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## Young astronomer reaches for stars

By B.C. Manion  
[bcmalion@cnewspubs.com](mailto:bcmalion@cnewspubs.com)

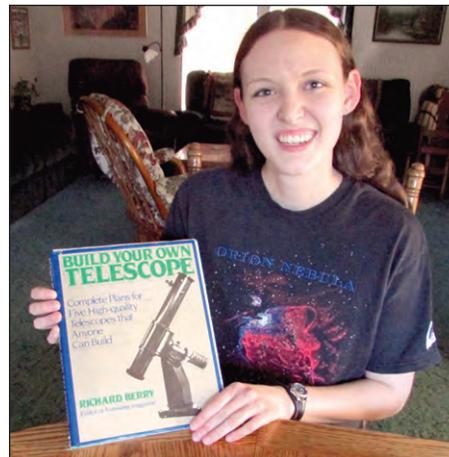
Melanie Crowson set up her telescope in the side yard of the New River Branch Library on an evening in October and welcomed anyone with an interest to come take a peek at the stars.

In a sense, the young woman from Wesley Chapel was coming full circle.

"We actually used to go up to the New River Library when we were kids, and I would check out all of the astronomy books," said the 23-year-old who aspires to become a professional astronomer.

Crowson enjoys sharing her love for astronomy at the occasional community viewing nights that she offers.

"It's fun," she said. As the viewing night approaches, she's excited about sharing astronomy. When it's over, it's nice to relax.



Melanie Crowson's interest in astronomy began when she was very young. She now offers free community viewings, using the telescope she and her father made when she was in high school. (Photos by B.C. Manion)

She loves introducing others to the world of stars, planets and galaxies. She also enjoys talking with people who share her fascination with celestial bodies.

"You end up discussing some interesting theories," Crowson said.

The astronomy student eventually wants to work at a planetarium or an observatory, and is taking online courses to pursue those aims through American Public University.

Crowson, who is a Christian, also hopes to use astronomy in connection with her spiritual life, too. She said she is getting to know God in a new light through her interest in astronomy. It's driven her to learn more and hopes one day to help develop new scientific evidence of the existence of God.

People talk about loving God with their

See STARS, page 14

## Top tennis player Isner headlines Avila fundraiser

By Michael Hinman  
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At one time, he led a restaurant company with more than 96,000 employees and nearly 1,500 locations. But when he wasn't working to grow Outback Steakhouse and other restaurants that were part of Bloomin' Brands Inc., Paul Avery's focus was on his family.

In particular, his daughters, who both suffer from a rare nerve degenerative disease called Friedreich's ataxia.

"Before we knew what they had, I never heard of Friedreich's ataxia," Avery said. "I didn't even know how to pronounce it. Like many people in life, you hear of these types of diseases and challenges, and it happens to somebody else. It hit home for us with both of our kids."

Avery, who is now president and chief executive of the World of Beer chain, is sharing the story of his daughters ahead of this weekend's Ace for a Cure tennis fundraiser hosted by Avila Golf & Country Club. It will feature Avila resident John Isner, the top-ranked male tennis player in the United States, and No. 14 in the world.

Isner, who grew up in North Carolina, has been friends with Avery and his family since he first started to attend fundraisers benefiting Friedreich's Ataxia Research



John Isner, currently the top-ranked male tennis player in the United States, takes a break on the Avila Golf & Country Club tennis courts while getting ready for the Ace for a Cure tennis fundraiser on Nov. 24 that will benefit Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance. (Photos by Michael Hinman)

Alliance in Tampa. And he has seen firsthand what the condition can do.

"The Averys are the absolutely nicest people, and they've worked really hard to conquer this disease," Isner said. "Before I met them, I didn't even know about

Friedreich's ataxia at all. But I've really gotten to know the ins and outs, and Paul and (wife) Suzanne are right on top of it."

Only 6,000 people in America have been

See ISNER, page 14

## Smaller gas tax hike could return next year

By Michael Hinman  
[mhinman@cnewspubs.com](mailto:mhinman@cnewspubs.com)

Without new funding sources, roads in Pasco County could be in trouble. And while county officials have brought several options to the table, commissioners chose to revive one debate that created quite a ruckus last fall: the gas tax.

"I've heard enough from the citizens before that I am not going to support a gas tax," said Commissioner Henry Wilson, who joined fellow commissioner Jack Mariano to

defeat an earlier proposed 5-cent gas tax hike in September.

Moments later, however, Wilson softened his stance, saying he might consider a compromise that would bring a proposed increase to just 3 cents.

That could make a big difference in what is now a \$5 million gap in the county's capital transportation fund. A 3-cent increase could raise that much money, and cost drivers 6 cents a day, assuming gas stations passed that tax on to drivers.

However, to fund all of the county's

transportation needs beginning next year, Pasco would need to raise \$8.5 million. And that's where a new option can come into play — raising property taxes.

That option, mixed with a gas tax, had the commission buzzing last week. With a 3-cent gas tax increase, the county would only have to raise taxes 0.1905 mills, equal to an annual increase of less than \$10 for a \$100,000 home that claims \$50,000 in exemptions.

See GAS TAX, page 14

# Shoot some clays, make a Big difference

By Michael Hinman  
 mhinman@cnewspubs.com

Being a Big Sister has always been one of those things that Elisabeth Butterfield wanted to do, but just couldn't make the commitment.

That is until a friend who had already volunteered with Big Brothers Big Sisters talked about everything involved, and how it can make a difference. And Butterfield was sold.

"I always wanted to get involved with the program, but I was noncommittal being a single person and all," Butterfield said. "Then I realized that was stupid. It's a very small commitment for such a big impact, and that is when I got over myself and finally did it."

A year ago, Butterfield was matched with 10-year-old Chelsea, who already has a very active mom, Theresa. But like many parents, there are times Theresa can use some time for herself, and having Butterfield involved in the family is like having that aunt nearby.

"There's all these life experiences that you can have as a child, but only if they're available to you," said Butterfield, who lives in Wesley Chapel. "For me, as a child, I never had sushi. I grew up in a low economic status myself, and for me, going out was going to Friendly's. I didn't know about dining out, and didn't even know things like what side the fork goes."

Those are just some of the benefits Bigs like Butterfield can share. But there are still dozens of children in Pasco County who could use mentoring like Chelsea, and that will be highlighted during an event this weekend at Tampa Bay Sporting Clays.

Clays for Kids kicks off at 9 a.m. at the center, located at 10514 Ehren Cutoff, in Land O' Lakes. The event is not only a fundraiser, but a chance to attract more volunteers like Butterfield into the program.



Elisabeth Butterfield, right, spends some time with her 'Little,' Chelsea, during a recent nature hike. Butterfield joined Big Brothers Big Sisters last year, and has become, more or less, part of Chelsea's extended family. (Photo courtesy of Elisabeth Butterfield)

The commitment to being a Big is just a few hours a month, said Jan Roberts, Pasco's director of partnership development for the organization. And it doesn't really cost much money, either.

"They are very, very into making sure that this is not a financial pinch for anyone,

because they want to be sure they have Bigs of any economical background," Butterfield said. "There are so many things to do, from trivia night, to bowling, and even tickets to games. They provide you with a lot of resources, so really, it's very little out of pocket."

## If you go

**WHAT:** Clays for Kids  
**WHO:** Big Brothers Big Sisters  
**WHEN:** Nov. 23, 9 a.m.  
**WHERE:** Tampa Bay Sporting Clays, 10514 Ehren Cutoff, Land O' Lakes  
**COST:** Teams of four, \$400; individual, \$100  
**INFO:** BBBSFL.org

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay will celebrate 50 years in 2014, from a national organization that has its roots all the way back to 1902. Big Brothers was formed in 1964 in Hillsborough County, and Big Sisters was added a year later through the efforts of juvenile court judge James P. Calhoun.

The organization now has 2,000 volunteers in Pasco, Hillsborough and Polk counties, but there is always a need for more. A study shared by the local Big Brothers Big Sisters says children who are mentored in the program are 46 percent less likely to begin using illegal drugs — that number jumping to 70 percent when focused on minorities.

Another 27 percent are less likely to use alcohol, and 52 percent are less likely to skip school.

Butterfield is a recruiting manager and runs a small consulting business, all of which can eat up large chunks of her time. But that doesn't stop her from spending time with Chelsea.

"Time finds you," she said. "Everyone will say they don't have time, but judging from my own experience, that's just not true. They just don't make the time."

For more information on the Clays for Kids fundraiser, or to volunteer, call Jan Roberts at (813) 997-6881, or visit BBBSFL.org.

## Senior citizens looking for much-needed Santa

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

One of the most overlooked groups every holiday season are senior citizens, and the Pasco County Tax Collector's office is stepping up to make a difference.

The office is launching "Be a Santa to a Senior" program. It's held in conjunction with Home Instead Senior Care, an organization dedicated to providing services to the elderly, many of whom do not have family or friends to provide companionship or assistance.

The program provides gifts and other necessities that elderly residents of long-term care facilities need and may never have a chance to receive otherwise.

Those wishing to participate can stop by any of the four tax collector's offices in the county, claim an ornament from the gift tree in the lobby, and then bring that item back to the tax collector's office before the requested due date.

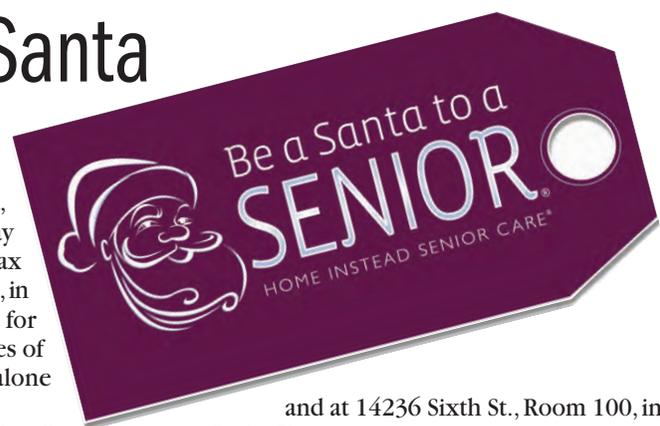
Home Instead will wrap and deliver all gifts to long-term care residents throughout Pasco County.

"I encourage everyone to stop by one of our offices, pick up an ornament, and bring some holiday cheer into a senior's life," Tax Collector Mike Fasano said, in a release. "This is a way for everyone to touch the lives of someone who may be alone and in need."

Gift trees can be found locally at the Central Pasco Government Center, 51111 Land O' Lakes Blvd., Land O' Lakes,

and at 14236 Sixth St., Room 100, in Dade City.

For more information, visit the tax collector's office online at [www.PascoTaxes.com](http://www.PascoTaxes.com).



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# Starting a book club to make new friends



By Diane Kortus  
Publisher

There was a time a few years back after my youngest left for college that I had more free time than I knew what to do with.

At first it felt luxurious. I read books that had been on my nightstand for years, discovered the intimacy of small theater at Stageworks, and took my dogs on long walks morning and night.

Since most of my longtime friends were still busy raising children and had little time to join me on my outings, I began to look for new friends.

I soon found that making new friends was not as easy as I presumed. Most people, I discovered, are content with the friends they've had for years and do not have the time or the desire to invest in new friendships.

So I decided to advertise for new friends — under the auspices of launching a book club. I ran a small ad in the classified section of The Laker/Lutz News and soon recruited a small group of women to meet once a month to talk about books.

In February, it will be four years since our first meeting, and our club is still going strong. We are nine women, small by book club standards, but all have been members for at least two years and we're committed to reading that month's book and come prepared to discuss it.

Together we have sliced and diced close to 50 books. Everything from Stephen King's "11/23/63," a 1,000-page science-fiction thriller that postulates what the world would be like today if Kennedy had not been assassinated, to "Tinkers" by Paul Harding, a Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about a dying man's reflection of his life as a clock repairer in rural Maine.

My book club has exposed me to genres I never would have considered. I still can't believe I read Diana Gabaldon's "Outlander," the first book of her immensely popular historical romance series and the first romance novel I ever read.

And, as I had hoped, it wasn't long be-

fore book club members became my friends. Our two-hour meeting soon stretched to three as we spent the first hour catching up on each other's lives.

We've helped each other through transitions common to women in mid life — the pride we feel as our children graduate from high school and college, and the sense of emptiness we feel when they move out. The excitement of searching and moving to a new house as we downsize. The agony of divorce and the exploration of dating. The birth of grandchildren. The satisfactions and frustrations of our jobs, where we have labored for so many years.

Our discussions, both personal and those about the books we read, are lively because we share our diverse experiences and different perspectives.

We range from our early 40s to mid-60s. We include a postal worker, college career counselor, retired librarian, surgical nurse, paralegal, newspaper publisher, social worker and two therapists.

Most of us are mothers. Some are grandmothers and one a great grandmother. Two never had children. Most of us live in Wesley Chapel and Land O' Lakes, but others live as far away as downtown St. Petersburg.

Each month we come together, gathering at a different member's home, with the host choosing that month's book.

I've just finished reading our November book, Elizabeth Gilbert's much-awaited new novel, "A Signature of All Things." Trust me when I tell you this book is as much unlike "Eat, Pray, Love" as you can imagine. I recommend it wholeheartedly.

Interestingly, my book club friends are just that. Book club friends. We seldom get together outside of our monthly meeting for the same reason I found when I began my search for new friends — our lives outside of work are filled with family obligations and activities with friends we've had for years.

But that's OK.

The three hours we spend together each month give us the time we need to share our love for reading, and to nourish the friendships we never would have had without our book club.



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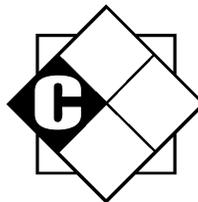


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## Feeling younger every day

Elfriede Rapp, left, and Rosalie Johnson — longtime friends and members of the GFWC's Lutz-Land O' Lakes Woman's Club — enjoy a laugh while reminiscing over happy shared memories of their many years in the Woman's Club. These two 90-something women have accumulated a combined total of more than 72 years of membership and community service in the club. (Photo courtesy of Patricia Serio)

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Busch Gardens  
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## Faster than a speeding cheetah?

Tennessee Titans running back Chris Johnson prepares to race cheetahs from Busch Gardens Tampa during a 'Man v. Cheetah' event that will air on cable channel Nat Geo Wild on Nov. 29 at 9 p.m. The cheetah is part of the park's Cheetah Run habitat.

## Tips for finding that perfect seasonal job

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

Retailers are expected to hire between 720,000 and 780,000 seasonal workers this holiday season, according to a new report from the National Retail Federation.

As job seekers start their search for those seasonal positions, the Better Business Bureau serving West Florida recommends applicants apply early, research potential employers and be cautious of fraudulent job offers.

The holiday season can account for anywhere from 20 to 40 percent of a retailer's annual sales. With so much hanging on those numbers, retailers are likely to be choosy about which candidates they hire.

As a holiday job seeker, the BBB offers the following tips:

- Do research ahead of time. Find out which companies are offering seasonal employment opportunities, and whether that would be a place worth working. Then use BBB.org to find additional information on the company, including consumer complaints about the company, and other details.
- Be suspicious of online offers requesting money. Many consumers use online

classifieds to search for local job openings. Scammers flock to these sites, posting fake jobs aimed at stealing money or the identities of job seekers. Never give personal information without thoroughly researching the company first.

• Work where you shop. Employers want applicants that know their products well. This could make frequent shoppers an attractive choice because the company may not have to spend as much time and money training them.

• Be available and flexible. Holiday hiring managers are drawn to candidates who will be available and have a flexible schedule. Seasonal employees will likely find themselves working long, inconvenient hours, and often on holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve.

• Put best foot forward. Job hunters need to dress their best and be prepared for the interview. This includes being familiar with the company's brand and its products. Retail job hunters in particular need to focus on impressing potential employers with their customer service skill set, which is a must when dealing with stressed shoppers, long checkout lines, and holiday returns.

## Hospice group promotes specialty license plate

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

With November designated as Hospice and Palliative Care Month, the Florida Hospital & Palliative Care Association is promoting its specialty vehicle license plates, available for an additional \$25 a year over normal registration costs.

Funds from the plate sales go to:

- Programs related to hospice, including a new model of care for very ill children, and improving and increasing access to end-of-life care for Florida's veterans.

- Education and outreach for hospice volunteers, patients, families and healthcare professionals.

- Free advance directives and educational materials for the public.

- A toll-free consumer help line at (800) 282-6560.

- Maintenance of the group's website.

The association is a nonprofit organization representing hospice patients and families, hospice professionals, and hospice providers.

For more information on the plates, visit the website at [www.MyFloridaSpecialtyPlate.com](http://www.MyFloridaSpecialtyPlate.com).



Purchases of this specialty license plate helps the Florida Hospital & Palliative Care Association provide a number of services to the state. (Image provided)

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**Q** How often should I have my teeth cleaned and checked by my dentist?

**A** On average seeing a dentist twice a year is recommended for most of us. People with a high risk of dental disease might need to be seen more frequently (every 3-4 months).

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- Smokers
- Diabetics
- People with a current history of gum or periodontal disease
- People with a weak immune response to bacterial infections
- People who tend to get more cavities or buildup of plaque on their teeth than the average person



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# Hike for Hospice raises \$56k for Gulfside

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

Nearly 600 hikers walked or ran in memory or honor of loved ones Nov. 10 at the seventh annual Hike for Hospice at Rasmussen College.

In all, more than \$56,000 was committed to the hospice in pledges through the event.

"Hike for Hospice is designed to celebrate and honor the lives of friends and family members," said Linda Ward, president and chief executive of Gulfside Regional Hospice, in a release. "The day was beautiful, and we got to honor our veterans this year with special presentations both before and after the hike. From the starting line at the run until the memorial at the end of the day, you could feel the energy of the hikers."

Nearly 175 runners participated in the 5-kilometer run, which started with a presentation that included retired Tampa Bay Buccaneers player Mike Alstott.

Kristin West, 11, told her story about how Gulfside helped her family after the death of her grandmother. She also attended



Gulfside's Hike for Hospice 5k Run takes off with 173 runners. (Photos courtesy of Ashley Juno)

Gulfside's Kids Camp, meeting others in her age group who were going through grief like she did.

The highest fundraisers and teams were recognized at the event, as well as the fastest runners in the 5k run. Awards were given to:

- **First place team:** Kanehl's Kids, \$3,500
- **Second place team:** Fabulous 4, \$2,112
- **Third place team:** The Ken Dolls, \$2,100
- **First place individual:** Frank McCollister, \$1,642
- **Second place individual:** Jo DeBolt, \$1,200
- **Third place individual:** Amanda Long, \$855

Fastest adult runners were awarded to Paul Lefebvre, Charles Rosse and Martin Triplett in the male category, and Elaina Canello, Katherine Canello and Patty Cain for the women.

Winning the youth category for kids 15 and younger were Nicholas Barbas, Brandon Bundick and Dalton Garafolo.

Proceeds from the Hike for Hospice will be designated for patients and their families facing life-limiting illnesses in Pasco County, as well as support programs like Gulfside's



Gulfside nurse care manager Terri McGee poses with her daughter, Katy McGee, holding Bella, during Hike for Hospice.

hospice houses and bereavement centers. The program has now raised more than \$300,000 for Gulfside since it began in 2007.

Gulfside was initially licensed in Pasco County in 1989, and serves more than 375 patients daily. It employs more than 250 professionals, and has more than 550 volunteers.

For more information, call (800) 561-4883, or visit [www.GRHospice.org](http://www.GRHospice.org).

## Wildlife group looking for best schoolyard habitat

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

The Florida Wildlife Federation is looking to award a commemorative plaque and a gardening book for children 12 years old or younger who have helped to establish and maintain a habitat for wildlife at home or on

school property.

The habitat will be featured on the group's website, and will be awarded next year on Earth Day, April 22.

Those wanting to enter can send a description and photos of the habitat to [patricia@fwfonline.org](mailto:patricia@fwfonline.org) before March 31. Entries should include talk on various elements being provided, including food, water, cover, and a place to raise young.

The habitat does not need to be approved by the National Wildlife Federation to be eligible.

The Florida Wildlife Federation is dedicated to encouraging young people to be good environmentalists and to care for native animals and plants.

For more information, call (850) 656-7113, or visit [www.FWFOnline.org](http://www.FWFOnline.org).

## Gift cards sought for Sunrise families

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

Sunrise of Pasco County Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Center is once again collecting gift cards to help those in need.

Last year, gift and food cards were distributed to 68 families, which included 12 single women, 57 mothers, and one father, as well as 125 children who received a holiday dinner and gifts they may not have had otherwise.

The program not only empowers those in need to purchase their own gifts and food, but also helps many of them with budgeting money.

Sunrise is looking for gift cards in de-

nominations of \$5, \$10 and \$25 from a group of retailers that include Target, Walmart, Kmart, Sears, Dollar Tree, CVS, Walgreens, Publix, Winn-Dixie, Big Lots, Dollar General, Payless Shoes, and others. Donations of gas cards and Visa gift cards are also encouraged.

Sunrise is also putting together food baskets for families participating in the outreach program, and can use donations for that as well. Deadline for donations are Dec. 9.

Donations can be sent to Sunrise of Pasco County Inc., P.O. Box 928, Dade City, 33526. For more information, call (352) 521-3358, or visit [www.SunrisePasco.org](http://www.SunrisePasco.org).

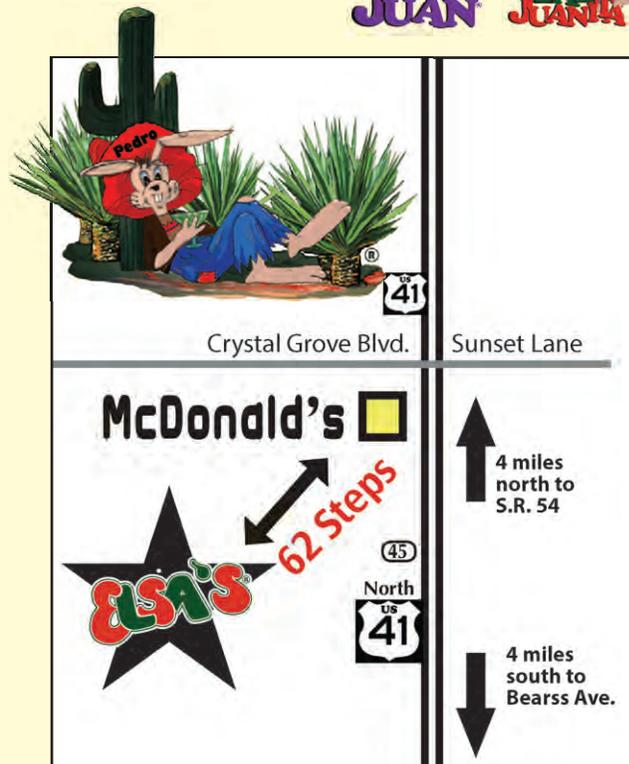


# The Bad Juan Story

The Bad Juan story begins in 1979 with the original Elsa's in Dayton, Ohio.

Inspired by migrant Mexicans who worked the fruit and vegetable fields in northwest Ohio, Elsa's owners spent many late nights in the mixology lab formulating a perfect tequila-lime drink.

The result was a truly authentic margarita that became Elsa's trademark. The key ingredients in the Bad Juan have never changed — tequila, triple sec liqueur and lime juice. There's nothing so satisfying, nothing so refreshing.



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# BUSINESS DIGEST

Send business news to [mhinman@cnewsdigs.com](mailto:mhinman@cnewsdigs.com)

## FOOD FOR A GOOD CAUSE

To celebrate its five-year anniversary, The Hound's Meow — located at 16311 N. Florida Ave., in Lutz — will donate 2 pounds of pet food for every purchase, up to 300 pounds, to local rescue groups on Nov. 23.

As part of its anniversary, the store is also offering various other discounts, as well as giveaways, treat and food samples, and raffles.

For more information, visit them online at [HoundsMeow.com](http://HoundsMeow.com), or call (813) 960-6111.

## RIBBON CUTTING AT FANCY FROCK

The Fancy Frock, 1045 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., in Wesley Chapel, will have a grand re-opening and ribbon cutting Nov. 21 beginning at 5:30 p.m.

The event will include both the Central Pasco Chamber of Commerce as well as the Greater Wesley Chapel Chamber of Commerce.

For more information, call (813) 973-1999, or email [jennifer@thefancyfrock.com](mailto:jennifer@thefancyfrock.com).

## WHOLE FOODS TEAMS UP WITH LOCAL FARMS

Whole Foods Market Tampa is partnering with Sweetwater Organic Community Farm that will allow local farmers to use the store as a drop-off and pick-up point for their subscribing customers, free of charge. It's part of a statewide effort by Whole



## North Tampa Behavioral Health has grand opening

Nearly 150 people were on-hand from Pasco County and surrounding communities as North Tampa Behavioral Health marked its grand opening on Oct. 24. The ceremony featured speeches from retired Major League Baseball player Darryl Strawberry in substance abuse recovery, as well as Pat Scimone-Almasy, board member of the local Pasco chapter for the National Alliance on Mental Illness. The center is at 29910 State Road 56, in Wesley Chapel.

Foods through its community-supported agriculture program.

Traditionally, farm customers had to go to the farm itself or a regional drop point to get their weekly shares. Through the new program, Whole Foods is not only looking to provide convenience, but also educate customers about community-supported agriculture, and increase support for local family farms.

In October, Sweetwater was the recipient of the store's 5 percent day program where 5 percent of the day's net sales were donated to the local nonprofit. On Oct. 29, Sweetwater raised \$3,229 for the program.

Sweetwater is located in Tampa where community members come together to grow fresh organic food, acquire sustainable living skills and support local agriculture.

Pickups will take place at Whole Foods, 1548 N. Dale Mabry Highway, every Thursday from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

For more information, call (813) 874-9435.

## BUILDER OF THE YEAR

Joe Fontana, Tampa division president for Ryland Homes, was named the 2013 Builder of the Year by the Tampa Bay Builders Association.

The ceremony also swore in officers Willy Nunn of Homes by WestBay as president, Jason Starling of Suarez Housing as president-elect, Laurie Stewart-Woodroffe of Heritage Drywall as associate vice president, Bob Gibbons of Ryland Homes as vice president and treasurer, and Keith Appenzeller of King Engineering as vice president and secretary.

Also winning awards were Stewart-Woodroffe from Heritage Drywall as Associate Member of the Year, and Bob Nixon of Nixon Construction as Remodeler Member of the Year.

## DADE CITY CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP ORIENTATION

The Greater Dade City Chamber of Commerce will have a member orientation for seasoned, new and prospective mem-

bers Nov. 21 beginning at noon at the chamber office, 14112 Eighth St., in Dade City.

The chamber will provide lunch. For more information, call (352) 567-3769.

## CITY GRILL TAKES OVER IN WESLEY CHAPEL

City Grill has opened in the former location of Winners Grill, 5429 Village Market, in Wesley Chapel.

Founder Gerry Malynowsky originally sold the restaurant, as Winners, in 2008. He repossessed it, however, in 2013, according to a release.

Keeping his ownership, Malynowsky decided to relaunch the restaurant under a new name, maintaining an upscale mix of sports bar and grill, pub, and family restaurant.

For more information, visit them online at [www.CityGrill.us](http://www.CityGrill.us).

Continued on next page



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**LONGTIME MAKEUP SPECIALIST OPENS WESLEY CHAPEL LOCATION**

A permanent makeup specialist with decades of experience is bringing her skills to Wesley Chapel.

Valerie S. Rudmin, a longtime registered cosmetologist who has specialized in permanent makeup for 26 years, has opened an Everlasting Beauty location at 3854 Flatiron Loop, Suite 102, in Wesley Chapel. It's her third location in Florida, following Pinellas and Hernando counties, where she's worked for more than 20 years.

Rudmin also travels to Des Moines, Iowa, five times a year by invitation to work in the Midwest.

Permanent makeup is a cosmetic form of tattooing in which pigment is implanted within the skin, which Rudmin says looks more natural than makeup.

For more information on Rudmin's new location, call her at (727) 460-3847.

**SMARTSTART GEARS UP FOR MONTHLY ROUNDTABLES**

The SmartStart Dade City Incubator will soon have monthly small business roundtables to help small business owners talk about their opportunities and challenges in a closed-door environment.

"The roundtables will be beneficial to any small business owner wanting to vet ideas with other entrepreneurs, and talk about challenges they might be facing," said John Moors, executive director of the Greater Dade City Chamber of Commerce, in a release. "We are thrilled to be involved with SmartStart, and helping small businesses flourish here in Dade City."

A schedule has yet to be released for the sessions, but they will take place at the incubator, located at the Dade City Business Center, 15000 Citrus Country Drive, Suite 103, in Dade City.

Those interested in participating can contact Krista Covey at (352) 437-4861, or email her at [kcovey@pascoedc.com](mailto:kcovey@pascoedc.com).

**NETWORKING GROUP SCHEDULES CHRISTMAS PARTY**

The East Pasco Networking Group will have its annual Christmas mixer Dec. 3 at 6 p.m. at Village Inn, 5214 Gall Blvd., in Zephyrhills.

The event, which will feature family members speaking — not business owners — will be "Dutch treat," but does require an RSVP deposit of \$10 per person or family.

For more information, call Nils Lenz at (813) 782-9491 or email him at [nilslenz@gmail.com](mailto:nilslenz@gmail.com).

**AIRPORT CHIEF WINS BOSS OF THE YEAR**

The International Association of Administration Professionals-City Center Chapter named Tampa International Airport chief executive Joe Lopano its 2013 Boss of the Year.

Boss of the Year is given each year to a manager, supervisor or executive who has been nominated by their administrative professional. The award is based on experience, achievements, civic work, involvement in the chapter, and other factors. They are presented in an essay that keeps the nominee's name anonymous.

Both Kim Humphrey and Carol Marino, who work in the executive offices of the Hillsborough County Aviation Authority, entered Lopano in September, citing his impactful leadership, his focus on employee wellness, and his support of the administrative professionals group.

The IAAP is a nonprofit professional association for office professionals with a mission to enhance the success of career-minded administrative professionals by providing opportunity for growth through education, community building and leadership development.



Joe Lopano

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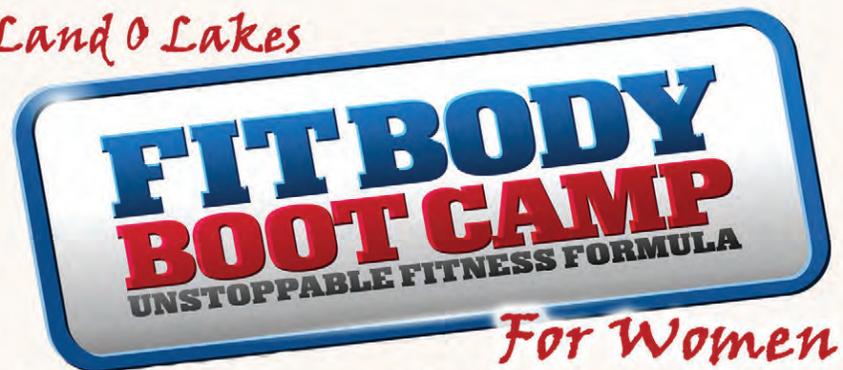
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9 am - 1 pm See the place  
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up to 11 lbs	\$40	up to 11 lbs	\$50
12 - 33 lbs	\$45	12 - 22 lbs	\$55
34 - 66 lbs	\$55	23 - 44 lbs	\$60
67 - 88 lbs	\$70	45 - 66 lbs	\$70
89 - 132 lbs	\$85	67 - 88 lbs	\$90
		89 - 132 lbs	\$105

### Weekend Vaccine Clinics

<b>SAT., NOV. 23<sup>RD</sup></b> 1 to 2 pm <b>TREASURED PET RESORT</b> 2643 Namia Way #101 LAND O' LAKES	<b>SAT., NOV. 23<sup>RD</sup></b> 2:30 to 3:30 pm <b>MIDWAY FARM &amp; RANCH</b> 19211 SR 52 LAND O' LAKES	<b>SAT., NOV. 30<sup>TH</sup></b> 1 to 2 pm <b>PET CITY</b> 2119 Collier Pkwy LAND O' LAKES	<b>SAT., NOV. 30<sup>TH</sup></b> 2:30 to 3:30 pm <b>WOOFGANG BAKERY</b> 18875 SR 54 LUTZ
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WEEKDAY IN-OFFICE VACCINE CLINICS: MONDAY-FRIDAY 1 - 2 PM

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### Noah dreams of being a companion dog

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**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, LEASHES AND HOME GROOMING PRODUCTS**

### 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](mailto:kwelton@cnewspubs.com), ATTN: Pet of the Week

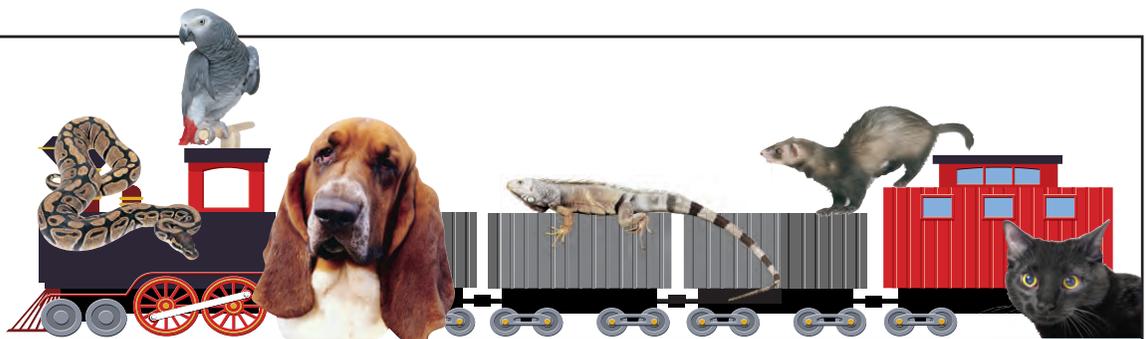
PLEASE NOTE: OWNERS NAME AND ADDRESS MUST BE INCLUDED FOR YOUR PET TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PUBLICATION.

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For more information on how to adopt Dude or other animals with Pasco County Animal Services, visit [tinyurl.com/AdoptPasco](http://tinyurl.com/AdoptPasco).

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# What's Happening

Your Community Calendar • Submit 2 weeks in advance to: [whathappening@cnewspubs.com](mailto:whathappening@cnewspubs.com) • All listings free of charge

## THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE

Craven Chiropractic Clinic in Land O' Lakes is collecting nonperishable food items for distribution through Christian Social Services. A collection box is located in the clinic's reception room at 5420 Land O' Lakes Blvd., Suite 105, in the Black Lake Professional Office Park. Monetary donations also will be accepted.

## TAMPA ICE RINK RE-OPENS

Tampa's downtown ice rink, 600 N. Ashley Drive, will return to Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park from Nov. 21 to Jan. 5. Cost is \$10 for a 90-minute session with skates. Proceeds will help fund scholarships to send children to summer camps through the city's parks department. For hours, visit [TampasDowntownOnIce.com](http://TampasDowntownOnIce.com).

## ORCHID SOCIETY

The Tampa Bay Orchid Society will meet Nov. 21 at 6:30 p.m. at Christ the King Church, 821 S. Dale Mabry Highway, Tampa. Guest speaker will be Ron McHatton, chief operating officer and director of education of the American Orchid Society, on the topic of Madagascar orchids. Refreshments will be provided. There will be plants for sale and a plant raffle. For more information, call (813) 839-4959, or visit [tinyurl.com/TampaOrchids](http://tinyurl.com/TampaOrchids).

## FESTIVAL OF TREES

The Good Samaritan Clinic will host its annual Festival of Trees, sponsored by Friendly Kia, on Nov. 22 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Verizon Event Center, 8718 Trouble Creek Road in New Port Richey. There will be more than 40 trees and wreaths on display, as well as a kid's coloring area, light refreshments, Christmas carols, and Santa. Admission is free.

## USF JAZZ IN WESLEY CHAPEL

The Center for the Arts at Wesley Chapel is hosting the award-winning University of South Florida Big Band Jazz Ensemble I on Nov. 22 at 7:30 p.m. The Big Band jazz will feature the music of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Glenn Miller and more. General seating is \$10, and seniors and students are \$5. The center is at 30651 Wells Road in Wesley Chapel. For tickets, call (813) 794-8772.

## SANTA'S WORKSHOP AT MOSI

The Museum of Science & Industry, 4801 E. Fowler Ave., in Tampa, is hosting a satellite toy workshop in MOSI's inventor's studio, Idea Zone, from Nov. 22 through Dec. 31. Kids can think, design and create stocking stuffers and gifts for parents and grandparents. The workshop is included with MOSI admission. For information, call (813) 987-6000, or visit [MOSI.org](http://MOSI.org).

## INTERNATIONAL AUTO SHOW

The 2014-Model Tampa Bay International Auto Show will be Nov. 22-24 at the Tampa Convention Center, 333 S. Franklin St., in Tampa. The show will feature a collection of high-end luxury cars, plug-in electric vehicles, family fun, and more. Hours are Friday from noon to 10 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tickets are \$9 for adults, and \$5 for seniors 62 and older, military, and children ages 7 to 12. Children younger than 6 are free. For information, visit [AutoShowTampa.com](http://AutoShowTampa.com).



Rev. Federico Agnir

## BENEFIT CONCERT FOR THE PHILIPPINES

Atonement Lutheran Church of Wesley Chapel, on State Road 54, will host Rev. Federico Agnir, keyboard player and baritone singer, in a concert Nov. 24 at 3 p.m. Rev. Agnir was born, bred and educated in the Philippines. The musical performance of familiar show tunes and inspirational music will benefit Atonement's Disaster Relief Fund, which in turn will go to the Pacific Typhoon Response Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. Admission is free. All donations are tax-deductible. Those wishing to mail a monetary donation can send a check made out to Atonement Lutheran Church, with 'Pacific Typhoon Response' on the memo line, to 29617 State Road 54, Wesley Chapel, 33543. (Photo courtesy of Federico Agnir)

## CARROLLWOOD VILLAGEFEST

Carrollwood Village Phase I, II & III Homeowners' Associations will host its 11th annual VillageFest on Nov. 23 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Dan Ruskiewicz Field, 13420 S. Village Drive. The event will feature live music, arts and crafts, plants, beer and wine, activities for kids, and more. Admission is free. Those going can park at the Carrollwood Cultural Center, 4537 Lowell Road, for \$2 per car. The event is rain or shine, and no coolers are allowed. For information, call (813) 842-7066, or visit [CarrollwoodVillage.com](http://CarrollwoodVillage.com).

## MODEL TRAIN SHOW, SWAP

Regal Railways will present its Model Train Show & Swap Meet on Nov. 23 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Knights of Columbus, 5850 K of C Drive in Port Richey. There will be more than 60 vendor tables and a model train layout. Admission is \$4 for adults, with children younger than 12 free. Lunch will be provided for a small fee. For information, call (727) 244-1341, or visit [RegalRailways.com](http://RegalRailways.com).

## GREYHOUND DOGS

Greyhound Rescue and Adoptions of Tampa Bay will host a meet and greet with greyhounds and their adoptive or foster parents on Nov. 23 from noon to 2 p.m., at the Suncoast Crossing Petco, 16248 State Road 54 in Odessa. For information, call (813) 971-4732, or visit [Great-Greyhound.org](http://Great-Greyhound.org).

## FESTIVAL OF THANKS

Florida Hospital Zephyrhills is hosting its annual Festival of Thanks concert event on

Nov. 23 at 5 p.m., at the East Pasco Seventh-day Adventist Church, 7333 Dairy Road in Zephyrhills. The free concert features the Florida Hospital Zephyrhills Community Chorale, and includes a Thanksgiving tribute to Abraham Lincoln and the nation.

## THANKSGIVING SERVICE, PICNIC

First United Methodist Church of Lutz, 960 W. Lutz Lake Fern Road, will host its Old-Tyme Thanksgiving Service & Picnic on Nov. 24. Following morning services at 8 a.m., 9:45 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., there will be a picnic by the lake beginning at 12:30 p.m. Turkey and drinks will be provided. Those attending should bring a side dish to share. There will be family yard games and music. For information, call (813) 949-1751.

## RUDOLPH CELEBRATES 50

Black Friday guests at The Shops at Wiregrass on Nov. 29 can join in Rudolph's anniversary celebration, featuring entertainment and activities. There will be a character meet and greet in Center Court from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., with Rudolph, Hermey and Bumble, characters from the famous 1964 television special. The Shops are located at 28211 Paseo Drive in Wesley Chapel.

## HOSPICE THRIFT SHOPS DISCOUNT

All five Gulfside Regional Hospice thrift shops will offer a storewide 25 percent discount to shoppers on Black Friday, Nov. 29. All stores will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. All sales benefit Gulfside Regional Hospice and help provide compassionate care for patients with life-limiting illnesses in Pasco County. Shoppers also can bring in donations of clothing, household items, electronics, and more. Visit [GRHospice.org](http://GRHospice.org), and click on the "about us" link for thrift shop locations.

## HOLIDAY CARD LANE

Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park in New Port Richey will present Holiday Card Lane, a festive display of holiday cards ranging in height from 4 feet to 8 feet made by local schools and businesses, from Dec. 2 to Jan. 8. Registration deadline to sponsor a card is Nov. 30. For information, call (727) 934-4198 or (727) 942-7439.

## COMMUNITY YARD SALE

Gunn Highway Memorial American Legion Post 147 will have a community yard sale on Nov. 30 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Legion Hall, 17383 Gunn Highway in Odessa. Spaces can be reserved for \$5. A space with table and two chairs is \$8. All proceeds go to the Disadvantaged Children's Christmas Party. There also will be an all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast available for \$5 for adults and \$2.50 for children younger than 12. For information, call (813) 295-0820 or (813) 920-7162, or email [amlegion@gmail.com](mailto:amlegion@gmail.com).

## VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS STROLL

The Henry B. Plant Museum, 401 W. Kennedy Blvd., in Tampa, will host its annual Victorian Christmas Stroll Dec. 1-23 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily. The stroll features 14 exhibit rooms designed in 19th century themes and antique holiday accessories. Complimentary spiced cider and cookies will be served on the veranda. Carolers will perform each evening. For information and ticket prices, visit [PlantMuseum.org](http://PlantMuseum.org).

## HABITAT FOR HUMANITY MIXER

Habitat for Humanity's annual Holiday Open House and Christmas Mixer is Dec. 5 at 6 p.m., at the Habitat ReStore, 15029 U.S. 301 in Dade City. The event includes raffles, refreshments and holiday cheer. Guests donating a gift card of \$10 or more, to be distributed to a Habitat family, will receive an entry into a raffle. Gift card is not required to attend. For information, call (352) 523-2020.

## WOMEN'S CLUB HOLIDAY PARTY

The Pasco Federated Republican Women's Club will host its holiday dinner party on Dec. 6 at 6 p.m., at the Fox Hollow Golf Club, 10050 Robert Trent Jones Parkway in Trinity. Suzanne Reno will provide the entertainment. Cost for dinner is \$25. Reservations must be made by Dec. 3. For information, call Fran Scerbo at (727) 597-3727.

## TAMPA BAY COIN CLUB

The Tampa Bay Coin Club meets the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m., at the Land O' Lakes Community Center, 5401 Land O' Lakes Blvd. The meetings include an auction, raffle, door prizes, guest speaker, free appraisals, and an opportunity to trade with other collectors. For information, visit [TampaBayCoinClub.org](http://TampaBayCoinClub.org).

## BIBLE STUDY GROUP

The Storehouse Bible Study Group meets at the Senior Center, Wisteria Loop in Land O' Lakes, every Thursday at 7 p.m., except the second Thursday of the month. Pastor Dan Brockman leads the group. Refreshments are served. There is also Power Point Sunday School at 5 p.m., and a worship service at 6 p.m., on Sundays. For information, call (813) 235-9239.

## 'LOCAL LANDSCAPES' EXHIBIT

Pasco Arts Council is showing the exhibit "Local Landscapes" until Dec. 2 at the New Port Richey Government Center, 8731 Citizens Drive. The exhibit showcases open air landscapes by the artists of West Coast Plein Air. The paintings are for sale as well as viewing. Admission is free. The center is handicapped accessible. Hours are Tuesday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For information, call the council at (727) 845-7322, or visit [PascoArt.org](http://PascoArt.org).

## 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 most needed items are: Canned meats (tuna, chicken, ham, sausage), canned fruits and vegetables, canned and boxed meals (soup, chili, stew, macaroni & cheese), pasta and 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. The Laker/Lutz News office is in the Copperstone Executive Suites, 3632 U.S. 41, Suite 102, in Land O' Lakes.



Check out our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/TheLakerLutzNews](http://www.facebook.com/TheLakerLutzNews)

You'll find stories, things to do, specials, community photos and more.

# Florida gets big overseas boost to tourism

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

Tourism is on the rise in Florida, with more than 72.6 million people traveling to the state this year already.

Visit Florida, the state's tourism organization, said nearly 23 million people visited Florida between July and September, up 1.7 percent over the same three months in 2012. It's the state's largest third quarter in history.

Overall, tourism is up more than 3.4 percent for the year. Gov. Rick Scott helped make the announcement last week at Busch Gardens in Tampa, adding that every 85 visitors to the state support one Florida job.

"A growing tourism industry equates to more jobs for Florida families and a stronger economy," Scott said, in a statement.

When tourists come to Florida, they're spending more money as well. Visitors to the state have spent an average of 713 per person, totaling 51.8 billion. That was up 5.8 percent over the year before.

Direct travel-related employment in Florida during the same period was up 2.8 percent, adding 29,700 jobs to the state.

All of these figures are record territory for Florida, creating the largest nine-month period in the state's history.

"This continued momentum is a testa-

ment to the strength of Visit Florida's marketing efforts, the power of the Sunshine State brand, and the dedication of the near 1.1 million Floridians who work in the state's tourism industry," said Tammy Gustafson, chair of Visit Florida's board of directors, in a release.

Although Americans traveling to Florida remain the bulk of the tourists visiting in 2013, more are flying in from overseas. Nearly 2.9 million people came in from other countries in the third quarter, a jump of 10 percent. At the same time, 516,000 Canadian visitors made the trek as well, up 2.9 percent over last year.

The economic impact of tourism on the state is significant, affecting everything from taxable sales, occupancy rates at hotels, rental car collections, bed taxes, and average daily room rates typically dictated by demand, said Will Secombe, president and chief executive of Visit Florida. The average daily room rate at a hotel in Florida is now 102.69, with occupancy just under 63 percent in the quarter.

Another boost to tourism is the number of Florida residents who travel within the state. During the past three months, 13.6 million Floridians did just that, making up for 42 percent of the total tourism market. That's up 6.2 percent from last year.

# Wilderness Café

## Taking on an International French Flair

The Wilderness Café is proud to announce that **Caroline Damman**, a graduate of the Culinary Arts School in France, is bringing her international restaurant experience and menu creations to our local café.

**Caroline**, born and raised in France, worked at the **Four Seasons Hotel George V** in Paris, France before immigrating to the Washington, D.C. area, where she managed the Café at the world famous Watergate Hotel.

**Caroline** recently moved to Tampa with her husband, a celebrated Chef, who accepted a position as Executive Chef, with a new restaurant in the bay area.

**Caroline** said, "I fell in love with the unique atmosphere of the Wilderness Café, and knew immediately, this was the new home for my Café creations, and my family."

**Caroline** told us, "I will be adding some items to the already unique menu, but more importantly, we will be bringing the neighbors together to savor the family experience."

"We have already scheduled Santa Toy Donation Days and a host of other holiday events," Caroline added.



FREE WIFI

Holiday Special Menus are now available for local business events and family catering for groups of 4 or more.

*Come in and try out our new local French accent*

MONDAY-FRIDAY  
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SATURDAY  
8:00 am until 8:00 pm  
SUNDAY  
8:00 am until 6:00 pm

The Wilderness Café is located at the north entrance to Wilderness Commons Shopping Center.

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Visit our Facebook page: Wilderness Market and Café for daily posts and updates

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# Letters to Santa!

We're sending by special delivery to the North Pole letters to Santa from our readers.

Tell Santa anything you want in your very own letter. We'll make sure he gets it!

Have your Mom, Dad or another adult mail us your letter along with this form by **December 12th**. Santa will pick out his favorite letters and they will be published in The Laker/Lutz News on Christmas Day.

You can also download and print this form from our website at [www.LakerLutzNews.com](http://www.LakerLutzNews.com)

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parents'/Helper's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail this form along with your letter to santa to:**  
Letters to Santa, The Laker/Lutz News, P.O. Box 479, Lutz, FL 33548.  
Or, drop off at our office in Copperstone Executive Suites at 3632 Land O' Lakes Blvd, Suite 102, Land O' Lakes, FL 34639.

TheLAKER / LutzNEWS  
Community News Publications

# Chalk Talk

Send school news to [mrrathman@cnewspubs.com](mailto:mrrathman@cnewspubs.com)

### SERVICE & SAFETY FAIR

Steinbrenner High School is hosting a Community Service & Safety Fair on Nov. 21 from 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. for students who need Bright Futures approved volunteer hours. The fair will be in the school's cafeteria, and there will be several nonprofit organizations available for guests to speak with. Steinbrenner is at 5575 W. Lutz Lake Fern Road in Lutz.

### MUSIC SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Claudia's School of Music in Lutz is hosting an open house Nov. 23 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Guests can meet the teachers, learn about lessons and programs, and take part in product presentations on digital pianos, guitars, violins, and more. The school is at 17615 Hunting Bow Circle, Suite 102, in Lutz.

For information, call (813) 926-1188, or visit [ClaudiasSchoolOfMusic.com](http://ClaudiasSchoolOfMusic.com).

### ACADEMY AT THE LAKES OFFERS TOURS

Academy at the Lakes Wendleck Campus, 2220 Collier Parkway in Land O'



### Diego Montoya wins essay contest

In honor of Constitution Day in September, the Pasco County's clerk and comptroller's office conducted its Constitution Essay Contest for fifth-grade students. First place was awarded to Diego Montoya, center front, a student at Odessa Elementary School. Diego wrote, 'This document to me is important because as a U.S. citizen it protects my rights. No one can steal them as long as it stands.' Joining Montoya, from left, are district superintendent Kurt Browning, clerk and comptroller Paula O'Neil, parents Maria and Andres Montoya, teacher Mary Wainwright, principal Teresa Love, and school board chair Cynthia Armstrong. (Photo courtesy of Pasco County Schools)

Lakes, offers weekly group tours as follows:

- Early Childhood Group Tour, prekindergarten and kindergarten, Tuesdays at 9 a.m.
- Elementary group tour, grades 1-4, Thursdays at 9 a.m.

- Middle division group tour, grades 5-8, Wednesdays at 8:45 a.m.
  - Upper division group tour, grades 9-12, Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m.
- For information, email [tgonzalez@academyatthelakes.org](mailto:tgonzalez@academyatthelakes.org).

### MOSI OFFERS PRESCHOOL SCIENCE

The Museum of Science and Industry, 4801 E. Fowler Ave., in Tampa, now offers PeeWee Wednesdays, with free preschool science activities every Wednesday, from 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. There will be a science activity or demonstration for children younger than 4. Kids eat free in the café with an adult meal purchase.

For information, call (813) 987-6000.

### ONLINE SOCIAL MEDIA COURSES

The Pasco-Hernando Community College corporate training department now offers two new online courses, "Introduction to LinkedIn Career Networking" and "Using Social Media in Business." Participants can learn to develop business contacts, and use the most popular media platforms to grow and promote their businesses.

To learn more, call (727) 816-3123, or email [corporatetraining@phcc.edu](mailto:corporatetraining@phcc.edu).

### ITALIAN AMERICAN CLUB DONATES TO ABC

The Italian American Club has donated \$1,000 to the Assist, Believe, and Care programs at R.B. Cox Elementary and San Antonio Elementary schools. The ABC program is designed to provide school supplies, clothing and other essential services to students and families in need.

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"Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo has worked with Community News Publications for years to promote special events, new exhibits/attractions and our summer camps. We find that advertising to their loyal family readership in the Land O' Lakes and Lutz area to be a valuable part of our marketing mix."

Jason Davis, Marketing Manager  
Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo, 813-935-8552

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# Five tips for making the holidays more affordable

Special to The Laker/Lutz News

Getting the perfect gift for everyone on your shopping list doesn't mean going over budget. A company known for its low costs, Dollar General, offers some tips on how to celebrate the season affordably without sacrificing the merriment.

• **Décor:** Whether you're going for a classic look or a modern feel, you can deck the halls stylishly and on budget at a discount retailer. Make your exterior inviting with a festive wreath and lights. Decorate your tree with a wide selection of ornaments and ribbons, as well as homemade ornaments.

Mini trees, snow globes and scented candles can also add cheer in every room. Let the fireplace take center stage and make it glow with mantel décor and stockings on those extra-cold evenings.

• **Gifts and stocking stuffers:** With a large quantity of people on your shopping list from coworkers to cousins and teachers, save time and money by picking up a simple glass jar and filling it with

their favorite candies and treats. You also can dress up the gift with a little ribbon and a \$1 ornament.

• **Baking:** End your holiday meals on a sweet note by baking your own cake and holiday-themed cookies with simple mixes and premade frostings. This not only saves money, but also creates an activity that could include the entire family.

• **Hosting a crowd:** If you will be hosting house guests for a winter party or for several days, stock up on basic household products before everyone arrives. Save by buying toilet paper, paper towels, and cleaning items in bulk online, and have them delivered to your home for one less stop during the holidays.

• **Staying Healthy:** Avoid the physician this holiday by staying well as the colder temperatures arrive. Drinking lots of water and eating healthy fruits and vegetables can keep you healthy this winter.

This holiday season, give yourself the gift of money in the bank for the new year.

– StatePoint



## Donation to a tea

Members of Women-n-Charge recently donated \$1,000 to a local ministry aimed at serving women, A Woman's Place. It offers hope and resources, free of charge, for women facing unplanned pregnancies. Money came from a fundraising tea event, which typically funds the group's grant program. (Photo courtesy of Amanda Wright)

## LIBRARIES

### Land O' Lakes Branch Library

- Baby Storytime, 11:30 a.m., and 2:30 p.m., every Thursday
- Toddler Storytime, 10:15 a.m., and 10:45 a.m., every Friday
- Preschool Storytime, 11:30 a.m., every Friday
- Teen Advisory Board, 6 p.m., Nov. 26
- Land O' Lakes Book Club, 1:30 p.m., Nov. 20
- Friends of the Land O' Lakes Library, 2:30 p.m., Nov. 20
- Taste of Sunshine, 5 p.m., Nov. 20
- PM-16-plus Game Night, 6 p.m., Nov. 22
- Tween Shrinky Dink Craft, 2 p.m., Nov. 23
- Tablet Time, 10:15 a.m., Nov. 27
- All day closed – Thanksgiving Holiday Nov. 28 and Nov. 29

The library is closed Sundays and Mondays, and is located at 2818 Collier Parkway. It can be reached at (813) 929-1214.

### Austin Davis Public Library

- Baby Time 11:30 a.m., every Tuesday
- Toddler Time, 10:30 a.m., Nov. 21
- Storytime, 11 a.m., Nov. 21
- Teen Advisory Board, 4 p.m., Nov. 20
- Scratch for Teens: Video Game Design Basics, 4:30 p.m., Nov. 20
- Microsoft Access-Tables And Relationships, 3:30 p.m., Nov. 21
- Early closing, 6 p.m., Nov. 25, Nov. 26 and Nov. 27
- Closed all day – Thanksgiving, Nov. 28 and Nov. 29

The library is located at 17808 Wayne Road in Odessa. It can be reached at (813) 273-3652.

### Lutz Branch Library

- Storytime, 11:30 a.m., every Tuesday
- Lucky Cat Yoga: Chair Yoga, 10:30 a.m., Nov. 20
- Baby Time, 10:15 a.m., Nov. 21
- Toddler Time, 11 a.m., Nov. 21
- Jump, Jive and Jam, 10:15 a.m., Nov. 20

- Keyboard Basics, 2 p.m., Nov. 25
- Early closing, 6 p.m., Nov. 25, Nov. 26 and Nov. 27
- Closed All Day – Thanksgiving, Nov. 28 and Nov. 29

The library is located at 101 W. Lutz Lake Fern Road and can be reached at (813) 273-3652.

### The Jimmie B. Keel Regional Library

- Wee Artists, 11 a.m., every Monday
- Family Center on Deafness Telephone Distributor, 10 a.m., Nov. 26
- Toddler Time, 10:15 a.m., and 11 a.m., Nov. 20
- Teen Advisory Board Meeting, 6 p.m., Nov. 21
- Online Shopping, 10:15 a.m., Nov. 22
- Early closing, Nov. 25, Nov. 26 and Nov. 27
- Closed all day – Thanksgiving, Nov. 28 and Nov. 29

The library is located at 2902 W. Bearss Ave., and can be reached at (813) 273-3652.

### New River Library

- Basic Conversational Spanish, 4 p.m., every Tuesday
- Toddler Storytime, 11:15 a.m., every Wednesday
- Preschool Storytime, 12 p.m., every Wednesday
- Teen Advisory Board, 6 p.m., Nov. 21
- Friday Classic Movies, 11 a.m., Nov. 22
- Basic Conversational English, 4 p.m., Nov. 22
- Teen Art Competition, 6:30 p.m., Nov. 21
- Closed all day – Thanksgiving, Nov. 28 and Nov. 29
- Children's Popcorn and a Movie, 1:15 p.m., Nov. 30

The library is closed Sundays and Mondays and is located at 34043 State Road 54, in Zephyrhills, and can be reached at (813) 788-6375.



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## STARS, from page 1

whole heart, Crowson said. She wants to make full use of her intellectual capabilities to love God with her whole mind, too.

Her fascination with celestial bodies began quite early in life.

"I think I've always been interested, since I was a real small kid," Crowson said.

She recalls going on occasional rides during the dark early morning hours with her dad, who was delivering his newspaper route.

"It was really cool. We could see all of the stars," Crowson said.

As she learned more about stars and planets, her fascination grew.

Crowson, who was home-schooled, said her parents encouraged her to pursue her curiosity about the heavens.

During her high school years, she and her dad ran across a book that provided instructions for building a telescope. They decided to take on the challenge.

She chronicled the project in a manual she titled, "Closer To The Stars: Detailed Instructions for Building Your Own Telescope."

It took about two years to build the telescope and it cost about \$1,000. It would have been cheaper to buy a telescope, but then she would have missed out on valuable lessons, Crowson said.



The telescope that Melanie Crowson and her dad made, a project that took two years and lots of trial and error.

Building the telescope helped her better understand how it works, she said. It also gave her a chance to apply math in real life.

"We used math to figure out sizes, distances, making sure the corners lined up," Crowson said.

If something goes wrong with her telescope, she also knows how to fix it.

"We built it so that we know where everything is. I know exactly what every screw is there for and what it does, what it's holding together," Crowson said. "I know which parts I can take apart. If I need to replace anything, I know everything about it."

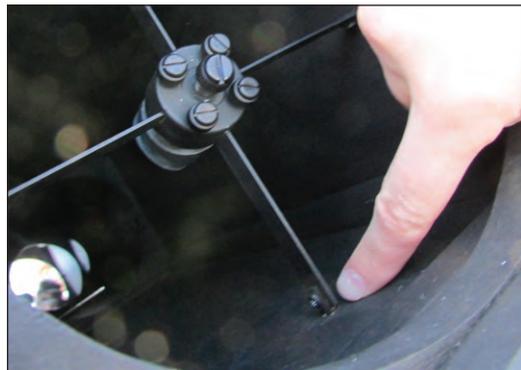
Having community viewing nights gives Crowson a way to share what she loves and offers an opportunity to inspire others. She hopes people who come to peer through her telescope will enjoy what they see.

She also hopes it piques their curiosity.

"Maybe it will make them wonder: What's out there? How was it made? Was it really a Big Bang? Make them question it a little bit more," she said.

Maybe gazing through the telescope, the experience "will bring them closer to God," she said.

If you would like to know more about Melanie Crowson's community viewings, email her at [scopegal617@gmail.com](mailto:scopegal617@gmail.com).



By building a telescope, Melanie Crowson said she became knowledgeable about how every part works and how to fix it, if it is damaged. This is a look at the interior of her telescope.

## ISNER, from page 1

diagnosed with the condition, but 1 in 100 people are carriers of the gene that can cause it, Avery said. The disease itself typically attacks the spinal cord, especially those nerves that direct muscle movement in the arms and legs.

It can lead to muscle weakness, vision and hearing impairment, spine curvature, diabetes and heart problems.

While pharmaceutical companies and research centers have been working on treatments and a cure for Friedreich's ataxia because of how it relates to other diseases like Huntington's and Parkinson's diseases, there is still a long way to go.

"Today, we have several drugs that are in advanced clinical trials," Avery said. "They are showing to be very promising, so we're excited about that. And the awareness of the condition continues to grow."

While the tennis event itself is on Sunday, the entire weekend actually kicks off Nov. 21 with a meet and greet and autograph session with Isner. Saturday, beginning at 8 a.m., Avila tennis director Roger Cypriano and his team will conduct a tennis

### If you go

**WHAT:** Ace for a Cure tennis fundraiser featuring John Isner

**WHO:** Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance

**WHEN:** Nov. 24, 11:30 a.m.

**WHERE:** Avila Golf & Country Club, 943 Guisando De Avila, Tampa

**COST:** \$80

**INFO:** [tinyurl.com/AceCure](http://tinyurl.com/AceCure)

Teach-A-Thon with half-hour lessons available for \$25.

The Spin-A-Thon begins at 9 a.m. with one-hour spin classes starting at \$50, and additional hours at \$25. The Mind Body-A-Thon begins at 11 a.m. with Pilates and yoga.

Tennis round robin takes place from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., for sponsors who spend \$1,000 or more.

Sunday is the tennis exhibition match featuring Isner, where gates open at 11:30 a.m. at Avila. Tickets to that match, which includes lunch, are \$80 each.

"I've always had a good time playing, and it's convenient for me, because it's all right here in the neighborhood," Isner said. "And it's for a great cause, and I'm glad that I can really help out."

Avery's daughters are looking forward to some of the treatments for Friedreich's ataxia making their way through clinical trials. In the meantime, however, they're living normal lives. One is in college, and the other is finishing her senior year of high school.

"They're super kids in their attitudes and expectations, and they have a great outlook," Avery said. "They're not defined by the disease, and just want to get ahead in life like everyone else."

To purchase tickets or sponsorships, visit online at [tinyurl.com/AceCure](http://tinyurl.com/AceCure). For more information on the event, call Roger Cypriano at (813) 968-6792, or email him at [tennis@avilagolf.com](mailto:tennis@avilagolf.com).



Paul Avery, the former chief operating officer of Outback Steakhouse's parent company, Bloomin' Brands Inc., and the current president and chief executive of World of Beer, has been a key figure for years with the Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance.

## GAS TAX, from page 1

Raising property taxes for road and bridge projects would affect homes in all parts of the county, including incorporated areas. But the county would not be required to share those revenues with the individual cities, like it would for other options.

Commissioners won't have to decide on a new plan until next year, but giving county administrator Michele Baker and her staff some direction in which way they're leaning could help with the planning process, Baker said.

"We have years of decisions to deal with, but going forward, we have very limited revenue, and we have to come up with a plan

on moving forward," she said.

By moving money intended to build new roads into accounts that would maintain existing roads, more than a dozen projects as part of an overall 15-year plan would be affected, officials said, totaling \$151 million, with \$55 million earmarked from gas tax revenue.

Projects like Bell Lake Road from U.S. 41 to Alpine Road would be pushed from 2015 to 2017. It also delays other projects like County Road 54 from State Road 54/56 to Progress Parkway, as well as Starkey Boulevard from River Crossing Boulevard to DeCubellis Road to the next decade.

Other projects would be moved off the schedule completely, like the third phase of

Collier Parkway to Ehren Cutoff, as well as Twenty Mile Level Road from State Road 54 to Collier Parkway.

Commissioners did indicate they would likely reject other options brought to the table, including creating a new municipal service taxing unit and tolling options.

Another funding possibility could come in the form of a real estate transfer tax, a documentary stamp tax that could raise 45 cents for every \$100 value when real estate is sold. The county would only have to tax 28 cents for every \$100 value for the full \$8.5 million. Such a move there, however, would require approval by the state legislature.

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Scott Andrews, left, and his brother Todd Andrews are proud of the achievements of Ace Hardware store in Lutz. The store has captured two national honors during recent months. (Photos by B.C. Manion)

## Ace Hardware in Lutz scores two national honors

By B.C. Manion  
bcmanion@cnewsbooks.com

The Ace Hardware store in Lutz is not exactly your mom and pop hardware shop.

At one end of the business, patrons can stop in at a service desk for Sunshine Pool Service & Repair to get their pool needs met. They also can peruse shelves in that area featuring chlorine stabilizer, alkalinity increaser and other pool chemicals and supplies.

At the other end of the store, customers can find angels, snowmen, Santas and other holiday decorations at ELLA Boutique, a shop that's dressed up for the season and well stocked with home décor and gift items.

The midsection of the store is chock full of washers, screws, garage door openers, motor oil, fasteners, paint and other stuff that's typically found in hardware stores.

The store's eclectic mix appeals to a broad range of customers, and it has helped the store distinguish itself as being one to watch in the industry.

Recently, the store snagged one of six national honors bestowed by Ace Hardware. It was named a 2013 "Coolest Hardware Store," and the honor was delivered during Ace's Platinum Conference in Las Vegas.

The store also recently received a Beacon Award for being the best new store of less than 25,000 square feet. Beacons are bestowed as part of a national industry awards program developed by The Hardware Connection magazine and The Hardware Conference. Just five hardware retailers received Beacons.

Scott Andrews and his brother Todd own the store, which is at 18469 U.S. 41 in Lutz. Scott oversees the hardware store and Todd takes care of the pool service.

Their wives, Tina and Andrea, work together to run ELLA Boutique.

ELLA draws its name from the couple's children. E and L stand for Elaina and Lilyanna, who are Todd and Andrea's girls. L and A stand for Luke and Alexander, who are Scott and Tina's boys.

Even Tina's mom, Alice McClain, gets into the act. She helps in the boutique.

The two trophies the store recently received are on proud display on a shelf at the front of the store. Directly behind this is a portrait of the two families and historic photos of Lutz.

Tina's family has deep roots in Lutz, Scott said. Her great-grandparents were early settlers, and her grandmother was one of the first children born in the community, which dates back a century.

Scott said the idea for opening their Ace store came to him while he and Tina were driving past the shopping center to attend Tina's grandmother's funeral.

Before they took over the space, it was occupied by a Walgreens store. He and Todd already owned the pool store and were looking for a new location, so they decided to move it to the former Walgreens site and add the Ace Hardware. The boutique came a little later.

Besides placing great value on their family, the couples also believe in community involvement, Scott said.

"I think that is how we were raised," Todd said.

Recently, they took part in a chili cook-off and classic car show to celebrate Lutz's 100th birthday. They also support various organizations and charities, such as Lutz Little League, local Girl Scouts and Toys for Tots.

And, it's not a bit unusual for a club or organization to drop by the boutique to ask them to donate an item to include in a gift basket, Tina said.

"We applaud the team at Lutz Ace Hardware for their commitment to providing a consistently amazing shopping experience for the local community," said Kane Calamari, vice president of retail operations and new business at Ace Hardware Corporation, in announcing the award, in a news release.

It was a huge honor, the brothers said, noting their district manager, Tom Parman, nominated them for the highly coveted Ace award.

Of 4,700 Ace Hardware stores nationwide, just six were honored.



This Ace Hardware store in Lutz is three stores in one. It offers a pool service, hardware items and a gift shop boutique.

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# Chance billboard introduces fitness studio to new home

By Michael Hinman  
mhinman@cnewsbooks.com

The ink was barely dry on the sales agreement, and Samantha Taylor was already moving into her new Pure Health and Fitness Studios location on Knight Road in Land O' Lakes.

That's because the longtime local trainer doesn't like to waste time, whether it's helping to get a body in shape, or to provide a new 3,700-square-foot facility for her clients. Yet, Taylor hasn't always enjoyed that level of discipline.

"I used to be a major binger," Taylor said. "I would binge on thousands of calories at a time, and that progressed for quite a few years, all in the middle of my professional training career."

At the time, Taylor was a physical trainer at Lifestyle Family Fitness Center. And while she was one of the top trainers in the company, Taylor had a nickname she didn't really much care for: "the chunky trainer."

"I had gained about 20 pounds," she said. "I know that doesn't sound like a lot, but for a personal trainer, that is like gaining 50 or 60."

But that all changed a decade ago when she discovered the Bible.

"I really started to get the revelation that the Bible talks about that your body is a temple of God," Taylor said. "For me, it was life-changing. It was just like a light switch went on inside my head, and I suddenly understood that my body was a gift, and I really didn't have the right to abuse it."

It was also that same time Taylor decided to strike out on her own, starting Pure Health, and working with women to build their bodily temples as well.

Taylor admits that because it helped her, spirituality is a part of her program. But it doesn't mean she attracts only Christian clients.

"We don't force it on people, but those



Taylor said she found her new location thanks to a billboard she saw on her way to Busch Gardens a few months back. (Photos by Michael Hinman)

who want it, it's in there," she said. "That is a reason why people seek me out. They want to work with someone who works with not just the body, but they like the mind, spirit and the body all together."

Since starting Pure Health, Taylor has hosted clients in a few smaller locations she rented out. And she was happy doing that, until one day last summer she saw a billboard while on her way to Busch Gardens.

"Something in me knew I had to turn around and get that phone number," Taylor said. "And when I finally saw the building, it was everything I had dreamed about. We now have rooms for seminars, and eventually even a cooking class. We are lakeside on an acre of land. I get teared up every time I think about it."

The two-story building is off State Road 54, not far from its intersection with Land O' Lakes Boulevard, but a bit hidden behind trees and a small lake. Taylor said she is turning it into a place where women can come and get fit without feeling intimidated by the bigger box gyms.

Construction is already underway inside the building, which Taylor expects to have

done by the end of the year. And right now, only her six trainers even know about the new location. They got their first look just

last week, welcomed by hundreds of rose petals sprinkled up the main walkway.

The boot camp portion of her program will open at the new location by Thanksgiving, set up in what is an air-conditioned former garage. The big doors opening up to it are still there, which Taylor says can be opened in cooler weather to let in some fresh air.

Taylor's program is straightforward: "If you don't eat certain foods, you will not have cravings."

"I think that is the trap that so many people find themselves in," she said. "They're trapped in cravings and impulses and desires that seem to overtake them. And they don't know how to rein it in."

The new location for Pure Health opens Jan. 1 at 2206 Knight Road in Land O' Lakes. In the meantime, to reach Taylor, call (813) 909-4939, or visit her website at PureHealthStudios.com.



Samantha Taylor displays some of the flooring that will be part of the boot camp section of her new Pure Health location in Land O' Lakes.

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NOV 30

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Founded by American Express in 2010, this day is dedicated to supporting local businesses that help neighborhoods prosper. It's celebrated every year on the Saturday after Thanksgiving and has given small businesses across the country a huge boost.

- In 2012, U.S. consumers who were aware of Small Business Saturday are estimated to have spent a reported total of \$5.5 billion with independent merchants.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2012, government officials in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. officially recognized Small Business Saturday — including President Obama and the U.S. Senate.<sup>2</sup>

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- **RALLY YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD**  
Help build enthusiasm and drive local support for Small Business Saturday by becoming a Neighborhood Champion.
- **GET ON THE MAP**  
If you're a qualifying American Express® Card accepting small merchant, sign up by Nov 4 to get your business on an interactive map to help American Express Card Members find and shop at your business.<sup>3</sup>

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Imagine what will happen when your entire neighborhood comes together to support the businesses they love. Join the movement and make Small Business Saturday huge for your business — and your neighborhood.

**CITATIONS:**  
<sup>1</sup>From the second installment of the Small Business Saturday Consumer Insights Survey by the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) and American Express (November 26, 2012). Redshift Research asked 800 people: "How much did you spend at small independently owned retailers, including restaurants on Nov. 24?" A sample size of 671 responding between Nov. 24 and Nov. 25 self reported a median spend of \$75 which was extrapolated to the US population aged 18 and older who would have been aware of (67%) and shopped (47%) on Small Business Saturday.  
<sup>2</sup><http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/112/sres589/text>  
<sup>3</sup>Qualifying merchants are those located within the 50 U.S. States or D.C. that have 25 or fewer locations and a sum total 2012 American Express charge volume not to exceed \$5 million. (Businesses located in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands must have 10 or fewer locations and a sum total 2012 American Express charge volume not to exceed \$500,000 and additionally must not have headquarters in the 50 states or D.C.) Businesses in the following industries are excluded: government agencies, public administration, charities, non-profits, trade associations, shopping property management companies, direct sellers, and political organizations. Small businesses that are part of a franchise brand with more than 100 stores are excluded. Additionally, if a franchise brand has more than 20 corporate-owned units, then the entire brand is excluded. Businesses that accept the Card through Square are not eligible. Merchants that do not have a physical storefront or location are not eligible.

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## Oncologist speaks at Keystone

The cancer support group sponsored by Keystone Community Church will host guest speaker Dr. Michael Montejo, an oncologist with H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute, on Nov. 21 at 7 p.m. The program topic is prostate cancer, followed by a question-and-answer session. The church is at 21010 State Road 54 in Land O' Lakes.

For information, call Walt Bockmiller at (813) 527-8211, or call the church at (813) 948-4522.

## Volunteer at Pasco Regional

Pasco Regional Medical Center in Dade City is looking for energetic men and women to join its volunteer team, including junior volunteers between the ages 14 and 18. Opportunities are available in both clinical and nonclinical areas of the hospital.

To learn more about the program, call Amy Fort at (352) 521-1195.

## Chatterboxes meet

The Medical Center of Trinity will host a Chatterboxes group meeting on Nov. 21 from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. at 9330 State Road 54.

This is a support group to assist individuals suffering from communication deficits as a result of a cerebral vascular accident or



## Volunteers shine at Regional Medical

Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point announced its recipients of the third quarter volunteer Five Star and One Star Awards. Winners, from left, are Lynn Axelrod, Five Star, Emergency Department volunteer; Jane Melito, One Star, courier; Thomas Moyer, Five Star, courier and outpatient lab; and Colleen D'Amario, Five Star, Welcome 'A' chairperson and surgical waiting room. (Photo courtesy of Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point)

other neurological disorder. Caregivers and spouses are encouraged to attend.

For information, call (727) 834-4946.

## Join Ombudsman Council

The Pasco and North Pinellas Ombudsman Council will meet on Nov. 21 at 10 a.m. at Saint Anne Byzantine Catholic Church, 7120 Massachusetts Ave., in New Port Richey. The council's goal is to improve the quality of life and care of residents of

long-term care facilities, including nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and adult family-care homes.

Those interested in joining the council can call Annette Perry at (727) 588-6912 or (727) 376-2788.

## Tools to Quit tobacco

The Medical Center of Trinity is hosting its Tools to Quit program to help participants quit the tobacco use, on Nov. 21 from

5 p.m. to 7 p.m., at 9330 State Road 54.

The seminar will provide participants with tools to set a quit date, make a plan, and work through simple steps to quit. Optional free nicotine replacement therapy will be available.

For information, call (813) 929-1000.

## Heart attack seminar

Morton Plant North Bay Hospital will host the seminar "What is a Heart Attack?" on Nov. 21 at noon, at the Bekesh Education and Conference Center, 6600 Madison St., in New Port Richey.

Dr. Parag Patel will discuss what a heart attack is, the importance of early detection, and the latest treatment options.

For information or to register, call (727) 953-6877.

## A Matter of Balance

The Medical Center of Trinity will offer the program "A Matter of Balance," designed to help people manage concerns about falls and increase physical activity.

This is a free program with two two-hour classes a week at 9 a.m., on Monday and Wednesday, beginning Nov. 25 and running through Dec. 18. Classes are in the center's Conference Room C, at 9330 State Road 54.

For information, call (727) 834-5630.

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# Bilirakis introduces flood insurance reform

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

With homeowners across the country facing what he calls “astronomical” flood insurance rate increases, U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis has introduced a new bill in Congress he says will help.

The rate increases, according to Bilirakis, R-Palm Harbor, are a result of reforms made to address the solvency and affordability of the National Flood Insurance Program, which protects homeowners from flood losses.

He expects premiums to double, and for some to increase ten-fold, in the Tampa Bay area.

“Congress must find a long-term solution to ensure flood insurance remains affordable for both current and future homeowners,” Bilirakis said in a letter to constituents.

Bilirakis has introduced what he calls the Homeowners Flood Insurance Relief Act, designed to cap annual insurance program premiums at the end of a 10-year phase-in to no more than the appraised value of the structure at the time of purchase, divided by 30 — which represents the typical time span of a homeowners mortgage.

It also would allow homeowners to pay premiums on a monthly basis.

“To date, no other Congressional propos-

al truly addresses the affordability and sustainability of the flood insurance program,” Bilirakis said.

Although the reforms made to the federal program were not intended to cause major increases, some Floridians have been quoted annual premiums of \$10,000 or more, according to Bilirakis.

“This is an untenable financial burden during these difficult economic times that will negatively impact our already fragile housing market, and requires correction,” he said.

The federal insurance program has generally been able to cover the cost of flood losses incurred by policyholders, Bilirakis said. However, the 2005 hurricane season brought unprecedented flood damage, with hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma causing \$18 billion in debt.

Hurricane Sandy in 2012 made it worse, with debt from the program jumping to \$24 billion.

Congress opted to reform, since losing the program altogether could deter financial institutions from writing mortgages in flood-prone areas like Florida, Bilirakis said.

“Congress cannot afford to kick the can down the road by just postponing the rate increases,” Bilirakis said, adding it’s “a path it too often defaults to.”



## Music to their ears

John McColley, a kindergarten teaching assistant at Orange Grove Drive's Corbett Preparatory School, shows students in the prekindergarten class how longer strings of his harp make lower sounds, and shorter strings produce higher pitch sounds. It was all part of the school's recent discovery of senses. (Photo courtesy of Courtney Pastor)

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Every recipe we receive will be posted on our Facebook page, and on Dec. 20th, we will **randomly select** 3 winners who will each receive a **\$25 Gift Certificate to Publix**.

Winners will be announced on Facebook on Dec. 20th and in the Dec. 25th edition of TheLaker/Lutz News.

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### 3 Ways to Enter:

- 1.) Clip this form and mail along with your recipe to: **Cookie Recipes, The Laker/Lutz News, PO Box 479, Lutz, FL 33548.**
- 2.) Email your recipe and if you want, attach a jpg photo of your cookie, to [news@cnewspubs.com](mailto:news@cnewspubs.com). Put "Cookie Recipes" in the subject line and don't forget to include your name, address, phone number, email and the story behind your recipe.
- 3.) Drop off your recipe and entry form at our office in **Copperstone Executive Suites at 3632 Land O' Lakes Blvd, Suite 102, Land O' Lakes, FL 34639.**



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## Steinbrenner volleyball reaches state semis

By Michael Murillo

The Laker/Lutz News Correspondent

With their victory over Wiregrass Ranch on Oct. 25, the Steinbrenner Warriors can now say they're Class 7A-District 8 volleyball champions.

Of course, they were able to say the same thing last year, and the year before that, and the year before that. In fact, in the five years the school has had a volleyball program, they're a perfect 5-for-5 in district titles.

But while the district results were always the same, so were the regional ones: The previous four years found the team 0-4 when it came to an elusive regional title.

Until this year.

The Warriors finally claimed their first Class 7A regional crown by besting the Lake Nona Lions on Nov. 9 in three sets. That win took them to the state semifinals for the first time in school history, where they fell to Gulf Coast in a tough five-set match.

But while their season ended with a loss, the team is proud of their accomplishments in claiming a regional title and advancing farther than any previous Steinbrenner volleyball team before them.

"They were the first group in school history to attain that goal, and I think that was most exciting for them," said Head Coach Laura Stegenga, who has coached for several years, but just completed her second season



The Warriors celebrate after a set win, during Steinbrenner High School's recent volleyball playoff run that named them regional champions.

with Steinbrenner. This squad stood out, she said, because the school's team historically is a young team. Yet they benefited from having a number of juniors and seniors to provide experience this season.

And with 10 juniors helping lead the way, Stegenga can also look forward to coaching a large portion of this year's successful team again in 2014.

One of those players, Avery Bradshaw, admits the state semifinal was a tough loss after coming so far this season. But the jun-

ior, now in her third year with the Steinbrenner volleyball team, soon recognized the importance of the school's first regional title.

"We wanted to be the first year (the 2013 squad) on the banner in the gym that said we are regional champions," Bradshaw said. "That was a great accomplishment for us."

She was also consoled by the outpouring of support the team received from the school. Originally unsure of the reaction

she'd receive and hoping nobody was disappointed in the team following the loss, Bradshaw said she was grateful to see students and faculty — including some she didn't know were even following the team's success — offering congratulations and letting her know how proud they were of her and her team.

"That made everything a lot better," she said.

While the team can look back on 2013 as the best volleyball season in school history, Stegenga knows that there will be new challenges next season. Each year the team wants to live up to the school's history of claiming the district title, but she admits that winning a regional title and coming so close to the state finals has raised the bar when it comes to team expectations.

The matchups, Stegenga said, will determine how challenging their draw is in the postseason, but she believes that this year's experience and the desire to improve will provide a lot of motivation for her returning players.

However, the moment they claimed the first regional title in school history is one that will stick with her.

"I remember that game point of the third set against Lake Nona (in the regional final) and the girls' celebration and the tears. It was very powerful," Stegenga said. "That's really the reason why I coach, is to have moments like that with the players."

## Sunlake, Wharton football squads fall in playoffs

By Michael Murillo

The Laker/Lutz News Correspondent

High school football teams fight all year for a shot at the district title. If they fall short, the backup plan is to be district runner-up, because that spot (like the title winner) earns a trip to the playoffs.

Neither the Wharton Wildcats nor the Sunlake Seahawks were able to achieve their top goal of a district title, but both earned a hard-fought runner-up spot to earn a playoff berth. And both battled right to the end in the first round of the playoffs, before falling to their opponents.

Neither team had an easy road to earning second place in the district. For Wharton, two straight district losses put them in a must-win situation at the end of the year against Bloomingdale. The team had faced a big deficit heading into the final period, but scored 22 unanswered points and came away with a 30-23 win, a tie-breaker over the Bulls and that coveted runner-up spot in Class 8A-District 6.

Sunlake dropped its first district game, then rallied to win their next three to earn their second place finish. A tough 28-21 win over Land O' Lakes in October proved to be the difference between the two teams, and the difference between second and third place. In the end, the Seahawks' 3-1 record was good enough for runner-up status in Class 6A-District 6.

While those were satisfying finishes for each school, it was really just the end of the regular season: Both teams then entered a separate 32-team regional tournament to determine the state champion. But for both clubs, the beginning of their playoffs would also be the end. Wharton fell in their playoff opener to Orlando's Dr. Phillips Panthers, 37-10, while Sunlake was a field goal short to the Gainesville Hurricanes, 17-14.

Sunlake Head Coach Bill Browning explained that, despite the loss, he was impressed with the way his team played.

"Gainesville's a very talented team. They have a ton of speed," he said. "We played exceptionally well. Physically, we beat them

up. The effort was fantastic. Close ballgame."

The Seahawks out-gained the Hurricanes and had a lead late in the game, but some untimely penalties and a late surge by Gainesville ended their season.

For Wharton, although the final score indicated the game wasn't close, it really didn't break open until the final period. The Wildcats were behind 14-3 at halftime and still within two scores in the fourth quarter. Head Coach David Mitchell said it was a few game-changing snaps and some self-inflicted wounds that turned the tide against them.

"They scored based on big plays," he said. "We had problems with penalties. That's what hurt us a lot."

While he didn't want Wharton to end their year with a loss, Mitchell believes they had a good season and already is looking toward next year. He has a number of returning players, and several of them will participate in other high school sports, which he said will help them on the gridiron.

In 2014, the key will be keeping them on

top of their grades (and eligible to play sports), focused and ready for the new season.

Browning has his team looking forward to 2014 as well. He said the Seahawks have plenty of good talent returning — especially on offense — and they'll be able to use some of the school's junior varsity players, who enjoyed an 8-0 season this year.

Looking back, the coaches know that making the playoffs is an achievement in itself, both for themselves and the players who work so hard to get there. And for those graduating, many can look back on not just a good year, but a good career at their respective schools.

"For some of those players, it's the third opportunity (to participate in the playoffs) in three years for them. That's pretty good," Mitchell said.

And Browning agrees. "For the kids coming back we'll have to learn from it (the playoff loss), and for the seniors, we had a great senior bunch. They're the winning-est senior class in the short history of the school."

## CHECK/OUT

### Dirty Girl run

Dirt Girl, a 5-kilometer obstacle run for women of all ages and athletic abilities, takes place Nov. 23 at 17951 Hamilton Road, Dade City.

Spectators are admitted free, but parking is \$10.

Registration is open to women 14 and older, and must be done in advance at \$100.

For more information, visit the website at [GoDirtyGirl.com](http://GoDirtyGirl.com).

### Senior Slo Pitch registration

The Slo Pitch Softball League, geared toward players older than 60, will host registration every Friday beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the Land O' Lakes Recreation Complex, 3932 Collier Parkway in Land O' Lakes.

Teams will be balanced, and will play

Friday mornings.

For more information, call Walt Bockmiller at (813) 527-8211.

### Adult soccer league wants players

With the fall season ready to commence, adult soccer players are being sought to participate in a league that plays men's, women's and coed games Sunday afternoons at CrossRoads Community Methodist Church on County Line Road in Wesley Chapel.

Players must be 18 or older.

For more information, call Colin at (747) 999-5425, or visit [NewAPSL.com](http://NewAPSL.com).

### Sign up for lacrosse tournament

Registrations are now being accepted for the 2014 Lax Max Florida Lacrosse Tournament taking place at Lakewood Ranch

on the weekend of April 6.

Lax Max is designed for recreational travel and town team programs within Florida. The event offers a choice of either one-day three-game jamboree, or a two-day tournament. It features boys and girls round-robin competitions at various levels for ages under-10 through under-18.

For more information, visit the website at [USAmateurSports.com](http://USAmateurSports.com), or email [usamateursports@aol.com](mailto:usamateursports@aol.com).

### Contest has high schools cheering

The Florida High School Athletics Association has launched the Sunshine State Spirit Showdown, a video contest in which students are encouraged to submit videos showing their classmates and community exhibiting positive sportsmanship while rooting for their favorite school.

Students from around the state are invited to submit videos ranging in length from 90

seconds to three minutes, including at least 30 seconds on why that school's student section is the greatest.

Videos can be uploaded online at [www.FHSAA.org/upload](http://www.FHSAA.org/upload) by Jan. 31.

Fans will then have a chance to vote for their favorite video, with voting to last from Feb. 6 until March 6. Taking those votes into consideration, FHSAA's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee will conduct final judging. The winner will be announced March 10. Judges will look at sportsmanship, participation, school spirit, organization, creativity and fun.

Students are encouraged to make the videos unique by including anything from picture montages and background music, to special chants, or even choreographed dances.

For more information, visit the website at [tinyurl.com/SpiritShowdown](http://tinyurl.com/SpiritShowdown).

—Submit your sports updates to [mhinman@cnewspsubs.com](mailto:mhinman@cnewspsubs.com).

## PREP SPORTS BOARD

### WEDNESDAY, NOV. 13

#### GIRLS BASKETBALL

Academy at the Lakes 62,  
Clearwater Central Catholic 15

### THURSDAY, NOV. 14

#### GIRLS BASKETBALL

Freedom 63, Alonso 42  
Steinbrenner 56, Plant City 26  
Wiregrass Ranch 62, Gulf 43  
Ridgewood 42, Zephyrhills 29  
Mitchell 57, Sunlake 22

#### BOYS SOCCER

Academy at the Lakes 4, Brooks-DeBartolo 1  
Jenkins 2, Wharton 0  
Pasco 4, Wesley Chapel 1  
Anclote 8, Zephyrhills 0

#### GIRLS SOCCER

Zephyrhills 3, Anclote 2  
Pasco 9, Wesley Chapel 1  
Jenkins 3, Wharton 0

### FRIDAY, NOV. 15

#### FOOTBALL

North Marion 17, Pasco 7  
Gainesville 17, Sunlake 14  
Dr. Phillips 37, Wharton 10

#### BOYS BASKETBALL

Zephyrhills 58, Crystal River 40

#### GIRLS BASKETBALL

Sunlake 42, Anclote 32  
Steinbrenner 53, Blake 5  
Academy at the Lakes 66, Osceola 17  
Wharton 39, Robinson 28  
Land O' Lakes 44, Fivay 40  
Mitchell 60, Zephyrhills 20  
Nature Coast Tech 62, Wesley Chapel 45  
Wiregrass Ranch 64, Pasco 16

#### BOYS SOCCER

Seffner Christian 8, Academy at the Lakes 0  
Wiregrass Ranch 5, Gaither 1  
Plant 1, Steinbrenner 1 (tie)

#### GIRLS SOCCER

Wiregrass Ranch 5, Gaither 1  
Sunlake 3, River Ridge 1  
Mitchell 4, Freedom 0  
Steinbrenner 1, Plant 0

### WEDNESDAY, NOV. 20

#### BOYS BASKETBALL

Robinson at Steinbrenner, 6:30 p.m.  
Middleton at Freedom, 6:30 p.m.  
Anclote at Pasco, 7:30 p.m.  
Sunlake at Wiregrass Ranch, 7:30 p.m.

#### GIRLS BASKETBALL

Robinson at Steinbrenner, 6:30 p.m.

#### BOYS SOCCER

Universal Academy at Academy at the Lakes, 4 p.m.  
Ridgewood at Pasco, 7:30 p.m.  
Wesley Chapel at River Ridge, 7:30 p.m.  
Zephyrhills at Sunlake, 7:30 p.m.

#### GIRLS SOCCER

River Ridge at Wesley Chapel, 7:30 p.m.  
Sunlake at Zephyrhills, 7:30 p.m.

### THURSDAY, NOV. 21

#### BOYS BASKETBALL

Plant at Wharton, 6:30 p.m.  
Shorecrest Prep at Academy at the Lakes, 7 p.m.  
Wesley Chapel at Ridgewood, 7:30 p.m.

#### GIRLS BASKETBALL

Sunlake at Wesley Chapel, 7:30 p.m.

#### BOYS SOCCER

Cambridge at Academy at the Lakes, 4 p.m.  
Wharton at Freedom, 6 p.m.  
Pasco at Anclote, 7:30 p.m.



Abbey Duncan races her way to a state championship in Class 2A for the Wesley Chapel Wildcats. (Photos courtesy of Ken Duncan)

## CAT swim duo finish strong at states

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

Abbey Duncan of Wesley Chapel, and Kara Wilkins of Land O' Lakes, both led their respective high school teams to their best state finishes ever.

Both are freshmen, and were the respective high-point finishers for their high schools. Both also train together at the Clearwater Aquatic Team at Hunter's Green Country Club in New Tampa.

In the preliminaries, Duncan seeded fifth, and finished the 200-meter freestyle at 1:58.84, a lifetime best, earning a second-seed finish going into the finals.

In the 100-meter fly, both Duncan and Wilkins competed, with Duncan taking second seed with a 0:56.57, while Wilkins finished under 1 minute for the first time, with a 0:59.82, and taking the 11th seed.

Wilkins also swam the 100-meter backstroke, going 0:59.69 for the 12th spot going into the finals.

Duncan swam her 200-meter freestyle to gold, pulling away in the last 50 yards for a new lifetime best of 1:50.82. During the finals for the 100-meter fly, Duncan finished with a lifetime best there at 0:56.23, good enough



Abbey Duncan, center, earns gold in the 200-meter freestyle, to become this year's only freshman individual state champion in Class 2A.

for the silver behind senior Grace DiMeo, who both battled for the first 75 yards.

Wilkins came back in the 100-meter fly, and once again finished under a minute, this time with a 0:58.74. She would take that success into the backstroke, going head-to-head with senior Courtney DeVeny, with the older girl winning by 0:0.15 seconds. However, Wilkins would have her best time ever in her first National Collegiate Scouting Association Junior Nationals cut with a time of 0:58.45.

Duncan was the only freshman individual Class 2A state champion, while Wilkins was the highest-finishing freshman in the 100-meter backstroke.

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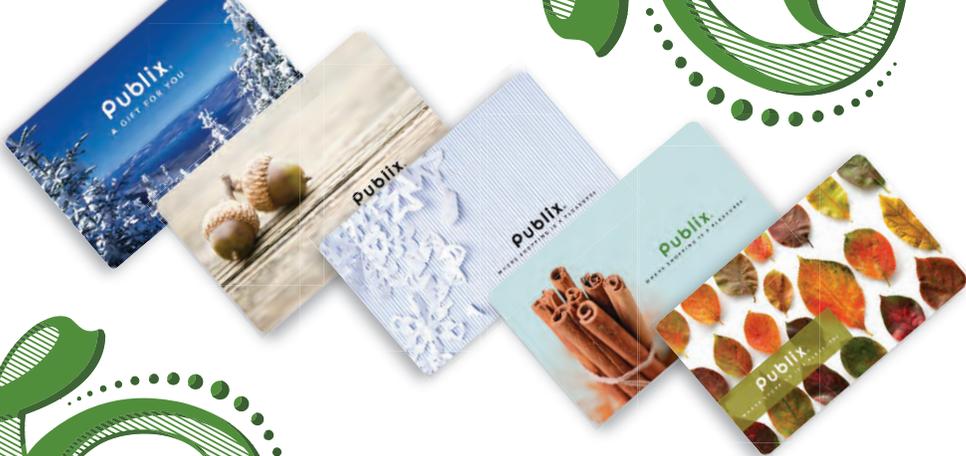
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SEE SOLUTION, PAGE 26

- |            |               |             |
|------------|---------------|-------------|
| ACRES      | DIVING        | IMAGINATION |
| AGAIN      | DRIED         | IMAGINE     |
| AGREE      | EARNEST       | INNER       |
| AHEAD      | ENCYCLOPEDIAS | LAYING      |
| ANYTHING   | ERASE         | MINDS       |
| BADGE      | EROSION       | MINOR       |
| BANKING    | EXPAND        | NOUNS       |
| CALCULATED | FLOODS        | PEASANT     |
| CREAM      | GATES         | POETS       |
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**WORD SCRAMBLE**

Rearrange the letters in each word to spell something pertaining to National American-Indian Heritage Month.

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- RHYME
- RIDING
- ROADS
- SAFER
- SCARE
- SENATE
- SERIES
- SHAGGY
- SMOKES
- SPEARS
- STIRS
- TEDDY
- THERE
- TOPIC
- UNTIED
- WASTE
- YARDS

**CRYPTOQUIZ**

Each of the following cryptograms is a clue to the identity of a distinguished journalist. Using the hints I=E and J=N, decipher the clues to name the journalist.

- 1 BATHE JIBD JAB  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 PANI  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 JIBD JUCRL  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 60 PUJYLID  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 SNOJIL UJ SITUN  
\_\_\_\_\_

This journalist hosts a self-titled show on CNN:

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Answers: 1) World News Now, 2) Mole, 3) NewsNight, 4) 60 Minutes, 5) Planet in Peril, Anderson Cooper

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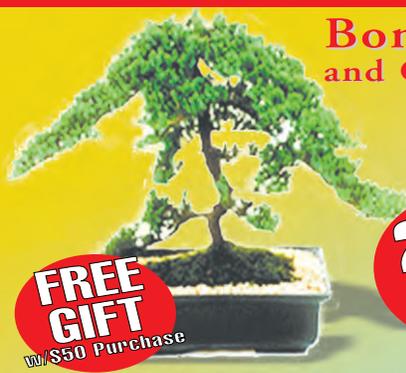
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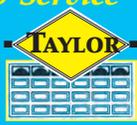
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Tower Rd., Gardenia Dr., Wisteria Loop.  
Numerous homes participating!

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LAKE HERON, LUTZ, 33549, 8AM-2PM

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Vendors, crafts, food, raffles, and more!

**TOOLS, LUMBER, CRAFTS**, gifts, decor, collectables at fabulous yard sale, Thurs-Sat, Nov 21-23, 8am-4pm, rain or shine!  
Country Aire Estates, off 301, S of Dade City, behind Raceway Gas Station.

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**ZEPHYRHILLS LIONS CLUB**  
5827 Dean Dairy Rd. is having a Flea Market/Yard Sale on Saturday, Nov 30, 8am-2pm. Vendors welcome for inside tables or outside spaces!  
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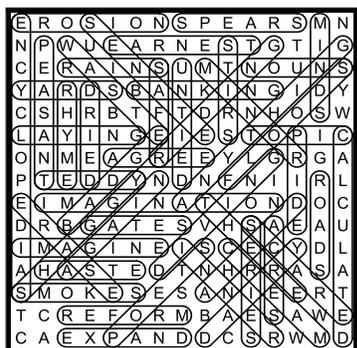
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### LEGAL NOTICES

#### NOTICE OF ACTION BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

IN RE: The Teacher's Certificate of:

**Randall Owen Johnson**  
7611 Notre Dame Drive, Apt. B  
New Port Richey, Florida 34653

Notice is hereby given to Randall Owen Johnson, Respondent, of the prosecution of an Administrative Complaint seeking the revocation or suspension of his teacher's certificate.

If Respondent, Randall Owen Johnson, wishes to schedule an informal conference under the provisions of Section 120.60(6), Florida Statutes, with all requirements for the retention of the certificate, he should contact Marian Lambeth, Office of Professional Practices Services, Florida Education Center, 325 West Gaines Street, Room 224-E, Tallahassee, Florida 32399, (850) 245-0438.

If such a conference is not requested, this notice shall constitute service of the Administrative Complaint, which shall be filed with the Education Practices Commission.

Failure to file a response to the complaint with the Education Practices Commission, Florida Education Center, 325 West Gaines Street, Room 224, Tallahassee, Florida 32399 by January 28, 2014 shall constitute holding the Respondent in default. The Complaint will then be considered by the Education Practices Commission for final action to impose disciplinary sanctions, including revocation or suspension, under the terms of Section 120.57, 120.60, 1012.79, 1012.795, and 1012.796, Florida Statutes.

PLEASE BE GOVERNED ACCORDINGLY.

Dated this 22nd day of October, 2013

*Pam Stewart*

**Pam Stewart**  
Commissioner of Education

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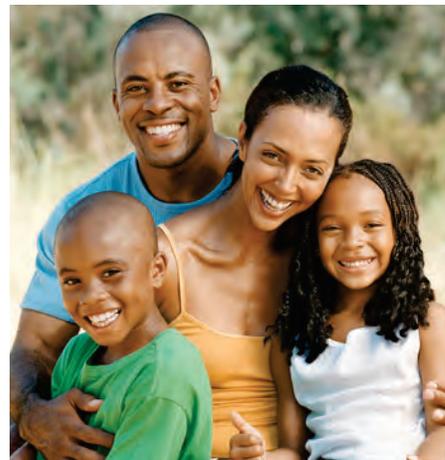
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