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VOLUME 4, NO. 28

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INSIDE:

Plan your summer fun with our annual guide.

Windermere weighing idea to merge Tree Board, Parks and Rec

GABBY BAQUERO
NEWS EDITOR

The town of Windermere is short on volunteers for its Tree Board and Parks and Recreation Committee and is considering dissolving the Tree Board to shift the responsibilities to the Parks and Recreation committee.

Town Manager Robert Smith emphasized the idea was pro-

SEE MAYBE PAGE 2



Children spun their hula hoops along to music in front of the clock tower.

Photos by Troy Herring

Resident celebrates Better Man anniversary



Danielle Hendrix

Windermere resident Brian Buckley is the mastermind behind The Better Man Event.

DANIELLE HENDRIX
BLACK TIE EDITOR

On April 13, 8,000 men will have the opportunity to learn how to become a better friend, student, coworker, brother, father or husband – and, overall, a better man.

UCF's CFE Arena is hosting the 15th annual The Better Man Event, an annual event designed to equip, encourage

SEE BECOMING PAGE 6

YOUR TOWN

FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES SCHOLARSHIP

Students have a new scholarship opportunity with the establishment of the Dannel J. Petro Foundation Scholarship. The West Orange Foundation is making it possible for eligible students to further their education at Valencia College, Orange Technical College or the University of Central Florida. Eligible students must live in West Orange, attend a local high school and have a current GPA of 2.75. Several student recipients may be awarded \$1,000 scholarships, and two students will receive \$2,500.

To download a copy of the application, visit bit.ly/2uCIDuX. It must be returned to Carrie Wilson at cwilson@wochamber.com by April 5; or mailed to 12184 W. Colonial Drive, Winter Garden, FL 34787.

Independence's Day

Independence, one of the first communities in Horizon West to be built out, is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year.

SEE STORY AND PHOTOS ON PAGE 4



Paola Melendez got into the music alongside other children during a dance party.

SPOTLIGHT



ALL SMILES
WHS revs up the fun at first CARNival.
PAGE 8

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Maybe a merger?

IN OTHER NEWS

■ Former Windermere Mayor Gary Bruhn was recognized for his 15 years of service and presented with the Key to the City.

■ Jim O'Brien was sworn in as the new mayor of the Town of Windermere, and new Town Council members Bill Martini and Liz Andert — as well as re-elected council member Bob McKinley — took their oaths of office.

■ Town Manager Robert Smith was evaluated for his the past year's performance and granted a five-year contract extension and pay increase.

■ Frank Krens was appointed to the town's Parks and Recreation committee.

■ Windermere Police Chief David Ogden swore in new reserve officer Patrick Husic. Ogden also promoted Windermere police officer Chip Irwin to the rank of Officer 2.

■ School Crossing Guard Patty Sanders received a Longevity of Service award for her 12 years of volunteerism.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

posed only recently and still is being vetted. The proposal sparked opposition from some Tree Board members, including Theresa Schretzmann-Myers, who expressed her concerns during the March 26 Town Council meeting's public forum.

"I received an email from our town manager today saying they were basically going to merge the Tree Board's responsibilities with Parks and Rec — with the idea that the Tree Board should shift the responsibilities to the Parks and Recreation Committee," Schretzmann-Myers said. "(Smith said) its members can apply to the Parks and Rec (committee) to fill their vacant seats. The goal is to have everything under Parks and Recreation, as opposed to having two separate committees whose goals are aligned. So I want to say on the record that I'm opposed (to this). I think the Tree Board was set up individually so that we could become a Tree City USA."

Schretzmann-Myers, who serves on the town's Historical Preservation Board and Tree Board, said she is concerned about the idea of merging the committees because she believes the mission statements are dissimilar. Moreover, the Tree Board members have undergone years of education regarding tree and horticulture.

"We are advocates for trees, and we've spent many long years attending conferences educating ourselves on trees and horticultural science," she said. "We are



Gabby Baquero

Former Windermere Mayor Gary Bruhn, third from left, received a key to the town at last week's meeting.

educated Tree Board members. ... So I think it's very important that we keep the committees separate. With all due respect, I think Parks and (Recreation) does a great job on our parks and playgrounds, but they do not educate themselves on our horticulture or attend the Trees Florida conference."

She recommends the town keep the Tree Board and recruit volunteers to fill the vacant seats for both the Tree Board and Parks and Recreation Committee.

In response, Smith said the idea to merge the two committees, at this point, is just that — an idea.

"It was an idea that was brought and proposed because the Parks and Recreation (committee) and the Tree Board all their goals are aligned," Smith said. "You have one committee that's made up of

four members, including Frank Krens, who was just appointed, and the other is also made up of four members, which also includes Frank Krens. So the idea is to take everything that the Tree Board is doing and put it under the purview of Parks and Recreation. These are discussion items we're talking about with Parks and Recreation and the Tree Board before we took it to the council to get their thoughts and feelings. So again, this is ... coming straight at you guys before we've had a chance to vet this out and get the feelings from everybody."

Smith also said he disagreed with the belief that the goals of the two committees were incompatible and explained that if the merger were to occur, the town would amend the Parks and Recreation

Committee's mission statements and bylaws.

"I don't think their missions are not aligned, and if we were to go ahead and move Parks and Rec to take over the responsibilities of the Tree Board, we'd work on amending their mission statement; we'd work on amending their bylaws; we'd work on amending education requirements," he said. "And that's not to say that the people currently on the Tree Board would be kicked off — they can apply (to the committee) because that's the process that we have. And I don't think Parks and (Recreation) would have an issue with taking on additional members to make them whole as a seven-member group. But again, this is something that is just being vetted out."



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This mural won Best in Show during the 2018 Chalkin' It Up sidewalk art contest.

File photo

DIAGNOSIS: Spring Fever is in the air

The Bloom & Grow Garden Society is holding its annual plant festival in downtown Winter Garden April 6 and 7.

GABBY BAQUERO
NEWS EDITOR

Winter Garden's annual plant-themed festival will blossom for its 19th year this weekend.

The Bloom & Grow Garden Society's annual Spring Fever in the Garden festival will take place along Plant Street from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, April 6, and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday, April 7.

The free festival features hundreds of local vendors selling seeds, flowers and potted plants and is sure to delight any plant enthusiast. The society also will host its Chalkin' It Up event — a sidewalk art contest sponsored by AdventHealth that takes place in front of Winter Garden City Hall.

Bloom & Grow Garden Society President Brenda Knowles said 109 contestants will participate in the contest this year to create a total of 62 6-foot-by-6-foot art murals depicting a nature or springtime theme.

"Sometimes, it takes all day for people to create their piece, while others are finished within a few hours," Knowles said. "So it's just exciting to watch, because they basically take up this blank canvas of concrete and then just use chalk to create their art. And all the art has to be garden or springtime-related and must be suitable for young children. We see a combination of everything, from parrots, to roosters, to rain-

bows — they're all beautiful and very colorful murals."

Chalk artists can enter the contest as an individual or a team in the elementary-, middle-, high- school or adult category. This year, the society also added a new category for families because they noticed many families wanted to participate as a team.

About \$2,100 in cash prizes are available for the winners in each category. All the murals must be completed by 4 p.m. Saturday, where they will be judged based on use of color, detail, technique and overall design, Knowles said. Awards include the People's Choice award, which comes with a \$400 cash prize, and the Best In Show award, the winner of which is awarded a \$700 cash prize.

Shelly Bradon, a Maitland resident and art teacher at The Geneva School, has participated in the art contest since it launched and has won the Best in Show award twice. Art always has been a part of her life, but she was introduced to chalk art after taking a job at The Geneva School, which took kids to chalk art festivals.

Bradon, who most enjoys creating pieces inspired by nature and landscapes she sees during her hikes around the state, grew intrigued with the art form and taught herself. She also draws and paints with acrylics and oils, and enjoys calligraphy.

For this year's contest, Bradon plans to draw her inspiration from either a 20th-century artist she recently discovered or an old

IF YOU GO

BLOOM & GROW GARDEN SOCIETY'S SPRING FEVER IN THE GARDEN

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, April 6, and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday, April 7

WHERE: Downtown Winter Garden

WEBSITE: springfeveringarden.com

photo of her son, she said.

"I have a couple options," Bradon said, "There's an artist I just discovered who I'd not heard of before at a show in Savannah, (Georgia), this weekend. She made beautiful paintings. So it would be a good opportunity to introduce something inspired by her because most people might not find out about her on their own. Everyone's heard of Van Gogh and Rembrandt, so I try to shy away from those big names, because people already know who they are. So I may do that or recreate a photograph I have of my son who's doing something whimsical. So I've thought about doing that, but I haven't decided yet."

Two teams comprising nine fifth-graders from Thornebrooke Elementary School also will be competing in the contest this year, said Lenore Eastham, an art teacher at Thornebrooke. One team will create a bee surrounded by flowers, while the other team creates a monarch butterfly, also surrounded by plants and flowers.

OCPS names new schools, receives music-ed award

Orange County Public Schools had an eventful month between naming its three new Horizon West-area schools and being recognized for outstanding music education.

DANIELLE HENDRIX
BLACK TIE EDITOR

Between naming its three newest Horizon West-area schools and receiving national recognition for its music program, Orange County Public Schools ended the month of March with a bang.

On Tuesday, March 12, Orange County School Board members approved the official names for each of the three new schools set to open to students in District 4 this fall.

Additionally, on March 28, OCPS announced it has been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation.

THE NAME GAME

During the Orange County School Board meeting Tuesday, March 12, members voted unanimously to approve each of the school names District 4 School Board Member Pam Gould chose from the suggestions.

Previously known as Site 25-E-SW-4, the elementary school at 9131 Taborfield Ave., Orlando, is now called Castleview Elementary. It will relieve Bay Lake and Sand Lake elementary schools. The name Castleview, which pays homage to the nearby Walt Disney World Resort, won over suggestions Lake Mabel Elementary and Seven Seas Elementary.

"I, too, love the name Castleview, and I think it is just a wonderful way to really honor some of the heritage in West Orange County that we have, especially because you can see (Disney) right from that school site," Gould said.

Site 49-E-W-4, located at 16000 Water Spring Blvd., Winter Garden, is now Water Spring Elementary. It is named for the street on which it is located and won over the other suggestions of Horizon West Elementary and Storey Grove Elementary.

"With this one, I was kind of torn between Storey Grove and Water Spring, but we don't have any Water Spring (around), and I think that's kind of a cool name, and we have a lot of water in West Orange County," Gould said. "I think a lot can be done with that name, too, with the kids — I think it could be very fun for them."

The new middle school, Site 37-M-SW-4, is now Horizon West Middle School. It is located at 8200 Tattant Blvd., Windermere, and relieves Bridgewater Middle. The name prevailed over the other suggestions of Windermere Middle and Lakeside Village Middle.

"Here's the challenge that I have for those of you who aren't as familiar with our area," Gould told meeting attendees.

"I think Horizon West (Middle) is probably the best choice for this school at this point ... I don't want any more confusion between all of our various Windermere schools."

— District 4 School Board Member Pam Gould

"It is located in the ZIP code of Windermere; it's not located in the town of Windermere. We have Windermere Preparatory School, Windermere High School, Windermere Elementary. ... I think there's going to be some name confusion out there with so many Windermere schools. I'd like to see this school have a unique identity.

"I think Horizon West (Middle) is probably the best choice for this school at this point," Gould said. "I think it truly is the best name that came out of them. They're all great names, but I don't want any more confusion between all of our various Windermere schools."

MUSICALLY INCLINED

OCPS' designation as one of the best communities for music education comes from The NAMM Foundation, a nonprofit supported in part by the National Association of Music Merchants and its 10,400 members around the world.

The foundation advances active participation in music-making across the lifespan by supporting scientific research, philanthropic giving and public-service programs.

The Best Communities for Music Education designation, now in its 20th year, is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to students.

To qualify, OCPS officials had to answer detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music-class participation, instruction time, facilities and support for its music programs. These responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

"Music education is incredibly supported within Orange County Public Schools and throughout our community," OCPS Senior Director for Fine Arts Curriculum Scott Evans said. "Coming on the heels of our West Orange High choral director, Dr. Jeffery Redding, earning the GRAMMY Music Educator of the Year award, earning a second year in a row as one of the best communities in the nation is just more verification that our commitment to music and the arts is top-notch."

According to OCPS, this designation recognizes that the district is leading the way with learning opportunities as outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act, which replaces the No Child Left Behind Act. The ESSA recommends music and the arts as important elements of a well-rounded education for all children, OCPS stated.



Sofia Melendez, center, tried to keep pace with other children during a dance and hula-hoop party.

Photos by Troy Herring

BIRTHDAY BASH

DANIELLE HENDRIX
BLACK TIE EDITOR

With more than 30 communities and thousands of residents who call it home, Horizon West continues to grow by the day.

Although there is so much new development in the area today, one of its first communities, Independence, is celebrating its 15-year anniversary this year.

The Independence community encompasses more than 1,300 acres and has frontage on both Lake Hancock and Lake Speer, with homes in between the lakes and conservation areas. As one of the first communities in the area to be fully built in 2004, Independence residents have had 15 years to build the level of community they have reached today.

On Saturday, March 30, the community kicked off its 15th-anniversary celebration with a party for all ages. Bounce houses, ice cream and cupcakes, contests, dance parties, a showing of the movie “Tangled” and a water-lantern celebration at dusk rounded off the evening. However, Lifestyle Director Tim Gesing said, the celebration will continue all year.

“We’re going to be offering throughout the year new events and enhancements to our existing offerings, whether it’s a new Wine Down Wednesday with different vendors coming in and doing wine tastings or a partnership with Orange County Parks and Recreation to bring in learning activities for our younger residents,” Gesing said.

Notable events the Independence community already enjoys throughout the year include a spring festival, splash bash and fireworks spectacular. And for the 15th anniversary, residents will notice new branding to celebrate, such as special banners throughout the community and celebratory logos and projections.

As the community’s lifestyle director, Gesing is responsible for overseeing all of the activities, events, fitness offerings and more. He also is in charge of ensuring the community offers



Left: DJ Alex Adkins pumped out the tunes as parents and children danced along to the beat.

Below: Micole Santana enjoyed her time dancing alongside new friends.



Trevor Sanders watched as his luminary floated about in the water during Saturday’s festivities.

the best resident experience possible.

“Just since I’ve been around, I’ve seen that growth of community, and the amount of residents getting involved has been awesome to see,” he said. “It’s not just families, it’s residents of all ages, and being able to bring everybody in is something we’ve been able to (do as we) grow the offerings of the community and reach out for partnerships with area businesses. It’s all thanks to our wonderful sponsors that we’ve been able to keep up with these events and add more offerings.”

Gesing moved to Independence 11 years ago and has served as the

lifestyle director for four years.

“We have 2,000 families that call us home, and we’ve been really trying to capitalize on that and offer so many different events and offerings throughout the year,” he said. “I very much love to see how much it’s grown and how much it has to offer and take that sense of pride in it.

“I love to be the one leading all the amenities in the community, seeing 4,000 folks watching the fireworks show, being able to be part of that, having that sense of community and watching it grow and grow each year,” he said.

The community features two clubhouses, several swimming

pools, tennis and basketball courts, children’s play areas, nature and bicycle trails and more. Additionally, those who enter the community from Fiquette Road are treated to the grand entryway that showcases a 50-foot clock tower and 512-foot reflection pond.

“I think with Horizon West and as much as it’s grown in the last several years, since it broke ground in 2004 you need to make sure you’re able to differentiate yourself from other communities,” Gesing said. “We want everyone to know Independence as the place to live, and we have events for all walks of life.”

Observer

“If we are to build a better world, we must remember that the guiding principle is this — a policy of freedom for the individual is the only truly progressive policy.”

Friedrich Hayek
“Road to Serfdom,” 1944

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OrangeObserver.com

Adult-training program expands into West Orange

OCA believes in working on the mind, body and spirit of individuals with special needs.

AMY QUESINBERRY
COMMUNITY EDITOR

Mornings begin with independent skill time, when Bianca can take part in her favorite activity — stringing beads to make keychains. She and a small group of other young adults are learning how to become independent citizens through the adult vocational training program at OCA, which has expanded into West Orange County.

The new location, at Purpose Church on West Colonial Drive in Winter Garden, offers a closer option for local people with special needs and their families.

Silvia Haas is the executive director of OCA, which recently celebrated its 10th anniversary. She opened the second location in December. The first, located on Eli Street in Orlando, opened a decade ago.

“After the age of 22, all programming stops for people with special needs,” Haas said. “We believe at OCA on working on mind, body and spirit: Opportunity, Community, Ability.”

In the Orange County Public Schools system, students on the autism spectrum and those with other special needs can continue attending high school until age 22. But, what happens to them after that?

CONSISTENCY IS KEY

“Everything they’ve been taught in school — we want to make sure we are still working on those skill sets,

because we want them to continue to gain independent-living skills,” Haas said. “The more independent they become, the fewer supports they will need as they age.”

Participants worked recently on laundry sorting and various kitchen activities, such as setting the table, washing dishes and wiping the counters.

Repetition is important to the clients, Haas said.

And it takes a dedicated, patient and well-trained staff to assist the clients in perfecting their everyday tasks.

“All (staff members) are trained in applied behavior analysis, the first therapeutic model to work with people with special needs,” she said.

Three certified staff members work with 10 participants at the Winter Garden site. Smaller ratios make it easier for individuals to reach their goals, Haas said.

The staffers work on generalizing, which means a student can learn to fold towels at OCA and then can go work at the YMCA, for example, and fold towels there.

They work on social skills, recreational skills, cooking and guided meditation. An occupational therapist provides activities for the clients.

Every week is the same at OCA, providing consistency for clients. On Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, they are in Winter Garden from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesdays and Fridays are longer days — until 3:30 p.m. — and they all go to the main campus, where they engage

in their regular activities plus music and dance therapies.

“We really believe in using a multi-disciplinary approach because using different therapeutic models allows our participants to gain more experiences (and) the more independent they can become,” Haas said.

“Day in and day out that’s what we strive for,” she said. “We end up trying to create an environment for them to be successful in.”

OCA has various partners in the community that allow the individuals to experience a work environment. On days that they work, they don their uniform — a collared shirt with the OCA logo — so they look professional.

On Mondays and Tuesdays, they engage in vocational work, such as cleaning the exercise equipment, at the Dr. Phillips YMCA. On Thursdays, they visit First Baptist Church Windermere to engage in clerical work, such as stuffing and sorting. When they are in Orlando on Wednesdays and Fridays, they train at Outback Steakhouse or Chili’s.

OCA partners with Love Your Neighbors Books for another job opportunity — an Amazon book drive. Through the book program, OCA collects donated books of any type. The OCA students then categorize them prior to selling and ship them after they are purchased.

“Every person can do something within that program,” she said. “It’s probably the most popular program, to them, because it’s meaningful.”

OCA’S ROOTS

Silvia and Todd Haas have three sons, the youngest of whom is non-vocal and needs round-the-clock care.

“He can’t speak, but he can make sounds and can sign and has other ways of communicating,” Haas said. “He’s a happy-go-lucky guy. He’s in our AVT program now. He makes us better people. He really does. He keeps our family grounded. ... Teaching has always been my passion; I never thought I would work with special needs.”

A decade ago, Haas met three women who worked with and formed a special relationship with her son, Matthew, now 23. She, Margaret Thornton, Jenny Griffith and Sabrina Sharpe wanted to create an organization that could benefit families like hers.

In 2009, they started the non-profit OCA in Orlando with 19 families and organized Special Olympics camps and social-skills training programs. The client list quickly grew to 125.

Two years later, Haas quit her 17-year teaching career and took on OCA full time.

Today, there is a therapy clinic and early-intervention clinic, and Haas plans to open a Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten program this summer. There is a theater company, too, and clients perform shows three times a year.

Haas said the ultimate vision of OCA is to build a village where individuals with special needs can live, work and play.

OCA has put together a housing

OCA WEST

13640 W. Colonial Drive,
Suite 140, Winter Garden
PHONE: (407) 960-7782
WEBSITE: Gooca.org
DETAILS: The capacity in the new location is 20, and there currently are 10 clients. For information, email info@gooca.org.

BY THE NUMBERS

1 in 68

The number of Americans living with autism, the fastest-growing developmental disability.

20,500-plus

The number of families on a wait list for services in Florida, with nearly 25% of them in Central Florida.

Up to \$60,000

The annual medical and therapeutic costs for a child or young adult with autism.

400-plus

The number of families receiving services from OCA annually.

Source: OCA

committee to acquire at least 10 acres of land for residential housing and programming, possibly in West Orange or Lake counties.

“Without passion, you have no drive,” Haas said. “These guys drive us to have more passion in what we do. Their spirit is them. We believe we have divine intervention that’s always been with us, but their spirit is infectious when they’re alive and engaged, (and) it makes the staff want to do so much more.”

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INSPIRING
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These tips can help you use 911 effectively

In 2008, the U.S. Congress established April as National 911 Education Month. In Orange County, we begin this month-long campaign to help our citizens of all ages recognize the importance of 911 and the role they play in ensuring effective and efficient emergency response in times of crisis.

For 50 years, 911 has served as the vital link between our citizens and our emergency services. As citizens utilize new communications technologies, 911 education takes on an increased importance for everyone. Recent 911 educational campaigns include:

■ **Call if you can, text if you can't.** Text to 911 is now available in Orange County. This service will benefit those who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech impediment, or for anyone who has a police, fire or medical emergency and making a voice call to 911 would put him or her in danger. A voice call to 911 is the best and fastest way for the 911 operator to retrieve and deliver lifesaving information, so citizens only should use Text to 911 when a voice call is not an option.

If you have to Text to 911, always provide your exact location and the nature of the emergency. Location technology is not the same with text as it is with a voice 911 call. Avoid using slang, social-media jargon or abbreviations, and do not send photos, emojis, GIFs or videos. Also, don't send a group text.

Finally, make sure to mute your phone if you are in a dangerous situation.

■ **Know Your location.** Wireless to 911 can provide inconsistent location information, so 911 call-takers will need more specific information from you. Be prepared to provide detailed information on where you are, so that help can get to you as quickly as possible.

■ **Stay calm and don't hang up.** Until you are instructed to do otherwise, stay on the line with the 911 operator so you can provide any necessary information or assistance to the 911 operator — and so the 911 operator can provide you with life-saving instructions. If you accidentally call 911, don't hang up. Stay on the phone and inform the 911 operator that you dialed accidentally and that there is no emergency. If you don't stay on the phone, valuable 911 resources will be used to locate you to ensure emergency services are not needed.

Agencies will be recognizing 911 Education Month with activities such as educational events, sharing information on their websites and social media. If you would like a 911 professional to present at a meeting or event, please email your request to 911MSAG@ocfl.net.

LAURA KINNEAR

ORANGE COUNTY 911 TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

Becoming better

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and engage men to become better. And under event founder and Windermere resident Brian Buckley and his team, the event has grown from 48 men 14 years ago to more than 4,000 in attendance last year.

Buckley, a partner at the Insurance Office of America for 18 years, moved to Windermere 14 years ago. For him, the inspiration to become a better man came when he was 20 years old and he met his first mentor and role model. Before then, he called himself a "B-minus guy," saying that he just did the minimum to get by in life as a brother, husband and employee.

"I grew up watching sitcoms, and the husband was always the idiot," Buckley said. "He was the one people poked fun at — Fred Flintstone, Archie Bunker, all these characters that the man was always the one people made fun of. I think it was because men were never setting a bar or living to be better. ... When I turned 20, I met a guy that taught me how to be extraordinary. He was an amazing role model to me in what would my life look like if I were to become better, extraordinary. He modeled that for me and with it came a work ethic that was beyond."

Buckley's faith also played a role in him wanting to make an impact and not just be a taker but also a giver. He decided he wanted to learn how he could be better by helping others and impacting other men's lives just as his was by his mentor. Thus, The Better

Man Event was born.

He asked some men he knew if they would be willing to help him bring his vision to life, and they did. All of this is volunteer work for both Buckley and everyone involved, but they know it's worth it to be able to help other men become better.

"We decided at that point we were going to have an event," he said. "It was just a gathering of 48 men, the first one. It happened in June 2005, and our first speakers were a financial-wealth manager, a psychologist and a family therapist."

The next year, attendance nearly doubled to 90, and it continued to multiply in each successive year. This year, the organization is taking a big step and moving to the CFE Arena to be able to accommodate 8,000.

"People come back each and every year," Buckley said. "Our biggest demographic is fathers bringing their sons and sons bringing their fathers. It's the biggest night, a lot of dads tell me, of their year with their son. It's easy for a dad to talk to this son about the Super Bowl and school and things like that, but this is an event where people walk out with tangible stories from our speakers on how they became better."

This year's speakers are: Mc-Kenzie Milton, UCF quarterback; Evander Holyfield, four-time heavyweight champion of the world; David Green, founder/CEO of Hobby Lobby; Jonathan Cain, member of rock band Journey; the Rev. Anthony Thompson, pastor and author

THE BETTER MAN EVENT

WHEN: Saturday, April 13. Tailgate event from 2 to 6 p.m.; VIP event from 4 to 5:30 p.m.; main event 6 to 9 p.m.

WHERE: CFE Arena, 12777 Gemini Blvd. N., Orlando

TICKETS: \$20 for students (ages 13 and up); \$25 first responders and military; \$35 general admission; \$200 VIP admission (comes with front-row seating, pre-event meal, interactions and photo opportunities with speakers, event shirt and more)

DETAILS: The Better Man Event is an annual three-hour men's event designed to equip, encourage and engage men to become better. Each year, it features nationally known speakers who speak to men on how to become better brothers, fathers, students and husbands. Tickets to this year's event are available at BME2019.com.

of "Called to Forgive," and Brad Stine, comedian and emcee.

And with a theme of "On The Edge," Buckley hopes men who attend this year's event will be inspired knowing that they are on the edge of something great.

"We can do something with our lives — we can impact those around us or we can just go through life," Buckley said. "I hope when men walk out of this event that they are inspired to get so mad at being B- or C-minus that they go, 'I'm going to be better.' I hope that whatever their world offers them the opportunity to do, they're going to do it."

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Lois Fakioglu is a cancer survivor who has been in remission for nine years after her battle with non-Hodgkins lymphoma.



Danielle Pyke and Lisa Holbrook attended the relay to support their colleagues and friends battling cancer.



The Dr. Phillips High School Student Council set up a booth to help fundraise for the American Cancer Society.

Support system



Olympia High students Lexi Hutton and Isabella Galbis participated in the ACS relay with their Olympia High School water polo team.



Left: Dr. Phillips High students Juliah Ozkan and Natasha Vergara decided to participate in the American Cancer Society West Orange Relay for Life because both of their moms are cancer survivors.

Local students and West Orange residents showed their support for cancer survivors at the West Orange Relay for Life Saturday, March 30, at Chain of Lakes Middle School. Attendees helped fundraise to support the American Cancer Society's mission. The society aims to support cancer research and programs that provide resources for cancer patients. In 2017, United States-based Relay for Life events raised a total of \$230 million. About \$6.3 billion has been raised in the U.S. since the movement was founded in 1985.

— GABBY BAQUERO



Employees of the Animal Clinic of Windermere — Heather Hurlock, Diane Chilton, Ava Schanke, Natalia Wiggins, AnneMarie Hermann and Lindsey Venckauskas — came to support the mission.



Dr. Phillips High students Ryan Richards, William Warfield and Kevin Koivu.

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Above: Emma Paterson, Ceci Reyes and Huck Paterson had a blast in the bounce house.

Right: FFA students and parents manned the petting zoo. From left: Phoebe Peano and goat Delilah, Elaine Peano and goat Juniper, Francesca Peano and goats Winston and Sheila, and Alex Reyes and goat Hazel.



Tyler Youngblood handled his horse, Blue.

Right: Derby Phicil and Ivan Delgado acted out a scene in front of the Mercedes they brought from Mercedes-Benz of South Orlando.

Vroom! Vroom!



Windermere High's FFA and hospitality clubs threw quite the bash Friday, March 29, during the school's inaugural Carnival Car Show. Students, parents and the community were invited out for an evening of family fun. Activities included food trucks, bounce houses, carnival-style games, exotic cars on display and even a petting zoo. Those who entered their cars competed for prizes like free hair cuts and gift cards to local restaurants and businesses.

— DANIELLE HENDRIX

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*NEW STUDENT SPECIAL

Local painter leads Florida Watercolor Society

Kim Minichiello is this year's President of the Florida Watercolor Society, which will be holding its annual convention in Orlando for the first time since 2012.

ERIC GUTIERREZ
STAFF WRITER

Kim Minichiello began painting with watercolors in the early 2000s simply as a means to document her travels. Inspired by travel sketchbooks from other artists, she always carried a compact kit of watercolors and her own sketchbook wherever she would travel for her job as a designer for Disney Imagineering.

"I've done a lot of traveling working for Walt Disney Imagineering, and I was always enamored by these (travel sketch) books," Minichiello said. "With all the traveling that I do, I just told myself, 'I want to do that,' (but) I wasn't that comfortable with

watercolor. I hadn't painted with it that much, but by wanting to do that (travel sketchbook), it was my goal to keep a travel sketchbook and do them in watercolor. I got very, very familiar with the medium, and I loved it so much, it just became my preferred medium. I don't use oil (paints) as much anymore because I love watercolor and the flow and the pigment on the paper ... and it's easier to travel with."

Today, Minichiello is at the head of the Florida Watercolor Society as its president for 2019. She is originally from Logansport, Indiana, but currently lives near Wintermere. Her paintings have been featured at the SoBo Art Gallery in downtown Winter Garden, and she currently has one on display at SoBo as part of Florida Watercolor Society's Traveling Exhibition. She's previously served as a member of the Winter Garden Art Association's Board of Directors, but serving as president of the Florida Watercolor Society — a position that has been four years in the making for her — takes up much of her free time these days.

"It's a huge responsibility, and I felt very honored and flattered that my peers had faith in me to do the job," Minichiello said. "Before I was president, I was on the board for four years doing different jobs at certain VP (vice president) levels to work my way up to the presidency job. Then I know what



Eric Gutierrez

Kim Minichiello often creates larger paintings using watercolors, which is not common for that medium.

needs to be done to pull off what our main event each year, (which) is a convention ... (and) an annual exhibition for our members (that features) 100 paintings, and we also do a big trade show as part of the convention."

When Minichiello is not working on one of her own paintings, she shares her passion for painting with others. Minichiello teaches private painting lessons and group painting classes from her home. She sets up tables, watercolor sets and paper in her garage to form a classroom for her students. Occasionally, she is contracted with Disney to teach painting workshops.

Minichiello said the work she has done with the Florida Watercolor Society has been a years-long commitment. She said working her way up to president and then beyond that position can take up to eight years. To be president, members have to work their way up from third vice president. Along the way, the presidents-in-the-making learn what it takes to run the Florida Watercolor Society's annual convention, trade show and art exhibition.

For the first time since 2012, the Florida Watercolor Society's Convention, Trade Show and Art Exhibition will take place in the Orlando area — Sept. 19 to 22 at

the Double Tree Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld; 10100 International Drive. The 48th annual Florida Watercolor Society Exhibition will take place Sept. 10 to Nov. 8 at Harry P. Leu Gardens, 1920 N. Forest Ave., Orlando.

When the Florida Watercolor Society takes on a new third vice president, where that person lives is taken into account. The annual convention, trade show and exhibition is held in different cities throughout the state each year, and it's typically held close to where the president of the Florida Watercolor Society for that year lives.



Courtesy of Kim Minichiello

Kim Minichiello is known for the depth of color and detail in her watercolor paintings.

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West Orange chamber celebrates women



West Orange Chamber of Commerce members, speakers and event sponsors gathered for a photo following the event.

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It was an afternoon full of uplifting and celebrating women Thursday, March 28, during the West Orange Chamber of Commerce's Celebrating Extraordinary Women event. Held at Lakewalk at Hamlin, the event included drinks, refreshments and opportunities for networking. It also offered a chance for celebrating women during Women's History Month. The featured speakers were Orange County District 1 Commissioner Betsy VanderLey; Marva Johnson, the vice president of state government affairs for Charter Communications south region; and Ellen Korbin, an entrepreneur who owns three businesses.

— DANIELLE HENDRIX



Ann Carpenter, Amy Schmidt and Carolyn Sawyer

ONLINE See more photos at OrangeObserver.com

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Liz Rutledge, Lauren Rutledge, Aaron Rutledge, and Iris and Peter Hao

Poolside party

An evening out by the pool, complete with food and live music, made for a fun time enjoyed by all as local nonprofit The Gift of Swimming hosted its annual poolside social. Held Friday, March 29, at SouthWest Aquatics, the social acts as a fundraiser for The Gift of Swimming, which provides swim instruction for children who might not otherwise have access to it. Attendees enjoyed catering from Yellow Dog Eats, live music, drinks, a raffle and more.

— DANIELLE HENDRIX

Right: Cheryl Miller, Lisa Magliaro and Steve Miller



Michelle Rathour and Britt Napier



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REAL ESTATE

Waterstone estate sells for \$1.05 million

A home in the Waterstone community in Windermere topped all West Orange-area residential real-estate transactions from March 22 to 28.

The home at 11916 Waterston Loop Drive, Windermere, sold March 26, for \$1.05 million. Built in 2011, it has four bedrooms, four baths, a pool and 3,729 square feet of living area. The price per square foot is \$281.58.

These are the highest-selling homes in each community in West Orange.

DR. PHILLIPS BAY LAKES AT GRANADA
The home at 8792 Alegre Circle, Orlando, sold March 28, for \$330,000. Built in 1984, it has four bedrooms, two baths, a pool and 2,453 square feet. The price per square foot is \$134.53.

BAYVIEW
The home at 6114 Indian Meadow St., Orlando, sold March 22, for \$625,000. Built in 2001, it has five bedrooms, three baths, a pool and 2,958 square feet. The price per square foot is \$211.29.

BELLA NOTTE AT VIZCAYA
The home at 8848 Via Bella Notte, Orlando, sold March 26, for \$485,000. Built in 2004, it has three bedrooms, three baths, a pool and 2,747 square feet. The price per square foot is \$176.56.

CLUBHOUSE ESTATES
The home at 7325 Burnway Drive, Orlando, sold March 28, for \$300,000. Built in 1982, it has three bedrooms, two baths and 1,620 square feet. The price per square foot is \$185.19.

CYPRESS POINT
The home at 9102 Great Heron Circle, Orlando, sold March 25, for \$715,350. Built in 1994, it has four bedrooms, four baths, a pool and 4,831 square feet. The price per square foot is \$148.07.



fanniehillman.com

This Waterstone home, at 11916 Waterstone Loop Drive, Windermere, sold March 26, for \$1.05 million. This custom home is surrounded by water on two sides.

GRANDE PINES
The home at 11809 Sheltering Pine Drive, Orlando, sold March 28, for \$550,000. Built in 2007, it has six bedrooms, four baths, a pool and 4,222 square feet. The price per square foot is \$130.27.

HIDDEN SPRINGS
The home at 5609 Cedar Pine Drive, Orlando, sold March 22, for \$404,000. Built in 1986, it has four bedrooms, two-and-one-half baths and 2,530 square feet. The price per square foot is \$159.68.

The home at 6037 Cedar Pine Drive, Orlando, sold March 27, for \$379,000. Built in 1987, it has four bedrooms, three baths, a pool and 2,411 square feet. The price per square foot is \$157.20.

ISLES AT CAY COMMONS
The condo at 4126 Breakview Drive, No. 202, Orlando, sold March 22, for \$170,000. Built in 2007, it has two bedrooms, two

baths and 1,112 square feet. The price per square foot is \$152.88.

LAKE CANE HILLS
The home at 5705 Briar Drive, Orlando, sold March 22, for \$329,000. Built in 1964, it has six bedrooms, four baths, a pool and 2,692 square feet. The price per square foot is \$122.21.

SAND LAKE HILLS
The home at 6004 Hardrock Circle, Orlando, sold March 22, for \$384,900. Built in 1982, it has four bedrooms, three baths and 2,506 square feet. The price per square foot is \$153.59.

The home at 5677 Marlberry Drive, Orlando, sold March 24, for \$300,000. Built in 1974, it has three bedrooms, two baths and 1,730 square feet. The price per square foot is \$173.41.

SANDPOINTE TOWNHOMES
The townhouse at 7755 High Pine Road, Orlando, sold March 27, for \$285,000. Built in 1986,

it has three bedrooms, two baths and 1,644 square feet. The price per square foot is \$173.36.

SHADOW BAY SPRINGS
The home at 5219 Springside Court, Orlando, sold March 25, for \$245,000. Built in 1984, it has five bedrooms, three-and-one-half baths, a pool and 2,794 square feet. The price per square foot is \$87.69.

STONEWOOD MANHORHOMES
The home at 7246 Della Drive, Orlando, sold March 22, for \$296,500. Built in 1986, it has three bedrooms, two-and-one-half baths and 2,214 square feet. The price per square foot is \$133.92.

VISTA CAY AT HARBOR SQUARE
The condo at 4804 Cayview Ave., No. 204-12, Orlando, sold March 26, for \$355,000. Built in 2007, it has three bedrooms,

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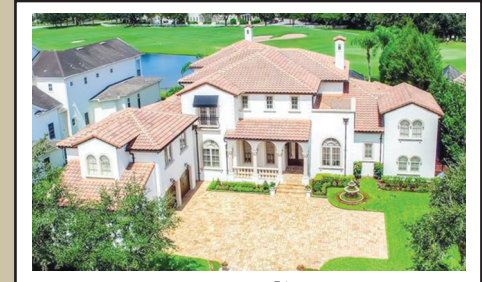
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Total Sales: 93
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 Low Sale Price: \$132,000

two baths and 2,097 square feet. The price per square foot is \$169.29.

VIZCAYA HEIGHTS

The home at 8760 The Esplanade, No. 51, Orlando, sold March 25, for \$386,000. Built in 2004, it has four bedrooms, three-and-one-half baths and 3,147 square feet. The price per square foot is \$122.66.

GOTHA

CITRUS OAKS

The home at 9438 Bud Wood St., Gotha, sold March 22, for \$185,000. Built in 1993, it has three bedrooms, two baths and 1,290 square feet. The price per square foot is \$143.49.

CITRUS OAKS LANDINGS CONDOMINIUMS

The condo at 1282 Melontree Court, Gotha, sold March 25, for \$195,000. Built in 2001, it has two bedrooms, two baths and 1,494 square feet. The price per square foot is \$130.52.

HORIZON WEST

ASHLIN PARK

The home at 11650 Ashlin Park Blvd., Windermere, sold March 22, for \$345,000. Built in 2016, it has four bedrooms, two-and-one-half baths and 2,378 square feet. The price per square foot is \$145.08.

EDENS HAMMOCK

The home at 5451 Gemgold Court, Windermere, sold March 27, for \$360,000. Built in 2006,

it has four bedrooms, two-and-one-half baths and 2,578 square feet. The price per square foot is \$139.64.

HAMLIN RESERVE

The home at 15775 Shaddock Drive, Winter Garden, sold March 27, for \$426,920. Built in 2018, it has four bedrooms, three baths and 2,791 square feet. The price per square foot is \$152.96.

HICKORY HAMMOCK

The home at 16209 Great Blue Heron Court, Winter Garden, sold March 27, for \$950,000. Built in 2015, it has five bedrooms, four-and-one-half baths and 4,830 square feet. The price per square foot is \$196.69.

INDEPENDENCE/SIGNATURE LAKES

The home at 15137 Sunrise Grove Court, Winter Garden, sold March 22, for \$275,000. Built in 2017, it has three bedrooms, two-and-one-half baths and 2,012 square feet. The price per square foot is \$136.68.

INDEPENDENCE/SIGNATURE LAKES

The townhouse at 14855 Evergreen Oak Loop, Winter Garden, sold March 25, for \$269,000. Built in 2016, it has four bedrooms, two-and-one-half baths and 2,000 square feet. The price per square foot is \$134.50.

LAKE BURDEN SOUTH

The home at 7617 Lake Albert Drive, Windermere, sold March 21, for \$465,000. Built in 2014, it has five bedrooms, four baths and 3,663 square feet. The price per square foot is \$126.95.

LAKE SAWYER SOUTH

The home at 7710 Fairgrove Ave., Windermere, sold March 22, for \$250,000. Built in 2008, it

has three bedrooms, two-and-one-half baths and 1,644 square feet. The price per square foot is \$152.07.

LAKES OF WINDERMERE

The home at 13119 Penshurst Lane, Windermere, sold March 22, for \$459,900. Built in 2007, it has five bedrooms, four baths, a pool and 3,594 square feet. The price per square foot is \$127.96.

LAKE REAMS TOWNHOMES

The townhouse at 8690 Brookvale Drive, Windermere, sold March 21, for \$243,500. Built in 2012, it has three bedrooms, two-and-one-half baths and 1,500 square feet. The price per square foot is \$162.33.

LAKESIDE AT LAKES OF WINDERMERE

The home at 8264 Maritime Flag St., No. 210, Windermere, sold March 28, for \$215,000. Built in 2008, it has three bedrooms, two baths and 1,442 square feet. The price per square foot is \$149.10.

LATHAM PARK

The home at 14078 Alford Drive, Winter Garden, sold March 21, for \$501,464. Built in 2018, it has five bedrooms, four-and-one-half baths and 3,542 square feet. The price per square foot is \$141.58.

The home at 8930 Shipbrook Way, Winter Garden, sold March 27, for \$374,500. Built in 2018, it has three bedrooms, two baths and 2,066 square feet. The price per square foot is \$181.27.

ORCHARD PARK AT STILLWATER

The home at 4004 Green Orchard Ave., Winter Garden, sold March 25, for \$474,427. Built in 2019, it has four bedrooms, three-and-

one-half baths and 3,786 square feet. The price per square foot is \$125.31.

NEWBURY PARK

The townhouse at 11745 Fitzgerald Butler Road, Orlando, sold March 22, for \$230,000. Built in 2010, it has four bedrooms, three baths and 1,544 square feet. The price per square foot is \$148.96.

SANCTUARY AT HAMLIN

The home at 7466 Pomelo Grove Drive, Winter Garden, sold March 26, for \$494,000. Built in 2019, it has four bedrooms, four baths and 3,349 square feet. The price per square foot is \$147.51.

The home at 7407 Pomelo Grove Drive, Winter Garden, sold March 28, for \$450,000. Built in 2017, it has four bedrooms, three baths and 2,696 square feet. The price per square foot is \$166.91.

SUMMERLAKE

The home at 14579 Bahama Swallow Blvd., Winter Garden, sold March 22, for \$295,000. Built in 2010, it has four bedrooms, two baths and 1,794 square feet. The price per square foot is \$164.44.

SUMMERPORT

The home at 4742 Blue Major Drive, Windermere, sold March 22, for \$353,000. Built in 2005,

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REAL ESTATE

it has four bedrooms, two-and-one-half baths and 2,694 square feet. The price per square foot is \$131.03.

The townhouse at 14415 Bluebird Park Road, Windermere, sold March 22, for \$257,000. Built in 2005, it has three bedrooms, two-and-one-half baths and 1,912 square feet. The price per square foot is \$134.41.

WATERLEIGH

The home at 16304 Wind View Lane, Winter Garden, sold March 25, for \$444,000. Built in 2016, it has four bedrooms, three-and-one-half baths and 2,956 square feet. The price per square foot is \$150.20.

The home at 16843 Beasley Bay Alley, Winter Garden, sold March 26, for \$338,160. Built in 2018, it has three bedrooms, two-and-one-half baths and 2,216 square feet. The price per square foot is \$152.60.

WATERMARK

The home at 14674 Scott Key Drive, Winter Garden, sold March 25, for \$429,990. Built in 2016, it has five bedrooms, three-and-one-half baths and 3,420 square feet. The price per square foot is \$125.73.

WICKHAM PARK

The townhouse at 7482 Bentonshire Ave., Windermere, sold March 22, for \$249,000. Built in 2007, it has three bedrooms, two-and-one-half baths and 1,428 square feet. The price per square foot is \$174.37.

The townhouse at 12972 Borland St., Windermere, sold March 22, for \$222,500. Built in 2007, it has three bedrooms, two-and-one-half baths and 1,428 square feet. The price per square foot is \$155.81.

WINDERMERE LANDINGS

The home at 6246 Roseate Spoonbill Drive, Windermere, sold March 25, for \$496,000. Built in 2011, it has four bedrooms, three-and-one-half baths, a pool and 3,068 square

feet. The price per square foot is \$161.67.

WINDERMERE TRAILS

The home at 8582 Powder Ridge Trail, Windermere, sold March 26, for \$385,000. Built in 2017, it has four bedrooms, three-and-one-half baths and 2,454 square feet. The price per square foot is \$156.89.

The home at 8329 Lookout Pointe Drive, Windermere, sold March 25, for \$354,900. It has four bedrooms, three-and-one-half baths and 2,633 square feet. The price per square foot is \$134.79.

WINDERMERE BELMERE VILLAGE

The home at 11713 Bella Milano Court, Windermere, sold March 22, for \$350,000. Built in 2004, it has four bedrooms, two-and-one-half baths and 2,206 square feet. The price per square foot is \$158.66.

KEENE'S POINTE

The home at 11911 Camden Park Drive, Windermere, sold March 22, for \$495,000. Built in 2006, it has four bedrooms, four baths and 3,424 square feet. The price per square foot is \$144.57.

RESERVE AT LAKE BUTLER SOUND

The home at 11044 Hawkshead Court, Windermere, sold March 27, for \$680,000 (short sale). Built in 2004, it has four bedrooms, four-and-one-half baths, a pool and 4,257 square feet. The price per square foot is \$159.74.

TILDENS GROVE

The home at 5045 Tildens Grove Blvd., Windermere, sold March 22, for \$850,000. Built in 2003, it has six bedrooms, four-and-one-half baths, a pool and 4,937 square feet. The price per square foot is \$172.17.

TOWN OF WINDERMERE

The home at 820 East Blvd., Windermere, sold March 22, for \$500,000. Built in 1952, it has one bedroom, one-and-one-half baths and 1,593 square feet. The price per square foot is \$313.87.

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SPORTS

Dr. Phillips High junior Sydney Kaufman is co-captain for both the cross-country and track-and-field teams. **Page 16.**



Betsy McFarland, right, and Geoffrey Miller, left, didn't let a windy afternoon ruin a day of practice at the OARS boathouse.

All in the same boat

At the Orlando Area Rowing Society in Windermere, local high-school rowers develop their abilities and build friendships.

TROY HERRING
SPORTS EDITOR

It's 4 p.m., and the weather in Windermere seems perfect. The sun above is warm, and the temperature is sitting around the mid- to upper-70s with a strong breeze blowing. It's the kind of weather that goes well with a nice walk or picnic, but for the rowers at the Orlando Area

Rowing Society looking to get out onto the water, it's not totally ideal.

The winds that were brought in by a small cold front have made getting their boats into the water a no-go, leaving them to work out with the rowing machines in the OARS facility.

Although they would rather

SEE PULLING PAGE 16



Meagan Goldsmith got a good workout in with her OARS teammates.



Kyle Dunlap leaped out of the water as he prepares to fired off a shot at goal.

Troy Herring

Olympia water polo continues winning ways

The boys and girls teams have made winning a recurring theme, and that's not changed at all for the Titans.

TROY HERRING
SPORTS EDITOR

There are some programs that have been so dominant year in and year out that it's hard to recall a time when they weren't winning.

Among those are the boys and girls water polo teams at Olympia High, which has owned the pool

in recent memory under the leadership of head coach Stephanie Johnson Possell.

Although the regular season is winding down for Olympia, at 19-4, the Lady Titans once again have shown that they have what it takes to carve out a big piece of

SEE TITANS PAGE 17

HIGH 5

1 In Dr. Phillips' dominating 15-0 win over Celebration in softball Monday, April 1, Ailey Schyck had just about the best offensive night that any one player could have. At the plate, Schyck went 4-for-4 with two homers and a double, all of which brought in seven runs total, while Schyck herself accounted for four runs. The win pushed the Panthers to 12-2 on the season.

2 In Olympia girls tennis' 6-1 win over Boone Friday, March 29, Aubrey Barnes had a big afternoon as she won her singles match 8-4 to help push the Titans to 12-1 on the season. On the boys side, Juan Bianchi won his 57th career match for the Titans with an 8-0 victory in No. 1 singles in Olympia's 5-2 win over Boone. Bianchi's win helped continue the Titans' undefeated season (13-0).

3 Katie Benedict came up big for the Windermere softball team in its 4-3 win over Dr. Phillips on Friday, March 29, as she hit the game-winning run in the bottom of the seventh inning to give the Wolverines the huge victory. To add to the Wolverines' offense, both Alyssa Bardsley and Natalia Velez had multi-hit games to get the Wolverines their 10th win of the season (10-2).

4 In Windermere Prep's 6-2 win over Legacy Charter in softball Friday, March 29, Lexi King had an impressive outing in the circle for the Lakers. Through six innings pitched, King racked up 11 strikeouts. On the offensive side of the ball, both Mia Williams and Julie Reeth recorded a home run.

5 Noah Sullivan stepped up when the Dr. Phillips baseball team needed him the most in its 4-3 win over Boone Friday, March 29. Following a two-run homer in the sixth inning by senior Jacob Hartman to tie the game at 3-3, in the bottom of the seventh inning Sullivan knocked a double into left field to bring in Will Sullivan for the game-winning run.

SPORTS SPOTLIGHT

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Sydney Kaufman

A co-captain on the Dr. Phillips girls cross-country and track-and-field teams, Sydney Kaufman is a distance runner who enjoys battling the competition — while going at her own pace. Although she refers to herself as a “mediocre runner,” what she lacks in speed, she makes up for in motivating her team and helping it get ready for the next meet.

When did you first get into running?

I had running clubs in elementary school and stuff like that, but I joined the track team when I got to middle school. I just got into it — it was something my family did a lot, and a lot of my friends were doing it and honestly, it was something where I felt like it was a sport where you can improve when you go to practice and you put in the work.

At what point in your running career did you first start getting competitive?

I struggled a lot in middle school to get the drive to be better, because the coaching is very different when you're at that level. I think starting at the end of my freshman year, I started to realize that just because I'm slow right now doesn't mean I have to stay slow.

What has been the most fun aspect of running at DP? How about the most difficult?

In terms of the most fun, I would definitely say my team — we come out here and be together every day, and the motivation I get from them helps me to run. The most difficult aspect is the obvious, being a student-athlete. It's hard to balance. I take a lot of AP classes this year and things like that as a junior, so the balance between things like that can be difficult, but in the end I know I'm getting better when I'm out here.

How do you balance your time between school and running?

Honestly, it's just a



THE BASICS

SCHOOL: Dr. Phillips
YEAR: Junior
AGE: 17
SPORT: Cross-country/
track
POSITION: Distance
runner

matter of budgeting your time and knowing when you're taking on too much. Running is considered one of the best sports in terms of being a student, because it teaches you a lot about managing your time, understanding where you're at and it's supposed to be good for your mental health, actually.

What has been a highlight for you during your time here?

I think being able to — this year especially — not only run faster but be a part of the motivation for my team. Being a team captain this year, I get to kind of mentor some of the younger girls.

Were you named co-team captain this year?

Yes, so we had a lot of seniors on the team leave last year, and we (Kaufman and Isabelle Nemcik) stepped up for it — we have no seniors on the team, so juniors are the oldest. But both of us — Isabelle and I have been on the team since freshman year.

Are you a cat or a dog person?

I'm a dog person. I'm not sure if this was a dream or a memory, but as a child, I believe I was bitten by a cat, so there's that. I have a dog, his name is Kiwi, and he is annoying, but you know, I still love him.

— TROY HERRING



Troy Herring

With winds blowing too hard to get in their boat, Geoffrey Miller worked out in the OARS boathouse.

Pulling for one another

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

be out on the water, just being around one another is enough.

“I think everyone can agree that coming here is like coming to your second family — it's basically like a second home,” said Samantha Clayborn, 17, who attends Windermere High. “School, your house and here is where you spend your most time — at least it is for me — but coming here is like being with my sisters and sometimes my brothers, and the coaches are like my parents. There's disagreements, there's great times, there's terrible times, but ultimately it's a lot of fun, and it's a lot of family.”

The concept of family is an important one for the rowers at OARS, because for many, it's directly related to how they got into the sport in the first place.

In Clayborn's case, it was her sister who first introduced her to the sport, just as others such as Geoffrey Miller, 16, and Meagan Goldsmith, 15, were inspired by their siblings. So to call it a sport of family tradition is fitting.

And just like any family with siblings, there's always that competitive push to be better, which in turn helps build relationships.

“The coolest part about being a member of the OARS team, for sure, has been the relationships that I've built out of it,” said Samantha Sizelove, 17, a student at West Orange High. “It's definitely a whole different atmosphere here — everyone is just all for the same thing; we all have the same goal. It's a huge team (and) everyone motivates each other, and I think it's — for everyone — just like an outlet that's different than every-

thing else in our lives and gives us something that we can push ourselves to get better at.”

Getting better at a sport such as rowing is way more difficult than someone who doesn't know might realize.

Sure, you'll see the rowing machines in the gym that people use, but the routine of prepping for and rowing a race requires high degrees of endurance, physical and mental strength, coordination and an athlete's drive to win.

In the case of Betsy McFarland, 15, it's going to practice six days a week for two-and-one-half to four hours per session. And that's just practice, which doesn't include watching film on professional rowers or juggling school and life in general.

All that hard work and effort is then put forward to the regattas, which require their own preparation.

“Usually the night before a race, we are still at practice and putting away boats on the trailer and getting ready to have everything set for the people who transfer the boats to the race,” said McFarland, a student at Legacy Charter. “Whenever I get home, though, I like to drink a lot of water — half a gallon to a gallon — and then stretch and eat whatever my mom made, and then go to sleep really early.

“I always get nervous the night before the race, so it's hard for me to sleep sometimes, so I watch recordings from really good national teams and college teams,” she said. “Those usually help a lot, because you have to find what motivates you.”

While McFarland has her approach, Miller does his own thing — which includes starting

preparation a week before the regatta. He has the same plan of drinking a lot of water and taking it easy before a race, but on race day, his method is unique. While many stay quiet, he goes into full frenzy mode.

“At the starting line, I tend to be as intimidating as I can toward the other teams,” said Miller, a student at Olympia High. “I start stretching by waving my arms around and trying to look like a mad man, and the reason why is it motivates me — truly.

“Sometimes during the races, I can motivate my other teammates by yelling, and it really helps,” he said. “It's so fun — to be honest, that's my favorite part.”

Each individual rower has his or her own “thing” that helps motivate them through their races and practices, but at the end of the day, the athletes always have the same goal — to enjoy themselves and bring home the “W.”

Whether that win is done with the arm-waving lunacy of a mad man or with a more controlled and subtle approach, the rowers at OARS don't care. And winning in rowing requires teamwork and concentration — something Goldsmith said was her favorite aspect about her sport.

“I really like rowing, because everyone has to connect with each other somehow,” said Goldsmith, who attends West Orange High. “You're not focusing on the outside world — you're just focusing inside the boat, and what it feels like, how to make it better, how to make it faster and how to win. Just having a common goal just really gathers everyone together to think the same, and I think that's really cool.”

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This week's Celebrity Cipher answers

Puzzle One Solution:
“L.A., it's nice, but I think of sunshine and people on Rollerblades eating sushi.” — Jimmy Fallon

Puzzle Two Solution:
“I don't accept the status quo. I do accept Visa, Mastercard or American Express.” — Stephen Colbert

This week's Sudoku answers

4	5	2	8	3	7	6	1	9
8	1	9	6	4	2	7	3	5
3	7	6	1	5	9	4	2	8
5	6	1	3	7	4	8	9	2
9	8	7	5	2	6	3	4	1
2	3	4	9	8	1	5	7	6
6	9	5	4	1	3	2	8	7
7	4	8	2	9	5	1	6	3
1	2	3	7	6	8	9	5	4

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This week's Crossword answers

A	M	A	N	A	I	N	C	U	R	S	D	U	H	S	B	A	R				
M	O	T	O	R	C	E	L	T	I	C	E	C	O	N	E	L	O				
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K	G	B	A	R	E	A	A	N	E	W	W	I	D	E	S	T					
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Titans find success

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

the proverbial pie for themselves as the district tournament quickly approaches.

“The girls are having a good season,” said Johnson Possell, who’s coached the program since 2009. “I’m most happy about the progress our girls have made this season and the adjustments that we have made between last season and this season — we have done a really good job.”

Like all high-school programs, the success of this season comes from the development of players through the span of a few years. In the case of the Lady Titans, it actually started back in 2017.

Following their state championship in the pool that year, Johnson Possell had six seniors graduate. Combine that with a lack of juniors, and Johnson Possell was in rebuild mode.

But all that hard work then has paid off now, as the program continues to grow. It also has helped that the girls on the team have bought into what Johnson Possell is selling.

“They’re a really fun bunch of girls to coach this year — they have positive attitudes, they like to work, they like to learn and I really see them growing every game,” Johnson Possell said. “Every game, we get better at something, and that has happened all season long.”

Leading the way for the Lady Titans is a pair of seniors in goalie Lily Rutledge and utility player Shoshana Scanlon. While Scanlon has become a scoring threat for

Johnson Possell’s side, Rutledge has played impressively between the posts — especially considering this is only her second season of water polo.

“She (Rutledge) has really stepped up and is doing a great job for us,” Johnson Possell said.

BOYS LOOK TO REPEAT

Just like the Lady Titans, the boys water polo team has built a reputation in the pool over the last several years, which culminated in 2018 with a state title.

Living up to the hype set forth by such a successful year is difficult for a lot of teams, but for the Titans, there appears to be no issues.

After graduating seven seniors from last season’s team — including one starter — this year’s team has raced its way to a 22-1 record with just two matches remaining. And if that’s not scary enough, this year’s team actually might be better than that 2018 state-title team, Johnson Possell said.

“We are bigger, faster, stronger and more skilled than we were last year,” Johnson Possell said. “The boys play a very unselfish game, but we do have a couple of players who are leading the way.”

“Luke Carey is currently leading our team in scoring — he is one of our two team captains — and he is a really good athlete,” she said. “We have Danny Cruz, who’s another senior this year who is up there with scores. Alec Johnson, he is a utility player and only a junior.”

Throw in Touma Mack and goalie Ryan Hopegill, and you have a team that can dominate on both



Stephanie Johnson Possell gave her team some words of advice during a time out.



Troy Herring
Ali Wagner made a move toward the goal during the Titans’ game against Winter Park.

sides of the ball.

Moreover, the coachable nature of the players on her team has been a real point of pride with the team.

“This is the hardest-work-

ing group of boys that I have ever coached,” Johnson Possell said. “They are coachable, they make adjustments when I ask them to make adjustments

— they really want to learn the game. The fun part of coaching them is that we are coaching them at such a high level — there are so many different things that we can do with them, because they know so much more about the game.”

Although the Titans still have two matches it’s the upcoming district tournament that has captured Johnson Possell’s attention.

Unlike other sports, in which both teams that make the title game go on to the state playoffs, only the district champion continues into the postseason.

“Our primary goal is always one possession at a time, so we always set big goals out there, but to get to those goals the focus is always just one step at a time, one possession at a time,” Johnson Possell said. “We have very competitive games that we need to play in order to get where we need to go.”

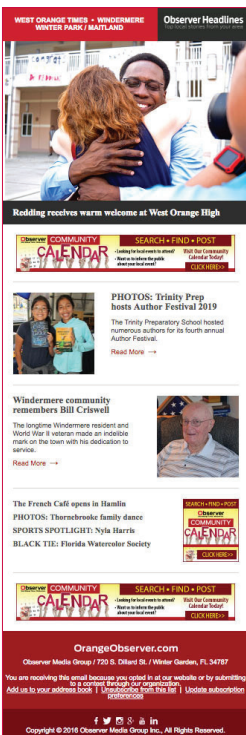
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WEATHER



Horizon West resident Kendall Tucker submitted this incredible photo. "I took this photo off of Seidel Road," Tucker said. "When my daughters noticed the new baby birds, we had to stop and snap some photos. I'm calling this photo, 'Follow the Leader.'"

The *Observer* is hosting this weekly contest, and winners will have their photograph featured and receive a \$20 prize. To enter, email your photo, along with your name, city and a caption, to amyq@orangeobserver.com; put "I Love West Orange" in the subject line. Please include your mailing address to receive your prize.

FORECAST

THURSDAY, APRIL 4

High: 83
Low: 65
Chance of rain: 10%



FRIDAY, APRIL 5

High: 85
Low: 66
Chance of rain: 100%



SATURDAY, APRIL 5

High: 87
Low: 67
Chance of rain: 20%



SUNDAY, APRIL 6

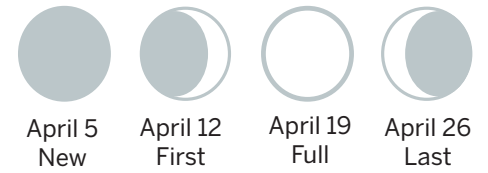
High: 86
Low: 67
Chance of rain: 40%



SUNRISE / SUNSET

	Sunrise	Sunset
Thursday, April 4	7:14a	7:45p
Friday, April 5	7:13a	7:46p
Saturday, April 6	7:11a	7:46p
Sunday, April 7	7:10a	7:47p
Monday, April 8	7:09a	7:48p
Tuesday, April 9	7:08a	7:48p
Wednesday, April 10	7:07a	7:49p

MOON PHASES



RAINFALL

Tuesday, March 26	0.00
Wednesday, March 27	0.00
Thursday, March 28	0.00
Friday, March 29	0.00
Saturday, March 30	0.00
Sunday, March 31	0.00
Monday, April 1	0.00

YEAR TO DATE:	MARCH TO DATE:
2019 4.93 in.	2019 0.21 in.
2018 3.42 in.	2018 0.75 in.

ONLINE See other winning photos at OrangeObserver.com

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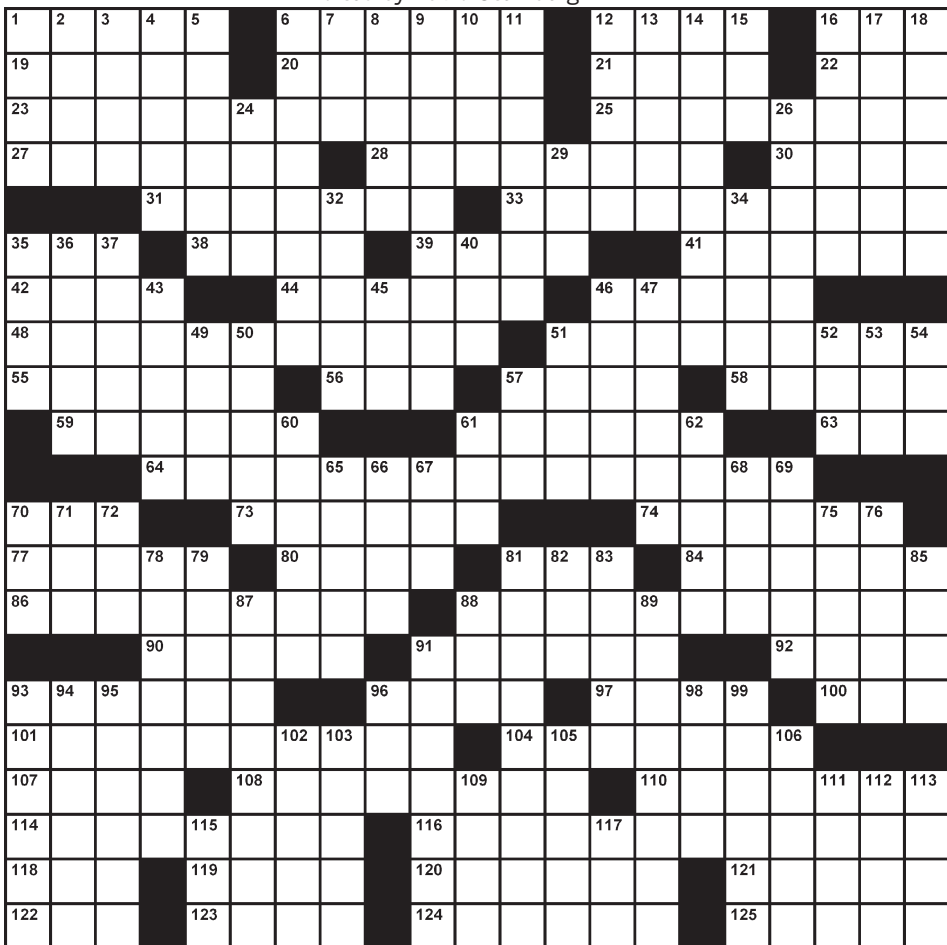
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CROSSWORD THIS GRID WILL MAKE YOU GRIN by David Alfred Bywaters; Edited by David Steinberg



- ACROSS**
- 1 Refrigerator brand
 - 6 Racks up, as debt
 - 12 "That's obvious!" cries
 - 16 Old-fashioned server?
 - 19 Spinning robot part
 - 20 Boston baller
 - 21 Business major's subj.
 - 22 Jeff Lynne's band, briefly
 - 23 Invention that would take you very high?
 - 25 Shovels' storage spot
 - 27 Of fluid diffusion
 - 28 Not forthcoming
 - 30 Tortoise racer

- 31 Card game cheater
- 33 Shakespearean storage unit?
- 35 Former CIA foe
- 38 Region
- 39 Freshly
- 41 Least narrow
- 42 It's worth more than a dollar
- 44 Representatives
- 46 Arroz con ___
- 48 Kurt Cobain's marriage to Courtney Love, e.g.?
- 51 Preadolescent who seemingly runs the house?
- 55 Was acceptable to

- 56 Maiden name preceder
- 57 Ricky Ricardo portrayer
- 58 Multiheaded beast
- 59 Traps
- 61 Mean looks
- 63 What old sofas do
- 64 Sports fan's jewelry?
- 70 Miami winter hrs.
- 73 Cruel person
- 74 Most miffed
- 77 "___ Witch" (2016 horror film)
- 80 Gondola propeller
- 81 Sorrowful
- 84 Mad bird in a simile

- 86 Some water and some salt?
- 88 Thugs you don't really need?
- 90 Chili con ___
- 91 Backspace key relative
- 92 Central facial feature
- 93 Spanish bullfighter
- 96 Pirate's plunder
- 97 Applaud
- 100 Sleuth, informally
- 101 Teatime projectile?
- 104 Brought back on the job
- 107 Flip, as a coin
- 108 Enclosed securely

- 110 Fill up
 - 114 Thorny flowers' spots
 - 116 Prized possessions of Descartes and Curie?
 - 118 ___ Baba
 - 119 One may wait in a queue
 - 120 Football kick type
 - 121 Or more, in prices
 - 122 Word after snap or snow
 - 123 Security breach IDs
 - 124 Helicopter tops
 - 125 Irritable
- DOWN**
- 1 Foam darts, for Nerf guns
 - 2 Dairy farm sounds
 - 3 Tiny thing to split
 - 4 Running with scissors, and others
 - 5 "Chain of Fools" singer
 - 6 Scoop filler
 - 7 NW neighbor of Ariz.
 - 8 Ballynally's Irish county
 - 9 Speech
 - 10 Civil disturbance
 - 11 Quill pen pushers
 - 12 Dissuade
 - 13 Storrs sch.
 - 14 Noisy night birds
 - 15 Longtime NBC show, informally
 - 16 Act properly
 - 17 Oldsmobiles of old
 - 18 Squirrel or mouse
 - 24 One may be pathological
 - 26 Vague
 - 29 Crow's cry
 - 32 Polytheist, perhaps
 - 34 Dirt
 - 35 Frat party casks
 - 36 Sages
 - 37 UCLA student
 - 40 Unknown ordinal
 - 43 Ready for pouring
 - 45 Summer on the Seine
 - 46 Tough problem
 - 47 Egyptian underworld god
 - 49 Movie star Richard
 - 50 Paradises
 - 51 Foamy beverage
 - 52 Mag. authorities
 - 53 Period

- 54 Pester
- 57 Trait carrier, briefly
- 60 Fasten with a click
- 61 Boxed collection
- 62 Like wintry weather
- 65 Desert building clay
- 66 Egypt's main water source
- 67 African fly, when doubled
- 68 Oldest "Brady Bunch" boy
- 69 ___ Hall University
- 70 Flow back
- 71 Digital ___ camera
- 72 Tropical cocktail half
- 75 "Damn!"
- 76 Future or perfect
- 78 It's burned for its smell
- 79 Supply with weapons again
- 81 Most steamy
- 82 Viking's weapon
- 83 Netherlands language
- 85 Fractional time period (Abbr.)
- 87 Pants
- 88 Proudful zodiac sign
- 89 Savors
- 91 Doomed
- 93 Sandal style
- 94 "Lawrence of Arabia" actor Peter
- 95 Country with 11 time zones
- 96 ___ Wayne (rapper dubbed Weezy)
- 98 Saudi, e.g.
- 99 Unusual domestic animal
- 102 Inserted, as quarters
- 103 Observes Ramadan
- 105 Composer Morricone
- 106 Apt name for a steak-house waitress
- 109 First Bond movie
- 111 Helps
- 112 Letter-shaped fastener
- 113 Catch sight of
- 115 Not-so-big shot
- 117 Digital storage medium, briefly

CELEBRITY CIPHER

By Luis Campos
Celebrity Cipher cryptograms are created from quotations by famous people, past and present. Each letter in the cipher stands for another.

"W.V., ZL'M CZNJ, FPL Z LDZCE YA
MPCMDZCJ VCO SJYSWJ YC
IYWJWJFWVOJM JVLZCU MPMDZ."
-HZXXT AVWWYC
Puzzle One Clue: T equals Y

"G KZM'F UNNLJF FCL EFUFBE RBZ.
G KZ UNNLJF OGEU, XUEFLWNUWK
ZW UXLWGNM LAJWLEE."
-EFLJCLM NZSPLWF
Puzzle Two Clue: S equals L

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SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

4			8	3				
		9		4				3
3		6		5				
					4			9
	8		5	2	6			4
	3		9					
				1		2		7
	4			9		1		
				6	8			4

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