

# Police Briefs

## Melrose man dies in Tuesday crash

MELROSE – A Melrose man died Tuesday night in a one-vehicle crash on County Road 219 in Putnam County, according to the Florida Highway Patrol.

FHP said 41-year-old Drew Blair was driving a 2003 Toyota Tundra southbound on CR 219 near Hall Road when the truck ran off the road to the right onto the grassy shoulder at 10:21 p.m. Investigators said Blair overcorrected to the left, which caused the truck to rotate clockwise, cross the southbound and northbound lanes of CR 219.

FHP said the left rear of the truck collided with a tree and the front of the truck would then later collide with the same tree and keep rotating before coming to rest on the shoulder facing the southeast.

FHP said a passenger in Blair's truck, 25-year-old Zachariah Strawder of Melrose, was seriously injured and was transported to UF Health Shands Hospital in Gainesville. A second passenger, five-year-old Lacy Strawder, also of Melrose, received minor injuries.

## 20-year-old charged with writing threats to kill

MIDDLEBURG – A 20-year-old Middleburg resident faces a felony charge of sending written threats to kill or do bodily harm to others after a brief investigation.

The Clay County Sheriff's Office arrested Nicholas Alexander Sweaney on Jan. 15 shortly after midnight after responding to the call around 9 p.m. on Jan. 14 at his home.

According to the redacted police report, Sweaney's ex-girlfriend received a text message from Sweaney that she he was going to kill her current boyfriend and then kill himself.

"Katrina advised Nicholas had previously sent her messages stating he was

going to kill her boyfriend and all ex-boyfriends she ever had," states the report.

Sweaney was booked into the Clay County Jail but has since been released on an undisclosed bond.



Nicholas Sweaney

## Middleburg man faces felony charges for killing black bear

MIDDLEBURG – Authorities say a Middleburg man turned himself over to the Clay County Sheriff's Office to face felony charges for killing a black bear without a permit from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

On Jan. 14, CCSO booked Joseph Matthew Empleo, 32, of a Tarragon Avenue address, on charges of shooting across private lands without permission, taking a Florida Black Bear without a permit and using a non-expanding, full metal case or military ball ammunition to "take" a bear.

According to the warrant obtained by the FWC, Empleo "trespassed onto a neighbor's wooded property behind his residence where he had previously placed a tree stand and multiple feeders."

FWC began its investigation on Dec. 13, 2018 and found Empleo had placed what they described as a large amount of corn in the feeders and scattered it to attract wildlife. FWC also points out on the warrant that Empleo does not have a valid hunting



Joseph Empleo

license or deer permit. "While sitting in the stand, a Florida black bear entered the area and Empleo shot the bear approximately 4-5 times, severely wounding it. He exited the tree stand, approached the bear, and shot it at close range to finish killing it," states the warrant. Empleo is free from jail after posting a \$1,503 bond.

## Fight with girlfriend ends in arrest

ORANGE PARK – An Orange Park area man faces charges of aggravated battery on a pregnant female and possession of 3.6 grams of cocaine.

According to a report from The Clay County Sheriff's Office, Brandon Derrel Washington, 26, pushed his pregnant girlfriend at his residence on Jan. 10 at approximately 9 a.m.

A CCSO officer was dispatched to the Bartlett Avenue address after receiving a report of a disturbance. The victim told police she confronted Washington "due to him being loud."

The victim reported that, after offering to drive Washington to a friend's house, he pushed her in the chest and it escalated to a physical fight.

At press time, Washington remained in the Clay County jail where his bond is set at \$35,006.

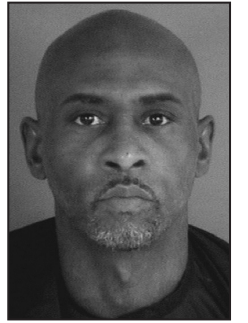
## Armed robbery charge for 2016 crime

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – An Arkansas man faces a charge of armed robbery dating back to 2016. According to a report from The Clay County Sheriff's Office, Timothy Lydell Williams, 43, brandished a knife and robbed the Orange Park Stay Suites around 6:00 p.m. on Nov. 25, 2016.

A CCSO officer was dispatched to the hotel and attempted to track Williams with a K-9 unit, reporting "items matching what the suspect was wearing" found in the parking lot.

The suspect allegedly stole \$1,497 in cash from the cash drawer and had previously been a resident of the Stay Suites two months earlier. According to the CCSO police report, Williams was located at the Bradford County Jail and was transported to their office where he was charged on Jan. 10 with armed robbery.

He is currently held with not bond.



Timothy Williams

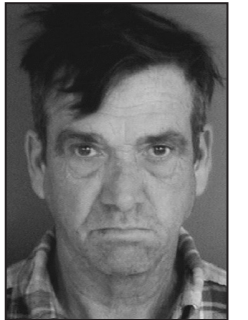
## Jax man charged with sexual battery

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – A Jacksonville man faces a charge of sexual battery of a victim under 12 years of age.

According to a police report from The Clay County Sheriff's Office, Kevin Lloyd Whitten, 59, allegedly sexually assaulted a female under the age of 12 sometime between July 2010 and July 2015.

The victim initially reported on Sept. 21, 2018 that Whitten sexually assaulted her in the Green Cove Springs area. On Nov. 14, 2018 a CCSO interviewed Whitten and

asked him about the reported assault. According to the police report, CCSO officers arrested Whitten at his Aline Road home on Jan. 10 and booked him at Clay County Jail where, at time of press, he has no set bond.



Kevin Whitten

## Arrests

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David Hegwood, 55, Middleburg, Violating Conditions of Pre-Trial Release for Domestic Violence

Antoine Hines, 31, Orange Park, Simple Domestic Battery

Tyler Christina, 21, Middleburg, Driving Motorcycle Without a License, Fleeing & Attempt to Elude Police

William Prezaz, 38, Orange Park, Aggravated Battery by Strangulation

Lillian Smith, 25, Orange Park, Petit Theft, Failure to Appear for Court

Antoine Hines, 31, Orange Park, Simple Battery

### Thursday, January 10

Jordan Brimlow, 26, Orange Park, Simple Domestic Battery

Brandon Washington, 26, Orange Park,

Aggravated Battery on Pregnant Female, Cocaine Possession

Kevin Whitten, 59, Jacksonville, Sexual Battery by Person 18 or Older on Victim Under 12

Deana Waldrep, 32, Orange Park, Methamphetamine Possession, Heroin Possession Drug Equipment Possession

Joshua Elliott, 29, Green Cove Springs, Contempt of Court Non-Compliance in Drug Court

Jennifer Howell, 31, Green Cove Springs, FTA-DWLSR

Kyle Perry, 26, Fleming Island, Petit Theft

Timothy Williams, 43, Orange Park, Armed Robbery-Other Than Firearm

Justin Rounds, 30, Green Cove Springs, VOP-Simple Battery

Carrington Williams, 21, Orange Park, Fraudulent Credit Card Use

John Arnouville, 42, Fleming Island, Disorderly Intoxication

Joseph Lanoy, 22, Green Cove Springs, Failure to Appear for Court

Eric Kowal, 18, Orange Park, Petit Theft \$100-\$300

Edwardo Torralba, 79, Orange Park, Simple Domestic Battery

Kimberly Soledad, 18, Oakleaf, Possession of Not More Than 20 g. Cannabis, Drug Equipment Possession

### Wednesday, January 9

Richard Rivers, 47, Green Cove Springs, Possession of Not More Than 20 g. Cannabis, Drug Equipment Possession, DUI

Matthew Sheldon, 19, Middleburg, Owning or Renting a Structure Knowingly to Sell Drugs, Possession of Not More Than 20 g. Cannabis, Drug Equipment Possession

James Sheldon, 48, Middleburg, Owning or Renting a Structure Knowingly to Sell Drugs, Possession of Not More Than 20 g. Cannabis, Drug Equipment Posses-

sion

Sara Mullins, 25, Green Cove Springs, VOP-Child Neglect

William Privette, 46, Middleburg, Simple Domestic Battery

Jeffrey Eyanson, 32, Orange Park, Violate Probation-Community Control

Joshua Robert Welch, 35, Middleburg, Insurance Fraud Less Than \$20,000

Austen Downs, 23, Green Cove Springs, Giving False Name or ID

Robert Parrotino, 61, Orange Park, Petit Theft

Franklin Briggs, 23, Green Cove Springs, FTA-Burglary, FTA-Resisting an Officer, FTA-Possession of Burglary Tools

Dale Bell, 71, Orange Park, DWLSR

Tania Carr, 22, Orange Park, Possession of Not More Than 20 g. Cannabis

Jordan Brimlow, 26, Orange Park, Simple Domestic Battery