



WESTSIDE JOURNAL



VOLUME XVII ISSUE 34

HOMETOWN PEOPLE...HOMETOWN NEWS

THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2021

"BECAUSE OF THE LORD'S GREAT LOVE WE ARE NOT CONSUMED, FOR HIS COMPASSIONS NEVER FAIL. THEY ARE NEW EVERY MORNING; GREAT IS YOUR FAITHFULNESS." - LAMENTATIONS 3:22-23

Hilliard Honors WWII Veteran Bob Zortea for 100th Birthday

Dawn S. West

The Hilliard Town Council met Thursday night for their first meeting of March. The first order of business was a proclamation to honor Mr. Bob Zortea, of Hilliard, for the celebration of his 100th birthday. Mr. Zortea, a WWII US Navy Veteran, celebrated his 100th birthday February 14, 2021. Mr. Zortea was joined by both of his daughters, Gail and Jimmy Davis and Inez and Terry Humphrey and their families. The proclamation shared that Mr. Zortea is a long-time citizen of Hilliard; he joined the US Navy in 1940 and served for 5 1/2 years; he worked and retired from General Motors in the Electric Motor



Division where, among other things, built traction motors on locomotives. Therefore, the Town of Hilliard values the contributions, significance and life of Mr. Zortea; and congratulates Mr. Nello 'Bob' Zortea on his 100th birthday



and proclaim this day Bob Zortea Day. His daughter Gail thanked the council for the special recognition of her daddy!

In other business, Ordinance 2021-01 was approved on second and final reading. The ordinance concerned amending the Comprehensive Plan, which will control Future Land Use, guide public facilities and protect natural resources.

Several Resolutions were also approved by the council that pertain to the Hilliard Airpark: Resolution 2021-04 which concerned Hilliard Airpark Design and Construct Hangar and Hangar Rehabilitation; Resolution 2021-05 which concerned Hilliard Airpark Construct Security Camera and

Video Recording System; Resolution 2021-06 which concerned Hilliard Airpark Turf Runway Maintenance & Improvements.

Resolution 2021-07 was also approved which concerned Hilliard as a Second Amendment Sanctuary Town. The resolution declares Hilliard a constitutional town and a reaffirmation of our commitment to stand in opposition to any abridgment of our constitutional rights and standing in immediate opposition to any abridgment of our United States Constitution Second Amendment Rights.

The final resolution approved was Resolution 2021-08 which concerned amending Building Permit Valuations Adding Discounts for Private Provider Plan Review & Inspections.

Alyson McCullough, Advisor for HMSHS Ag Program, held a presentation with some of students for their (school) property as a part of their class studies. "We have worked very hard to build this program to what it is today. We have secured funding through some grants to further our activities as a program," said McCullough. "We have previously come before the council

when we wanted our chickens and coops. The students built the coops and shelters for the chickens as they have for the goats. They ran water lines, built a secure pen, placed automatic water and feeding systems for the animals. We need to know what else we have to do to put our goats in their new yard?"

After several students also gave their presentations, McCullough and the students were told they must go before the Planning & Zoning Board to get the approval.

In other business, Klynt Farmer, owner of K.A. Farmer Septic Tank Services approached the podium requesting the opportunity to build a relationship with the town in times of need. "Our company is under close watch with DEP. We have to follow very strict guidelines with what we do and how we handle the waste. We have property where we normally release the waste from our trucks. This has been one of the rainiest seasons we have had. Currently, our trucks can't get back to our property to dump," said Farmer. "We have been working with the Town of Callahan dumping a few loads and we would like to also work with the town of Hilliard to do so. We will be paying you for the loads and just mixing it with your waste at the WWTP, as we do in Callahan. You would be

See 'Hilliard' on page 2

Spring Lake Concerns Addressed

Editor's Note: This article is in response to last week's submitted article concerning Spring Lake Estates.

Board of Directors for Spring Lake Estates of Nassau County Owners Association

Spring Lakes Estates is a subdivision that began adding homes in 1988 and has always operated with a 'homeowner-run' Board of Directors. There are benefits and detriments to this type of situation, not the least of which is homeowners are not HOA experts, nor are they always

familiar with the laws that affect their performance. There have been several issues that have come before the more recent boards of Spring Lake Estates of Nassau County, that are requiring resolution through legal channels. The current board inherited several issues from a previous board who did not meet their fiduciary duties to the community (i.e. failure to preserve the covenants, failure to file tax returns). These issues have required extended efforts by more recent boards to resolve them under the legal requirements, that were not met



by the previous board. Presently it is the discovery that the covenants were allowed to expire January 24, 2018, that necessitated the hiring of legal and HOA professional advice for the expert

help in navigating this process.

Any HOA Board of Directors in this situation has a fiduciary duty to their fellow home owners to begin and carry out the Revitalization steps, so that every member of the community has an opportunity to vote the direction they desire for the future of their community. It is unfortunate that a small group of people, who would like to abolish the HOA, have either misinterpreted the information shared, or deliberately chosen to portray these factual

See 'Spring Lake' on page 3

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A Word From the Publisher

How blessed we are to live in Florida! Can I get an Amen? The most recent reason is our beautiful weather this week. It has really been difficult to stay in my office when I could see that beautiful sunshine outside...but I did! I know we are all extremely tired of the rain but so thankful we aren't flooded like Kentucky and Virginia. And we haven't had a foot of snow on the ground, just a nice winter.

This weekend don't forget to spring forward on your clocks by moving your clocks up one hour before you go to bed Saturday night! It's Daylight Saving Time! I know a lot of people do not like it but I am a huge fan. It's really nice to get home from work, eat supper and still have some daylight to go outside and enjoy. I am really a sunshine person and I love as much time as I can get to enjoy it.

And yes, that takes me back to my growing up days. My dad was a teacher/coach so the summertime was our vacation time for the most part. My parents would save up enough money to rent a beach house for one week in Fernandina. Let me tell you, my siblings and I made the most of that week. We had a blast running and playing. From the time we woke up and ate some breakfast, we were on the beach. We stayed out there until lunch time when Mama made us go up to the house. After lunch, we had to take a little rest. Then we got the signal that we could go back down to the beach and off we went. There was nothing on the beach for us but a sheet and a few towels lying out there. Some days we would take

long walks...taking several dips along the way. Other days it was competition sand castles or maybe a game of pepper (with a bat and ball) with Daddy. We also played volleyball a few times. The boys always liked to body surf by riding waves in with Daddy. I only tried that a couple of times...not for me!

When I was really young, I remember my parents renting a house with other families. The house was 3-stories and oh so cool. It was directly on the beach on the north end. Of course the other families had children too, so that only added to the fun. I think the older kids got to have one floor to themselves. Not really sure if that was fair but I didn't care back then. We actually did some seining with everyone. Now that I think about it, I can't believe my parents let me take part in that...it was really scary for me.

Memories are what life is made of. I'm so thankful for the special memories that I have. I was blessed to be born into a loving, godly family with lots of discipline and direction. Even though I am a grown woman (sometimes) I still go to my parents for advice. I pray that my children and grandchildren will always feel like they also can come to me at any time. It's never too late to start making memories especially the small ones. As we all know too well, life is very short and every day is precious. Let's all try to make the best of every day and make special memories!

Have a blessed week!

Dawn S. West

Hilliard

receiving just liquid as it would all be strained when you get it. I pray this rain doesn't continue but if it should I would appreciate any help you could provide. I know we're (company) up here in Hilliard a lot. We're just looking for some help."

"Currently, we are having some problems with levels at our WWTP. I'm also under the watchful eye of DEP and I sure don't want to mess that up," said Public Works Director Ritchie Rowe. "Once we get our levels right, I wouldn't mind trying one load. Then we could see what the levels do and go from there."

Farmer gave his information to Rowe to contact when he is ready.

Charlie Hahn, representing the First Baptist Church of Boulougne approached the podium. "We (FBC Boulougne) are asking permission to use the Town Hall property (open field beside Town Hall) for a Community Wide Easter Sunrise Service," said Hahn. "The service will begin at 7 a.m. with our church providing the PA system and tables for Danish & coffee. The service will be from 7- 8 a.m. and we will be off of the property with everything cleaned up by 10 a.m. We are inviting 19 churches to join us for some singing hymns and a service."

The council approved the request.

The council approved the contract termination of Building Inspector Larry Hogan and also approved the clerk to advertise for Contract Services.

Town Clerk Lisa Purvis asked the council if they wanted to do the Hilliard Clean Up. "If so, the Clean Up is scheduled for Saturday, April 10 and we will be teaming with Keep Nassau Beautiful," said Purvis. "We could still plan to pass out garbage bags and gloves to residents that want

Continued from page 1

to participate and provide a location (if they don't have one) to clean up. Our only concern right now is we haven't received confirmation from the garbage service about assisting with disposal. We won't do the lunch due to social distancing policy."

"I think if the Fire Department is okay with cooking the hamburgers and hot dogs, we could still have it and just have them box or bag up the meal for people to pick up," said Councilman Kenny Sims.

The council approved moving forward with the Clean Up once they find out more about the garbage disposal company's response.

Parks & Recreation Director Gabe Whittenburg advised the council that the basketball season went very well and currently the soccer and gymnastics has begun. The soccer program has 53 children signed up and the gymnastics program has 51 signed up. "It's always a great day at Hilliard Parks & Recreation," said Whittenburg with a smile!

The council approved supporting the National League of Cities Service Line Warranty Program. The program allows residents to sign up and pay monthly for services that might be needed should they have a problem with their water or sewer pipes. If they do have problems and they are covered, the program will pay for the repairs. Residents will be receiving more information from the company in the mail.

Council President John Beasley advised the council that he had received a letter of intent from the Town of Callahan to join with Hilliard for the fireworks display. A workshop has been scheduled for March 22 at 6 p.m. at the NE FL Fairgrounds to work out the details.

In the Kitchen...

Sour Cream Pound Cake

3 cups sugar
6 eggs, separated
1/4 teaspoon baking soda

3 cups plain flour
1/2 lb. butter
1/2 pint sour cream

Cream butter and sugar. Add yolks one at a time. Sift dry ingredients. Alternate adding flour and sour cream. Beat whites until stiff. Fold into batter. Bake at 300° for about 1 1/2 hours.

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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.

What's Worse, Opium or Wokeium?

Dear Editor,

If you've never had the chance to visit the Philadelphia "Badlands," I highly recommend you at least drive through. After you visit the Liberty Bell, holster up, leave your kids at the hotel and experience the joys of a fourth world country without the jet lag! Used needles are scattered on the sidewalks, people are passed out on steps and there is no shortage of trash and feces on the streets. You can imagine all the dark things that happen in this open opium market. DuckDuckGo search it if you want details.

In the last few years, I've noticed wokeium

overdoses have spiked. My wife was shopping for books for my son and several Dr. Seuss books are no longer on the shelves, the wokeium addicts stole them. The wokeium addicts beat up Aunt Jemima (actually Anna Harrington, who used her profits from Quaker Oats to open and run a large boarding house). Wokeium junkies tore down statues of American heroes but didn't even cash in on the scrap metal!

People on wokeium don't need our money to get high, they just need our culture. So what's worse, opium or wokeium?

Urban Fleming

Spring Lake

happenings incorrectly. The board has sought to share more information as some homeowners expressed the need, and a Voter Information packet arrived in homes this week. In addition, the Board will be hand-delivering this week the revised version of the covenants and governing documents (with suggestions included that were submitted by the homeowners) to each home, or mailed to some homes, as necessary.

There are basically two options for the residents of Spring Lake Estates with the official vote that will be held on Tuesday, March 30, 2021. Those that wish to continue to live in a planned unit development with deed restrictions as when they purchased their property, should vote Yes. The benefits of voting yes are to maintain the street lights in our community and the entrance drive, providing maintenance for the ponds, and the entrance lawn care maintained at our schedule. Those who do not see the benefit of an HOA, and no longer want any of those advantages, should vote 'no.' In that case, the covenants will remain expired, there

will be no requirement for the type of homes, or how they are maintained in the community. The current board members will step down and the county may eventually increase property taxes, with assessments to pay for the periodic lawn care, and maintaining the ponds as required by the state. Either way, we feel it is important for every homeowner to be able to vote their desire.

The issue of a property management company, if a majority vote yes, and our community continues with an HOA, it will always be up to the Board of Directors, as the bylaws of our community give the board the power to decide and hire, any help they need in this regard. This also ensures that the community will always continue to decide this issue, by their willingness to serve, and if so desired, do the work of the HOA themselves. Nothing has been or will be forced on Spring Lake Estates, everything is their choice.

We appreciate the opportunity to present the details of the recent happenings, in a factual manner.

Continued from page 1

JUST MY OPINION

Roger R. West

Well, what are you offended by today? Is it Dr. Seuss or Mr. Potato Head, maybe the Muppets or possibly Pepe La Pew? It does seem that in today's society everything offends the left. What offends me is the determination of the liberal left working so hard to ruin the country that I love. I am offended by their acts and ambition to eliminate fair and honest elections; I'm offended that they spend 1.9 trillion dollars of tax payer's money for supposed COVID relief, when only 9% of the money is actually being used to help individuals in distress. I'm offended that federal government employees receive an additional \$1400 a month if their children's school is still closed. In short, Liberal Socialist left wing radicals offend me. Can we cancel them like they are cancelling our culture? I can only wish so!

Speaking of liberalism, here is an interesting writing by an unknown author that a close friend sent me. I found these numbers VERY interesting. As reported by the CDC...Here are the US deaths by year and the change from the previous year. Year 2017: 2,818,503 Americans died; Year 2018: 2,839,205 deaths (20,702 more than the previous year 2017); Year 2019: 2,855,000 deaths (16,300 more than the previous year 2018).

The year of the pandemic...Year 2020: 2,913,144 deaths (57,641 more than the previous year 2019). BUT WAIT: There were zero deaths from Covid-19 during 2018 and 2019, and the jump from 2019 was only 57,641? I've been told that COVID is responsible now for 500,000 + deaths. Shouldn't the 2020 number be a lot higher? So the question becomes: How many people died of COVID and How many died (of other causes) WITH COVID?

Now...Food for thought: A very well-orchestrated plan or an unimaginable set of events that just fell into place with the United States front and center. You tell me! Scare people with a virus, force them to wear masks and place them in quarantine. Count the number of dead every second of every day, in every news headline. By the way, ninety-nine and eight-tenths of the people who get the virus recover. About one to two tenths of one percent, who get the virus, dies.

Most all of them had other medical problems. Did you catch that? Less than 1/2 of a percent die. Close businesses = 35,000,000+ instantly unemployed. Remove entertainment and prohibit recreation, closing parks, gyms, bars, restaurants, sports, etc. No dating. No touching. No weddings. No funerals. Isolate people. Dehumanize them. Close Temples and Churches - prohibit worship. Create a vacuum and let depression, anxiety, hopelessness and desperation set in.

Then... ignite hatred and civil unrest, creating a Civil War. Empty the prisons because of the virus and fill the streets with criminals. Send in Antifa and BLM to vandalize property, as if they were freedom fighters. Undermine the law, while calling it Peaceful Protest. Riot, Loot and Attack all Law Enforcement, but governments order a stand-down. Then...Defund Law Enforcement and abolish Police.

We are all being played by those who want to destroy America! This is how you destroy a Nation from within, and in very short order. Will it work? I guess that depends on you and me. Yes we are being snowballed from the left. We have one major stand, which is prayer.

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

RECREATION MEETING

The Nassau County Recreation Commission Meeting will be held Thursday, March 18 at 5:30 p.m. at the Nassau County Facilities Maintenance/Parks and Recreation Office, located at 45195 Musselwhite Rd., Callahan. If you have questions, please call (904) 530-6120 or (855) 534-8529. The public is invited.

EVENTS AROUND TOWN

The American Legion Auxillary Unit 401, 37405 Henry Smith Rd, Hilliard, is hosting **Breakfast with the Easter Bunny**, Sat., March 20 from 8-11 a.m. Children will receive breakfast, a basket and photo with the Bunny. Donations will be accepted.

QUIT SMOKING! Free Tools to Quit Tobacco Classes in Nassau County! Wed., March 24, from 10 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., Barnabas Center Fernandina, 1303 Jasmine Street, Suite 101. To register call, AHEC at (904) 482-0189.

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Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!

Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

Isaiah 43:16-19

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A few weeks ago, I was given the privilege to go fishing on a charter boat out of Mayport with a few friends. We spent the night in Ponte Vedra the night before. Early the next morning I went down to meet the group that was going fishing, and noticed that it was foggy. I was sure that by the time I got to the boat ramp and loaded on the boat that the fog would start to lift. We had three boats rented for the day. One of the three boats was late to arrive at the dock, so there were only two boats going out at this time. As we loaded on the boat I noticed that the fog appeared to be getting thicker. When we got underway the Captain was following the other boat at a close but safe distance. It wasn't long and I lost site of the shore because of the fog. Once we reached the Ocean, the swells and waves began to get larger. It was still foggy but by now we could see about 300 yards. Because of the fog and the waves, we had to go at a slower than normal pace. It was a long rough 20-mile trip out to the reef.

When we let down our lines the fish starting biting. Within a few minutes the lightning started popping close by and we had to move away from the thunderhead. After several attempts to outrun the storm, the Captain felt that we better call it a day and head back to shore. The visibility was still very restricted because of the fog. But because of the lightning and rain, the Captain made a bee-line for the shore. If it wasn't for the help of the sophisticated electronic equipment on that boat, I don't know how he could have found his way back to the inlet. Due to the rain and the fog you couldn't see more than 500 yards at the time. He had both of the 150hp motors wide open heading in the direction of the inlet. We were being tossed about pretty rough in the back of the boat and I began to think about a song that a group of men would sing in the church that I grew up in when I was just a teen. The song was called "The Light House".

In years past before all the new sophisticated electronic equipment was onboard these boats they were dependent on a compass and the Lighthouse. The Lighthouse gave the Captain a beacon of light to help show them the way safely into shore. In that song the words declared that Jesus is the Lighthouse. I want you to know that when things get foggy in your life and you're not sure which way to turn, you need to look to Jesus. Jesus is the Lighthouse. In Hebrews 12:2, the Bible tells us that we should, "Fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith." (NIV84)

Jesus is the one who can bring direction to your life when you have lost your way. Jesus is the one who can guide you through the storms of life. Jesus is the one who can help to calm your rough seas. Jesus is the one who can bring hope when you have lost all hope. If you are going through some rough waters and the way has become foggy, look for the Lighthouse and find Jesus. He loves you and He is there to help you through your troubled waters. I guess you figured it out by now, that God was good to us that day and He got us safely back to shore. If you will put your trust in Jesus He can do the same for you. Jesus is the Lighthouse!

Free Wednesday Community Dinners Continue

Dawn S. West

As a small business, I enjoy reaching out and helping where I can. Gordon and Becky Gresch, of Jacksonville, have been hosting the Wednesday Community dinners for over 12 years. "We just love this community, saw a need, and searched for a way that we could help," said the Gresches.

The dinners used to be held at the multi-purpose building at the fairgrounds for years every Wednesday night...fast forward to 2020 and the pandemic. All county buildings were closed to the public. Now realizing the need for food was even greater, the couple searched for another venue. Pastor Dan Search of Callahan First United Methodist Church stepped up to the plate and offered his social hall to do walk-up dinners, continuing on Wednesday nights.

The dinners, who are provided by Callahan Barbecue, are picked up, brought to the church, boxed and separated and given out beginning at 5 p.m. There are some sponsors for the dinners. We, the Westside Journal,

sponsor the dinner once a month. Sponsors may come and help give out the dinners or just go pay Callahan Barbecue for that night. Just being a part of such a special group of people is a wonderful feeling. Seeing the smiles on people's faces and hearing them being so thankful for a hot meal is so rewarding. It's such a small price to help someone out.

Sponsors are needed this year more than ever. It's really not hard. All you have to do is email Becky or call her. Maybe you only want to sponsor one time, every quarter, or once a month. She has a schedule and basically can put you where you want to be. There have been sponsors that sponsored in honor or memory of someone for their birthday, anniversary or as a Christmas gift. We are currently feeding around 200 people. It's a small cost...for a lot of good.

For more information call Becky at: 904-309-3735 or email her at: jaxgresch@gmail.com. Thank you in advance for your blessing!

CHURCH NEWS

Hilliard First Assembly of God will host Encounter Worship Circle on Sat., March 13 from 6-8 p.m. The church is located north of the Hilliard Winn Dixie at 550920 US Highway 1. For more information call 845-2642.

First Baptist Church of Boulougne will hold a Clothing Giveaway Sat., March 13 from 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. Men's, women's and children's clothing available. Everyone welcome, 28226 Church Dr., Hilliard.

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OREMC Announces Plans for 2021 Youth Tour

OREMC Sponsored Youth Tour Experience Open to High School Juniors

Typically this time each year, Okefenokee REMC is preparing to select delegates to represent the co-op as part of the National Washington Youth Tour Leadership Experience, with a week-long trip to Washington, D.C. COVID-19 sidelined last year's trip, and has cancelled it again for 2021. OREMC has decided to take a different approach.

High school juniors attending schools in OREMC's eight county service area: Brantley, Camden, Charlton, Glynn, Ware and Wayne counties in Georgia, and Baker and Nassau counties in Florida—are invited to apply for the 2021 OREMC Youth Tour. Six students will be selected to participate in a cultural heritage and history tour from June 14-18.

Planned activities for the trip include:

- Team Building through a tree-top trek at Callaway Gardens,
- Learning the roots of rural electrification by visiting Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Little White House in Warm Springs, Georgia,
- Exploring Stone Mountain,
- Sights, sounds, museums and monuments of Atlanta,
- Connecting with legislative representatives and tour of the Georgia State Capitol
- Atlanta Braves vs. Boston Red Sox baseball game and ballpark tour
- Providence Canyon

"While we understand the reasons for cancelling the national Youth Tour experience again this year, we felt we had a unique opportunity to provide a similar trip with a localized perspective," explains Dewayne Johns, OREMC Member Service Representative. "Georgia is the birthplace of rural electrification. How fortunate we are to be able to explore the roots of our shared cooperative experience with the next generation, as well as better understand government in action from those currently serving. A trip like this also exposes students to other natural wonders, historic and notable sites around the state, making history more "real" and not simply pictures in a book or something they have Googled."

Youth Tour information and the application are available online at oremc.com/youth-tour or you can request a copy at one of OREMC's offices in Nahunta, Kingsland and Hilliard, Florida. Completed applications must be submitted electronically, emailed, mailed or delivered to one of our OREMC offices by Friday, March 26, 2021. COVID-19 testing and adherence to all recommended safety protocols will be required to participate.

For more information or questions about the OREMC Youth Tour, please contact Member Services Representative Dewayne Johns at 800-262-5131 ext. 1143 or via email at youthprograms@oremc.com.

FSCJ Recognizes Dr. Kathy Burns

In honor of Women's History Month, the FSCJ Foundation celebrates, Dr. Kathy Burns, who serves as Nassau County Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Burns, an FSCJ alumna, is a recognized educational leader who has led the County to a 93% graduation rate, has made Nassau County a top four school district in the state and has led the county to an overall A-rating.



Women's History Month Author Talk

Celebrate Women's History month with a fun discussion with Southern author, Kay Dew Shostak. The discussion will be moderated by Professor Chris Twiggs and the topic will center around women and friendships, managing families, adjusting to new environments and other life situations. Kay is the author of the Chancey series and numerous other books, including *The Shrimp Did It*. Join this virtual event on Thursday, March 25 at 6 p.m. by visiting the library website, www.nassaureads.com and selecting the link.



Libraries Return to Regular Hours

The Nassau County Public System has resumed regular operating hours. Appointments are not necessary to enter the building. There are some health and safety precautions that are to be observed when entering a library. All customers and staff members must answer a brief COVID-19 screening questionnaire, wear a face covering at all times and stay socially distanced while in the building. Some areas are closed, and some furnishings have been relocated to guide residents and allow staff to clean and sanitize where possible. Some public computers that are appropriately distanced are available.

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904-530-6500, option 4
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Thursday 12 – 8 p.m.

Bryceville Branch

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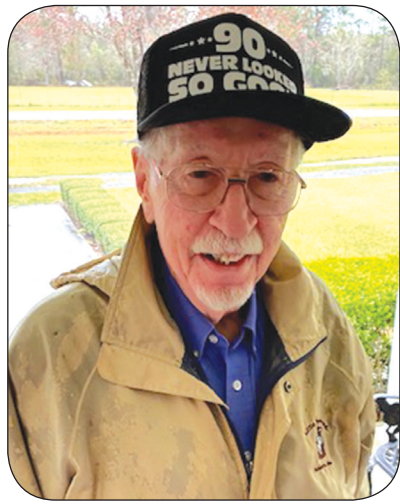
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New Beginnings and Milestones

Ray Seeley Celebrates 90th Birthday



Mr. Ray Seeley, longtime Hilliard resident, celebrated his 90th birthday March 5! Mr. Ray was born March 5, 1931 in Akron, Ohio. He moved his family to Florida in 1967. Mr. Ray, also known as the 'Voice of the Flashes' continues to announce the Flashes girls varsity softball games. He was the announcer for Flashes football for 33 years and also basketball where he called the game from 'Ray's Roost' which was named after him a few years ago.

Mr. Ray celebrated his special milestone with a family dinner with his children Friday night. He was surprised Saturday with a huge sign in his son's yard saying

Happy Birthday Grampy and a surprise party with his family and friends!

He has three children Karen Seeley, Ken (Peggy) Seeley and Eric Seeley; eight grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.



Lavern Meeks Celebrates 90th Birthday

Lavern Higginbotham Meeks celebrated her 90th birthday March 7. Mrs. Lavern is a longtime Callahan resident and is always willing to help out when she can. She volunteers almost every Wednesday night for the community dinners. She loves her church, Callahan First United Methodist Church and loves to laugh and have a good time. She is one special lady. She celebrated her special milestone in many ways. She enjoyed getting together with her friends and playing cards, which she loves, on Friday! She also celebrated by having a special dinner with her family at Red Lobster.

She wants to thank everyone for all the cards, phone calls and visits in celebration of her birthday. She received over 40 cards. "I am a very blessed woman and I love each and every one of you," said Lavern.



Retired Educators Hold Essay Contest

Emma Love Hardee student Lauren Wortham was awarded first place in this year's Nassau County Retired Educators Association Fifth Grade Essay Contest. She was recognized at her school and received a plaque, ribbon and gift card. Lauren's first place essay will now be entered into the District 5 Florida Retired Educator Association competition.



grandparents and a time she spent baking cookies with her grandmother. The essay demonstrated the love she has for her grandparents and how much she enjoys spending time with them.

The Fifth Grade Essay Contest was created by the FREA to encourage writing abilities in fifth grade students. It is a wonderful way for students to show

Reese Talbert from Emma Love Hardee was the second place winner.

Mackenzie Franklin from Callahan Intermediate earned third place. Mackenzie's essay was about her

appreciation and love for the important older people in their lives, be they grandparents or someone close who enhances their lives on a daily basis.

Be the Change Opens at Flea Market



Be the Change NE FL, in partnership with Florida Rainmakers and Joel Pace Piano and Music. Pace recently opened a promotional store at the Pecan Park Flea Market.

Be the Change is an outreach created by Joel Pace Piano and Music. It is a group of volunteers with a heart for humanity and a want to help their community in every way possible. Clothing and household goods donations are always accepted and used to raise funds, along with monetary donations, to provide clothing for the homeless and those in need. Be the Change also provides donations to local organizations to benefit those in our community. For more information visit their Facebook at: Be the Change NE FL Inc.

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TOWN OF CALLAHAN, FL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Callahan Town Council will have a Joint Meeting with the Nassau County School Board
Monday, March 15th at 6 pm
at Callahan Town Hall

542300 U.S. Hwy. 1 • Callahan, FL 32011

Interested persons may appear and be heard at the hearing.

Individuals with disabilities needing a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in the program or activity should contact the office of the Town Clerk at (904) 879-3801 or clerk@townofcallahan-fl.gov at least seventy-two hours in advance to request such accommodation.

If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the board, agency, or commission with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

Hengerer Signs with JAA



Congratulations to Hilliard Middle-Senior High School senior Brantley Hengerer who recently signed with Jacksonville Athletic Academy. Brantley will continue his education at FSCJ while playing football with JAA. He plans to eventually transfer and continue his athletic career. Brantley is the son of James and Holly Hengerer of Callahan.

Brantley, a multi-sport athlete, plays both football and baseball for Hilliard. Football Coach John Pate says of Brantley, "He is a consummate, team player. He did an outstanding job for us as our Sam linebacker and snapper."

Brantley has also managed to acquire 177 community service hours through Upward Basketball, Little League and organizations dealing with human trafficking. He is in the National Honor Society, Beta Club, FFA and Future Business Leaders of America where he recently won the District competition for Sports Management and Entertainment. Brantley is a whiz when it comes to sports statistics and can pull random sports trivia out of the air like it's common knowledge. He plans to pursue a career in Sports Journalism and get paid to talk about what he loves.



What does prayer mean to you? Prayer is not an expression of religion or denomination. Prayer restores hope, brings joy and renews self-worth.

Prayer Back in School is Essential!

Our children are suffering, both mentally and spiritually, starting at home, in our community, churches and schools. Prayer Back in School presents a new ideology that is a devotion necessary to advance our children.

We need people to sign the petition to return Prayer in School. The Westside Journal will be orchestrating the campaign with petitions for churches, residents, etc. to come by and pick them up, pass them around, and return completed petitions to our office by March 31, 2021. The petitions will be picked up and delivered to the Florida Secretary of State to be placed on the ballot. The Westside Journal office is located at: 450034 SR 200 (directly across from Callahan Dollar General), 879-4180.

Westside Regional Park Planning Meeting Held

About 30 residents attended the first in-person meeting concerning the Westside Regional Park last Thursday at the multi-purpose building at the fairgrounds. Planners from the Prosser Engineering firm were on hand to listen to public comment concerning the park. The property is located on US Highway 1 between Callahan and Hilliard just north of Pratt Siding Road. There are 110 acres of land for development however the engineers are looking to residents for the type of park they would want.

An online survey and questionnaire was completed and this was the first planning meeting. Designers hope to take the information from both the online and the in-person meeting and come up with a tentative design. They still welcome public input. From the online questions, people seemed to select more of open space for playing, an environmental learning area; and trails.

Keep watching for more information and another in-person meeting to see the conceptual design plan.

Extreme Outdoors Raffle Fundraiser



Win a Barnett Blackcat Recurve Bow! The bow is a \$285 value on Ebay. The fundraiser is to raise money to purchase equipment (archery, kayaks, ground blinds, BB guns, camping gear, etc.) for outdoor events. Purchase tickets at the Westside Journal office, 450034 SR 200, Callahan. Tickets are \$10 each or 3 tickets for \$25.

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Railroad Day Festival Planned for April 17

The West Nassau Historical Society has selected Saturday, April 17, for their signature fundraising Railroad Day Festival. The all-volunteer nonprofit's 16th Annual celebration is an all-day event held in and around the historic 1881 Callahan Train Depot and adjoining 1856 Florida Railroad bed. This year's event will include a commemoration of Florida's 200th anniversary of becoming a US territory. Other photos and maps of interest will be on display inside the museum of local history section of the 140-year old wooden train station.

The arts/crafts vendors and food vendors will be open from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. The kids' area will include Joel Pace hands-on music zoo and Hobo scavenger hunt. Local live entertainment will perform on the main depot stage. The Callahan Cruisers will host a Classic Car Show at Cochrane's Collision Center next door to the depot. Various citizens and sponsors will be honored and car show and contest winners announced during the

festivities. Antique engines, tractors, and scaled trains will be exhibited outside the depot while model train layouts will be on display inside the Depot Annex. This is an outdoor event so please bring your lawn chairs. COVID-19 guidelines that are in place during April will be followed.

The West Nassau Historical Society is an all-volunteer non-profit, tax exempt organization dedicated to the preservation of Nassau County's rich and diverse history and entrusted with the upkeep of the historic Callahan Train Depot. Donations to the 501c3 organization are tax deductible in accordance to current IRS rules. Sponsors and volunteers are needed to help make this year's festival a success. For additional information on the 2021 Railroad Day Festival visit www.wnhsfl.org or if you are interested in becoming a volunteer, vendor, sponsor, member, or donor call festival co-chairs John Hendricks or Emily Baumgartner at 904-879-3406.



CONNECTING THANKFUL AMERICANS WITH OUR NATION'S MEDAL OF HONOR HEROES ONE LETTER AT A TIME

The National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation is joining forces with Janine Stange for the 5th Annual Medal of Honor Mail Call.

Today, there are 69 living Medal of Honor recipients. Each has a powerful story and we owe each a debt of gratitude.

Help us show America's heroes how thankful we are for their service and sacrifice by writing a personal letter of thanks.

How to Participate in the Medal of Honor Mail Call:

1. Pick a living recipient from the database at www.MOHMuseum.org/MailCall2021
2. Research your recipient's service & learn about their life
3. Write your letter, speak from the heart, tell them what you learned & why it matters
4. Mail your letter by March 25th to:

National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation
Attn: (Insert Recipient's Name)
1905 East Randol Mill Road
Arlington, TX 76011

Groups of 20 or more should visit: www.janinestange.com/moh to be assigned a recipient.



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RETIRED FLAG REMINDER

Spring is coming! Is your American flag looking tattered and torn? Why not replace it today with a new one! Retired flags may be brought to the Westside Journal office for proper disposal.

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NOTICE FOR BIDS TOWN OF HILLIARD RIGHT-OF-WAY MOWING CONTRACT TOWN OF HILLIARD, FLORIDA

The Town of Hilliard is soliciting bids from landscape/mowing contractors to mow the Town's rights-of-way on a bi-weekly basis from April 15 through October 15 of each year. Sealed bids shall be received at the office of the Town Clerk at 15859 County Road 108, Hilliard Florida, 32046-6712 until 2:00 pm local time on March 18, 2021, at which time the Bids received will be publicly opened and read aloud.

Bids will be received for a single prime contract. Bids shall be on a unit price basis as indicated on the Bid Form. The Issuing Office for the Bidding Documents is the Town of Hilliard, 15859 CR 108, Hilliard, Florida 32046-6712, (904) 845-3555. Prospective Bidders may examine the Documents at the Issuing Office, Monday through Friday (excluding Holidays) and may obtain copies of the Bidding Documents free of charge from the Issuing Office. Owner shall not be responsible for full or partial sets of Bidding Documents, including Addenda, if any, obtained from sources other than the Issuing Office.

The Town of Hilliard is an equal Opportunity Employer and welcomes bids from MBE/WBE contractors.

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KIMBERLY N. AQUINO



Kimberly N. Aquino, 36, passed away Thursday, March 4, 2021, following a lengthy battle with cancer. Kimberly was born in Louisville, Kentucky and lived in the Jacksonville area most of her life. She was a graduate of Sandalwood High School and Florida State College of Jacksonville. She enjoyed gardening, music, crafts and animals.

Kimberly is survived by her husband Paulo Tomaz de Aquino; son David Tomaz Aquino; daughter Anabelle Marie Sheets; step-daughter Anna Clara Tomaz Alvez; mother Tina (Darrell) Edmonds; father Kevin (Robin) Stewart; step-father Charlie Hernden (Jan Snyder); Anabelle's father Curtis Sheets; brothers Kevin A. Stewart, Jordan Chemay and Jared Chemay; sisters Abby Hernden, Traci Edmonds (Jordan) Shannahan and Ashley Edmonds; and numerous nieces, nephews, extended family and friends.

A memorial service will be held Tuesday, March 16 at 1 p.m. at the Event Center at Peoples, 14165 N. Main Street, with Rev. Dr. Greg Frazier officiating.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Humane Society of Jacksonville.

Peoples Family Funeral Home is serving the Aquino Family.

ALTON DALE CREWS



Alton Dale Crews, 66, of Starke, passed away Monday, March 1, 2021 in Jacksonville. He was born April 25, 1954 in Folkston, Georgia to the late Chester Thomas Crews and Christine Geiger Crews. He retired after 25 years as a car hauler. He was a member of the Homeland Pentecostal Church where he had served as pastor for the last 17 years. In addition to his parents; he was preceded in

OBITUARIES

death by two brothers Dennis R. Crews and Jerry Mitchell Crews.

He is survived by his wife of 47 years, Kathy Lightsey Crews; two children Alton Crews, Jr. and Wendi Crews; two brothers Floyd T. (Linda) Crews and D. Steven Crews; a sister Sheila Crews Brandies; four grandchildren Tyler Ray Conner, Gavin Del Crews, Magnolia Dale Carroll and Hunter Ray Crews; and two great-grandchildren Brayden Isaac Carroll and Sawyer Isaiah Carroll.

The family received friends Friday, March 5 at the Homeland Pentecostal Church. A funeral service was held Saturday, March 6 at the church with Rev. James James officiating. Burial followed in Brickyard Cemetery.

Condolences may be expressed at www.shepardfh.com. Arrangements by Shepard-Roberson Funeral Home, Folkston.

DALTON DRAYTON EPTING



Dalton Drayton Epting, 80, passed away on February 25, 2021. He was a native of Northeast Florida, born in Hilliard and residing in Jacksonville most of his adult life.

He was an accomplished athlete, playing basketball with the Hilliard Flashes, followed by the Stetson Hatters and the Army Big Blue. He was quite a local celebrity in the late 50's/early 60's and was featured many times in the Florida Times Union and Jacksonville Journal as a pivotal player on the Hilliard team and as a North Florida All Star team player. As a Stetson Hatter (1958-1962), he earned the distinction of NAIA All American and still holds school records for the most free-throws attempted and made during his career. He achieved the

rank of 1st Lieutenant in the Army, serving in the Intelligence and Security Agency in Europe during the Vietnam War (1963-1965). During this time, he enjoyed playing with the Army Big Blue basketball team, providing a much-needed morale boost to the troops during a troubled time.

He also dedicated his career to excellence in education, serving the Duval County Public School System for over 40 years. His first assignment was at Wolfson High School the year it opened in 1965 as a mathematics teacher and basketball coach. At Wolfson, he had the pleasure of coaching a talented group of young people, many of whom went on to become leaders in the Jacksonville community. He held positions of Assistant Principal, Vice Principal and Principal at 6 local high schools including Terry Parker, Robert E. Lee, Paxon, Englewood, Fletcher and Mandarin. His proudest achievement was opening Mandarin High School as its first Principal. He retired from the Duval County Public School system in 1997 but was soon called back to teach advanced mathematics at Paxon School for Advanced Studies. He taught at Paxon through 2006, serving as the math department chair and being voted Teacher of the Year.

He loved the thrill of competition. He brought that passion to be the best to all of his endeavors: academics, basketball, track and field events, even recreational aspects of life. As a classroom teacher he wanted to excite his students about mathematics and the joy to be found in problem solving. As an administrator he sought to bring excitement and involvement to students and faculty alike to foster a positive atmosphere for all and of course have the "best high school" in Duval County.

Mr. Epting was preceded in death by his parents Robert and Zola Epting; brothers

Buddy and Billy Epting; and sister Bobbie Karam.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Carolyn; son Billy (Pam) Epting; daughter Claudia (Keith) Portell; grandsons Kyle (Danielle) Epting, Eric (Rachel) Epting, Scott Epting, Andrew Portell and Aaron Portell; great-grandchildren Mackenzie and Roen Epting; and brother Richard (Jane) Epting.

A celebration of Dalton's life will be held Saturday, March 13 at 11 a.m. at Hardage-Giddens Oaklawn Legacy Lodge. Any who would like to share stories of Dalton will be encouraged to do so. We do ask that you please wear a mask.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that a donation in Dalton's honor be made to the Hospice of your choosing.

THOMAS J. HIGGINBOTHAM



Thomas Jefferson Higginbotham, 92, of Callahan, went home to be with the Lord on March 4, 2021. He was born to the late Napoleon Broward and Hattie Ella Higginbotham in Hilliard. Thomas was a devoted member of Our Lady of Consolation Catholic Church. In his spare time, Thomas enjoyed gardening and fishing but most of all he loved spending time with his grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Margaret "Peggy" Higginbotham; daughter Deborah Elaine Keene; and grandson Thomas Martin Higginbotham.

Thomas is survived by his children Marty (Debbie) Higginbotham, Christine Keen and Tommy (Dawn) Higginbotham; grandchildren Jaime Purvis, Kristin (Scott) Dover, Samuel (Kaylie) Higginbotham, April (Bryan) Higginbotham, Emily (Matt) Shute, Jonathan (Amanda) Higginbotham and Andrew (Breanna) Higginbotham; 17 great-grandchildren; eight nieces; and 15 nephews.

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OBITUARIES

A celebration of Thomas's life was held Tuesday, March 9 at Our Lady of Consolation Catholic Church with Father Bui officiating. Interment followed in Jones Cemetery. The family received friends Monday, March 8 at the church.

Visit www.nassaufh.com to sign the family's guest book.

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

sister Lisa Hanson; brother-in-law Eric Hanson; niece Keena; nephew Nicholas; and his beloved pets Governor and Xena.

A funeral service was held Wednesday, March 10 at Nassau Funeral Home. Interment followed at Jones Cemetery. The family received friends prior to the service.

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

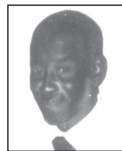
Visit www.nassaufh.com to sign the family's guest book.

CHARLES TROY HOYLE

Charles "Charlie" Troy Hoyle, 53, of Callahan, passed away on March 4, 2021. Charlie was born on September 22, 1967 in Jacksonville. Charlie graduated high school from Victory Christian Academy in 1985. He graduated college from Palm Beach Atlantic University with a degree in business and the Phoenix University with a Master's Degree. Charlie worked for UPS for 13 years. In his spare time, he enjoyed and was active in karate at CMAI Karate. He achieved his purple rank belt. Charlie also enjoyed ballroom dancing. He was preceded in death by his grandparents Charles and Amelia Bailey, Sr. and Arthur and Ann Hoyle; uncle Charles Hoyle Bailey, Jr.; wife Pam Hoyle; son David Hoyle.

Charlie leaves behind his mother, June Bailey Hoyle; father Robert Arthur Hoyle;

JOSEPH MELTON, JR.



Joseph Melton, Jr., 88, a resident of 11411 Armsdale Road, Jacksonville, made his transition on February 27, 2021. Remaining to cherish his precious memories are sisters and brothers-in-law; brothers and sisters-in-law; numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and friends among them, his special niece Marilyn Grimage.

A funeral service was held Saturday, March 6 at the Callahan Community Cemetery, Stratton Road. The family received friends Friday, March 5 at the Northside Chapel of Sarah Carter's Funeral Home.

Services Sarah L. Carter's Funeral Home, Jacksonville, (904) 765-4150.

Take Stock to Host Virtual Gala

Take Stock in Children of Nassau County (TSICN) is excited to announce they are hosting a virtual gala Saturday, March 13, 2021 at 7 p.m. in the evening. The "Home Grown Virtual Gala" is inspired by Take Stock's desire to support and showcase local businesses in Nassau County and feature talented and deserving Take Stock Nassau students, while keeping our guests safe as they participate from home. Ticketed guests will pick up a three-course meal from the popular Lagniappe restaurant and tune in to the program live-streamed from Amelia Community Theatre. The event will be hosted by the talented John Drew and guests will be entertained by dazzling performances from Take Stock students. The gala will include an online auction to bid on fun excursions, unique art and jewelry, and gift certificates to local restaurants and shops.

TSICN is a nonprofit organization working to stop the cycle of poverty for low-income students. TSICN

provides mentors and scholarships to academically promising students. The program begins in middle school, continues through high school, and supports students in college and career. Public and private donations help qualified Nassau County students achieve their dreams for a better future through their own hard work and Take Stock's support.

"Take Stock in Children Nassau County is focused on changing the lives of talented, deserving local students and helping them to achieve their dreams. We hope you will join us for this fun event and make a difference for these talented students," says Chair of the Board of Directors, Regina Lee. Help celebrate March as "Take Stock in Children" month by purchasing tickets to the virtual gala at www.takestocknassau.org. Your investment stays local and builds the rigorous standards of success for TSICN students.



FREE Quit Smoking Class
Wednesday, March 24
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. - Barnabas Center
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<p>Whole T-BONE STEAKS  \$4.95 lb. <small>Expires 3-16-21 WJ</small></p>	<p>1 lb. Can Claw CRAB MEAT  \$7.95 <small>Expires 3-16-21 WJ Limit 6 With this Coupon</small></p>	<p>Bushel (50 lb. Bag) OYSTERS  \$60.00 <small>Expires 3-16-21 WJ</small></p> <p>Party Bag \$20 Fresh Pints \$12.95</p>
<p>Fresh, Lean GROUND BEEF  \$2.49 lb. <small>Expires 3-16-21 WJ</small></p>	<p>3 lb. Pack GROUND CHICKEN  \$4.95 <small>Expires 3-16-21 WJ</small></p>	<p>Fresh Chicken LEG QUARTERS  10 lb. Bag \$5.00 <small>Expires 3-16-21 WJ Limit 2 With this Coupon</small></p>

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Eighth Grade Students Experience the World of Work

On Friday, February 19, 90 Nassau County students engaged in the district's "Career Shadow Day", an annual event coordinated by the Career Education Department. The opportunity was open to all Nassau County 8th grade students that registered and were willing to take on the follow-up assignment. Students shadowed and studied occupations of all types, including manufacturing, construction, hospitality, healthcare, technology, and business.

"This was our highest level of participation so far, so we really appreciate the work of our middle school administrators, guidance counselors, CTE staff, and the Nassau County Community for helping us get the word out," said Brent Lemond,

Director of Nassau County Career Education. "Most of all, we appreciate all of the participating businesses that were willing to host our students."

This marks the 4th year that the district has offered the 8th grade shadow day program.



Chef Ian Kitch, Henry McDuffy (YMS), Deven Cagle (HMSHS), Piper Kebert (FBMS), Brent Lemond (Career & Adult Ed.) at the Nassau Technical Career Center Culinary Arts Program



Hailey Hodges (HMSHS) at Cloud Accounting & Consulting



Asher Conway (YMS) with assisted living residents at Osprey Village



Ella Baker (CMS) & Danny VanSickle at Electrical Training Alliance of Jacksonville



Payton Suber (CMS), Brian Simmons (Instructor), Luke Bird (YMS) at the Nassau Technical Career Center Computer Hardware Program

National Passport Awareness Day!

The Fernandina Beach Branch Library has another reason to love your local library. We are celebrating National Passport Awareness Day! The Fernandina Beach Branch Library will have extended hours for passport application processing on Saturday, March 20, from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Appointments are strongly encouraged, but walk-ins are welcome!

For adults we can process first time applications, and renewals for passports if issued over 15 years ago. For minors 15 and under, we process first time AND ALL renewals. We process all applications for those 16 & 17 years old as well. Has your passport been lost or stolen? Did you have a name change? We can do these also. Don't forget, now you can get a passport card in addition to the book!

Getting your passport is easy and

can be done quickly if you are prepared! You will need to bring three items: 1) evidence of your identification such as your FL driver's license; 2) evidence of your citizenship, typically your birth certificate. The birth certificate must be the original or a certified copy and 3) two checks for payment. We are happy to take the photographs for you! Photos are \$10. We have all forms available at the library. Please stop in before-hand to pick up yours.

Phone lines too busy? Try our new online appointment calendar! Please check the library's website for details: www.nassaureads.com; or visit travel.state.gov. New! A dedicated phone line for passport appointments: 904-530-6508; or you can email us at: libraryinfo@nassaucountyfl.com. Coffee provided by Friends of the Fernandina Beach Branch Library.

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