

## FEMA AID

Sapelo Island may not get relief

Story, B-3



mark woods

## Anything happen while I was gone?

I was on vacation last week, camping in the high country of Yosemite National Park.

For the first couple of days, I kept instinctively reaching for my phone, only to see each time that it said: "NO SERVICE."

I eventually stopped checking and instead accepted, even appreciated, having no cell signal, no electricity and, once I got into the Yosemite backcountry, no running water other than the nearby Tuolumne River.

Of course, it's one thing to choose not to have such modern-day conveniences — and another to be without them because of a hurricane.

I felt a bit guilty leaving town a week after Irma. The last story I wrote before going on vacation was tied to the Jaguars' home opener. It was about how sports, while obviously trivial in the grand scheme of things, have this ability to unite people and communities.

When I was a kid, I saw it happen with baseball, with the city of Detroit rallying around the Tigers amid turmoil of the late 1960s.

When I was a young sportswriter in Indiana, I saw it happen with high school basketball.

I expected it to happen with football in Texas and Florida after a pair of devastating storms, for NFL games to bring everyone together as they rooted for the home team.

So ... did I miss anything?

I felt a bit like Rip Van Winkle when I returned home and heard people saying they're going to burn their jerseys and boycott the NFL.

While in Yosemite, the only news I heard was that the current administration moved closer to altering some of America's national parks, with the secretary of the interior recommending the shrinking of at least four national monuments.

I didn't know that President Trump threatened to "totally destroy" North Korea. Or that another attempt to repeal Obamacare was all but dead. Or that the Jaguars had lost their home opener, before rebounding with a stunning victory in London.

Not that I heard much about any of this when I returned to civilization.

From Fox News to MSNBC, from Twitter to sports talk radio, it was all about kneeling. About President Trump saying in a speech in Alabama and days of tweets that NFL owners should fire any "son a bitch" who kneels during the national anthem. About the NFL, owners and players responding, starting with the Jaguars and Ravens in London, with shows of unity — some players kneeling, others linking arms.

A week ago, this was a story that seemed to be fading away. Colin Kaepernick was out of the league. Another season was underway. Now it's something much bigger than anything Kaepernick planned when he knelt last year.

The president hasn't just challenged the NFL and its owners. He has said that if you're an NFL fan who loves America, you should be ready to leave the game.

"Even if it's one player, leave the stadium," he said, adding the NFL isn't what it used to be anyway.

Almost lost in all of this was how he also said league is "ruining the game" with rules designed to reduce dangerous hits. Never mind the latest sci-

WOODS continues on B-2

## Curry's budget priorities look safe

Council was set to approve next year's budget late Tuesday

By Christopher Hong  
christopher.hong@jacksonville.com

The Jacksonville City Council on Tuesday continued to debate a budget for next year that would bring spending on streets and other infrastructure to its highest level in years and increase the size of the city's police force.

The council didn't approve the budget by press time, although there was no indication they weren't going to sign off on the hallmark priorities set by Mayor Lenny Curry, including a \$131 million capital project list and

authorization for the Sheriff's Office to hire 100 new police officers.

The \$1.2 billion budget keeps the city's property tax rate at 11.4419 mills. It goes into effect on Oct. 1.

Earlier this summer, Curry proposed a stimulus-style budget that spread money across the city, which was made possible by a stronger economy, growing property values and a newfound financial flexibility stemming from a series of reforms to the city's pension plans.

For the third straight year, he faced little resistance in setting

the city's spending priorities.

Curry's budget wasn't significantly altered during the council's preliminary review. The council's additions to the budget include a \$850,000 enhancement to purchase library materials and \$1.2 million to mow parks and other city properties that residents often complain of being unkempt and blighted.

Curry again made public safety a top priority in his budget. After adding 65 new police officers during the last two years, Curry proposed adding 100 new officers this year.

If the budget is approved by

the council, it would increase the Sheriff's Office employee cap by 100 new police officers and provide the department enough money to hire as many as 80 new officers next year.

It will likely take several years for the 100 new officers to hit the street. The department expects to graduate 136 new officers in the next year, and more than half of those positions would fill existing vacancies.

The budget's \$131 million capital spending plan would pour millions into roads and other infrastructure across the city, as well as additional millions to help prepare city-owned downtown properties for private development.

## Baseball wall of fame



Artist Chris King moves his ladder Tuesday as he works on a mural reproducing vintage baseball cards for players such as Roberto Clemente (right) on a Post Street building. The building will be home to Dan's Sports Cards & Games. King has been living on the road, traveling from job to job along the East Coast where he has done projects as varied as a portrait of abolitionist John Brown to murals at the Baltimore Orioles' baseball park, he said. The Post Street building, just west of King Street, previously housed a bicycle shop. Dan's Sports Cards & Games, which will sell collectible cards, autographed memorabilia and fantasy game supplies, is set to open in about two weeks, said owner Dan Williams. (Bob Self/Florida Times-Union)

## Federal agent shot at suburban grocery store

Struck several times at Publix, officer survives after 18-year-old gunman kills himself

By Dan Scanlan  
dan.scanlan@jacksonville.com

An unprovoked 18-year-old wanted on a narcotics warrant opened fire on a uniformed U.S. Customs and Border Protection agent as he was walking out of an Oakleaf Publix before killing himself Tuesday afternoon, according to the Clay County Sheriff's Office.

The agent was shot multiple times in the ambush as the shooter was driving by, Chief Wayne McKinney said. He suffered severe injuries but is expected to recover.

"He was carrying his grocery bag and caught totally off guard," McKinney said. "He appeared to be shot from behind."

The suspect then sped down the parking lot and crashed after shooting himself, the chief said.

He did not know if the agent was wearing a bulletproof vest. McKinney also said the agent never fired a shot. No names have been released, but Customs and Border Protection said the agent is with the Air and Marine Operations.

It happened shortly



The parking lot of the Publix at the Oakleaf Commons shopping center is the scene of a shooting involving a U.S. Customs and Border Protection agent. (Will Dickey/Florida Times-Union)

after 3 p.m. at Publix at Oakleaf Commons at 1075 Oakleaf Plantation Parkway with upward of 30 witnesses, McKinney said. The two had no prior contact, but it appears the agent was targeted.

It sent customers and employees and neighboring businesses scurrying. Authorities cordoned off the parking lot as many waited to be interviewed.

The Sheriff's Office put a blue tarpaulin over a car in the middle of the parking lot next a temporary shelter.

Katie Sexton said she was taking a break outside the Alliance and Associates office next to the Publix parking lot when she heard three shots and saw a car speeding away and then crash.

"We saw everybody

run out of the store, so we knew something had to have been happening. Someone else heard the person who got shot screaming help help," she said.

Two or three minutes later, deputies were pulling in, she said.

"He was walking out with his grocery bags, and what we heard but we don't know it's true is that

the guy thought he was following him and so he got paranoid and unloaded on him," Sexton said.

Avianca Manning also works at Alliance. She said she had just gotten out of a meeting and was heading outside to go to lunch a little after 3 p.m. when she heard the shots.

"It sounded like construction. We were confused, and then we heard screams and cries for help, then we saw Publix baggers and cashiers and everybody running toward something," she said.

Manning said she grew up in the up-and-coming Oakleaf area and never would have thought anything like this would happen.

McKinney said investigators do not know what the motive was for the shooting, which was done with a small-caliber handgun. He said it was disturbing that a federal agent can be attacked while shopping for groceries in a quiet suburban shopping center.

"It is something we live with each and every day knowing that going out in our community there are individuals who would