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Wrestler brought home first state title for East River High School **8**



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## Traffic signal brings jobs

One light could help create 200 jobs and bring in \$20 million worth of construction

■ **JORDAN KEYES**  
Sun Staff

During the day, a trip to the new Bahama Breeze on Alafaya Trail can be anything but a breeze.

For East Orlando resident Maria Competelli, just making the turn into the parking lot was a harrowing experience.

"I personally always have to do a u-turn because I can't cross over the lanes," Competelli said. "It freaks me out super badly."

The quarter mile of road in front of The Shoppes at Alafaya Trail, which is between the Waterford Lakes Town Center and East Colonial Drive on North Alafaya Trail, can see between 3,000 and 4,000 cars an hour during the late morning and early afternoon, according to the Orange County Public Works department's latest traffic survey. The total traffic volume average for that section of road is more than 50,000 vehicles a day.

"As soon as the Bahama Breeze opened, we knew we had a problem," District 4 Orange County Commissioner Jennifer Thompson said.

■ Please see **DEVELOPERS** on page 5

# Bring on the barbecue

Online efforts could help bring 4Rivers to Waterford

■ **JORDAN KEYES**  
Sun Staff

There was a lot riding on the brisket sandwich Sunshine Davis ordered at 4Rivers Smokehouse. She'd never been, but she took her out-of-town parents — who are both food and travel writers — to try it out.

She took a bite. The juicy meat dribbled off the sides of the sandwich, splashing onto her plate. A burst of smoky, tangy flavor hit her. She was hooked.

"I didn't really even know what it was. I just thought it would be like pulled pork but with beef instead of pork," Davis said. "It falls apart on the bun. It looks like a mess, but it tastes amazing."

Soon, Davis found herself making the 45-minute trek from East Orlando to the Winter Park restaurant at least twice a month, which is no small feat for the mother of two

■ Please see **4RIVERS** on page 5

Visit "Bring 4 Rivers Smokehouse to Waterford Lakes" on Facebook.



PHOTO BY JORDAN KEYES

Sunshine Davis regularly drives the 45 minutes it takes her to get to 4Rivers Smokehouse in Winter Park.

# Break the silence, ride to peace

■ **MEGAN STOKES**  
Sun Staff

Dawn Runyon never thought her husband was capable of raping a teenager, especially since he fathered their then 1-year-old daughter.

But some odd behavior, mixed with striking similarities between her husband and the news' description of the rapist on the loose in their small New York town led her to contact the authorities.

Timothy Rupert was very controlling and critical — one day he choked her nearly to death over finger prints on the microwave, she said. She became so fearful of him that she kept a note in her wallet saying that if she was found dead, it was her husband who'd done it.

He also wanted to leave town immediately after reports of the rape surfaced.

Despite her suspicions, she still couldn't grasp

that the man she'd been married to for two years could commit such a heinous crime. She went to his trial and was shocked when he admitted to kidnapping a 17-year-old girl and sexually assaulting her before she



PHOTO BY MEGAN STOKES

Diana Oakley, at left, a sexual assault survivor, and her attacker's daughter ride together in Ride to Reach.

escaped his clutches. Dawn doesn't know how long she sat in the courtroom, she only knows that when she finally got up out of her tear-soaked haze, new people were on trial in front of her.

Dawn has spent every day since weighed down by the immense guilt that she should have done something to stop her now ex-husband. She also found herself unable to trust people the way she used to.

"You look at life differently; you don't see

the good in everybody," Dawn said.

She fell into a deep depression and constantly thought about the poor teenage victim and whether she'd find peace.

Dawn's daughter, Laura, now 22 years old, said she was always aware of what her father did and because of that, she felt a strange connection to his victim, as if she were a long lost family member whom she desperately wanted to reconnect with.

■ Please see **RIDE** on page 6



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# Coffee with Beat

Beat Kahli



## Our political pains and a prophecy

Politics in the U.S. has become a national sport these days.

That's a big problem. And believe it or not, the ultimate solution lies right here in East Orlando.

On its face, politics makes for great entertainment. Whether you're liberal, conservative or anything in between, there's at least one major outrage, three or four minor weekly or monthly disparities, and half a dozen utopian promises awaiting you in your daily newspaper or on your favorite TV news program this evening.

And that's half the problem we have in trying to figure ways to reestablish America's leading role as the world's most productive economy, a model of democracy and the purveyor of peace and prosperity throughout the world.

That is what we want to be, isn't it? Isn't that the promise of our national institutions, our sixth-grade civics teachers, our American ideals: aren't we a light for the world to follow? The shining example?

Alas, we've lost some of our luster.

For most of the world, American politics is not so much a signpost as a Seinfeld episode — an amusing half-hour about nothing.

We've allowed our exceptional culture to erode.

We live in a democracy. Our democratic ideals are crucial to our American culture, our way of life, and even the foods we put on the table

*For most of the world, American politics is not so much a signpost as a Seinfeld episode — an amusing half-hour about nothing.*

for our families and the roofs we protect them with.

But democracy only works if we participate, leave it all up to the other guy to do it and, well, we've seen those results before and they are disastrous.

When's the last time you attended a county commission meeting? A city council meeting? When's the last time you spoke with a candidate for political office? Volunteered in a political campaign? Ran for office?

As a community developer, I have been involved in many local political issues. Most people at the "main street" level hold the highest ideals of justice, fairness and democracy.

Trouble is, there are never enough "main street" people. We common, everyday citizens — the ones who obey the laws, pay the taxes, create the jobs and send our kids to school — don't make time to participate in local government.

We can find an easy reason to avoid Chamber of Commerce meetings, even neighborhood

gatherings.

That's a trend we need to reverse.

I can find a dozen things I hate about the Tea Party movement in America. I can find a dozen things I hate about the "Occupy Wall Street" campaign too.

But the one thing I love about both sides of that equation is that they are everyday American citizens who are playing an active role in expressing their political will.

In politics, the answer is always found in the middle somewhere.

Somewhere between Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street, there's a solution that will restore America to its rightful place among the world's great cultures.

That's us. You and me. We're the ones in the middle. We are the solution. We need to participate.

The prophecy? I think most of us are getting tired of the fake drama. I think most of us feel the need for a little parental discretion. I hope and pray more of us are about to get involved.

### Letter to readers

Dear readers,

You'll notice a few changes in this month's issue.

We are welcoming our newest columnist, Richard Rosado, an Avalon Park resident who will dish out healthy cooking advice and healthy recipes from his own kitchen. Rosado, who's been cooking for more than 14 years, uses his cooking school, Healthy Flame, to combat obesity.

Another change you'll see is some new staff email addresses that carry the Turnstile Media Group label. It's become clear to us that the name "Observer Newspapers" doesn't convey what we've become: a diverse media platform that goes far beyond the printed page. Rebranding ourselves as the Community Media Division of Turnstile Media Group will allow our titles — Winter Park-Maitland Observer, Seminole Voice, East Orlando Sun and Baldwin Park Living — to grow as a more cohesive unit as we continue to expand how we deliver the local news you care about.

Before we go on, I thought you'd appreciate a little bit of history about how we got here. In 2007, the Winter Park-Maitland Observer, now the Sun's sister paper, was sold to Orlando-based Turnstile Media Group, the parent of Golfweek and Professional Artist magazines.

The Observer was Turnstile's first foray into the newspaper business, but it was a business that owner Rance Crain knew all too well. Crain's grandfather, G.D. Crain, founded Crain Communications in 1916 with two newspapers and three staffers. That company has grown to 30 publications, including such respected titles as Advertising Age and Crain's Chicago Business.

Crain, president of Crain Communications since 1974, is an ardent believer in the mission of community journalism. In 2007 he gave his blessing to build a portfolio of high-quality, community-focused publications. The same year that the Observer joined Turnstile, we welcomed the Seminole Voice — formerly the Oviedo Voice — to our team. The Voice was founded in Oviedo in 1990 and expanded to Winter Springs in 2000.

In mid-2009, the East Orlando Sun got onboard. In November 2010, new President and CEO Francis X. Farrell arrived, bringing decades of magazine experience with him. Less than two months later, we started publishing Baldwin Park Living, a community magazine serving Baldwin Park's residents and business owners. Founded in 2005 as a quarterly community newsletter, the magazine has grown to 10 issues a year.

Our promise at Observer Newspapers fits well into Turnstile Media Group's mission: Develop diverse media platforms that engage and strengthen the communities they serve. We are more than a newspaper — we are a constant flow of information. Our other products — websites, newsletters and social networks — are the go-to place for fresh, award-winning community news that's happening right in your backyard, news that affects your family and your neighbors and cannot be found anywhere else. And we're constantly developing new ways to deliver that content: to your laptop, mobile phone, tablet and maybe, one day, on your computerized glasses. One thing is certain: community news, no matter how it's delivered, won't go out of style.

As we continue to evolve as Turnstile Media Group's Community Media Division, I'd like to hear from you. Please tell us about the changing ways that you consume media, and how we can adapt our mission to best fit your needs. Please email [jandreasson@turnstilemediagroup.com](mailto:jandreasson@turnstilemediagroup.com), message us on Facebook or Twitter or send a letter attention to me to 1500 Park Center Drive, Orlando, FL 32835.

Thanks for reading!  
Warm regards,  
**Jenny Andreasson**  
Managing editor



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- June 30, 1961  
**John F. Kennedy**

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# Christmas gets fire station

After 20 years, a permanent facility is rising

■ MEGAN STOKES  
Sun Staff

The horses across the fence from the Christmas Fire Station mosey over to Lt. Elaine Fisher after only one holler. They know her voice means carrots or apples to munch on.

The horses aren't the only ones in the community who are friendly with the firefighters. Kenny, the rancher who owns the property next door, sends over fresh squash for them. Another neighbor makes them homemade zucchini bread, and at Christmastime the amount of cookies, cakes and pies hand delivered to the station is enough to keep them eating until spring.

"You know all the dogs, all the horses, all the people," Fisher said. "When you go out on a call, you know the people."

It's that closeness with the community that made the groundbreaking of the new, sorely needed station so special on Tuesday, April 17. For more than 20 years, the firefighters have been operating out of a temporary station — a doublewide trailer that's falling apart from the inside out. The floors are so worn that one firefighter fell through several years ago, the bathrooms are so musty that mushrooms are growing in the stalls and a sheet hanging on a curtain rod in front of a closet forms the only bedroom in the place.

A station is a firefighter's second home. They work in 24-hour shifts, which means a third of their lives are spent eating meals there, working out, sleeping and hanging out.

"We're getting a new home," senior firefighter and EMT Jon Whitesell said. "The fact that the county is doing this for us and the community, we're real excited."

Whitesell is most excited about the indoor gym. All of their work-

Check out more photos, including a rendering of the new station by clicking on the QR code below.



out equipment is currently just outside the trailer door, which means lifting weights in sweltering weather in the summer and frigid temperatures in the winter. Whitesell said the worst part about working outdoors is the mosquitoes.

Besides the exercise area, the \$1.2 million, 6,948-square-foot station will feature a commercial kitchen, dining area, day room, three dorms with two beds each, two full locker rooms, a storage area for equipment, lieutenant suites and a public area for blood pressure testing and other services.

The new station was made possible by the \$2 million Orange County Mayor Teresa Jacobs set aside for each commissioner to spend on priority projects in their districts in July. District 5 Commissioner Ted Edwards made the decision to funnel that money to the station.

"Christmas did come early this year with this fire station," Edwards told the crowd of community members and firefighters just before the groundbreaking. "This has been an embarrassment to District 5 and Orange County. This is probably the only mobile



PHOTO BY MEGAN STOKES

Firefighter Joann Rupert takes time to feed the horses across the fence from the old fire station, located in rural Christmas.

station we have."

Bobby Beagles, president of the Christmas Civic Association, has been pushing officials at the county to build a permanent station for more than 14 years. His wife, Vickie, said it feels longer.

"It seems like we've been fighting for this forever," she said.

The Beagles will donate a painting of a dalmation next to a fire hose with the message "Never give up" underneath, to be hung up in the new station. It belonged to the couple's son-in-law, an Oviedo firefighter who was killed by a tractor trailer while working a crash scene on the Florida Turnpike 10 years ago.

When asked why he wanted to donate the painting, Beagles said, "Because we love him and we love this station."

### Protect the people

A new station means more than just better facilities and amenities; it means that the firefighters can stay in the community in case of

a natural disaster. Currently, fighters would have to leave the station and hunker down at the Bithlo Fire Station 82 if a hurricane came through because the trailer cannot withstand hurricane-strength winds.

"You don't want to leave the community you're here to protect," Whitesell said.

The new station will not only exceed the state standard of withstanding 130 mph winds but will also have a back-up generator.

Fisher said the Christmas station is assigned an airboat because of its proximity to the St. John's River. But because of the mobile unit, the boat is kept at the Bithlo station, which means that when they're called out to the river for anything from a boat crash to a boater experiencing cardiac arrest on the river, they must borrow a boat from Midway Airboat Rides on State Road 50 until Bithlo can get their airboat out there. It's a plan that's worked so far but Fisher said if they get a call at night,

Midway isn't there to help them.

"Someday it could be an airline crash out there. If a pilot is in trouble, he's going to look for a soft place to land," Fisher said.

Beverly Russell, who's lived in Christmas since 1996, said having a facility strong enough to stand up to hurricane-force winds is the main concern for Christmas residents. But it also makes them feel as important as other county residents.

"We were the last community to have a temporary station, and now we feel like we're finally catching up to the rest of the communities. We feel like we matter," she said.

Assistant Fire Chief Michael Howe said the Christmas station is dear to his heart after spending three years there just before accepting a management position. Because it's in such a rural area — a population of 1,754 people, Howe said that when a call comes, the crew is on its own for much longer than a typical station in Orange County.

"It's typically slow, but when you're called, you're by yourself for quite some time. You have to make sure everyone's on their game," Howe said.

"When you get a horrible crash on the Beachline, it's 15 to 17 minutes before the next crew will be there," Division Chief Mike Wajda added. "You have to do the same amount of work, the same tasks as the downtown crew but with less people."

Fisher said this station is also unique in the kinds of calls they get and how they handle them. She recalled a 3 a.m. call from a neighbor whose cow got loose. Typically, a station would have to call Orange County Sheriff's Office ranch unit to help find a black cow in the middle of the night in a rural area like Christmas. But with the help of so many of their neighbors, they were able to track the cow down before it caused a vehicle crash or other problems.

"We have to rely on each other more than other stations do. We have 24-hour shifts so we spend more time together than most families," Fisher said.

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**DEVELOPERS**

■ CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Besides making it easier to motorists to access the plaza, the addition of the new traffic light is opening doors for more retailers who have been interested in the site.

Dick's Sporting Goods signed a tentative agreement to become an anchor store for the Shoppes, but only after an agreement was reached to construct a traffic signal in front of the shopping center. Jason's Deli is also planning to occupy space there.

"We had several retailers who were looking to build here," property spokesperson Scott Corwin said. "But they didn't want to move forward until they knew something was going to be done about the intersection."

The new traffic signal's yet-to-be-determined installation costs will be paid for by the developers with no cost to the county and the benefits for the area could be sizeable, Thompson said.

"If this retailer comes, [the light] becomes a catalyst for them signing on the dotted line, \$20 million in construction spending and over 200 jobs," she said. "Sometimes a light isn't just a light."

Many major retailers make sure that when they start construction they can be open in time for the holiday season, which was a factor in getting the light approval expedited, Thompson said, but not the main one.

"Traffic lights aren't put in to enhance growth. Traffic lights are put in because it's a safety issue," Thompson said. "If the numbers work then you can get it in the queue or you go where

it will have the most effect."

Corwin agreed: "Cars trying to get across six lanes of busy traffic is dangerous. That's an accident waiting to happen."

Now that changes are in motion, Corwin says that more retailers are joining in. According to developer UP Development's website, at build out, The Shoppes at Alafaya will have 14,000 square feet of retail and a 40,000-square-foot, full-service fitness center.

**Lights all around**

This light isn't the only one going up in an attempt to solve problems for East Orlando residents.

In an effort to clear up frequent traffic jams in front of one of their properties, the developer of a neighborhood near the intersection of Timber Springs Boulevard and Avalon Park Boulevard will fund the installation of a light in front of their entrance.

There is still no specific timeframe for the lights as the data collection and research stages are ongoing.

"These developers aren't just paying for the construction of the signals," Thompson said. "They're also paying for signalization, which is the process of studying and reprogramming the timing of all the surrounding signals."

The work that developers and Orange County officials are doing at these intersections is not only bringing in new business but making people like Competelli more comfortable behind the wheel in East Orlando.

"I would just feel safer and it would make my trip so much easier," she said about the light on Alafaya Trail. "It would be a lot less stressful."

**4RIVERS**

■ CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

who's currently earning a masters in communications at the University of Central Florida.

As an Internet marketing professional, she knew there was something she could do about her dilemma: start a Facebook group, which she did on April 6.

"Bring 4 Rivers Smokehouse to Waterford Lakes" got 100 'likes' in its first week, with people posting things such as, "UCF/Waterford Lakes area needs you. I'm tired of the same old BBQ over here."

Another Facebook user quickly responded, "This might be the best campaign ever!" Davis' movement was something food fans could get behind: food bloggers were sharing the page and friends kept joining.

And it turns out owner John Rivers was already considering opening an East Orlando location.

"We've been spending a tremendous amount of time looking for property on the east side of Orlando and to see that kind of response from our fans out there is overwhelming and extremely humbling," Rivers said. "I can't tell you how much we appreciate the desire to have us there."

Davis is not the first person to get 4Rivers fever. The original location is unsuspecting with its small building, and even smaller dining room. There's always a line out the door during lunch and dinner hours. The business' own Facebook page currently has more than 9,600 'likes' and their "Peace, Love and 4Rivers" bumper stickers can be seen all over town. The restaurant responded to demand by opening two other locations in the Orlando area — one in Longwood and the other in Winter Garden.

Before opening the inaugural restaurant,

Rivers said he never expected to have such enthusiastic supporters. What was supposed to be a small catering company has become a full-blown restaurant franchise and people like Davis are behind that.

"To this day, we've never spent a penny on traditional advertising; it's all word-of-mouth, grassroots marketing," he said. "I think the basis for that is doing the right thing to help people."

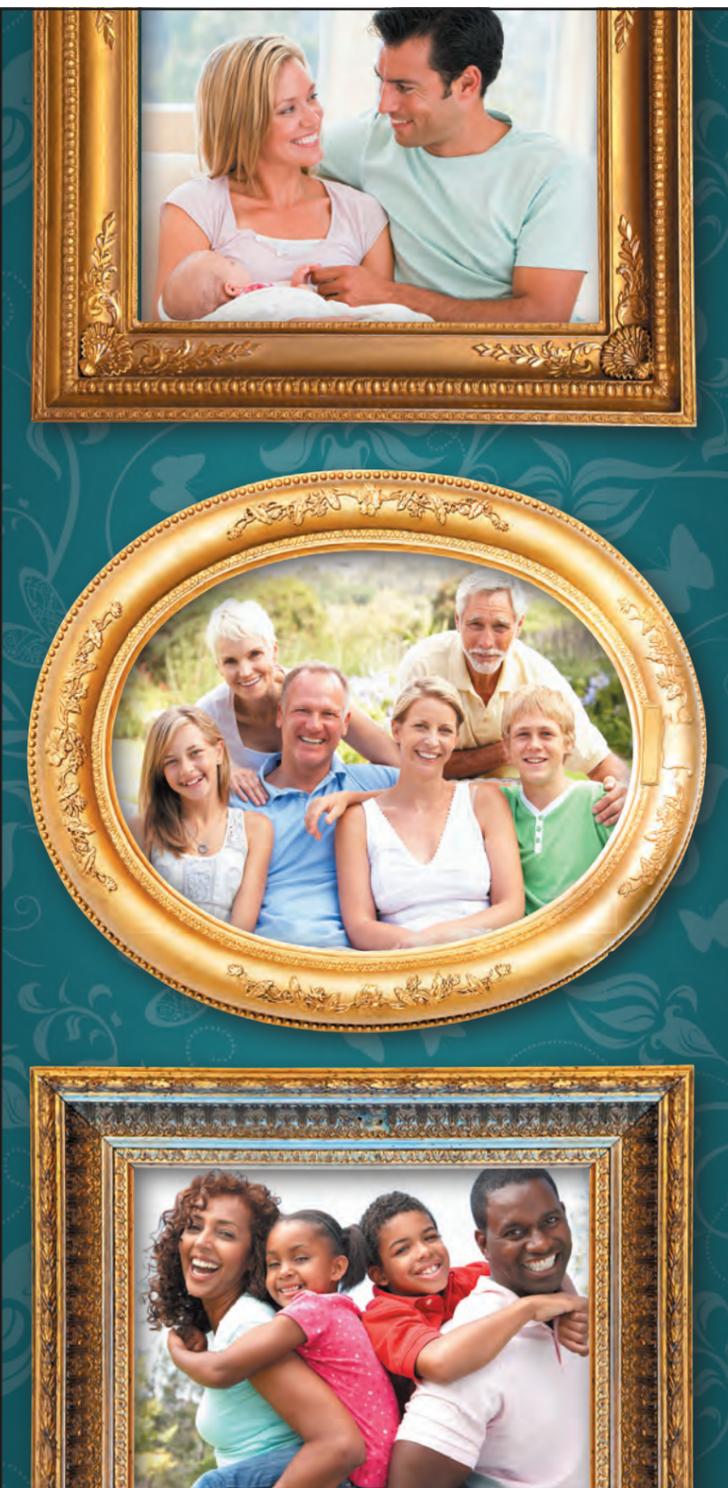
*"I can't tell you how much we appreciate the desire to have us there."  
— John Rivers, owner of 4Rivers Smokehouse*

Even before Davis' campaign, 4Rivers had fans in East Orlando. April Krempasky, a UCF student, said a locale near campus would be ideal.

"I love 4Rivers and I think UCF students would really love having one over here," Krempasky said. "It's affordable and the social environment there is something we'd all really enjoy."

4Rivers spokesperson C. Major said the East Orlando deal is moving in a good direction but said Rivers was still looking at contracts and making decisions so she couldn't give more details. Rivers and Davis recently met and she too reported on her 4Rivers Facebook page that things are looking good for an East Orlando location.

"I don't have an agenda," Davis said. "I don't want to sell him property or anything," Davis said. "I just really love the restaurant."



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## RIDE

■ CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

"I always felt that she would resent us and that broke my heart," Laura said.

On April 27, the two women arrived at Orlando International Airport to meet the woman who they'd become so emotionally attached to—Diana Oakley, who now lives in Waterford. Laura

was so afraid that Diana would hate her that she was sick to her stomach. Although she had excitedly booked the flight and the hotel, Laura almost didn't board the flight.

"I didn't want her to hate us," she said.

There wasn't a moment of hesitation; the three women embraced when they saw each other. There were tears but not as much as the women thought before meeting.

"We held it together," Diana said laughing.

They spent the entire day together—going to the beach and out to dinner. Meeting Diana's husband and three young children and seeing that she smiles often and is out-going and funny gave the two women the confirmation they've needed for 21 years.

"I feel 1,500 pounds lighter seeing her, knowing she's OK," Laura said.

Dawn and Laura came to Orlando to ride with Diana in the Victim Service Center's Ride to Reach in Avalon Park on April 28 — the anniversary of Diana's attack and the day when Rupert's parole hearings arise each year. The biking fundraiser was inspired by Diana's survival.

### Diana's story

One of the ways Diana showed her healing was the fact that she was willing to get on a bike at all, let alone take a 17-mile trip. In fact, she'd promise herself she'd get back on the saddle every year since her attack but never did until a few months prior to the event.

She had loved pedaling around her small New York town as a child. There was no reason to think her joyride on April 28, 1991—the first nice day of the season—was different from any other until she was thumped on the back of the head, propelled off of her bike and skidded 30 feet along the pavement. The driver of the pickup truck that hit her rushed to her aid, apologizing profusely. He insisted on helping her to her house and loaded her and her bike into the truck.

As they drove, Diana noticed shotgun bullets rolling back and forth around her feet on the passenger-side floor. He talked non-stop but that didn't keep her from noticing that they'd driven at least five miles when they should have only gone one. She knew something was wrong. They pulled into an empty field. He came to her door with a hatchet and said, "Don't scream."

She gave in to the idea that she'd be killed that day. Her hands were bound, and he had left her sitting on a blanket in the middle of the woods to get something from the truck — Diana knew it was the shotgun those bullets belonged to. Suddenly, something told her to stand up, turn around and run. She listened. Branches smashed into her face and her naked body as she ran. The terror that kept stinging from the sound of him chasing behind her propelled her faster and faster. She was sure at any moment he would grab her hair and pull her back.

To her amazement she saw a house ahead of her. She remembers everything about that day vividly but after the people in that house answered the door, she shut down. She knew they had covered her with a blanket and remembers looking out the window and seeing that if she had run any other way, she would have been running to nothing but more woods.

Timothy Rupert was arrested and sentenced to 20 years in prison. His sentence expired last year but he was deemed mentally unfit for release.

Still, every year on April 28 when his chance for parole surfaces again, the anxiety starts to build. Dawn and Laura become

terribly stressed. During his time in prison, he's sent death threats to not only Dawn but to the prosecutor and judge who helped put him behind bars. Diana said she spends the day on the couch, the weight of sadness keeping her down.

For years following her attack, Diana numbed the pain with excessive drinking and drugs. Even after she met her husband and settled into family life she thought about the attack every day; it defined her. She thought about it constantly but never talked about it.

Gina Costa, Victim Service Center of Central Florida executive director, said Diana's reaction to the assault is common, especially when there's no treatment.

"When she was assaulted 21 years ago, there weren't a lot of services available," she said. "We've only been in existence since 1999. People assaulted before that were still going to the emergency room where a rape is not considered a medical emergency. They can be waiting there for hours and hours and hours, and when you are seen, there's just a little curtain separating you from everything else."

In 2007, Diana finally decided to write her story in the form of an online blog. She'd write and the pain would bubble up and she'd want to stop but she forced herself to keep going. It took her three years to write it all out. It felt good but the response she started getting from other victims of sexual assault felt even better.

"I didn't mean to write a book," she said of "Intended Harm," which she published in 2010. "I didn't think I would ever be normal again. I thought I was damaged beyond repair."

Her healing has progressed so far that she's actually forgiven the man who stole 16 years of her life and said she wishes he could be rehabilitated not just for him but for her too — so she could rest easy that he won't come after her.

Writing had undoubtedly aided her recovery but her husband Tom Oakley said her work volunteering at the VSC treatment facility and her role as chairman of the VSC's speaking bureau has helped her move on.

"The more she gets out and helps people, the better she is. She has a unique gift for understanding what others are going through," he said.

He said meeting Dawn and Laura means a tremendous amount to her recovery.

"It shows how much she's grown as a person. It shows the healing is complete. This is full circle."

Seeing the three women together, they seem like old friends, getting together to catch up. They joke, laugh and swap stories. It's easy, enjoyable, normal.



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# Just 1 Book hits the road

■ MEGAN STOKES  
Sun Staff

Sarah Dewitz stood far from the bookmobile's swinging door, afraid to enter.

It wasn't the fact that the bus had been abandoned in Orange County's lot off of Michigan Street and Bumby Avenue for the past four years, or the pair of pants she found in it days earlier that weren't there the first time she toured it, but rather the huge spider that made the entrance to the bus its home.

The bookmobile was funded four years ago by the county but lost its funding that same year, so it's been abandoned, sitting on flat tires, an inch of dust collected on each of the book shelves and the reading posters on its walls starting to curl.

But to 12-year-old Sarah, it's like finding gold.

Since she and her family started Just 1 Book two years ago in April, they've collected and donated more than 75,000 books for kids who might otherwise not be able to afford them, set up mini libraries in community and Head Start centers in areas where reading material is more scarce, and created state and nationwide partnerships to expand Just 1 Book's reach. But a bookmobile was always Sarah's dream.

"I wrote down a list of things

For more information about Just 1 Book, visit [just1book.net](http://just1book.net)

I'd like to see with Just 1 Book when it started. On that was an ice cream truck but for books," said the East Orlando girl.

The bus will help the organization collect and distribute more books at events — Sarah's mom Sharlene Dewitz has car filled to the ceiling with boxes of books — and will allow them to more easily reach kids groups, such as summer camps and Head Start programs. They estimate a couple thousand books can be stored in the bus at a time.

The Dewitz family found out that the county had the bus in its lot last year, and immediately started working on a way to claim it. At the April 24 Orange County Commission meeting, the motion to sell the bus to the family for \$1,800 was all but approved until Mayor Teresa Jacobs decided it should be donated instead.

"I can't think of anyone in this county who could do better with a bookmobile than Sarah Dewitz. This is the most remarkable young woman. In two years she has gotten people to donate 75,000 books... 75,000 books," she said, astounded. "If we could clone her, we could change the world and even if we don't, she could change



PHOTO BY MEGAN STOKES

Sarah Dewitz said she's wanted a bookmobile for her charity organization, Just 1 Book, since she started it two years ago.

the world herself."

Sarah never saw that coming. In fact, in the beginning, she was sure it would have been at least 10 years before her bookmobile dream would come to fruition.

"I thought it would take longer for it (Just 1 Book) to catch on and for people to realize that kids want and need books. People say, 'Oh, kids don't like to read anymore.' They do," she said.

Sarah's dad, Bill Dewitz, said

he had a mechanic look the bus over before they moved ahead with trying to purchase it. The bus is in fairly good condition with only 7,500 miles and a need for a new battery, new tires and new brakes. Nonprofit organization Give Back Central Florida has committed to financially helping to fix up the bookmobile.

"The poor thing has been sitting here," Sharlene said, looking pitifully at the bus.

Although Sarah is the face of Just 1 Book, it's truly a family effort. One member of the family who's usually behind the scenes is Sarah's 15-year-old brother, Danny. When first asked what he does for the organization, he modestly lists grunt work such as lifting boxes or setting up tents at events, but he's made a huge impact on the growth of Just 1 Book.

He attends Boone High School as a magnet student. When he heard the Student Government Association was looking for a service project, he pitched Just 1 Book. They collected 3,500 books in March and plan to continue

serving Just 1 Book in the future.

Danny's constantly thinking about ways to help the organization. While touring the Florida governor's mansion with his high school class, he gave the curator there Sarah's business card.

"Everyone needs books. Everyone needs an education," he said. "I'll be in it as much as I can, doing anything I can do to help. All Sarah has to do is ask, she knows that."

In August, the Florida Kiwanis Governor is scheduled to announce Just 1 Book as the statewide service project, which means all 261 clubs in the state will be collecting books and dispersing them to kids in need. A Just 1 Book has also launched in Sharlene's hometown of Carteret, N.J. So far, 6,000 books have been collected there.

"We're hoping to get more communities nationwide," Sharlene said.

During the Orange County meeting, Jennifer Thompson told Sarah, "The world is your oyster. This is just your first bookmobile and your first 75,000 books."

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**Rotary Business of the Month**

**Brianto's Original Hoagies**

May's Rotary Business of the Month is Brianto's Original Hoagies in Avalon Park. Owner Brian Seals has a soft spot for kids. His business provides lunch for Orange County Academy students from Bithlo when they periodically come to Avalon Park for free hair cuts and other services, such as karate class. He prepares a platter of food each week for Friday Night Life, Avalon's free teen club, and donates all of their paper supplies. Brianto's, which is a Partner in Education, also hosts spirit nights for each of the local schools and supports many individual causes for kids in the area. Brianto's is located at 12001 Avalon Lake Drive, Ste. B, Orlando. Their hours of operation are from 7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. For more information, call 407-382-2667 or visit [www.briantos.com](http://www.briantos.com)

*Co-sponsored by the Rotary Club of Avalon Park, the East Orlando Sun and Pinnacle Awards and Promotions, the Rotary Business of the Month recognizes East Orlando businesses and organizations that are actively involved in their communities and embody the motto of Rotary: Service above self. Winners receive a plaque, a free advertisement in the Sun and a spot in the Downtown Avalon Park Discount Card, which serves all of East Orlando. Nominate a business at [facebook.com/avalonparkrotary](http://facebook.com/avalonparkrotary).*

(Left to right) Rotary of Avalon Park's Jim Foulks with Brianto's General Manager Todd Freeman and Owner Brian Seals.

# From troubled student to champion

East River High School has its first state champ

■ ALICIA DELGALLO  
Sun Staff

It only took two years for Frangelyca Brito to become a champion.

The East River High School senior began her wrestling career last year, and in January she won the state tournament. Although her rise to the top may seem to have come easily, it was a fight she began long before her first match.

When Brito was three months old, her mother left the country, and took her to the Dominican Republic illegally. Brito's father, Jose, had to fight to get her back. He wouldn't gain full custody of Brito until she was 6 years old.

"In the beginning, she left and she took everything, she even took her," Jose said of his eldest daughter. "Everything started from there - the abuse and the hitting. So one day they call me from school and she was all bruised up, and I had custody since then," Jose explained.

Now Brito only sees her mother once or twice each year, but she doesn't hold a grudge. She leaves that anger for the mat.

"I didn't really think about, 'Oh you need to win,'" Brito said, "I just thought, I need to go aggressive because this will prove to my mother that I can make it - I can do other stuff; I can be really good without you."

After years of therapy, she channels her anger into sports, and her relationship with her father has grown very strong.

"It was me and her battling everything, and um," Jose paused, looking down at the ground, "we went through a lot. We became very good friends and I think that helps a lot."

When Brito was young, she



PHOTO BY ALICIA DELGALLO

Frangelyca had many life hurdles to overcome but once she did, her drive for perfection in wrestling and complete dedication to the sport made her the best in the state. Below, she poses with her dad with whom she's very close.

looked to school as a safe haven. She would spend hours there after classes ended.

"For me, at that age, it was like, well, school is safer than home," Brito said. "School is my home, ya know, home is just a place where I sleep...I guess that's another reason why I feel so comfortable staying so late at the school for sports, because I'm so used to do-

ing it from when I was little until now."

Once she started wrestling, she was able to put those extra hours to good use. She got to know the janitors, and sometimes they let her practice long after the rest of the team went home. She'd spend hours working on her form for different moves while listening to one song on her iPod: Bulletproof by La Roux.

"Ya know, 'this time baby I'll be bulletproof,' I would blast it," Brito said. "I would literally be there in sweats, my wrestling suit and East River jacket 'til I was dripping sweat. I would cry when I didn't get something right, make myself mad and keep going."

### A star is born

East River's wrestling coach and science teacher, Nicholas Eliason, saw something special in Brito. He met her while coaching the bowling team she was on and formed a close tie with her father.

One day, Jose called Eliason, asking him to talk to her about an argument they'd had at home. Eliason agreed, and pulled Brito aside after class. He suggested she try wrestling to help her deal with her anger. Brito took her teacher's advice.

"If I had never done wrestling, I would still have to do therapy," Brito said. "I guess wrestling just took my mind off everything, and they said I didn't have to go to therapy anymore."

She was a natural, and one year later became East River's first and only state champion athlete.

"For girls wrestling, if you get the athletically gifted, physically strong wrestler - which she is -



it's a little easier," Eliason said.

Brito's junior year she lost a few matches, but still made it to the state tournament and took second place. She lost to a senior from Cypress Creek whose nickname was "the beast."

Brito came back senior year with a vengeance. Not only did she remain undefeated, 15-0, but she won every match by pinning her opponent, rather than a decision on points. The season culminated with her winning the state title in the 215 lb. weight class.

"It felt like time went slow when I was wrestling her, and every move I made, it was just slow, like I had time to do everything, and she grew like really weak, and then I just brought her down," Brito said.

The win was an emotional one for her father. "I was really proud, and I think I cried," Jose laughed.

However, being able to beat everyone hasn't always been a good thing. She often hurt girls on her team when she practiced with

them. "We had to have some of the boys team come in to wrestle her so she had some competition," Eliason said.

Just because the boys can withstand injuries, it doesn't make the girls any less aggressive, according to Brito. "The females are just as aggressive as the guys are," She said. "If we weren't aggressive then it wouldn't really be wrestling, it would just be girls hitting each other."

After graduating, Brito plans on joining the Navy and wrestling on their team, a decision her father supports.

"When I was younger I wanted to go to the Navy, but I couldn't because mom and dad never approved," Jose said. "We talked about it, and I explained to her that if she keeps her grades, and that's what she liked, then I'd support her - whatever she wanted to do."

"The only thing I told her is to make sure to be whatever she wanted to be."

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# Knights look to regroup

■ ISAAC BABCOCK  
Sun Staff

The Knights lost their first conference baseball series of the season to finish off April, and they did it by the narrowest of margins. In three games at home against Memphis (20-24, 7-11), the Knights (35-10, 13-5) won their first game 4-3, then dropped the next two by only one run each.

They entered the series with six wins in a row behind them, and only three losses since mid March. That changed in a hurry as the Knights faced Memphis, which has a losing record, but has turned out to be one of the toughest teams in Conference USA.

Game 1 came down to small ball, as the Knights pecked away at the scoreboard over the course of seven innings to add a run here and there until they'd built a 4-0 lead. Two of those runs came courtesy of catcher Ryan Breen, who came up with a pair of clutch hits. Meanwhile Ben Lively threw a three-hit, three-strikeout start for his seventh win of the season. Joe Rogers picked up his ninth save after Roman Madrid almost blew the lead.

In Game 2, the Knights jumped out early with a three-run rally in the second, starting with a Chris Taladay ding-er over the right field wall, but watched in horror as the Tigers mounted a late

game comeback that overtook them in the ninth. Rogers came up with the unlucky loss in that game, giving up the deciding run in the final inning with two outs.

The third game of the series gave the Knights a shot at redemption, but instead turned into a pitchers' duel that came down to one run.

Most of the Knights' starting lineup picked up a hit, but with each player only finding a single each, the Knights had trouble stringing together enough bases. Brian Adkins was the unfortunate loser in that one, going the full nine innings and giving up only one run.

The Knights take a rare late-season break from C-USA play to start May, facing Stetson at press time before hosting Presbyterian for a three-game series starting at 6:30 p.m. May 5. After that they'll head to Marshall for their penultimate conference series of the regular season, starting May 11. They'll take on Stetson at 6:30 p.m. May 15 one more time, and then close out the season with a three-game series at home against Rice, which is currently topping the C-USA ladder. That starts 6:30 p.m. May 17.

After that, the Knights will be swinging for the C-USA championship, with the tournament starting May 23 in Pearl, Miss.

## The Scoop

East River's **Ryne Rankin** received the school's first Class 8A First Team All State honors for the 2011 football season. He recently signed with the Georgia Bulldogs.

Timber Creek men's and women's tennis teams both finished in third place in the district tournament. **Brittany Spurgeon** was district runner up in line 5 for singles, **Kendall Romain** was in line 3 singles and **Sydney Ismir** was in line 4 singles.

East River's **Alexis Brand** and **Lauren Chiota** placed fifth on Day 1 of the Class 3A District 7 tennis tournament in April.

**Timber Creek's girls lacrosse team** defeated Dr. Phillips on April 27 15-13, which moved them into the final eight in the state. They fell to Bishop Moore 12-7 on May 1 in the third round.

**The UCF baseball team's** climb in the national rankings continued in April as it surged seven spots to No. 7 in the USA Today/ESPN Top 25 Coaches' poll and jumped two more spots to No. 8 in the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association rankings. The Knights (35-10, 13-5) tied the highest ranking in school history as they were slotted at No. 7 in 2001 by Baseball America prior to the NCAA Columbia Regional.



East River track team



Timber Creek tennis

East River's **Wilfredo Rodriguez** was named to the 1st Team All Metro Conference basketball team and was also voted MVP. He was also selected to the Puerto Rican 18U National Team.

**Timber Creek's baseball team** defeated University on April 27 for the District Championship 10-0. They played Vero Beach in the first round Region game Thursday—after press time.

The East River boys weightlifting team won third place in the Eastern Division of the Super Metro Championship in April. **Keith Clements** was named the Metro Conference Champion (219 pound class) and was named to the All Metro Team.

After defeating East River in the Regional Semifinal game 8-7 in April, the **Timber Creek girls softball team** traveled to Durant High School at press time for the regional final game.

East River track team's **Jose Santana** was crowned regional champion in the 400 meter race and **Gilbert Gildersleeve** won second place in the high jump, clearing 6'5".



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## Chef Richard Rosado hopes to teach healthy cooking in Avalon Park

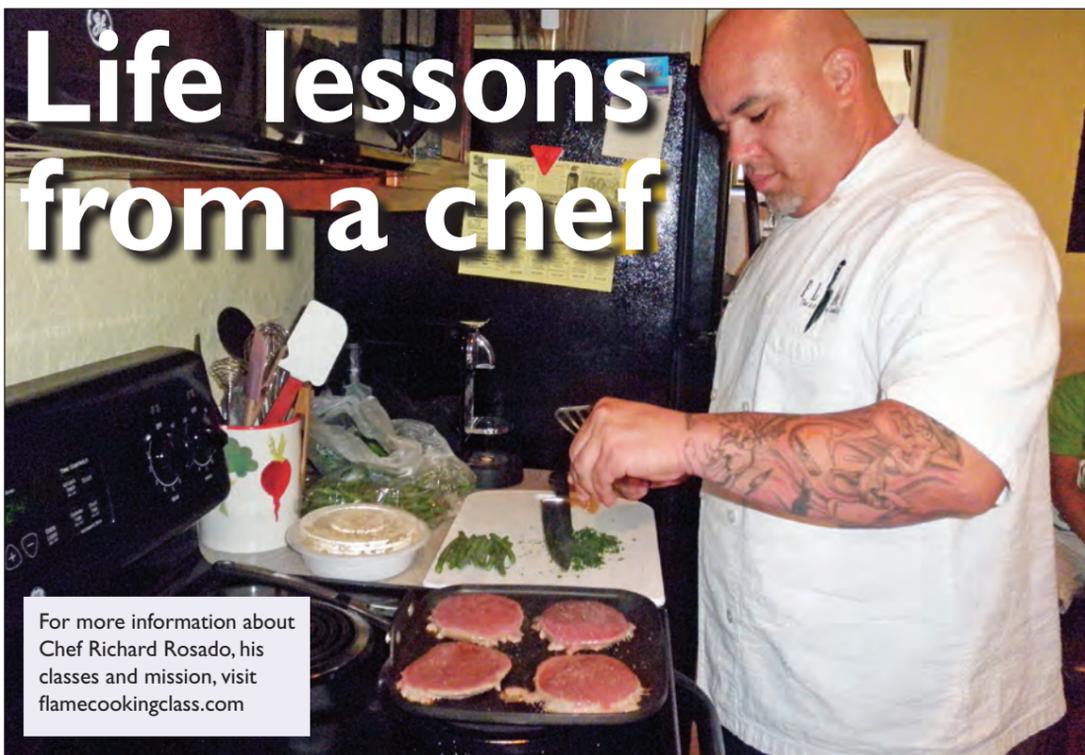
■ BRITNI JOHNSON  
Sun Staff

For many families, convenience store grocery shopping, processed foods and fast food meals are an everyday occurrence. The healthy ideal may seem out of reach; That fruits and vegetables, baking instead of frying and farmer's market produce are things only other people have the knowledge and resources to get. And this mindset has its problems—obesity affects one-third of all adults, and 17 percent of adolescents in America.

"It's one of those problems that doesn't discriminate; it's for everybody," said chef Richard Rosado of Avalon Park.

But if Rosado has anything to do with it, that will be a belief and lifestyle of the past for all families, regardless of income or education in Central Florida. He's going to teach them all. Rosado is on a mission to fight obesity, and it's starting with students at Orlando's Jones and Evans high schools with his "one dish at a time" program.

"I think this whole epidemic is an education thing, I know it can be combated, but we as chefs have to take it to the people," he said. "I



For more information about Chef Richard Rosado, his classes and mission, visit [flamecookingclass.com](http://flamecookingclass.com)

PHOTO BY BRITNI JOHNSON

Richard Rosado cooks turkey burgers with cilantro and pineapple for his family. He hopes to teach others to cook healthy.

can't just sit on the sidelines when I know I have the tools that can make it go away."

Rosado, who owns Healthy Flame, a culinary school he runs out of his home, hopes to open a brick and mortar nonprofit cooking school to help families learn how to make healthy, inexpensive and delicious meals at home. His goal is to find a location for his

school by June, and he's looking in the Central Florida area, including Avalon Park and Winter Park. The school would offer classes with professional chefs—he's the first on board—that teach the basics of cooking and techniques with a focus on healthy eating. Using the income from that, his plan is to reach out to underserved and lower-income communities to

teach the same for free.

Right now he's participating in Arnold Palmer Hospital's Teen Xpress program by volunteering at the two high schools and teaching the students healthy cooking and eating habits weekly. And they're devouring all of it—the new foods and knowledge.

"For the first time they're eating real, wholesome meals, so to

me they're all a success story because they all try it," Rosado said.

Rita Vento, program manager for Teen Xpress, a mobile health unit that provides medical and mental health care for underserved and at-risk teens in Orange County, said she sees the effects of an unhealthy diet all the time at the mobile unit. Teens have diseases normally thought to be for adults—hypertension, diabetes, obesity and high cholesterol—so, she said, what Rosado does is invaluable.

"Everybody says eating healthy is expensive, and so when you look at this population who has limited resources and is living in food deserts oftentimes where you probably aren't going to get fruits and vegetables around the corner, you're probably going to see a convenience store instead, and you start seeing all these effects that all that is having on them," Vento said.

But who Rosado really hopes to reach are the parents, where he can make an impact from the start. That's what he hopes his nonprofit will do for the community.

"It's important to start with the top and go down, if we can get the parents to understand the importance of nutrition and then pass that down to their children, then I know it will help with the problem we have here in America," said Jon Stylz, one of Rosado's students and volunteers.

And Rosado is the first to say he isn't naive about the situation, which is where his "one dish at a time" philosophy comes into play. But small steps will eventually make a difference. He teaches students to try frozen vegetables, which are nutritious, cheap and easy to prepare. The skills and food are approachable, and the teens are grasping it, already buying what he suggests and making food for their families at home.

"It's nice to be able to teach people that they don't have to spend a whole lot of money in order to get what they need nutritionally as well as flavorful," said Ryan Voelker, a student and volunteer.

Rosado knows that first hand. He's married with three children and deals with the time struggles of a busy life, but that makes him even more passionate that taking the time to make dinner at home can be done. And it makes him feel great to share his love with his family and community.

"I like the sharing of food ... and I love feeding them the right foods because I know the benefits of it," he said.

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# Kid group feeds homeless pets

■ BRITTON JOHNSON  
Sun Staff

Bithlo residents walk up tentatively to the table filled with little bags and cans of dog and cat food. They've been there before yet they still shyly ask to take some food home with them.

"They don't trust you yet," Nimesh Patel said. "They have a right to be skeptical."

It's true. The Bithlo community has been lost to the residents of East Orlando for quite some time. Patel, who owns University of Doglando, said he and most of his customers who live in the neighborhood of Avalon Park had no idea of the struggles there.

His non-profit The Doglando Foundation and their tween community service group Karma Club have joined the efforts of United Global Outreach to help the people of Bithlo with a special need - feeding their pets through their new Full Tummy Project.

Many people living in Bithlo live in poverty or are homeless. And many of these people have dogs, there to protect them from the dangers of others in the woods and most importantly, to serve as companions.

Paula Kane, known as "Miss Clown" to her fellow Bithlo residents, comes to Orange County Academy every Thursday to collect bread, and now dog food, to help her homeless and neighborhood friends. She said most would go without food to help their pets, and that if they get food, it will go to feeding their dogs first. Kane said

this is one of the best programs she's seen come to the community.

"It means they get to eat another meal, and their best buddy gets to have a healthy meal," she said. "Because homeless people will go hungry before their dogs."

One of her friends hasn't been buying her medicine, and instead spends that money on her dog's food. Now she'll be able to buy that medicine.

"I said, 'I'll bring you dog food if you get your medicine,'" Kane said. "The only friend she has in her house is her dog."

Kane wonders aloud how many dogs she needs to feed and what size they are to calculate how much food she'll need to take with her. She stacks the little bags until her hands are full. Before this, she said it wasn't uncommon to see her dumpster diving behind pet stores to gather thrown out dog food for friends. She hides food in places where homeless people who are nervous to come out of their camps can find it later. Kane said she doesn't need a thank you. In Bithlo, people take care of each other.

"What they got they share with everybody ... they take care of their own," she said.

The Doglando volunteers are just happy to see people starting to get to know them. At first, many were worried they might form plans to take away their dogs. Patel said all they want to do is help dogs stay healthy, and they offer high quality food they give to their own dogs.

Some don't have this philosophy. At first thought, it begs the question: Why own a



Visit [doglandofoundation.org](http://doglandofoundation.org) for more information about The Doglando Foundation. For more information about United Global Outreach visit [ugo2.org](http://ugo2.org)

PHOTO BY BRITTON JOHNSON

Paula Kane and neighborhood Bithlo kids are excited about free dog food from the foundation.

dog if you can't afford it? But Patel said the homeless population gives their dogs what they really want, constant companionship. And the dogs do the same for their owners.

"Human beings judge, dogs don't," he said. "They're loyal."

And you can see the love, he said, when you watch a dog, unleashed, following its owner wherever they go.

"It's a different relationship," Patel said. "Everyone needs a friend," Diamond Golden, a Timber Creek High School junior and member of the Karma Club, said.

McKinney said this program is a way to show the Bithlo community that they want to serve their whole families.

"You're valuable so we recognize all your needs," he said.

He sees Doglando volunteers and the connections they make, not just to help the dogs, but the people too. The kids in the club play with the neighborhood children on the playground. The night is full of kids laughing, people socializing and a community sharing with each other. It's not a sad place by any means, but it still needs more. Denise Zaldivar, Doglando Foundation vice president, can see a lot of possibilities in ways they can help in the future.

"This is still a lost community," she said. "They've been promised so much with no delivery. There's so much potential here to make good."

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Calendar

MAY

East Orlando schools are encouraged to participate in the **OCPS District 2 Book Drive** to benefit Englewood and Pinar Elementary schools' summer reading programs. New or gently used books for kids grades K-8 can be donated to any District 2 school's front office through May 11. Those outside of District 2 can donate by contacting Orange County School Board member Daryl Flynn at [daryl.flynn@ocps.net](mailto:daryl.flynn@ocps.net)

Waterford Lakes Town Center will host **Family Night on the Patio**, every Friday night from 7-11 p.m. throughout the year near Friendly Confines. Guests of all ages are invited to enjoy free games and listen to DJ Laurie. The Patio is located at 413 N. Alafaya Trail, Orlando.

An **art collection** from Valencia College students will be displayed through May 18 in the Anita S. Wooten Gallery on the Valencia East Campus at 701 N. Econlockhatchee Trail, Orlando. For more information, visit [valenciacollege.edu/gallery](http://valenciacollege.edu/gallery)

MAY 4

**Avalon Park Relay For Life** runs from 5 p.m. Friday, May 4, through midnight Saturday, May 5, at Timber Creek High School. Visit [www.relayforlife.org](http://www.relayforlife.org)

MAY 5

**Epic Family 5K races**, presented by Nemours Children's Hospital and Orange County Parks and Recreation, will host a 5K race at Blanchard Park, 2451 N. Dean Rd., Orlando on May 5. Races are for all ages and the cost is \$25 per person. For more information, visit [www.OrangeCountyParks.net](http://www.OrangeCountyParks.net) or connect on Facebook at Orange County Government Parks and Recreation.

**Waterford Lakes CAN collection** takes place at 9 a.m. Saturday, May 5. Residents can leave canned food items at the end of their driveway and volunteers will pick it up and donate it to local food pantries.

The **UCF Knights Baseball** team takes on Presbyterian College at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, May 5, at Jay Bergman Field on the University of Central Florida Main Campus. Tickets are \$8 for general admission and \$5 for



Asian Cultural Festival

students, faculty, staff and youth. For more information, visit [ucfathletics.com](http://ucfathletics.com)

MAY 6

**Twilight Tea in the Garden**, an event that will support Kristin Root in her Walk for the Cure, is from 7:30-8:30 p.m. Sunday, May 6, at Myrtle Glen, a private garden in Avalon Park. There will be food and desserts, door prizes and hypertufa planters for purchase. Tickets cost \$20 at the gate and \$15 pre-sale with all proceeds benefiting Walk for the Cure Breast Cancer Walk 2012. For more information, contact Kristin at 407-277-5419 or email [rootke@yahoo.com](mailto:rootke@yahoo.com)

MAY 8

The **Parent Resource Group**, a free support group for parents, meets the first Tuesday of every month from 6-7 p.m. The next meeting is Tuesday, May 8, at the Blanchard Park YMCA. Children welcome. To register or for more information, call 407-382-5551.

MAY 11

**Shabbat Chavayah**: Temple Shir Shalom's Shabbat Experience is at 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 11, at UCUMC

Main Sanctuary, 1395 Campus View Court, Oviedo. There will be new, original music with full-scale production.

The 4th Annual **"Party with a Purpose"** for Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis is from 5-7:30 p.m. Friday, May 11, at Black Hammock Fish Camp in Oviedo. Live band "The Retreads" will entertain guests and there will be free snacks, a cash bar, raffles and prizes. There is no admission; funds will be raised via voluntary donations and sale of raffle tickets. Contact [yesican26@aol.com](mailto:yesican26@aol.com) or 407-432-7104 for more information.

MAY 12

See live entertainment, arts and crafts and food from China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korean, the Philippians, Thailand, Vietnam and others at the **Asian Cultural Festival** from 4-9 p.m. Saturday, May 12, in downtown Avalon Park. Admission is free. For more information, visit [aahc-cf.org](http://aahc-cf.org)

The **58th Annual Bahia Shriners Circus** will perform at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. May 12-13 at the UCF Arena, Bldg. 50 N. Gemini Blvd., Orlando. General admission tickets are \$14 at

the UCF Arena Box Office. For more information, visit [ucfarena.com](http://ucfarena.com)

MAY 16

The East Orlando Chamber's 2012 **Visioning event** is from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 16, at the UCF College of Medicine at Lake Nona. A panel of key leaders in the community will discuss the topic, "Boldly Building Our Future: Talent Supply and Education as Drivers of Innovation & Economic Development." Visit [eocc.org](http://eocc.org)

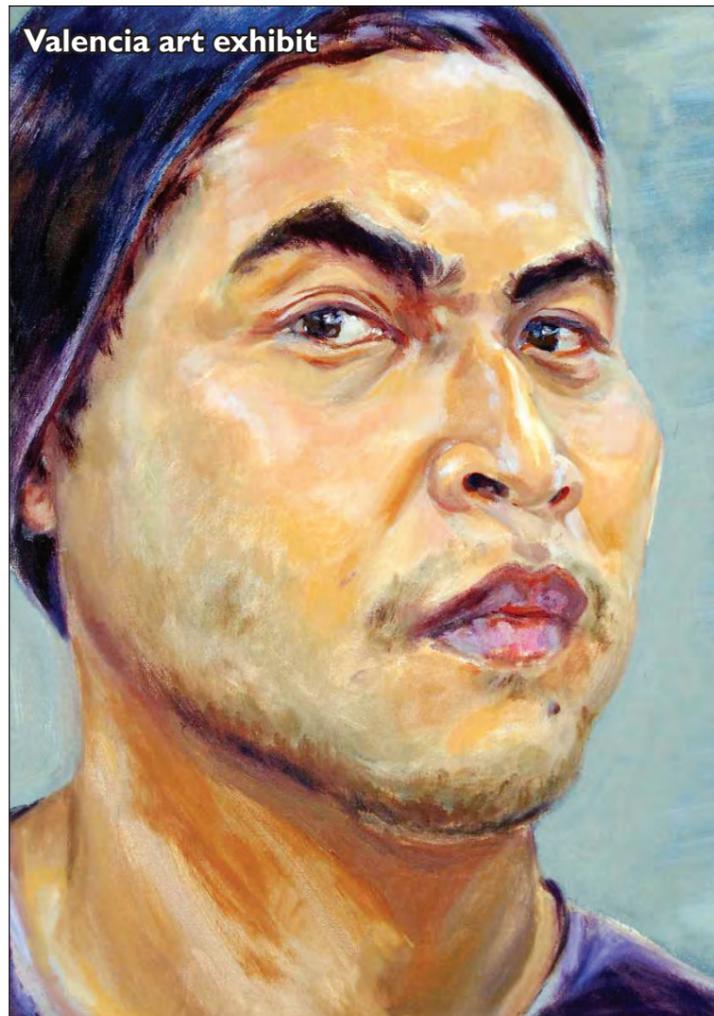
The following are free events at the **Alafaya Branch Library**, 12000 E. Colonial Drive, Orlando:

**Mother's Day Floral Crafts** is at 2 p.m. Saturday, May 12. Sarah Andriaccio of Flower Girl Designs will teach a floral design class for Mother's Day. Design a decorative fan with cascading ribbons, pearls and flowers to give to the "coolest" mother you know. To register, call 407-835-7323.

**Citizenship Inspired** is at 4:30 p.m. Tuesdays, May 1, 8, 15, and 22. During this four-week program, students will meet each week to prepare for the U.S. Naturalization (Citizenship) Test and Interview. To be eligible for U.S. Naturalization, you must be able to read, write and speak basic English. This series is for adult learners and is free to cardholders. Visit [www.ocls.info](http://www.ocls.info) or call 407-835-7323.

The whole family can come watch a screening of Disney's **"Lilo & Stitch"** at 11 a.m. on Saturday, May 12. There will be Hawaiian-themed crafts. The event is recommended for children ages 6-12. Call 407-835-7323 or visit the Alafaya location page at [ocls.info](http://ocls.info)

Preschool-aged children are invited to a **train-themed event** at 11 a.m. on Saturday, May 19. Kids ages 3-5 can become a conductor and there will be readings of train stories throughout the day. For more information, call 407-835-7323 or visit the Alafaya location page at [ocls.info](http://ocls.info)



Valencia art exhibit



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Education First's Educational Homestay Program (EHP), a non-profit based in Cambridge, MA, is bringing students from France to Orlando this summer to study English and experience the American way of life. We are currently looking for homes for these students and we need your help!

Below is some additional information on this summer's program:

- The students will be visiting from July 11th - July 30th
- EF provides 24/7 staff support and will be coordinating weekly activities for the student.
- Host Families are asked to provide a bed, meals and a warm, loving environment.
- For the duration of the 3 week program, your student will become fully integrated into your family's daily lifestyle. That means they may also travel with you within the US!
- Host family students can earn up to 45 community service hours!

Host Families, if you are interested, please contact Laura Barry ASAP!

Cell: (808) 551-5613 or email [llbarry01@msn.com](mailto:llbarry01@msn.com)



# Ups, downs of parenthood in "Baby"



**Josh Garrick**  
Culture worthy of your calendar

## Now to May 12 – "Baby" at Winter Park Playhouse

"After seeing the original (Tony-nominated) Broadway production, 'Baby' has been on my production wish-list for years," says Roy Alan, artistic director for the Winter Park Playhouse. With lyrics by Richard Maltby, Jr. and music by David Shire, "Baby" follows the stories of three couples as they experience the rewarding, agonizing and poignant consequences of pregnancy and parenthood. Through May 12. Call 407-645-0145 or visit winterparkplayhouse.org

## Now to May 13

Disney's "The Lion King" is on the stage of the Bob Carr PAC with all its stunning theatricality and beloved musical score. Giraffes and elephants strut, as gazelles leap and Africa comes to life as the Tony Award-winning

Broadway sensation features Elton John's Oscar-winning "Can You Feel The Love Tonight" and "Circle of Life." Visit Orlando-Broadway.com

## Now to July 15 – Paintings of Florida

Drawn from the largest private collection of Florida-based art, The Orlando Museum of Art continues its "Made in Florida" project celebrating Florida art and artists with "Reflections: Paintings of Florida 1865 - 1965 from the Collection of Cici and Hyatt Brown." Running through July 15, "Reflections" includes masterworks by artists who worked in Florida over a period of 100 years including Herman Herzog, George Inness, Thomas Hart Benton, and N.C. Wyeth. "The exhibition includes 70 paintings, which depict the evolution of Florida's landscape while offering a new perspective of the works of these renowned artists," says Marena Grant Morrissey, director for the OMA. Call 407-896-4231 or visit omart.org

## May 6 – Vegas-Style High Kicks

The Fab Follies, a Vegas-style song and dance troupe, is comprised of 30 extremely talented guys and gals – each of "a certain age." And you will never deter-

mine their real ages based on the dancing – and high kicking – that goes on in this show. The show starts at 3 p.m. on May 6 at the Maitland Civic Center. Call 407-647-2111.

## May 10 – Art Thieves Beware

Robert K. Wittman has been called "the most famous detective in the world" by the London Times as former FBI special agent, Wittman helped recover more than \$300 million in stolen art from around the world. Wittman, author of a best-selling memoir about his years at the FBI, will be in Winter Park on May 10 to share stories of his undercover sleuthing at the Morse Museum's Hugh McKean Public Lecture at 7:30 p.m. in the Tiedtke Concert Hall at Rollins College. Admission is free. A reception, open to the public, follows the lecture. Visit morse-museum.org

## May 11 to Sept. 1 – 'Oh, the Stories They Will Tell'

Elders from one of our country's oldest African-American townships will tell their stories of segregation, kinship and faith as a group of men and women, ages 85 to 106, share their experiences as lifelong residents of

Winter Park. The 16 participating 'elders' are part of "The Sage Project: Hannibal Square Elders Tell Their Stories," hosted by the Hannibal Square Heritage Center from May 11 to Sept. 1. An opening reception is from 6-9 p.m. May 11. Visit crealde.org or call 407-539-2680, or visit hannibalsquareheritagecenter.org

## May 19 – United Way's 20th Annual Chef's Gala

There are some big food and wine events in Central Florida, but none are as truly fabulous as the Annual Chef's Gala that benefits Heart of Florida United Way. This year's festivities begin at 6:45 p.m. on Saturday, May 19, as the sparkling wine begins to flow (along with a silent auction) at Epcot at Walt Disney World. The evening features fine cuisine from more than 20 of Central Florida's top chefs and restaurants. Most importantly, proceeds benefit local health and human service programs supported by Heart of Florida United Way that are vital to Central Floridians in need. Call 407-429-2161 or visit ChefsGala.org

## May 19 – The Science of Wine

Should you prefer your wine with a 'scientific twist,' one of the largest collections of wines of any

Orlando event is coming to the Orlando Science Center on May 19 from 7-10 p.m. More than a simple wine tasting, this oenological evening offers workshop presentations on all aspects of wine, from growing to tasting, along with the opportunity to sample more than 100 fine wines from the world's most important wine regions. And yes, there will be food offerings to accompany the wide range of wine selections. For tickets, call Kathy Lopus at 407-514-2233 or email klopus@osc.org

## May 19-20 – Orlando Gay Chorus Presents

The challenges of changing hearts (and minds) are not easy ones, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered community has chosen the theme "Changing Hearts" for its next concert. Songs from Michael Jackson, Eric Clapton and Lady Gaga are included in performances at 7:30 p.m. on May 19, and at 4:30 p.m. on May 20 at Plaza 'LIVE' in Orlando. Call 888-868-3208 or visit plazaliveorlando.com

Josh Garrick is a writer, photographer, educator and fine art curator. He is a member of the Curatorial Council for the Museum of Florida Art. Garrick can be reached at joshgarrick9@gmail.com or 407-522-3906.

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# They've got sole

Two Timber Creek students are collecting kicks for clean water

■ JORDAN KEYES  
Sun Staff

Allyson Lefler's car is so packed with shoes that when she makes turns, the piles threaten to topple over on top of her.

Every Thursday Lefler and Kimberly Kern drive around Avalon Park picking up shoes by the dozens of all kinds: Sneakers, sandals, boots, you name it.

No, these Timber Creek High School students don't have a strange foot fetish. In fact, their efforts are saving lives.

"We collect the shoes and they're sold to fund water filtration systems and education in third world countries," Lefler said. "Plus, we make 10 cents from every pound shoes collected."

Lefler and Kern are taking part



For more information on Shoes for Water, visit [www.edgeoutreach.com/shoes/shoes-water](http://www.edgeoutreach.com/shoes/shoes-water). To contact the Timber Creek program, call the school at 321-235-7800.

in Shoes for Water, a program started by non-profit EDGE Outreach. The shoes they are accumulating have been dropped off in collection boxes in local schools and stores throughout the Avalon area.

And these collection boxes have been filling up fast.

"It's amazing to see how people have responded," Kern said. "We're always picking up so many shoes. The one in the Publix is always filled."

The community has rallied around the efforts as businesses display the drop boxes and residents like Linda Moskowitz keep coming to fill them.

"Whatever hasn't been worn in my closet that's still sitting around went to the donation bin," Moskowitz said.

Moskowitz, a mother of three, first saw the donation box in the Timber Creek front office and then began seeing them pop up everywhere.



PHOTO BY JORDAN KEYES

Alyson Lefler and Kimberly Kern collect shoes of all kinds for charity. The shoes are sold to fund water filtration systems in underdeveloped countries.

"I love the concept they're using," Moskowitz said. "Somebody is benefitting from someone else's unwanted items."

Not only do the profits go to help third world countries get

clean water, but the shoes are sold to "microbusiness owners" in those same countries who need the materials for their own sustainability.

When they were asked by their school to head up the project, Lefler and Kern, student body president and vice president respectively, jumped at the opportunity. They didn't know what they got themselves into.

Dealing with people's old shoes isn't always glamorous. From hand-picking out old, dirty shoes to dealing with unconventional donations, the girls have faced some unorthodox challenges.

"It gets pretty gross," Lefler said. "One donation box is outside and people keep thinking it's a trash can. So we have to sort through the trash to get to the shoes."

Despite the challenges, they are seeing results. They say they have collected more than 100 pairs of shoes to donate and they are still taking donations through May.

They're still working hard and people in their school and community are taking notice.

"They're dedicated to what they do, I mean they're student body president and vice president" Alyssa Creel, a Timber Creek student, said. "But they're always thinking about helping people."

Aside from the hard work, the girls have fun with the project and have seen some added benefits.

"Not only are we helping people and raising money," Kern said. "We got muscles too. Those shoes get pretty heavy."

As they push forward into the last month of collecting shoes, the Lefler-Kern team is optimistic about what their success has meant to themselves and the community.

"It's a good way to pull everyone together," Lefler said. "People get rid of their shoes and we get to donate them. It's a win-win situation."

Moskowitz agreed.

"So many people take their clothes to secondhand stores and consignment shops to resell and do garage sales," Moskowitz said. "I think it's just so much more rewarding to just give it away."

Providing an easy way to make a difference is why Kern says they've seen such an overwhelming response.

"It's an easy way to make a difference. You're giving something away you don't use anyway. Plus, you get to clean out your closet."

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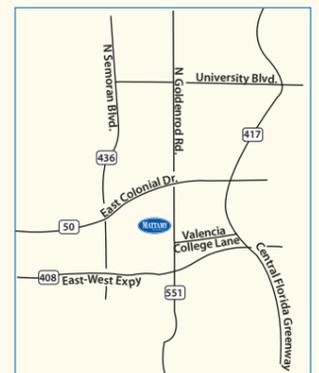
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## “KIDS’ QUOTES”

We asked Castle Creek Elementary students what they’re doing for Mother’s Day on May 13.



“I’m definitely gonna get her flowers. I’m gonna get her a cake. We might go somewhere special, like a restaurant.”

— Jurnee, 7



“I’m going to cook her eggs with bacon and toast and then when she wakes up, I’m going to give it to her. Then, when it’s afternoon, I’m going to take her to a restaurant called Fridays. Then I’m going to take her bowling and I’m gonna pay.”

— Sabrina, 8



“I think I’ll take her to her favorite restaurant, maybe with my stepdad.”

— Kailey, 8



“Bring her to the beach and go to a restaurant and bring her a cake and make her breakfast, lunch and dinner.”

— Chris, 8



“I’ll make breakfast in bed for her, and I’m going to ask my dad if we can all go to her favorite place.”

— Isabella, 8



“For Father’s Day, I’m gonna make him a big grandma card. It’s called that because it’s big and it has a poem with love. And I’m going to give him a lot of Hershey bars with almonds.”

— Ahmaria, 8

### School News

**April 27 was Engineering Day** in Avalon Elementary’s fourth-grade classes. Local engineers showcased all of the different careers available in engineering to the students. The school also welcomed a dozen students from their sister school, Hiwassee Elementary to share the day. The students were also treated to lunch by Bayridge Sushi in Avalon.

**Five Waterford Elementary students** — Jahfari Booth, Anne Cavanaugh, Nicholas Falkowski, Wendy Stein, and Lehana Turner — will compete in the Bright House Solar Cook-Off on Saturday, May 5. Over six weeks, they and their classmates have used Purdue University’s engineering design process to plan, construct, test and improve their cookers. While learning about the properties of sunlight — how to convert it into heat energy and how to trap the heat inside — they have created an oven capable of cooking a full meal using nothing but sun power and can explain how it works.

**Avalon Middle School celebrated Earth Day** by raising awareness of the importance of going green. In addition to classroom activities, the eighth-grade students planted flowers and



Stone Lakes goes green

bushes in the school’s courtyard.

**Stone Lakes Elementary students** spent Earth Day collecting trash from around the community. This was a project that was organized by the school’s Kiwanis K-Kids Club under the direction of Alison Morris and Michelle Miller.



Waterford art celebrated

**On March 31, hundreds of students** from the University of Central Florida packed The Venue on campus for the 16th annual Knight-Thon to dance for 16 hours to raise a record \$118,972 for Greater Orlando Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals. For more information on Greater Orlando Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals or to become involved in their events, please visit [www.gocmn.org](http://www.gocmn.org)

**The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Office of Food, Nutrition, and Wellness** awarded Avalon Middle School the Bronze Level USDA HealthierUS School Challenge award. The school was selected based on their efforts to combat childhood obesity and their focus on the health and wellness of its students.

**Two Waterford Elementary students,** Samantha Foster and Christina Newsholme, were selected from several hundred submissions to be included in the Orlando Utilities Commission’s Water Color Project water conservation

calendar. These students were recognized at an awards ceremony on April 19.

**Two Castle Creek fifth-grade students** have received a special recognition. Alejandra Sanchez-Zumbado was chosen to be the school’s Spirit of Excellence recipient because she has demonstrated an ability to adapt and overcome the challenges faced by English Language Learners. Kyle Sullivan, below, was chosen as one of the 15 Shining Star recipients for Disney’s Dreamer and Doer Award. He was chosen because his actions can serve as an inspiration for others in similar situations.

**The Avalon Middle MathCounts Club students** and their sponsor, Mrs. Klingler, have been awarded Gold Level Status, which is an impressive accomplishment requiring hard work and dedication. The students in the AMS math club successfully completed a total of six rigorous math challenges throughout the school year. The school is one of only 266 schools nationwide to receive this status.

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Castle Creek Dreamer and Doer

# 2012 Downtown Avalon Park *Calendar of Events*

**Absolutely Avalon**  
**Saturday, April 14th, 2012, 5-9 p.m.**

**July 4th**  
**Wednesday, July 4th, 5-9 p.m.**

**Oktoberfest**  
**Friday, October 12th, 2012, 6-10 p.m.**  
**Saturday, October 13th, 2012, 6-10 p.m.**

**Spooktacular**  
**Saturday, October 27th, 2012, 5-9 p.m.**

**Avalon Jubilee**  
**Friday, November 16th, 2012, 3-10 p.m.**  
**Saturday & Sunday, November 17th & 18th, 10 a.m. – 10 p.m.**

**Avalon Aglow & Holiday Parade**  
**Saturday, December 1st, 2012, 3-9 p.m.**

**Movie Under the Stars**  
**Check [www.AvalonPark.com](http://www.AvalonPark.com) for Up-to-date Listings**

Hosted by Avalon Park Merchant Association. For more information on this and other events visit [avalonpark.com](http://avalonpark.com) or call 407-658-6565.  
Avalon Park is conveniently located in East Orlando, 5 miles south of the 408 Expressway on Alafaya Trail.





**Jennifer Thompson**  
Commissioner's Corner

## Alafaya Trail moving along

I am pleased to say that construction on Alafaya Trail is now 25 percent complete! The project is currently on schedule and expected to be completed by October 2013.

The contractor will be starting construction of the box culvert, which will allow for storm water to pass underneath the road once it's complete. This will take place south of Mark Twain Boulevard. Crews are continuing to construct the storm water system in various areas along the west side of the road. Pressure tests are currently being done on newly installed water and sewer mains. New ponds north of Avalon Park near the Orange County Water Treatment Facility are now being completed and set with sod. The utilities companies are also actively working to relocate their facilities along Alafaya Trail where construction has occurred. Construction on the roadbed has begun, starting near Mark Twain Boulevard toward Publix.

If you have any concerns, please feel free to contact me at Jennifer.Thompson@ocfl.net

### New parks coming to District 4

Since taking office as your county commissioner, it has always been a priority of mine to address the need for additional recreational facilities, especially ball fields, in our community. I am excited to announce that the Orange County Board of County Commissioners recently approved the purchase of 60 acres in east Orange County for a future 27-acre active recreation park. The property is located on Young Pine Road, south of Curry Ford Road. There is currently no money budgeted for capital improvements nor operations and maintenance, and therefore a timeline has not yet been set on the construction of this future park site.

A smaller five-acre site is located in Avalon Park off of Avalon Park Boulevard. This site was subject to illegal dumping, and is now in the process of being cleaned up. Orange County Parks and Recreation will put a fence around the location to prevent further illegal dumping, and is in the process of leveling the ground to plant Bahia grass. This space will act as a passive park for children and families to play and enjoy. No additional parking or lights will be added for this park.

The possession of these properties is a step in the right direction toward providing much-needed recreational facilities that are easily accessible to all residents. I will continue to look for additional opportunities to expand our park options in District 4 and keep you up to date on further developments.

### WaterproofFL – free door alarms

As we approach the summer months and begin to spend more time by the pool, we must remember water safety and take measures to protect our families. Florida leads the nation in drowning deaths in children between the ages of 1 and 4. That is why the Orange County Health Department and the Florida Department of Health are offering a free small device that could help save a child from drowning. Any Orange County resident who has a residential pool, and children between the ages of 1 and 9 years old, may be eligible to receive free door alarms that can be placed on a door or window leading out to the pool area. The alarms are being provided through a statewide drowning prevention campaign called WaterproofFL, while supplies last. To receive a free door alarm, contact Karen Johnson at the OCHD at 407-858-1456. For more information, visit [waterprooffl.com](http://waterprooffl.com)

Jennifer Thompson is the commissioner for Orange County District 4. Contact her at 407-836-5881 or Jennifer.Thompson@ocfl.net

# Chamber's new direction

It's been almost two months since I started as the membership director for the East Orlando Chamber of Commerce, and I am happy with all the things we have going on. One thing is for sure, I'm thankful for the support I've gotten from my board members and the people I've networked with over the four years since I've lived in Central Florida.

Some of the things that have happened in the last few weeks include moving our office to the UCF Incubator on April 2. We acquired Orlando's No. 1 networking group started by Insight Magazine in 2007, the Orlando Coffee Club. On April 5, we had our first meeting at Fairwinds Credit Union's corporate office on Alafaya Trail and had about 70 people show up. We are thankful to Fairwinds for not only providing our new location but sponsoring Coffee Club for the rest of the year. This networking group will remain free and open to all to attend.

Benefits to our members have great-



**Gege Venant**  
From the Chamber

ly improved and include an updated website that will continue to improve, new member-to-member benefits, greater access to our events through an online calendar and social media such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Meetup. My goal is to have everyone wanting to be a part of the EOCC because they don't want to miss out on all the things we've got going on.

On May 16 we host our annual Vision Event at the UCF College of Medicine where a panel of local leaders will

discuss key issues in East Orlando. The panel will offer their knowledge and perspective on our talent supply and local education and how both drive innovation and economic development.

Our Women on Wednesdays (WOW) will be starting a new format on June 6. We will go from meeting bi-monthly in various locations to once a month at Florida Hospital East, who has graciously become our sponsor for the remainder of the year. We are adding a mentorship program for our members as well.

On June 26, the East Side Regional Hob Nob will be held at the Bright House Networks Stadium. This event is a chance for the community to meet the candidates running for federal, state and local offices. There will be a two-county straw poll where attendees may vote on either Orange or Seminole County ballots.

A new event we are putting together is a Small Business Expo on Aug. 10. We want this to be an opportunity for our members to get out and network and showcase their business to the community all in one location. They will also get a chance to hear some great speakers who will provide them with great tools to help their business.

I'm looking forward to our 28th Annual Golf Tournament happening on Friday, Sept. 14. This year, Just 1 Book, a cause started by then fourth-grader Sarah Dewitz that collects thousands of books to enrich the lives of her neighbors, will be benefiting from some of the proceeds.

For more information about the chamber or events or sponsorship opportunities, please feel free to contact me at [gege@eoec.org](mailto:gege@eoec.org) or 407-277-5951.

Gege Venant is membership director for the East Orlando Chamber of Commerce. Visit [eoec.org](http://eoec.org)



Bahama Breeze ribbon cutting

# Slim down with sautéing

Spring is in the air, and that means a whole new set of fruits and vegetables to enjoy.

When thinking of healthy eating that is flavorful, nutritious and economically appealing, it is always beneficial to purchase fruits and vegetables in season. Spring will bring some of your favorite fruit, such as apricots, bananas, melons, pineapples and strawberries, or vegetables such as asparagus, broccoli, avocado, corn, snow peas, sugar snap peas, sweet potatoes and tomatoes, to name a few.

These fruits and vegetables are perfectly matched with the featured cooking technique of the month: Sauté. Sautéing, if done properly, will save you time because of the nature of it and it is essential when trying to eat healthy. This technique requires a small amount of oil, relatively high heat and food that is already naturally tender. The problem occurs when too much fat is used; this changes the technique into pan frying — an enemy of healthy cooking and eating. Cutting the food into bite-sized pieces will also help in the amount of time you spend in the kitchen.

### The method of sautéing

Place your pan on the heat and add about one tablespoon of oil to it. As it heats up, the oil will begin to expand and cover the bottom of



**Richard Rosado**  
Chef Rich's Kitchen

the pan. When tilted to the sides you should have about a teaspoon of accumulated hot oil. That is the perfect amount for sautéing, because that will be absorbed by the food. When you see some wisp of smoke begin to form, add your vegetables in order of dense to soft. Allow the product to get some color then begin to stir and season. When dealing with meat, place the seasoned meat in the pan and allow it to sit. Make sure the pan and oil are hot. Initially it will stick — that is a normal process. Do not panic! When the cooking reaction has completed, the meat will practically turn itself over with a beautiful brown flavorful crust.

Chef Rich lives in Avalon Park and owns Healthy Flame, a cooking school dedicated to fighting obesity. He has been cooking and teaching professionally for more than 14 years. Email any questions or comments to [chefrich@healthyflame.com](mailto:chefrich@healthyflame.com)

### Penne Pasta with Asparagus, Peas, Mushrooms, Fava Beans and Tomatoes

Penne pasta ..... 1 pound  
Olive oil ..... as needed  
Asparagus ..... 12 spears  
Peas ..... 5 oz  
Fava beans ..... 5 oz  
Garlic cloves, minced ..... 4 cloves  
Onions, minced ..... 1 small  
Tomato paste ..... 4 tbsp  
Red wine, optional ..... 1/4 cup  
Basil, fresh, sliced ..... 6 leaves  
Parsley, minced ..... 1 tsp  
Chicken stock ..... 1 cup  
Mushrooms, quartered ..... 5 oz  
Tomatoes, seeded, cored and diced ..... 4 each

#### Method:

In salted, boiling water, cook the pasta until al dente. Drain the pasta, saving the boiled water, and toss it with a little oil and let it cool in the refrigerator.

Sauté mushrooms in olive oil until brown and season with salt and pepper.

Remove the mushrooms and set aside. Add the onions to the sauté pan for 10 minutes then add the tomato paste and cook for about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until the aroma is released.

Deglaze with wine and reduce the liquid by half. Add the asparagus, fava beans, peas, mushrooms, and tomatoes and give 3-5 minutes in between.

When done, add the pasta and herbs. Stir and serve.

Use the boiled water from cooking the pasta to thin out the sauce, if necessary.

# Joel Salatin talks gardens, technology

I recently spoke with Joel Salatin. Joel is working on the leading edge of sustainable farming practices at his Polyface Farm in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. He makes an appearance in the movie "Food, Inc." and numerous other contemporary agricultural media productions. He's written several books, with his most recent titled "Folks, This Ain't Normal."

**Tom Carey:** How big is your vegetable garden?

**Joel Salatin:** It's hard to say, but a quarter acre would be about correct and add a quarter acre in hoop houses. As the animals from the hoop houses come out in the spring, we then go in with vegetables starting with sweet corn. We do a lot of micro-site gardening. Shitake logs under the eaves of the barn get the roof dripping on them. Where the cows are kept at the hay shed in the wintertime, the deep bedding gets churned up muddy and heavily fertilized, almost compost. We grow our potatoes there, it's already tilled up, and so we just set the potatoes on the ground under some straw. Another barn we have has a southern exposure and that's where we grow our cucumbers. They grow up the side of the barn with moisture dripping from the awnings. It's a real nice fertile micro-site, full of red wrigglers,



**Tom Carey**  
From My Garden to Yours

with compost from the barn animals. You can get a lot of space real quick using micro-sites.

**Tom:** Do you look at your educational help as a source of affordable labor, or do you put emphasis on teaching the next generation of farmers to help them dip their toe in the water?

**Joel:** We do look at it as an education, and while we certainly do work them plenty hard, we also do some formal evening lectures; we visit other farms and agricultural enterprises. Lest anybody think this is cheap labor when you've rewelded the trailer hitch for the 10th time because somebody took off without lifting up the jack. This cheap labor comes with a cost.

**Tom:** I've read your new book, "Folks, This Ain't Normal," and numerous Acres USA columns and articles. Following the themes you write about, do

you see that decentralized food production is becoming more efficient due to appropriate technology and information sources?

**Joel:** We are seeing a local food tsunami that is being enabled by technology. A big hurdle has been economy of scale and efficient distribution between farm and fork. You can't expect everybody to drive around to 10 farms to get their food. Now, there are companies that are electronic farmers markets (Home-grown Co-op). The electronic media technology was developed for globalization but is being co-opted to enable localization. We'll see a move away from bricks and mortar to embracing the electronic commerce interface. We're finding much more efficient ways to interface the customer and producer. We're making an end run around big warehousing. Retail façades are too expensive, from display coolers and cash registers, to stocking shelves with retail processed products. We did a comparison of our prices and we're now cheaper than most competitors in our area, even the organic supermarkets. By leveraging the sheer efficiency of the electronic interface we're seeing the beginning of the future.

**Tom:** Food deserts in inner cities are starting to be served by urban farms using high-intensity



**Joel Salatin**

hydroponic and aquaponic systems, hoop houses and framed raised beds. Are you comfortable with these high-tech methods?

**Joel:** There's still so much we can do using traditional methods. This country has 35 million acres of lawns, 36 million acres for recreational horses, and we haven't even touched golf courses. Cornell University did a study, and the state of New York has 3.1 million acres of fallow farms, land that is no longer working farms. Twenty years ago there was so much concern over suburban development and malls gobbling up farmland, but the bigger issue now is land abandonment. I do not espouse the idea that the only

way to heal land is to abandon it. Human involvement with land is not inherently evil or debilitating. Our mandate as humans is to use our intellect to massage the landscape into better productivity, i.e. more solar energy converted into growing biomass, than nature does if left in a static state.

**Tom:** When organic produce, grown in real soil, must be certified (which my gardens are not), while all the other high-tech methods, not to mention conventional chemical farming, aren't certified, it all gets a bit confusing.

**Joel:** There's no comparison to knowing your farmer, visiting the farm, taking a look around and satisfying yourself. People say 'I don't have time to do that,' but they do have time to watch TV, go on a Caribbean cruise, visit Disney World, to shop for \$100 designer jeans with holes already in the knees. We tend to make time for the things we think are important. We need to choose to take our time to discover the farm treasures in our communities. You'll get knowledgeable and find what is important to you.

*Tom Carey is the owner of Sundew Gardens, a you-pick gardening business near the University of Central Florida in East Orlando. Visit the Sundew Gardens Facebook page.*

## Letters to the editor

### We are government

I am a student in Ms. Dixon's eighth grade American History class at Avalon Middle School. We are currently studying government. I read the article, "We should all learn from Seminole County's mistake" (ran in the Feb. 3 issue of the East Orlando Sun). I couldn't agree more. I agree with pretty much everything in the article, especially the quote, "Government is not a business. Nor should it be, Government isn't just me, it's us. Good government is everyone." I know I'm sort of beating the horse with a club when I say this, but government is *everything*. We need it. Mostly because it is us, as it states in the article.

I myself go to Avalon Middle School, which is why I also agree with the fact that it is a great school. Schools should be built for a cheaper cost and what the government is doing is completely selfish. Profit shouldn't be what they are looking for. They should be looking to help the community out and start focusing on other things to improve economic life in today's world. Like the article says, efficiency and results are key, as well as an end product that does what it should do sustainably.

In the end, government is key to our lives in today's world and should be worked on and improved. I think the government should start listening to more ideas and stop running the states like a business. We *should* learn from others mistakes, and it isn't like Seminole County messing up shouldn't affect us. We *need* to improve, whether it is a slow or fast progression. Things like government can mean everything to some people and should not be a joke or a ruined part of the United States.

Thanks,  
Alec Johnston  
Avalon Middle School

### Column serves as lesson

I teach eighth grade American History at Avalon Middle School. We are studying

the creation of the Constitution during the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Preliminary to that was the study of the first Constitution, which is the Articles of Confederation. This lesson involves a study of the faults and inadequacies of the central government in meeting the needs of the new country after the Revolutionary War. All the honors classes read the editorial from Mr. Kahli regarding the problems with the school system in Seminole County (ran in the Feb. 3 issue of the East Orlando Sun). It was perfect for a comparison and contrast between the government at that time and one of our current local governments: how the first citizens "watched" the government like a hawk fearing a return to the way they had been treated under British rule, to Seminole County citizens not being so watchful of their elected leaders with a strong central government.

Students were assigned to respond to Mr. Kahli's editorial. Three of the editorial responses were selected to be sent to the newspaper for the next edition. I think you will see the skill and knowledge the students have, and their ability to speak frankly about our government. All the students and I would be thrilled and honored to have their letters printed in the editorial section.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Catherine Dixon  
Nanuq Team – eighth-grade American History  
Avalon Middle School

### Column is right on

In your article about the things we should learn from Seminole County's mistake (ran in the Feb. 3 issue of the East Orlando Sun), you mentioned things like "Government is not a business. Nor should it be. Government isn't just me, it's us. Good government is everyone."

I utterly and completely agree with this statement. The founders of our government and the Articles of Confederation wanted our government to be like this.

They didn't achieve this goal then, but just like other counties are learning from Seminole's mistake, we, the United States, have learned from our founders' mistakes and are coming closer to achieving this goal.

America's government was created by the people; not I, it was created by us. Even our governments in each county, state and our overall country, was chosen by us. We elected our representatives and everyone created an overall good government. Although our government might be good as a whole, we do have our ups and downs; all governments do, from beginning to end, "For better or worse, our government is us."

You mentioned in your article that we get to choose those who represent us. Also, constantly Seminole voters choose those who say they will cut taxes and government spending, even though cutting these things causes certain things to go away, such as some public schools. This predicament Seminole County is going through isn't good, like you said, we have to realize and figure out, "What do we want our government to do?" It's truly outstanding how you really just state your opinion in black and white, and truly support what you believe in, which most people will not do. Most would just agree to one thing, then not take responsibility for their words and actions, which is what everyone needs to do. Instead of having the few brave and courageous people who will stand for what they believe in or believe in what's right, we need the entire country, state and county to stand as a whole. We need to become less enthralled in ourselves and care more about what we and our government can do together.

Thank you,  
Hailey Jenkins  
Avalon Middle School

### Government should have power

Hi, my name is Lauren and I am an eighth grader from Avalon Middle School.

Have an opinion? Send it to [newsdesk@eosun.com](mailto:newsdesk@eosun.com)

In history, we are learning about the Articles of Confederation and how it helped shape and form our government today.

To further enhance our learning, our teacher presented us with your article about Seminole County's problem (ran in the Feb. 3 issue of the East Orlando Sun). We thoroughly read the passage and discussed it. Our teacher asked us to compare and contrast the problem now to the problem the Americans faced writing the Articles of Confederation.

It seems that both problems have been caused by people wanting the government to have less power over them. But, if the government has no power, why have the government at all? I think that the people in Seminole County need to understand that the government can't decrease taxes too dramatically, otherwise they'll have no funding to improve their community and the environment in which we live in.

There is, however, a difference between these two issues. Which do you think is worse: ignorance or apathy? Do you think each is just as destructive?

When they were writing the Articles of Confederation, they all were very concerned about the formation of the government. However, they were ignorant to the effects it would have on the states as a united nation. In Seminole County, the people seemed well-informed about the issues in their county. Unlike the writers of the Articles of Confederation, it wasn't ignorance that caused the problem, but it was their apathy. They didn't care what the government was doing with their funds; they just didn't want to give up their money.

I really enjoyed reading your article. I do agree that we are the government and it is up to us whether it is good and effective or not. It was constructed by the people, for the people.

Thank you  
Lauren Culibao  
Avalon Middle School

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