



WESTSIDE JOURNAL

Pray
to God for
Our Nation!

VOLUME XX ISSUE 16

HOMETOWN PEOPLE...HOMETOWN NEWS

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2023

"THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH AND MY SHIELD; IN HIM MY HEART TRUSTS, AND I AM HELPED;
MY HEART EXULTS, AND WITH MY SONG I GIVE THANKS TO HIM." - PSALM 28:7

Wall of Heroes Unveiled at Life Care Center of Hilliard

Last Thursday, the Wall of Heroes was unveiled, prior to Veterans Day, at the Life Care Center of Hilliard. Several Veterans, who are residents, were honored at the event. One of the walls in the main hall of Life Care was painted a beautiful blue and the words 'Wall of Heroes' written. Below the words were the seals from each branch of the United States military followed by pictures of residents, who are Veterans, who proudly served their country.

The event was opened by four cadets, Justin Housend, Angeline Wooten, Brodie Rowell and Kolton Wright, from the West Nassau JROTC Program. The cadets held the precise 'folding of the American Flag' ceremony, while each fold was read clearly for all to hear.



Following the presentation, a large red ribbon was cut by Mr. Milton Lewis, 97, US Army Veteran, assisted by Tyler M. Connors, Executive Director of Life Care. The WN JROTC also presented a folded flag in a case and placed it on the wall. It was a very special day for the Veterans of Life Care!

The following are the Veterans that are currently in Life Care: Milton Lewis, US Army; Richard Henry, US Navy; Lyndell Johnson, US Army; Kenneth Ghoston, US Navy; Warren Womack, US Army; Garland McRae, US Air Force; Henry Hartsfield, US Army; Pete Rouse, US National Guard; John Roswan, US Army; Robert E. Klund, US Marine Corps; Marsha Fuqua, US Marine Corps; Randall Smith, US Air Force; Richard Colson, US Army; Gerald Willis, US Air Force; and Larry Boothe, US Army.

Thank you for your service!



Fire Completely Destroys Hilliard Home



Last Thursday, the Hilliard home of Wendall and Donnie Jean Crews, was completely destroyed by fire. The Crews have lived in the home since 1974.

Thankfully, neither one of them were hurt. Between the fire, smoke and water damage, they lost everything. Their daughter, Tammy Lynch, sent out a post on Facebook letting people know about the fire. The Crews are currently staying at Tammy's house in Yulee. This is the last thing anyone needs to be worried about at 76 years old. Mr. Crews' health is failing and I'm sure the added stress isn't helping the situation.

Wendall retired from the Nassau County Sheriff's Office, where he

worked as a deputy. Donnie Jean worked at Aunt Bee's Daycare in Hilliard for over 20 years. "On a positive note, about 6 months ago, Daddy lost his wedding ring that Mama gave him 57 years ago. We searched and searched and could never find it," posted Tammy. "Mama found it today. To see her excitement today brought joy to my heart and Daddy was beyond happy. To see them both smiling considering what they've been through was such a blessing. My family has been so amazing throughout this process."

As the process continues and tough decisions are being made, they will need everything to put a home back together again. However, they do not have any place to store anything. Currently, they need monetary donations to help continue to take care

of their regular needs. Tammy plans to open a savings account for them as soon as she can. If anyone wishes to donate money (cash or checks), it can be brought to: the Westside Journal, 450034 SR 200, Callahan (879-4180), and we will make sure the Crews receive it. Checks need to be made out to: Tammy Lynch. Any help would be greatly appreciated during this difficult time. Let's join together as communities and help this sweet family in their time of need.



Celebrating Thanksgiving Saturday, November 18

Hilliard
Council on Aging
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Veterans Appreciation Ceremony Held at WNHS

Last Thursday night, the Annual West Nassau JROTC Veterans Appreciation Ceremony was held. The evening was sponsored by the cadets with some help from local businesses and citizens. The cadets greeted each Veteran as they entered, seated them at their table and learned more about their time while in the service. All branches of the military were recognized and there was lots of time for Veterans to get together and share stories and memories. Everyone enjoyed a nice dinner!



In the Kitchen...

- 1 whole chicken, cut into 6 pieces
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh rosemary

Preheat the oven to 350°. Place chicken pieces into a 9x13-inch baking dish. Stir together mayonnaise, garlic, rosemary, salt, and black pepper in a bowl. Spread mayonnaise mixture over chicken; top with Parmesan cheese. Bake in the preheated oven until no longer pink in the center and the juices run clear, about 1 hour and 10 minutes. An instant-read thermometer inserted into the center should read at least 165°.

Mayo Chicken

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Green Signs with Troy University



Last Wednesday, West Nassau High School senior Reese Green signed a letter of intent to attend Troy University on a softball scholarship. Reese is a 4-year letterman with the Lady Warriors softball team, along with also playing travel ball. "She has worked hours and

extra hours to get where she is today," said WN Coach Randalyn Bryant. "She is a great athlete but also great academically. She will definitely leave her mark on West Nassau softball as an outfielder and shortstop."

Reese plans to begin her college career in the fall of 2024. "I already love the coaching staff and the players," said Reese, recalling her visit to the Troy campus. "It's a beautiful campus and the facilities are top notch. In fact, there is a lot of construction going on at the campus. They are growing."

While continuing softball, Reese is thinking about majoring in some type of sports related career. She is the daughter of Bubba and Tiffany Green. Her proud siblings are Riley and Jayden!

WNHS Most Decorated Cheerleaders

Last week, the West Nassau High School Cheerleaders from the 2022-2023 season held a banquet to be presented their Championship Rings. Three of the cheerleaders, who have already graduated, Kylee Womack, Payton Blackburn and Kyra Fours, were honored to be the Most Decorated Cheerleaders in West Nassau High School history. Each one won 4 FHSAA State Championship titles; 5 National Championship Titles; and 3 World Championship titles (no Worlds event in 2021 due to Covid). Congratulations to these ladies!



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1. Contact Jenna D., Facility Manager at 904-874-5261 or email her at jenna@dayspringvillage.org.
 2. You will be assigned a resident and their 'wishes'.
 3. Have your gift wrapped and back to the facility by December 23rd.
 4. Baking - If you like to bake we would love to have you sponsor the evening snack for the residents!
 5. Music - If you have a musical talent you would like to share we invite you to come and perform!
- 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 - 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

www.dayspringvillage.org

AL #5766



Letters to the Editor



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

In Response

Dear Editor,

For once I read the ‘Just My Opinion’ column all the way through because it was what I considered to be well written, factual and not full of political rhetoric. I am guessing that is why there was no mention of President Biden given how strongly he has spoken in his support of Israel and Ukraine for that matter.

Tommy Taylor

First By Flood

Dear Editor,

History suggests that religion can be traced as a major factor at the inception of all wars, religion referring to the motives of the ruling class, political fanaticism and/or religious diversity. In this light, the seriousness of carnage taking place in Israel and the Ukraine intensifies. Anyone who doesn’t see that these wars are a threat to the entire world has their head in the sand. (Not to use the crude vernacular)

The often quoted, “Those who do not learn from history are bound to repeat it” comes to mind. All world leaders know America has a weak president. In case you haven’t noticed, Putin is taking full advantage by flexing his muscles with isolated incidents. Israel’s Prime Minister Netanyahu is ignoring any attempt by

Biden to intervene clearly attests to his being disrespected. All Biden can do is send money, which only fuels the flames and adds to the conflagration. Which raises the question of: When are we going to learn to stay out of the conflicts of other nations?

To add to our fears and uncertainty of what lies ahead, our politicians are embroiled in arguments about abortion, which is not about abortion but political posturing. Discerning truth out of communications in this country is exhausting. We need to be regularly reminded that the press, the politicians and pundits have an agenda they are covering up. I guess it might be good to consider that they are all lying and play the same game we play with all advertising. This game, if you’ve never played, is a version of the childhood search for truth, which was called, “Where is the Fish in the Picture.” The adult version changes from Fish to Lie. It certainly makes being a hostage of commercials more fun.

The growing prospect that current events are a prelude to a worldwide conflict is bone chilling which makes our worries about paying the mortgage, having enough food to eat and the price of gasoline seem mundane. Words from the HOLY BIBLE seem apropos to sum up current events: FIRST BY FLOOD... THEN BY FIRE.

B. R. McConnell

EVENTS AROUND TOWN

Hilliard Flashes Home Run Vendor Event, HMSHS ball park, behind HES, Saturday, November 18, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Fundraiser by Hilliard Baseball Boosters to improve the facilities at the field.

The Sons of Confederate Veterans monthly meeting will be held Monday, November 20 at 7 p.m. at the Pig Barbeque restaurant in Callahan. The public is invited.

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JUST MY OPINION

Roger R. West

I never dreamed that I would have to face the prospect of not living in the United States of America. At least not the one I’ve known all my life. I’ve never wished to live anywhere else. This is my home and I was privileged to be born here. But today I woke up and as I was having my morning coffee, I realized that everything is about to change. No matter how I vote, no matter what I see, something evil has invaded our nation and our lives are never going to be the same. I’ve been confused by the hostility of family and friends. I look at people I’ve known all my life, so hate filled that they agree with opinions that they would never express as their own. I think I may have well entered the twilight zone. We have become a nation that has lost its collective mind.

You can’t justify this insanity. If a guy pretends to be a woman, you’re required to pretend with him. Somehow, it’s un-American for the census to count how many Americans are in America. Russians influencing our elections are bad but illegals voting in our elections are good. It was cool for Joe Biden to blackmail the president of Ukraine; but it’s an impeachable offense if Donald Trump inquired about it. Twenty is too young to drink a beer but 18 is old enough to vote. People who have never owned slaves should pay slavery reparations to people who have never been slaves. People who have never been to college should pay the debts of college students who took out huge loans for their degrees.

Immigrants with tuberculosis and polio are welcome but you better be able to prove your dog is vaccinated. Irish doctors and German engineers who want to immigrate to the U.S. must go through a rigorous vetting process but any illiterate gangbanger who jumps the southern fence is welcome. Five billion dollars for border security is too expensive but 1.5 trillion for free healthcare is not. If you cheat to get into

college, you go to prison, but if you cheat to get into the country you go to college for free. People who say there is no such thing as gender are demanding a female president. We see other countries going socialist and collapsing, but it seems like a great plan for us. Some people are held responsible for things that happen before they were born and other people are not held responsible for what they’re doing right now. Criminals are caught and released to hurt more people, but stopping them is bad because it’s a violation of their rights and pointing out all this hypocrisy somehow makes us racist. Nothing makes sense anymore... no values no morals and no stability. People are dying of a Chinese virus but it’s racist to refer to it as Chinese even though it began in China. We are clearly living in an upside-down world where right is wrong, wrong is right, where moral is immoral and immoral is moral, where good is evil and evil is good. Where killing murders is wrong but killing unborn babies is okay. Wake up America! The great unsinkable ship, Titanic America, has hit an iceberg and is taking on water and is sinking fast. Speak up! This was contributed by Sunshine Sally 13.

Have you heard that Harvard, Princeton, the University of Chicago and the US Treasury Economists have admitted that the Trump tax cuts worked as advertised? Research proves that the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act created a surge in business investment, which greatly benefited the economy. Most of us deplorables already knew this, it just took woke liberals six years to admit it. Once again, Trump was right! One more thing, don’t expect Joe Biden to be on the ballot in 2024, I just have a feeling the Socialist Dems are going to move him aside. Watch closely for a Michele Obama/Gavin Newsome campaign to begin to emerge. Oh, how I hope I am wrong!

As always...that’s just my opinion!

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The Cause of Thanksgiving

Pastor Adam Pierce, Liberty Baptist Church, Callahan



Thanksgiving is a national holiday. One in which we are to set aside time to be grateful. I suppose it could be argued that “being grateful” is not something you should have to schedule. The holiday itself has roots in God’s goodness and our perspective on life. After all, we are told in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, “*In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God...*”

Thanklessness is often caused by a wrong view of life and what makes that life good. Our society puts too much weight in material goods, wealth, or success as the source of what causes gratitude. It is also caused by the inability to see benefit in your current state. Webster’s 1828 dictionary defines gratitude as: An emotion of the heart, excited by a benefit received. The children of Israel, for example, murmured in thanklessness after God showed them great benefit by delivering them from bondage in Egypt and the hand of Pharaoh by parting the Red Sea.

So, what causes gratitude or a thankfulness? That answer is found in the Scriptures. 2 Corinthians 9:11 expresses that cause clearly, “*Being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.*” God then, who is our object of gratitude, defines thanksgiving as our perspective to see an enriching (supply) in every part of our lives that leads to bounty (goodness). The key to remember is that we do not get to define supply or goodness... God does.

This year, rather than choosing to focus on what we think God didn’t supply, let’s give thanks for all the good things God did supply! We are truly blessed. Happy Thanksgiving!

Farm Bureau Celebrates Farm City Week

Thanksgiving season is when many Americans gather with their families and reflect upon many blessings. One of those blessings is a nutritious and diverse food supply produced by our farmers and ranchers. We also benefit from other agricultural products that provide clothing, housing, medicines, fuel and other products we use daily. These necessities are available to us because of a broad partnership of farmers, ranchers, processors, brokers, truckers, shippers, scientists, wholesalers and retailers. Our collaborative partnerships help maintain our standard of living.

In appreciation of our farm city partnerships, the President of the United States annually proclaims the week leading up to Thanksgiving Day as National Farm City Week. Florida’s agriculture, natural resource and food industries employ more than two million individuals and annually contributes \$149 billion to Florida’s economy. The following link provides more agricultural stats: www.nass.usda.gov/Publications and www.ifas.ufl.edu/extension-economic-contribution-reports/.

gov/Publications and www.ifas.ufl.edu/extension-economic-contribution-reports/.

We encourage our fellow citizens to pause this holiday season and consider the many diverse and healthy foods available. Locally, the Nassau County Farm Bureau celebrated the national event by placing display boards at the Callahan Library and Roasted Rooster Coffee Company to educate the community on the connection between farmers, consumers, shippers, packers, scientists and everyone else who has a part. Both the farm and the city can exist in collaboration. Our interdependence creates jobs, markets and relationships that build our economy and support our collective security.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving, let us remember the farm city relationships that have allowed us to create an outstanding quality of life for all Floridians. Please join us in celebrating Farm City Week, November 15-22, as we give thanks for all that we enjoy.



Baby Donations needed!

The Nest, A Women’s Center, is in need of new or gently used Baby Items.

Diapers (mostly size 3 and 4); Pacifiers; Bottles; and any kind of Baby Formula

Items from the list may be brought to the Westside Journal office, 450034 SR 200, Callahan. The Nest has two locations, Jacksonville and in Yulee, 904-619-4914.

CHURCH NEWS

Classic Cruise-in, 3741 Heavenly Lane, Hilliard, Saturday, registration 9-11 a.m., show 11 a.m.-3 p.m. hosted by The Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints Youth. All Proceeds go to Youth Program. Cars, Trucks, Motorcycles! Food trucks on site!

Thanksgiving Community Dinner at Callahan Methodist Church, 449648 US 301, this Saturday, Nov. 18 at 1 p.m.



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All Star Youth Showman 4-H Club Shine at the Fair!

This year the Northeast Florida Fair put together a fantastic agricultural experience for fairgoers, 4-H and FFA youth. One new 4-H Club rose to the challenge. All Stock Youth Showman club members participated in several of the fair's livestock shows and events. They even earned some of the top awards. Many of the members of All Stock Youth Showman are new to 4-H and agriculture. They spent many hours training and studying cattle, goats, poultry, rabbits and livestock judging. The club members will be attending livestock shows across the states of Florida and Georgia with the goals of showing animals and learning new life skills.

"This was the first year that I started branching out into different species of livestock. I remember watching the cattle show at last year's fair and I thought I could do this," stated Garrett Bennett, a senior in 4-H. "I decided to start learning and I knew I wanted to show both dairy and beef cattle. Thanks to my contacts in 4-H, I was able to lease a Jersey calf from Jessica Maynard and



a Charolais heifer from Saydie Price to show at this year's fair. It was a truly amazing experience."

4-H is all about "Learn by Doing." This is a very true statement for the All Stock Youth Showman 4-H club members. Most of the members do not own livestock and never had the opportunity to work with these kinds of animals. The club leaders Sarah Bennett and Renee Shannon aim to allow all youth the learn by doing experience. Members are provided with animals to lease and the training to go along with them. "I want to allow youth

to learn new skills in an uplifting and supportive environment. It is very important to me to give back to the very same community that has supported my son for many years and this is one way for me to do just that," said Sarah Bennett, Club Leader.

New 4-H members Emma and Brooklyn

Hansford both senior 4-H'ers joined the club and expressed interest in working with beef cows. Leader Renee Shannon and her husband Lee found two heifers for the girls to show. Emma and Brooklyn spent many hours breaking and training the heifers to get them ready to show at the NEFL Fair. Wouldn't you know that on the day of the show, the heifers were less than cooperative, but Emma and Brooklyn relied on their training and handled the situation like true showman! "I was so proud of the girls. Their first show didn't quite go as planned, but they worked hard and put on a good show," added Renee.

The Mclay girls Brynn, Carys and Delaney, who are also new to All Stock Youth Showman, joined in the fair activities by showing poultry, rabbits, and goats. Carys a junior 4-H member won first place in rabbit showmanship earning her first-ever belt buckle. Brynn and Delaney also placed well in their shows and judging competitions.

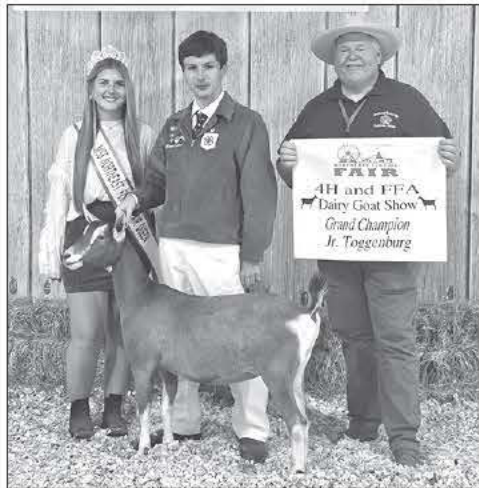
All Stock Youth Showman Club is your adventure waiting



to happen. The club meets on the first Saturday of each month in Hilliard and is open to ages 5-18. You do not need to own livestock to join. This club travels to several agricultural events each year.

The club needs round pens to provide a safe and secure place to train large animals, a livestock trailer, clippers for shaving animals, and stanchions for cattle and goats. The club is seeking sponsors and/or donations to help with supplies and costs.

If you are interested in joining or supporting All Stock Youth Showman, please call Sarah Bennett at 904-583-9258 or the 4-H office at 904-530-6353.



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FSCJ to Host FIRST LEGO League Tournament

The Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ) S-5 Scholarship Program and the FSCJ Next Generation PLC Grant will host a Northeast Florida FIRST LEGO League robotics tournament at the FSCJ Advanced Technology Center. The event will be held Saturday, November 18 from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the FSCJ Advanced Technology Center, 401 West State Street, Jacksonville.

Fourth through eighth-grade students from Baker, Duval, Nassau, St. Johns and surrounding counties will compete in the robotic competition. These students have worked for several weeks to plan, construct and program an autonomous robot, conduct research on

a topic of their own choice and prepare a presentation of their findings.

FIRST LEGO League is an international educational program. It was initiated in 1998 by the American foundation FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) and the LEGO company.

Northeast Florida FIRST LEGO League is actively seeking competition judges with backgrounds in science, technology, engineering, arts, or mathematics (STEAM). Individuals interested in volunteering as a judge should visit the following link and create an account.

For more information, visit <https://www.firstinspires.org/>.

St. Marys Little Theatre presents “Forever Christmas”



A little homeless girl in Camden County longs for warmth, food, and shelter, but most of all a “forever family.” Through original music and classical Christmas songs, Little Nell laments the approach of Christmas and the circumstances that are beyond her control. St. Marys Little Theatre director Barbara Ryan Harris said that this holiday’s production will inspire audiences to look upon those less fortunate in a different light. It’s a timeless story of struggle and angst, but as all good stories do, “Forever Christmas” has a happy and triumphant ending. “The roller coaster ride that we take the audience on will lead up to the opening of hearts throughout the audience,” Ryan said. “In the end, not only will they be cheering for Little Nell, but also will feel endeared to the mean rich man who threatens to report the little girl to the Department of Children and Families.”


Throw in a guardian angel, Santa, some bullying kids, and Rudolph, and you have the makings of a delightful third season holiday production for St. Marys Little Theatre. The play

and original songs were written by Barbara Ryan Harris who said that “Forever Christmas” addresses the social conscience but is also a joyous, heartwarming holiday event that will be enjoyed by all ages. “Families with children comprise the fastest growing segment of homeless people,” Ryan-Harris said. “Though people would like to think that our area is untouched by homelessness, there is no community in which this is not an issue that needs to be addressed.”

When asked to describe the overall theme of the play, she noted that it’s like ‘It’s a Wonderful Life’ meets ‘Little Orphan Annie’ meets ‘The Little Match Stick Girl.’ “The story is inspiring. The music is inspiring. The performers are inspiring,” Ryan-Harris said. “People will walk away from the theater with a sense of wonder and celebration for the most beautiful season of all.”

Performances of “Forever Christmas” are December 8 and 9 at 7 p.m.; and December 10 at 2 p.m. at the Theater by the Trax, 1000 Osborne Street, St. Marys, Georgia. Tickets are now on sell: \$20 adults and \$10 for children 12 and under. Tickets can be purchased at Once Upon A Bookseller (cash or check at bookstore) in downtown St. Marys; or at: www.stmaryslittletheatre.com. For more information call 912-729-1103.

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Yams , Mac & Cheese, Cornbread, Biscuits, Fried Squash, Fried Okra, Fries, Fatback
Salad Bar, Cold Bar, Cobbler, Ice Cream

MONDAY

Fried Chicken, Baked Chicken, Cubed Steak, Sausage Peppers & Onions, Chicken Gizzards
Chicken Liver, Rice, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Green Beans, Greens, Cabbage, Corn, Field Peas
Blackeyed Peas, Rutabaga, Carrots, Stewed Squash, Mac & Cheese, Cornbread, Biscuits
Fatback, Salad Bar, Cold Bar, Cobbler, Ice Cream

TUESDAY

Fried Chicken, Baked Chicken, Fried Pork Chops, Sausage Peppers & Onions, Chicken Liver
Chicken Gizzards, Rice, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Stewed Tomatoes, Rutabaga, Pinto Beans
Green Beans, Cabbage, Corn, Greens, Baby Green Lima Beans, White Lima Beans, Yams
Mac & Cheese, Fatback, Cornbread, Biscuits, Fried Okra, Fried Squash, Salad Bar
Cold Bar, Cobbler, Ice Cream

WEDNESDAY

Fried Chicken, Baked Chicken, Stewed Beef, Ham, Chicken Gizzards, Chicken Liver
Rice, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Stewed Tomatoes, B Mac's Mix, Pinto Beans, Green Beans
Cabbage, Corn, Greens, Ford Hooks, White Lima Beans, Yams, Mac & Cheese, Fatback
Cornbread, Biscuits, Fried Okra, Fried Squash, Salad Bar, Cold Bar, Cobbler, Ice Cream

THURSDAY

Fried Chicken, Baked Chicken, 4 flavors of Chicken Wings, Sausage Peppers & Onions
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Baby Green Lima Beans, White Lima Beans Yams, Mac & Cheese, Fatback
Cornbread, Biscuits, Fried Okra, Fried Squash, Salad Bar, Cold Bar, Cobbler, Ice Cream

FRIDAY & SATURDAY (LUNCH ONLY)

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Green Beans, Cabbage, Corn, Greens, Baked Beans, Cheese Grits
Mac & Cheese, Fatback, Galic Cheddar Biscuits, Cornbread, Biscuits
Fried Okra, Fried Squash, Salad Bar, Cold Bar, Cobbler, Ice Cream

FRIDAY & SATURDAY NIGHT (STARTING AT 4:00)

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Gravy, Stewed Tomatoes, Baby Green Lima Beans, White Lima Beans, Green Beans
Cabbage, Greens, Baked Beans, Cheese Grits, Hush Puppies, Mac & Cheese
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FRIDAY & SATURDAY NIGHT

\$17.00 cash / CC \$17.69
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Sensory Friendly Fall Festival Held



On Saturday, November 4, the Northeast Florida Advocates for Autism and Related Disabilities, Inc., in collaboration with Conner's A-maize-ing Acres, hosted the 8th Annual Sensory Friendly Fall Festival at Conner's. This heartwarming event brought together over 100 families from the community.

The Sensory Friendly Fall Festival is specifically designed to cater to families with children of all ages who are on the autism spectrum or have other developmental disabilities. Several community partners specializing in supporting children on the autism spectrum joined hands to enhance the experience, offering warm smiles and support to the attendees.

The primary goal of this event is to encourage families to engage in a collective activity by navigating their way through a corn maze. Each child is provided with opportunities to practice

social interaction and teamwork. Everyone relished close encounters with farm animals, hayrides, a corn sensory bin, blue skies and much more!

For further information about their annual sensory-friendly outings and additional resources, you can follow N.E.F.A. on Facebook or reach out via email at northeastflorida.advocates@yahoo.com.

"We extend a FARMTASTIC THANK YOU to Conner's A-maize-ing Acres for graciously hosting us each year. This day is truly special for everyone involved," said Mandy Conner.



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Hilliard Appreciates Veterans

Dawn S. West

The Town of Hilliard held their Annual Veterans Appreciation Ceremony Saturday at Town Hall Park. There was a great group of Veterans and families to enjoy the event. Each veteran present was requested to sign in and list their branch of service; years of service; and their age.

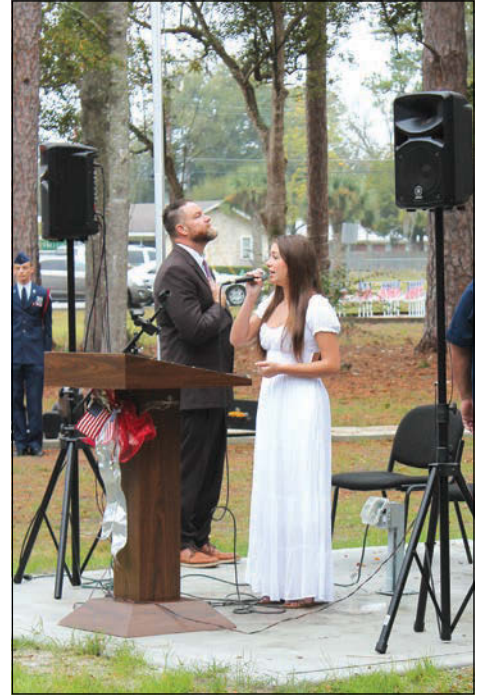
The ceremony was opened by Hilliard Mayor John Beasley as he announced a flag team from the West Nassau JROTC to present and raise the flag. LeeAnn Purvis followed by singing the National Anthem. The Hilliard Middle-Senior High School Band performed throughout the event and did an amazing job!

Hilliard resident and Veteran Glenn Higginbotham was the main speaker sharing his time of service and sharing accolades of his late Uncle Harold Wade, also a veteran of WWII. Glenn ended his speech with, "Uncle Harold was a warrior, contractor, carpenter, poet, father, husband and comedian, all rolled into one fine human being. He was an inspiration to me and everyone that was lucky enough to have known

him. He passed away in February 2005. I loved him and miss him." Florida Representative Dean Black and Congressman Aaron Bean also spoke to the crowd.

Mayor Beasley announced the winner of the oldest Veteran, Mr. Dana Wine, who is 91 and is a US Air Force Veteran; Youngest winner was Gabriel Wollitz, who is 22 years old and serving in the US Air Force; the Veteran who had served the most years was Mr. Ken Bass (also Callahan Mayor) with 34 years in the US Air Force & Army. A flag was also given from a drawing of all those who signed in, and the winner was Mike Sadler who served in the US Air Force.

Following the ceremonies, everyone enjoyed a barbecue dinner and cake! It was a special day for our Veterans and another great event at Town Hall Park!




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Naturally Nassau

Grits with Grandpa

Nancy Lee Bethea

This fictional column features an inside look into the lives of John and Bethany McNair, a couple who live and work in Nassau County. The McNairs have three children, John Jr., 19, Brianna, 15, and Jacob, 5. Mr. McNair is a transplant from Chicago, Illinois, who teaches art. Mrs. McNair is a Nassau County native who works as a forester and has deep roots here.

I love my daddy. I'm his "little girl," and always will be, even though I'm in my forties with three kids of my own. Recently, we moved Daddy into an assisted living facility (ALF). Like most other people, my father has an opinion. Unlike others, my father has no trouble letting his opinion be known. We try to take Daddy on a field trip from the facility every month or so. We might take him to watch sunrise at the beach and eat breakfast somewhere. Dad needs a wheelchair, so the whole process is a production, but we manage. Daddy insists on naming restaurants he and Mom used to visit. Unfortunately, most of them closed years ago. So now, we give him a list of restaurants that are actually open. He finds fault in almost every one of them! The food is undercooked or overcooked, too raw or too stale, too crisp or too wilted.

A new breakfast and lunch place opened recently. John and I took Daddy there. We didn't discuss it with him first, we just went. Basically, if he wanted to eat, he needed to get in the wheelchair or else he could stay hungry in the car. "This car is so tiny! What is it? A Hot Wheels car?" he yelled, starting everyone's day with a complaining

spirit. "Can't you get any closer to the door?" he asked, after we parked in the first handicapped spot. Had Daddy always been this grumpy?

Once we were seated, the waitress gave us menus and took our drink order. I went to the ladies' room once she left. Well, not exactly. I actually followed her and begged her to forgive my dad for anything he had said or would say. She didn't bat an eye and told me she knew how to handle senior citizens. John ordered French toast with maple syrup, while I ordered grits, eggs and bacon. I cringed when the sweet waitress turned to Dad to take his order. He wanted traditional oatmeal, not the microwaved junk, two strips of bacon... extra crispy, and some strawberries. Oh, and a whole pot of hot coffee. I guess he planned to stay a while.

While we waited, Dad complained about crying children and banging sounds from the kitchen. But he didn't complain about the waitress, which was unusual. A few minutes later, the waitress returned with our food and coffee. She brought plenty of creamers and sugar packs, she said, because she wasn't sure how Daddy drank his coffee. We all enjoyed our meal, but Daddy was quiet. His oatmeal, bacon, and strawberries must have been perfect since his complaining ceased. Maybe

he had just been hungry. Our waitress came by multiple times, but Daddy the only thing Daddy ordered was another pot of coffee. "I see the 'liars corner' table over there," Daddy said a few minutes later. Some of his friends sat a few tables away from us, but they had not seen him. I offered to roll him over to say hi, but he didn't want his friends to see him in his wheelchair.

Daddy insisted on paying the check, even though we protested. We rolled his chair to the cash register, and then we remembered just how old school my dad is. He doesn't use a credit card...ever. He counts out each bill and coin from his billfold or pocket.

After he paid, he held out his hands for the change, which totaled something like \$1.50. He handed me the money and asked me to go back and leave it on the table as a tip. I did what Daddy asked, except I added more to the tip.

The restaurant was short-staffed that day, so our waitress was cleaning the table when I got there. I handed her the money and thanked her for being patient with Daddy. She wouldn't take it. She explained how her grandfather and my dad were alike. Then, she shared how she had lost her grandfather a few months earlier. Their demeanor, their look, and their way of speaking were very similar, she said. It was her privilege to serve us, and have her 'grandfather' back in a way.

"That waitress sure knew how to take care of customers and keep my coffee cup full," Dad said as we pulled into the ALF. Pretty high praise from my curmudgeonly dad! I hope that waitress is working at the restaurant the next time we go. She was a blessing to us that day. Until next time, and until our next outing for breakfast, we'll be living our Naturally Nassau life.

Nancy Lee Bethea is a local writer who leads the Creative Writing Department at LaVilla Middle School of the Arts in Jacksonville. She is married to Stan Bethea and they live in Callahan with their teenage daughter and their rescue cat.



NARFE First Coast Chapter 2273

First Coast Chapter 2273 of NARFE (National Active and Retired Federal Employees Assn.) will meet Tuesday, November 21 at 11:30 a.m. at The Pig Barbecue, 450102 SR 200, Callahan. We will cover the upcoming FEHBP Open Season and changes this year. We have representatives and literature from BCBS and other plans available. 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 program will start around noon. Chapter 2273 has regular luncheon meetings the third Tuesday of the month, except December. For additional information and non-members, contact Greg D'Alessio at 904-347-3338.

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THE TOWN OF HILLIARD is seeking a highly motivated individual for a **PUBLIC WORKS TECHNICIAN** position. Current Driver License and High School Diploma / equivalent are required. Job description includes landscaping, facility maintenance, and the ability to perform multiple tasks. Experience in water and sewer utility work is a plus. Pay ranges from \$16.23 to \$24.36 depending on experience. the Town of Hilliard is an Equal Opportunity Employer and a Drug Free Workplace. Post-offer physical required. Applications may be picked up at Town Hall located at 15859 West County Road 108, Hilliard, Florida from 9am until 5pm Monday through Friday, or can be printed from our website www.townofhilliard.com and will be accepted until the position is filled. 111623

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FRANCES RODENBARGER



Frances Darlene Reed Rodenbarger, 78, of Hilliard, went peacefully to be with the Lord Saturday, November 11, 2023 in Jacksonville. She was born February 16, 1945 in Folkston, Georgia to the late Coyle Reed, Sr. and Vera Prevatt Reed.

Frances was a loving mother to three daughters and a son. She also had a large love of Cardinals and could be found watching them from her Florida room along with family and friends. Most days she sat quietly in her chair with her dog Milo with the TV on, or chatting on the phone while also watching the many hummingbirds that flocked to her Bottle Brush trees. Every Spring you would find her preparing for the first day she could start planting tomatoes and flowers. She had quite a knack for growing things. She had many favorite flowers that bloomed year-round in and outside of her home. Besides these things

Frances was a wonderful cook as well. Her family brags to this day about her Southern cooking. She will be greatly missed by all her family and friends.

In addition to her parents; she was preceded in death by her husband John Rodenbarger; granddaughter Jerrica Rogers; four sisters Vernell Henderson, Althea Rice, Alene Morris and Inez Hannah; seven brothers Donald Reed, Coyle Reed, Jr., Dallas Reed, Beverly Reed, Glen Reed, Carrol Reed and Bobby Reed.

She is survived by her three daughters Angela (Jason) Wade and their children Ashley, Brett and Rachael; Melanie (John) Rogers and their children Courtney and John Matthew; Michelle (Billy) Long and their children Candice, Billy and Blake; a son Scott Rodenbarger and his son Reese; a brother Cleveland Reed; and nine great-

OBITUARIES

grandchildren Brandan, Aria, Bryce, Dalton, Zoey, Izzy, Kyler, Brenlee and Hayzlee; and a number of nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Pallbearers will be Brett Wade, Blake Long, Billy Long, Reese Rodenbarger, Robert Rodenbarger, Randy Sikes and Matt Rogers.

The family will receive friends Thursday, November 16, 2023 at Shepard-Roberson Funeral Home from 6-8 p.m. Funeral services will be held Friday, November 17 at 11 a.m., also at the funeral home, with Pastor David Cubbage officiating. Burial will follow in Oakwood Cemetery, Hilliard.

Condolences may be expressed at: www.shepardrobersonfh.com.

Arrangements by Shepard-Roberson Funeral Home, Folkston.

cooking, outdoors, fishing, hunting and simple walks through the woods to take care of the plants and animals. Bill enjoyed reading his Bible and sharing God's word. Bill received and took God's plan of salvation at the age of 12. He was a lifelong student of the Bible and its scriptures. He would share these words with family and friends and any who would listen.

However, his biggest love was his family. Bill kept tabs on birthdays and special family days, family history...BILL LOVED HIS FAMILY. He demonstrated this daily. Bill served his country in the US Coast Guard from 1975 - 1978. He was proud of his service to his country. Bill enjoyed laughing, making you laugh, jokes and entertaining others. During Bill's years of employment, he spent 15 years as a surveyor for Container Corporation. Bill was also a gifted welder who took great pride in his craft. He enjoyed his time at the Jacksonville Shipyards as a certified welder and metal worker.

Bill leaves behind his longtime loving soul mate, Susie Rewis; daughters Susie (Smith) Rick and Makayla Smith; grandchildren Wyatt Smith, Brett Rick, Mallory Rick and Raimey Smith; brothers Randy (Ann) Smith, Ken (Barb) Smith and Alan (Charmin) Smith; sisters Peggy (Ken) Seeley and Melody (John) Kirkwood; as well as numerous nieces and nephews, along with his beloved and faithful dog Sage.

A private family service will be held at a later date.

Condolences may be expressed at: www.shepardrobersonfh.com.

Arrangements by Shepard-Roberson Funeral Home, Folkston.

WILLIAM ARTHUR SMITH



William "Bill" Arthur Smith, 67, of Dahoma, passed away Friday, November 10, 2023, as Heaven's gates swung open, in Kingsland, Georgia.



Bill passed into light from darkness surrounded by his loving family. Bill, the son of Wilbur Randall Smith and Sarah Eunice Smith, was preceded in death by his loving parents; his son Lucian Smith; and his sister Kay Griffin.

Bill was a thoughtful, giving man who had many interests, including American history, military service, astronomy, people,

HAPPY HEAVENLY BIRTHDAY CHUCK ROBERTS

November 17, 1971 - May 9, 2023

Heaven gained a Good Man 6 months ago and I gained a special angel to watch over me. I think about and miss you every day! Happy Heavenly Birthday, Baby!

Love Forever and Always,
Rhonda



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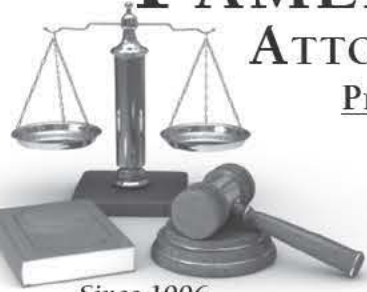
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Really! You can't understand?

Douglas C. Pearson, Sr.

I watched an ad, the other day, with amusement, as people were considering an "Extended Warranty" for their cars. Different folks describing differing conditions to justify making that purchase. "I keep hearing a 'Ding, Ding, Ding,'" one person says. Well, there is no 'extended warranty' for the problems we have.

Our Vice-President, who is the walking definition of Artificial Intelligence, has been appointed as being in-charge of that phenomena. Meantime, our President has signed a 111-page executive order on that subject, which he knows nothing about. It was revealed that the former president, Barack Hussein Obama II, compiled and wrote the entire thing. Further demonstrating who is in charge at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

We just celebrated "Veterans Day," purportedly to pay tribute to our veterans of the armed services. At the same time, we're witnessing demonstrations against a race of people that those veterans fought to protect and liberate from what was described as an evil government during World War II. Since that war, we've celebrated and committed our resources, and national moniker, to ensuring that it would never happen again. Now, alleged students and un-educated individuals, are driving demonstrations justifying those atrocities that Adolf Hitler advocated.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology had told their students that they would be expelled, for demonstrating and supporting the regime that accomplished those murders, kidnappings and dismemberments on that October Day. Now, MIT has backed down from that position, as there is a substantial number of students

that would lose their visas and might be deported as a result of an expulsion.

But the biggest capitulation by our Commander in Chief is not his reversal of support for Israel, as he calls for a "Cease Fire" for humanitarian purposes, but his failure to respond appropriately as our own military facilities and personnel are being attacked around the world. No wonder we can't get recruiting numbers up where they belong in the military. Who wants to raise their hand, and take an oath, to a government that itself will not support and protect them, as they do the work that no one else has the patriotism to accomplish. *"Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; when it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it!"* - Judge Learned Hand, May 21, 1944

As a Veteran, we all understood the "Blank Check" that we signed over to the U.S.A. when joining the armed forces. We also understood that just as our word was going to held against us, so too was the word of the U.S.A. going to be held against those in Washington D.C. In government, as in marriage and business, when one party does not hold up their side of the bargain, the other side can no longer be held accountable. Even when a warranty exists, if one party fails to meet the obligations that warranty is rendered Null and Void! The rest of the world is responding as expected.

But maybe we can fix one problem, which was addressed at the start. To the person, debating the decision to purchase an "extended Warranty" for their vehicle? The next time you hear a "Ding, Ding, Ding", save your money and just fasten the seat belt! Then you might understand (at least in this case) what that noise was!

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.

Sunday, November 5

Gregory Bryan Gay, Jr., 33, Hilliard: Failure to Appear

Monday, November 6

Amanda Lynn Goss, 36, Hilliard: Violation of Probation Community Control Felony

Tuesday, November 7

Lauren Marie Moody, 34, Hilliard: Failure to Appear; Failure to Appear Felony

Friday, November 10

Thomas William Edwards, 49, Callahan: Possession of Schedule 1-5 Substance; Possession of Drug Paraphernalia with Residue

Mary Katherine Shahan, 54, Callahan: Driving while License Suspended with Knowledge 1st Conviction; Possession of Drug Paraphernalia with Residue



Get Help NOW!

If you love someone struggling with drug or alcohol use, you may feel alone and unsure where to turn for help. That is where Parents of Addicted Loved Ones (PAL) can help. PAL weekly meetings provide a structured, evidence-based curriculum to give you the tools you need to encourage your loved one's recovery without enabling their addiction. Equally important is the opportunity to network with other parents and loved ones struggling with the same issues, for support and fellowship.

The meetings are free and confidential. Meetings are held on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. at the Hilliard Library. While I can't guarantee that your loved one will seek help if you attend the meetings, I can say with confidence that you will learn new ways to deal with them and gain a better understanding of addiction. I can be reached at (904) 703-7847 or by email at tashiad210@gmail.com for more information. I urge you to reach out for help. There is hope!

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Sheriff Leeper Presents Award

Recently, Nassau County Sheriff Bill Leeper presented the Florida Sheriffs Association's "Distinguished Service Award" to Mr. Lovett W. Taylor, Jr. of Hilliard. The award acknowledges 30 years of continued support to the Florida Sheriffs Association.

"Mr. Taylor is being recognized for his loyal dedication to the FSA organization and law enforcement. Please congratulate Mr. Taylor for everything that he has contributed to his community over the years to help keep people safe," said Sheriff Leeper.



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Next Session: Tuesday, November 28

We need you to volunteer to serve on our Jury today! Stay in touch by phone or emails! Sign-in between 5:30 to 5:45 p.m. Jeans and collared shirts required for boys; and modest dress for girls. Court begins promptly at 6 p.m. and is over by 7 p.m. 3 Hours Community Service for each Court Session!

We are always seeking new students to serve as Attorney's in Court. Anyone wishing to learn and serve in this position, just serve on the jury and speak to the coordinator about joining the team! Court meets at the Robert M. Foster Judicial Center in Yulee. Simply show up, sign up and serve on the Jury. Call Nancy, the coordinator, at 904-548-4520 or email nbeasley@nassaucountyfl.com.

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Historical Military Exhibit Held Saturday



If you missed visiting the American Military Historical Society of Florida's Military Exhibit on Saturday at the Hilliard Library, you missed an amazing display of history. The display began outside with two military Jeeps and an official military tent. The tent had a cot, footlocker and a manikin in military uniform working on a telegraph. Talk about feeling like you were back in time... it was real. I was told by the owner of the tent that his father and his grandson actually spent the night in the tent on Friday night.

Inside the conference room at the library, the exhibit was set up in chronological order: WWI, WWII,

Korean and Vietnam. With each war, there was a veteran that could give all kinds of information about the war and explain some of the uniforms and weapons. The four men that escorted all the military treasures were: Phillip A. Buhler, Stephen Cargile, Forrest Bledsoe, and Warren Chard. The expansive displays are just a fraction of the military artifacts the society



privately owns. Each of the men were so knowledgeable about the event as if they happened last year. They are all passionate about preserving our nation's history. Nearly every military conflict has been painstakingly researched with artifacts purchased, restored and cataloged for each branch of the service. The pieces are then included in the educational presentations the Society provides to high schools, Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) chapters and the general public. The Military Exhibit will return to Hilliard on Tuesday, December 5 and have their display at Hilliard Middle-Senior High School for the day.



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Blank Check Society Fundraiser Successful

Saturday, November 11, Veterans Day, the Blank Check Society held the 8th Annual Pork Butt Cook Off, Blood Drive, Wreaths Across America Auction and Raffle. What an amazing event showing support for our Veterans! This Fundraising Event was a Great Success in due part from the local community. The VFW Post 10095 in Hilliard, proudly hosted this year's event.

There were six delicious entries in the Pork Butt Cook Off that served over 140 dinners. Taking 1st Place in the Cook-Off was Jimmy Legare; 2nd Place Mike Mekara; 3rd Place Wesley Watson; and the People's Choice Award was Glenn Beck. Special Thanks to our contestants, AA Bottled Gas Company, Callahan Barbecue, SCW Liquors, Uncle DumDum's Swamp Juice, American Legion Riders 401 and ALL the other businesses and clubs for their generous donations.



The ongoing Blood Drive was also successful with 18 blood donors. There continues to be a critical need for blood. Please donate when you can and help your community.

Once every dollar had been tallied, we were able to write a check to Wreaths Across America Jacksonville National Cemetery for \$5,000.00!

A visit from Santa at the VFW Post 10095 will be Saturday, December 16. Santa will be arriving at 4 p.m. There will be snacks, gifts for children and an amazing Christmas Soldier Story.

Thank you to everyone that came out! BCS ROCKS!



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