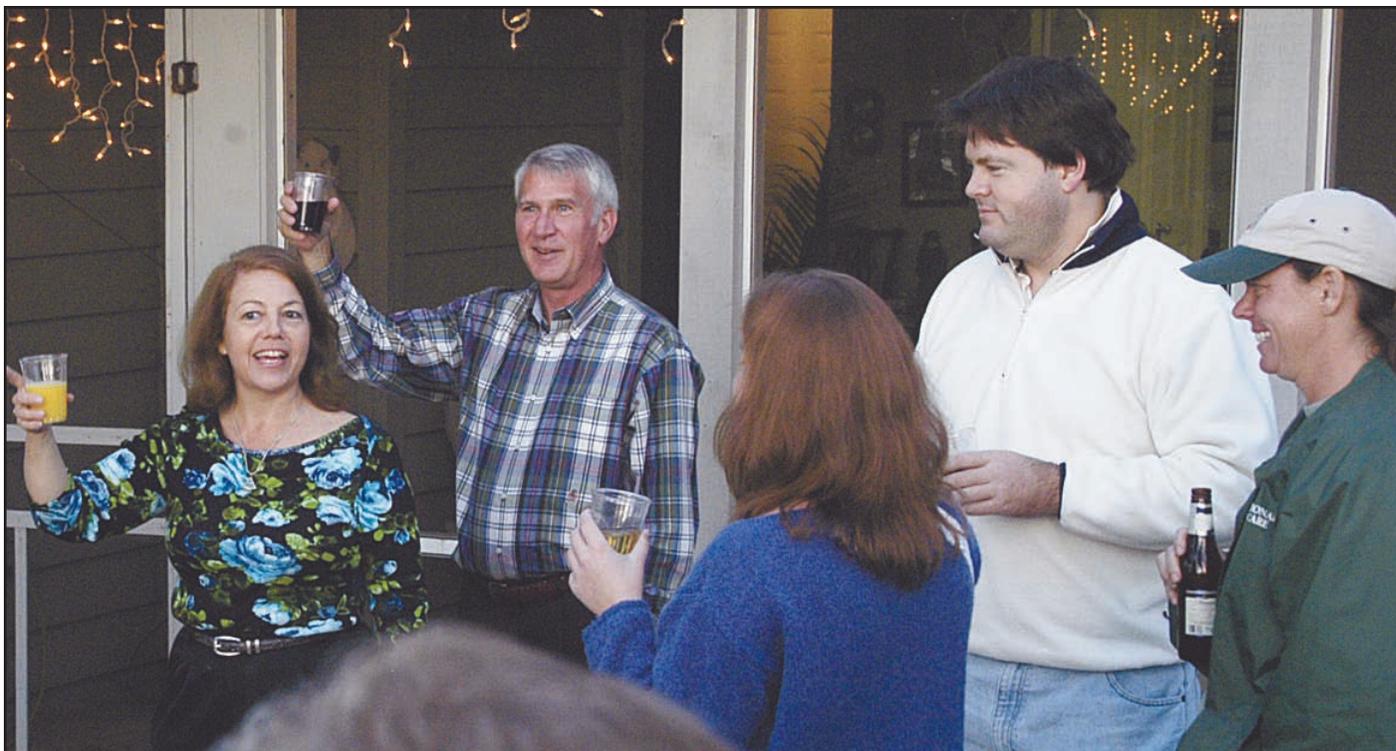


A toast to the founders



Joyce Owen/The Sun

Brenda and Lane Rees join in a toast Dec. 29 to celebrate the 180th anniversary of the founding of Walton County. A group met at the Rees' home Wednesday for the first of 20 celebrations leading up to the 2024 event.

Walton County School Board meets Monday

By JOYCE OWEN
SUN REPORTER

DEFUNIAK SPRINGS — To avoid conflict with other county meetings, the Walton County School Board voted in November to move its meeting day to the first and third Mondays of the month. To offer the opportunity for participation by working parents, the board also agreed to start the meetings at 6 p.m.

At the first meeting of 2005 on Jan. 3, the board will take action regarding an administrative hearing held Oct. 12 to determine whether to approve former Freeport Middle School teacher James Hylton's request for back pay. Hylton was suspended Nov. 11, 2003 without pay after he was arrested at the middle school and charged with multiple felonies.

The agenda also includes action to approve the creation of a temporary position, MIS Coordinator temporary trainee.

The board will vote on a \$2,115,000 contract with Lord and Sons Construction Company to construct additional classrooms at Bay Early Education Center. There will also be dis-

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Only 20 years to bicentennial

By JOYCE OWEN
SUN REPORTER

As the countdown began for the commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the founding of Walton County, celebrations honoring the event will certainly be held in 2024, but for Brenda Rees, she's taking it one year at a time.

Few residents were aware of the significance of Dec. 29, until Walton County resident Rees made a few calls Tuesday afternoon.

"Walton County was founded Dec. 29, 1824. On Wednesday, we will begin the 20-year countdown to the 200th anniversary of the founding of Walton County," Rees said as she extended the invitation, "Come, watch the sunset and

toast the event."

When well wishers gathered at the Eastern Lake home of Lane and Brenda Rees as the sun dropped into the Gulf at 4:51 p.m., she said they would hold a similar celebration every Dec. 29 at sunset until the 200th anniversary. On that night, those remaining from the original group will share a bottle of wine.

This year make a New Year's resolution that lasts

By PASHA CARROLL
SUN REPORTER

If you want to keep your 2005 New Year's resolution just ask Shirley Bartholomew, who works at Uptown Girls in Grayton Beach, to add you to her party guest list.

This year on Dec. 31, Bartholomew's guests will seal their resolutions in two self-addressed envelopes. Six months later and again 12 months later she will send the resolutions back to her guests to remind them how eager they had been months earlier to turn some part of

their lives around.

The resolutions that go into Bartholomew's envelopes will include several clichés and one inspirational resolution.

"The gym, of course, it's my annual three month run of the gym, spend less, listen more," she said quickly. Then after a moment of pondering she continued, "And I am going to identify the miracles around me, they are there everyday."

Like Bartholomew, Cindy Lyons, a tourist from Michigan has a way to remember her resolutions into the New Year.



For every letter in her first name, Lyons made a resolution.

C is a resolution to be more caring, I is a resolution to be more interested in everything, N is to be more nurturing, D is to be more decisive and Y is to act younger.

Each of the people in Lyon's 12-person "bunko" group made acronym resolutions. The group, which plays dice once a week together, will also play watchdog to one another's resolutions.

While in paradise, one has to expect resolutions to include outdoor activities and fun in the sun.

Gerry Hagen, of Bluewater Bay is making her

New Year's resolution to play more golf in paradise. Hagen is making a resolution to get a wetsuit so she can do water aerobics outside in the winter.

Lisa Reaves, a vacationer from Birmingham is making her a resolution to spend even more time at the beaches of South Walton County. Already, she enjoys the beach at least once a month.

Whatever one's New Year's resolution for 2005 may be, one thing is for sure — having friends like Bartholomew ensures your resolution to exercise won't be lost in the mail.

