



# WESTSIDE JOURNAL

Pray  
to God for  
Our Nation!

VOLUME XXI ISSUE 17

HOMETOWN PEOPLE...HOMETOWN NEWS

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2024

ENTER HIS GATES WITH THANKSGIVING  
AND HIS COURTS WITH PRAISE;  
GIVE THANKS TO HIM AND PRAISE HIS NAME.  
FOR THE LORD IS GOOD AND HIS LOVE ENDURES FOREVER;  
HIS FAITHFULNESS CONTINUES THROUGH ALL GENERATIONS.  
PSALM 100:4-5

## Happy Thanksgiving

### Community Thanksgiving Dinner Held



Dawn S. West

The Westside Senior Center was decorated up with 'all things Thanksgiving' Saturday, as they hosted the Concerned Citizens of Hilliard Community Thanksgiving luncheon. It was so wonderful to see so many people, young and old, having conversations with each other all over the room. We were blessed to snap a picture of the two oldest seniors present, Ms. Alice Jones (97) and Mr. Sylvester Ross (98).

The aroma from the kitchen was amazing as the 'Citizens' had cooked up a delicious meal for all to enjoy complete with dessert! Thank you to the Concerned Citizens of Hilliard for sponsoring this special community Thanksgiving feast each year!



### Two Planning & Zoning Seats Open in Hilliard

Dawn S. West

The Hilliard Town Council met Thursday night for their final meeting of November. The first order of business was the approval of Resolution 2024-20 which concerned adopting the Amended Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

The next order of business was the council's approval for the step-pay increase for town employee Phillip Bouchillon.

The following item concerned two of the Planning & Zoning Board member seats that are up for appointment for a 3-year term starting January 2025.

Resumes of all interested parties are to have their completed applications turned into Town Hall no later than Thursday, December 5. Applicants will be interviewed at the Thursday,

December 12th workshop. The town council is responsible for appointing Planning & Zoning Board Members.

The next item concerned the approval of the Town of Hilliard donation to the Nassau County Public Library System for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, to the Friends of the Hilliard Library in the amount of \$8,000.

See 'Hilliard' on page 2



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I must say, Thanksgiving is by far my most favorite time of the year! I heard someone say on the radio, Thanksgiving is wonderful because you don't have the pressure of bringing gifts! I guess I've never thought about it that way, but it certainly makes sense. I love the fall with all the colors of gold, brown and orange! And of course, I love pumpkins! They are so beautiful. I am down to two now, as my squirrels have decided they enjoy scratching them, making a hole and eating the inside! Those crazy squirrels are going to be the death of me!

When talking with my parents on the phone, I told them as Thanksgiving draws near, I'm reminded of the trip I took to Arkansas with my children (shown to the right). We were going there to celebrate my grandparents' (Daddy's parents) 70th wedding anniversary in 1997. The goal was to try to have the entire family at the celebration and everyone actually made it! My children and I flew out of Jacksonville on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, like the one million other travelers that day! Actually, it wasn't too bad except Jenny was terrified to fly, as this was their first flight! It was a little hectic at the airport but all went well. We arrived and I guess Daddy picked us up at the airport.

We, I think just our family, stayed at a little place on the lake. We went and purchased some of the Thanksgiving

Hilliard

In the following item, the council approved AECOM, payable for Project Name: Obstruction Removal North & South Runway at the Hilliard Airpark in the amount of \$3,130.25. This is a part of a 100% grant funded project.

The final item concerned the approval of Mittauer & Associates, Inc., payable for Project Name: WWTP Permit Renewal in the amount of \$1,520.

In closing comments, Mayor John

A Word From the Publisher



dinner items and ate at the lake. It was certainly a memorable Thanksgiving! My grandparents' celebration was held that Saturday at their church. Dad had three siblings, and of those, they had five children. We had five children in our group and then mix in a few spouses and grandchildren, we had quite a crowd. It certainly made my grandparents happy and what an honor it was for us! Not sure how we all were able to make the trip (financially) but God provided. Everyone left on Sunday with lots of memories. It was a special trip!

Thanksgiving is a time to be thankful, of course. In one of the devotionals I enjoy each morning it

shares the importance of being thankful. Life is tough and times are hard. It's so easy to get inside of your head and think of all the bad. The reading shared to start each day with an 'Attitude of Gratitude' and things will go a lot smoother. When you just try to think of three things each morning that you are thankful for, it's really hard to stop at three.

God has been so good to me. Just when I think I am overloaded with thoughts and problems...it's then that God places a 40-year-old mother, of four young children, in my path who is fighting the worse type of cancer there is, yet she continues to move forward with treatment through it all. I'm so

thankful that she shared, that God has her and that's what she's leaning on. The promises of God. Now what problem did I have? It certainly puts things (me) in perspective.

I have so much to be thankful for and as I look back in my life, I can see the many times God has carried me when I was done. Our God has promised He will never leave us or forsake us. His love is everlasting. I can't count the times I've went from bad to worse, happy to sad, etc. Our God never changes. He is the same today and tomorrow. He is always waiting to hear from his children. I pray God's blessings upon your lives now and through this Thanksgiving season. If you have not accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, make today the day. That will certainly bring the 'Thanks' to your Thanksgiving! Be saved today!

Happy Thanksgiving!

Dawn S. West

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.

Thank You!

Dear Editor,

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to our wonderful community that has reached out to help us during this difficult time of losing our home in a fire. We're so thankful that no one was hurt. We were overwhelmed with the donations that were collected on our behalf. Please continue to pray for us as we continue to rebuild our lives. Again, we appreciate your support, your continued patronage to our shop, Hilliard Donuts & Kolaches, and your kind words.

Thank you,  
J.R. and Jan Sum

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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

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AL #5766



DECEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Callahan Town Meeting 7 p.m.	3 Westside Republicans 6 p.m. Hilliard Comm. Center NAMI Family Support 6:30 - 8 p.m. Alachua Club, Fern. Bch.	4 Callahan Garden Club 10 a.m. Free Community Dinner 5 p.m. Callahan Methodist Church Parents of Addicted Loved Ones (PAL) 6 p.m. Hilliard Library	5 Food Giveaway @Callahan First Baptist 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Hilliard Town Meeting 7 p.m.	6 NAMI Support 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Fernandina Council on Aging	7  10:45 a.m.
8	9 WN Genealogical Society 10:30 a.m. Lions Club Country Star Quilt Guild 7 p.m. Anchor Church Ch. 154 Order of Eastern Star 7:30 pm @ Masonic Lodge	10 Gardening Club of Hilliard 11 a.m. Bethany Episcopal Church Torah Club 9 a.m. & 6:30 p.m. Callahan Methodist Church Callahan Lions Club 7 p.m.	11 NAMI Support 12-1:30 p.m. Hilliard Journey Church Free Community Dinner 5 p.m. Callahan Methodist Church PAL 6 p.m. Hilliard Library	12	13 NAMI Support 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Fernandina Council on Aging American Legion & Auxiliary Post 401 Hilliard 7 p.m. Country Star Quilt Guild Sit-N-Sew 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Callahan Masonic Lodge	14
15	16 Westside Optimists 7 p.m. Lions Club Sons of Confederate Veterans 7 p.m. The Pig	17 Torah Club 9 a.m. & 6:30 p.m. Callahan Methodist Church NARFE Nat'l Active & Retired Federal Employees 11 a.m. The Pig NAMI Family Support 6:30 - 8 p.m. Alachua Club, Fern. Bch.	18 Free Community Dinner 5 p.m. Callahan Methodist Church PAL 6 p.m. Hilliard Library	19 Food Giveaway @Callahan First Baptist 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. Hilliard Town Meeting 7 p.m.	20 NAMI Support 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Council on Aging	21
22	23 Ch. 154 Order of Eastern Star 7:30 pm @ Masonic Lodge NC Beekeepers Association 7 p.m. Multipurpose Building	24 Torah Club 9 a.m. & 6:30 p.m. Callahan Methodist Church Callahan Lions Club 7 p.m.	25  Christmas Day	26 Historical Society 6:30 p.m. @ Depot	27 NAMI Support 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Fernandina Council on Aging Country Star Quilt Guild Sit-N-Sew 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Callahan Masonic Lodge	28 Town of Hilliard Golf Cart Parade 6 p.m.
29	30	31 Torah Club 9 a.m. & 6:30 p.m. Callahan Methodist Church	Remember the Reason for the Season 			

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JUST MY OPINION

Roger R. West

While strolling the internet I came across a News4Jax article titled, “Community in Crisis: Proclamation issued, vigil held in Nassau County for Transgender Day of Remembrance.” My first thought was, how disgusting for Nassau County, my second thought was the same as the first. Of course, all of this was occurring in the city of Fernandina Beach. The once quant beach town we all loved with the old putt-putt golf course and skating rink at Main Beach, the nostalgic Centre Street, the Marina Restaurant and many more down-home qualities. That was when A1A was a two-lane road and a draw bridge across the Intercoastal Waterway.

As the years passed, the home town feeling diminished as more and more people moved in from the north. Nassau County’s secret haven had been discovered by corporate America, starting with Amelia Island Plantation and followed by Investment Firm after Investment Firm. The entire island has been transformed into a liberal sanctuary, except for the Island natives that are desperately trying to maintain as much of the history and life-style they once treasured.

Last Tuesday, the Fernandina Beach City Commission issued a proclamation for “Transgender Day of Remembrance.” Nationally, the week of November 13-19 is “Transgender Awareness Week” with the week

ending with “Transgender Day of Remembrance” on November 20th. Yes, we have an entire month to adorn Gay Pride and now we have a week set aside for Transgenders. Kudos to the mayor and vice mayor for refusing to read the memorandum! However, one of the commissioners proudly stood before the attendees and read it.

The group, “Fernandina Beach Pride” sponsored the events of the week including the Transgender Day of Remembrance vigil at Central Park. The vigil supported by clergy and members of Memorial United Methodist Church honored eight transgender and gender-nonbinary individuals whose lives were taken over the past eight years. All eight lived within an eight-hour drive from Fernandina Beach. I wonder how long it took them to find out that! Across the entire world there were 360 trans that were either killed or committed suicide. Trans make up less than 1% of the population, but they get a week set aside for their delusional lives they live in their make-believe world.

We have weeks and months set aside for just about every cause and ethnicity except one. I still wait on a week dedicated to the white male, after all, it was the white males that forged this land we call America. Of course that would be racist. That sent me back to my first thought, disgusting.

As always...that’s just my opinion!

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For more information, contact Town Hall at 904-845-3555.



# The General Letters

*Pastor Benjie Loyd, River Road Baptist Church, Hilliard*



In today’s article, we will overview the fourth group of New Testament writings. So far, we have covered the Gospels, Acts, and Paul’s Letters. The fourth group of writings in the New Testament are called the General Letters or the Catholic Letters. In understanding the grouping of these letters, Catholic is not referring to the Roman Catholic Church. The word Catholic means universal and these general letters are given to the universal church. The general letters begin with Hebrews and conclude the book of Jude. The name is a catchall phrase that refers to all of the New Testament letters that were not written by Paul. Like the letters of Paul, these letters are not in chronological order, they are loosely arranged in order of length. Hebrews is the only letter in the New Testament that is anonymous. James and Jude were written by Jesus’ brothers and the letters of Peter and John were written by the two of Jesus’ apostles. Let’s now turn to our overview of the content of these letters.

- **Hebrews:** Hebrews is an anonymous letter that is considered a brief word of exhortation (13:22) that exhorts the early Christians to stay faithful to Christ. The message of the book of Hebrews is the supremacy of Christ over Judaism and all things. Hebrews reveals the superiority Christ’s person (1-4:13), the superiority of Christ’s priesthood (4:14-7), the superiority of Christ’s covenant (8-10), and the superiority of the life of faith (11-13).
- **James:** The book of James is earliest book in the New Testament and was written by Jesus’ biological brother. There is not really discernable outline of the book. James is similar to the Old Testament book of Proverbs and has many connections with Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. The overall message of the book of James is the authentic of faith. The most famous passage in the book is faith without works is dead (2:14-26).
- **The Letters of 1 and 2 Peter:** The books of Peter were written by the Apostle Peter and his purpose for writing was to encourage all Christians to stay faithful to Christ in suffering. The two letters are companions. First Peter prepares the church to stay faithful against opposition from outside of the church. In 1 Peter, we are reminded that we are exiles and aliens in this world (1:1-2). Then Peter gives two responses to the suffering that exiles are to expect in a fallen world. We are to understand our lives in light of the Gospel (1:3-2:12) and we are to maintain vibrant witness to the culture (2:11-4:19). In Second Peter, the church is prepared for dealing with adversity on the inside of the church. Peter reminds his audience that we have everything we need in the Gospel (1:1-21), the church has real enemies (2-3:10), and we have real hope (3:11-18).
- **The Letters of John:** The three books of John were written by John the Apostle. First John was written to expose false teaching and to assure Christians that they have eternal life (1 John 5:13). Throughout First John, three cycles of tests are

# Nassau Art Show in January

The West Nassau Historical Society is excited to announce they have expanded their 13th annual Nassau Art at the Callahan Depot (NACD) art show and sale to three days: January 23-25, 2025. The show is FREE and open to the public; come and vote your favorite artwork. Awards and gifts will be given to the top winners in three categories: painting, photography and 3D art. Deadline for artists entries is noon, Friday, January 17, 2025.



- The Nassau Art show will be held inside the historic Callahan Train Depot, 45383 Dixie Avenue.
- Opening reception and meet and greet the artists: Thursday, January 23, 2025, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
  - Kids' Award Presentation & evening ice cream reception: Friday, January 24, 2025, 2 – 7 p.m.
  - Adult division Award Ceremony: Saturday, January 25, 2025, 10 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
- Visit the Society’s website: [www.wnhsfl.org](http://www.wnhsfl.org) for entry applications and art show information, or call 904-879-3406, or message us on Facebook.

The NACD Art Show portion showcases art from adult artists residing within Nassau County, plus students attending a Nassau County middle or senior high school. The quaint 144-year-old railroad station and museum is the ideal venue for local artists to display their works, while giving the public a chance to view the treasure trove of historic photos and artifacts inside the depot museum.

The art sale portion is open during all three days of the NACD show and for visitors to purchase beautifully-created art from the participating artists. Since a nominal portion of all purchases go to the host Historical Society, this art sale is the perfect opportunity for the public to support both our local artists and our history.

The West Nassau Historical Society is a registered all-volunteer 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to preserving and promoting Nassau County’s history and culture. We are an active member of Nassau County Arts and Culture, a county-wide organization dedicated to promoting the arts.

given to assure believers of the reality of eternal life. The tests involve the head (what we know), the heart (what we love), and the hands test (what we do). The book begins with a prologue (1:1-4), the first cycle of tests cover (1:5-2:27), the second cycle spans (2:28-3:10), and the third cycle covers (4:7-5:21). Second John speaks of the relationship between truth and love and Third John speaks joy killers and joy producers in the church.

- **Jude:** The book Jude was written by Jesus’ brother and prepares the church to deal with false teachers and false teaching. Jude shares many similarities with the book of 2 Peter. Jude passionately urges us to contend for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints (3-4).

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# 2050 Vision Plan Meeting Held

Marci McCosh

I was very surprised to be one of only a handful of people to attend the November 19, 2025 Vision Plan Committee meeting. This is a very important plan that will shape the course for the county, its residents, and surrounding areas. I was shocked that before the consultants even presented to the Planning and Zoning Committee, who is acting as an Advisory Council, that the county made a recommendation of Scenario 3: The Big Picture, which is the largest and most densely developed plan of the three options.

We have around 90,000 people living in Nassau County and have had less than 10% provide input on what we want for the future of Nassau County. Those that have replied identified priority areas as 1) Preserving Natural Resources, 2) Managing Growth, 3) Outdoor Spaces, 4) Safety, and 5) Arts/Culture. The predominant concern in the surveys is consistently growth and yet, the staff recommendation is the EXACT OPPOSITE of what the public's stated desire, while they are wanting to maximize growth.

Are hired staff dictating the county's future or the people in it? Growth at the "biggest" level will mean less natural and open spaces, risks for natural resources, and statistically speaking more people and lower income housing brings crime, not safety. During public comment, I reminded them that we cannot put toothpaste back in a tube and urged discretion. One member replied that he trusted county staff had done their homework. May I remind you of the many lawsuits currently against our county and local developers by homeowners fighting tooth and nail for protection? Has the county always done right by you?

Staff were quick to point out that the Vision Plan is just a jumping off point and infrastructure and more specific plans come later. But the truth is this is the catalyst for those things. I have been told frequently when pushing back on zoning or land use, "it is in

the Comp Plan so that is how it has to be." Some have boldly acknowledged the 2030 Comp Plan is not particularly well written, but we have continued to adhere to it as the gospel. This Plan is an opportunity to get it right at the front end and not have to try to work around and fix things at the back. True, it's a jumping off point, but a critical one, and the fact that the Planning Department tried to downplay is concerning.

Once wheels are put into motion progress tends to go bigger not smaller. No developer has ever come and said, "I'd like to do fewer houses here," or "Let's downgrade this zoning." Instead, on the island we have a pulp mill who now wants an ethanol plant. In Callahan we had a small campground, water park, and high-end restaurant that will now become a 150-unit RV park with no amenities for the community. Crawford Diamond promised warehousing and light industrial, they now want heavy industrial and trains. Growth by its very definition goes larger, not smaller. This is the vision that future residents, commissioners, and staff will reflect on and say, "That's what the people wanted," but is it? Scenario 3 is most assuredly not what the people want because while it is big, it puts us at risk of bigger. We could settle for Scenario 2, and then selectively go bigger where growth allows. We can allow them to select the biggest and then expect smaller; that is not how this works.

How do staff justify recommending what the people do not want? Why have we paid consultants and analysts only to ignore the data? I have urged Planning and Zoning members as well as Commissioners to think long and hard before they cast a vote on our future.

To participate in the Growth Scenario Survey Link, residents need to make sure and visit the website and do the survey: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/nassaugrowthscenarios](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/nassaugrowthscenarios).

To learn more about the Nassau Florida Vision Plan and ways to get involved, please visit: [www.nassaufl2050.com](http://www.nassaufl2050.com).

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# New Beginnings and Milestones

## Tripp Farmer Turner



Matthew and Rylie Turner, of Callahan, are proud to announce the birth of their son Tripp Farmer Turner. Tripp was born September 9, 2024 at 1:58 p.m. at UF Health North in Jacksonville. He weighed 8 pounds 4 ounces and measured 21 inches.

Paternal grandparents are Jeff and Tami Turner of Crossville, Tennessee.

Maternal grandparents are Adam and Jodie Pierce of Callahan.

Tripp was welcomed home by his big sister Annie!



## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday Annie Malynn Turner

Annie Malynn Turner celebrated her first birthday August 8. She was born August 8, 2023. She celebrated her special day with a party held in her honor with lots of family and friends joining in the fun! Her proud parents are Matthew and Rylie Turner of Callahan.

Proud grandparents are Adam and Jodie Pierce of Callahan; and Jeff and Tammy Turner of Crossville, Tennessee.

## Benjamin Wade Farmer Staunches

Wyatt and Erin Staunches, of St. Marys, Georgia, are proud to announce the birth of their son Benjamin Wade Farmer Staunches. Benjamin was born September 7, 2024 at 1:42 a.m. at UF Health North in Jacksonville. He weighed 6 pounds 12 ounces and measured 20 ½ inches.

Paternal grandparents are Chris and Hope Staunches of Queensbury, New York.

Maternal grandparents are Adam and Jodie Pierce of Callahan.

Proud great-grandparents are Linda Robertson; Phil Pierce; and Zana Furnia.



## West Nassau High School's Parm Signs with Webber

Recently, West Nassau High School senior Avery Parm signed her letter of intent to play soccer at Webber University. Avery is super excited about the opportunity to first of all continue playing soccer, and second about continuing her education. Currently, Avery plays soccer, softball, and competes in cross country and weightlifting. You might think she is an over achiever! Shortly following graduation, she will move to Webber in June, as soccer conditioning begins soon after! "I met Avery while coaching soccer at Callahan Middle School when she played in 6th grade. That was the first time she ever kicked a soccer ball," said WNHS Soccer Coach Shannon Hartley. "Today she is signing a letter of intent to play soccer in college. I'm so proud of her. She's also a great student!"



Avery plans to work towards a career in Pediatric Nursing or even Trauma Pediatrics. Her proud parents are Joey and Jessie Parm of Hilliard and she has a younger brother Jacob! Good luck, Avery!

## Callahan Christmas

The Town of Callahan is asking for all business owners to decorate your business during the Christmas holidays. Have fun and be creative! We hope to light up our Town for all to see and feel the joy of Christmas all through our streets!

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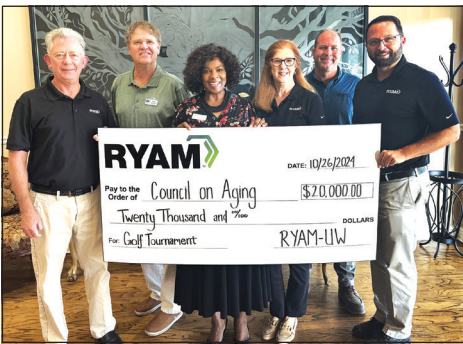


# NCCOA and RYAM Raise Funds to Support Local Senior Programs

Nassau County Council on Aging (NCCOA) is proud to have recently partnered with Rayonier Advanced Materials (RYAM) to raise essential funds supporting programs and services for Nassau County seniors. A local manufacturer with an 85-year history in our community, RYAM has been a long-time partner, providing meaningful support to NCCOA and its mission to enhance the lives of local older adults and their families.

As part of this commitment, RYAM’s 18th Annual Charity Golf Tournament raised a record-breaking \$100,000, a portion of which is dedicated to NCCOA’s senior-focused programs. RYAM representatives visited NCCOA’s Janice Ancrum Senior Life Center in Fernandina Beach, November 12, to present a generous contribution. The funds will go toward vital services such as meal programs, transportation and wellness initiatives, which play a critical role in supporting seniors’ independence and quality of life across the county. “We are incredibly grateful for RYAM’s unwavering partnership and their dedication to our mission,” said Janice Ancrum, President & CEO, NCCOA. “This contribution strengthens our ability to provide essential services that enhance the quality of life for seniors in Nassau County. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with RYAM to benefit our community.”

“For 85 years, RYAM has been committed to supporting the people and organizations that make our community



stronger,” said Mark Homans, Senior Director, Project Management, RYAM. “We’re proud of how this event has grown over the years and excited to build on our relationships with partners such as NCCOA who are making a real difference in the community.”

This year marked NCCOA’s first participation in RYAM’s charity golf tournament, a longstanding community tradition that has supported local nonprofits for 18 years. Other beneficiaries from this year’s tournament include United Way of Northeast Florida, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Florida, Elm Street Sportsman Association and The Barnabas Center, all of which play a vital role in supporting Nassau County. “The tournament provided an opportunity to strengthen essential partnerships that will have a lasting impact in Fernandina Beach,” said Jeff Scott, Engineering Manager, RYAM, and long-time tournament organizer. “We’ve built great momentum through this event, and I’m excited about the deeper connections we’re fostering within the community—both on and off the golf course.”

# Surrency Receives Donation to Continue His Mission

Dawn S. West

Luke Surrency is a senior at West Nassau High School that has been very active in helping others...the homeless. “This is always something I have wanted to do, so I have worked hard to try to plan what I want to take and how to make it work smoothly,” said Luke. “I have partnered with the Be the Change Organization and learned a lot. Mr. Joel Pace has greatly helped me.”

Luke has a full schedule of classes, including college courses, is a member of the Honor Society and Key Club and probably more. He also fits in cross country running with WNHS, which is over now but soon track will begin and he plans to continue with that sport! In his spare time, he has worked to try to take peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, chips and a drink to downtown Jacksonville to serve the homeless. His friends in the Key Club that recently joined him to make about 175 PB&J sandwiches. He and a few friends go down on a Saturday, team with the Be the Change group and hand out sandwiches. “It’s just amazing to me what a sandwich means to many people,” added Luke. “I’m truly humbled by the people as they are thoughtful and kind.”

Most times they are near the Clara White Mission and also move to the Sulzbacher Center to distribute food and some clothes. The Pace group



usually provides a few clothing items for the people to choose from and we have sandwiches, chips, water and sometimes a cookie or treat. “I am thankful for my church, Bryceville

First Baptist Church, that has also helped. The ladies provide hygiene bags for people for each trip,” said Luke. “The Storehouse (Callahan FBC) also provides us a place to make sandwiches, if we need to and also provides some oranges or apples if they have them. Be the Change donates chips and snacks. It’s great teamwork!”

Last Tuesday, Luke was honored to receive a \$750 grant donation to continue his mission, from the Kiwanis State Fund. The Westside (Jacksonville) Kiwanis Club was the sponsor, who assisted WNHS with writing the grant. Mr. Bert Wasmund and David Christian, representing the Westside Kiwanis Club, presented Luke with the donation. “We are so happy to present you with this check,” said Wasmund. “It’s always great to help students continue their missions in helping others.”

Following graduation, Luke plans to continue his education at Florida State University to work on achieving his Mechanical Engineering plan. His proud parents are William and Teresa Surrency of Bryceville. Congratulations Luke and good luck in your future endeavors!

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Take Stock in Children Nassau is a nonprofit mentoring, college success, and college scholarship organization dedicated to transforming Nassau County, one student at a time. The TSIC

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for 30 minutes at school, whenever the time works for you. You are asked to meet weekly but it’s okay to miss occasionally. Mentors are desperately needed for west side students at West Nassau High School and Hilliard Middle-Senior High School. Mentors do not have to do homework or tutor you are simply a friend to talk to! It’s quite rewarding. It doesn’t cost anything except your time and it can’t hurt to check into the program.

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**HELEN JOYCE BENNETT**  
Helen Joyce Bennett, 88, of the River Road Community, passed away peacefully November 10, 2024, at home. She was born November 7, 1936, in Tangipahoa Parish, Hammond, Louisiana, to Joe Henry Jordan and Maybelle Bignor.

Helen enjoyed her career in healthcare as a Licensed Nurse working at Baptist Medical Center and moving into a Professional Office practice with Dr.'s. Mackinzie Manson and Jack Barr MD's for nearly 20 years of service. In addition to her career, she was a loving wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Helen's kindness and nurturing spirit impacted all that knew her. She was active in the Eastern Star and the River Road Fire Department, alongside her husband. She was a longtime member of River Road Baptist Church.

Helen was preceded in death by her parents; and sisters Emerine, Jodie, and half-sister Marilyn.

Helen is survived by her husband of 68 years, Leonard James Bennett; son James E. and Lisa Bennett; grandson Michael C. (Heather) Bennett; great-grandsons Ethan and Jaxon; her sister Grace; and many extended family members and friends.

A celebration of life service will be at a later date.

**THOMAS HAYES**  
Thomas Hayes, of Callahan, passed away November 20, 2024.

A Homegoing Ceremony will be held Saturday, November 30 at 10 a.m. at the First Baptist Church in Callahan. Immediately following the service, a Celebration of Life Service will be held at The Barn at Cottonwood Ranch, 452039 Old Dixie Highway, Callahan, until 3 p.m.

# OBITUARIES

**LISA RACHELLE HILLIARD**  
Lisa Rachelle Hilliard, 59, of Live Oak, passed away peacefully November 13, 2024, at Haven Suwannee Valley Hospice Care Center in Lake City. She was born October 9, 1965, in Blackshear, Georgia to Thomas Branch and Linda Chancey. Known for her warm and nurturing nature, Lisa was a loving mother and grandmother who cherished every moment spent with her grandchildren.

Lisa's personality was marked by her love for life's simple pleasures. She had a passion for flowers, frequently visited yard sales, and enjoyed shopping trips. These activities brought her immense joy and allowed her to connect with her community and nature. Lisa will be remembered for her kindness, her dedication to her family, and her ability to light up a room with her presence. She leaves behind a legacy of love and cherished memories that will be fondly remembered by all who knew her. Lisa is preceded in death by her mother Linda Chancey Medsker; husband Ralph Hilliard; and son Joshua Howell.

Lisa leaves behind her son Brandon Smith (Amanda Gans); daughter Mandy Thornton; father David (Terri) Chancey; mom Linda (Richard) Thornton; brother Kevin (Kristen) Chancey; sisters Karen and Sherri; grandchildren Liam, Lacie, Lakai, Emma and Nathan.

Arrangements by Nassau Funeral Home, 541720 US-1, Callahan, 904-879-1770.

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

**Obituaries are published free of charge.**  
They may be emailed to [news@westsidejournal.net](mailto:news@westsidejournal.net).

**ELEANOR BARBARA MARTIN**  
Eleanor Barbara Martin, 84, of Callahan, passed away November 21, 2024 at her home. She was born April 24, 1940 in Halstad, Minnesota, to the late Einer Phillip Wolseth and Goldie Lucinda Wood Wolseth. She retired as a Mortgage Broker and later enjoyed working in a number of retail clothing stores. In addition to her parents; she was preceded in death by her son Keith Swisher; and a sister Carmen Cacciotti.

She is survived by her daughter Crystal Weller and her fiancé Greg Williams; her son and daughter-in-law Mike and Dawn Martin; sister Linda Hellerud; four grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren; and a number of nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life service will be held in the summer.

Condolences may be expressed at [www.srfhcallahan@gmail.com](http://www.srfhcallahan@gmail.com).

Arrangements by Shepard-Roberson Funeral Home, Callahan Chapel, 617365 Brandies Avenue.

**THAIS "TY" ZELM**  
Thais "Ty" Boone Zelm, 79, of Bryceville, passed away Sunday, November 17, 2024, at the Warner Center in Fernandina Beach. She was born January 10, 1945, in Stockton, Alabama, to the late Herbert Cecil Boone and Annie Catrett Boone. She served as secretary of New Life Baptist Church in St. George, for a number of years. In addition to her parents; she was preceded in death by her son John Matkin; and a sister Dorothy Key.

She is survived by her son and daughter-in-law Jason and Chasidy Bulger; two grandchildren Brittany Michelle Matkin and Jayce Bulger; and one great-grandchild.

A celebration of life service was held Thursday, November 21 at New Life Baptist Church, 1058 Wheeler Street, St. George with Pastor James Conner and Pastor Forrest Elledge officiating.

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

Arrangements by Shepard-Roberson Funeral Home Callahan Chapel; 617365 Brandies Avenue, Callahan, 904-879-2336.

## 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 free and confidential meetings are held on Mondays at 6 p.m. at the Northeast Florida Baptist Association in Yulee; and Wednesdays at 6 p.m. at the Hilliard Library. Come and learn new ways to deal with your loved ones and gain a better understanding of addiction.

For more information, call (904) 703-7847 or email at [tashiad210@gmail.com](mailto:tashiad210@gmail.com). There is hope!

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# Time To Give T.H.A.N.K.S.

Yvette Outler

I take great comfort in knowing that God is in control. He never leaves His throne. He never says, “Uh Oh.” He knows what He is doing and why He is doing what He is doing. He is God. Leaning on this certain truth gives me peace. Out of that peace is an overflow of “THANKS” that resonates in my soul knowing I have a God in whom I can fully trust, lean on, and cry out to in times of trouble.

God does not leave us hanging. He is fully present in our lives. The coolest thing about these thoughts is apart from the Lord we cannot truly be thankful. But because of Him we can be! Here is a faith-filled acronym of T. H. A. N. K. S.

T – Trust: Give yourself permission to not have to have it all figured out. God will place your feet where they need to go when it is time to move forward. At the same time lean in to trust Him. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make straight your paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6

H – Hope: Supernatural “Hope” is the breath we inhale as we believe. God stirs inside of us hope so that we fully rely on Him and not ourselves. He gives it. He orchestrates it. He sets it on fire inside of you. “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:13

A – Answers: I do not have to have all the answers right at this very moment. I can rest in the fact that God does. I am grateful that we have an answering

God. God speaks. Sometimes it is still a small voice. Sometimes it is a strong, definitive yes or no. Sometimes it is not right now. He is not a secret keeper. He is a will revealer. “I sought the Lord, and he answered me, He delivered me from all my fears.” Psalm 34:4

N – New Mercies: Each day you wake there are new mercies waiting to meet you. Our new mercies today will be completely enough to satisfy the need of today. I am thankful that God sloshes mercy into my life, as needed. At times it is a sprinkle, and other times it is a tidal wave that knocks me down.

“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end, they are new every morning, great is your faithfulness.” Lamentations 3:22-23

K – Kindness: A smile or opening a door cost nothing. Kindness is a gift we give away. The most generous kind of kindness is forgiveness. It is for us not them. We become free. We look at little more like Christ when we do. “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32

S – Salvation: Heaven is real. Hell is real. Upon your very last breath you will spend eternity in one of these places. God deeply desires a relationship with you right now that will last through all eternity. Give God room to be God in your life. He will do far better with it than you could have ever imagined or dreamt. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

T.H.A.N.K.S. and be blessed!

Thankful  
and  
blessed

# OREMC Honored for No Loss Time Incidents

Okefenoke REMC was recently recognized for one year without a lost time injury in the workplace or in the field, an impressive accomplishment given the complexity and inherent dangers of working with electricity in the utility industry. “Our business inevitably involves risks from energized wires, working high off the ground and moving heavy items like poles – not to mention being out in storms to restore power,” said David Smith, OREMC’s Director of Loss Control, Safety & Training. “We strive every day to minimize these dangers by investing time and attention to safety measures and careful work practices.”

To acknowledge the co-op’s robust safety program, OREMC received the No Lost Time Award during Georgia EMC’s annual meeting on November 11 in Savannah.

Today, electric utility employees, including those with OREMC, work in a much safer environment due to advances in equipment and safety techniques along with stricter safety regulations and oversight, all of which



leads to a significant reduction in accidents and time away from work for many employees.

According to Georgia EMC’s Vice President of Training & Safety Harry Reeves, due to the nature of the electricity business, it is a challenge to avoid an injury no matter how many safety practices are in place, making it especially noteworthy when EMCs such as OREMC earn this award.

“It’s a testament to all our employees and our highly-skilled linemen,” says Smith. “Our success and safety depend on all of us following carefully designed safety precautions to ensure we return home to our families at the end of each work day.”



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# Zooming In Photography 4-H Club News



Emma DeRamus, Reporter

On October 26, our Nassau County 4-H Zooming in Photography Club traveled to the Okefenokee Swamp for our first photo shoot of the year and were treated to a beautiful experience. The Okefenokee gets its name from the Native American term ‘Land of the Trembling Earth’ because of the swamp’s vast peat deposits, that seem stable, but shift when walked upon.

We learned the importance of lighting in photos such as front, side, back and diffused lighting. Though it seems self-explanatory and fairly simple, lighting is a crucial part in photography. We, club members, learned it can be both an ally and a foe in getting perfect photos. By visiting the swamp in the early hours, we were able to practice using



these various lighting techniques. We also learned ways to stabilize our cameras for maximum clarity: 1: The use of a tripod; and 2: Elbow-stabilizing techniques. We took a 90-minute boat ride down the channels of the largest Blackwater swamp in the world and we learned about the vast flora and fauna of the region. We saw various swamp inhabitants: birds, alligators, turtles and numerous trees and plants that call the swamp home.

The following are comments from others thoughts from our trip: "Today I used my mom's phone to take lots of pictures. I know how to zoom in with it but that's it. I haven't been on a boat ride before and loved everything I saw," said G. Berry.

"I learned that in photography, back lighting is when light comes from behind the subject, resulting in a dark, shadowy subject. Also, if you don't have a tripod, breathing slowly



and steadily when taking a photo will help it not turn out blurry," said A. Jolley. "Finally, if there is a lack of forest fires in the swamp, the peat forests would overtake the area and the animals that like the swamp will leave."

"When we rode the boat, I took lots of photos of alligators," said K. Strickland.

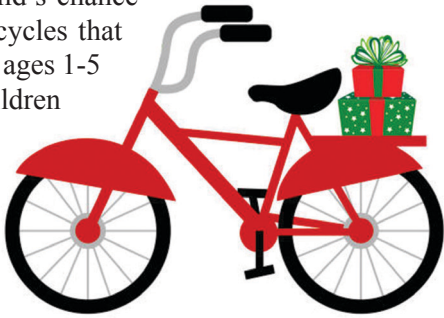
The Zooming In Photography 4-H Club meets the last Saturday of each month. For more information, contact Laura Marino, Advisor, at 904-530-6353 or email: llaroche@ufl.edu.



## CHRISTMAS BIKE Giveaway

The Town of Callahan is doing a Christmas Bicycle Giveaway! There is a Santa Box located in the lobby of Callahan Town Hall to register with your name and number and drop it in the box for your child’s chance to win a bicycle. There will be four (4) bicycles that will be given away. Two will be for children ages 1-5 years old; and the other two will be for children ages 6-12 years old. You must register your child no later than Wednesday, December 18 at 3 p.m.

The drawing for the bicycle will be held Wednesday, December 18 at 4 p.m. at Callahan Town Hall.





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