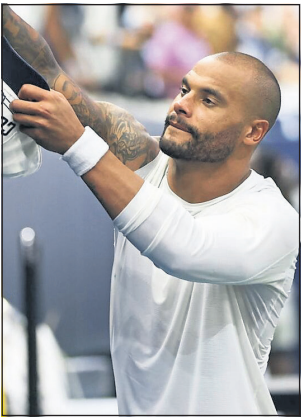




NATION Page A7
Gaza City becomes the focus of famine and a military offensive

SPORTS Page A6
Cowboys can't escape that Groundhog Day feeling



CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE

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Crystal River council to consider street vacation near Hunter Springs

By **MIKE ARNOLD**
Chronicle Reporter

The Crystal River City Council will meet at 5:30 p.m. Monday, Aug. 25, at the Citrus County Welcome Center, 915 N. Suncoast Blvd., to consider a series of property and planning measures.

Hunter Springs street vacation

Two items are tied to property owner Edward Sinz. Council

will consider a proposal to vacate a portion of Northeast First Avenue – known locally as “C Street” – between Northeast Second Street and Hunter Springs. The city’s Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval earlier this month. The closure would remove about 0.61 acres of right-of-way from public use.

Sinz, who owns five parcels east of Hunter Springs Park, has also requested a development agreement with the city to address increased traffic along

A portion of Northeast First Avenue, which runs along the left side of this photo, just out of frame, will be the topic of discussion Monday at the Crystal River City Council meeting for a street vacation.

Matthew Beck / Chronicle photo editor

Northeast First Avenue since the park’s redesign. His plan calls for vacating the street while deeding half of the land back to the city and installing buffers such as a six-foot fence,

See **STREET**, page A2



IN BRIEF

Free series for dementia caregivers

Taking care of loved ones who have any type of dementia can turn everyone’s world upside down. However, understanding the disease process and gaining information on successful caregiving practices can bring life back to a manageable, positive place. This is the goal of the Savvy Caregiver program presented by Elder Options.

The seven-week series is being held at Grace Methodist Church in Homosassa. Sessions will run on Thursdays, 1-3 p.m. from Sept. 11 thru Oct. 16. There is no fee; however, participants need to pre-register by contacting instructor Teri Lonon at lonont@agingresources.org or Karen Kline, Grace Methodist Church, at karen@neilkline.org.

Savvy Caregiver is nationally recognized as a leading dementia caregiver training program. People learn strategies that can improve day-to-day time with a dementia patient, as well as taking care of themselves as caregivers. With the majority of dementia care being provided by family members or friends, Savvy Caregiver programs offer strategies that can be adapted for a variety of situations.

Programs are designed to provide the most relevant dementia knowledge and caregiver skills from leading universities and health care providers. They have been proven to decrease caregiver stress and depression, while increasing a sense of competence and confidence in the caregiver role.

Course content focuses on understanding the many types of dementia diseases, the cognitive process (thinking/learning/remembering/using language), the role of confusion in dementia, identifying a person’s current stage of disease, design and support of daily activities, decision-making at every stage, practicing newly learned skills and caregiver self-care.

Grace Methodist Church is at 5030 S. Memorial Drive in Homosassa.

Help place wreaths at Bushnell cemetery

The public is invited to support the efforts of Aaron A. Weaver Military Order of the Purple Heart, Chapter 776 to assist in reaching the goal of Florida National Cemetery to place a wreath at each of the 60,000 graves in Bushnell on Dec. 13 by sponsoring wreaths.

We have Veterans Day in the fall and Memorial Day in the spring, but our service members sacrifice their time and safety every single day of the year to preserve our freedoms. In many homes, there is an empty seat for one who is serving or one who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

Wreaths Across America Day on Dec. 13 has been set aside to lay wreaths at the places where we remember, honor and teach

On ‘the train’ toward a musical career



Photos special to the Chronicle

Maijah Taejon sings the “Star Spangled Banner” at Tampa Tarpons’ games.

Local woman pursues dream as professional singer

By **MARGO WILSON**
Chronicle correspondent

She wants to be a pop star.

Known as Maijah Taejon to her approximately 3,000 social media followers, Maijah Taejon Franklin, 28, who grew up in Crystal River, has a smooth, sweet voice like maple syrup drizzled over French toast. She’s on a quest to make herself a household name.

The first trick is learning how to pronounce her name – think “Maya Tayzhone.”

The second is recognizing that this substitute teacher by day is the voice on weekends performing the “Star Spangled Banner” at Tampa Tarpons or Clearwater Threshers baseball games, singing original songs at St. Johns Tavern in Crystal River, or occupying radio airwaves with her new cut, “We Can.”

Since she was about 4, Taejon has dreamed of dominating stages as do performers like Mariah Carey, the late Aretha Franklin, Demi Lovato, Kelly Clarkson, Adele or the late Whitney Houston.

“When I first listened to Mariah, I said, ‘I want to do that,’” Taejon said.

She said she’s three notes away

from having the same vocal range as five-octave Carey.

Taejon said she started learning to sing by listening to her father, Donny Franklin, who was a singer in the 1990s.

Her mother, Syretta Scriven, also sang.

“I just mimicked them, and I tried to do what the divas were doing,” Taejon said.

She’s the oldest sister to four younger sisters and a younger brother.

“I was an only child for eight or nine years,” she said. “I was confident. I felt I could sing and was reinforced by people who told me I could sing.”

She performed with her father a few times.

“I’ve always pretty much known I would perform,” she said.

By the time she was 9, she was writing lyrics in a journal.

However, when she was in middle school, she took a slight detour.

“I thought I might like to be a lawyer,” she said. “I like to argue.” But performing won out.

The budding performer

Taejon has been seen on local stages since elementary school at Crystal River Primary, followed



Maijah Taejon’s new release is “We Can,” which can be heard on YouTube, sonarmuse.org, Apple Music, and other streaming platforms.

by performances at Seven Rivers Christian School, from which she graduated. She said Seven Rivers had two theatrical productions each semester, and she participated. She also sang the national anthem at Seven Rivers.

Moreover, she was a cheerleader and played softball. She said that as a cheerleader, she was proud to be a base supporter of some of the other girls, who flew up to more aerial positions.

“I did weightlifting. I was strong,” she said.

She’s the second cousin of Sam

See **SINGER**, page A8

CCSO makes arrests for 2021 homicide

STAFF REPORT

Nearly four years after a young Hernando man was found shot to death in a crashed pickup truck, the Citrus County Sheriff’s Office has announced arrests in the case.

Early last week, investigators with the CCSO Major Crimes Unit obtained arrest warrants for Thomas Paul Smith, 29, and Dmitry William Growdon, 29. Both men face charges of third-degree murder with a firearm, criminal conspiracy while armed with a firearm, and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon in connection with the 2021 killing of 20-year-old Marquel “Manny” Murray.

On Sept. 9, 2021, deputies responded to a report of a vehicle crash shortly after 1 a.m. on North Alabaster Drive in Hernando. When they arrived, they found a 2020 Dodge pickup truck off the road and riddled with bullet holes. Inside was Murray, the sole occupant, dead from multiple gunshot wounds.

See **ARRESTS**, page A8



Smith and Growdon

Commissioner Kinnard: Pirates Cove price too high



Matthew Beck / Chronicle photo editor

The Pirates Cove property at the west end of Ozello Trail in Crystal River is about 3.6 acres on 750 feet of water frontage and includes about a half-acre of commercial land and abuts an existing park and boat ramp.

County offered \$1.17M to buy property; seller countered at \$1.5 million

By **MICHAEL D. BATES**
Chronicle Reporter

The county’s proposed purchase of Pirates Cove in Ozello will be back in the spotlight when commissioners meet Tuesday.

The county offered \$1.17 million to buy Pirates Cove, but the seller countered at \$1.5 million – a price Commissioner Jeff Kinnard said he will not support.



KINNARD

the property is larger than first believed.

On Tuesday, commissioners will decide whether to stick with their original offer, accept the counter or make a new proposal.

County commissioners have

See **COVE**, page A3

SINGER

From page A1

Franklin Jr., a safety with the Denver Broncos and formerly with the Carolina Panthers, who’s a Citrus High School graduate and first cousin of Taejon’s father.

Taejon majored in theater and minored in music and voice at Florida A&M University, from which she graduated. It was while she was in college that she first took voice lessons. She also studied music production at Full Sail University.

She said that she at first thought she’d like to be a Broadway actress but has decided to focus on music. The theatrical roles should evolve from that.

Her day jobs

But like most young artists, Taejon needs a day job to support her creative pursuits.

She’s a substitute teacher with the Citrus County School District, often teaching at Crystal River Middle School and sometimes in Lecanto.

She also is a driver for Walmart’s Spark grocery delivery program and sometimes for Uber Eats. During the summer, she’s been doing remote grading of standardized tests.

Thus, she’s busy and could use a little help carving out a niche for herself in the music business.

Enter Joseph E. Jones, a former Los Angeles sound technician and movie driver. He’s done sound work for Paula Abdul, Sweet Sensations, and other well-known musicians.

Jones’ sister sells real estate locally and so does Taejon’s father. Taejon’s dad asked Jones’ sister



Singer Maijah Taejon and her manager, Joseph E. Jones, took some time out recently to discuss Taejon’s budding music career and grab a bite at La Casita Mexican Restaurant in Crystal River.

if Jones would listen to Taejon’s album, “My Emotions.”

As Jones tells it, “I’ve worked on over 250 videos and have been around top musicians. I have an ear for vocalists. When I heard the CD, I knew her potential. Her voice is unique. She can hit the notes. She can do harmonies. She can project.”

Taejon said she would describe her voice as “sweet, powerful, soft and sincere.”

Many of her songs are love songs and perhaps are best characterized as “pop,” although she said, “I don’t have a genre. I like pop and R&B, show tunes, punk, a little of everything. It’s multi-genre.”

She has written all the songs on her CD, and said she’s covered only two songs from other people.

However, she is excited to have recently received permission to cover Adele’s “Remedy.”

She also is being pursued by the

Pittsburgh Pirates, the New York Yankees and other sports teams to sing the national anthem.

She enjoys composing her own music and lyrics. She explained that when she’s working on a new song, she’ll use her keyboard to pluck out chords and then will work on chord progressions.

Promoting her musical dreams

She’ll figure out a lead vocal track and then lay down the main track at a studio. Most recently, she’s been working with Andy Freeman, a musician with the band Baron von Steele, who has a home studio in Ocala.

The two met at the Guitar Center in Ocala and “he fell in love with her voice,” Jones said.

Once Freeman gets the main vocal track in shape, he’ll send a copy to Taejon and she’ll record a backup track in her room.

Then, it’s back to Freeman for



Maijah Taejon’s new song, “One Thing This Christmas,” should be heard soon on area radio stations. Find her on all major social media platforms. Photos special to the Chronicle

more adjustments.

Jones is promoting Taejon’s single, “We Can,” as well as the single, “One Thing This Christmas,” and is trying to get radio play.

He said he believes radio still is a valuable way for new artists to break into the music business. Nevertheless, Taejon’s “We Can,” and songs from her “My Emotions” album can be found on YouTube and other streaming platforms.

Jones is looking for bands who are seeking opening acts, as well as for “a proper booking agent.” He can be reached at 818-749-6050 or Soundspeed123@outlook.com.

For the moment, Taejon can be seen in person singing the national anthem at Tarpons’ and Threshers’ games. The fourth Thursday of each month, she sings four original songs at St. Johns Tavern in Crystal River.

Taejon said she would like to ask potential fans to “listen to my music. Give it a chance. Just take a moment. Check me out and follow my social media.” (She can be found on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok.)

Where does she hope to wind up and what does she hope to accomplish?

“Honestly, everything,” she said. She listed her goals – be a pop star. Be a Broadway and/or film star. She would particularly enjoy acting in horror movies, she said.

“I have a good scream.”

She’d like to host “Saturday Night Live.”

And at the end of her career, she’d like people to think, “I love music. I would hope people can resonate with what I can share with the world.”

But for now, she advises, “Get on the train before it leaves the hometown. I’m on a journey.”

ARRESTS

From page A1

Detectives immediately treated the case as a homi-

cide. Over time, investigators gathered physical and digital evidence, along with conducting numerous interviews, which CCSO said eventually led them to establish proba-

ble cause for the arrests.

Growdon is already in state custody on unrelated charges and will now be held on the Citrus warrant. Smith was arrested Thurs-

day night during a traffic stop and booked into the Citrus County Detention Facility without bond.

Sheriff’s officials said the arrests show the agency’s

commitment to solving violent crimes, no matter how much time passes.

“No amount of time can diminish the importance of justice,” Sgt. Thomas Dowl-

ing said. “Our hearts go out to the Murray family, who have been waiting for this moment. This arrest proves that criminals can’t hide forever.”

SEVEN DAY FORECAST

Exclusive daily forecast by:



TODAY & TOMORROW MORNING
High: 87° **Low:** 74°
humid with scattered thunderstorms.

MONDAY & TUESDAY MORNING
High: 89° **Low:** 72°
humid with scattered thunderstorms.

TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY MORNING
High: 91° **Low:** 71°
Party sunny with a chance of pop-up thunderstorms.

WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY MORNING
High: 91° **Low:** 71°
Party sunny with a chance of pop-up thunderstorms.

THURSDAY & FRIDAY MORNING
High: 90° **Low:** 71°
Party sunny with a chance of pop-up thunderstorms.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY MORNING
High: 89° **Low:** 70°
Party sunny with a chance of pop-up thunderstorms.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY MORNING
High: 89° **Low:** 71°
Party sunny with a chance of pop-up thunderstorms.

FLORIDA TEMPERATURES

City	H	L	F'cast	City	H	L	F'cast
Daytona Bch.	88	75	sh	Miami	92	81	sh
Fort Lauderdale	93	79	sh	Ocala	87	74	sh
Fort Myers	90	80	t	Orlando	89	75	sh
Gainesville	88	73	sh	Pensacola	91	75	t
Homestead	93	77	t	Sarasota	89	79	t
Jacksonville	88	75	sh	Tallahassee	89	72	t
Key West	91	84	s	Tampa	90	79	t
Lakeland	89	75	t	Vero Beach	91	75	sh
Melbourne	92	76	sh	W. Palm Bch.	88	80	sh

MARINE OUTLOOK

Today: West winds 10 to 15 knots. Seas 2 to 3 feet. Wave detail: west 2 feet at 4 seconds. Bay and inland waters a moderate chop. Numerous showers and scattered thunderstorms. Tonight: West winds 10 to 15 knots. Seas 2 to 3 feet.

Gulf water temperature

84°

Taken at Crystal River

LAKE LEVELS

Location	SAT	FRI	Full
Withlacoochee at Holder	27.79	27.77	34.64
Tsala Apopka-Hernando	35.76	35.74	38.66
Tsala Apopka-Inverness	36.82	36.81	39.73
Tsala Apopka-Floral City	38.56	38.49	41.37

Levels reported in feet above sea level. Flood stage for lakes are based on 2.33-year flood, the mean-annual flood which has a 43-percent chance of being equalled or exceeded in any one year. This data is obtained from the Southwest Florida Water Management District and is subject to revision. In no event will the District or the United States Geological Survey be liable for any damages arising out of the use of this data. If you have any questions you should contact the Hydrological Data Section at (352) 796-7211.

THE NATION

0s 10s 20s 30s 40s 50s 60s 70s 80s 90s 100s 110s

FORECAST FOR 3:00 P.M. Sunday

City	SAT	SUN	City	SAT	SUN	
H	L	Pcp.	H	L	Pcp.	
Albany	82	59	0.00	81	64	t
Albuquerque	84	72	0.00	91	69	mc
Asheville	73	69	Trace	81	59	sh
Atlanta	77	73	0.02	84	67	sh
Atlantic City	79	55	0.00	81	70	mc
Austin	87	72	0.00	87	74	s
Baltimore	81	64	0.00	88	72	mc
Billings	68	53	0.00	81	51	pc
Birmingham	88	73	0.00	87	66	sh
Boise	84	66	0.00	96	69	mc
Boston	84	63	0.00	83	68	pc
Buffalo	77	61	0.00	75	59	sh
Burlington, VT	86	60	0.00	80	64	sh
Charleston, SC	77	73	3.58	86	73	sh
Charleston, WV	86	66	0.00	86	59	sh
Charlotte	80	70	0.00	86	67	pc
Chicago	83	69	0.00	74	56	s
Cincinnati	82	62	0.00	81	56	s
Cleveland	79	66	0.00	76	60	pc
Columbia, SC	79	72	Trace	88	69	mc
Columbus, OH	84	65	0.00	81	55	pc
Concord, NH	86	50	0.00	84	63	pc
Dallas	93	74	0.00	97	77	s
Denver	71	58	Trace	80	59	sh
Des Moines	73	64	0.08	74	49	s
Detroit	75	68	Trace	76	56	pc
El Paso	88	73	0.00	94	73	s
Evansville, IN	82	61	0.00	82	56	s
Harrisburg	81	59	0.00	82	65	sh
Hartford	82	55	0.00	83	66	pc
Houston	91	75	0.01	95	77	s
Indianapolis	79	64	0.00	77	56	s
Kansas City	79	70	0.00	79	60	s
Las Vegas	99	88	0.00	104	87	t
Little Rock	87	69	0.00	94	66	s
Los Angeles	77	70	0.00	91	69	s
Louisville	82	64	0.00	83	58	s
Memphis	87	69	0.00	91	63	s
Milwaukee	77	68	0.08	71	51	s
Minneapolis	71	59	0.08	66	49	pc
Mobile	85	73	Trace	94	75	s
Montgomery	83	74	0.20	90	70	sh
Nashville	86	73	0.04	90	59	pc
New Orleans	88	80	0.00	92	77	t
New York City	80	67	0.00	91	69	pc
Norfolk	80	61	0.00	83	69	t
Oklahoma City	88	70	0.00	90	67	pc
Omaha	73	64	0.10	76	53	pc
Palm Springs	99	90	Trace	108	89	t
Philadelphia	81	64	0.00	84	69	mc
Phoenix	100	91	Trace	110	90	s
Pittsburgh	81	66	0.00	84	60	sh
Portland, ME	81	54	Trace	73	65	pc
Portland, OR	79	65	0.00	99	69	pc
Providence, RI	81	60	0.00	80	67	mc
Raleigh	79	66	0.00	86	69	mc
Rapid City	69	57	0.00	74	51	s
Reno	81	68	0.00	88	61	sh
Rochester, NY	79	60	0.00	80	59	sh
Sacramento	75	63	0.00	98	63	s
Salt Lake City	90	73	0.00	92	68	t
San Antonio	91	75	0.00	96	75	s
San Diego	75	69	0.00	81	69	pc
San Francisco	64	55	0.00	69	58	pc
Savannah	83	75	1.99	86	73	sh
Seattle	75	63	0.00	89	65	pc
Spokane	79	57	0.00	97	61	pc
St. Louis	82	61	0.00	80	57	s
St. Ste Marie	70	64	1.24	62	51	sh
Syracuse	85	57	0.00	81	60	sh
Topeka	79	70	Trace	78	59	pc
Washington	82	64	0.00	86	67	mc

YESTERDAY'S NATIONAL HIGH & LOW

HIGH 108, Furnace Creek, Calif.

LOW 34, Stanley, Idaho

WORLD CITIES

CITY	SAT H/L/SKY	SUN H/L/SKY
Acapulco	82/74/mc	80/66/mc
Amsterdam	69/53/s	London 78/58/cl
Athens	90/81/s	Madrid 92/69/s
Beijing	83/70/cl	Mexico City 74/60/ra
Berlin	66/51/ra	Montreal 75/64/ra
Bermuda	82/80/ra	Moscow 64/49/ra
Cairo	105/79/s	Paris 80/56/s
Calgary	77/49/s	Rio 76/71/mc
Havana	93/77/ra	Rome 84/70/s
Hong Kong	88/81/ra	Sydney 66/56/ra
Jerusalem	90/70/s	Tokyo 96/86/s
		Toronto 78/64/pc
		Warsaw 69/50/ra

KEY TO CONDITIONS: c=cloudy; f=fog; h=haze; mc=mostly cloudy; pc=partly cloudy; ra=rain; rs=rain/snow; s=sunny; sh=showers; sm=smoke; sn=snow; ss=snow showers; t=thunderstorms

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Who's in charge:
Trina MurphyPublisher, 352-563-3232
Jim GouvellisExecutive Editor, 352-564-2930
Trista StokesAdvertising Director, 352-564-2946
Jackie LyttonCirculation Director, 352-563-5655
John MurphyDigital Leader, 352-563-3255

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The Chronicle is printed in part on recycled newspaper.

www.chronicleonline.com
Published every Sunday through Saturday
By Citrus Publishing LLC

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
Citrus County Chronicle
2519 HIGHWAY 44 WEST,
INVERNESS, FL 34453

PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID AT INVERNESS, FL
SECOND CLASS PERMIT #114280