



“Tourism Buzz!”

(From The Clay County Tourism Bug)

(Sponsored by Ash Tisdelle VW)



**By: Eve Szymanski: Director of Tourism & Film Development Division
Clay County Chamber of Commerce**

February 2006

The North Florida Hunter-Jumper Association has outdone itself this year. For those of you who attended some of the recent wonderful events at the Clay County Fairgrounds, you know what we mean. All total there were 5 Grand Prix's with a total of \$125,000 in prize money! There has been International level show jumping competition right here in Clay County for the last 5 weeks which culminated on Feb. 4th. Our hats are off to the planners making this one of our largest events of the year with an economic impact to match. We won't know the numbers until next month.



Sponsors are our Friends and we love them!



Tommy Feigel on Contendress- One of the \$35,000 Finalists.



Awesome Power!

On February 24th & 25th, the North Florida Scottish Games and Festival are literally marching in! Our games are the largest games in North Florida, and perhaps the state. Last year we had more than 400 bagpipes & drums in the opening ceremony. We expect more this year. On top of an amazing lineup of activities, the new additions to the games are: Scottish Fiddle Revival Society, the Gaelic (language) Tent, and the 17th Century Scottish Military Encampment and Reenactors with authentic weaponry, uniforms and equipment. The games begin at 9 am on Feb. 25th and the opening ceremonies are at noon. Check out www.neflgames.com for the full itinerary or call 904-725-5744.



**CLAY COUNTY SPRING VISITOR'S GUIDE AD SPACE ON SALE NOW
CALL 904-394-7401 OR EMAIL: eszymanski@claychamber.com**

The First Quarter Report is in! Visitor Packets mailed out are up 25%, Leads booked are up, Website Hits are up over 200%, and Bed tax Collections for our first quarter are at \$85,345, which is up \$12,169 over 2005, and our second highest first quarter ever. Visit Florida is predicting a growth of 3.2 percent of visitors to Florida, and it looks like we are getting our Fair Share. Considering we have no new hotels (yet) in Clay County, that is a very bright outlook for this year.



The Great Clay County Bug Out January Winner!

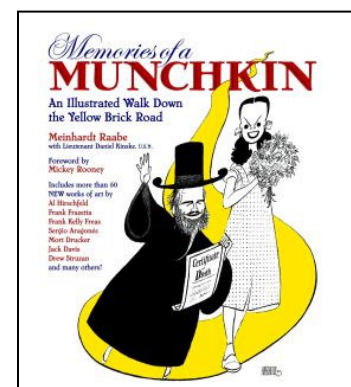
Peggy Fulford of **WaterConnexion** was our first 2006 winner of a \$100 Savings Bond! The place to be was the Clay County Chamber of Commerce “Winter Wonderland” Chamber Connection at the Golf Club of Fleming Island Plantation on January 26. You could say “We made a Connexion at the Connection!” The Savings Bond is sponsored by **Bug Out Service, Inc**, just one of our Tourism Partners. **Ash Tisdelle VW** sponsors “The Bug”. Spot it “out” and you too could win! Fax 904-264-0070 or email eszymanski@claychamber.com with the date, place and time and your contact info.

The 2006 Visit Florida Calendars are here. Clay County has the February page with a photo of our own Scottish Highland Games on it. There are also some smaller photos from the Hunter Jumper events, the Green Cove Springs Pier and the Clay County Agricultural Fair. If you would like a copy, please stop by the Chamber and pick up one.

Some of you may have heard about our **Northeast Florida Marketing Alliance**. We have joined Nassau, Duval and St. John’s Counties, along with Jax Intl Airport, Jaxport and Florida’s First Coast of Golf to create a regional marketing group to target new international business. We have a budget and marketing plan to focus on the German market for this year. If you would like to see what has been created so far, go to www.destinations2discover.com or <http://www.destinations2discover.com/microsite/index.php?id=360> to go directly to Florida’s Northeast Coast. Partnerships like this put us on the international map.

And that brings us to our newest partnership with the **Jacksonville Convention & Visitor’s Bureau**. The new President, John Reyes comes from San Diego where they partnered with Phoenix and Las Vegas. (They like those BIG Partners out west!) The Jax CVB & the Beaches and the Clay County Chamber of Commerce are teaming up much more than in the past. This partnership will make our mutual visitor’s guides available at both offices, the airport, and other visitor’s centers. We will have our website logo/link on both websites and have access to each other’s calendar of events in order to promote the area. Together, we are stronger. You can check out the Jacksonville and the Beaches Convention and Visitors Bureau website at www.jaxcvb.com.

Wizard of Oz Day! Do you know we have one of the original “Munchkins” from the **Wizard of OZ** living at Penney Farms? His name is Meinhardt Raabe, and he was the “Coroner” who declared the Wicked Witch of the West dead. We will be doing a special salute to Mr. Raabe on March 11 at the OP Mall. See the calendar and get your tickets early, because it will be a sellout! Go to www.wizardofozday.com for more details or call 394-7401.



So we are not only “Off to see the wizard.....”, but we are off to a great start this year. Here is the Calendar of Events for the next month.

N FL Hunter Jumper Winter Series Jax Finale Week V	2/1-2/5/2006	Clay County Fairgrounds	8:00 AM	Free Spectator Admission	The Series \$25,000 Grand Prix Finale will be held on Sat, Feb. 4th at 7 PM. Come watch the final competitions as the now "seasoned" jumpers prepare to go on to additional shows of the circuit and then on to Malaysia. For more information contact Sue Rindal at rindal@bellsouth.net or call 904-522-0375
Ron McLoughlin Horse Handling Clinic	2/10-2/12/2006	Clay County Fairgrounds	Call or Visit Web Page	Call or Visit Web Page	Call (904) 529/278-3617 or Visit www.claycountygov.com
No Time For Termites	2/10-2/12/2006	Orange Park Community Theatre	Call for times	276-2599 or www.opct.org	If you enjoyed Forgotten Precinct, you will be delighted to see the two detectives again. Call 276-2599 or Visit www.opct.org
Hubbard Street Dance Chicago	2/11/2006	Thrasher-Horne Center for the Arts	7:30 PM	\$22, \$18, \$15	HSDC is among the most original forces in contemporary dance. It's 21 dancers display unparalleled versatility and virtuosity. 904-276-6750 or www.thcenter.org
Southeast Model A Roundup	2/17-2/19/06	Quality Inn & Conference Orange Park	8 AM to 6 PM	Free Spectator Admission	Come see Model A Fords built from 1928 to 1931. Meet the owners and learn about the Club! Or call 904-291-5365 or email modalAlover1@comcast.net
1st Annual Outdoor Sportman Expo	Cancelled 2/18/2006	Clay County Fairgrounds			
Capt. J.P. Cruise Line	2/18/06	Reynolds Park Yacht Center / Green Cove Springs	10:30 AM & 7:30 PM	\$49.95 AM \$45.00 PM Child \$10.00	Come join us for a beautiful buffet luncheon cruise or a Saturday Night Dinner Dance with a Prime Rib Buffet! Enjoy the St. Johns River for sightseeing, weddings, a corporate party or a convention outing. 1-800-396-3305
First Coast Hunter Jumper Association	2/18/2006	Clay County Fairgrounds	Call or Visit Web Page	Free Spectator Admission	rindal@bellsouth.net or call 904-522-0375
NE Florida Scottish Kilted Golf Tournament	2/24/2006	Ravines Golf Club & Lodge	Sign-In 8am Tee Time 9:30am	\$50	Golf Tournament at one of the premiere courses in NE Florida Call (904) 725-5744 or visit www.NEFLGames.com
NE Florida Scottish High Tea	2/24/2006	The Hilltop Club, Orange Park	6:30-7:30	\$15	Enjoy tea and scones while hearing a presentation on genealogy by Beth Gay and the influence of the Scots by Dr. John Munro Call (904) 725-5744 or visit www.NEFLGames.com
NE Florida Scottish Whisky Tasting	2/24/2006	The Hilltop Club, Orange Park	6:30-7:30pm	\$25.00	Learn the business, history and lore of single-malt scotch with Byron Cassell Call (904) 725-5744 or visit www.NEFLGames.com
All-American Boys Chorus	2/25/2006	Thrasher-Horne Center for the Arts	7:30 PM	\$18, \$15, \$12	Coming from performances all over the world, they bring their world-renown sound to Clay County. 904-276-6750 or www.thcenter.org

Northeast Florida Scottish Games & Festival	2/25/06	Clay County Agricultural Fairgrounds	Gates open at 9 AM. Closes at 5pm	\$10 in advance, \$12 at the gate, or go on line to purchase. Children 10 & under -free.	See and experience all things Scottish: Clans, Athletics, Music & Dancing, Parade of Tartans, Bagpipes, Sheep and Dog Herding, Scottish Cattle, Fencing, Falconry, Reenactments, Geneology, Food & Vendors. Tickets at the chamber or on line. Call (904) 725-5744 or visit www.NEFLGames.com
NE Florida Scottish Musical Evening	2/25/06	Clay County Agricultural Fairgrounds	7:00-10:00pm	Free with Games Admission	Come hear music of Scotland, from bagpipes to fiddles, and folk to rock, in an intimate acoustic setting Call (904) 725-5744 or visit www.NEFLGames.com
NE Florida Scottish Kirkin' of the Tartans	2/26/06	St. Giles Presbyterian Church, Orange Park	10am	Free	A Scottish church service featuring the Blessing of the Tartans Call (904) 725-5744 or visit www.NEFLGames.com
Look Who's Laughing	3/3-3/4 & March Weekends	Orange Park Community Theatre	Call or Vist Web Page	\$15 General \$13 Sen., Stu., Mil.	A comedy regarding the legendary temper of a man who must spend one whole week without losing it in order to win a wager with an admirer. Come and see! Call 276-2599 or Visit www.opct.org
Cattleman's Association Team Roping	3/3 - 3/5/06	Clay County Fairgrounds	Call or Vist Web Page	Call or Visit Web Page	Call (904) 529/278-3617 or Visit www.claycountygov.com
Patsy Cline	3/3/06	Thrasher-Horne Center for the Arts	7:30 PM	\$25, \$20, \$15	This hit musical traces the legendary singer's rise to stardom & includes song like Walin' After Midnight, Crazy, & I Fall to Pieces. 904-276-6750 or www.thcenter.org
Wizard of Oz Day-Meet Real Munchkin Meinhardt Raabe	3/11/06	OP Mall: AMC Theatres/Books-A-Million	1pm-AMC 24 theatre doors open. 1:30 Presentation 2 pm-movie. 4pm-book signing at Books A Million in OP Mall.	Movie Price: \$6.50	Meet the Munchkin Coroner from the original Wizard of Oz Movie! This National Treasure (Meinhardt Raabe) lives in Clay County! Get tickets in advance for the large screen color version showing of the original movie by calling 904-264-3888. Seating is limited. <u>Memoirs of a Munchkin</u> is Mr. Raabe's book on sale at Books-A-Million next_door_ Have your copy autographed starting at 4 PM. www.wizardofozday.com
First Coast Hunter Jumper Horse Show	3/11-3/12/0	Clay County Fairgrounds	Call or Vist Web Page	Free Spectator Admission	rindal@bellsouth.net or call 904-522-0375
Keystone Recreation Association	Call to confirm 3/12/2005	McDavid Park in Keystone Heights	9 AM until?	Free Admission	At Pecan Street & Orchid Avenue. Carnival type games, dunking booth, pony rides, music, food, and sports vendors. Softball & Baseball games begin at 1 pm. 904-278-3617
Thumbelina	3/18/2006	Thrasher-Horne Center for the Arts	2:30 PM	\$7, \$6, \$5	Using 9 feet tall puppets, the Bits "N Pieces Puppet Theatre brings the Hans Christian Anderson play to life. 904-276-6750 or www.thcenter.org
Capt. J.P. Cruise Line	3/18/06	Reynolds Park Yacht Center / Green Cove Springs	10:30 AM & 7:30 PM	\$49.95 AM \$45.00 PM Child \$10.00	Come join us for a beautiful buffet luncheon cruise or a Saturday Night Dinner Dance with a Prime Rib Buffet! Enjoy the St. Johns River for sightseeing, weddings, a corporate party or a convention outing. 1-800-396-3305
Carrie Clarke Day	Call to confirm 3/19/2005	Clarke Park in Orange Park	10AM to 5 PM	Free Admission	Tours of Historic Clarke House and the grounds. Guides in period attire and Model A cars on display. Free parking available at 1st Baptist Church across the street. Food, music and hayrides! Call 904-278-9675

Call for your ad space reservation for the Spring Visitor's Guide: 904-394-7401!