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Details on page 18

Commissioners spare New River library

By B.C. Manion
bcmorian@cnewspubs.com

Patrons of New River Branch Library can breathe a sigh of relief.

The Pasco County Commission voted unanimously last week to keep open both the Wesley Chapel library as well as the Centennial Park Branch Library in Holiday.

The decision came after library supporters reminded commissioners how important those libraries are in the communities where they operate.

One woman described the New River Branch as having the welcoming feel conveyed on the television sitcom "Cheers," saying it's a place "where everyone knows your name."

She told commissioners that the library is a community gathering spot, serving everyone "from the tiniest child up through seniors."

Diane Halterman, a former county library system branch manager from Zephyrhills, also weighed in on the topic.

See LIBRARY, page 12

Pasco approves virtual school, despite having reservations

By Michael Hinman
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They didn't like it, but the Pasco County School Board earlier this month approved the application of a virtual charter school that was once under state investigation.

In a 3-1 vote, with Alison Crumbley dissenting, the board allowed the Southwest Florida Virtual Charter Board to open a virtual charter school in Pasco County — as long as the school meets stringent quality guidelines.

It turned a rather significant page in the evolution of virtual education with the expansion of such services in the county. But then the landscape shifted significantly when the state-run Florida Virtual School announced massive layoffs after an enrollment drop and changes to how the state funds it.

The future of educating students no matter where they are is at a precipice, and virtual education must find a way to not only survive, but thrive, says Pasco eSchool principal Joanne Glenn.

"It's a great choice option for a variety of families in a variety of circumstances," Glenn said.

Virtual schools are typically done



Science teacher Stephanie Carter prepares to give a virtual class through her laptop and tablet computer setup as part of the first day of school for Pasco eSchool last year. Joining Carter are, from left, Chinese language teacher Kim Giorgio, English and language arts teacher Heather Kline, and music and physical education teacher Kristi Duffy. (Photo courtesy of Pasco eSchool)

through a computer and Internet connection, and were designed for students who were geographically challenged to get specific coursework from a bricks and mortar operation. Today, however, these types of schools are being used more and more by students looking to supplement what they're already doing in an actual school classroom.

Students in kind of a traditional setting

began to supplement their instruction through virtual schools," Glenn said. "They can take courses to recover credits, or even take courses that can accelerate their workload, to help them complete graduation requirements in their off time, so they can free up space to do a dual enrollment court or advanced placement."

See VIRTUAL, page 12

Golf club reopens, denies ownership shakeup

By Michael Hinman
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After a dramatic and highly publicized shutdown Aug. 10, Plantation Palms Golf Club is back in business, reopening its links to golfers Aug. 16. Yet what caused the golf course to shut down in the first place continues to linger in some minds.

"It was just a culmination of a lot of things that led up to the closing, but mostly the economy," said Jason Ray, who co-owns the golf club with Mitch Osceola and Steve McDonald through MJS Golf Group LLC. "It's been too hot, and it's been raining, and the culmination of all that, just resulted in not a lot of people playing golf. Summertime is always tough for all the golf courses."

Ray and the other owners purchased the golf club in May 2011, using a \$2.18 million mortgage through Native American Bank of Denver. The 5-acre course features 18 holes, a driving range, a clubhouse and a lounge.

The course is the nucleus of the Plantation Palms community that surrounds it just off Collier Parkway near Parkway



Plantation Palms Golf Club closed for about a week earlier this month, citing a poor time of year thanks to summer heat ... and summer rain. The club reopened quickly, and is set to offer a prime rib dinner to members Friday night. (Photos by Michael Hinman)

Boulevard, said Steve Pitts, who owns the golf pro shop at the course.

"For the homeowners there, their best shot is to have these guys who are owners work this thing out," said Pitts, a Land O'

Lakes resident who owns Steve's World of Golf in Hudson. "It needs to be a positive, positive business in the center of that great community. And yeah, it's going through some tough times between the owners right now, but I can tell you from being on the inside, those problems are just about done."

Pitts had pulled his pro shop out of Plantation Palms earlier this year, despite it being his top sales location out of his 18 shops around the southeast.

"The bills weren't getting paid, and we had to pull out," Pitts said.

Since Friday, however, Steve's World of Golf is slowly moving back in because he's encouraged by what he said was a management shakeup that would reduce the ownership team from three to either two, or possibly even one.

David Brooks, an avid golfer and Plantation Palms resident, said he heard the same reports of management changes during the golf club's down time.

See GOLF, page 12

Pasco residents expect 9 percent tax hike

Sheriff's budget won't grow

By B.C. Manion
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Pasco County commissioners spent hours whittling away at different portions of the county's \$1.16 billion budget last week, but didn't make a dent in a proposed tax hike.

Based on the county's proposed millage rate, officials say the owner of a \$100,000 house, assuming a \$50,000 exemption, would pay \$33 more a year.

Scores of taxpayers have contacted commissioners voicing opposition, but commissioners continue to move forward with the proposed increase.

The proposed property tax rate is 7.49 mills, up from last year's rate of 6.86 mills. The proposed municipal fire rate is 1.71 mills, up from 1.54 mills last year. Each mill is equal to \$1 for every \$1,000 of taxable value.

Commissioners did not reduce the proposed rates, despite rejecting a request by Pasco County Sheriff Chris Nocco to increase his \$91 million budget by \$500,000.

The sheriff initially proposed a \$93 million budget. County officials recommended a \$91 million budget, then Nocco came and asked commissioners for \$500,000 more. However, commissioners noted the sheriff's budget has continued to go up, while other county departments absorbed cuts.

"I think he's got to learn to live within his budget," Commissioner Pat Mulieri said. "I just think there is a limit."

While rejecting the half-million bump, commissioners agreed to Nocco's request to use Penny for Pasco funds to purchase unmarked detective cars and other sheriff's office vehicles.

While they didn't lower the proposed tax rate, commissioners made about \$700,000 in cuts in the proposed budget to plug an unexpected revenue gap. The changes were needed because Mike Fasano, the county's newly appointed tax collector, informed the county that it had overestimated the amount of money his office would return to the county by about \$720,000.

Fasano recently assumed the office that was held by Mike Olson, who died suddenly in June.

To help balance their proposed budget, commissioners trimmed an allocation for a master facilities plan, eliminated a proposal to beef up code enforcement, reduced the amount of funding for a communications office among other things. They're still about \$52,000 from where they need to be.

Commissioner Henry Wilson, who voted against the tentative tax rate in July, remains opposed. "I still can't support this," he said.

Commission Chairman Ted Schrader told Wilson that he's being disingenuous, unless he can recommend specific budget cuts.

"I have not completed looking at the book," Wilson said. "I'm still trying to figure out places to cut."

Commissioners are set to have their first public hearing on the proposed budget on Sept. 10, with a second and final hearing on Sept. 24.

HEALTH & WELLNESS



Hospice Care at Heather Hill celebrates first anniversary

Gulfside Regional Hospice president and CEO Linda Ward, left, celebrates the first anniversary of the Gulfside Center for Hospice Care at Heather Hill in New Port Richey with Virginia Bittenbender, nurse care manager, and Brian Jackson, center administrator, at a party on July 31. (Photo courtesy of Gulfside Regional Hospice)

Infant care classes

The obstetrics program at Medical Center of Trinity is offering an infant care class to provide parents with the knowledge and skills to make their transition into parenting smooth and comfortable. This is a six-hour course, consisting of two classes on two consecutive Thursdays. The cost is \$40. The next course is Aug. 22 at 6 p.m. at 9330 SR 54 in Trinity. For information, call (727) 834-5630.

Tools to Quit program

The Medical Center of Trinity is offering a free seminar to help tobacco users quit. "Tools to Quit" will be Aug. 22 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the medical center, 9330 SR 54 in Trinity. Participants will set a quit date, make a plan, and receive optional free nicotine replacement therapy. The program is sponsored by the Florida Department of Health. For information, call (813) 929-1000.

Co-dependence group

The Medical Center of Trinity will host the new Co-Dependence Anonymous Group on Aug. 22 and Aug. 29 from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the West Pasco Campus, 5637 Marine Parkway in New Port Richey. The group is a fellowship of men and women whose common purpose is to develop healthy relationships. For information, call Shirley at (727) 816-8678 or Judy at (727) 858-3013.

Cancer support evening

Keystone Community Church is hosting guest speaker HOPE founder Darlene Gant on Aug. 26 at 7 p.m. Gant's organization is a nonprofit for those with cancer seeking support and health options. She will share her story of survival and triumph over cancer. The church is at 21010 SR 54 in Lutz. For information, call Walt Bockmiller at (813) 527-8211 or the church at (813) 948-4522.

Sleep disorder presentation

Florida Hospital Wesley Chapel will host guest speaker Dr. Brett Scotch on Aug. 27 from noon to 1 p.m. in the Health & Wellness Center. The seminar is "Tired of Snoring? Update on Sleep Disorders in 2013." Learn how to improve sleeping, breathing and well-being. A free lunch will be served. Reservations are required. Space is limited. For information and to register, call (813) 929-5432.

Alzheimer's support group

Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point's Alzheimer's monthly support group will meet on Sept. 3 from 10 a.m. to noon at 14000 Fivay Road in Hudson. The meeting is open to caregivers and others interested in discussing and exchanging ideas in the care of Alzheimer's patients. For information, call Laura Arnold at (727) 863-0176.

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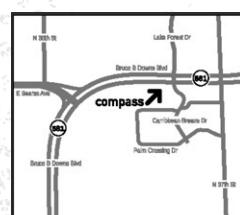
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Local woman sees world through new lens

By Michael Hinman

mhinman@cnewspubs.com

For two years, longtime Lutz resident Linda Reynolds found her home in a country whose population is about the size of Hillsborough and Pinellas counties put together.

The Republic of Macedonia, formed in the early 1990s following the breakup of Yugoslavia, was never a place Reynolds thought she'd ever found herself in. But that trip changed her life.

"I was a business manager, and one of the original employees of Transitions Optical back in 1992," Reynolds said. "I helped to grow the business from a very small company to a worldwide leader in optical lenses."

But after 18 years on the job, Reynolds knew it was time for something different. It was exactly when she found the Peace Corps.

"It's something that I wanted to do ever since I was a child," said Reynolds, who turned 57 last weekend. "I truly believe that the way the world gets to be a better place is by people connecting, and I think the Peace Corps is a fabulous way to serve the country."

It takes a village

After a lengthy application process and extensive training, Reynolds found herself on a plane to Eastern Europe in 2011. While traditional Peace Corps jobs are thought of as doctors and language teachers, Reynolds was taking a different path: community and business development.

She set up shop in Kriva Palanka, a small town in the northeastern part of Macedonia, not far from the Bulgaria border where more than 14,000 people live. Reynolds connected with community leaders there to find out



Linda Reynolds makes her way across a rickety bridge not far from her host family's house in the Kratovo area of Macedonia. Reynolds, a 34-year resident of Lutz, served two years in the Peace Corps. (Photo courtesy of Linda Reynolds)

what the small town needed, and how she could make a difference.

One of her first targets was a fire station that probably hadn't been touched since the 1950s, Reynolds said. It was in desperate need of renovation, so with the help of a \$4,000 grant she obtained, Reynolds worked with the firefighters to spruce up the place.

"I got board, and they made cabinets," she said, "I got PVC pipe, and they built a bathroom. I bought laminate floor, and they laid it. At the end of all of it, these firefighters had a professional place to work and to live, and every single firefighter contributed their time to make it happen."

The right stuff

Peace Corps volunteers like Reynolds are really diehard individuals, said Alethea Parker,

public affairs specialist for Peace Corps in Atlanta.

"It's a large commitment to be away from your family and friends for two years," she said. "But from our perspective, it's very rewarding and impactful ... and it is important work."

The only requirements to become a Peace Corps volunteer are being at least 18 years old, and a U.S. citizen. But getting selected, that is much more daunting.

"Our application process is quite competitive," Parker said. "Most of our programs do require at least a bachelor's degree, and we are typically looking at several years of full-time professional work experience."

But the number of applications doesn't mean the Peace Corps isn't in need of good candidates. With a little more than 8,000 slots available around the world and an annual budget about the size of an oil company's daily profits, the Peace Corps must be very selective.

Being a Peace Corps volunteer has its advantages beyond just helping out overseas. Medical expenses are covered at 100 percent, and a decent stipend is offered to cover day-to-day living expenses.

Life back home

Reynolds had a small apartment in Kriva Palanka where she adopted two cats — not

a very common pet in that part of the world.

"People thought it was very, very odd that I had cats in my apartment," Reynolds said. "There, cats are outside animals. So it was very hard to go to the supermarket in my little town and find the supplies I was looking for to take care of my cats."

Reynolds has only been back in the United States for about four months, and after 34 years living in Lutz, has now settled in Atlanta closer to her children. Reynolds hasn't quite decided what she wants to do with her life now that she's back, but she's definitely a much different person than when she left two years ago.

"I find myself less frantic," she said. "I don't have a job, but I'm not frantic about it. It's too early for me to retire, and I'm too old to start a new career. But I would like to find something that will allow me to contribute to something in a meaningful way."

"I'm just trying to get my sea legs back and not rush into anything. And I'm fortunate that I don't have to."

The Peace Corps currently has 36 volunteers from the Tampa Bay area serving overseas, and more than 850 volunteers from the region have participated since President John F. Kennedy founded the program in 1961.

Right now, however, the Peace Corps needs 1,000 volunteers, and it is recruiting now. Details can be found online at www.PeaceCorps.gov.

"If a young person from any community could go and spend time in a village some place in the world and come back to use everything they learned, we would be a better country as leaders," Reynolds said. "We would definitely have a more worldly viewpoint that would make us more sensitive in our roles as leaders of the world."

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Traditional party-turned-fundraiser hauls in \$3,600 for cancer

By Marcia Stone
Special to The Laker

After six years of having a summer party, long-time Land O'Lakes resident Gary "Cuz" Mincin learned he had prostate cancer and decided to try to raise funds for the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center.

The first fundraiser brought in \$460. The next year, the Krewe of Blackbeard's Revenge joined in and matched Mincin's \$900, for a total of \$1,800.



Land O'Lakes resident Steve Wallace shows off the Kid Rock guitar he won at Cuz Fest 9.



Cuz, Krewe members Jean 'Eliza Dagger' White, charity director, and Captain Darrell Haun raffle prizes onstage at Cuz Fest 9. (Photos by Marcia Stone)

Mincin and the Krewe worked tirelessly to put together this year's event, and \$3,600 was raised.

Guests brought a favorite dish to add to the endless and fabulous feast. Entertainment by local groups included Allen-Griffin, Dead Man's Rodeo and Smoke N Run. Local establishments including Wolf's Den, Village Inn, Westshore Pizza, Tire Kingdom, Uptown

Pizza, Pizza Villa, Benedetto's, Texas Roadhouse and several others donated raffle prizes.

The grand prizes included four guitars, including several autographed by Kid Rock, Tom Petty, Jimmy Page and the band Seven Dust. Land O'Lakes resident Steve Wallace won the Kid Rock guitar.

A heated swimming pool and a fireworks



'Cuz' Gary Mincin has had his private party for nine years running, and his goal for next year is \$5,000 to benefit the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center.

show added to the event.

Krewe members Jean "Eliza Dagger" White and Cheryl Stewart worked the audience raising the donations even higher.

Mincin said he is overwhelmed at how large his private event has become, and added that many cancer survivors attend. Numerous people give their time and labor, and Mincin said he wishes to thank all of them.

Next year's goal is \$5,000, and Mincin is now contemplating a fall event to help support All Children's Hospital.

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Economic boom? County commits \$50,000 to Saddlebrook golf

By B.C. Manion
bcmorian@cnewspubs.com

Pasco County and Saddlebrook Resort Tampa are joining forces to host the 2014 Golfweek Senior Amateur Championship and the Golfweek Junior Tour Championship early next year.

The Pasco County Commission voted unanimously to approve a \$50,000 sponsorship in a joint venture with Saddlebrook and Golfweek Magazine.

"I think this is a phenomenal opportunity," Commissioner Jack Mariano said.

If the county can get people to look at Pasco, especially at the right time of year, it could open new possibilities, not only for Saddlebrook, but for other quality area golf courses, Mariano said.

"The promotional value to Pasco County, highlighting some strong assets that we have, is tremendous," he said.

"Maybe this will be the beginning of a lot



Pasco County's tourism council is using golf courses like the one at Saddlebrook Resort to help highlight the sporting opportunities available to tourists. (File photo)

of opportunities," said Commission Chairman Ted Schrader, noting the county's success with the national lacrosse tournament that takes place annually in Wesley Chapel.

This partnership is the tourism office's first foray into promoting Pasco's golf amenities, said Eric Keaton of the Office of Tourism Development. Revenues from bed taxes pale in comparison to the promotion-

al value of the venture.

Besides Saddlebrook, the county has 20-plus courses, Keaton said.

"Golfweek and Saddlebrook are going to work together to not only promote their destination, but also a number of other golf destinations in the county," Keaton said.

Keaton told commissioners the tourism office has the money to cover the expense

because its revenues exceeded expectations, and costs were kept below budget. The value of the partnership "exceeds the purchase price two-fold," agenda documents supporting the proposal noted, adding that Golfweek is the "Cadillac of golfing advertising platforms."

The senior tournament is scheduled for Jan. 15-17 and is expected to involve 80 players on one golf course. The event should generate 400-plus room nights, as golfers arrive the day before the three-day tournament, and depart the day after the event ends.

Spouses are expected to accompany the senior golfers, potentially bringing in more revenue to the county.

The junior tournament, which will be in January or February, is expected to draw 40 to 60 golfers on a single course and will involve two days of golf, the agenda materials read.

The event is projected to create 240-plus room nights with golfers accompanied by their families.

Casino night will make one charity a lucky winner

By Michael Hinman
mhinman@cnewspubs.com

Forget reality television. The Pasco Hernando Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has developed a competition that gives four solid charities a chance to raise a lot of money, but only one can win.

Havana Casino Night is slated for Aug. 29 beginning at 6 p.m. at Quail Hollow, 6225 Old Pasco Road in Wesley Chapel. Presented by Rivera Chiropractic, the evening will include hand-rolled cigars, a cash bar, casino games, and music from Jorge Laureano & His Fiesta Orchestra.

The biggest event of the night, however, is who will walk away with half the casino

night jackpot: Will it be Big Brothers Big Sisters? Helping Hands Food Pantry of Wesley Chapel? The Wesley Chapel Lions Club? Or, the Oasis Pregnancy Care Centers?

"We didn't want to be the ones that said let's choose, so we decided to leave that up to the public," said John Jay, president of PHHCC, and owner of Finest DeeJays in Wesley Chapel. "Staying with our casino theme, everyone will place their bets on who will win half the proceeds."

The decision will be made by who ends up with the most poker chips by the end of the night. Those poker chips will come from each person attending the casino night, encouraging all four organizations to bring as many potential supporters as possible.

The other half of the proceeds will go toward PHHCC's scholarship fund, which will help three students this year seek out a college education.

Even if they don't take home a bucket of quarters, each charity will have a chance to share what they do — and what they need — with the community, Jay said.

For instance, Big Brothers Big Sisters always has a need for Latino and Latina mentors. Helping Hands feeds hundreds of people throughout Wesley Chapel every week. And the Lions Club is raising money to build a park especially for handicapped children.

Oasis supplies food and other needs for pregnant women who have nowhere else

If you go...

The Havana Casino Night Fundraiser takes place Aug. 29 from 6-10 p.m. at Quail Hollow, 6225 Old Pasco Road in Wesley Chapel. Tickets are \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door.

Details are available at www.phhchamber.com, or by calling John Jay at (813) 298-3232.

to turn.

"These four organizations all give back to the community," Jay said. "Our main goal is to give back to the community as well, and to give these organizations a helping hand. And this way, we can bring a light to each and every one of them."

ROBOTIC PRECISION WITH A HUMAN TOUCH

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12 - 22 lbs \$55

23 - 44 lbs \$60

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67 - 88 lbs \$90

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Weekend Vaccine Clinics

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1 to 2 pm

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SAT., AUG. 24TH

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PET of the WEEK

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Meet The Starbucks Gang

Latte is a 2-year-old Maltipoo, and Mocha is a 2-year-old Lhasapoo. They love to go for long walks. The neighbors have nicknamed them "The Starbucks Gang." Latte and Mocha run and play in their backyard and are hosts of many Land O' Lakes Dog Park parties in their backyard. The proud doggy parents are Steve and Karen Fortin of Lutz.

**PET OF THE WEEK FAMILIES RECEIVE A \$50 GIFT CERTIFICATE
FROM RED HYDRANT PET SPA & BOUTIQUE TO USE
IN ITS RETAIL STORE FOR TREATS, TOYS, COLLARS,
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Send us a picture and information on your favorite pet!

Write a short paragraph about why your pet is special along with a photo and mail to: Pet of the Week, c/o The Laker, P.O. Box 479, Lutz, FL 33548 or email to kwelton@cnewspubs.com, ATTN: Pet of the Week

**PLEASE NOTE: OWNERS NAME AND ADDRESS MUST BE INCLUDED
FOR YOUR PET TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PUBLICATION.**



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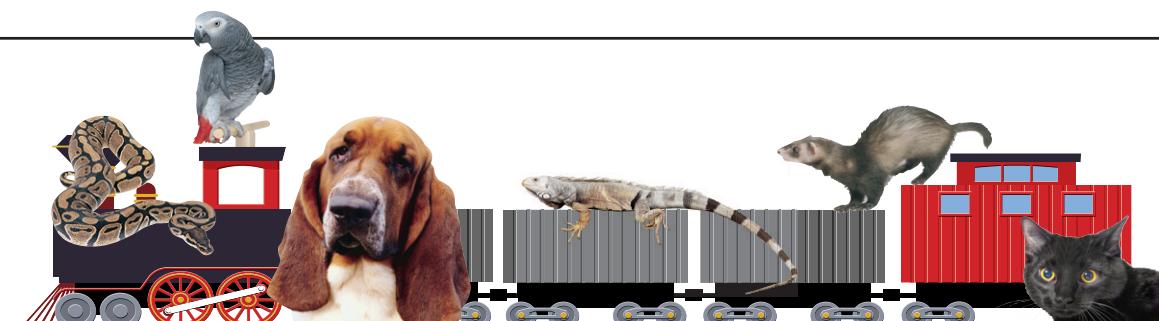
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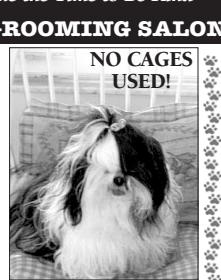
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Donna Powell, DO



Jennifer Giglia, MD

Women's Health Wednesday Wednesday, September 4, 6pm

Join us to discuss digestive and colon health. Donna Powell, DO, Internal Medicine, a specialist in gastroenterology, will discuss how to maintain a healthy digestive system along with signs and symptoms of digestive issues. Jennifer Giglia, MD, Medical Oncology, will discuss the diagnosis and advanced medical treatment options for colorectal cancer.

The following topics will be covered:

- Crohn's disease
- Diverticulitis
- Ulcerative colitis
- Colon cancer
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)

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What's Happening

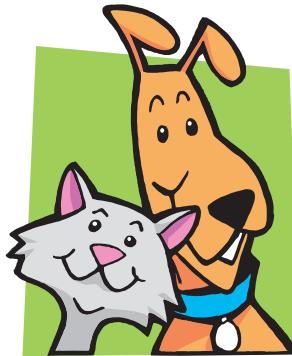
Your Community Calendar • Submit 2 weeks in advance to: whatshappening@cnewspubs.com • All listings free of charge

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

New Tampa Players will present Rodgers and Hammerstein's "The Sound of Music" at Crosspointe Church of the Nazarene on Aug. 23 at 8 p.m., Aug. 24 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Aug. 25 at 2 p.m. The church is at 919 Debuel Road in Lutz. For ticket information and group rates, call (813) 386-6687.

FREE PET VACCINATIONS

The Humane Society of Tampa Bay is offering free pet shots on Aug. 24 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Northdale Park, 15550 Spring Pine Drive in Tampa. The free vaccinations will be available to Hillsborough residents, but limited to the first 500 animals. There is a household limit of four animals. Dogs must be on leashes. Cats must be in carriers or traps. For information on age requirements and types of vaccines, call (813) 367-2078 or visit humaneocietytampa.org/shotclinics.



FAME JR. IN CARROLLWOOD

The Carrollwood Players & Theatre By Young People will present the musical "Fame Jr." through Aug. 25 at the Carrollwood Playhouse, 4335 Gunn Highway. The shows are Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m. Tickets start at \$11. For reservations, call (813) 265-4000 or visit www.carrollwoodplayers.org.

FIELD DAY FUN

Local Cub Scout Pack 212 and Boy Scout Troop 212 will host a fun field day on Aug. 24 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Tim's Memorial Presbyterian Church, 601 Sunset Lane in Lutz. The event will include games, faces, fun physical and mental contests, and information about scouting.

CONSERVATORY OPEN HOUSE

The Patel Conservatory at the Straz Center for the Performing Arts will have an open house on Aug. 24 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. There will be orientation sessions at 10 a.m. and noon. There will also be free dance classes and auditions for the Vocal Arts program. The Straz Center is at 1010 North W.C. MacInnes Place in Tampa. For information about auditions or to RSVP for open house, call (813) 222-1002 or email patelconservatory@strazcenter.org.

GREYHOUND DOGS

Greyhound Rescue and Adoptions of Tampa Bay will host a meet and greet with greyhounds and their adoptive or foster parents on Aug. 24 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Port Richey Petco, 9638 US 19 North. For information, visit (813) 971-4732 or visit www.great-greyhound.org.

Boots and Bling Fundraiser

The Pasco Aging Network will host its Boots and Bling fundraiser on Aug. 23 from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. at Spartan Manor in New Port Richey. There will be a Texas Hold 'Em poker tournament, along with other games, dancing, food and an auction. Proceeds help support senior services in Pasco County.

Tickets are \$25 each, or two for \$40, prior to the event. The cost at the door is \$35.

Tickets include 100 gaming bling bucks and hors d'oeuvres. For tickets, call Terry Weaver at (352) 796-9891 or email tweaver@wilsontechgroup.com.



BEAUTY PAGEANT PREVIEW

There will be a free meeting for anyone interested in pageant details for the 2013-14 season on Aug. 24 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at 24824 SR 54 in Lutz. Everyone who attends will get a free facial and makeover with new color looks for fall. Refreshments will be served. To RSVP, call Vicky McShane at (813) 714-6513.

RIDE THROUGH HISTORY

The Armed Forces History Museum in Largo will host a day of family fun on Aug. 24 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with a variety of activities. Those attending can get a close-up look at military vehicles, view a re-enactment of a World War II infantry division, and "ride" a number of vehicles. There will be free hot dogs, and snacks and beverages will be available for purchase. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for kids ages 4-12. Ticket price includes museum admission. For information, visit armedforcesmuseum.com.

CASABLANCA AT TAMPA THEATRE

Tampa Theatre is showing the film "Casablanca" on Aug. 24 and Aug. 25 at 3 p.m. as part of its Summer Classics movie series. Tickets are \$9 for general admission and \$7 for theater members. The theater is at 711 N. Franklin St. in Tampa. For information, call (813) 274-8981.

'DYING TO BE HEARD' PREMIERES

Local company Tender Shoot Films will premiere "Dying to be Heard" on Aug. 25 at 2:30 p.m. at Muvico Starlight in Tampa. The film is based on true stories and underscores the reality of God's compassion for every human life, from the disabled, to the autistic, to those who perished in the Holocaust, and the unborn. Tickets are \$7.50 for adults and \$4.50 for children, and can be purchased at dyingtobeheard.eventbrite.com. The theater is at 18002 Highwoods Preserve Parkway. For information, email Alyse Merritt at alysemerritt@gmail.com or call (813) 335-0234.

DEODORANT SWAP OUT

Whole Foods Market in Carrollwood is hosting a Naturally Fresh Deodorant Swap

Out on Aug. 25 starting at noon in the Whole Body Department. Swap out your old deodorant stick for a free full-size version of Naturally Fresh deodorant, while supplies last. Limit one per household. Whole Foods is at 3802 Northdale Blvd. in Carrollwood.

BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

Career Central is offering open roundtables on the topic "Assessing Your Business Training Needs" to the business communities of Pasco and Hernando counties.

-Aug. 27, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., at 7361 Forest Oaks Blvd. in Spring Hill. Call (352) 200-3027.

-Aug. 29, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., at 4440 Grand Blvd. in New Port Richey. Call (727) 484-3400, ext. 3027.

CULTURAL CENTER OPEN HOUSE

The Carrollwood Cultural Center will host an open house and class preview on Aug. 28 from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at 4537 Lowell Road in Tampa. The event will showcase new classes being offered and instructors will be available to answer questions. Anyone registering for a class during the open house will receive 5 percent off their total tuition. To view a class schedule, visit www.CarrollwoodCenter.org/classes.

REPUBLICAN CLUB

The Republican Club of Central Pasco will host guest speaker, Mike Fasano, tax collector, on Aug. 28 at 6 p.m. The club meets at Copperstone Executive Suites, 3632 Land O' Lakes Blvd. in Land O' Lakes. For information, call Steve Graves at (813) 996-3011.

FOOD TRUCK RALLY

Generation Food Truck and The Florida State Fairgrounds Authority will present the world's largest food truck rally on Aug. 31 from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the Fairgrounds, 4800 US 301 N in Tampa. There will be more than 100 gourmet trucks and a free concert headlined by "Escape Tonight" from St. Petersburg. Parking fee is \$6 per car and \$12 per RV or bus. For information, email 100TruckRally@gmail.com or Generationfoodtruck@gmail.com.

GULFPORT GECKOFEST

The 13th annual Geckofest Gulfport is Aug. 31 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. at 3129 Beach Blvd. South in Gulfport. The event includes live music on two stages, costume contest, street performers, artisans, kids zone and food vendors. A Gecko Ball will precede the event on Aug. 24. For information, visit www.GulfportMA.com or www.Geckofest.com.

DINOSAUR WORLD DISCOUNT

Through Sept. 2, Florida residents will be treated to discounted admission to Dinosaur World, 5145 Harvey Tew Road in Plant City. Children younger than 3 are always admitted free, but the cost of admission will only be \$10.95 for adults and children ages 3-12. Proof of residency is required. The park boasts life-sized models of dinosaurs, some up to 80 feet in length. Dogs on leashes are welcome. For information, visit www.dinosaurworld.com.

MUSEUM 'SWAPTEMBER'

Beginning Sept. 3, MOSI pass holders will be admitted free to the Florida Aquarium and the Lowry Park Zoo throughout the entire month. MOSI members must present valid membership documentation along with a photo ID for admission into the zoo. Some restrictions may apply. It is suggested to call and confirm offer before your scheduled visit by calling MOSI at (813) 987-6000, the aquarium at (813) 273-4000, or the zoo at (813) 935-8552.

HISTORY OF MEXICAN ART

The Tampa Museum of Art will present "Miradas: Ancient Roots in Modern and Contemporary Mexican Art" through Sept. 15. The exhibition celebrates works by Mexican and Mexican American artists. The museum is at 120 Gasparilla Plaza in Tampa. For information, call (813) 274-8130. For tickets, call (813) 421-8380.

REUNION

The USS Essex Association is looking for local sailors and marines who served aboard the USS Essex CV/CVA/CVS 9 and LHD 2. Annual membership fee is \$25. The association gathers for a yearly reunion, and the next reunion is Sept. 23 in Nashville, Tenn. Anyone interested in joining, can email Dan at USSEssex@peoplepc.com or call (954) 899-2170. For information, visit www.ussessexcv9.org.

A DAY ON THE LINKS

Ace Golf is offering kids ages 5 through 15 a free bucket of balls to hit on the golf range at Pebble Creek Golf Club, 1055 Regents Park Drive in New Tampa. Stop by and pick up a punch card anytime through the end of August. No purchase is necessary. An adult must accompany the participating child. To reach the golf club, call (813) 973-3870.

Continued on next page

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Lowry Park Zoo Run

Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo will host a "Zoo Run Run" on Aug. 24 at 7:30 a.m. This annual 5k event winds through the zoo and along the scenic Hillsborough River. Kids can sign up for the Fun Run. Registration includes zoo admission. Check-in is at 6:30 a.m. For information, visit www.lowryparkzoo.com.



FREE MUSEUM ADMISSION

The Polk Museum of Art is offering free admittance to its Lakeland attraction on Saturday mornings from 10 a.m. to noon. Regular general admission is \$5 for adults Tuesday through Friday. Current collections on display include Georgian silver, works by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi and sculptor C. Paul Jennewein. The museum is at 800 E. Palmetto St. in Lakeland. For information, visit www.polkmuseumofart.org.

FREE ENTRY TO SILVER SPRINGS

Silver Springs, the botanical park near Ocala, is now offering free admission. The park features child play areas, shopping, dining and botanical gardens. Boat rides are not included in the free admission deal and cost \$12.99 for adults and \$9.99 for seniors and children. Each ticket purchased includes a buy-one, get-one-free food voucher and merchandise discount voucher. Regular daily admission is still charged on days when a concert is scheduled. The park is

at 5656 E. Silver Springs Blvd. For information, visit silversprings.com.

HELP FIGHT HUNGER IN THE COMMUNITY

The Laker/Lutz News is joining the ongoing fight to help feed community members in need through a food drive. We have a collection box in our office for our readers to drop off donations for Feeding America Tampa Bay-Suncoast Branch in Land O' Lakes, just one of the more than 200 food banks in the Feeding America network. The Laker/Lutz News office is in the Copperstone Executive Suites, 3632 US 41, Suite 102, Land O' Lakes. The most needed items are: canned meats (tuna, chicken, ham, sausage), canned fruits and vegetables, canned and boxed meals (soup, chili, stew, macaroni & cheese), pasta, rice and peanut butter. No glass please. Pop-top items preferred. No donation is too big or small. We appreciate our readers' efforts in helping in this mission.

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BUSINESS DIGEST

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CABA AWARD WINNERS

The Carrollwood Area Business Association announced its 2012-13 award winners. They are:

Rookie of the Year: Diane Stoddart, Significant Insurance Solutions

Member of the Year: Larry Manning, Innovative Mortgage Solutions

Business of the Year: Ocean Blue Sushi Bar

Jay Mauk Memorial President's

Award: Anthony Brooks, Capital Finance Advisors

The group's new board of directors:

President: Wendell Hock, Primerica

President-elect: Kristin Votta, Fitness-Tek

Immediate past president: Lea Orchard, Great Clips

Treasurer: Tim Castle, Bay Cities Insurance

Secretary: Erin Hesbeens, PNC Bank

The group's directors are:
Diane Stoddart, Significant Insurance Solutions

Jean Fuller, Premier Bookkeeping Services

Nick Spurlock, do You IT
Dr. Tommy Lane, Lane Family Chiropractic

Lynda Damiata, Kabay Graphics
Jeff Ryder, Carrollwood Copy Center & Printing

LOCAL TOURISM ON THE RISE

Tampa Bay tourism is showing improvement, according to new data for Hillsborough County.

Occupancy rate, room rate and revenue per available room rate grew between October 2012 and June 2013, according to Smith Travel Research.

Occupancy rate was 66.2 percent, up 1.5 percent over the same period last year. The room rate was \$91.85, up 0.4 percent, while the revenue per available room was \$61.34, up 1.9 percent.

Tourist development tax paid by visitors to Hillsborough County is also up by 6 percent over the previous nine months, bringing in revenue of \$16.8 million.

BRITTEN ON DENTISTRY BOARD

Gov. Rick Scott has appointed Leonard L. Britten to the state Board of Dentistry. Britten is a general dentist with Britten Dental Associates. He succeeds Carl Melzer and is appointed for a term that began in July and ends on Oct. 31, 2015.

DO-IT-YOURSELFERS GET THANK YOU

Home Depot will show its appreciation to professional builders and do-it-yourself customers with a two-day event at stores across the region.

It will feature special deals on top prod-

ucts, free delivery on products purchased during the event, the launch of a new loyalty program, discounts with new credit card accounts, free food and giveaways.

The event is on Aug. 27 and Aug. 28 from 7 a.m. until 11 a.m.

For more information, visit www.homedepot.com/pro.

JEWELRY STORE OPENS IN DADE CITY

Sparkling Stacy's Jewelry & Accessories will host a grand opening from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Aug. 31, with a ribbon cutting at noon.

The shop is at 14123 Seventh St. in Dade City.

DANIEL JEANNERET NAMED TO LIFE INSURANCE COUNCIL

Daniel Jeanneret has been selected to serve on the 2013 Executive Council of New York Life Insurance Company.

Jeanneret, of New York Life's general office in Tampa, has been with the company since 2009. He lives in the Oakstead community in Land O'Lakes.

MUSIC SCHOOL GRAND OPENING IN LUTZ

Claudia's School of Music will host its grand opening on Aug. 24 at 11 a.m. in Lutz.

The school is at the Ballantrae

Professional School at 17915 Hunting Bow Circle. It offers private music lessons in piano, violin, guitar, drums, and voice for all ages and of all ability levels.

The school also offers music history and music theory group classes for homeschooled students and music camps and recitals. Claudia's School of Music is an authorized dealer of Casio keyboards and digital pianos.

FREE WOMEN'S FINANCIAL SEMINAR

Women of Pasco County are invited to attend a free women's financial seminar hosted by Gulfside Regional Hospice.

The workshop, led by Christine Cooper of Cooper Financial Services, will provide information and practical tools and techniques for organizing and taking control of a family's personal and financial paperwork.

The workshop will be on Aug. 26 at 11 a.m. at Gulfside's Lutz Thrift Shoppe, 1930 Land O'Lakes Blvd in Lutz.

Seats are limited. RSVP to Jen Chianella at (727) 992-8984.

DR. SANTOSH POTDAR JOINS OAK HILL'S HOSPITAL STAFF

Dr. Santosh Potdar, a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, has joined the staff of Oak Hill Hospital. He is board certified in surgery and his general surgery

practice is located at 8367 S. Suncoast Blvd. in Homosassa.

PHCC OFFERS CAREER SERVICES

Pasco-Hernando Community College recently partnered with the College Central Network® to provide students and alumni access to an online career and job search resource. The new services can be accessed at www.collegecentral.com/pascohernando. Registration is required, however there is no cost to students, alumni or employers.

"The job search feature houses jobs, internships and employers approved by the Career and Testing Services department at PHCC. Students and alumni can be confident the local job opportunities listed are legitimate and relevant," Rick Casey, director of Career and Testing Services, said in a release.

Job seekers may create resumes and career portfolios to apply to open jobs or post to a database searchable by employers. Job seekers also gain access to career announcements, podcasts, videos, and articles to assist with job searching. In addition to the College Central Network, PHCC offers other career development resources including interest and personality assessments, resume reviews, interviewing and job search strategies, along with career advising.

For more information, call (727) 816-3381, or visit tinyurl.com/n32gs5r or www.collegecentral.com/pascohernando.

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Watch for bikers: They're honoring local heroes on Sept. 7

By Michael Hinman
mhinman@cnewspubs.com

Firefighters and first responders are known for making house calls when they're needed the most. But on Sept. 7, they'll get some visitors of their own: Hundreds of motorcycle riders, just wanting to say thanks.

Pasco County Choppers are hitting the road once again for its annual Gratitude Ride, a 50-mile trek from station to station honoring the heroes that don't get thanked enough. At the same time, these more than 300 bikers raise money for the Pasco County Fire Benevolent Fund, which helps families of firefighters when they need a helping hand of their own.

It's no coincidence this ride happens around the anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks that killed 412 emergency workers in New York City alone. Local Realtor Dan Turner is originally from New York, and visited the World Trade Center towers many times before the tragedy. While that fateful day is now 12 years in the past, Turner wants to make sure it's always remembered.

"Some people have forgotten about 9/11; the whole thing has worn off a bit," said Turner, who is now in his fourth year organizing the event. "We try to bring as much attention to it as possible."

For the second year, the Gratitude Ride goes beyond just a gathering for hog enthusiasts. It's expanding into a public afterparty at the Quail Hollow Country Club beginning at 1 p.m. There, visitors can enjoy the many motorcycles on display, eat food, enjoy drinks, and hear music from the Greg Billings Band.

Funds raised through a raffle and 50-50 will go to the Benevolent Fund.

"We'll be passing some boots around to try and raise a little bit more money," Turner said, referencing the boot campaigns conducted by firefighters to raise money for the New York City victims on street corners immediately following the terrorist attacks.

While the party begins at 1 p.m., the chopper riders will be up much earlier, gathering at the government center at 4111 US 41 in Land O'Lakes around 9:30 a.m. There, Turner will host a dedication ceremony, and just after 10 a.m., the bikes will start heading out to their first destination.

This year's stops begin with Station 15 at



Motorcycle riders from Pasco County Choppers and other groups line up to take off on its Gratitude Ride last year, visiting firefighters and first responders, to thank them for their service. (Photos courtesy of Dan Turner)

11538 Trinity Blvd., in New Port Richey. Station 14 follows at 7800 River Ridge Blvd., also in New Port Richey, before wrapping up the trip at Station 20 at 15900 Little Ranch Road in Brooksville.

"We remember the events and honor the lives that were lost," Turner said of the terrorist attacks. "Closer to home, I wanted to make sure that we recognized our own emergency services, not just after the fact, but all the time. They are the ones that always say it's just a job, but we all know that they run into danger as we are running away from it."

If you ride a motorcycle:
Registration for the Gratitude Ride itself runs from 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. at 4111 US 41 in Land O'Lakes. The last bike departs at 10:15 a.m. The ride includes a poker run, which includes three stops at various Pasco County fire stations.

If you just want to attend the party:

Bring the entire family to the Quail Hollow Country Club, 6225 Old Pasco Road, Wesley Chapel, beginning at 1 p.m. There is no admission, but there will be food, drinks, a bike show, and music from the Greg Billings Band.

While there might be stigmas assigned to large groups of motorcyclists thanks to portrayals of them in the movies, the chopper community is actually quite the opposite.

"It is a community that gives back," Turner said. "There's always some kind of benefit we're participating in, a lot of toy runs and food drives and things like that. It's a broad spectrum of people that ride, and they always have an eye for doing something special."

The rain date for this year's event is Sept. 8. For more information, visit www.PascoCountyChoppers.com.



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Who's who

Meet

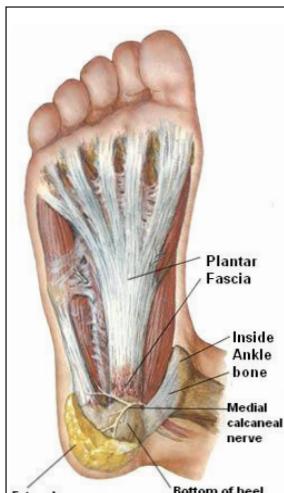
Dr. Mazon Abboud, DPM



Dr. Abboud grew up in Boston and comes from a family of podiatrists. He followed his two brothers into the specialty after an initial stint in dental school, transferring his studies to Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine in Philadelphia. After graduating from medical school in 2003, he stayed in Philadelphia for another three years to complete his internship at Parkview Hospital and residency at Roxborough Memorial Hospital.

Dr. Abboud and his wife, Joanne, moved to Florida in 2006 to be closer to his wife's family. The couple recently celebrated their 13th wedding anniversary and lives in New Tampa with their four children, ages 4 to 10. Dr. Abboud volunteers for the World Walk Foundation, which provides podiatric care to underdeveloped countries around the world.

Dr. Abboud is the first podiatrist to join Florida Medical Clinic, joining the practice in March of this year.



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Dr. Abboud is the first podiatrist to practice at Florida Medical Clinic

Your feet are the foundation of your body. And when they hurt, your entire body hurts.

That's why Mazon Abboud, DPM, is so passionate about his specialty. As a podiatrist, he can help just about anyone who comes to see him with foot pain at his Florida Medical Clinic practice.

"I love practicing podiatry because it is good, old-fashioned medicine," said Dr. Abboud.

"Most first exams take between 30 to 45 minutes because I really focus on listening to the patient, really listening. I usually can diagnose a patient's problem before I physically examine them."

Dr. Abboud has been practicing podiatry for 10 years. He began his medical career in Philadelphia in 2003 and moved to the Tampa area in 2006, where he worked in private practice for several years in Zephyrhills and Wesley Chapel before joining Florida Medical Clinic last March.

"The majority of my patients have suffered from foot pain for more than a year and are desperate for relief," said Dr. Abboud. "Unfortunately, most wait too long before seeing a doctor. In most cases we can

get the patient pain relief within two weeks. It is very satisfying work."

The foot has 28 bones and supports thousands of pounds per square inch, explains Dr. Abboud. Foot problems can be very painful and often affect the entire body, even causing headaches.

"We put on between 3,000 and 10,000 steps a day, per foot, so healthy feet are an essential part to someone's overall well-being," said Dr. Abboud.

A podiatrist's practice is typically equally divided between three primary areas — heel pain, foot tumors and Achilles tendinitis. All are painful and fortunately, all very treatable.

About 30 percent of Dr. Abboud's patients complain of heel pain — pain that often feels like sharp needles in the bottom of the foot that often wakes sufferers at night and prevents them from falling back to sleep.

"Heel pain can be very painful, but thankfully it is almost always treatable," said Dr. Abboud, who explains the condition is the result of chronically infected ligaments at the bottom of the foot.

Another common area of complaint, especially among women, is Neuroma. This condition causes painful foot

tumors that are caused by tight-fitting shoes and high heels. Dr. Abboud estimates that between 25 and 30 percent of his patients see him for these types of problems.

The third largest area of complaint is Achilles tendinitis, which is pain in the back of the heel caused by tight muscles in the leg.

"Achilles tendinitis is most commonly seen in middle-aged men after they begin a new exercise program," said Dr. Abboud. "It is often called New Year's tendinitis because so many men start out the New Year with a resolution to get fit and overdo it."

After diagnosing a patient's condition, Dr. Abboud spends a lot of time making sure the patient fully understands their problem and their treatment options.

"We make sure our patients clearly understand what they must do to get their condition under control," said Dr. Abboud.

In addition to treating patients in these three primary areas, Dr. Abboud is also on staff as a foot and ankle surgeon at Florida Hospital Zephyrhills and Pasco Regional Medical Center in Dade City. Much of his surgery is setting bones and repairing ligament damage caused by automobile accidents and falls.

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Busch Gardens welcomed a new Grevy's zebra born on Aug. 5. (Photo courtesy of Busch Gardens)

Summer baby boom goes on at Busch Gardens with new zebra

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

An endangered Grevy's zebra was born on Busch Gardens Tampa's 65-acre Serengeti Plain on Aug. 5. Within an hour after its birth, the baby was able to stand on its own and nurse from its mother, Brooke.

This is the fifth foal for 13-year-old Brooke, and is the first offspring with another zebra, Two Step. The gestation period for Grevy's zebras is 13 months, and the mothers typically give birth to only one foal at a time.

In addition to the new foal, seven female and one male Grevy's zebras live on Busch

Gardens' Serengeti Plain.

Busch Gardens' guests can view the baby, parents and the rest of the zebra herd from the Edge of Africa, the Skyride or Serengeti Express train ride.

The population of Grevy's zebra has declined by more than 50 percent in the last 18 years, and they are the only species of zebra that is listed as endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature Red list, a widely recognized comprehensive, objective global approach for evaluating the conservation status of plant and animal species.

trips to Daytona Beach.

"That means spending more money just to keep an eye on everything," Scowcroft said.

Jeff Kvitowski, a spokesman for Virginia-based K12 Inc., which calls itself the "vendor" for the charter school operations in Florida, points to the fact that the previous claims against the school were unsubstantiated. And even if there was an issue of teachers lacking certification for their particular subject matter, it's not against the law.

The state department of education reports more than 8,700 teachers in Florida's schools are teaching courses outside their subject certification, Kvitowski said in a statement. He added that Seminole County, which made the complaint, admitted to having 100 teachers without proper certification in the 2011-12 school year alone.

"K12 had only three teachers whose certifications were 'out-of-field,' and they were quickly corrected," Kvitowski said.

Some of the demand for virtual schools will now be shared by both Florida Virtual Academy and Pasco eSchool. And that alone could very well create a strong future for this newer type of learning, eSchool principal Glenn said, especially since taking at least one virtual course is a graduation requirement for the Class of 2015.

"This is the way a lot of employers are delivering on-the-job training now and professional development, and it's also something that is happening more and more in post-secondary schools, colleges and universities," Glenn said. "This gives all of our students a chance to have that first experience in a supported environment. So once they get out there in the real world, they'll be ready."

Southwest Florida Virtual appealed that decision to Florida's Department of Education, prompting school board members to reconsider without risking a lengthy legal battle.

An investigation concluded Southwest

Florida Virtual hired only certified teachers in Seminole County, but concerns remain.

"Student achievement, or the lack thereof, is something we are very worried about," said Nancy Scowcroft, supervisor of charter schools for Pasco County. "Their school grades are not being posted on the Department of Education's website, which means they are appealing. I don't know what these scores look like, but apparently they are not where they want to be."

The county maintains oversight of charter schools to make sure they are meeting specific criteria. With bricks and mortar schools, it means just traveling to different parts of the county when needed. However, to see what's happening with Florida Virtual Academy of Pasco County, as this new school will be called, it will require regular

GOLF, from page 1

"I did talk with one of the owners, and there's been a kind of breakup in management there," said Brooks, who played 18 holes on the course after it reopened on Friday. That followed up on a promise he made while the golf course's future was uncertain that he would return to Plantation Palms, but he might not necessarily pay for membership well in advance.

"I think everybody would like to enjoy the golf course, and you need an ownership team that makes viable business decisions and have the right cash flow to keep the place open," Brooks said.

Ray, however, denies there's been any management breakup, and that all three owners are still active with the golf course.

"There are no ownership changes," Ray said. "A lot of rumors went around about what was going on, but no one knew the full story except us."

Ray said he's working to make up for the downtime, and understands how frustrated many of the members were.

"It's understandable," he said. "They put up money to make sure they could play on a golf course, and you can't play on a golf course that's not open."

"To them, it was almost a disaster. But we were basically closed for seven days. That's usually what we're closed for when we



The perfectly manicured greens of Plantation Palms Golf Club await arrivals of its first golfers after reopening last week from a brief hiatus. Despite rumors to the contrary, all three owners are still in charge of the golf course, according to its management team.

oversee the greens."

Golfers are slowly coming back to Plantation Palms as word of mouth spreads the golf club has reopened. Many should find out by the end of the week when the Oasis grill there serves prime rib and tilapia as part of its regular Friday night dinner, Ray said.

"I'm one of the members here, and I live in the community," Brooks said. "I want all the businesses in the area to be successful, because it's good for our community. And I certainly want our golf course to be successful, because we need it here for our community."

LIBRARY, from page 1

"When I moved here in 1985, I was appalled that there were no public libraries on the east side of the county, except for the very, very tiny one in Zephyrhills," she said. "And Dade City's library was also very small. I saw the bond issue coming to the county and was thrilled to see libraries go up."

Closing the New River branch would pose a hardship for many young families in Zephyrhills, who work in the service industry and can't afford to have computers in their homes, Halterman said.

Gail Stout, chairwoman of the county's library advisory board, told commissioners the per capita spending on libraries is \$12.07 in Pasco County, compared to the state average of \$25 per capita.

"You certainly are getting a huge bang for your buck in this portion of your budget," Stout said.

Bob Robertson, also of Zephyrhills, joined with other speakers in describing New River as being a central part of the community's fabric.

"The activities that go on there well exceed the books on the racks," Robertson said. "I think it would be a very sad thing, if we were to close that library."

Nancy Fredericks, administrator for Pasco County libraries, said closing the two libraries would cause more than 18 layoffs and yield about \$776,875 in savings.

It quickly became clear that commissioners had no interest in closing the libraries. Even Schrader said he raised the issue because he wanted to be sure the county explored all of its options.

Commissioner Jack Mariano adamantly opposed any library closings.

"I just would love to see this conversation stop right now," he said, urging commissioners to send a clear message that all county libraries will remain open.

"I think the libraries are very important for

the county. Children have to take online courses. If they don't have a computer at home, where are they going to go?" Mariano said.

Closing libraries would be a step in the wrong direction, he added.

"I just think we're really hurting quality of life. There are better ways to go," Mariano said.

Commissioners Pat Mulieri, Kathryn Starkey and Henry Wilson made it clear they were against the idea.

"We all have to decide what kind of community we want to live in," Starkey said. "Having a quality place takes some investment. This is, to me, a real turning point in Pasco County."

Despite that sentiment, Schrader countered that the commissioners are still going to need to find places to save money, or residents will get bigger tax bills in the mail later.

"In less than a month, on Sept. 10, we have the first public hearing," he said. "Staff needs some direction from this board where you're going to cut and where you're going to raise taxes."

Commissioners have been hearing plenty from people who don't want a tax hike.

But Mulieri asked how well those louder voices are being represented.

"How many people did you hear from?" she said. "Twenty-five? Thirty? Fifty? There's 478,000 people in Pasco County. Most people like the idea that we have a fee for services. But they also want their library."

Starkey and Mariano noted that quality of life has an impact on the county's economic prospects.

"I've heard from a lot of people who don't want any raise in the taxes. I've heard from a lot more that say they want a quality place to live," Starkey said.

"We can't attract businesses here, when they drive by shuttered parks, shuttered libraries, roads full of potholes, snipe signs and garbage everywhere because we aren't taking care of our backyard," she said.

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Freedom developing team bond to continue success

By Jeff Odom

news@cnewspubs.com

The Freedom High volleyball team has a new motto this season that is aimed at keeping its run of success going and developing younger players.

That fresh adage, according to interim coach Michelle Davis, is "One Team, One Dream." But to the team, it's much more than just a slogan on the back of a T-shirt.

"We're going to incorporate co-practices this season to really work with our girls (to) have a one-team atmosphere between our junior varsity and varsity players," said Davis, who is filling in as head coach this season for Kerry Short, who is out on maternity leave.

"What (assistant coach Jeff) Saxton and I have noticed with some of the junior varsity from last year was that some of them were not ready to move to the varsity level, because they did not have the talent and the skills to get there. But the best way to build a solid program is to make sure we have a strong junior varsity team, so we're focused on that to have a feeder program, which is going to be very important moving forward."

The Patriots are coming off of three straight winning seasons, which included a runner-up finish in Class 7A-District 9 last year.

However, if Freedom continues its run of success, the squad will have to do it without 2013 graduate Jasmyne Perry (422 kills) and senior outside hitter Ashley Wilson (212 kills, 190 digs), who are no longer with the team.

While the team will feel the impact left by their voids both on and off the court, Davis said, it's best for her players to treat it like a work environment where people come and go.

"You've got to move forward and that's the sign of a true champion," she said. "These girls have really picked that up. At

Freedom roster

No.	Name	Pos.	Yr.	Ht.
1	Gabby Jacobs	DS	Sr.	5-6
5	Savanna Young	S, RS	So.	5-8
7	Hannah Skendziel	MH, MB	Jr.	5-11
8	Katie Clark	DS	Jr.	5-6
9	Delaney Smith	DS	Sr.	5-6
10	Danielle Thomas	MH, MB	So.	5-10
11	Kayla Ireland	DS, S	Sr.	5-7
12	Kelly Schaller	S, RS	Sr.	5-9
14	Carlee Jacobs	OH	So.	5-7

the beginning of the season, they acknowledged there was a hole and we weren't sure with (junior varsity) girls stepping up or incoming freshmen, what we were going to have. And we've been very fortunate that everyone's been healthy and everyone has stayed focused and strong and they are one collective unit that wants success for the program."

One of the ways her team has worked to fill that hole is through honing their skills and staying in shape through outdoor beach volleyball.

"Running in the sand, playing in the sand and playing in the heat has made their conditioning level already really high coming into this year," Davis said. "And there's no hiding a girl like you can indoors if you have a girl who's taller and can be put onto the back row and you can sub a girl out, there's none of that happening in beach. So, it's made the girls have to work a little bit harder to become more well-rounded."

One of the teams that Freedom is trying to learn from is none other than cross-town rival Steinbrenner, which has won four district championships in as many years.

Davis was originally hired as the Warriors' junior varsity coach, but opted to come to Freedom when a spot opened because it was closer to her New Tampa home. After seeing how strong Steinbrenner's junior varsity program was, the idea of meshing practices became a no-



Freedom senior setter Kelly Schaller had 154 digs and 80 assists for the Patriots last season. (File photo)

brainer and, so far, it has led to many of her players stepping up as leaders. That includes setter Kelly Schaller (154 digs, 80 assists) and defensive specialist Gabby Jacobs, who had 105 digs and 27 aces last season, according to statistics as entered by coaches to MaxPreps.com.

Jacobs said the early guidance of Davis has helped the program tremendously in just the first few days of organized practice,

and added that she feels like the team has a good chance to make even bigger strides this season to possibly steal the district championship.

"We've all worked really well together, and we all have really strong players," Jacobs said. "Even though we're just now at the beginning, we're all looking really good together."

Davis said she's expecting a lot out of Jacobs, a senior, and believes her speed is going to be great for her back row. However there is one other player that has caught her eye, and that's Jacobs' sister, Carlee, a sophomore outside hitter.

"With those girls running the back row, I have a lot of confidence in our defense, and I don't see our back row letting anything get by," Davis said.

Still, even with a surplus of young talent and blossoming leaders, Davis said she knows it's going to be a difficult schedule at times. But that won't stop her from making any bold predictions.

"This program has the opportunity to be fantastic, because these girls are working so hard," Davis said. "I honestly don't think they're going to be stopped this year. I know that we have Sickles and Steinbrenner and they may see us as an underdog, but I have the utmost confidence in this team. I think we will win the district championship."

Freedom opens the regular season at home against Hillsborough on Aug. 27 at 7 p.m.

Steinbrenner aims higher than fifth straight district title

By Jeff Odom

news@cnewspubs.com

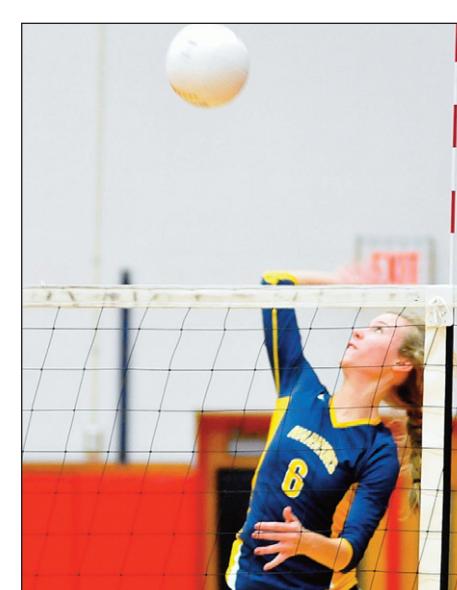
Capturing four district crowns in as many years and coming off the best season in program history, the Steinbrenner High School volleyball team has been nothing short of dominant since the school was opened in 2009.

The Warriors made their first trip to the Class 7A region finals last year before falling to eventual state champion Venice in three straight sets. And while another district championship would be special, the players want more this time around, said second-year coach Laura Stegenga. Like winning a state title.

"I have the athletes; we've just got to put the work in," said Stegenga, who took over the team for Jennifer Graham in May 2012. "The biggest thing I want my players to focus on is not just going for championships, but practice and what happens there. That's how you achieve those kind of goals, and I think it's a goal that we can achieve if we work hard."

That road to states may be a little tougher for Steinbrenner this season because of the addition of one extra game against each district opponent and Sickles entering Class 7A-District 8.

The Gryphons are coming off three



Steinbrenner outside hitter Rachel Matheson helped lead the Warriors to the Class 7A region finals last season with a team-high 257 kills. (File photos)



Senior setter Casey McLean needs to play a major role if Steinbrenner is to have a chance at its fifth district title in as many years.

nothing the team can't handle.

"I know (my seniors) are really driven, and I know that they're extremely good leaders," she said. "It's really neat to have them a part of it and also setting the tone for the younger ones."

Any competition that challenges the team will only make them better, Stegenga said, even if it results in a loss.

"It's OK in my eyes," she said. "By adding Sickles, I think it's a positive thing for us, because it's just more competition."

Another potential concern the Warriors face this season is replacing the leadership of the team's three graduated seniors. They include libero Natalia Campos and starting

outside hitter Madison Seuzeneau.

Seuzeneau, who now plays at Spring Hill College in Alabama, was second on the team in kills last season with 255, second in aces with 40, and third in blocks with 14, based on stats entered by coaches to MaxPreps.com.

Campos, now at Valdosta State University in Georgia, had a team-high 377 digs to go along with 39 aces and 15 assists.

Filling the void left behind by their departure are senior outside hitter Rachel Matheson (257 kills, 169 digs, 30 aces and 11 blocks), setter Casey McLean (199 assists, 158 digs and 66 aces) and opposite hitter Maddy Powell (seven kills).

The opportunity to step into a leadership position is something the trio relishes, Stegenga said.

"They've definitely made their comments about their seniority over things," she said, with a laugh. "They're anxious, excited, and every emotion that they're feeling is probably very positive for our program. They don't want anything to change, even though we lose players every year. They don't want what has been happening the past few years to change, so I feel like they're willing and ready, and they have the desire to go in and take those roles, all three of them."

Steinbrenner hosts Armwood to open the regular season on Aug. 29 at 7:30 p.m.

Summer Food Drive

HELP FIGHT HUNGER LOCALLY

The need is especially great during the summer months because those children that rely on getting adequate meals while attending school will need help when school is not in session. In general, 1 out of 4 children in the Tampa Bay area do not have enough to eat.

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CHECK THIS OUT

Zephyrhills '80s-style mud run

Hidden Creek in Zephyrhills has organized another 5-kilometer mud run event, this time with the theme of the 1980s, for Saturday, Sept. 21 at 3:30 p.m.

A portion of the proceeds will go to the local ROTC, Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, who will all be helping out at the race.

Along with the '80s-style 5k mud run, there will be uphill slide climbs, slides and log crossing. After the run, music bands Hired Guns, the Ryman Fillmore Band and No Name Band will perform live. There will also be dancing, music and volleyball.

Each participant receives one free beer or water, a free T-shirt, a custom finisher's medal and free entry into the after party. The cost for registration starts at \$45, and up to \$90 the day of the event.

To register online, visit www.hidden-creekrecpark.com.

The event is free for spectators, but there is a \$10 parking fee.

For more information, call (813) 714-2528.

Sunlake band fundraiser

The Sunlake Soaring Sound marching band and color guard is having its annual car wash

fundraiser on Saturday, Aug. 31 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the 7-Eleven on the corner of US 41 and SR 54 in Land O' Lakes.

Money raised will pay for music, show props, instruments and transportation for the band.

For more information, contact Mary Makal at (813) 495-0088 or email sunlakehsband-fundraise@gmail.com.

FAPA golf tournament

The Pasco County Foster Adoptive Parent Association is hosting its annual Fore Families golf tournament on Sept. 28 at 1 p.m. at the Lansbrook Golf and Country Club in Palm Harbor.

The cost is \$90 for each player, or \$320 for a foursome. All players must be 16 years and older.

Registration includes a box lunch, 18 holes of golf with shared cart, prizes and a special awards dinner following play. Team prizes will also be awarded for players finishing first, second, third and "last but not least."

All players in the tournament are automatically entered in the hole-in-one contest to win cash or a new car.

Nonplayers can also attend the dinner buffet for \$20 per person.

FAPA is a nonprofit organization based in Pasco County, which strives to provide foster and adoptive parents with the necessary resources to deal with the many challenges they face in raising our communities' children.

All donations are tax-deductible.

For more information, email Christina Nunez at becharmed2@gmail.com.

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SPORTS



Ernest Suttles, a former defensive end standout at Gaither High School, has finally settled on Memphis as his college home after being dismissed from the University of Nebraska earlier this year. (File photo)

Another week, another college for Suttles

By Jeff Odom
news@cnewspubs.com

He may have never stepped foot on a college gridiron, but former Gaither High School defensive end Ernest Suttles is set to join his third college team since graduating in May.

After he was dismissed from the University of Nebraska following an off-campus incident, Suttles thought he had found a new home in Coral Gables at Miami last week. But, the Hurricanes denied his transfer request, which left the 2012 All-Laker/All-Lutz News Defensive Player of the Year without a team again.

But not for long.

Memphis has accepted Suttles' transfer request, and he officially joined the Tigers, which compete in the American Athletic Conference.

"He was involved in an unfortunate situation," Memphis coach Justin Fuente told the Memphis Commercial Appeal newspaper on Aug. 14. "But we got letters of recommendation from an associate athletic director at Nebraska, from his high school principal, his high school football coach, a high school teacher, and we talked to two assistant coaches at Nebraska. They all had nothing but unbelievable things to say about him. They said he was a really good kid who made a mistake and was in a bad situation."

Suttles joined Memphis for practice on Aug. 11, but will still have to sit out one year due to NCAA transfer rules, according to the Commercial Appeal. He will have four years of eligibility starting in 2014.

Memphis started last season 1-8, but rebounded with three straight wins to finish with an overall record of 4-8.

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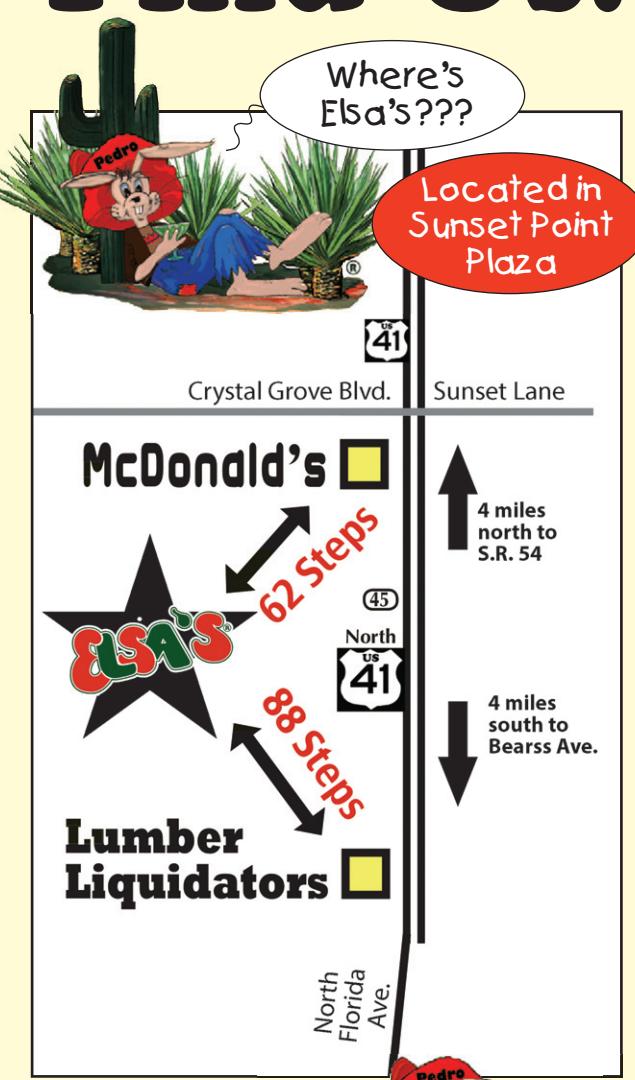
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Seniors hope to take Wiregrass volleyball to next step

By Jeff Odom
news@cnewspubs.com

As Mindy Kantor walked into the Wiregrass Ranch gymnasium recently, the Bulls' volleyball coach took a moment to glance at the row of championship banners hanging from the rafters.

Football, baseball, soccer, cross-country and track are just a few that are christened with seasons of titles, glory and remembrance of their respective accomplishments.

Then, there's volleyball — blank.

"They believe in themselves. They're determined," said Kantor, the only coach since the school opened in 2007. "We've built this team on respect for everything — the uniform, the school, the coach and yourself, big time. And if you have the confidence to believe all of that, it's in your court, and it's what they put out on that court that's going to go up on that banner."

It's that kind of confidence that has the Bulls believing that this can be the year they get over the hump and into the postseason, which they fell one win short of last season

after losing to Freedom in the district semifinals.

One of the major factors that could lift them to the title this time around is leadership from the program's nine returning seniors, many of whom have grown through the program since they were freshmen and sophomores.

"We've gone so far and then the ups and downs and the disappointments, but they've taken those disappointments and they feed off of it," Kantor said. "They've wanted (to win the title) from all the way back in June, when we started open courts and conditioning. They gave it through the summer, they gave it through camp ... you name it, they gave it, and it's now transpiring into practices. It's nonstop."

One of the benefits of bringing back that many seniors, according to Kantor, is the return of what she refers to as the "Big Three" — outside hitter Grace Olsen, setter Teddi Wright and libero Izah Deang.

Wiregrass Ranch roster

Name	Pos.	Yr.	Ht.
Conner Bennett	MB, MH	Jr.	5-10
Courtney Rottum	MB, MH	So.	5-8
Emily Dennison	RS	Sr.	5-10
Grace Olsen	OH	Sr.	5-10
Izah Deang	L	Sr.	5-3
Jackie Spencer	MB, MH, RS	Sr.	5-10
Jordan Piercell	DS	Sr.	5-10
Kaitlin Diehl	OH	Sr.	5-10
Kayleigh Putman	DS	Sr.	5-4
Madison Besterfield	RS, S	Fr.	5-9
Teddi Wright	S, RS	Sr.	5-8
Toni Berrios	DS	Sr.	5-4

"We've all really grown together," Deang said. "We really want to see us succeed as a team, and it's a very big advantage because most teams don't have as much family-wise as we do or have a very close knit group."

If Wiregrass Ranch is able to win its first Class 7A-District 8 championship this season, the route to it won't be easy.

Aside from Freedom, the Bulls will also have to defeat newcomer Sickles — winner of three straight district titles — and Steinbrenner, which has won its district each year since the school opened in 2009 and is a perfect 22-0 all-time in district matches, dropping just one set in four years.

Wright, who had a team-high 79 assists last season, said it will take a lot more work to get past those teams, but it's nothing they can't handle.

"It's going to take a lot of hard work from us," Wright said. "Once we step onto the court, we know it's time to be serious. Yeah, we can have fun, but we also know when we go, we are all out, and we never give up and we always push each other to the max."

Added Kantor: "They want that district title, they want that (Sunshine Athletic Conference) title and they can almost taste it. They're not being cocky about it and they're not overconfident, but it's a goal they want and it's a goal that they really want to reach their senior year."

Wiregrass Ranch opens its season on the road against Fivay on Aug. 27 at 7:30 p.m.

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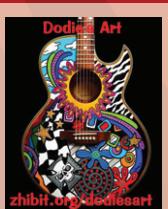
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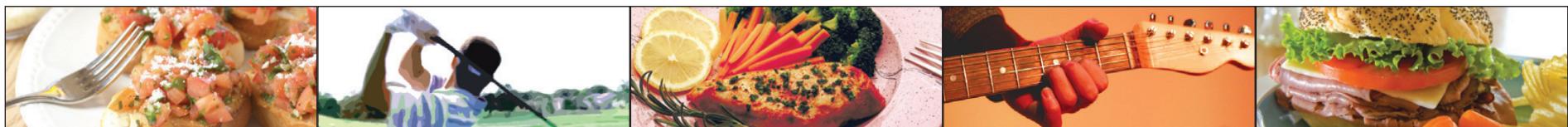


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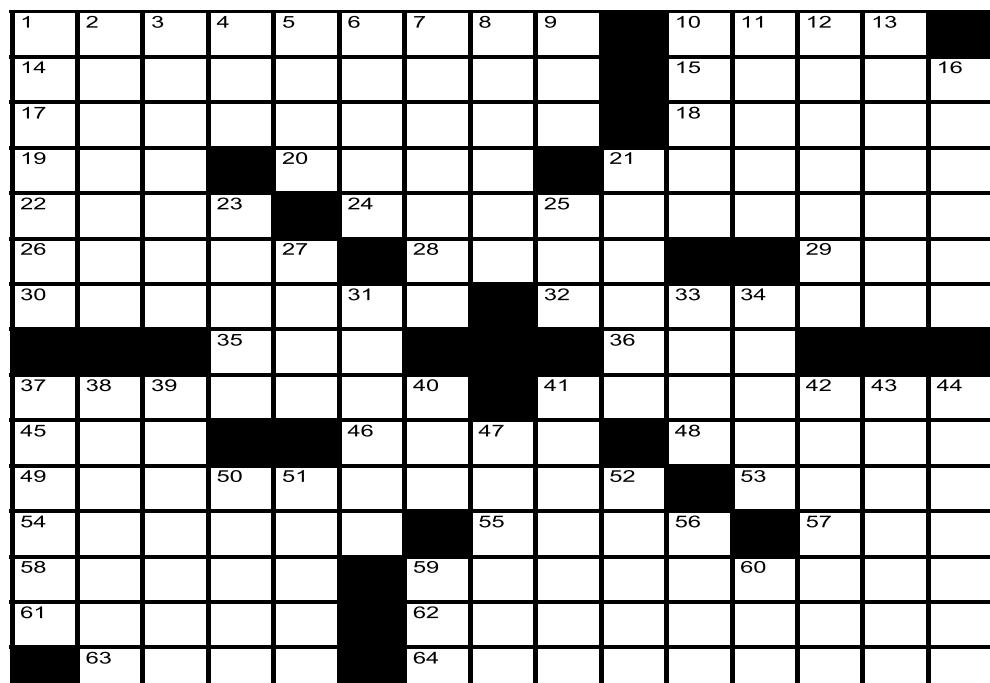
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10. Biology lab supply
14. Jurassic quadruped
15. Cavalry weapon
17. Vocalization
18. Jack
19. ___ any drop to drink: Coleridge
20. Appropriate
21. Staggered
22. During
24. Magazine middle
26. Kind of jar
28. Check
29. Born
30. Hand over for protection

32. Oriental
35. "Dilbert" cartoonist Scott Adams has one: Abbr.
36. Code word
37. Disgustingly
41. ___ Hardy, Marvel Comics' Black Cat
45. Call, as a game
46. Kill, in a way
48. Check for fit (2 wd)
49. Unconventional (3 wd)
53. Arp's art
54. More artful
55. Associations
57. Barely beat
58. Bind
59. Continental U.S.

DOWN

61. Kind of code
62. Heights above sea level
63. Animal shelters
64. Tiny
1. Salt shaker?
2. Place to put the feet up
3. Poet
4. "Act your ___!"
5. Cause for a lawsuit
6. Bartender on TV's Pacific Princess
7. Limpest
8. Clear
9. Bauxite, e.g.
10. Inquiring one

SEE SOLUTION, PAGE 22

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters in each word to spell the title of a book that has been made into a movie.

LEESOHSS OJEANSWER: *Shoeless Joe***CRYPTOQUIZ**

Each of the following cryptograms is a clue to the identity of a popular movie character. Using the hints E=G and K=O, decipher the clues to name the character.

1 **EHAELGB**
_____2 **UKUK**
_____3 **DXCT EGSMGAC**
_____4 **SXIT OMHJJFSO**
_____5 **LKBF**

Oh, how this character longed to be back on the farm: _____

5) Home, Dorothy Gale from The Wizard of Oz

Answers: 1) Gingham, 2) Toto, 3) Judy Garland, 4) Ruby Slippers,

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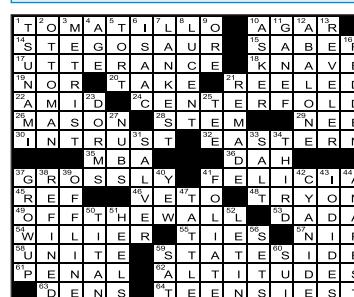
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Cory Lake Isles in Tampa! Beautiful 5/4/2 two story home in gated community. Spacious formal areas, family room, bonus room, kitchen has corian counter tops, cherry wood cabinets, stainless steel appliances, and a breakfast nook. **\$395K.** (cor)



Wilderness Lakes Preserve Pool Home! This Custom Bayfair model home features 4 bedrooms with a bonus room that can be a 5th bedroom, 4 bathrooms and a 3 car garage. The home has 18# tile throughout and a gourmet kitchen. **\$359K.** (sky)



Tampa Bay Golf and Tennis Club in San Antonio! This 3/2/2 home is in an over 55 guard gated community with a multi-million dollar country club, award winning resort style Olympic size pool and spa, and a 18 hole championship golf course. **\$150K.** (col)



Sunset Estates in Zephyrhills! Clean 2/2/1 block home has tiled living and dining room, sliding doors to back porch from dining area, walk-in closet in master bedroom, established neighborhood close to shopping, restaurants, and hospital. **\$75K.** (9th)



Townhome at Sabal Pointe! Completely updated, 1692 Sq. Ft. 2/2.5/2 vaulted ceilings, large walk-in closets, all new stainless steel appliances & granite counter tops. **\$129.9K.** (key)



Lakeview Crossing in Dade City! Enjoy the country atmosphere with easy access to I-75, just 25 minutes from Tampa. This 4/3.5/3 3128 Sq. Ft. home is situated on a 15 acre working cattle ranch, electric fences with a water supply in all of the fields. **\$985K.** (lak)



Two Story in Concord Station! This immaculate 3/2.5/2 is bright, open and is situated on a premium conservation, cul-de-sac lot. This home shows like a model! **\$204K.** (her)



Two Story Home in Dupree Lakes! This 2608 Sq. Ft. 4/2.5/3 home has formal living and dining rooms, features a great master suite with large walk-in closet, and a deluxe master bath appointed with double sink vanity, garden tub, and wall tiled shower. **\$279K** (swe)



Condo, Only Half a Mile From USF! This 2 bedroom 2 bath second story condo would make a good investment for parents of a USF Student or any investor. It is in good condition and move-in ready. Master bedroom has a huge walk-in closet. **\$54K.** (han)



Townhome 2-3 Floors in N. Redington Beach! Live the Florida lifestyle in the luxurious 3/2.5/2 home, prepare delicious meals in the gourmet kitchen, this end unit offers 4 balconies to enjoy relaxing or entertaining sunsets over the Gulf. **\$489K.** (sho)

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CUSTOM ESTATE HOME IN AVILA! On and oversized corner lot. 5 bedrooms, 3.5 baths with bonus room. Gourmet kitchen features cherry cabinetry, granite countertops, high end appliances and butler's pantry with wine cooler and dry wine storage. Formal living & dining rooms are great for entertaining. 4 car, side entry garage! This home is part of the exclusive community of Avila with many prestigious amenities. **\$899K.** (can)

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Oakstead! This 3/2/2 home is situated on conservation in The Gated Section of Marchmont. Home features an open great room floor plan with tile entry areas. **\$1400/mo.** (ott)



Chapel Pines in Wesley Chapel! Absolutely charming 3/2/2 home. Foyer leads to living room and dining room opposite each other. All appliances included. **\$1295/mo.** (bir)



Fantastic Lutz Home in Willow Pond! This 3/2/2 home is located in a quiet neighborhood, split floor plan, all new carpet, and beautifully landscaped. **\$1395/mo.** (wil)



North Oaks Condo in Tampa! Very attractive 2/2 condo with fireplace all on first floor, spacious living space, split bedroom plan and master has a big walk-in closet. **\$800/mo.** (nes)



Hammocks Townhome in New Tampa! This amazing 2/2 corner unit has all the upgrades possible. Lower level features spacious living with built-ins. **\$1095/mo.** (nee)



Waters Edge Multi Story in New Port Richey! Absolutely amazing 4/3.5/3 home with nearly 3000 Sq. Ft. of living space, vaulted ceilings, and beautiful eat-in kitchen. **\$1995/mo.** (bid)



Holiday Gardens Estates in New Port Richey! 4/1.5/1 newly updated with fresh paint inside, beautiful wood floors, new carpet, spacious kitchen, and a fenced yard. **\$995/mo.** (alc)



Condo in Hudson! This 2/2/1 is on the 2nd floor and is just minutes from SR52 and Little Rd. It boasts a spacious living/dining room combo & open split floor plan. **\$750/mo.** (hil)



Woodward Village in Hudson! This 2/2/2 home has a large fenced backyard, lovely shade trees in the front, wood floors, updated vanities, and a large screened back patio. **\$775/mo.** (woo)



New Tampa Townhome! Wonderful 3/2/1 corner unit is move-in ready with all appliances including washer and dryer, and has fabulous community amenities. **\$1400/mo.** (nee)

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