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Education needed on elevated road

By Michael Hinman
mhinman@cnewspubs.com

The biggest obstacle in the way of an elevated road connecting the east and west sides of Pasco County is public education.

At least that's what Pasco County Commissioners stated last week just before signaling their support of the Florida Department of Transportation's continued study into an unsolicited bid that would build upward on the State Road 54/56 corridor.

"I definitely don't think the public under-

See ROAD, page 16



Commissioner Pat Mulieri says Pasco County officials should show this rendering when talking about the proposed elevated road. This concept would have elevated lanes high enough to provide a clear view across the road, and allow better local car and pedestrian traffic below. (Image courtesy of Pasco County Planning and Development)



These are the members of the Merry Makers, a Wesley Chapel children's chorus. They include, in front from left, Nuvini Wijesundara, Sandali Idippili, Sayuri Ranatunga, Yuthmi Gamage, Bianca Walker and Jasmine Mazard. In back, from left, Ravidu Idippili, Thevin Wijesundara, Yeran Gamage, Jeremiah Williams and Breonna Walker. (Photo by B.C. Manion)

Merry Makers use music as an instrument of joy

By B.C. Manion
bcmansion@cnewspubs.com

If you're looking for a bit of holiday cheer, there's a new choral group in Wesley Chapel that wants to supply it.

The group, called Merry Makers and led by Edie Ledee-Finnerty, is a choir made up of children ages 6 through 13. And it will soon sing some holiday tunes at Florida Hospital Wesley Chapel, a Publix grocery store and Cobb Theatres Grove 16.

The children couldn't be more excited. On Saturday, they were at Ledee-Finnerty's house, rehearsing the songs they will perform.

As they sang, the choral director periodically stopped them, offering feedback. Sometimes, she called for improvement. Other times she doled out praise.

She clearly had the kids in the palm of her hand.

At one point, they were singing "Silent Night." Some of the children knew the carol, but were rusty. Others were still learning the song. The first run-through was a little bit rough.

After Ledee-Finnerty's coaching, however, they excelled on the second attempt.

Ledee-Finnerty's ability to inspire the kids comes as no surprise to the children's parents.

Merry Makers performance schedule:

- Dec. 13, 6 p.m., Florida Hospital Wesley Chapel, 2600 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.
- Dec. 14, 2 p.m., Publix at Shoppes of New Tampa, 1920 County Road 581
- Dec. 15, 1:30 p.m., Cobb Theatres Grove 16 & CineBistro, 6333 Wesley Grove Blvd.

"They adore her," said Jinali Idippili, whose children Sandali Idippili, 8, and Ravidu Idippili, 11, are part of the group.

Parents feel likewise, Idippili said. "She's wonderful."

Chulani Wijesundara said her children —

See MUSIC, page 16

Burgess eyes Tallahassee, but path may not be easy

By Michael Hinman
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Although there always was a chance he could run for re-election, Danny Burgess knew he had just a short time as mayor of Zephyrhills when he was elected unopposed earlier this year.

He will step down from that office in April with an eye on a much bigger prize: replacing Will Weatherford as the area's state representative in Tallahassee.

Burgess has all the qualities of a strong candidate — a solid government service background, the ability to connect with just about anyone, and a winning smile that will look good on campaign posters — as well as the same youthful vigor Weatherford had when he was first elected



Danny Burgess

to the House.

But the badge of the Republican Party, typically so strong that anyone who wore it could practically start picking office furniture at The Capitol soon after they win their primary, may not be what it once was.

And it might mean an uphill battle for Burgess, a registered Republican who has practically lived in the local public spotlight his entire adult life.

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McBride writes about 'miracle' on the road

By B.C. Manion
bcmanion@cnewspubs.com

Karen McBride recalls the moment as if it were yesterday.

She was heading home from a computer class she was teaching in Tampa and had a million things on her mind. She was wondering how she could make the class better for her students. She was thinking about what she would make for dinner. And, McBride knew she'd have to make dinner fast because she needed to get her daughters to karate.

So, the Lutz woman wasn't especially in the mood to wait for a long traffic light at the end of the Veterans Expressway, where it intersects with North Dale Mabry Highway.

"I was sitting at the red light," McBride said. "I was getting impatient because it

seemed like the light was never going to turn green."

She couldn't figure out what was taking so long.

"There was nobody coming," she said. "As soon as the light turned green, I saw my grandmother sitting next to me. Right in the passenger seat. She said, 'Wait. Just wait.' And so, I waited. I did what my grandmother told me to do."

Not a second later, a car speeded down Dale Mabry and roared through the intersection, running the red light.

"I had no idea how fast he was going," she said.

McBride is sure she would have been in the path of the car, had she not followed her grandmother's instruction. The thing is, her grandmother — Margaret Wilson of Cohoes, N.Y. — died in 1989, 13 years before this incident occurred.

Initially McBride didn't tell anyone about her experience.

"Even now, I don't know if people are going to believe me. Or, they'll just think I'm crazy," McBride said.

McBride, who is married and has three daughters, said she decided to share her story during a family reunion in the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

"Somehow, somebody brought up the subject of guardian angels," McBride said. "So, I told them my story."

Since then, she has shared her story with her family and with friends in her Bible studies at Grace Family Church. And now it can be found under the heading of "Listening to our Angels" in the book "Chicken Soup for the Soul: Miraculous Messages from Heaven."

McBride, who said she was honored to have the story published, said it gives her comfort to know that others can watch out for us even after their death — and she hopes that her experience can help others feel that same sense of comfort, too.



Karen McBride of Lutz shares her story of 'Listening to our Angels,' in 'Chicken Soup for the Soul: Miraculous Messages from Heaven.' (Photo by B.C. Manion)



Barley and his 'mom,' Lea Murray, will make an appearance at 'A Very Barley Christmas Party' Dec. 14. (Photo courtesy of Lea Murray)

'Barley Claus' is coming to town

By Sherri Lonon
The Laker/Lutz News Correspondent

Move over Santa. There's a new jolly elf in town.

That's the message the folks at East-West Animal Hospital in Lutz are trying to get out as the date draws near for "A Very Barley Christmas Party."

The holiday-themed celebration is a fundraiser with a twist. Proceeds will benefit a variety of animal rescue groups, including Second Chance Boxer Rescue, Kitty City and the National Opossum Society. Instead of a visit from St. Nick, attendees can meet "Barley Claus," an opossum that's become quite a local celebrity since he was rescued and nursed back to health nearly two years ago.

Barley was involved in a car accident as a baby. That accident killed his mother and siblings, explained hospital spokesman Dennis Costantino. With some tender, loving care from East-West's staff and his new "mom," Lea Murray, Barley survived.

Since his rescue, Barley has become the hospital's mascot of sorts, but more importantly he's "an ambassador for these very misunderstood animals," Costantino said. While some people think opossums are mean and others brand them nuisances, Costantino said those perceptions are false.

"They are very solitary and quiet," he said.

Opossums tend to avoid people and only hiss when they're cornered and scared. They don't carry rabies, but they do play an important role in Florida's ecosystem.

"They're basically the garbage men," sur-

living off carrion and bugs, Costantino explained.

Opossums are highly resistant to poisonous snake and spider bites, and tend to keep areas where they live free of such pests as roaches, Costantino said.

They're also quite photogenic — or at least Barley is. That's why the locally famous marsupial plans to pay a visit to the hospital's celebration dressed as "Barley Claus." Attendees can get their holiday pictures taken with him during the event for a donation to the animal rescue groups.

Proceeds from the photos and chance drawings will be split among numerous rescue groups, explained Jade Sceusa, the hospital's office manager. Fifty percent will go directly to the opossum society, while the other half will benefit a host of other groups.

Although the celebration is meant for fun, it does have a serious purpose.

"We wanted to do more for the species," Sceusa said. "We are so passionate about rescue."

Why has Barley become such a celebrity?

"Everyone has just fallen in love with Barley," Sceusa said. "He's the cutest little guy."

A Very Barley Christmas Party takes place Dec. 14 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., at East-West Animal Hospital, 1524 Land O' Lakes Blvd. The event features food from Uptown Pizza & Subs, Panera Bread, Publix and The Breakfast Nook.

There will also be a variety of local vendors present, goodie bags given away and opossum fans can pick up their Barley calendars and T-shirts.

For more information, visit www.EastWestAnimalHospital.com.



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David Heller 'was a big kid at heart'

By B.C. Manion
bcmanion@cnewspubs.com

David Heller wasn't the kind of guy who had to impress others by symbols of success, say those who knew him well. He was much more interested in how he treated others.

Heller died Oct. 29 from an enlarged heart. A celebration of his life is planned for Dec. 14 at 10 a.m., at Reilly's Reserve in Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo, 1101 W. Sligh Ave., in Tampa.

The 48-year-old was a science teacher at a number of schools including Orange Grove Elementary School, Mary Help of Christians School, Pepin Academy and Randall Middle School. Although he taught science, his brother Mark Heller said he was really a "teacher of life."

"I think he found the most meaning in his summer work," said Mark Heller, head of school at Academy at the Lakes in Land O' Lakes. "He was one of those teachers who never took a summer vacation. He always worked, and he worked at camps his entire adult life as a camp counselor."

For many years, David Heller worked as the lead counselor at Camp Hiawatha in Odessa, and after that closed, he came to work at Summer at the Lakes, the summer day camp offered by Academy at the Lakes.

"David always taught life lessons through fun activities," his brother said. "Usually, they were lessons about character, lessons about respect — from things as simple as taking turns, to rolling with the punches — understanding that certain things are more important than other things."

Barbara Soule, director of Summer at the Lakes, said she was shocked when she heard the news of David's death.

"He's going to be greatly missed," Soule said. He had a knack for connecting with others, especially kids. And they flocked to his camps.



David Heller

"The kids were not just taking a camp, they were taking the camp because of him," said Soule, noting he took great care to keep kids not only safe, but made sure they were having a great time, too. "To me, he was the epitome of a great camp counselor. I think he was a big kid at heart. He told jokes all of the time, and he loved to tell stories."

David Heller taught archery, canoeing and fishing programs.

"It was very important to him that the kids catch a fish," Soule said, and if a camper was having trouble, he would bring in a trinket and tell the camper it was a good luck charm.

Soule said she doesn't know how or why it worked, but somehow it did.

"By golly, they'd always catch a fish. The kids were so excited," Soule said.

Penny Benson, who works in the business office at Academy at the Lakes, said David Heller taught her daughter Brandy how to fish. The family still has a picture of Brandy with the bass she caught using a cane pole and a hot dog, Benson said.

When Benson told her daughter about the camp counselor's death, the teenager



David Heller teaches a camper how to fish. (Photos courtesy of Academy at the Lakes)

immediately began telling her mom about the inside jokes she shared with the outdoors enthusiast.

"She loved Mr. David," Benson said. "I felt like it hit my family, too."

Heller said there was no indication that his brother was ill.

"He came home and laid down to take a nap and never woke up," he said. "Though I'm deeply sad, I feel really proud that this really good man was my brother, and he is remembered so fondly by all because he was just plain good."

Mikey Mauger, a junior at Sunlake High School, sent Mark Heller a sympathy note after David Heller's death.

"I fortunately had the privilege of working with him at camp this summer for three

weeks," Mauger wrote. "One thing I will never forget is that he taught me that loving relationships with good people are more rewarding than any material possession or individual achievement."

Those were exactly the kinds of lessons that mattered to his brother, Heller said.

Besides Mark, David Heller is survived by his mother and father, Jack and Judy Heller; his sister, Lynn Heller; his sister-in-law, Kathy; his nieces, Eden Heller and Kennedy Lachicotte; his nephew, Ben Lachicotte, and his girlfriend, Lori Capra, of Olympia, Wash.

Those wishing to honor David Heller's memory can contribute to the David Heller Summer Opportunities Scholarship Fund, c/o Academy at the Lakes, 2331 Collier Parkway in Land O' Lakes, 34639.

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BUSINESS DIGEST

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NEW MASSAGE THERAPIST AT CAMEO SALON

Kiki Young has joined Cameo Salon & Spa as a licensed massage therapist.

Using a unique combination of Lomi Lomi techniques and traditional massage, Young develops individualized therapeutic treatment plans for every client. Her massages include sports, Swedish relaxation, customized deep tissue, prenatal and trigger point.

Cameo is located at 1817 Collier Parkway in Lutz. For more information, call (813) 948-7411.



Kiki Young

CONNERTON'S \$1,000 GRAND TOUR

Connerton, the planned community of 8,000 homes in central Pasco County, is offering visitors a chance to win \$1,000 by taking part in its grand tour of homes. But anyone looking for a chance to win will need to hurry, as the drawing is set to take place Dec. 15.

Builders taking part in the tour include Ryland Homes, Taylor Morrison, M/I Homes, and Homes by WestBay. Each offers different types of homes ranging in price from the higher \$100,000, to more than \$700,000.

Ryland can be reached at (813) 996-1800, or at Ryland.com. Taylor Morrison is at (866) 495-6006, or at TaylorMorrison.com. M/I is at (813) 388-6836, or at MIHomes.com, while WestBay can be reached at (813) 428-5973, or at HomesByWestBay.com.

Since the community's grand re-opening in May, more than 75 homes have been sold in the community.

Connerton is located west of Interstate 75 on U.S. 41, five miles north of State Road 54.

For more information, visit the website at Connerton.com.

KIRK SPEAKING AT CHAMBER BREAKFAST

The Greater Dade City Chamber of Commerce will host a business breakfast Dec. 17 beginning at 8 a.m., at the Hornbuckle Room of the Dade City Business Center, 15000 Citrus Country Drive in Dade City.

The guest speaker is Arthur Kirk Jr., president of Saint Leo University.

Cost is \$5 per person.

For more information, and to RSVP, call (352) 567-3769.

NEW COMMUNITY PHASE OPENS AT CONNERTON

Ryland Homes recently opened a new phase for single-family homes beginning at \$190,000 in Connerton. It's located at 8641 Savory Walk Drive in Land O' Lakes.

Mike Finley, vice president of sales and marketing for Ryland Homes in the Tampa Bay region, said the homebuilder has released 32 conservation and water view lots in the new phase.

Connerton is a master-planned, designated "New Town" community with a theme park-style pool, community center, restaurant, and a highly rated elementary school within the community.

For more information, visit the website at www.Ryland.com/Tampa.

CROSS INSURANCE COMES TO LUTZ

Douglas Scribner is helping the newest office for Cross Insurance from his Lutz location.

The office is located at 1423 Kensington Woods Drive in Lutz. Scribner will become Cross' head of Southeast Surety Operations, and will be responsible for handling the bonding and risk management needs for a diverse group of construction companies and businesses within Florida's surety marketplace.



Douglas Scribner

"With Florida poised to become the third largest state in the nation, we feel there's room in this marketplace for a strong player to duplicate Cross Surety's successful Northeast business model in the Southeast," said Michelle Orlando, president of Cross Surety Inc., in a release. "Doug's knowledge of the surety industry in Florida makes him the perfect choice to lead our new office."

A native of Maine, Scribner has worked in Florida's surety industry for the past 24 years. Prior to joining Cross Insurance, he has served as an account executive and officer for Travelers Casualty and Surety's Construction Surety Division in Tampa. Scribner also worked with ProSure Group, Aon Risk Services and Amwest Surety.

Cross Surety is a wholly owned subsidiary of Cross Financial Group, and currently has offices in Massachusetts, Maine and New York.

CHAMBER HOSTS QUARTERLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The Greater Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce will host its quarterly membership meeting Dec. 11 beginning at 9 a.m. at the chamber office, 38550 Fifth Ave., in Zephyrhills.

Scheduled to speak are Krista Covey from the SmartStart Business Incubator, chamber president Carolyn Sentelik, and

chamber executive director Vonnice Mikkelsen.

For more information, call (813) 782-1913, or email the chamber at news@zephyrhillschamber.org.

NEW HOME STYLE INTRODUCED

ICI Homes recently hosted a grand opening to showcase its new Salerno luxury model home at New Tampa's Grand Hampton.

The homes, according to ICI's vice president of sales and marketing Rosemary Messina, offers contemporary styling and an open floor plan with four bedrooms, three bathrooms, and an optional bonus room and additional full bathroom in a little more than 3,400 square feet of space.

Prices for the building style begins at just under \$440,000, with plans to build 35 of them at Grand Hampton, located in New Tampa between Bruce B. Downs Boulevard and Interstate 75, just south of East County Line Road on Dunham Station Drive.

BUSINESS LINK MEETING

The Greater Dade City Chamber of Commerce will host its Business Link meeting Dec. 11 beginning at 7:30 a.m., at Quality Inn & Suites, 6185 Gall Blvd., in Zephyrhills.

A complimentary breakfast will be provided.

For more information, or to RSVP, call Rebecca Gaddis at (813) 778-2142, or email her at rgaddis@sacfcu.org.

DADE CITY EATERY HAS NEW OWNER

Tropical Café in downtown Dade City has opened its doors under new ownership.

Luis Rivera said he will keep the name and same style of cuisine that has been a part of the restaurant since it opened.

He purchased the restaurant from Ivelisse Martes, who was recently hospitalized and then advised by her doctors to step away from the restaurant business, according to a release.

Tropical Café is located at 14249 Seventh St., in Dade City.



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A decade of dedication from three employees

By Diane Kortus
Publisher



We are a company of just 12 employees, myself included.

It is a small group, really, to take on the many steps needed to produce a unique community newspaper every week.

There is no cookie-cutter approach to what we do. Every story you read, every photo you see, every ad you review and every invoice we prepare is created new each week by our team of writers, artists, sales representatives and customer service folks.

To produce the 32-page newspaper you are holding, my staff was looking at 32 blank pages last Tuesday. They had just five business days — until Monday — to fill these pages with new stories, new photos and new advertisements. This is the equivalent of 15,000 words, 80 headlines, 30 photos, 140 display ads, 60 directory ads and 125 classified ads.

People are often surprised when I tell them there are only a dozen of us getting the paper out each week. Our group makes it happen week after week because we share a vision, and a commitment, to produce a newspaper with quality stories and



Terri Williamson, Mary Eberhard and Carolyn Bennett each have played important roles at The Laker/Lutz News for 10 years. (Photo by B.C. Manion)

effective advertisements that are important to our readers and local businesses.

This shared vision keeps us motivated and satisfied by our work. Employees are trusted to make decisions that are best for readers and advertisers, and know their decisions will ultimately be best for our company.

I credit our success to this culture of self-determination, and believe it is why eight of our 12 employees have worked here for more than six years. Even more remarkable is that three of these employees are celebrating 10 continuous years with our company.

Terri Williamson, our senior account manager, was the first to pass this milestone in November. In the business community, Terri is the face of The Laker/Lutz News, attending two or three chamber and community events most weeks.

I never fail to marvel at Terri's ability to assess a business' marketing needs and then recommend ideas to maximize its budget and exposure. Her goal always is focused on getting more people to buy products or services from the businesses she consults with, whether it's through ads in our newspapers, by sponsoring a chamber event, or connecting the owner or manager to another

business that targets similar customers.

Next up is Mary Eberhard, our accounting manager, whose anniversary was Dec. 2. Mary is the ultimate diplomat — the rare person who intuitively sees the other's perspective. She brings a kind heart and level head to our accounting process, and manages her area with outstanding communication and accuracy.

And then there's Carolyn Bennett, who celebrates 10 years on March 2. As our inside customer service rep, she is the person most customers work with to update their ads and sign off on their proofs. Carolyn also works closely with other departments in a position that is perhaps the most detailed in the company.

No matter what her responsibility, Carolyn handles it with incredible efficiency and finesse.

I single out Terri, Mary and Carolyn in this column because of the significance 10 years represents. But they would be the first to tell you they would not be successful at their jobs without the shared commitment of the rest of our team: Matt Mistretta, Stefanie Burlingame, Kathy Welton, Suzanne Beauchaine, Rachel Thompson, Mary Rathman, Michael Hinman, B.C. Manion and myself.

It is our appreciation and respect for each other that unites us at The Laker/Lutz News. We come together to produce a new newspaper every week with commitment and dedication because we know our newspaper is important to each other and to the communities we serve.



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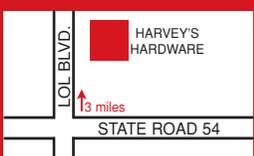


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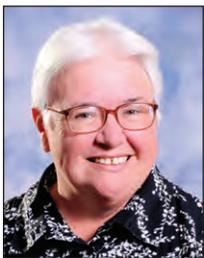


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A stroll to remember



Worth the Trip

By B.C. Manion
bcmanion@cnewspubs.com

With its decorative gingerbread woodwork, distinctive minarets, chrysanthemum windows and wrought iron balconies, the University of Tampa is an interesting place to visit any time of the year.

At the holidays, however, the National Historic Landmark — originally opened in 1891 as the Tampa Bay Hotel — becomes even more special. That's when visitors to the Victorian Christmas Stroll can get a look at 14 rooms dressed up for the holidays in the Henry B. Plant Museum.

Museum staff takes great care in creating rooms that offer a sense of walking into the era when winter visitors came from all over the world to experience the opulence of the grand hotel.

"We really want you to feel that you're stepping back in time," said Sally Shifke, who handles museum relations.

The structure, built by railroad tycoon Henry B. Plant, graces a plot of land on the western edge of the Hillsborough River in downtown Tampa. It took more than two years to build the grand hotel, at the cost then of \$2.5 million. Another \$500,000 was needed to purchase the hotel's European furnishings and artwork.

Visitors to the Victorian Stroll, now in its 32nd year, will have a chance to walk the same grounds Teddy Roosevelt did when he commanded the Rough Riders during the Spanish-American War. They also will be able to claim they've been to the same place as famous visitors who stayed or performed at the hotel, including John Phillips Sousa, Sarah Bernhardt, Clara Barton, Booker T. Washington, Thomas Edison and Babe Ruth.

Of course, there are those who are not particularly interested in history or architecture, and for them, the stroll offers a chance to see plenty of old-fashioned ornaments, garland and twinkling lights. And, in a gesture of true Southern hospitality, strollers are invited to conclude their visit by relaxing on



These antique dolls represent children playing with bubbles in a bathtub during the Victorian era at the hotel, which opened in 1891 and cost \$2.5 million to construct.

the hotel's vast verandah to enjoy a complimentary cookie and cup of spiced cider.

Like its name implies, the Victorian Christmas Stroll aims to give visitors a chance to slow down and breathe in the beauty and magic of the holidays. One room in this year's stroll, called "Toys, Then and Now," features toys from the days of the hotel — from the 1890s to the 1930s and from the present day — including Lincoln Logs to Legos, Raggedy Ann to Barbie.

"We feel that this exhibit will really provoke conversation. The fact of the matter is that all children like toys and they use their imagination," Shifke said, noting the room will likely evoke pleasant memories for older visitors and prompt questions from younger guests.

One thing that patrons may notice is that the toys of today are made from synthetic materials, while those of the past are made from metals, woods and natural fibers, Shifke said.

Another room, known as the Men's Reading/Writing Room, is the most authentic room in the museum, Shifke said. It features two trees, with masculine themes. One tree is decked out in playing cards and cigar boxes.

"When men came to the Tampa Bay Hotel, they played cards. There was a card room and they would smoke cigars," Shifke said.

The other tree sports a baseball theme.

"They always talk about Babe Ruth hitting his longest home run on the grounds of the Tampa Bay Hotel," Shifke said.

Another room on the stroll features a tree, standing nearly 14 feet tall, decorated with peacock feathers. That tree pays hom-



This tree, which features peacock feathers, is one of the tallest trees at the Victorian Stroll. It represents the peacocks that strolled around in the garden during the hotel's heyday. The portrait behind it is of Henry B. Plant, the railroad tycoon who built the grand hotel. (Photos by B.C. Manion)

age to the peacocks that once strolled about in a garden that the hotelier had built for his guests.

In addition to the dressing up the trees, the museum staff pays attention to the small details.

"We do try to pretty much decorate every nook and cranny," Shifke said. They add miniature antique Christmas trees and other holiday accessories to mantles, cabinets and curios, using items of interest from the days when the Tampa Bay Hotel attracted affluent visitors to winter there.

In other places on the tour, visitors can see Santa climbing a stairwell, a vintage goose-feather Christmas and an exhibit featuring sock monkeys, paying tribute to the monkey house that was once on the hotel grounds. John Herrmann of Pasco County loaned the museum the goose-feather tree and 23 of the sock monkeys, Shifke said.

When strollers want to take a break, they can settle in to watch a movie about the hotel's history.

Besides getting a glimpse of the life that was at the hotel, Shifke believes the stroll



The Tampa Bay Hotel, known for its opulence, served its meals on fine china from around the world. Part of the display in this room is the menu for Christmas day. (Photo courtesy of Henry B. Plant Museum)

If you go

WHAT: The Victorian Stroll

WHEN: Dec. 1-23, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., with carolers performing nightly. The stroll is also open from Dec. 26 through Dec. 31 from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m.

WHERE: Henry B. Plant Museum, 401 W. Kennedy Blvd., in downtown Tampa.

COST: \$13 for adults; \$11 for senior citizens (65 and older); children, ages 4-18 are \$7, until Dec. 23; after that, \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors and students, and \$5 for children, ages 5 through 12. (There are no carolers, cider or cookies after Christmas)

INFO: PlantMuseum.com

prompts visitors to conjure personal memories of Christmases gone by.

"If you weren't in the Christmas spirit before you got here, you certainly will be in when you leave," Shifke said.

Worth the Trip Bonus Picks

Holiday Lights in the Garden

The Florida Botanical Garden, 12520 Ulmerton Road in Largo, lights up its collection of tropical plants, roses, fruits, herbs, bromeliads and other plants with 500,000 twinkling lights. The lights go on nightly from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., through Jan. 1. Admission is free for children younger than 12, with a \$2 suggested donation for adults. Refreshments are available, and entertainers perform nightly.

Holiday movies

Tampa Theatre, 711 N. Franklin St., in downtown Tampa, is offering holiday movies this season including "White Christmas" Dec. 15 at 3 p.m., and "It's a Wonderful Life" Dec. 20 at 7:30 p.m., Dec. 21 at both 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., and Dec. 22 at 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10.

Holiday Hoopla

The fifth annual Holiday Hoopla takes place Dec. 14 from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m., at 3129 Beach Blvd. S., in Gulfport. "Make and take" gifts, holiday musical performances, dancers and street performers, and shopping are all a part of this pet- and family-friendly event. Parking and admission are free. For more in-

formation, visit www.GulfportMA.com, or call (727) 322-5217.

Gregorian Chant

Florida Pro Musica will perform "Gregorian Chant XI: Mass for the Third Sunday of Advent" on Dec. 15 at 4 p.m. at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 509 N. Florida Ave., in downtown Tampa. Tickets are \$10. For more information, visit www.FloridaProMusica.com.

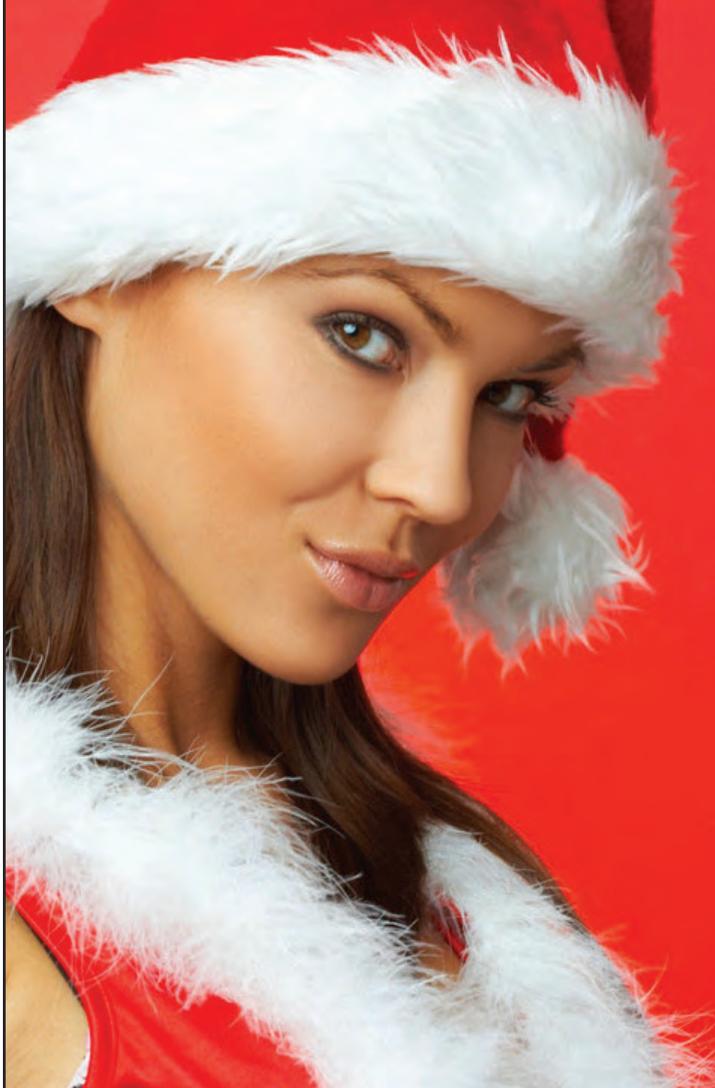
Wild Wonderland

Visit real reindeer, and check out animated displays, twinkling lights, the 100-foot-long Arctic Freeze slide, all at Wild Wonderland on select nights at Lowry Park Zoo. Attendees also can experience "Florida flur-

ries" and takes some free zoo rides during the event at 1101 W. Sligh Ave., in Tampa. It runs Dec. 13-15, Dec. 17-23 and Dec. 26-30 from 6:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. Tickets are \$14 for children, \$11 for children ages 3 to 11, and free for children ages 2 and younger.

'The Wizard of Claus'

Una Voce: The Florida Men's Chorus presents "The Wizard of Claus" in three performances: Dec. 13 at 8 p.m., at The Palladium in St. Petersburg; and two shows at the Mainstage Theatre at the Ybor City campus of Hillsborough Community College Dec. 14 and Dec. 15, both at 4 p.m. Tickets are \$20 in advance, and \$25 the day of the show. For more information, visit www.Una-Voce.org.



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Shoot, Clay, Love



Country music legend Charlie Daniels surprised shooters at a fundraising event for The Angelus last weekend with a couple of songs on an acoustic guitar bearing his signature. This was the first time Tampa Bay Sporting Clays on Ehren Cutoff hosted an Angelus fundraiser, and Daniels said next year he's going to 'pop some clays' with everyone else. (Photos by Michael Hinman)



A golden fiddle, similar to what singer Charlie Daniels made popular in the late 1970s with 'The Devil Went Down to Georgia,' was one of many things being offered to those who came out to shoot for The Angelus, a group rehabilitative home in Hudson. Tampa Bay Sporting Clays on Ehren Cutoff hosted the event last weekend.



R.J. Molinere Jr., far left, and Jay Paul Molinere, far right, from History's 'Swamp People,' pose for pictures at Tampa Bay Sporting Clays during the Charlie Daniels fundraising event for The Angelus last weekend.



Plaques honoring the best youth shooters during the Charlie Daniels shootout at Tampa Bay Sporting Clays are displayed, waiting to be handed to their new owners.

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Give the gift of blood

Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point, 14000 Fivay Road in Hudson, is hosting a blood drive on Dec. 12 from noon to 5 p.m. All donors will receive a long-sleeve T-shirt and a wellness checkup, including a cholesterol screening.

Appointments can be made online at OneBloodDonor.org, using sponsor code "OB034."

Gulfside volunteer orientations

Gulfside Regional Hospice will host the following volunteer orientations:

- Dec. 12 and Dec. 13, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Gulfside's Bereavement and Community Outreach Center, 6230 Lafayette St., in New Port Richey, for all new volunteers in West Pasco. For information, call Kathie Poole at (727) 845-5707.
- Dec. 23, 9 a.m. to noon, Lutz Thrift Shoppe, 1930 Land O' Lakes Blvd., for new shop volunteers in Central Pasco. For information, call Jennifer Ball or Tracey Thompson at (813) 780-1235.

Free hearing aid batteries

The Sertoma Speech & Hearing Foundation of Florida will have a free battery giveaway on Dec. 13 from 10 a.m. to noon at its New Port Richey office, 4443 Rowan Road.

The most common sizes of 10, 13, 312, and 675 will be available, while supplies last.

For information, call (727) 834-5479.

Pediatric CPR course

The obstetrics program at Medical Center of Trinity, 9330 State Road 54, is offering a pediatric CPR class on Dec. 14 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Participants will learn the skills of the American Heart Association course "CPR for Family and Friends." Cost is \$15 per person, or \$25 for two.

For reservations, call (727) 834-5630.

Condensed childbirth course

Florida Hospital Wesley Chapel, 2700

Healing Way, will host "Understanding Birth - Condensed Course" on Dec. 15 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the Health & Wellness Center conference room.

The condensed course will teach the stages of labor, how the birth process unfolds using real birth stories, helpful partner support tips, and what to expect from common medical procedures. Cost is \$40 per couple.

To register, call (813) 929-5683.

'Tree of Life' at HPH

HPH Hospice is hosting its annual "Tree of Life" through Dec. 24. With a donation of \$5 up to \$1,000 or more, an ornament corresponding to that amount will be placed on one of HPH's trees in memory or honor of a loved one. The proceeds will benefit HPH's patient care and family support programs.

Donations can be made online at HPH-Hospice.org, or by calling the HPH Foundation at (800) 486-8784. In-person donations can also be made at the Marliere Hospice Care Center, 6801 Rowan Road in New Port Richey.

To ensure the ornament is hung on the tree of your choice, a donation must be made by Dec. 18.

For information, call (727) 863-7971.

Parkinson's support group

The Tampa area Parkinson's Support Group will host a holiday potluck luncheon on Dec. 18 at noon, at Church of the Nazarene, 5902 N. Himes Ave., in Tampa.

Turkey, ham and beverages will be provided. Guests should bring side dishes and desserts to share.

The group is open to those with Parkinson's, their caregivers, and family members.

For information, call Adele Ida Walter at (813) 932-6902.

—Health notes are run for free on a space-available basis. Please send all information at least two weeks before an event to news@cnewspubs.com.

DENTAL BITES



There have been so many changes in how dentistry is practiced since we opened our dental office 25 years ago in Land O' Lakes. We want to use this dedicated space in The Laker and Lutz News to answer questions we are frequently asked and to share with you information about new innovations that make dentistry pain free and affordable.

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A thank-you turkey

Scherei Hart, left, manager of provider relations at Gulfside Regional Hospice, picks up her free turkeys with provider representative Karis Diaz. They were two of nearly 300 employees who received a turkey, a 2014 calendar and a holiday bonus, along with some pie and apple cider for Thanksgiving. This is the fifth year Gulfside has provided turkeys for its employees. (Photo courtesy of Ashley Juno)



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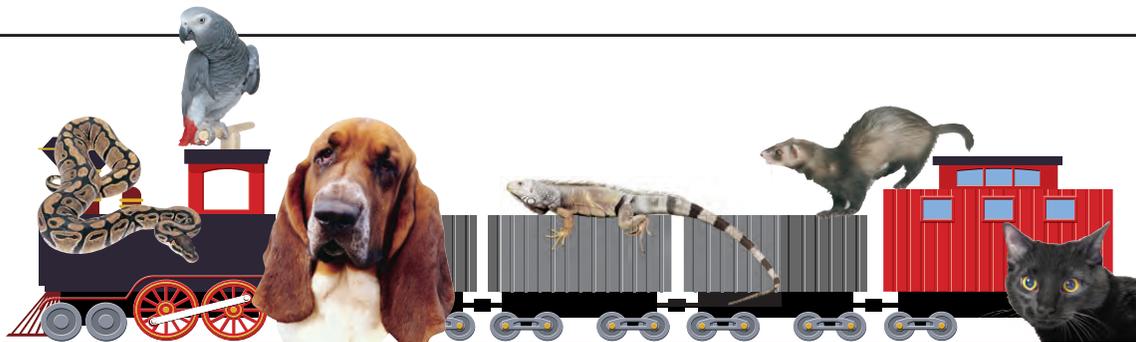
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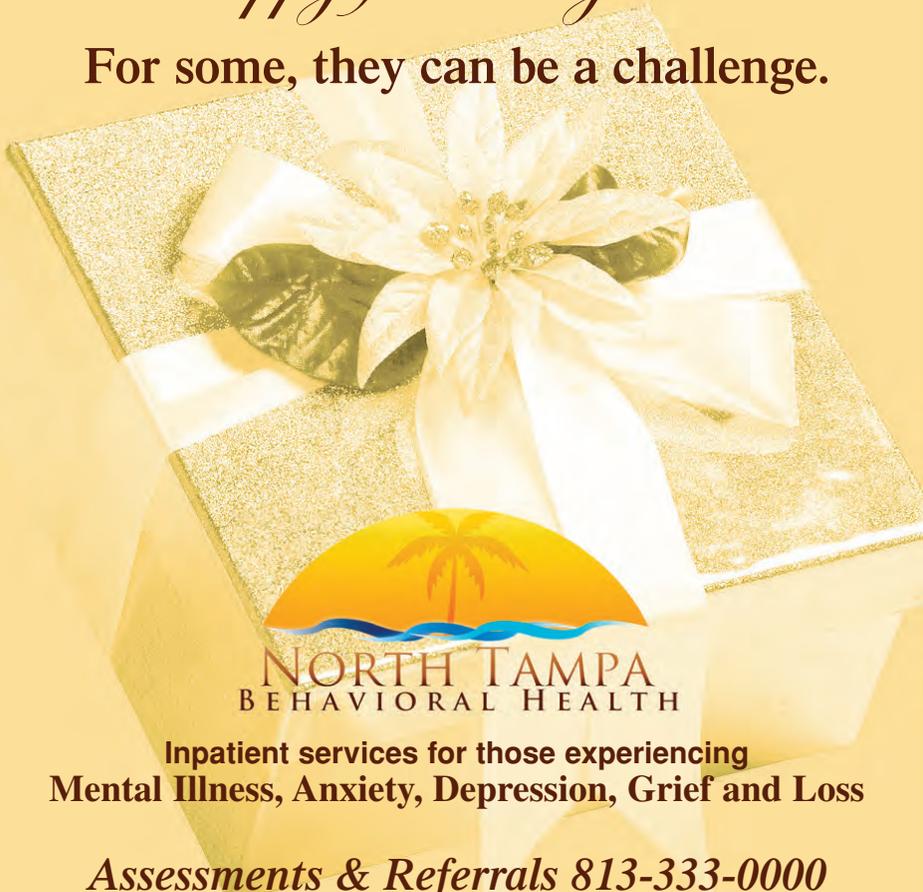
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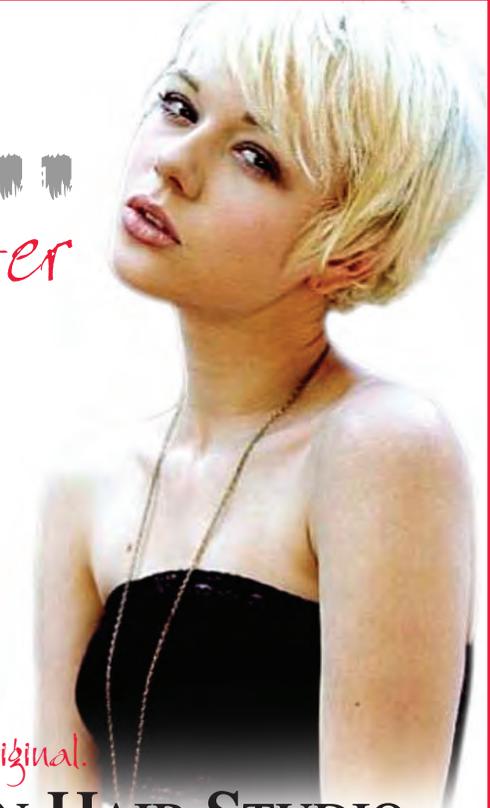
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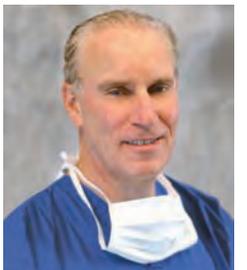
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What's Happening

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

COMMUNITY BIBLE STUDY

The First United Methodist Church of Land O' Lakes, 6209 Land O' Lakes Blvd., hosts an interdenominational community Bible study every Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Children are welcome. For information, call Jeanine Coris at (813) 910-7670, email her at ejcoris@live.com, or visit CommunityBibleStudy.org.

HUDSON THEATER MUSICAL

Venue Theatre, 9125 U.S. 19 in Hudson, will present a new Christmas musical, "The Last Room," through Dec. 22. The show is an interpretation of the nativity of Jesus as seen through the eyes of the innkeeper. Friday and Saturday performances are at 8 p.m., and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20. Group rates are available. For reservations, call (727) 822-6194, or email venueactorstudio@gmail.com.

AARP HOSTS LUNCHEON

The Land O' Lakes AARP Chapter 4764 will host its holiday luncheon on Dec. 13 at 10:30 a.m. at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 20735 Leonard Road in Lutz. The luncheon meeting will include the installation of new officers, board members and committee chairs. There will be a Secret Santa exchange. The cost is \$15 for current chapter members and their guests, and former chapter members. Anyone age 50 or older can attend and become a 2014 member for an extra \$10. For reservations, call (813) 996-1361, or email pebross@verizon.net.

IDLEWILD CHRISTMAS PRESENTATION

Exciting Idlewild Baptist Church, 18333 Exciting Idlewild Blvd., in Lutz, will present the performance "Christmas Child" from Dec. 13 through Dec. 15. Shows are 7 p.m. each day, and one matinee on Dec. 14 at 4 p.m. Tickets start at \$8, and are available online at Idlewild.org. The program is not recommended for children younger than 5. For wheelchair and companion seating, call (813) 264-1515, ext. 207.

PARENTS NIGHT OUT

The Savanna Church Ministry Center, 3807 Maryweather Lane, Suite 101, in Wesley Chapel, will host a parents night out on Dec. 13 from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Children can enjoy pizza, songs, a Christmas movie, crafts and games, while parents enjoy a night out, or finish up Christmas shopping. The evening is for children from the age of 2 to those in fifth grade. Cost is \$5 per child. For information, call Joe Jackson at (813) 907-5511, or visit SavannaChurch.com.

FORT FOSTER CANDLELIGHT EVENT

Historic Fort Foster, 15402 U.S. 301 in Thonotosassa, will host a candlelight experience on Dec. 13 and Dec. 14 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Guests will follow a lantern-lit trail through the fort, encountering live history scenarios along the way. There will be folk music, cider and cookies. There will be a battle reenactment on both days after 8 p.m. Cost is \$5 per person. Children younger than 5 are free. Proceeds benefit the Hillsborough River State Park Preservation Society. For information, call (813) 987-6771.

IRAQ VETERANS MEMORIAL DEDICATION

A new memorial commemorating the service of Iraq conflict veterans will be unveiled on Dec. 14 at 3 p.m. at Veterans Memorial Park, 3602 U.S. 301 N., in Tampa. The dedication ceremony will honor those who sacrificed their lives in Iraq from March 2003 to December 2011. A motorcycle procession will begin at 2 p.m., and Jason Wyatt will perform a

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

HOLIDAY FOOD GIVEAWAY

Pasco County Tax Collector Mike Fasano, Sen. John Legg, Sen. Wilton Simpson, and Rep. Amanda Murphy, along with Farm Share, are hosting a holiday food giveaway on Dec. 13 from 10 a.m. to noon at Faith Baptist Church, 9230 Ridge Road in Port Richey. The giveaway is for low-income families and Medicaid, supplemental security income and food stamp recipients. No food will be given away before 10 a.m. For information, call (727) 844-7744.

FEEDING AMERICA FUNDRAISER

Rooms & Relics, 5110 Land O' Lakes Blvd., in Land O' Lakes, will host a cookout to benefit Feeding America Tampa Bay-Suncoast Branch on Dec. 14 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and on Dec. 15 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Hot dogs and refreshments will be served, and there will be sale items available. Feeding America Tampa Bay serves a food-insecure population of close to 700,000 residents across West Central Florida. For information, call Kathy Sholette at (813) 777-5937, or email her at kathysholette@gmail.com.

musical selection. Guest speakers include Lt. Gen. John Mulholland. Refreshments will be provided. For information, call (813) 744-5502.

TASTE OF THE HOLIDAYS

Whole Foods Market, 3802 Northdale Blvd., in Carrollwood, will host a free Taste of the Holidays on Dec. 14 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., and on Dec. 18 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Guests can sample items from a holiday catering menu, including vegetarian-friendly items. For information, call (813) 264-3600.

WINE FESTIVAL, BIRTHDAY PARTY

Florida Estates Winery, 25241 State Road 52, near Land O' Lakes, will host its Wine Festival & 12th Birthday Party on Dec. 14 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The event will include vendors with unique gift items, cheese tasting, birthday cake, and door prizes. Sam Osborne will provide the entertainment. Friendly, vaccinated, leashed pets are welcome.

'JOY STORY' AT HERITAGE

Heritage Church, 1854 Oak Grove Blvd., in Lutz, will present "Joy Story," a Christmas musical, on Dec. 14 at 7 p.m., and on Dec. 15 at 10 a.m. This is a free family event. For information, call (813) 909-4080, or visit YesHeritage.com.

LADIES' CHRISTMAS TEA

Water's Edge Community Church, 30200 Overpass Road in Wesley Chapel, will host a ladies Christmas tea on Dec. 14 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Guests can enjoy food and fellowship. For information and to RSVP, call Patty Fitzpatrick at (813) 528-8565.

FIREWORKS, SANTA AT AVALON

The Avalon Park West community center, 5227 Autumn Ridge Drive in Wesley Chapel, will host Avalon Aglow on Dec. 14 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Guests can take pictures with Santa, enjoy food from local vendors, and listen to local music. There will be a bounce park. This free event includes a fireworks display at 8 p.m.

HAVE YOU WRITTEN TO SANTA YET?

The sixth annual Traditions on the Green from the Central Pasco Chamber of Commerce, The Heritage Park Foundation, and the Tampa Bay Times, will take place Dec. 14 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Land O' Lakes Community Center, 5401 Land O' Lakes Blvd. The event will feature a free pancake breakfast with Santa beginning at 9 a.m., hosted by the Wesley Chapel Noon Rotary. Kids activities include games, crafts, puppet shows, face painting, and even



Letters to Santa, sponsored by The Laker/Lutz News. For more information, call (813) 298-7363, or (813) 996-3011.

FIRST UNITED CHRISTMAS MUSICAL

First United Methodist Church of Lutz, 960 Lutz Lake Fern Road, will present "A New Heart for Christmas" on Dec. 14 at 7 p.m., and on Dec. 15 at 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. The drama will be presented by the worship arts team. For information, call (813) 949-1751.

QUANTUM LEAP FAMILY FUN

Quantum Leap Farm, 10401 Woodstock Road in Odessa, is hosting a Holiday Family Fun Day on Dec. 14 from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. The event will include pony and equine arts and crafts, hayrides, and pony rides for kids. For information, visit QuantumLeapFarm.org.

CONTEMPORARY JAZZ CONCERT

The Center for the Performing Arts at Wesley Chapel, 30651 Wells Road, will present contemporary jazz artist Eric Darius on Dec. 15 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for senior citizens and students, and \$20 for general seating. For information and tickets, call (813) 794-8772, or visit CFAWesleyChapel.com.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

The children and youth at Grace Community of Wesley Chapel will present the program "Why Do We Call It Christmas?" at Wiregrass Ranch High School, 2909 Mansfield Blvd., Dec. 15 at 10:30 a.m. The show features a puppet named Buck Denver and other characters from the "What's In the Bible?" video series. This is a special family service. Refreshments will be served. For information, call (813) 994-9363, or visit ExploreGrace.com.

CORNERSTONE AIR COLLECTS TOYS

Cornerstone Air, 4946 Land O' Lakes Blvd., in Land O' Lakes, is an official collection point for Toys for Tots. The business is open Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and is accepting toys and food through Dec. 17. For information, call (813) 949-4445.

GRANDPARENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

Kinship Services Network of Pasco County will host two support groups for grandparents and other relatives raising kin. The group will provide information on community resources, services, family support and reducing stress. For information, call (813) 716-8254, or visit

ChildrensHome.org. The groups will meet as follows:

- Dec. 17, 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Trinity Presbyterian Church of Seven Springs, 4651 Little Road, New Port Richey.
- Dec. 18, 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Calusa Elementary School, 7520 Orchid Lake Road, New Port Richey.

CHRISTMAS CARD LANE

Lutz is having its final celebration to mark its 100th birthday with Christmas Card Lane on Dec. 17 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The event will feature giant holiday cards, entertainment, refreshments, and an appearance by Santa. It will be near the Train Depot, at U.S. 41 and Lutz Lake Fern Road.

AAUW LUNCHEON PROGRAM

The Tampa Branch of American Association of University Women will have a holiday luncheon on Dec. 18 at 11:30 a.m., at Tampa Yacht Club, 5320 Interbay Blvd., in Tampa. The guest speaker will be Ellie Almand talking about human trafficking. The cost is \$28 by Dec. 13. For information, call Adele Ida Walter at (813) 932-6902.

PARENT NIGHT OUT

Sports & Field Family Athletic Club, 2029 Arrowgrass Drive in Wesley Chapel, will host a parent night out on Dec. 20 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. The event includes pizza, drinks, crafts, games, movies and more. Cost is \$10. Early drop-off appointments will be available for an additional cost. For information, call Kayla Ramos at (813) 948-5500.

'A CHRISTMAS OF GIVING'

Wesley Chapel Nissan, 28519 State Road 54, will host "A Christmas of Giving" through Dec. 21. Guests can visit the showroom and vote for their favorite decorated tree. Each dollar donation counts as a vote. Wesley Chapel Nissan will match donations up to \$500. Beginning Dec. 16, there will be a silent auction to bid on the trees. Proceeds will go to local charities. WJQB-FM, better known as True Oldies 106.3, will broadcast from the dealership on Dec. 21 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. For information, call (813) 751-1300.

MODEL TRAIN SHOW, SALE

Golden Spike Enterprises will host its Model Train Show & Sale at the Florida State Fairgrounds, 4800 U.S. 301 in Tampa, on Dec. 21 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Dec. 22 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. More than 350 dealers will have model items in all gauges and railroad antiques for sale. Admission is \$8. Children younger than 12 are free. There is a parking fee. Guests can get a discount coupon at GSERR.com. For information, call Alan Altman at (813) 949-7197.

'CHRISTMAS IN SMALLTOWN'

Messiah Lutheran Church, 14920 Hutchison Road in Tampa, will celebrate "Christmas in Smalltown" on Dec. 22 from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Guests can visit Christmas village shops, make crafts and eat supper in the Smalltown Town Square. There will be a popcorn cart and snowman area. For information, call (813) 961-2182.

GIVE BEANIE BABIES, GET DISCOUNT

Gulfside Regional Hospice is collecting Beanie Babies at its thrift shops through December to be used in the Mending Hearts Kids' Program. The program visits local schools to perform puppet shows about grief. Each child who attends a show receives a Beanie Baby. Anyone donating a Beanie Baby will receive 25 percent off one item in the store. The shops are located at:

- 1930 Land O' Lakes Blvd., Lutz, (813) 909-0485
- 6117 State Road 54, New Port Richey, (727) 842-7262

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NEW SPACE DEDICATED WITH PRAYER AND SONG

Father Stephan Brown and Saint Leo University music instructor Cynthia Selph recently celebrated the renovation of a university campus building to house the music department, along with female members of the Saint Leo Singers, one of the student choral groups. Students and faculty perform in both fall and spring semesters in programs that are free and open to the public, in addition to the annual Christmas program.

WIREGRASS RANCH NAMED DISTINGUISHED SCHOOL

Wiregrass Ranch High School has received the Apple Distinguished School designation for the second time.

Apple recognizes a select class of institutions nationwide as exemplary learning environments and centers of innovation, leadership, and educational excellence.

Wiregrass Ranch was recognized for consistently supporting student learning with daily, instructional technology use.

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTS CRUMBLEY, LUIKART

The Pasco County School Board recently elected Alison Crumbley as chairwoman, and Steve Luikart as vice chair.

Crumbley was elected to the District 4 school board seat in 2010 to complete the final two years of Kathryn Starkey's term when Starkey ran for county commission, and was re-elected in 2012 to a four-year term. Crumbley is marketing director for her family's real estate company.

Luikart was elected to the District 5 school board seat in 2010, and is serving a four-year term. Luikart is a retired school administrator.

CENTER FOR THE ARTS HOST SCHOOL BANDS

The Center for the Arts at River Ridge, 11646 Town Center Road in New Port Richey, will host a variety of school bands throughout December. All concerts are at 7 p.m., and admission is free. The upcoming schedule is:

- Dec. 11, River Ridge High School Band Concert
- Dec. 12, Cypress Elementary School Band Concert
- Dec. 13, Gulf Middle School Glee and Talent Showcase
- Dec. 14, Mitchell High School Prism Band Concert
- Dec. 16, Moon Lake Elementary School Music Concert

- Dec. 17, Long Leaf Elementary School Choral Concert
- Dec. 18, Calusa Elementary School Band Concert
- Dec. 19, River Ridge Middle School Band and Choral Concert

NEW CHRISTIAN SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL TO OPEN

Esther's School — a special needs school specializing in autism, Down syndrome, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and learning differences — is slated to open Jan. 6.

The school will combine a Christian education with individualized learning and character building. Each child will work at his or her own pace. Diagnostic testing and individualized curriculum will be offered.

It will be located at St. James Methodist Church, 16202 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., in New Tampa.

For information, call Marilyn Davis at (813) 454-8377 or (727) 544-4700.

HEATHER EDWARDS ELECTED TO STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Heather Edwards, a freshman and psychology major at Trevecca Nazarene University in Nashville, Tenn., was elected to the school's student government for freshman class student services for the 2013-14 school year.

Edwards is a native of Lutz.



Wildcats spring into action

The Wildcat Garden at Wesley Chapel Elementary School is blooming with fruit trees, strawberries, tomato plants, broccoli, lettuce, okra, and a variety of other fruits and vegetables. The NFL Fuel Up To Play 60 and the Dairy Council of Florida provided funds to purchase plants and supplies, and students and volunteers dug in on Wildcat Garden Day to plant, mulch and water the garden. Fourth grade student Sania Siddiqui prepares her pomegranate bush for planting. (Photo courtesy of Wesley Chapel Elementary School)

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Tampa Tour de Clay shows off the artistry of pottery

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

Clay artists at each of the five studios in the sixth annual Tampa Tour de Clay have been busy making, glazing and firing in pottery works in preparation of this year's event, scheduled for Dec. 14 and Dec. 15.

The Tour de Clay includes studios in Pinellas, Pasco and Hillsborough counties, and features 22 clay artists.

The tour kicks off at 9 a.m., at the Pottery Boys Clay Studio at 30 Bogie Lane in Palm Harbor. The next opening is at 10:30 a.m., at the Clay and Paper Studio, located at 110 Peterson Lane in Palm Harbor.

Hidden Lake Pottery, at 16705 Hutchison Road in Odessa, will have its opening at 2 p.m., followed by the Wellman and Welsch Pottery opening at 3 p.m., at 17202 Whirley Road in Lutz.



The final opening is at 5 p.m. at San Antonio Pottery, 11903 Curley St., in San Antonio. That location has extended hours until 9 p.m., and will serve refreshments. Singer and songwriter Rebekah Pulley also will perform at that studio.

Pottery demos are planned for 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., at all the studios on Sunday.

Those visiting the pottery studios will have a chance to talk to the potters and do some shopping.

For more information about the artists and the event, visit TampaTourDeClay.com.

Time for a shot: Flu season is here

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

The Florida Department of Health is reminding residents and visitors that the new flu season has begun, and getting the flu vaccination is recommended.

The vaccine is the single-best way to protect against the flu each year, officials said.

"It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body which protect against the influenza virus infection," said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John H. Armstrong, in

a release. "I encourage Floridians to receive the vaccination now before the flu begins to potentially impact your community."

The vaccine is recommended for anyone six months of age or older. And there are several flu vaccine options that can be considered.

A seasonal flu shot, which protects against three or four different flu viruses, is available right now, as well as an egg-free shot for people 18 through 49. A high-dose flu shot is available for those 65 and older, and an intradermal flu shot also has been approved for people 18 to 64.

Standard dose nasal spray vaccines also are available for healthy, non-pregnant people from 2 through 49.

For more information, visit online at www.FloridaHealth.gov.

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Closer Look

AN ADVERTISER PROFILE

Permanent makeup comes to Wesley Chapel

by Mike Matthew
special to The Laker / Lutz News

Valerie Rudmin, owner of Everlasting Beauty, has been a permanent makeup specialist for 26 years. She first heard about permanent makeup when Michael Jackson had permanent eyeliner applied. She thought, what a great idea! That inspired her to become a permanent makeup artist to help those in need, especially women without eyebrows.

She immediately enrolled in one of the only schools in the United States offering permanent makeup and began offering it as a service through the hair salon she owned in Chicago.

Her first client was herself. "I wanted to show my clients what I was talking about, rather than trying to explain it, no one knew what this was" says Valerie. "That way, they could see the results firsthand." Her business took off from there.

In 1990, she moved to Florida. Shortly after that, she met a doctor in Hernando County, who asked her to come to work in his office. Her reputation grew, and she began working with cosmetic surgeons at the Clearwater Center for Cosmetic Surgery.

After attending a conference 16 years ago in North Carolina, she was invited to open a studio in Des Moines, Iowa. Every couple of months, she flies there to work with clients who've booked appointments from all over the U.S.

"I always wanted to work closer to home," says Valerie. "A friend found a studio that's just a few minutes from my home, so I opened a studio in Wesley Chapel in January (2013) adding to my other locations."

Valerie currently has over 30 certifications in permanent makeup. Her education is ongoing. "I'm always interested in learning something new," says Valerie. "In 1992, I took some time off to study with master tattoo artist Big Joe in New York. He was the best in the industry and a really interesting character."

The majority of her work comes from referrals. "People need to know who's working on their face," says Valerie. "There are things that should not be done, mistakes that can cause irreversible damage. A tattoo artist with a couple of classes in permanent makeup is probably not the wisest choice."

Valerie's studio is a safe and sterile environment that's been licensed and inspected by the State of Florida Health Department. She uses the best topical anesthetic and knows how to apply them so her clients don't feel anything while she's working on them. Most work is completed in a single visit lasting a little over one hour. Clients leave her office with no swelling, bleeding or bruising, just makeup that won't wash off.

Valerie is a Lifetime Member of The Society of Permanent Cosmetic Professionals (SPCP.org). She also remodels scars, including chemo port scars, creates the 3D areola on "our beautiful breast cancer survivors", as well as eyebrows, eyeliner and lip liner. She also has her own skin care product line. She works by appointment only. Call her at (727) 460-3847 to set up an appointment.

"I can take 10 years off your face simply by doing your eyebrows," says Valerie. "It feels good to wake up with makeup."

Everlasting Beauty



Valerie S. Rudmin, Registered Cosmetologist • 727-460-3847
e-mail: MakeUp1987@aol.com • facebook@[EverlastingBeauty.FL.IA](https://www.facebook.com/EverlastingBeauty.FL.IA)

ROAD, from page 1

stands what we are talking about," Commissioners Kathryn Starkey said. "We need to go out to the community, get their input, and let them see what their options are. When I go to them, I see a lot of misunderstanding and misconception, and a lot of understandable objections. But they don't know what we know. They don't get to sit up here and see the traffic projections and understand what the alternatives are."

International Infrastructure Partners Inc. has proposed building a 33-mile elevated toll road down the center of the State Road 54/56 corridor, similar to the Lee Roy Selmon Expressway in Hillsborough County, using private money to fund it. The ultimate decision on whether it happens lies with FDOT, but the state agency wanted the county's OK before moving forward.

Richard Gehring, Pasco's planning and

development administrator, said one of the main misconceptions is that businesses and homes along the corridor would face giant walls, similar to what's happened in the elevated portions of U.S. 19 in Pinellas County. However, a completely elevated road could have far less negative aesthetic impact than many realize.

"You could have view lines across the roadway," Gehring said. "That condition could be enhanced by landscaping and night lighting to soften up the overall infrastructure."

Gehring showed a rendering of what he thinks State Road 54 could look like from the ground level. The elevated road was about 20 feet high, but the supports were covered in topiary-like vegetation, and businesses across the road were quite visible.

"Have you reached out to the chambers to show them how this road could look?" Commissioner Pat Mulieri asked Gehring after seeing the images. "The elevated road

has caused such an uproar since they think it would have this blank wall that would destroy businesses. But this is a totally different concept."

But not all the commissioners were anxious to move forward with more studies of the elevated road. Commissioner Henry Wilson said he moves through traffic just fine.

"I spend very little time in congestion here in Pasco County," he said. "The congestion is when I get into Hillsborough County. This is going to benefit the Pinellas and Hillsborough drivers more than it benefits our people, our citizens."

Although Gehring demonstrated 17 other road options that were carefully considered instead of an elevated road — including the construction of a 20-lane surface highway through the middle of Pasco — both Wilson and Commissioner Ted Schrader felt there could be other alternatives outside of the corridor that could move traffic east and west.

That could include Ridge Road, which Schrader said might not have even been considered by FDOT since it is a county road and not a state one. Elevating that road and connecting it to Interstate 75 could be a possibility.

Gehring, however, said that would still only move traffic over the Suncoast Parkway, and would not connect the east and west sides of the county with an expressway option. And such an option will be needed within the next 30 years if the county doesn't want to stunt its growth.

In the end, however, commissioners approved a resolution giving their support to more studies on a proposed elevated road unanimously.

The elevated road is still quite a ways away, if it ever happens. A member of Gehring's team said ground could be broken within seven years at the earliest, although Schrader said it would be more like 10 years if everything goes as planned.

MUSIC, from page 1

Thevin and Nuvivi — have been taking piano lessons from Ledee-Finnerty for years. The teacher offers piano lessons at very reasonable prices, Wijesundara said. "Chorus is free."

Both Ledee-Finnerty and her husband, Eugene Finnerty, are involved.

"While Ms. Edie is teaching kids, her husband, Mr. Eugene, gives her full support," Wijesundara added.

Ledee-Finnerty said she appreciates hav-

ing a group of parents who are involved.

"Each person offers their particular talent — making dresses, buying props, offering rides, making capes and costumes," she said. "We all work together and it's very rewarding."

One of the moms, Katrina Williams, is the group's choreographer. She enjoys helping the children make the right moves.

Ledee-Finnerty sees music as a powerful force for good, offering a bridge between people of diverse cultures.

"You can bring very different people together and have them learn the same song,"

she said. "I particularly love music from around the world because we learn so much about each other through our music."

It can be fun, too. As the kids sang "The 12 Days of Christmas," they were going through the motions of milking, leaping, dancing and other actions contained in the Christmas carol.

The choir is made up of Yuthmi Gamage, 6; Sayuri Ranatunga, 7; Nuvivi Wijesundara, 7; Bianca Walker, 8; Jasmine Mazard, 8; Sandali Idippili; Jeremiah Williams, 9; Breonna Walker, 9; Yeran Gamage, 9; Ravidu Idippili and, Thevin Wijesundara, 13.

Every member of Merry Makers said they enjoy singing.

Sandali Idippili, who attends Wesley Chapel Elementary School, put it this way: "When my voice is going high, I think of the blue sky and the birds are coming down and singing with me."

The children are memorizing all of the words to the songs they will be performing, and Sandali Idippili believes they'll be ready. She credited the choir director, noting, "She's very talented."

She offered another reason, too: "We practice a lot."

BURGESS, from page 1

"I don't concern myself with polls and how the federal government is doing," Burgess said. "I'm going to focus on the election, getting to meet people, and to hear what those people are concerned about."

Yet, what the federal government is doing could come back to haunt candidates, even ones at the state level.

"This is going to be a very nationalized election from the top of the ballot all the way down," said Susan MacManus, a political science professor at the University of South Florida, who grew up in Land O' Lakes. "People's images of politicians at this moment are based on what's happening in Washington, specifically the President and Congress, but most basically Congress."

Weatherford originally won his House seat by more than 20 points in 2006, and despite raising more than \$1.7 million through

all of his elections, didn't have to put up too much of a fight.

But next November is an election where many will use the ballot box to share their opinions of Washington, D.C. Although a lot can change in 11 months, current polls have rated the Republican-controlled U.S. House of Representatives at some of its lowest levels in history. And there could be a real blowback on state-level races, including ones like Weatherford's legislative seat.

"Americans right now don't like either party," MacManus said, meaning two things could happen at local races. "Some of the independent candidates, like a Libertarian candidate, could get a lot of protest votes, which can drain from both parties."

"The second is more frightful — turnout drops," she said.

In Pasco County, independents have a real shot of tipping the political scale one way or the other. They make up more than 27 percent of the electorate, leaving just 39 percent for

Republicans, and 34 percent for Democrats.

Two other candidates have already filed to seek Weatherford's seat, including Republican Minerva Diaz and Democrat Beverly Anne Ledbetter. Diaz made news earlier this year when she told Pasco County Commissioners she wanted to see more stringent background checks on firearm buyers. Ledbetter is a former public school teacher who currently works at Saint Leo University, according to published reports.

Diaz has raised \$1,960 in cash so far in the young election, with Ledbetter scheduled to file her first campaign finance report this week. New candidates have until July 28, just before the Aug. 26 primary, to file their paperwork if they want to run.

But judging by past elections in this district, the successful candidate is going to have to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars — far more than Burgess has ever needed running for city council or mayor in Zephyrhills. Yet, he feels that city-level expe-

rience gives him a significant leg up over anyone who might run against him.

"Having the opportunity to serve at a local level as a councilman has given me a keen understanding of municipalities and local government," Burgess said. "And local governments are exactly what encompasses your district as a state representative. I am currently the mayor of the largest city in the district, and I feel like I have the opportunity and the understanding of what the district means to help make it better."

While he wouldn't get into specifics, Burgess said he is ready to serve, even if the governor after the next election isn't Republican.

"I'm a team player, and I look forward to working with people on both sides of the aisle," Burgess said. "I do what I am elected to do, but I also understand that there's much stuff that gets done up there for whatever reason, so I hope to be a good positive change in Tallahassee, and hopefully, to get some good things accomplished."

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NATURE NOTES



With two cutting blades, bypass pruners make a cleaner cut in the garden. (Photo courtesy of B.J. Jarvis)

What does that favorite gardener want for Christmas?

By B.J. Jarvis
Special to The Laker/Lutz News

Each December it is a challenge to find the perfect gift for gardening aficionados. But this year, there are a number of choice presents that any Florida gardener would be excited to find under the tree.

Occasionally, garden tasks can take a toll on gardeners. Ergonomic pruners, rakes, and trowels make tasks less painful at the end of the day. Ergonomic tools return benefits in both function and health, but can be hard to find locally.

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A gift many gardeners would love to receive is a pair of super-sharp, rust-free pruners. Felco and ARS brands both make excellent pruners that are easy on the hand, and are exceedingly durable. Choose bypass types, with two cutting blades, for maximum cutting power.

When weather forces gardeners indoors, consider a few choice books.

Florida wildflowers brighten our day. For nature lovers, try "Florida's Wildflower in their Natural Community," by Walter Kingsley, a guide grouped not just by their color or family, but by the natural habitats in which they're found.

More than 500 color photos and detailed descriptions outline Florida's major

ecosystems, and the wildflowers unique to each.

Organic gardening remains of interest to Florida gardeners. In "Organic Methods for Vegetable Gardening in Florida," botanist Ginny Stibolt and master gardener Melissa Contreras provide simple advice for successful, pesticide-free vegetable gardening. Birders will love a handsomely illustrated guide to Florida's birds.

Each of the 348 bird species in "Florida's Birds: A Field Guide" is represented with full accounts and color illustrations. Author David Meahr includes information about breeding months, best habitats, and time for each bird, as well as a state map of 25 birding hot spots.

Learn how to attract and feed wild birds, and to care for sick, injured and orphaned birds.

Finally, a cushy kneeling pad will fit nicely into every gardener's stocking.

Many of these books can be found at the University of Florida's bookstore at IFASBooks.ifas.ufl.edu, or at (800) 226-1746.

B.J. Jarvis is Pasco's Cooperative Extension director and horticulture agent. She can be reached at pasco@ifas.ufl.edu, or by calling (352) 518-0474.

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Tubas invade Zephyrhills for Christmas

By Michael Hinman
mhinman@cnewsbooks.com

In a holiday world where trumpets and hand bells reign supreme, it's about time tubas and euphoniums get their due.

And they will Dec. 21 when TubaChristmas returns to Times Square on Fifth Avenue in Zephyrhills.

The low brass instrumentalists will perform Christmas favorites from the gazebo, made up of players both locally and regionally. And all of them will play together as a single unit for the first time, just hours after their one and only practice.

That just adds to the fun, said John Wheeler, a longtime TubaChristmas performer, who is organizing the Zephyrhills event for the seventh year.

"They tend to be musicians who have a good time," Wheeler said. "They are low-key, and this is a bit of a come-as-you-are party."

TubaChristmas has performances all over the country, each performance never conflicting with others so that players can attend as many as they want. In fact, some of the 25 or so musicians that show up for the Zephyrhills event have already done other events, like one last week in Lakeland.

And anyone with a tuba or euphonium, and a \$10 registration fee, can join in. Those who would like to watch need only show up with lawn chairs at 7 p.m. to get a free one-hour show.

"The tubas and euphoniums are the lower brass instruments in the band, and it is a mellow rumbling sound that you get from it," Wheeler said. "It gives people a chance to sing along."

Euphoniums, which have a sound that's a step higher than tubas, typically take on the melodic parts. And without the rest of the higher-pitch instruments, it gives these players — usually relegated to the background — a chance to stand out.

"You usually get buried by everybody else, and this is the one chance that we get to star," Wheeler said.

The rehearsal for this performance will begin at 2 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, 38635 Fifth Ave. Players not only get a chance to perform for the community, but they also receive a commemorative TubaChristmas button honoring their participation in the event.

The performers are all ages, and some of



Young, old, local or not — players need only show up the day of the performance, and anyone who'd like to watch can do so for free. (Photo courtesy of John Wheeler)

them even come from the local high schools, Wheeler said.

"It's a wonderful opportunity, especially for the younger generations," he said. "No one is judging them on playing right or wrong notes."

Some players might just stay local, but others travel quite a bit.

"We have players from all over who'll participate, and one time we had a guy who showed me on a back of an envelope where he had recorded the dates that he played in TubaChristmas all over the country that year," Wheeler said. "He attended 84 of them."

Because players can wait right up until the same-day practice to show up, Wheeler does admit as an organizer it can be a little frightening wondering if enough players will show up to play. The Zephyrhills event, however, has really taken root in the town over the last several years, which means only a little stress for Wheeler leading up to the concert.

"I lost a little sleep the first time out," he said.

Wheeler has performed with TubaChristmas for 28 years, getting his start in New Hampshire and other parts of New England.

"I remember playing once in Maine with the snowflakes coming down and the valves (on his instrument) tend to freeze up," he said. "We're in Florida now, so we don't have to worry about it. I've had the pleasure of playing in a variety of instances, and Zephyrhills is the most enjoyable one."

For more information, call John Wheeler at (813) 788-7408.

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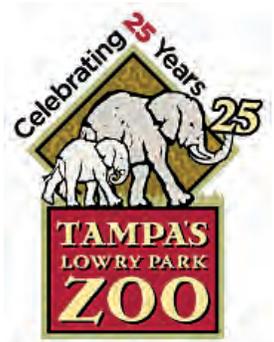
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A colonoscopy can find pre-cancerous growths as small as one millimeter before they can turn into deadly tumors.

"The good news is that regular screening is the most powerful weapon for preventing colorectal cancer in its earliest stages, when it's easier to treat," said Christian Bailey, M.D., a gastroenterologist at St. Joseph's Hospital in Tampa and St. Joseph's Hospital-North in Lutz. "Removing polyps can help prevent cancer from starting yet nearly half of all adults skip the test."

Kevin Kruszewski turned 50 and knew it was time for his first colonoscopy, but he didn't do it right away. Like most, Kruszewski was skeptical about the potential discomfort. Then a couple of years passed and he found himself past due for the screening.

"I met Dr. Bailey through his wife, who is a customer at my bakery," Kruszewski said. "I always knew that when it was time to get a colonoscopy, he would be the doctor who I called."

Finally, he called Dr. Bailey and scheduled the procedure.

Regarding the preparation, "I had to follow a special diet for a couple of days and take some medication – I stayed home the day before," he said.

As for the procedure itself, Kruszewski summed it up, "It really wasn't a big deal!"

"Kevin, like most of my patients, learned that colon screening typically takes less than 30 minutes and the majority of the discomfort is due to the preparation during the day before," Dr. Bailey explained. "Afterwards, patients are just a bit woozy from anesthesia but can

return home after a couple of hours and resume normal activity."

"If a polyp is found, it will be removed during the test, and often times no further treatment is necessary," Bailey said.



Dr. Bailey

Patients also should know that while the recommendation for colonoscopy screening is to start at age 50, it is recommended to consult a physician to ensure earlier screening isn't required due to certain risk factors, such as ethnic background or family history.

For Kruszewski, his test results came with good news, "Dr. Bailey said he will see me in 10 years!"

Since symptoms of colorectal cancer are often silent, it is important to get screened regularly. You should make an appointment with your doctor immediately if you notice any of the warning signs or symptoms listed below.

- Change in your bowel habits that last for more than a few days and cannot be explained by travel or illness
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Abnormalities in stools
- Blood in your stools or blood found on toilet paper
- Feeling that your bowel does not empty completely
- Frequent gas pains, cramps, or bloating
- Unexplained weight loss

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Caliente Resort and Spa was the site of a successful fundraiser in November for the Moffitt Cancer Center Foundation that raised more than \$30,000. The Caliente-based Breast Friends Forever organized the event, Pink Heals. The funds are specifically earmarked for breast cancer treatment and research. Participating in the presentation are, from left, Polly Honor, Dan Minor of the Moffitt Cancer Center Foundation, Judi Miller, and Hilda Holt. (Photo courtesy of Polly Honor)



Big Brothers Big Sisters picks up donation

Christian Business Connections of Central Pasco donates \$250 to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay. The funds come from membership dues of the group, which meets every Thursday beginning at 7:45 a.m. at Myrtle Lake Church. Participating in the check presentation are, from left, Rene Van Hout, Schiller Daux, Michelle Pentifallo, Shantelle Beachler, Jan Roberts of Big Brothers Big Sisters, Peter Castellani, Edda Gilbert and Clestine Herbert.

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-Elizabeth Byrd, Land O' Lakes



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Makes 3 dozen

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- 1 cup Butter
- 2 tsp Vanilla
- 1/3 cup Sugar
- 2 tsp Water
- 2 cups Flour
- 1 cup chopped Walnuts
- Red & Green colored Sugars

Directions:

- Cream butter and vanilla
- Add sugar, cream until fluffy
- Add water
- Stir in flour, mixing well
- Add walnuts
- Shape into 1" balls
- Roll in sugar
- Place on ungreased cookie sheet (1" apart)
- Bake @ 325 degrees for 20 minutes or until firm to the touch

HOLIDAY

Gift Guide 2013



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Pee Wee Predators cheer way to nationals

By Michael Murillo

The Laker/Lutz News Correspondent

When you attend a Pop Warner football game, you might not realize that you're seeing more than two teams on the field.

The first, of course, is the football team. But there's another group of athletes performing, and they also practice, work hard and compete against opponents at the conference, regional and national levels. And they're part of every game.

They're the cheerleaders.

Cheerleading isn't simply a side activity that complements the football programs. It's an organized sport in its own right that requires patience and skill to compete at a high level. And in the Pee Wee division, the South Pasco Predators have demonstrated their ability to not only compete, but stand out. The team took first place at the conference level, compiling the highest score and earning a trip to regionals.

But there were more reasons to cheer for the Predators. At the regional competition, the team again placed first and again had the highest score of any squad (including teams from the rest of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Georgia). That accomplishment has earned them a spot in the national competition, which will be this week at Walt Disney World in Orlando.

For Coach Kayla Hensley, the team's success validates not just the Pee Wee Predators, but the sport of cheerleading.

"If you don't have any experience watching cheerleading, they make it look so easy that it doesn't seem like it should be a sport," she said. "That's the real challenge of cheerleading. You're supposed to make it look easy and effortless."

People see cheerleaders from professional football teams — who mostly perform dance routines — and they think that's all there is to it, Hensley said. But competitively, there's a lot of skill necessary, a lot of dedication required and a lot of preparation and practice to perform the team's complex routines correctly.

Hensley seems to have found the formula for cheerleading success: This is the second team she's coached that reached na-



Kate Allmond, Shae-Lynn Gibbs and Kylee Brown lift Lila Zois as part of the award-winning routines of the South Pasco Predators in the Pop Warner Pee Wee division. The girls are heading to Orlando to compete at the national level. (Photos courtesy of Kayla Hensley)

tionals (she coached Junior Pee Wee for the Predators last year, and that team placed fourth at the national competition). She's also a former Predator herself, cheerleading in her youth for the team before becoming a cheerleader for Land O' Lakes High School.

Hensley said that she feels more stress as a coach than when she was doing the routines herself.

"It's way more nerve-racking on the coaching side of things, because you have no control over their performance," she said. "You're not out there so you can't do anything to help them."

But her athletes think she's done a lot to help them get where they are today.

"Kayla, she's amazing. I really like her," said Kylee Brown, one of the team's cheerleaders. "She encourages us. Every time we go on the stage, she gives us a pep talk."

Hensley also reminds the team that no matter how the national competition turns out, they should be proud of making it this far and enjoy the level of success the Predators have already attained, Brown said.

Another cheerleader, Elizabeth Harmon, said that Hensley's experience has helped them recognize what's important to judges and how to maximize their points to have the best showing possible.

"She knows what's expected, and she knows how many points you can get (for different parts of a routine) so she knows how to get us a really high score," Harmon said.

She admits to be a little nervous about competing at nationals, but also is excited about the chance to perform at Disney World.

Hensley will be proud of the team regardless of how they finish. But that day will be a mix of pride and anxiety, and the coach might even be more nervous than the girls who will be competing.

"The nervous feeling that I used to get right before I went on the mat, I have the whole entire day of the competition," she said. "Whenever I watch them, I just have a huge smile on my face and my eyes get watery. I feel like I'm watching my own kids out there."

PRE-SPORTS BOARD

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 4

BOYS BASKETBALL

Mitchell 64, Pasco 45
Gulf 75, Wiregrass Ranch 73

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Pasco 49, Fivay 33
Ridgewood 56, Wesley Chapel 41
Steinbrenner 42, Wharton 28

BOYS SOCCER

Carrollwood Day 6, Academy at the Lakes 1
East Bay 0, Wharton 0 (tie)

THURSDAY, DEC. 5

BOYS BASKETBALL

Wharton 66, Riverview 45
Wesley Chapel 72, Fivay 37
Hudson 44, Zephyrhills 36

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Wiregrass Ranch 77, Sunlake 23
Riverview 51, Wharton 44

BOYS SOCCER

Pasco 6, Zephyrhills 0

FRIDAY, DEC. 6

BOYS BASKETBALL

Freedom 70, Wiregrass Ranch 60
Steinbrenner 74, Alonso 56
River Ridge 36, Land O' Lakes 35
Nature Coast Tech 69, Pasco 39
Land O' Lakes Christian 59, Ruskin 49
Wesley Chapel 60, Weeki Wachee 49

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Steinbrenner 50, Alonso 6
Hernando 42, Zephyrhills 34
Wesley Chapel 62, Weeki Wachee 27
Dunedin 65, Sunlake 52
Wiregrass Ranch 70, Freedom 58

BOYS SOCCER

Land O' Lakes 5, Anclote 0
Wharton 1, Plant 0

GIRLS SOCCER

Plant 2, Wharton 1
Pasco 3, Zephyrhills 0

Continued on next page

CHECK THIS OUT

Baseball clinic in Land O' Lakes

Rockstar Performance Baseball will conduct a four-week winter instructional training camp in December and January for players between the ages of 6 and 18 at the Land O' Lakes Little League sports complex.

Training will focus on hitting, fielding, base running, pitchers and catchers instruction. It will review key mechanics, common mistakes and how to fix those mistakes through proper drill sequence and identification.

For more information, visit www.RockstarBaseball.com.

Lightning is FARA's honored partner

The Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance, which recently had a fundraiser at Avila Golf & Country Club, named the Tampa Bay Lightning its 2013 Partner of the Year.

"FARA recognizes that collaboration and partnership are absolutely essential for success," said Jennifer Farmer, FARA's executive director, in a release. "The Tampa Bay Lightning has gone above and beyond to help further our mission to find a cure for Friedreich's ataxia. Their personal and professional commitments have brought us closer to the finish line and inspired hope in many."

The Lightning hosted a FARA Night earlier

this year at the Tampa Bay Times Forum, and have contributed a number of exclusive auction items to the Energy Ball silent and live auctions. The team also donated their suite at a Eagles concert to help raise a record high \$260,000.

Friedreich's ataxia is a rare nerve degenerative disease that has been diagnosed in 6,000 people in the United States, yet one in 100 people are carriers. The disease itself typically attacks the spinal cord, especially those nerves that direct muscle movement in the arms and legs.

For more information, visit CureFA.org.

Everyone Can Play

The fourth annual Everyone Can Play special needs baseball clinic will be Jan. 11 beginning at 9 a.m. at Mary Help of Christian Center, 6400 E. Chelsea St., in Tampa.

The group is looking for volunteers, sponsors and players, and all clinics are taught by local athletes for participants age 4 and older.

For more information, visit EveryoneCanPlay.org.

All-South Region volleyball players, coach named

Jaclyn Mailoto of Saint Leo University was among 14 players named to the 2013



Golfing for PHCC

Keith Martin, left, John Semeraro, Jimmy Adcock and Joe Cobb were team gross winners from Tampa Electric Co., during the fourth annual Pasco-Hernando Community College Foundation Golf Tournament, in October. These golfers and others played a key role in raising more than \$37,000 for the advancement of student scholarships, academic and athletic programs, libraries, and other needed college initiatives.

American Volleyball Coaches Association All-South Region team. She was joined by teammate Lauren Campbell, who received an honorable mention.

Chris Catanach, the coach from University of Tampa, was named Coach of the Year in the same selection process.

Other members of the All-South Region team include Becca Acevedo, Christina Alessi

and Faith Rohn, all of Palm Beach Atlantic University; Jenny Bellairs and Lindsay Homme of the University of West Florida; Lindsay Biggs of Eckerd College; Meagan Burke, Marissa Lisenbee, Holly Reschke and Berkley Whaley of UT; Alexis Gillis of Christian Brothers University; Melissa Holt from the University of West Georgia; and Camille Indest of Rollins College.

Finding best gifts for outdoor adventurers

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

There's no better time than the holiday season to help outdoor thrill seekers gear up for all their upcoming adventures.

Even if the hiker, backpacker or climber on the gift list has their favorite gear, new innovations in outdoor products are helping both new and seasoned adventurers go further and higher.

Here are some ways to find the ideal holiday gift for outdoor enthusiasts:

Give back — Help protect the environment that enthusiasts so passionately enjoy with eco-friendly gear. This can include hats, jackets, and even boots made from recycled material.

Even if the recycled route isn't the preferred way to go, shoppers can still keep sustainability in mind by opting for durable gear that will last a lifetime. The less often a jacket, tent or sleeping back needs replacing, the better for the environment.

Warm up — Gone are the days where

a simple down coat is the be-all and end-all of staying warm during an outdoor adventure. Now, technically advanced outdoor apparel, equipment and footwear are designed to fit the versatile needs of outdoor enthusiasts, offering lightweight options that offer warmth in varying weather conditions.

For example, the ThermoBall Jacket from The North Face is made of a synthetic insulation that mimics the loft and warmth of a down cluster, with the added benefit of insulation retention when wet.

Get inspired — Gift recipients may wish to be in the great outdoors all the time, but that's not usually possible. Give him or her something to do between adventures with a book or ebook.

There are plenty of outdoor adventure and travel memoirs that offer inspiration, even for someone who is curled up in bed. Or, consider purchasing a subscription to an outdoor adventure magazine.

—StatePoint

PREP SPORTS BOARD

SATURDAY, DEC. 7 GIRLS BASKETBALL

Academy at the Lakes 55,
Academy of the Holy Names 43

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 11 BOYS BASKETBALL

Chamberlain at Wharton, 6:30 p.m.
Steinbrenner at Plant, 6:30 p.m.
Land O' Lakes at Pasco, 7:30 p.m.
Sunlake at Academy at the Lakes, 7:30 p.m.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Sunlake at Academy at the Lakes, 6 p.m.
Steinbrenner at Plant, 6:30 p.m.
Fivay at Wesley Chapel, 7:30 p.m.
Tampa Bay Tech at Freedom, 7:45 p.m.
Chamberlain at Wharton, 8 p.m.

BOYS SOCCER

Bishop McLaughlin at
Academy at the Lakes, 4 p.m.
Gulf at Pasco, 7:30 p.m.
Wesley Chapel at Anclote, 7:30 p.m.
Zephyrhills at River Ridge, 7:30 p.m.

GIRLS SOCCER

Anclote at Wesley Chapel, 6 p.m.
Sunlake at Land O' Lakes, 7:30 p.m.
River Ridge at Zephyrhills, 7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, DEC. 12 BOYS BASKETBALL

Sickles at Wiregrass Ranch, TBA
Steinbrenner at Freedom, 6:30 p.m.
Land O' Lakes Christian at Providence, 7:30 p.m.
Zephyrhills at Ridgewood, 7:30 p.m.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Land O' Lakes Christian at Providence, 6 p.m.
Sickles at Wiregrass Ranch, 6 p.m.
Steinbrenner at Freedom, 6:30 p.m.

BOYS SOCCER

Pepin Academy at Academy at the Lakes, 4 p.m.
Riverview at Wharton, 8 p.m.

GIRLS SOCCER

Riverview at Wharton, 6 p.m.

FRIDAY, DEC. 13 BOYS BASKETBALL

Wharton at Newsome, 6:30 p.m.
Anclote at Sunlake, 7:30 p.m.
Cambridge Christian at Academy at the Lakes, 7:30 p.m.
Land O' Lakes at Fivay, 7:30 p.m.
Nature Coast Tech at Wesley Chapel, 7:30 p.m.
Pasco at Weeki Wachee, 7:30 p.m.
Wiregrass Ranch at Tampa Catholic, 7:30 p.m.

Compiled from MaxPreps.com, other sources



I once caught a fish ...

Steve Hart recently caught this 9.5-pound big mouth bass in a small lake behind his mother's house near Newberger Road. And being the sportsman he is, Hart released the fish back into the lake after posing with it. (Photo courtesy of Barbara Hart)



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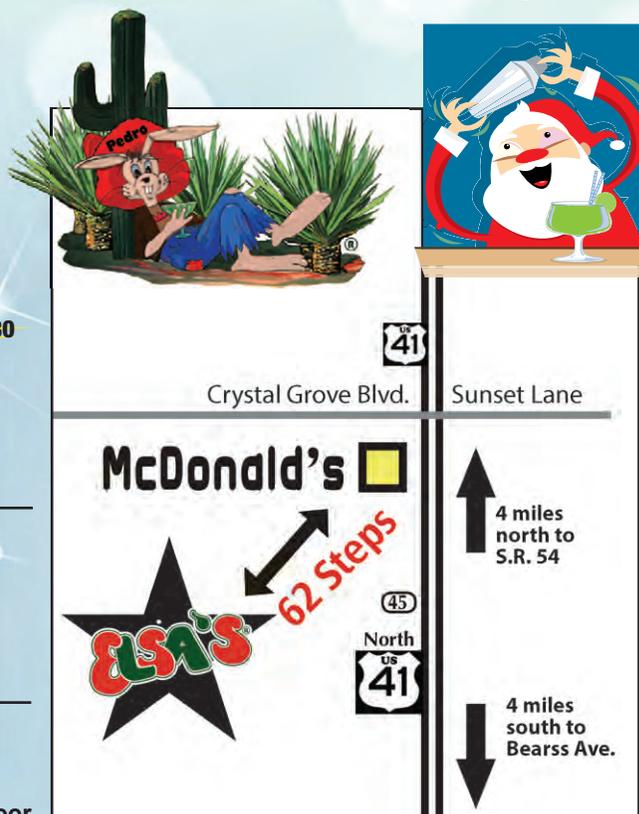
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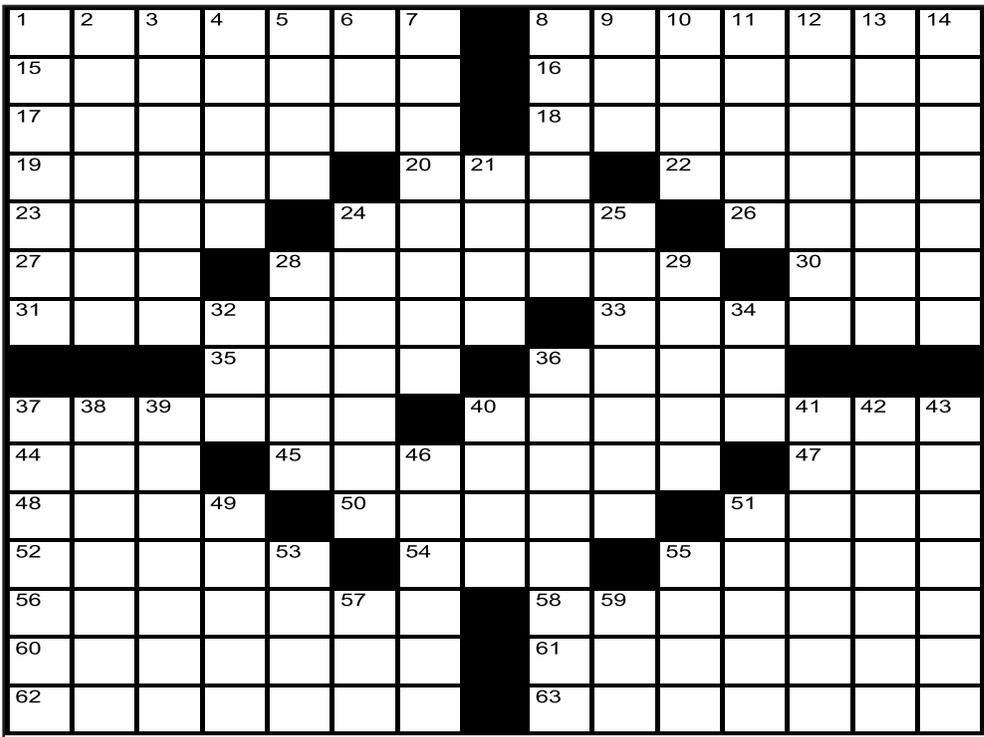
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SEE SOLUTION, PAGE 30

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters in each word to spell Santa's name in places around the world. (Hint: Chile)

JVOEI RRUOESAPC



ANSWER: Viejo Pascuero

ACROSS

- 1. Climb up and over again
- 8. More domineering
- 15. Attitudes of a culture of era (pl.)
- 16. Throw
- 17. Break into pieces (2 wds)
- 18. Take back
- 19. Continental money
- 20. A pint, maybe
- 22. Asian capital
- 23. Western blue flag, e.g.
- 24. Complain
- 26. Bar order
- 27. A.T.M. need
- 28. Unoccupied
- 30. "It's no ___!"
- 31. Slogans
- 33. Having winglike exten-

sions

- 35. Arabic for "commander"
- 36. Ancient greetings
- 37. Free
- 40. Spider, e.g.
- 44. ___ gestae
- 45. Mechanic's equipment box
- 47. "Aladdin" prince
- 48. "Hamlet" has five
- 50. Area of South Africa
- 51. Assayers' stuff
- 52. Sounds raucously
- 54. Howard of "Happy Days"
- 55. Gold braid
- 56. Indian dish with seasoned rice and meat (var. spelling)
- 58. Arranged in rows
- 60. The alimentary canal
- 61. One who leads a Spartan

lifestyle

- 62. The milling on coin edges
- 63. Having lost the most freshness

DOWN

- 1. Proof of purchase
- 2. An ancient country in west-central Italy
- 3. Using something jointly or in turns
- 4. Coconut palms
- 5. Says "When?"
- 6. Basic unit of money in Romania
- 7. Trellis on which ornamental shrubs grow flat
- 8. News office
- 9. "___ moment"

- 10. Literally, "king"
- 11. Bubbly drinks
- 12. To settle a problem through discussion (2 wds)
- 13. Champion
- 14. Having finished one's active working life
- 21. Amount to make do with
- 24. A spoken blessing
- 25. Agonizing work
- 28. Calculus calculation
- 29. Bumper sticker word
- 32. Franchise
- 34. ___ Wednesday
- 36. 25th U.S. state
- 37. Long-handled device to grasp hard-to-reach items
- 38. To lie back or down
- 39. Ancient fertility goddess
- 40. A chorus line
- 41. Recount
- 42. Inflammation of the small intestines
- 43. Analyze
- 46. Move forward by rowing
- 49. Enclosed in a pigpen
- 51. Architectural projection
- 53. Delhi dress
- 55. Boat in "Jaws"
- 57. "Smoking or ___?"
- 59. "C"___ la vie!"

CRYPTOQUIZ

Each of the following cryptograms is a clue to the identity of a popular holiday character. Using the hints G=C and R=O, decipher the clues and name the character.

- 1 GRUBGRI JEJX
- 2 IAMMRB BRFX
- 3 GRYK XLXF
- 4 FEKC DYM
- 5 WYVEG

This character is the subject of a Christmas classic sung by Gene Autry.

Answers: 1) Cornucopia, 2) Button Nose, 3) Coal Eyes, 4) Silk Hat, 5) Magic Frosty the Snowman

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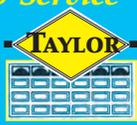
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ANNOUNCEMENTS



The engagement and approaching marriage of Sarah Elifson and Alex Fackler has been announced.

Parents of the couple are John and Donna Elifson of Land O' Lakes, Florida, and Ken and Michele Fackler of Oviedo, Florida. Grandparents of the couple are LaVonne Blakeslee of Livingston, Montana, the late William Blakeslee, and the late James and Elna Elifson, of Clinton, Iowa. Also, Ken and Sandy Fackler of Ocala, Florida, Mavis Monell, of Franklin, New Jersey, and the late Paul Burger of Wayne, New Jersey.

The bride-to-be is a graduate of UCF in '12, majoring in Health Services Administration and is employed with SimonMed as an Account Manager. Her fiancé is a graduate of UCF in '11, majoring in Marketing and is employed with the Orlando Sentinel as a Digital Account Executive.

Vows will be exchanged in Orlando, Florida on 12-13-14

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