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**INSIDE, PAGE 1B**

Traffic woes may lessen at 41/54

By Kathy Steele

ksteele@lakerlutznews.com

Some relief may be coming in 2018 to reduce the daily traffic jams at U.S. 41 and State Road 54.

Frustrations at the intersection are common, as more than 100,000 motorists pass through the intersection every day.

Pasco County and state highway officials are now looking at a plan to lessen congestion.

The plan calls for lengthening turn lanes, providing more room in those lanes to improve the general flow in through lanes.

Pasco County Commissioner Kathryn Starkey talked about the turn-lane project during a recent Pasco County workshop.

Starkey said she'd learned of the project at a committee meeting for the county's Metropolitan Planning Commission.

"I think that's a huge step forward on our road projects," Starkey said.

The project isn't seen as a permanent solution, but as something that can be done in the near-term.

"It is a fix," said Margaret Smith, Pasco's engineering services director, adding she doesn't know how long the fix will last.

Design work is expected to take about

eight to 10 months, with construction likely in 2018. The county will spend about \$300,000 on design, with money saved from other road projects, Smith said.

A funding source for the remainder of the project, estimated at around \$1 million is being sought.

The redesign would include these changes, based on an email from the Florida Department of Transportation:

- The right-turn lane eastbound on State Road 54 would increase from 215 feet to 1,050 feet. Eastbound dual left-turn lanes

See TRAFFIC, page 15A

Firefighter inspires comic superhero

By Kevin Weiss

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Larry Jarrell was so captivated when he learned of Stephanie Sorensen's story that he created a web comic heroine based on the Wesley Chapel woman's life.

This isn't the first time that Sorensen has attracted attention.

The volunteer at Fire Station 28 in Land O' Lakes, placed second in a national campaign to raise awareness of the need for volunteer firefighters.

Besides volunteering at the fire station, she also is a teacher, mother and actress.

Sorensen's distinct daily life left an impression on Jarrell, president of Crushed Ego Studios, an Orlando-based comic development company.

Jarrell was particularly "moved" by Sorensen's background as both a female firefighter and an elementary teacher to autistic children.

That sparked an idea for a web comic heroine, aptly named Firegirl.

"It's just an amplification and just an inspiration for what (Sorensen's) already doing, but just making it kind of more of a superhero kind of thing," said Jarrell, who has worked in the comic industry for more than 20 years.

Though Sorensen acknowledged she's never been a comic buff, she was intrigued by the proposition.

"I had never really thought about it from a comic book standpoint, but when (Jarrell) presented the idea...to take an everyday woman and turn her into a hero, I just thought that was an amazing idea," Sorensen said.

For her, the project creates an opportunity to teach life lessons, in an exciting, positive manner: "I feel like it's another av-

**Fire
Girl**

The Firegirl web comic is slated to be released in April by Crushed Ego Studios, an Orlando-based comic development company.



COURTESY OF STEPHANIE SORENSEN

Sorensen will have input into Firegirl's storylines and plot development. She also was involved with the character's image and qualities.

enue for me to be an inspiration to people, and help them; it's not just for entertainment."

In real life, Sorensen remains a busy woman.

Typically, she undergoes Wednesday night fire training sessions, and often picks up weekend shifts, as her schedule permits, at the fire station, which is located at 2109 Hale Road.

She's also a full-time Autism Spectrum Disorder teacher at Clark Elementary in New Tampa.

Sorensen balances her volunteer firefighter schedule with her primary responsibilities as a teacher and a mother to an autistic son.

Plus, she's an actress on the side. She was cast in the 2015 film "The Inevitable," and she has made an uncredited appearance in Netflix's "Bloodline."

Last year, Sorensen competed in "Step Up and Stand Out," a national campaign sponsored by Kidde — a leading manufacturer of residential fire safety product — to increase awareness of the ongoing need for volunteer firefighters. The national contest was launched to recognize volunteers who have "gone above and beyond in their community."

Sorensen was one of five finalists (and the lone female) selected from video nominations for volunteers "who represent the best of the fire service." She placed second in the contest, which ended in September.

Though she didn't win, she said it was a gratifying experience.

See COMIC, page 15A

Nudist tourism needs more exposure

By Kathy Steele

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Pasco County is the nudist capital of Florida.

The state of Florida is the nudist capital of North America.

But, the clothing-optional lifestyle is an often overlooked tourism market that contributes \$7.4 billion to the state's economy annually, according to a report from the American Association of Nudist Recreation.

The association wants to put the spotlight on missed economic opportunities across the state, and in Pasco.

How about nudist days at Pasco's beach parks? Should there be nudist beaches at Sand Island and Anclote Island, or at an undeveloped lake at SunWest Park?

Starkey Wilderness might yield opportunities for nude recreation activities, too.

Those were some of the ideas included in the AANR report, which was compiled by John Heather, a consultant for the organization and an instructor of international tourism & hospitality management at Saint Leo University.

Heather was guest speaker at the Feb. 14 general meeting of the Central Pasco Chamber of Commerce.

Pasco could be a role model on how to



Monique Liliensiek, center, filmed a German documentary, 'World of Nudism,' at Lake Como Resort in 2014.

build on the existing economic base of nudist recreation, Heather said.

"We don't have the beaches of Clearwater or the vibrant culture of downtown St. Petersburg," Heather said. "But, we are so fortunate to be on major (highway) arteries. A lot of these resorts are in rural areas. They are something to make your place unique."

Pasco's history with the nudist lifestyle began decades ago, with resorts, social clubs and residential communities. Lake Como Resort, for instance, celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2016.

Other locations for vacations and permanent residency are Caliente Resort & Spa

See NUDIST, page 15A

Heroes for Hire playing the right tunes

By Kathy Steele

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Being a boy band with a first release on iTunes is heady stuff.

But, Heroes for Hire is getting used to the attention, playing their brand of edgy, alternative rock at venues such as Skipper's Smokehouse, New World Brewery and Buckets.

Louis Mittens, 15; Ben Hense, 13; Ryan Romero, 15; Corey Fox, 15; and, Josh Morin, 14, came together as a band at Jim Chambers Music Box.

Chambers is the maestro who orchestrates and fine tunes young musicians at his "school of rock" in Carrollwood. He puts bands together with that right mix of personal chemistry and musical chops.

"In six weeks, they're expected to play a show," Chambers said.

Heroes for Hire started playing gigs more than a year ago.

On Feb. 4, the band had a release party for its first iTunes' song, "The Wanted One," at The Orpheum in Ybor City.

Romero is the group's songwriter. He also came up with the band's name which salutes the military.

"You think of soldiers. They're always heroes," said Romero.

He started writing songs in seventh grade. "I like emotional topics that have a moral meaning, that are inspirational."

Some band members knew one another before coming to "the box," but mostly they've become fast friends because of the



COURTESY OF MARLENE FOX PHOTOGRAPHY

Heroes for Hire celebrated their first iTunes release with a performance at the Orpheum in Ybor City.

music. They attend Blake High School, Buchanan Middle School and Gaither High School, and live in Carrollwood and Lutz.

Fox's mother started him on bass guitar when he was age 10.

"I was super into it," he said, adding that a long career in music "would be a dream."

Chambers knows how those dreams can sometimes happen.

He is a former music executive who earned Grammy awards with Maroon 5 and Loudon Wainwright III.

Chambers got his start in the mailroom

at Sky Records, which was co-owned by Amy Ray of the Indigo Girls. Ray got him a job promotion after a chatty encounter one day at work.

In a podcast interview with Cigar City Radio First, Chambers recalled Ray asking afterward, "Who's that kid in the mailroom who won't shut up? Put him on the phones."

From there, marketing and promotion became his way up the music industry ladder.

In nearly three decades, Chambers built

a long resume. His jobs included merchandise representative for Sony Records in Miami and national sales representative for a division of Sire Records in New York.

Along the way, he watched Maroon 5 break into the outer stratosphere of the music world.

The economic crash in 2009 cost him his job. He flirted with moving to Belize, but ended up back home in Carrollwood, with his parents.

He taught drum lessons for awhile. Then, he ran a home-based music academy, until the homeowner's association objected.

In July 2015, he opened Jim Chambers Music Box in a small shopping plaza, at 4312 Gunn Highway. Creative Loafing magazine recognized his school as "Best of the Bay" band incubator.

His band protégés include the all-girl band, Extra Celestial, and Inkblot.

Musical influences on Heroes for Hire are the Foo Fighters, Jack White and Jimi Hendrix.

Morin admires instrumental rock guitarist Joe Satriana. "He lets the guitar be his melody," he said.

Rehearsals at Chamber's studio are free-wheeling, get-it-on rock shows. But, live performances are the best.

"This is a way of getting feedback," said Hense, who plays the drums. It also builds a fan base that gets to know their music.

Mittens thinks he's found his niche.

"Pretty much all I want to do is play guitar, in and out of school," he said.

Construction to extend State Road 56

By Kathy Steele

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Contractors on the State Road 56 extension are cleared to begin turning dirt.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued a permit for the roadwork on Feb. 2.

The extension is considered an important project by residents, commercial interests and government officials, because it provides an important link for motorists traveling east and west across Pasco County.

"I'm excited," said Pasco County Commission Chairman Mike Moore. "It will bring traffic relief...and economic development all along the corridor."

An official groundbreaking is in the planning stages but Moore said Cone & Graham Inc., would begin work as soon as

possible. "We don't want to hold them up," he added.

A previous groundbreaking had been targeted for late January, but it took longer than expected for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to review additional information that had been requested.

The road project will provide a four-lane extension of State Road 56 from Meadow Pointe Boulevard in Wiregrass Ranch to U.S. 301 in Zephyrhills.

Initial plans called for a two-lane extension.

However, nearly two years ago residents lobbied hard during a town hall meeting in Zephyrhills for an expanded project.

Area residents and Zephyrhills' officials see the road as a major factor in easing traffic bottlenecks and supporting greater economic development.

Money became an issue.

But, Pasco County qualified in 2016 for a state loan of nearly \$23 million to finance the project.

A loan repayment schedule allows the county to collect funds from developers and landowners along the corridor through mobility surcharge fees, or special assessments, if needed.

Property owners and developers along the route provided rights of way to Pasco County.

About half of the 6.7-mile extension runs through Two Rivers Ranch.

Cone & Graham is expected to cover any shortfall in expenses, with the county and the city of Zephyrhills as fall back in the event the contractor is fired or a new contractor hired.

In that scenario, estimates peg the coun-



FILE
The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has granted a permit to allow construction to begin on the widening of State Road 56 between Wiregrass Ranch and Zephyrhills. The project provides an important link for motorists.

ty's responsibility at about \$1.5 million with Zephyrhills contributing 10 percent, or \$150,000 to that amount.

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Escape life's upheaval at the county fair



By Tom Jackson
tjackson@lakerlutznews.com

You don't need a consumer confidence report to know that the economy is on a rebound trajectory. Instead, just open your eyes to what's going on in Pasco County, where change, once more, is afoot.

You can scarcely swing a surveyor's plumb bob without whacking evidence of our resurgence. Earth movers are moving earth. Grimy guys with signs are redirecting traffic. New construction is erupting like mushrooms after a summer thunderstorm.

Entire parts of the county are hardhat zones, and it's all pretty much good, this investment in things that bring new jobs and opportunity.

Amid the flying dust, the big machines belching smoke and the sense of anticipation that attends it all, humans are naturally grateful for what is reliable and unchanging. It's why we celebrate efforts to preserve vast swatches of virgin land and lovely old buildings. It's also among the reasons to cheer the return this week of the Pasco County Fair.

The county fair is our annual Brigadoon, a touchstone that remains virtually the same one year to the next, despite all the change that swirls around it. And, we not only count on its constancy, we are reassured by it.

There may be a connected city — whatever that is — surrounding jaw-dropping manmade lagoons back up the road. Traffic engineers might be spellbound by the prospect of a "divergent diamond" interchange at State Road 56 and Interstate 75. Riders can access Wi-Fi on all county buses now. In short, we're so cutting edge you could lose a finger.

But, just beyond the ticket-takers at the county fair, it might as well be ... well, frankly, you can pick your year. Because, with the exception of a detail here or there,



McKenna, left, and Brianna Childs, of Dade City, wait in the stall area at the 2016 Pasco County Fair, until they are called for their part in the Possum Trot club 4-H events.

it never changes.

Pasco's fair week — always the third week in February, always nestled between the Florida State Fair and the Plant City Strawberry Festival — is a comforting little slice of yesteryear, where the familiar abounds: Pig race, poultry preens, cities, towns and communities boast, young pageant princesses seek their first crowns, and performers with unusual talents bring fresh meaning to the term "side show."

Where, besides a county fair, after all, are you likely to run across the self-proclaimed "only traveling 'Lumber Jill' show in North America?" Or, a psychologist who promises to "explore the hilarious side of hypnosis" in a "wacky show that rivals reality television?"

This year's opening day event is history, of course, but as a past participant, I would

be remiss if I did not throw some love in the direction of the goofy opening-day "Celebrity Milk-Off."

Nevermind that the annual descent into bovine mayhem is that variety of celebrity events in which, as humorist Dave Barry observed, all the celebrities require name tags.

In truth, almost nobody comes to see Pasco hotshots ineptly yanking on poor heifers' delicate faucets. They come, instead, to see which cow will relieve herself smack dab in the middle of a squeeze duel.

In this way, the milk-off is a lot like the Daytona 500.

What else? With the possible exception of a rickety rollercoaster, the county fair's midway offers all the rough-and-tumble kinetic experiences sufficient to eliminate weak-stomached NASA astronaut applicants.

The county fair is relentlessly doable, then, and that, also, is to its credit.

Its midway, resembling a droopy barbell, is as organized as such things can be: big-kid rides in a big grassy plaza on the north end, little-kid rides on the south, and connecting them an avenue of games of — *cough-cough* — skill.

Just the way it's always been. And, that's just the way county fair-goers like it. Familiar. Comfortable. Traditional.

Something reliable to hang onto in this time of hurry-up upheaval. This is the week to lose yourself in yesteryear. Our changing world will be waiting when you get back.

Tom Jackson, a resident of New Tampa, is interested in your ideas. To reach him, email tjackson@lakerlutznews.com.

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Speaking of stomachs, fairs are pretty much the originators of food trucks, although you aren't likely to be able to find a barbecue sundae, corndogs or fried, well, everything at the Taste of New Tampa or those downtown Tampa food-on-wheels roundups Mayor Bob Buckhorn fancies.

And, a bellyful of fried-everything is exactly what is needed when you board a ride in which you will spend substantial moments suspended upside down.

Then again, you don't have to eat fair fare. Up at the Madill Building, they're grilling juicy hamburgers that will transport you to 1957. And, at the next window, you'll find strawberry shortcake that'll save you the trip to Plant City.

There's also this to like: At 30-odd windswept acres atop a hill overlooking State Road 52, the Pasco County fairgrounds is contained. Compare that to the Florida State Fair, which sprawls across a daunting 330 acres.

The county fair is relentlessly doable, then, and that, also, is to its credit.

Its midway, resembling a droopy barbell, is as organized as such things can be: big-kid rides in a big grassy plaza on the north end, little-kid rides on the south, and connecting them an avenue of games of — *cough-cough* — skill.

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What's Happening

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

MULCH FUNDRAISER

Boy Scout Troop 33 of Land O' Lakes is hosting a mulch fundraiser to help send the Scouts to summer camp. Mulch is available in pine bark, red, brown, cypress and gold, and comes in 2.0-cubic-foot bags for \$3.50 each. Orders can either be picked up March 4 at Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church, 2348 Collier Parkway in Land O' Lakes, or the scouts will deliver the mulch anywhere on your property (within delivery area). For information or to place an order, call Rich Thibeau at (813) 267-6261, or email Troop33MulchFundraiser@gmail.com.

BEACONS OF HOPE

The Zephyrhills Public Library, 5347 Eighth St., will host guest speaker Det. Sgt. Roberts of the Zephyrhills Police Department Feb. 23 at 4:30 p.m. In honor of Black History Month, Roberts will share his thoughts on those who had significant roles in shaping the African-American experience. For information, call (813) 780-0064.

LIFE 101

The Hugh Embry Library, 14215 Fourth St., in Dade City, will host "Nyara's Ark: Life 101" Feb. 23 at 1 p.m., for anyone interested in free data on life insurance. For information, call (352) 567-3576.

FASHION SHOW

The GFWC Lutz-Land O' Lakes Woman's Club will host its annual Flea Fashion Show featuring "Fashions from Rosie's Closet" Feb. 23 at 11 a.m., at the Lutz Community Center, 101 First Ave., N.W. There also will be an auction to buy the fashions. A tapas and salad luncheon, with beverage and dessert, will be served for \$7. All proceeds will benefit Very Special Arts, which provides special-needs schoolchildren with art supplies and projects. For information, call (813) 528-1179.

PRETEEN MOVIE

The New River Library, 34043 State Road 54 in Zephyrhills, will host a preteen movie and snacks Feb. 23 at 4 p.m., for grades four to seven. For information and movie title, call (813) 788-6375.

SAFETY SUMMIT

Pasco-Hernando State College will host a Safety and Security Summit Feb. 23 from 7:45 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Feb. 24 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Saint Leo University, in the Student Council Center. The two-day event's theme is "Cyber Threats, Human Trafficking and Guns." There will be 200 seats available. Breakfast, lunch and refreshments will be served. Admission is free. For information, visit PHSC.edu/safety-security-summit.

SMART DRIVER CLASSES

The AARP Smart Driver class will be offered at these locations:

- Feb. 24 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Zephyrhills Public Library, 5347 Eighth St. Call Bev Cogdill at (813) 907-3908.
- Feb. 27 at Bayfront Health Dade City, 13100 Fort King Road. Call Jack Martin at (352) 588-2802.
- Feb. 28 at New River Library, 34043 State Road 54 in Zephyrhills. Call Bev Cogdill at (813) 907-3908.

The cost is \$15 for non-members and \$20 for AARP members. Preregistration is required.

QUILT SHOW

St. Lawrence Catholic Church, 5221 N. Himes Ave., in Tampa, will host "Applique in Tampa Bay IV: Spring Fling" Feb. 24 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Feb. 25 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The quilt show will include a quilt auction, gift baskets, a café and more, and is sponsored by The Feather Princesses. Admission is \$8. Parking is free. For information, email Laura Brooker at laurajbr@macc.com. For information on the sponsor, visit FeatherPrincesses.org.



Green Blessings fundraiser

"Green Blessings," an evening to benefit the Benedictine Sisters of Florida, Holy Name Monastery's aquaponics program and other ministries, will be Feb. 25 at 5:30 p.m., at the Tampa Bay Golf & Country Club, 10641 Old Tampa Bay Drive in San Antonio.

The evening will include a cocktail hour at 5:30 p.m., dinner, dancing, a live auction, a silent auction, a 50/50 drawing, and a Most Creative Green Outfit Contest and prizes.

The cost is \$50 per person.

For information or to RSVP, call (352) 588-8443, or email hn.monastery@saintleo.edu.

NUNSENSE PERFORMANCE

The Center for the Arts at Wesley Chapel, 30651 Wells Road, will present "Nunsense" at 2 p.m., Feb. 25 and Feb. 26. The performance features the Little Sisters of Hoboken who discover they are in need of burial funds after the cook accidentally poisons some of their fellow nuns. Tickets are \$20. For information and tickets, visit CenterForTheArtsWesleyChapel.com, or call (813) 794-8772.

MAINE DAY

The 63rd annual Maine Day gathering will be Feb. 25 at the Lions Club, 5827 Dean Dairy Road in Zephyrhills. Registration starts at 9 a.m. The cost is \$3 per person. There will be a lunch sale of Maine Lobster rolls, hot dogs and baked beans; music by Rockin' Ron & New Society Band; and, door prizes. For information, call Brenda Bell at (813) 788-7598.

LITTLE MAKERS

The Land O' Lakes Library, 2818 Collier Parkway, will host "Play, Make, Discover! Under the Sea" Feb. 25 at 10:30 a.m., for toddlers and preschoolers, as part of its Little Makers program. The program will be an ocean-themed sensory experience. For information, call (813) 929-1214.

CONGREGATION KOL AMI

Congregation Kol Ami, 3919 Moran Road in Tampa, will host these upcoming events:

- Feb. 25: Kiddush luncheon, after the 9:30 a.m. Shabbat services. Admission is free, but non-members are asked to RSVP.
- Feb. 25 at 6:30 p.m.: Havdallah and a Movie. The film "Denial," a version of Deborah Lipstadt's libel trial in England, will be shown.
- Feb. 28 at 7 p.m.: The Tree of Lifelong Learning Book Group will discuss "Anna and The Swallow Man" by Gavriel Savitt. For

information, email Debbie Doliner at debdoliner@gmail.com.

For information, call Kol Ami at (813) 962-6338.

K9 PARTNERS FOR PATRIOTS

The K9 Partners for Patriots open house will be Feb. 25 at 16230 Aviation Loop Drive in Brooksville. The Mobile Vet Center will be available from noon to 4 p.m., along with a readjustment counselor and K9 trainers. For information, call AJ Jones at (727) 372-1854. Information also can be found at VetCenter.va.gov.

NO-SEW PILLOWS

The Land O' Lakes Library, 2818 Collier Parkway, will offer a no-sew pillow class Feb. 25 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., for ages 9 to 15. A proper dress code and signed liability waiver are required. For information and to register, call (813) 929-1214.

CRAB & SHRIMP FEST

The SunWest Park Crab and Shrimp Festival will be Feb. 25 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Feb. 26 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., at SunWest Park, 17362 Old Dixie Highway in Hudson. There will be live bands and entertainment, an appearance by NASCAR's Cody Lane, bounce houses and face painting, a beer and wine area, carnival rides and crab races. Proceeds will benefit The Student Survival Organization. Admission is free. Parking is \$5. For information, call (727) 674-1464.

SUPERHERO SHOW

The Carrollwood Cultural Center, 4537 Lowell Road in Tampa, will present "Squadron Spectacular" Feb. 26 at 2 p.m., for kids ages 8 to 12. The interactive show will feature brothers Matthew (a musician) and Jamie (a graphic novelist) Jones who will introduce a new superhero. Admission is \$7 for members, \$8 for general admission, and \$28 for a family four-pack. Children ages 4 and younger are free, but must have a seat reserved. For information and tickets, call (813) 922-8167, or visit CarrollwoodCenter.org.

ACADEMY AWARDS PARTY

Tampa Theatre, 711 N. Franklin St., in Tampa, will host its annual Academy Awards Party Feb. 26 starting at 7 p.m., with a red-carpet reception and VIP watch party for the live telecast. There will be games, prizes, free popcorn and soda, hair and makeup touchups, and a cash bar. Guests are encouraged to wear a movie-themed costume or a Hollywood-inspired outfit. General admission tickets are \$20, or \$15 for theater members. For information, visit TampaTheatre.org.

OASIS DAY BENEFIT

Oasis Pregnancy Care Centers will host Oasis Day at Hungry Harry's BBQ, 3116 Land O' Lakes Blvd., in Land O' Lakes, Feb. 27 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Twenty percent of sales (eat in or takeout) will be donated to Oasis. For information, call (813) 949-2025.

REPUBLICAN CLUB

The Republican Club of Central Pasco will host guest speaker Susan MacManus Feb. 27 at Copperstone Executive Suites, 3632 Land O' Lakes Blvd., in Land O' Lakes. MacManus is Florida's most-quoted political scientist. The social begins at 6:30 p.m., followed by a business meeting at 7 p.m. For information, call (813) 996-3011.

INTRO TO BLACK HISTORY

The New Tampa Regional Library, 10001 Cross Creek Blvd., will present "An Intro to Unknown African-American History" Feb. 27 at 6:30 p.m., for adults. The program will explore aspects of African-American history that are often overlooked. For information or to register, call (813) 273-3652.

CARROLLWOOD BOOK CLUB

The CCC (Carrollwood Cultural Center) Book Club will meet Feb. 27 at 7 p.m., to

discuss "Other Voices, Other Rooms" by Truman Capote, at the center, at 4537 Lowell Road in Tampa. For information, visit CarrollwoodCenter.org, or email the club's organizer, David Brayshaw, at david8463@verizon.net.

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

Big Brothers Big Sisters will offer an orientation/training Feb. 28 from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., at Wesley Chapel Honda, 27750 Wesley Chapel Blvd., for anyone interested in becoming a volunteer and mentor. For information, contact Deb Kristol-Irwin at (813) 997-6881 or DebK@bbbstampabay.org.

MAKE A SPINNING TOP

The Land O' Lakes Library, 2818 Collier Parkway, will offer Woodworking 101 Feb. 28 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., for ages 16 and older. Participants can make a spinning top. A proper dress code and signed liability waiver are required. For information and to register, call (813) 929-1214.

DONATE TO FLEA MARKET

The GFWC Lutz-Land O' Lakes Woman's Club will host its annual flea market on March 3 and March 4, and is accepting donations between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., at the Old Lutz School, 18819 U.S. 41. Donations must be clean and in working order. Large format TVs, appliances and sleeper sofas cannot be accepted. For information, call Patricia Serio at (813) 948-4752.

JOIN ZEPHYR SOUND

Zephyr Sound, an informal ladies barbershop chorus, is looking for members. Practices are every Monday from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., at Zephyrhills Wesleyan Church, 38924 C Avenue. Women of all ages can join. For information, or to book a performance, call Peggy Shear at (813) 991-9326. Those interested also can come to a rehearsal.

JOIN FRIENDSHIP SINGERS

The Friendship Singers, a group of volunteers that performs in local nursing homes, assisted living facilities and senior centers in Pasco and Hillsborough counties, are looking for members. There are two practices and two concerts each month. There are no auditions and no prior singing experience is necessary. For information, contact Joyce Ruby at (813) 442-7879 or joyceruby99@yahoo.com, or Joe Berling at (813) 997-1454 or jberling@tampabay.rr.com.

FOOD & CLOTHING MINISTRY

The New Jerusalem Church of God, 38442 Tuskegee Ave., in Dade City, has provided a free food and clothing ministry since 1998. The ministry 'feeds' both the physical and spiritual needs of others. Those interested in the service should make an appointment by contacting Pastor May Ross at (352) 567-9775 or fax (352) 567-2595.



Park-wide sale

Grand Horizons in Zephyrhills will host a park-wide and clubhouse rummage sale Feb. 25 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. There also will be lunch and a bake sale. Grand Horizons is located behind Lowes and Walmart. Guests should take Green Slope Road to the entrance. For information, email Pat Mengl at scraps1937@yahoo.com.

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COURTESY OF STACY STETLER SALMON

Circus bids farewell

The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus performed its last show in Tampa at Amalie Arena Jan. 29. Prior to the show, the clowns made an appearance and mingled with the crowd.



COURTESY OF PATRICIA SERIO

Delivering smiles and supplies

Karin D'Amico, president of the GFWC Lutz-Land O' Lakes Woman's Club, volunteered during her recent GFWC Florida Caribbean cruise, where she toured Casa Aberque de Martina in the Dominican Republic and the Hogar Rafaela Ybarra Girls' Shelter in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She took suitcases and backpacks filled with school supplies and other fun items donated by club members to distribute to the girls in both facilities. The little girls met D'Amico with big smiles and open arms expressing their gratitude. D'Amico is shown with one of the residents in the Santo Domingo orphanage.

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Proudly Welcoming Jenny Buck, MD, FACOG



Dr. Buck earned her medical degree from Michigan State University. She was Board Certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology in 2009 and specializes in robotic-assisted gynecological surgery. For the past 10 years, Dr. Buck practiced at Hackley Hospital - Mercy Health, near her hometown of Muskegon, Michigan.



Reut Bardach, MD, FACOG

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Making New Friends Is Easy At Asturia

It has been less than a year since the first residents began moving into their new homes in Asturia, a beautiful master-planned community going up in Odessa.

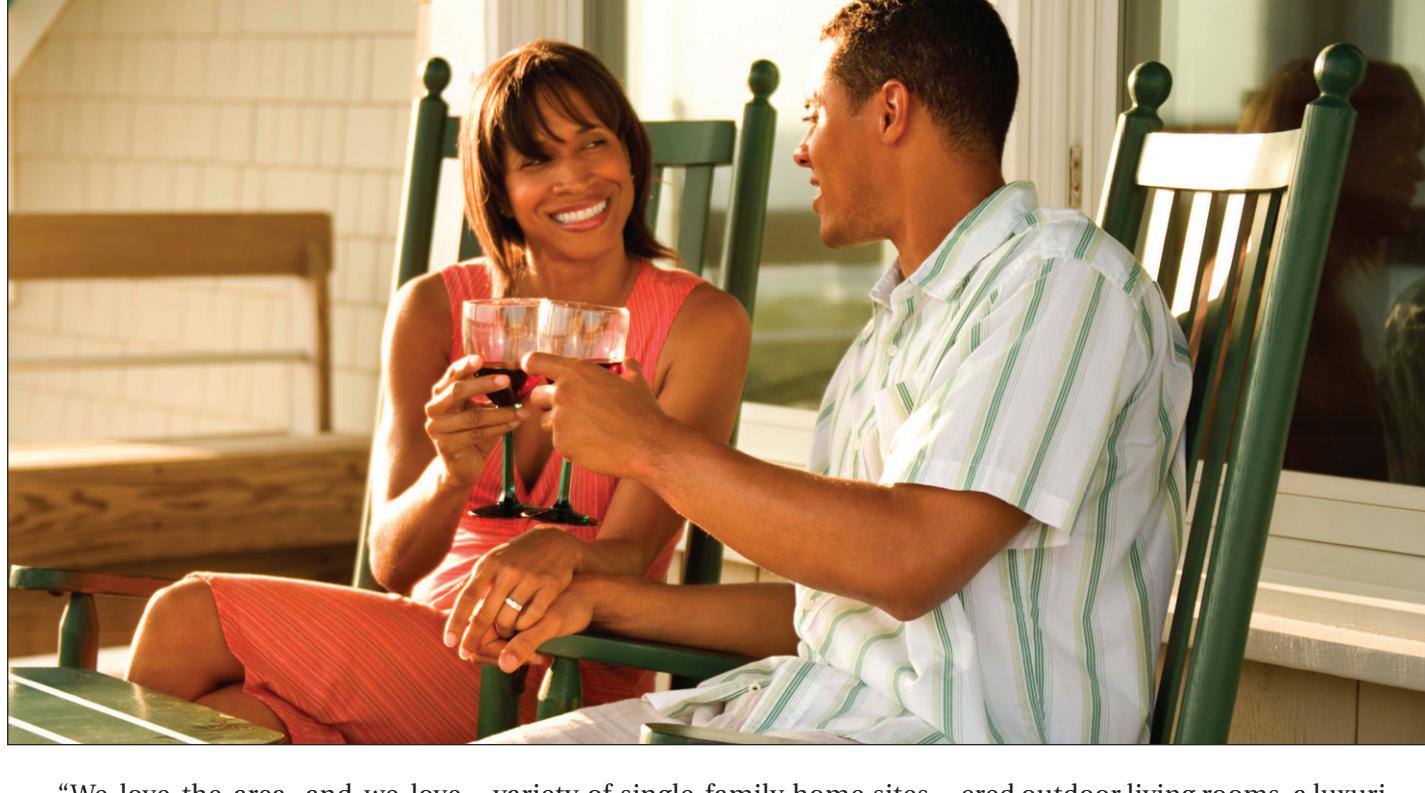
And, in that short time, homeowners have quickly become friends with their new neighbors, coming together at family events hosted by the developer, and enjoying the community's many amenities, nature trails and playgrounds.

To celebrate these new friendships, and to make new connections, Asturia has recently begun a unique monthly party they've christened "Front Porch Friday."

Front Porch Friday brings together residents, friends and folks looking to make Asturia their home for wine, appetizers and warm conversation. The next party is March 3 from 5 to 7 p.m. at a beautiful Ashton Woods model home, located at 14835 Caravan Ave., in Asturia.

Folks are invited to stop by and learn from residents why they chose Asturia as their new home. There is no cost to attend Front Porch Friday, although RSVPs are appreciated, which can be made at (813) 446-8362.

Chad and Sarah Raaymakers, Asturia's very first residents, moved to the community last July from Oldsmar. The couple wanted to be closer to their work, and also wanted their two young children, George and Theo, to attend better schools.



"We love the area, and we love Asturia! We chose Asturia for the intimate feeling of neighborhood and its real sense of community," said the Raaymakers.

8 BEAUTIFUL MODELS

Set against a backdrop of serene natural wetland preserves, neighborhood parks and open green spaces, residential lots at Asturia are some of the most beautiful homes sites in the Tampa area.

New homes continue to go up at a fast pace. The community offers a

variety of single-family home sites and home styles from award-winning builders Ashton Woods and David Weekley Homes. Each builder has four model homes that are open for tour daily.

UNIQUE AMENITIES

With its modern and unique architectural design, the Amenity Center is at the heart of the new community. At over 5,800 square feet, the Amenity Center includes a community clubhouse, a fully equipped state-of-the-art fitness center, cov-

ered outdoor living rooms, a luxurious resort-style swimming pool and expansive lawn areas for recreation.

"Our new Amenity Center focuses on a healthy lifestyle and complements the best-in-class home styles provided by Ashton Woods and David Weekley Homes. Asturia has truly raised the bar," said Lane Gardner, managing director of Hines, the developer of Asturia.

Asturia is located on State Road 54, just west of the Suncoast Parkway. For more information, go to AsturiaFlorida.com, or call (813) 227-4148.

Asturia

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Join us at the Ashton Woods model at 14835 Caravan Ave, Odessa, Florida on Friday, March 3rd from 5-7pm for Front Porch Friday. Meet Asturia neighbors and guests while enjoying delicious wine and appetizers. **RSVP by calling 813.446.8362.** Learn about the most desirable master-planned community in Tampa with an unrivaled amenity package. See you Friday!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT US TODAY.

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"The Flying Locksmith is a 70-year-old company with an outstanding customer service reputation," said Marius.

Because family was close-by, the couple chose Tampa as the location for their Flying Locksmith franchise, and opened their company last August. It serves families and businesses in central Tampa, and the northern suburbs of Lutz, Land O'Lakes and Wesley Chapel.

"It's great to finally be open and helping people with their locksmith and security needs," said Angelina.

The Flying Locksmiths began in Boston 70 years ago by a WWII veteran and pilot, who handed it down to his sons and, today, is the largest locksmith service in the northeast.

Customers value The Flying Locksmith because of the expertise, reliability and its technicians, and for its extensive inventory of parts and accessories. They especially like that technicians undergo a security background check, wear professional uniforms and always present identification.



Marius and Angelina Ferezan, owners

"When you allow a service person into your home or business, you want to be sure there are no security concerns," said Marius.

When customers call The Flying Locksmiths, there is always a live operator who answers and quickly dispatches technicians when needed.

"The company has over 100 years of combined experience in the field. If one tech hasn't seen a particular lock, it's highly likely someone else has," said Marius.

Be sure to call The Flying Locksmiths for all your security needs. Services include home and vehicle lockouts; deadbolt lock rekeying; master key systems; keyless entry solutions; safe and filing cabinet locks; door repair and replacement; and alarm and surveillance systems.

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New, Affordable Office Condos on U.S. 41 Ready For Occupancy This Summer

Russell Adams Realty has been one of the most recognizable names in Pasco County real estate for 50 years.

The firm's patriarch and namesake, Russell Adams, began doing business in Land O' Lakes back in 1966, when he sold his first lot in Lake Padgett Estates.

Over the years, the firm expanded into commercial and industrial sales — market segments now handled primarily by son Cody Adams, who joined his father's company in 1996.

"Back then, Land O' Lakes was still considered off the beaten path. But, now it is a suburban city with tremendous opportunities for businesses of all sizes," said Cody.

"While the area has certainly developed since I was a boy growing up on Lake Padgett, Land O' Lakes still has a lot of charm, and remains a great place to live and work."

Cody and his father are bringing their extensive knowledge of the central Pasco market — in particular their commercial real estate experience — as brokers for Black Lake Professional Center.

"We are honored to be the sales agent for Black Lake, and are aggressively negotiating with a variety of businesses looking to move to this ideal location in the heart of Land O' Lakes," said Cody.

Construction on the 7,800-square-foot building, which is located just north of the Land O' Lakes Post Office, will be completed this summer. Five offices are being configured in 1,500 and 1,800-square-foot units. Because the building is strategically zoned C-2, its space is suited for either retail storefronts or professional offices.

Three local businesses have already reserved their office condominiums — an eye doctor, communications company and service business.

"These businesses chose Black Lake because of its optimum location and affordability," said Cody. "There's no better value in commercial prop-



erty in central Pasco than Black Lake."

One of the development's strongest assets is its direct frontage on U.S. 41, which see 45,000 vehicles a day. Black Lake has excellent highway signage and visibility, and is the first new office park to be built along this fast-developing corridor.

The building is also located just three miles north of booming State Road 54, and is convenient to Interstate 75, Dale Mabry Highway and the Suncoast Expressway.

"Buying at Black Lake now is a smart move because prices have not yet caught up with the redevelopment of 41," said Adams.

The new building's architectural design matches the upscale, Mediterranean style of the original Black Lake building, with its distinctive terra cotta stucco exterior.

Owners will work with designer/builder Toliver Payne of

Waterford Designs Inc., to design their interior space exactly as they need to maximize production and sales.

WAREHOUSE BUILDING

Soon-to-be under construction is a 20,000-square-foot warehouse building being built immediately behind the two office buildings. Space is being divided into seven, 2,800-square-foot units, all which come with a 400-square-foot office.

"The warehouse space is very unique, and something we're getting lots of calls on," said Adams. "It's ideal for businesses needing large open areas and direct access to a major highway."

Please call Cody Adams with questions about the Black Lake development, as well as any other real estate inquiries, at (813) 949-3603 or (813) 503-6933.

Project Highlights

- Highway frontage on U.S. 41, one of the busiest roads in Pasco County, with daily traffic count of over 45,000 vehicles
- Just three miles north of State Road 54
- Excellent highway signage and visibility
- Fast access to Suncoast Expressway, I-75 and North Dale Mabry Highway
- Next door to the Land O' Lakes Post Office, and close to many surrounding residential communities and businesses
- Quiet professional setting with mature landscaping and ample parking

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22348 WEEKS BLVD, LAND O LAKES
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22482 CHEROKEE ROSE PLACE, LAND O LAKES
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Prices, plans and terms are effective on the date of publication and subject to change without notice. Depictions of homes or other features are artist conceptions. Hardscape, landscape and other items shown may be decorator suggestions that are not included in the purchase price and availability may vary. Standard Pacific of Florida (CQ1038741).



Connerton: Old-Fashioned Family Values

In the heart of Pasco County lies the beautiful community of Connerton. It's a place away from the hustle and bustle of busy highways and intersections, a community where families enjoy time together and neighbors become friends, an open landscape where nature and conservation intersect.

Nestled on 4,800 acres of land that was once a cattle ranch owned by the Conner family, this New Town community has flourished since its re-opening in 2013. Its residents and their stories are a testament to the success of Connerton's revitalization and much-desired, family focused lifestyle.

You'll see happy residents walking, jogging and biking along Connerton's miles of nature trails. Folks of all ages enjoy the abundant amenities and family events at Club Connerton — a 10,000-square-foot clubhouse with a resort-style pool, expansive fitness center and versatile multipurpose room. It's also home to Connertown Café, where neighbors meet to grab a quick sandwich, slice of pizza or cool drink.

When the Gifford family relocated from California in 2007, they chose Connerton as their new home.

"We were looking for a community that was family oriented — one that would provide lots of recreation, entertainment and socialization opportunities, and also one that was connected to the outdoors. We found all that and more at Connerton," said Bryan and Tracy Gifford.

The Allenbaughs purchased their home in 2013. "We fell in love with the Norman Rockwell look and feel of Connerton, and just felt good overall about the whole community," said Gary and Jill Allenbaugh.

To encourage outings where residents can meet and have fun together, Connerton sponsors community events for all ages and occasions. Social activities organized by the Lifestyle staff at the clubhouse include everything from yoga to Pilates, Mardi Gras to wine-tasting parties, pool games to gift card bingo. The Lifestyle staff also pro-



vides child care for its Parents Night Out events, so couples can spend quality time together without worrying about their children.

In addition to Club Connerton, the community has several other gathering places for residents, including Garden Party Park, Connerton Cove, Storybrook Park and the Arbors Trail. These parks offer playground equipment, a soc-

cer field and dog park that are enjoyed by residents and their families.

If you're looking for an old-fashioned Independence Day celebration this summer, Connerton offers the best party in town with fireworks, live music, games and food trucks! And, for wildlife lovers, deer, otters, sandhill cranes, raccoons and other wildlife frolic and play in the community's conserva-

tion areas, including the pristine 3,000-acre Conner Preserve.

Currently, four quality home-builders offer a variety of one- and two-story floor plans ranging from 1,600 to over 4,800 square feet, with homes priced from the low \$200s to over \$700,000.

Connerton is excited to announce that come this spring, it has been selected as the Showcase Community for the 2017 Parade of Homes, sponsored by the Tampa Bay Builders Association. M/I Homes, Taylor Morrison, Lennar and Homes by WestBay will be showcasing seven fully decorated models for parade-goers to tour, all conveniently located in one place.

The Parade of Homes runs from April 1 - 30, giving Parade guests five full weekends, plus weekdays, to visit and sort through builders, floor plans and decorating options. Watch for more information on this exciting event in coming weeks.

Connerton is located in Land O' Lakes on U.S. 41, six miles north of State Road 54. For more information, visit Connerton.com, or call (813) 996-5800.

The Community



More Old Fashioned Family Values



Main Entrance



More Outdoor Activities

Connerton is an amazing community located in the heart of Pasco county. It's the place that you've been searching for in a planned community. Imagine your wish list for a place to call home, a place to raise your family and create dreams and memories, and you'll find that Connerton has it all.

- More pool-side fun and sporting fields of dreams
- More quality schools for your children's futures
- More amazing amenities ready to enjoy today
- More walking, biking and hiking trails to explore
- More community events and outdoor gathering places
- More neighbors just waiting to become lifelong friends
- More home for your money from our quality builders

The list of benefits go on and on giving you all the more reason to put Connerton on your short list of communities you must see to believe.

Want to learn more? We invite you to visit us today and find out why there are simply more reasons to choose Connerton.



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Send health news to
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MEDICARE 101

The Hugh Embry Library, 14215 Fourth St., in Dade City, will offer Medicare 101 Feb. 23 from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

A SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) volunteer will be available to answer questions, complete forms and more.

For information, call (352) 567-3576.

MAMMOGRAM PARTY

The Medical Center of Trinity will host a "Screened & Fabulous Mammogram Party" Feb. 23 from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., at its Women's Imaging Center, Medical Arts Building, 9332 State Road 54, Suite 401, in Trinity.

The center will set time aside for women throughout the community to get a screening mammogram. Both 2D and 3D digital

screening mammography will be offered. No prescriptions are required. Insurance will be filed and self-pay rates are available.

There also will be appetizers and refreshments.

Appointments are required. To schedule, call (727) 834-4888, or email Penny.Stevens@hcahealthcare.com.

YOGA FOR WELL-BEING

The Land O' Lakes Library, 2818 Collier Parkway, will host "Yoga for Well-Being" Feb. 23 at 4 p.m., to help reduce stress and tension, and increase flexibility, strength and breathing ability.

The class offers fundamental techniques tailored to the level of ability and fitness of the participants, with an emphasis on relaxation and mindfulness.

Guests should wear comfortable clothing and bring a large beach towel or yoga mat.

A completion of liability forms is required. For information, call (813) 929-1214.

ARTHRITIS LECTURE

Access Health Care, 5350 Spring Hill Drive in Spring Hill, will offer a lecture on "Arthritis and What You Need to Know to Prevent & Make it Better" Feb. 23 from 5:15 p.m. to 7 p.m.

For information and to register, call (352) 688-8116, ext. 4344.

MAMMOGRAPHY SEMINAR

The Medical Center of Trinity, 9330 State Road 54, will offer a seminar on "2D vs. 3D Mammography: What's the Big Deal?" Feb. 24 at noon.

Dr. Alene Wright will discuss imaging options in the fight against breast cancer.

Admission is free. A complimentary lunch will be provided.

For reservations and information, call (727) 834-5630.

FREE CPR DEMO TRAINING

Suncoast Heartsavers and The Heart Institute at Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point will offer free community CPR demonstration trainings Feb. 25 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Graduate Medical Education, 14108 Glacier Drive in Hudson.

Classes will take place every hour.

For information and to register, call (727) 869-5498, or visit RMCHHealth.com.

VOLUNTEER FOR SHINE

SHINE, a Florida Department of Elder Affairs program, is looking for volunteers to provide free, unbiased one-on-one insurance counseling and information on Medicare and prescription drug assistance.

There will be a class Feb. 27, with meals and travel reimbursed.

For information on volunteering, contact Sue Samson at (727) 570-9696, ext. 234.

For a volunteer application, visit FloridaShiner.org/join-the-team.aspx.

SMOKING CESSION

The Zephyrhills Public Library, 5347 Eighth St., will offer the I-Quit smoking cessation class Feb. 28 at 10 a.m.

Participants can learn strategies for quitting all forms of tobacco and Nicotine Replacement Therapy. Free patches, gum and lozenges also will be available, while supplies last.

For information, call (813) 780-0064.

HOSPICE WORKSHOP

Gulfside Hospice will offer a "Forget Me Not" workshop Feb. 28 from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the Gulfside Bereavement & Community Outreach Center, 6224 Lafayette St., in New Port Richey.

The workshop will allow participants to use their green thumb to plant seeds of hope and honor a loved one by creating a memorial flower pot.

Admission is free, but reservations must be made by Feb. 24.

For information, call Kelly Cavagnetto at (813) 431-3348.

LONG-TERM CARE PREP

Oasis Pregnancy Centers, 3632 Land O' Lakes Blvd., Suite 108, in Land O' Lakes, will offer a free seminar on preparing for long-

KID'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

The Florida Department of Health and the American Dental Association partner every February to raise awareness about the importance of children's oral health.

Dental health is an important part of overall health. Parents should take time to discuss teeth and gum care. Children should: Brush their teeth twice a day, floss daily; see a dentist regularly, maintain healthy eating habits, and wear a mouth guard while training and competing in contact sports.

Depending on the ages of the child, parents also should consider discussing these issues: Smokeless tobacco is addictive and can cause gum disease, tooth loss and mouth cancer; and, oral piercings cause damage to teeth and fillings, and can cause infection, pain and swelling.

For information on dental care for uninsured children, call (727) 861-5260, ext. 284.

term care Feb. 28 at 6:30 p.m.

Participants can learn how to choose long-term health care insurance and the options available.

Light refreshments will be provided.

For information and to RSVP, call (727) 459-5440.

HEART DISEASE TUTORIAL

The Heart Institute at Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point will host a Tuesday Tutorial on "Heart Disease" Atherosclerosis" Feb. 28 at the Rao Musunuru MD Conference Center, 14100 Yosemite Drive in Hudson.

Registration and lunch begin at 11:30 a.m., followed by the tutorial at noon.

Admission is free. Reservations are required. For information, call (727) 869-5498.

BILIRAKIS NAMED TO HEALTH CARE PANEL

U.S. Representative Gus Bilirakis (FL-12) has been appointed to serve on the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health, a key congressional panel with jurisdiction over the repeal and replacement of Obamacare, as well as medical research and public health issues.

In the 114th Congress, Bilirakis helped author major legislation on the Health Subcommittee, such as the 21st Century Cures Act, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, and bills to boost research for rare disease, neurological, and congenital heart defect patients.

The panel additionally has jurisdiction over Medicare and Medicaid reform, and Food and Drug Administration policy.

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Commissioners approve Connected City

By Kathy Steele
ksteele@lakerlutznews.com

A champagne toast and tethered hot-air balloon rides heralded the groundbreaking for a 7-acre manmade Crystal Lagoon that — when finished — will be large enough for six football fields, end to end.

In the background, construction workers stirred dust and hammered nails into model homes for the first master-planned community in Epperson Ranch, along the Connected City corridor. The Crystal Lagoon is the splashy jewel at the center of Epperson.

Connected City, if successful, could become Pasco's economic jewel.

Pasco County commissioners voted unanimously on Feb. 7 to approve the framework to establish the Connected City, as a state-approved 10-year pilot program to foster a technology-based "city of the future."

At its 50-year build out, the Connected City is expected to have more than 96,000 residents within multiple neighborhoods; 37,000 homes and apartments; as many as 7.2 million square feet of employment facilities; and, a role-model reputation for technology innovation.

But, for now, all eyes are on Epperson and the Crystal Lagoon in northeastern Pasco, at Curley and Overpass roads. The mammoth swimming pool, with clear blue, see-through waters, is a global phenomenon, with locations in Chile and Cabo San Lucas in Mexico. Pasco's Crystal Lagoon will be the first in the nation.

"It's like swimming in a bottle of Zephyrhills water," said Greg Singleton, president of Metro Development Group. "It's so incredibly clear."



COURTESY OF COLE MEDIA PRODUCTIONS

Dignitaries picked up shovels and tossed dirt at a ceremonial groundbreaking for Crystal Lagoon, a 7-acre, manmade lagoon at Epperson Ranch.

It took more than two years of planning, workshops and negotiations to reach the groundbreaking at Epperson on Feb. 2, followed by the Connected City vote nearly a week later.

"It was worth the time. I say congratulations to everybody," said Pasco County Commission Chairman Mike Moore. "I think we'll see great things for our neighborhoods. All eyes are going to be upon us now. People will be coming to Pasco County, to follow suit."

State lawmakers carved out about 7,800 acres in northeastern Pasco, in 2015, for a special development district. The boundaries are Interstate 75, State Road 52, and Curley and Overpass roads.

State law, and now county approval, set in motion a 10-year pilot program to encourage mixed-use development projects and master-planned communities built from the ground up with cutting edge technology.

"At the end of the day, I feel it's the right

thing for the county," said Pasco County Commissioner Mike Wells. "It comes down to job creation for me."

Still, the excitement level created by Connected City isn't shared by everyone.

Resident Jennifer McCarthy has been a frequent critic of Connected City at prior meetings. She and her husband, Chris McCarthy, attended the final hearing on Feb. 2, but neither spoke during public comment.

They both remain worried about property rights of residents who have lived in the area for decades. Increased traffic is another issue, especially on Kenton Road where they live.

They also aren't convinced that the area can become another technology-heavy Silicon Valley.

"This isn't California," said Jennifer McCarthy.

Resident Nancy Hazelwood worries about preserving the rural character of the area.

She objected when county commissioners voted to carve out a portion of the Villages of

Pasadena Hills, and to add it into Connected City boundaries.

County commissioners said that made sense because the state-drawn boundaries overlapped into one of the Villages' neighborhoods.

It was the third time, Hazelwood said, that the county gave up rural land to accommodate urban development.

"You keep taking things from what we were given at one time," she said.

Change is coming.

Metro Development Group anticipates completion of the lagoon in 2017, with the opening of model homes in late 2017 or early 2018.

Metro Development Group is working in a public-private partnership with Pasco County on the initial development within Connected City. The development company controls about 35 percent of the targeted area.

A second community — known as Mirada — is planned by Metro Development Group, along with a second Crystal Lagoon of more than 10 acres.

In return for meeting more than 50 development criteria, the county is offering mobility fee credits and a faster-than-usual review process to Connected City projects.

Technology is the premier feature in what is expected to entice high-paying jobs to Pasco.

The vision is for the entire area to become a northern gateway into the Tampa Bay region, with links to commerce and education centers to the south, including the research-oriented University of South Florida.

"I am doing everything I can to hook them up with tech companies," said Pasco County Commissioner Kathryn Starkey.

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Board Certified in Family Medicine

Please join us as we welcome Dr. Sonal Patel and Dr. Elisa Thompson to the Sunlake area and community with an open house and ribbon cutting at their beautiful new office space in The Shoppes at Sunlake Centre.

Dr. Patel is a board certified internal medicine physician who has been practicing medicine in the Tampa Bay area for over a decade and provides care for adults ages 18 and older. Dr. Thompson is a board certified family medicine physician with over 10 years of experience who cares for patients of all ages, from newborns to adults.

Both doctors and their staff look forward to visiting with you and giving you a tour of their new office.

When: Tuesday, February 28, 2017

Time: 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Where: Sunlake Lutz Medical Center

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→ Ribbon cutting at 5:30 pm courtesy of the Central Pasco Chamber of Commerce

→ Refreshments will be provided

Call (813) 803-7150 with any questions.

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Chalk Talk

Send school news to
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SAINT LEO HELD VETERANS INFO MEETING

Saint Leo University hosted a Veterans Community Information Meeting, bringing together various organizations that serve veterans in Pasco County and surrounding counties. Coordination of services is key so that veterans' needs do not fall through the cracks. Dr. William J. Lennox Jr., university president, spoke at the meeting. Capt. Tait Sanborn of the Pasco County Sheriff's Office and student-veteran John Morgan were also present.

INSTRUCTIONAL JOB FAIR

Pasco County Schools will host a Spring Instructional Job Fair Feb. 23 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., at Wesley Chapel High School, 30651 Wells Road in Wesley Chapel.

The job fair is for teachers and student services employees.

Positions are available at the elementary, middle and high school levels, including: reading, math, science, emotional and be-

havioral disorders/autism spectrum disorder, school nurse, and behavioral analyst.

Applicants can get on-the-spot interviews and prizes for participating.

For information, visit PascoSchools.org, and click on the Job Fair banner at the top of the page.

Those interested also can call Lori Perreault at (813) 794-2845.

RECYCLED ARTWORK

Pasco County Recycling is hosting its annual Art of Recycling contest, back for its 21st year.

Pasco County high school students have created art from trash, and the recycled artwork will be on display in the lobby of the West Pasco Government Center, 8731 Citizens Drive in New Port Richey, through Feb. 24.

Creations are judged in 15 categories, including Best Use of Aluminum, Best Use of Plastic, Most Innovative and Best Environmental Concept.

The contest and exhibit help raise awareness of the arts and encourage the practice of recycling.

For information, visit bit.ly/2kdGsIk.

HIGH SCHOOL CAR SHOW

The second annual Wesley Chapel High Car Show will be Feb. 25 from 10 a.m. to 2

p.m., at 30651 Wells Road in Wesley Chapel, with imports, domestics, trucks and student cars.

There also will be food trucks, a disc jockey and kid's activities.

The show will feature three classes, and handmade trophies will be awarded.

All proceeds will go to the high school's auto academy.

The show entry fee is \$20. Spectator admission is free.

For more information, please email bodellev@pasco.k12.fl.us.

COLLEGE NIGHT

Wesley Chapel High School, 30651 Wells Road, will host its annual College Night Feb. 27 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., for all area high school students (particularly 11th-graders) and parents.

Students can get information about majors, sports, special programs, admission requirements, tuition, financial aid, scholarship availability, future career opportunities and more.

Representatives from state universities; Pasco-Hernando State College; other public and private colleges and universities from Florida and other states; and, the U.S. Military, including Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines and Navy, will be available to assist potential applicants.

For information, contact Timothy Durling, WCHS career specialist, at (813) 794-8733 or tdurling@pasco.k12.fl.us.

FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

Tampa and St. Petersburg-area Simon properties are seeking applicants for \$1 million in scholarships. The Simon Youth Foundation, a national nonprofit that provides educational opportunities for at-risk high school students, is looking for qualified applicants who live near Tampa Premium Outlets, Ellenton Premium Outlets, Tyrone Square and the surrounding communities.

Any student who will graduate in 2017 and lives in the community surrounding a Simon property is eligible. Applicants can check eligibility by entering their zip code at SYF.org/scholarships.

Recipients can receive up to \$1,500 to enroll in an accredited college, university, vocational or technical school.

The application period ends March 1.

HOME-SCHOOLING MINISTRY

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church, 2348 Collier Parkway in Land O' Lakes, offers a Home-schooling Ministry, with weekly co-op at the church, social events and more.

For information, email Linda Holt at lmtca@verizon.net.

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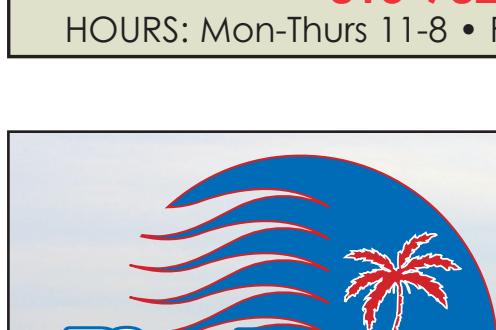


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TRAFFIC, from page 1A

would increase from 350 feet to 750 feet. An additional 125 feet would be added to the outside left-turn lane for a total length of 875 feet.

• Westbound on State Road 54, the right-turn lane at U.S. 41 would increase from 360 feet to 500 feet. The southbound dual left-turn lanes on State Road 54 already are at the maximum length.

• Southbound on U.S. 41, the dual left-turn lane would increase from 430 feet to 475 feet. The southbound right-turn lane would increase from 320 feet to 475 feet.

• No change is planned for the northbound U.S. 41 left- and right-turn lanes because they are at maximum length.

A permanent and more intense design

change for the intersection remains uncertain.

Work will begin anew in March on the Vision 54/56 corridor study, which is looking at a range of road projects from U.S. 19 to Bruce B. Downs Boulevard.

A first phase of the study was completed in 2016.

This second phase will place emphasis on ideas to improve the intersections of State Road 54 and U.S. 41 in east Pasco, and State Road 54 and Little Road in west Pasco.

Meanwhile, the state transportation department put an earlier proposal on hold to build a \$180 million flyover elevating State Road 54 over U.S. 41, and including toll lanes.

The road project met strong resistance from residents at a town hall meeting in 2015.

COMIC, from page 1A

"I couldn't believe how many people, especially young girls, were inspired by me coming in second," Sorensen said. "I ended up with a lot of followers on Instagram, just for being a teacher and a firefighter."

Meanwhile, Sorensen worked closely with the comic studio, over a period of several weeks, to help develop Firegirl's image and primary qualities.

"I wanted it to be more of like an athletic character and a strong female character," Sorensen said.

One distinguishing feature is the superhero's hair, which resembles a blaze of flames.

"We worked back and forth with her in development, to come up with a different image," Jarrell said. "We also wanted to make sure it wasn't overly racy-looking or anything; we kept it more modest."

He added: "The build of the character is...not exaggerating like a lot of comic book characters are — they're always bigger and badder and more giant; it's just not very realistic of what you see."

As the project moves forward, Sorensen will have input on the comic's plot development.

"There will be portions where it's out of the firehouse or out of the schoolhouse," Sorensen said. "The idea is that it's something I can be proud of my students reading, but also still appeals to everybody, that everyone could enjoy reading it."

"Ultimately, it's important for me that the storyline does have teachable moments."

While a story arc is still being hashed out, Jarrell did offer a sneak preview, of sorts.

He said Firegirl will initially square off against three terroristic villains — Vapor, Volt and Pyroclast.

"There's a storyline that deals with...a vil-



FILE
Stephanie Sorensen is the inspiration for a web comic superhero, called Firegirl. Sorensen, who volunteers at Fire Station 28 in Land O' Lakes, placed second in a national campaign to bring awareness to the need for volunteer firefighters.

lain starting a fire, and other issues going on with the school where she teaches," Jarrell explained. "The villain has no idea Firegirl is there...and it just winds up that it works out, in a roundabout way."

"The story itself," he added, "is she gains these abilities and actually uses them to kind of put the smackdown on...fear and terror."

The web comic likely will be released online (FiregirlWebComic.com) sometime in April. It may later be published in print form, too.

Once released, Sorensen said she hopes to share the comic with her students either on Club Days or during the Great American Teach-In.

NUDIST, from page 1A

and Lake Paradise Resort. The Oasis is a gated, upscale subdivision described as a hybrid nudist community.

Nudist communities and resorts are spread across the state.

According to the AANR report there are:

• 34 nudist resorts, including eight in Pasco County

• 30 naturist social clubs

• 5,100 nudist resort rooms available

• 1.2 million nudist room nights sold in 2016

• 22 million visitor nights

• Visitors on average stay 10 nights, with a high percentage staying a month or more

• \$4.3 billion a year in direct spending by nudist visitors.

While the nudist population in Pasco is sometimes pegged at about 10,000, Heather said it's difficult to pin down exact numbers.

Some visitors are "snowbirds" who stay during the winter; others are international visitors who might stay 10 days; some are day-trippers from nearby counties; and others are permanent residents, he said.

Pasco clearly is a star in the nudist firmament.

In 2014, a German documentary, "World of Nudism," was filmed at Lake Como. A TLC reality television show, "Buy Naked," features local real estate agent, Jackie Youngblood, as she finds and sells homes in Pasco for her nudist clients.

A Bare Dare 5K is an annual event at Caliente and is probably the largest naked runners' race in North America.

Pasco County's website has an online link, "Naked People Vacation Here," at

VisitPasco.net.

"They recognize that it is very important to our tourism tax here," said Heather.

But, much more could be done to promote nudist tourism, he added.

Six new hotels are under construction or newly opened in Pasco, but Heather said they often focus on the business traveler. More resorts and tourist hotels are needed, he said.

Statewide, cruise lines are adding more clothing-optional vacations.

Currently, the only officially sanctioned nudist beach is in Miami, on the northern end of Haulover Beach.

But, nudists are quietly accepted at a few other locations including Playlinda, at the federally owned Cape Canaveral National Seashore.

The AANR report highlighted Haulover's economic benefits to Miami.

About \$988,000 in parking fees from nude beach visitors were collected at the north parking lot in 2015-2016.

The annual expenditures from nudist tourism is pegged at about \$1 billion.

"The nude beach is packed with people," Heather said.

Still, there is acknowledgement that nude beaches would be a challenge. "It could be a political back and forth," Heather said.

But, the payoff could be significant, he said.

Pasco County set a record last year by earning nearly \$1 million from tourist tax revenues.

Overall, tourism has grown in Florida from about \$87 billion in 2011 to about \$109 billion in 2016.

"Your return on investment is just too great," he said.



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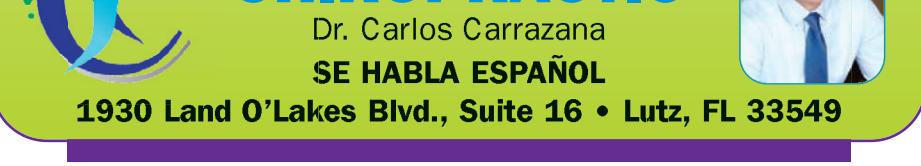
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Community Sports

Your Neighborhood Sports Source

Sunlake falls short of state title bid

By Kevin Weiss

kweiss@lakerlutznews.com

They were just one win shy from reaching the Class 7A state tournament.

Yet, as the performance in their first-ever region final would indicate, Sunlake's varsity girls basketball team still has some work to get there.

The Seahawks (17-9) — the last girls hoops squad standing in Pasco County — suffered a devastating 66-24 loss to Orlando Edgewater (16-14) on Feb. 17 at Wiregrass Ranch High School.

A sizable Seahawks crowd — loud and proud in pre-game warmups — was quickly silenced as Edgewater roared to a blazing 24-0 start, less than 7 minutes through the opening quarter.

The Eagles attacked Sunlake's 2-3 zone, mostly by hitting 3s, drawing fouls and getting second-chance opportunities.

Edgewater's well-rounded athleticism and on-ball traps, too, proved a problem for the Seahawks throughout the contest.

The first Sunlake points finally came with 51 seconds left in the first quarter — a three-point play by 5-foot-10 junior guard Elizabeth Moran, who led the team with eight points.

It was far from enough, though. By halftime, Edgewater's lead grew to 53-16.

A running clock ensued in the second half.

For the game, Edgewater made 18 three-pointers, and out-rebounded the Seahawks 27-12.



KEVIN WEISS

Sunlake fell one win shy of reaching the Class 7A state tournament. However, they return all but one player for the 2017-2018 season.

Edgewater, which has won four state championships since 2007, is now playing in the state tournament for the sixth time in 10 years.

Despite the lopsided defeat, Seahawks coach Reesa Hendrix Pledge remained upbeat.

"Sometimes you're just not ready," Hendrix Pledge said, honestly. "But, we'll be ready next year. We'll be back."

There's a solid chance of that, considering Sunlake has just one senior — guard Cheyenne Yucatoni. The senior, graduating from a team that returns five juniors, two sophomores and three freshmen.

"They're babies," Hendrix Pledge said. "There's two of them that started last year, and the rest of them are just now playing."

The 2016-2017 season, she noted, was more about "coming together as a team."

"The greatest thing," Hendrix Pledge said, "is they love each other more, and they fight for each other."

Sunlake's final basket of the season, fit-

tingly, was scored by Yucatoni. The senior was subsequently pulled out of the game as a show of gratitude for her contributions to the program.

"She's meant everything," Hendrix Pledge said. "She's worked hard, she's been the first one to practice, she's been the one that helps clean up, she's (taught) them what it takes to work year-round and to get better."

"That's what we needed this year — that leadership — and she showed it."

Prior to the setback to Edgewater, Sunlake won four consecutive playoff games, defeating Springstead twice, Land O' Lakes and Brandon high schools.

Elsewhere in our coverage area, the Carrollwood Day School's varsity girls basketball team advanced to the state tournament for the first time in school history. Under first-year coach Karim Nohra, the Patriots (27-2) are heading to Lakeland to play in the Class 3A state semifinal, following a 51-43 victory over Orlando

Key returnees for Sunlake in 2017-2018

- Andrea Wallace, junior center: 11.9 PPG, 13.0 RPG, 2.2 blocks per game
- Mary Moran, junior guard: 9.6 PPG, 8.7 RPG, 2.5 steals per game (SPG)
- Kasia Ramirez, junior guard: 8.3 PPG, 2.0 RPG, 2.1 SPG

Christian Prep in the region final on Feb. 14.

Nohra previously guided Academy at the Lakes to the final four in five of his six years before departing to CDS in October.

The Patriots enter the state tournament with youth — and lots of it. The roster of 10 players includes just two sophomores, six freshmen, an eighth grader and a seventh grader. Additionally, all five starters are freshman, including top player Tiasia McMillan, a guard who averages 15.8 points and 7.6 rebounds.

CHECK OUT

SEND SPORTS NEWS TO KWEISS@LAKERLUTZNEWS.COM



COURTESY OF PREMIER JUNIOR GOLF TOUR

Pitcher named preseason All-American

CJ Van Eyk, a senior right-handed pitcher at Steinbrenner High School and Florida State commit, was selected as a 2017 first-team preseason high school All-American by Collegiate Baseball News.

Van Eyk was one of several dozen players nationwide selected to the list.

The site says players on the list "represent not only amazing athletic ability and talent in their respective positions, but they also are among the most sought after players by pro scouts and college recruiters."

It's not the only outlet hyping Van Eyk's abilities.

He also was named to Maxpreps.com's 2017 preseason All-American team, which encompasses 30 prep players nationwide.

Last year, the 6-foot-2, 185-pound ace helped spearhead Steinbrenner's Class 8A state title, compiling a 12-1 record on the mound, with 130 strikeouts and a



FILE
Steinbrenner's CJ Van Eyk

0.77 ERA in 91 innings.

In October, Van Eyk was one of 20 players across the country selected to the USA Baseball 18U National Team.

Scouts laud Van Eyk for his low-90s fastball, along with his power curve and changeup.



COURTESY OF LUTHER COLLEGE

Local grad earns collegiate letter

Darrylus Lowe, a former Land O' Lakes High School defensive lineman, earned his first collegiate letter as a member of the Division III Luther (Iowa) College football team. Lowe, a 2016 graduate of Land O' Lakes, made an immediate impact as a freshman defensive tackle, tallying 20 tackles and 2.5 sacks for loss. At Land O' Lakes, the 5-foot-10, 285-pound Lowe was one of the more disruptive defensive players in Pasco County. As a senior in the 2015 season, Lowe racked up 67 tackles, 19 tackles for loss, four sacks and a forced fumble.

Richey. The 17th annual event includes a 5K, 10K and half-marathon foot race, as well as a noncompetitive one-mile Fun Run and bike tour. Funds raised will benefit individuals with Alzheimer's disease in Pasco County and Central Florida, and their families. For information or to register, call (727) 848-8888, or visit AlzheimersFamily.org.

ROLLER DERBY RECRUITING OPEN

On the first two Mondays of each month, Revolution Roller Derby will have open recruitment from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., at SpinNations, 8345 Congress St., in New Port Richey. Anyone over the age of 16 is welcome to join; no experience is necessary. The nonprofit, flat-track roller derby league features a women's team, The Rolling Valkyries; and a coed team, Mom & Pop's Militia. For information, visit RevolutionRollerDerby.com, or email info@revolutionrollerderby.com.

FURRY FRIENDS 5K SET APRIL 9

Girls Scout Troop 497 will host the third annual Furry Friends 5K on April 22. The run starts at 8 a.m., in front of the Wilderness Lake Preserve Lodge, 21329 Wilderness Lake Blvd., in Land O' Lakes. To run the race, participants must bring one donation item per person. Food and supplies will be donated to both the Pasco County Animal Shelter and P.U.R.R (Pets Unconditionally Rescued and Rehomed). Animals will be available for adoption at the end of the race. Furry Friends 5K T-shirts can be pre-ordered through March 25. For information, visit tinyurl.com/gq4vevt.

Golfer wins junior tournament

Jordan Sarhaddi, a sophomore at Sunlake High School, won the Premier Junior Golf Tour's Crescent Oaks Junior Open on Feb. 12 in Tarpon Springs. In the Boys 16-19 Division, Sarhaddi finished plus-4, shooting a two-round total of 148 (79-69), five strokes lower than the second-place finisher. He made seven birdies during a final round, three-under par 69. The win earns Sarhaddi a Florida Junior Tour exemption.

AREA COMMITMENTS

• Imani Thomas, a 6-foot power forward for Academy at the Lakes, will continue her basketball career at Hillsborough Community College. A reliable double-double threat, Thomas is the first player in the Academy's history to log 1,000-plus career points and rebounds.

ESPN.com ranks Thomas as a three-star recruit, and the nation's 71st-best forward for the 2017 class.

"She is incredibly intelligent, a very smart player," Academy's coach Todd Huffman recently told The Laker/Lutz News. "She understands the game, and reads and reacts to situations with split-second adjustment."

• Brett Bitter, a wide receiver for Steinbrenner High, has committed to play collegiate football at Liberty University, an FCS school in Lynchburg, Virginia. In 2016, the 6-foot-2, 165-pound wideout led the Warriors in receiving, tallying 43 receptions for 652 yards and seven touchdowns. He also added 35 tackles and two interceptions on defense. During his prep career, Bitter compiled 94 receptions, 1,479 yards and 13 touchdowns.

• Nate Springfield, a right-handed pitcher for Wiregrass Ranch High, has committed to play baseball at St. Petersburg College. The 6-foot-2, 190-pound senior led the Bulls in ERA (1.30), strikeouts (49) and innings pitched (49.1) in 2016. The Bulls' 2017 season began Feb. 21.

LOCAL HOOPERS TO PLAY IN ALL-STAR GAME

A pair of local basketball standouts were chosen to participate in the Tampa Bay Basketball Coaches Association East-West

Senior All-Star Game. Wharton High School's Dae'Son Barnes and Steinbrenner High's Trey Williams will both represent the West squad. Barnes is a 6-foot-2 shooting guard, and Williams is a 6-foot-1 point guard. The game's date and time is pending.

SAINT LEO HOSTS FREE SPORTS CLINIC FEB. 25

Saint Leo University will host a free sports clinic for elementary- and middle-school students on Feb. 25, celebrating National Girls and Women in Sports Day.

The day will start with a sports clinic for school-age students on the University Soccer Field at 10 a.m. The clinic aims to expose participants to a variety of sports; introductory developmental skills will be taught by Saint Leo NCAA student-athletes.

Once the clinic concludes at 11:45 a.m., participants are invited to stay for free pizza and the softball doubleheader, which begins at noon at University Softball Stadium.

Tampa Bay area native and 2016 Olympic gold medalist swimmer Melanie Margalis will be in attendance at the clinic. Margalis, a 2010 graduate of Countryside High School in Pinellas County and a 2014 graduate of the University of Georgia, won a gold medal with the U.S. Women's 4x200 freestyle relay team at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

For information about Saint Leo's activities for National Girls and Women in Sports Day, contact Erin Mykleby at erin.mykleby@saintleo.edu or (352) 588-8223.

To register, visit TotalCamps.com/saintleoevents.

BOSTON MARATHON FUNDRAISER FEB. 23

Wesley Chapel resident Trish Trout is once again competing in the Boston Marathon, as a runner for the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. A fundraiser is scheduled for Feb. 23 at 6:30 p.m., at FITniche at The Shops at Wiregrass. The fundraiser includes a 3.1-mile run/walk. Bart Yasso, chief running officer from Runner's World Magazine, will head up the run, and will also give a short presentation. The event is free, but donations will be accepted. For information, call FITniche at (813) 428-6945.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS SET FOR FEB. 24

More than 700 athletes are expected to compete in the East Pasco Special Olympics Feb. 24 from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Wesley Chapel High School, 30651 Wells Road in Wesley Chapel. Events include track & field, bocce, cycling, soccer and tennis. Admission and parking are free. For information, contact Bridget White at (813) 794-8729 or bawhite@pasco.k12.fl.us.

LITTLE LEAGUE CELEBRATES 66TH YEAR

Dade City Little League will celebrate its 66th anniversary March 4 at Burk's Park, 13220 Gene Nelson Blvd., in Dade City. The event kicks off with a pancake breakfast at 8 a.m., followed by Opening Day ceremonies at 9 a.m. Throughout the day, there will be a Challengers game, along with t-ball, baseball and softball games. For information, email John Moors at jmoors@dadecitychamber.org.

IDLEWILD MEN'S SOFTBALL REGISTRATION

Registration is now open for Idlewild Baptist Church's Men's Softball league. Cost is \$45 per player. Games are played every Monday evening from March 6 through April 24. Playoffs are May 1 and May 8. For information, email ibcresc@idlewild.org.

BISHOP MC LAUGHLIN 5K

Bishop McLaughlin Catholic High School will host a Category 5K/Fun Run & Family Event Feb. 25 at the school's athletic fields, 13651 Hays Road in Spring Hill. Registration begins at 9 a.m. Cost is \$10 for children ages 6 to 12, \$20 for students, and \$30 for adults. Other family events include a corn hole tournament and putt-putt golf. Online registration and payment are available at BMCHS.com. For information, call (727) 857-2600.

ALZHEIMER'S PASCO CHALLENGE

The Alzheimer's Family Organization will host its Pasco Challenge March 11 at the Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park, 10500 Wilderness Park Blvd., in New Port

Ice arena offers plenty of room, action

By Kevin Weiss

kweiss@lakerlutznews.com

There's no shortage of activities — or room — at the newly minted Florida Hospital Center Ice.

From learning to skate, to playing hockey and curling, there's plenty to do at the much-ballyhooed facility, which measures 150,500 square feet.

On Jan. 28, during the facility's opening weekend, hundreds of youth and adults packed into what has been described as "the largest ice sports facility in the Southeastern United States."

Patrons came from as far away Brooksville, Valrico and Lithia to check out the complex, at 3173 Cypress Ridge Blvd., which is off Interstate 75 at the State Road 56 interchange in Wesley Chapel.

Others visited from nearby Lutz, Land O' Lakes and New Tampa.

And, while two of the complex's five rinks remain under construction, there were plenty of options to accommodate ice enthusiasts of all kinds.

The Olympic rink, which measures 200 feet by 100 feet, was fully occupied with public skaters and learn-to-skate participants.

Two NHL-sized rinks (200 feet by 85 feet), meanwhile, were teeming with hours of youth recreational hockey evaluations and adult pickup games.

During breaks in ice action, spectators marveled at the fully stocked pro shop and other amenities at the two-story facility.

Gordie Zimmerman, managing partner of Florida Hospital Center Ice, is one contented man.

"We've exceeded our expectations from the get-go," Zimmerman said. "Like participation for the Learn to Skate, everything's almost double of what we thought it would be coming out of the starting block, so it's been terrific."

That, too, applies to registration figures for the center's adult hockey leagues.

The initial eight-week "reduced" session has 25 teams signed up, consisting of beginner, intermediate and advanced leagues.

"We thought we would maybe get 10 teams in the first adult (league)," Zimmerman said. He's elated with the current registration figures.

Additionally, more teams are anticipated to sign up once 12-week sessions commence.

Besides recreation league offerings, the center also will be home base for several



FRED BELLET

During a water break, Mason Cessna, 9, of Valrico, gets a quick swig during the 9- and 10-year-old session. Coaches were watching the individual abilities of each participant in the 'Squirts' division.

other area-based teams and organizations.

The Wiregrass Ranch and Freedom high school club teams have signed up. The same goes for the University of South Florida Ice Bulls, of the American Collegiate Hockey Association.

The Tampa Bay Junior Hockey Club, an elite training development program, also has jumped aboard.

Consequently, a bevy of regional and international tournaments and camps are in the works, Zimmerman said.

One of the more intriguing on the docket is the World V-Red Prospect Advanced Camp, from July 16 through July 21.

Labeled as Canada's No. 1 hockey program, it's the first time ever the weeklong event will be hosted in the United States.

"The biggest thing that we're doing," Zimmerman said, "is that we're bringing in major tournaments through the summer, and we're going to bring in another one that's going to be huge for the area for hockey."

The complex, too, has drawn the eyes of the Tampa Bay Lightning, who've signed on as program rink sponsors.

No plans are in the works for the Lightning to relocate their practices from the Ice Sports Forum in Brandon, however.

Other visiting NHL teams, though, may practice at the Wesley Chapel complex during their road trips to Florida; multiple NHL organizations have already expressed interest in doing so, Zimmerman said.

Still, there will be ample ice time for

everyone — even the average skater or recreational hockey player.

"We can do a lot more...and still keep our public skate and our learn-to-skate program going; we don't have to cancel it," Zimmerman explained.

Other key features of the complex, interestingly, don't even require ice.

Rinks can be converted to accommodate large corporate events and dry floor sports, such as basketball, volleyball and box lacrosse.

"We have a sub-floor that goes over the ice," Zimmerman said, "and a sport court goes on top of one of the NHL rinks. We can put it on any one, and we can also do it on the mini-rink."

There's also a six-lane, 90-yard running track, and a 2,600-square-foot fitness facility.

All those features, Zimmerman said, set the facility apart from other complexes.

"Really, there's nothing comparable to this south of New York all the way through the West Coast," Zimmerman said. "It's pretty amazing."

Shari Klutz, skating the center's program director, agrees.

"I love this facility," said Klutz, who previously served as figure skating director at the

Ashburn Ice House in Virginia.

"They thought of a lot of key things, and made it unique. It has every training aspect you could need."

The ice complex has been a long time coming for the area.

Previously, many Pasco and north Hillsborough residents would trek to Brandon to get their hockey and skating fix. Others may have used the Clearwater Ice Arena or the Tampa Bay Skating Academy in Oldsmar.

Florida Hospital Center Ice was expected to open in October 2015. However, vari-



Florida Hospital Center Ice has attracted a large number of skaters, taking to the ice.

ous permitting and technological setbacks stalled the \$28 million capital investment project.

Zimmerman pointed to a lengthy commissioning period, balancing of the building and "other things out of our control."

"I wouldn't say they were necessarily delays," Zimmerman said. "It's a very complicated building."

He added: "We would have loved to be open before the (Christmas) holiday, but we're going to be here a long time, so we wanted to do it right."

With a relative dearth of ice complexes in the Bay Area, Center Ice is forecasted as an economic driver for both Wesley Chapel and Pasco County.

The county already has five hotels in development, including two directly adjacent to the complex.

Officials believe the massive facility will attract 1.5 million to 2 million visitors annually, with 40 percent coming from outside Tampa Bay.

Though open and operable, the entire complex is still not fully complete.

Finishing touches are still being made to the fitness center and two rinks. The full-service restaurant, Top Shelf Sports Lounge, is slated to open sometime this month.



Rob Passante, left, of Wesley Chapel, has the duty of tying ice skates for 10-year-old Tucker McKinney, of Seffner, as Tucker's brother, Luke McKinney, 4, looks on. Tucker is friends with Passante's son, Dominic.

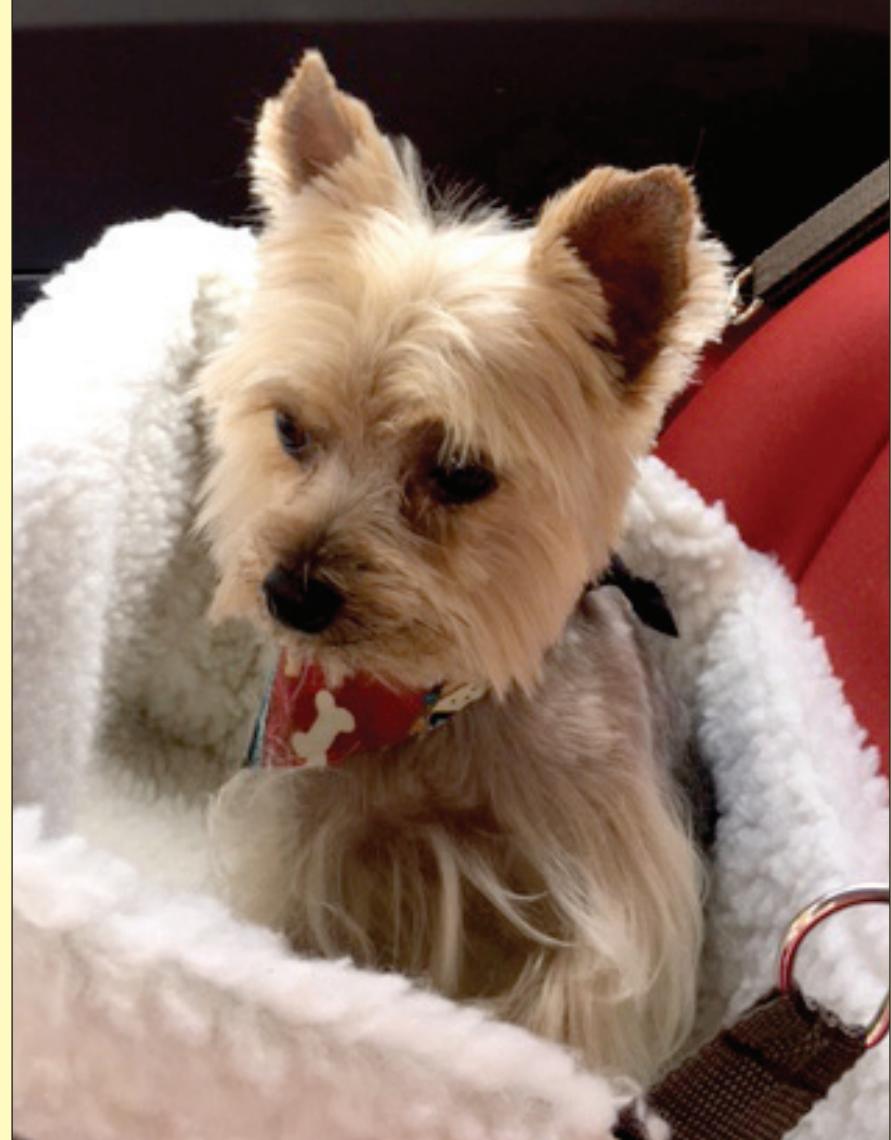


Gavin Conley, 5, of Lutz, seems one with the ice as he skates solo after a few pointers from ice-skating instructor, Megan Welch, of Wesley Chapel.



In a beginner's group session, 7-year-old Michael Caruso, left, of Wesley Chapel, finds ice skating can be a slippery experience, while he and others try skating from one side of the rink to the other.

PET of the WEEK



This is Barklee

Barklee's favorite thing to do is go riding anywhere in his car seat with his mommy. He is 5 years old and loves being petted. Barklee's proud parents are Shirley Godette and George Machado, of Zephyrhills.

Send us a picture and information on your favorite pet!

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If you would like to adopt either Coco or Trey, be sure to visit Pasco County Animal Services at 19640 Dogpatch Lane in Land O' Lakes. The adoption center is open Tuesday through Saturday, noon to 6:30 p.m. All adoption fees include spay/neuter, microchip and vaccines. For more information, email adoptionpartners@pascocountyfl.net.



Pet Loss Support Group



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MANDATORY CAT LICENSING

Pasco County now requires anyone who owns or cares for a cat 4-months of age or older to obtain a cat license and have the pet vaccinated against rabies. The Pasco County Board of Commissioners approved mandatory cat licensing in October of 2016.

One- and three-year cat licenses are available, depending on the rabies vaccine expiration date.

A license can help identify and protect lost pets. It can:

- Help lost pets and their owners to be reunited quickly
- Offer proof that a pet has been vaccinated against rabies
- Provide a source of revenue to support the return of lost pets and support adoption efforts for homeless pets.
- Help pay for animal neglect/cruelty services, spay/neuter programs, and community education services.

Residents can obtain a pet license through the Pasco County Animal Services' website, by mail, in person, at the Hudson Library, or through the veterinarian administering the rabies vaccine.

For more information, please visit PascoCountyFL.net/PAS.

TAILS AT TWILIGHT

"Tails at Twilight" is scheduled for Feb. 25, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., as part of Gulfport's Get Rescued event, the annual street festival and fundraiser on Beach Boulevard.

After the pets have gone to bed, guests are invited to stay for an evening of live music and dancing, catered hors d'oeuvres, a cash bar and opportunity drawings.

Proceeds from ticket sales, after expenses, will be donated to rescue groups participating in the evening event.

There also will be live and silent auctions.

Tickets for "Tails at Twilight" are \$25 and available at the Gulfport Welcome Center, 3101 Beach Blvd., S.

Advance tickets can be purchased online at VisitGulfportFlorida.com.

SAVE THE DATE FOR DOGS' DAY

Dogs' Day in Dade City is set for March 18, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., in Agnes Lamb Park.

Vendor spaces are available for \$20, or \$10 for a nonprofit. The 12-foot-by-12-foot space must have a fire retardant tent.

For vendor information or sponsorships, call Lucy Avila at (352) 424-49672.

For more information, please visit DogsDayInDadeCity.com.

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The LAKER/Lutz NEWS

Email to: mrathman@lakerlutznews.com, SUBJECT: Pet of the Week

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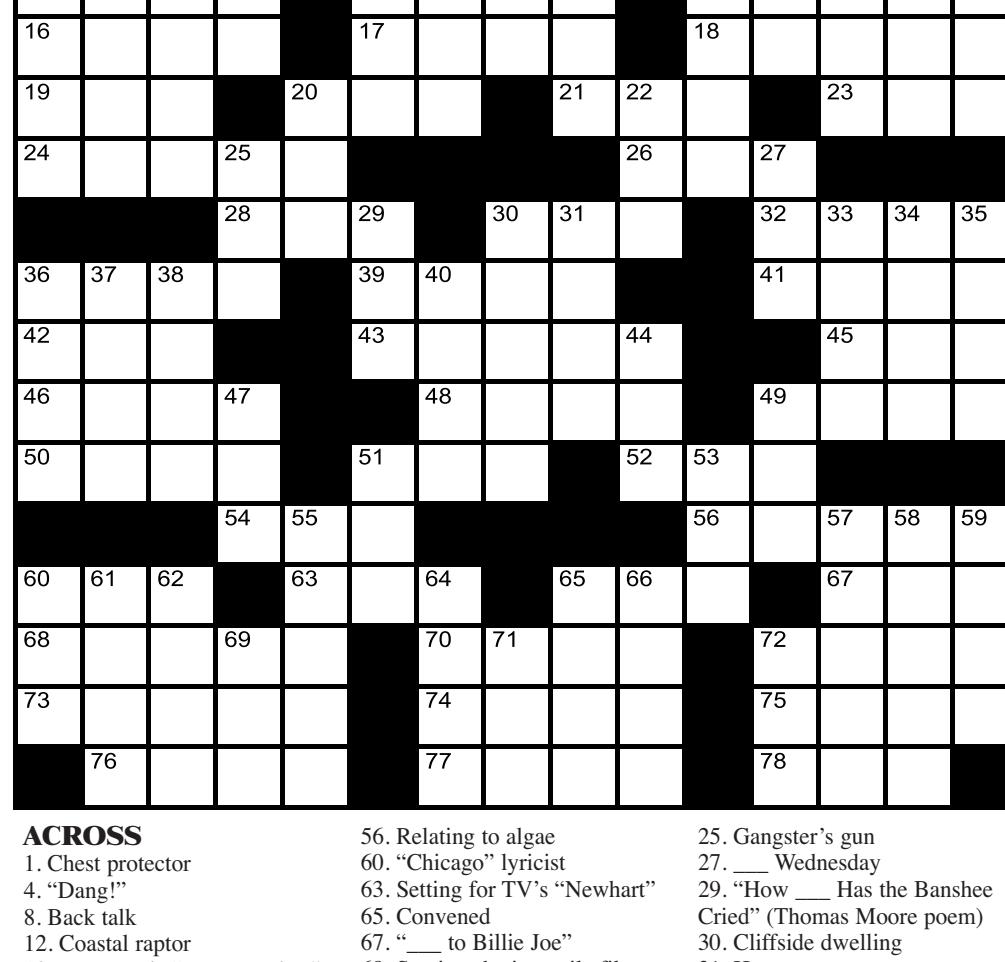
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17. Barbra's "A Star Is Born" co-star
18. Car dealer's offering
19. Barely get, with "out"
20. Drone, e.g.
21. "For shame!"
23. Ale holder
24. Conductor Koussevitzky
26. Cable network
28. Back, in a way
30. Appropriate
32. Buttonhole, e.g.
36. Clash
39. At liberty
41. Conceal
42. ___ and cheese
43. Beat
45. Barbie's beau
46. ...
48. Banquet
49. Fly, e.g.
50. French door part
51. Golf ball support
52. Car accessory
54. "The Three Faces of ___"
56. Relating to algae
60. "Chicago" lyricist
63. Setting for TV's "Newhart"
65. Convened
67. ___ to Billie Joe"
68. Semisynthetic textile filament
70. Airy
72. "How ___!"
73. Admittance
74. Cost of living?
75. Long, long time
76. Fall (over)
77. Buddy
78. The "p" in m.p.g.
56. Gangster's gun
57. Wednesday
59. "How ___ Has the Banshee Cried" (Thomas Moore poem)
60. Cliffside dwelling
61. Hammer part
63. Go for
64. Bad day for Caesar
65. Camping gear
66. FedEx, say
67. Legal prefix
68. Call from the flock
69. Carnival attraction
70. Center of a ball?
71. "Comprende?"
72. Amigo
73. Big ___ Conference
74. Backstabber
75. What records are made of
76. Overcharge
77. Calculator, at times
78. Bottom of the barrel
79. "... ___ he drove out of sight"
80. Billiard cushion
81. Information unit
82. "Cheers" regular
83. Cast
84. A chip, maybe
85. Bauxite, e.g.
86. ... green
87. 50 Cent piece

DOWN

1. Slow
2. ___ tube
3. "Wanna ___?"
4. An embankment
5. Pink, as a steak
6. "Aladdin" prince
7. Makeup, e.g.
8. Corporate department
9. A pint, maybe
10. High-five, e.g.
11. Comme ci, comme ca (hyphenated)
12. Lady bighorns
15. All ___
20. Beseech
22. Away

SEE SOLUTIONS, PAGE 6B

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TAKE 5 RIBBON CUTTINGS PLANNED

The North Tampa Chamber of Commerce will host two ribbon cuttings for Take 5 Oil Change.

The first event will Feb. 23 at 4 p.m., at Take 5 Oil Change, 5309 Gunn Highway. The second event will be Feb. 24 at 11:30 a.m., at Take 5 Oil Change, 4319 Ehrlich Road.

Light refreshments will be served. For more information, please contact the chamber at (813) 563-0180 or ContactNTCC@gmail.com.

JOB PROMOTION

James Hall, the chief operations officer of Goin' Postal Franchise Corporation and GP Brands, has been tapped as chief executive officer of GP Brands Inc., as of Feb. 13.

GP Brands offers franchises to serve an array of potential business owners and their consumer markets, including Goin' Postal neighborhood shipping stores, GP Postal stores (inside Walmart stores), Hut no. 8 clothing and accessory stores, and Sir Face Lift mobile commercial kitchen services.

Marcus Price, former chief executive officer and co-founder of Goin' Postal, will now focus on the creation of GP Brand's newest franchise chain, with an estimated launch in the first quarter of 2018. No details on the franchise were available.

DOING BUSINESS WITH GOVERNMENT

Pasco County will sponsor the Pasco County Reverse Trade Show on March 2 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., at the Land O'Lakes Recreation Center, 3032 Collier Parkway in Land O'Lakes.

A reverse trade show allows suppliers, consultants, contractors and other company representatives to meet with procurement professionals and department staff from government offices. In addition to Pasco County, participants include Pasco County Sheriff's Office, County Clerk of Circuit Courts, Dade City, New Port Richey, Port Richey, the City of San Antonio, and the Town of St. Leo.

The goal is to encourage more vendor participation. It also allows departments to see products, and can help streamline the process for contractors and vendors who want to do business with government.

Small businesses, minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses and

disadvantaged businesses are encouraged to attend and network with other companies.

Company representatives can move from table to table on the trade show floor to meet with representatives of government agencies and share information on their goods and services.

Registration is free.

For information, email Christine Davis at Cdavis@pascocountyfl.net.

WOMEN-N-CHARGE

Join the ladies of Women-n-Charge on March 3 from 11:15 a.m. to 1:15 p.m., at Pebble Creek Country Club, 10550 Regents Park Drive in Tampa. The women share their talents and resources, and they build relationships with other women in business.

No guest speaker is planned. Instead, there will be extra networking time. Each attendee also will have a minute to intro-

See BUSINESS DIGEST, page 7B

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BUSINESS LINK BREAKFAST

Business Link will have its monthly networking breakfast on March 8 from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m., at Wesley Chapel Toyota, at 5300 Eagleston Blvd., in Wesley Chapel.

The monthly gathering, held at various locations, provides networking and an in-

formation-sharing platform for the small business community.

A complimentary breakfast will be provided. The event is sponsored by the San Antonio Citizens Federal Credit Union.

RSVP to Rebecca Gaddis at (352) 588-2732, ext. 1237.

GENERAL MEETING

The North Tampa Chamber of Commerce will have a general meeting on March 9 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Iavarone's Steakhouse & Italian Grill, 3617 Humphrey St., in Tampa.

The guest speaker will be Barry Coziah of Postcard Mania.

For early bird registration, RSVP online with credit card or to the chamber office at ContactNTCC@gmail.com by 5 p.m., on March 7, at the discounted rate of \$20 (whether you eat or not). After that date, the cost is \$25 (whether you eat or not), payable at the door by cash, check or credit card.

For information, call the chamber office at (813) 563-0180, or visit NorthTampaChamber.com.

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ADULT EDUCATION

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BREAKFAST MEETING

The East Pasco Networking Group will meet on March 14 at 7:30 a.m., at the Village Inn at 5214 Gall Blvd., in Zephyrhills.

The guest speaker will be historian and author Madonna Jervis Wise, who will discuss "Women's History Month: A Look at Women Who Rocked!"

For information, contact Chairman Nils Lenz at (813) 782-9491 or Vice Chairwoman Vicki Jones at (813) 431-1149.

NETFEST SPONSORSHIPS

The Pasco Economic Development Council is seeking sponsors for the 15th Annual NetFest (Networking Festival) on April 6 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., at Starkey Ranch on State Road 54 in Odessa.

The annual mixer is a night of food, drink, music and networking. Dress is casual. Hats and boots are proper attire.

Sponsorships range from \$500 to \$2,000 for the "sponsor-only chili cook-off."

Sponsorship forms can be downloaded at PascoEDC.com.

For information, call (813) 926-0827, ext. 226, or email Suzanne@pascoedc.com.



COURTESY CENTRAL PASCO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Carlos Carrazana opened Carrazana Chiropractic at 1930 Land O' Lakes Blvd., Suite 16, in Land O' Lakes.

CHIROPRACTIC RIBBON CUTTING

The Central Pasco Chamber of Commerce welcomed its newest member at a ribbon cutting for Carrazana Chiropractic on Feb. 16.

Dr. Carlos Carrazana's clinic specializes in car injury accidents, according to the clinic website. Clients can receive chiropractic services, as well as physical therapy and massage therapy.

For information, call (813) 591-2506, or visit CarrazanaChiropractor.com

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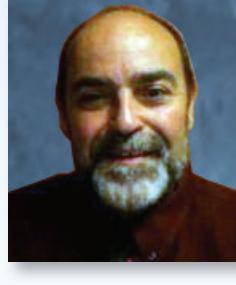
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PRESENTER:
Doug Webster, LCSW



3/21/17
Dementia:
Related Diseases and
Care
PRESENTER:
Gary LeBlanc



3/28/17
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