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SPECIAL SECTION
inside this week

Crystal Lagoon will make a splash in 2018

By Kathy Steele
ksteel@lakerlutznews.com

The Epperson residential development, with its Crystal Lagoon, will open in spring 2018 with a special guest - Olympic gold medal swimmer Michael Phelps.

Phelps signed on with Crystal Lagoons as its "Global Ambassador." He will promote swimming and water sports around the world, with appearances at Crystal Lagoon properties, including Epperson, according to a news release from The Conroy Martinez

See LAGOON, page 15A



COURTESY OF CRYSTAL LAGOON INC.

The Crystal Lagoon at Epperson is expected to open in spring 2018, with festivities that will include Olympic gold medalist Michael Phelps.



Lois Cohen/Land O' Lakes

"I'm thankful for the nice weather. I'm so glad it's finally cooled down," said Lois Cohen, of Land O' Lakes.

But, that's not all she's grateful for. I'm thankful for all of the friends that I have in the Lutz-Land O' Lakes Woman's Club," she added.

For the holiday, Cohen said, "We're having my family over for Thanksgiving. My husband is doing a whole menu," she said, including German potato casserole and cranberry trifle.



Joshua & Stephanie Critser/Zephyrhills

Stephanie Critser and her 3-year-old son, Joshua, were enjoying a beautiful day at Zephyr Park recently — which offers an example of why the Zephyrhills woman is grateful this Thanksgiving. "I am very thankful that I am able to stay at home with him. I'm able to spend a lot of quality time with him. I haven't always been able to do that, so this year, I am very thankful for that," she said.

The family will be celebrating Thanksgiving with her in-laws, she said. "My husband (Daniel) is making his mashed potatoes."

Giving thanks, for life's big and little blessings

By B.C. Manion
bcm@lakerlutznews.com

Whether it's for the expected arrival of a first grandchild, the ability to be a stay-at-home mom, landing a new job, or savoring the sheer blessing of being alive to celebrate the holiday — people across The Laker/Lutz News coverage area have

many reasons to celebrate this Thanksgiving.

Those of us working at the newspaper, join them, in celebrating the holiday of gratitude and express our appreciation to you, our readers.

PHOTOS BY B.C. MANION

See more THANKS, page 15A



Rita Noble/Dade City

Rita Noble, an avowed book lover, has been working at Hugh Embry Branch Library for 17 years. She said she's grateful for her family and friends, and is excited by the prospect of her first grandchild who is due this spring. Noble said she'll be making a "Thanksgiving dinner" with all of the fixins'.



Isabel Wirth/Dade City

Isabel Wirth, who has been volunteering at Daystar Hope Center Thrift Shop in Dade City for 19 years, said "I'm thankful that we can do as much for the people here, and I'm thankful for good health."

The Dade City woman plans to travel to Mount Dora to her niece's house for Thanksgiving.

Heritage Stage is becoming a community gathering place

By B.C. Manion
bcm@lakerlutznews.com

Long before Heritage Stage existed, Sandy Graves envisioned a place where the community would gather, to watch performances and spend time together.

The stage was completed this fall and Graves' vision has begun to take shape.

Recently, the stage was the centerpiece for an event to honor area veterans.

Shortly after that, entertainers used it for performances during Land O' Lakes SwampFest.

Next, the Land O' Lakes High School Band, the Pine View Middle School Band, the Pine View Middle School Dance Team and the Lake Myrtle Elementary School Choir will provide a holiday concert during Traditions on the Green.

The free event, being held at the recently renamed Land O' Lakes Heritage Park, 5401 Land O' Lakes Blvd., also will feature a visit from Santa, a tree lighting and a raffle on gift baskets, to raise money for the schools.

"We'll have cookies and warm apple cider, until it runs out," Graves said.

The event is set for Dec. 2, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Spectators are encouraged to bring lawn chairs, blankets and snacks, to the evening of performances presented by the Heritage Park Foundation and the Wesley Noon Rotary Land O' Lakes Satellite club.

Another event is planned for the afternoon of Dec. 10, from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The event will include a food truck, a bounce house, a visit from Santa and, from 2



FILE

Live musical entertainment always plays a big role in the annual 'Traditions on the Green' event. This year, for the first time, the entertainers will have a stage for their performances at the event, set for Dec. 2, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

If you go

TRADITIONS ON THE GREEN

WHERE: The recently renamed Land O' Lakes Heritage Park, 5401 Land O' Lakes Blvd.
WHEN: Dec. 2, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.
COST: Admission is free
DETAILS: The even features performances by local schools and a visit from Santa. Bring a lawn chair or blanket.

blanket or lawn chair, to sit back and enjoy some music presented by Heritage Park, Classical Preparatory School and several other sponsors.

Another event — the Land O' Lakes Arts & Crafts & Seafood Festival, featuring The Battle of the Bands — is planned at the venue on Dec. 16 and Dec. 17, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Featured bands will be Priest, Rat Salad and Soul Circus Cowboys. And, there will be food, shopping and kids' activities, as well.

The event is family and pet friendly, and proceeds will benefit Pasco County Animal Services.

Graves is delighted to see the stage being put to good use. "We're so excited," she said.

p.m. to 3:30 p.m., the Florida Orchestra Brass Quintet will perform "Holiday Pops" on the Heritage Park Stage.

Again, spectators are advised to bring a

Interim steps planned to improve 54/41 traffic flow

By Kathy Steele

ksteele@lakerlutznews.com

Construction on a project to improve traffic flow through the intersection of State Road 54 and U.S. 41 is expected to begin in 2018, according to Florida Department of Transportation officials.

The project, which will lengthen some turn lanes, currently is in design. The construction cost is about \$752,000 and is included in the transportation department's fiscal year 2019 budget, according to the department's spokeswoman, Kris Carson.

Changes will focus on the west side of the intersection by lengthening the eastbound right- and left-turn lanes on State Road 54. To accomplish this, the median on State Road 54 at Hunt Road will be altered to allow only right turns from Hunt onto State Road 54.

Pasco County officials estimate design costs to be about \$300,000.

The turn-lane changes are considered an interim solution to the traffic congestion at this intersection.

A permanent solution - and a major re-

construction - is the current focus of a study by a local task force that will make a recommendation to the county's Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Those efforts began in 2015, and are expected to extend into 2018.

The entire study includes the State 54/56 corridor, from Bruce B. Downs Boulevard on the east to U.S. 19 on the west. Currently, the focus is on two intersections: Little Road and State Road 54 in New Port Richey, and U.S. 41 and State Road 54 in Land O' Lakes.

The Land O' Lakes intersection is receiving most of the attention as one of the county's busiest intersections. There also is available funding, which the New Port Richey intersection lacks.

Some options for State Road 54 and U.S. 41 include elevated lanes, as well as redesigns at ground level. Dedicated lanes for buses and express toll lanes also are being considered.

The 17-member task force is working with the MPO as well as Pasco County Planning and Development, FDOT and consultants.



COURTESY OF PASCO COUNTY TAX COLLECTOR'S OFFICE

Tax collector's Land O' Lakes office moves slightly north

A ribbon cutting took place at the new Land O' Lakes office for Pasco County Tax Collector Mike Fasano. Those attending included, from left: Greg Giordano, assistant tax collector; Paula O' Neil, clerk & comptroller; Dan Biles, county administrator; Mike Moore, commission chairman; Gary Joiner, property appraiser; Mike Fasano; Billy Poulos, deputy tax collector; Brian Corley, supervisor of elections; and Tim Couet, director of customer relations.



Billy Poulos, deputy tax collector, accepts a plaque from Pasco County Tax Collector Mike Fasano, in appreciation for his efforts in spearheading the project for the opening of the new Land O' Lakes office. The office is now located at 4135 Land O' Lakes Blvd., about 150 feet north of the old one. For information, visit PascoTaxes.com.

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Expressing gratitude to bees, for all that they do

By Nicole Pinson

Special to The Laker/Lutz News

Gardeners are a grateful people, and part of our gratitude can be traced to bees.

This year, I enjoyed four butternut squashes from our garden.

I was only able to enjoy this harvest, though, because of bees.

The bees and I have a win-win partnership.

I plant flowers and vegetables. That gives bees a food source, and they, in turn, pollinate the plants.

Bees and pollinators are important to people for many reasons:

- One-third of the food we eat comes from animal-pollinated plants.
- They help pollinate our native plants and wildflowers.
- They pollinate blueberries, an \$82 million per year industry in Florida.
- Forage plants, used by meat and dairy industries, depend on pollinators to produce seed.
- More than 100 crops in the U.S., such as apples, squash, pumpkin, cranberries, onions, carrots and blueberries, benefit from pollination.

But, there are concerns about bee decline.

Several factors contribute to bee decline, including bee nutrition.

Bees gather nectar and pollen from flowers. The nectar provides bees carbohydrates and minerals to help them with flight, colony maintenance and general daily activities.

Pollen provides protein, fats, minerals and vitamins, and aids in the development of young bees.

But, did you know that all pollen is not created equal? The nutritive components of pollen differ among plants.

Bee nutrition is important to bee health and the development of young bees.

A yard or garden with only a few plants may provide less pollen variety for the bees. However, a diverse garden can provide bees



COURTESY OF NICOLE PINSON

Butternut squash, like melons, pumpkins, zucchini and cucumbers, rely on bees for pollination. If you lack bees, your vines may not produce vegetables and fruits.



Simple, inexpensive bouquets from the garden are enjoyed indoors by people, and outdoors by bees and other pollinators.

more flower choices, different pollen components and, hopefully, better nutrition.

Eric Mader with the University of Minnesota explains, "As a general rule, gardeners who want to conserve bees should provide a minimum of three plant species that bloom at any given time during the growing season."

Flower diversity includes not only color (red, pink, white, orange, purple and yellow flowers), but also bloom periods, texture and height. Diversity in height can be achieved by planting groundcovers, flowers, vines, shrubs, grasses and trees. Plants that bloom throughout the year, especially late fall, winter, and early spring, provide bees important nutrition during winter.

Add flowers to your garden that have different shapes, such as daisies, clusters, tubular flowers and bell-shaped flowers.

Bees use fine and coarse textured plants

(woody stems, leaves and grasses) for nesting materials. Plant in clumps, rather than as single plants, to attract more pollinators and provide nutritional benefits.

Examples of great bee plants include American beautyberry, partridge pea, dotted horsemint, blanket flower, Walter's viburnum, native milkweeds, frogfruit, larraflower, sunflower, cosmos, mint, African blue basil, salvia, pentas, fennel, dill, black-eyed Susan, grasses, ironweed, blackberry lily, hollies, redbud, saw palmetto, and many more.

Plant a variety of flowers and create long-season food sources to provide bees better nutrition throughout the year.

Thank a bee for its pollinator services as you enjoy your holiday meals.

And, add a few more flowers to your yard or garden so a bee can have a nutritious, happy Thanksgiving.

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For additional information, contact pinsonn@hillsboroughcounty.org or (813) 744-5519, ext. 54145.

Nicole Pinson is the Urban Horticulture Agent in Hillsborough County.

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THRIFT SHOP SALES

Life's Treasures Thrift Stores will host Black Friday sales events with 60 percent off from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m., 50 percent off from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and 30 percent off from 1 p.m. to closing, on Nov. 24 and Nov. 25. Proceeds benefit the programs and services of HPH Hospice and LifePath Hospice. Local store locations are at 4802 Gunn Highway in Carrollwood and 4910 S.Allen Road in Zephyrhills. For other locations, visit ChaptersHealth.org.

HOLIDAY CLASSIC MOVIES

Tampa Theatre is back with its Holiday Classics movie series. The theater itself will be closed for renovations through the end of December, so the movies will be shown at Curtis Hixon Park. The movies scheduled (all at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted) are "Miracle on 34th Street" Nov. 24; "A Christmas Story" Nov. 25; "The Polar Express" Dec. 1 at 8 p.m.; "Elf" Dec. 15; and "It's a Wonderful Life" Dec. 16. Admission is free. Lawn seating is first-come, first-served. Refreshments will be available. For information, visit TampaTheatre.org.

GULFSIDE THRIFT SALES

All six Pasco County locations of the Gulfside Hospice thrift shops will offer a Flip-A-Coin sale on Nov. 24. Flip heads at the cash register and get 10 percent off a purchase. Flip tails and get 20 percent off. All stores also will offer free coffee for shoppers. Black Friday hours will be 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For all locations, visit GHPPC.org.

HELP ASSEMBLE BIKES

Make a Difference Inc., will host a "Bike-O-Rama" Nov. 25 at its Dade City location, 12311 U.S. 301. This is a volunteer event to assemble 100 bicycles that the golf scrambles and sponsors have purchased to be distributed in East Pasco through Toys for Tots, Make a Difference Inc., and The Perfect 10 Charity. For information and to sign up, call Cherrie Lowe at (352) 437-3466.

BOUTIQUE & BAKE SALE

The GFWC Woman's Club of Zephyrhills will host its second annual Jingle Bell Boutique and Bake Sale Nov. 25 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the clubhouse at 38545 Fifth Ave., in Zephyrhills. The event will be inside and outside. All proceeds from the bake sale and vendor fees will be used to further local programs and projects of the club. For information, visit GFWCZephyrhills.org.

SENSORY FRIENDLY FILM

Cobb Grove 16 Theatres, 6333 Wesley Grove Blvd., in Wesley Chapel, will offer a sensory friendly film for families with varying abilities Nov. 25 at 10 a.m. The movie will be "Coco." The auditorium will have brighter lights, and the sound level will be turned down. Guests can dance and sing without the worry of disturbing others. Tickets are available in person the Wednesday prior to the showing. Films, dates and programs are subject to change. For information, call (813) 948-5444.



A Saint Leo Christmas

The Saint Leo University School of Arts and Sciences will present its annual student and faculty holiday concert, "A Saint Leo Christmas," at 4 p.m. and 7 p.m., Nov. 30 and Dec. 1.

No tickets are required for the 4 p.m. performances, as seating is first-come, first-served.

To reserve tickets for the 7 p.m. performances, send an email to schoolofartsandsciences@saintleo.edu.

Admission is free and all shows will be in the Black Box Theatre, on the first floor of Benedictine Hall.

The Christmas tree lighting ceremony will take place at 6 p.m., outside the Student Activities Building. Father Kyle Smith, university chaplain, will bless the tree and the manger.

For special accommodations, contact Megan Orendorf at (352) 588-8401 or Jennifer.orendorf@saintleo.edu.

FLORIDA SNOW DAY

Springleton Fun Park, 9227 County Line Road in Spring Hill, will be the site for a Florida Snow Day Nov. 25 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event, "Snow Bash, A Castle Celebration Fundraiser" will help raise funds and awareness for The Seed Foundation to support seniors, children and veterans. There will be real snow, vendors, live entertainment, food trucks and more. Preregistration is \$2 per person or \$5 at the door. For information and tickets, visit Ticketor.com/fllocalevents/default.

LOCAL AUTHOR FORUM

Local author John Cinchett will host a "Local Author Forum: A Celebration of History" Nov. 25 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Book Swap of Carrollwood, 11738 N. Dale Mabry Highway. Guests can meet local Tampa history authors who will discuss and sign their books. Proceeds will benefit hurricane relief efforts for Florida and Puerto Rico through Catholic Charities. Admission is free. For information, call (813) 963-6979.

BENEFIT DINNER

Moore-Mickens Education Center, 38301 Martin Luther King Blvd., in Dade City, will host a benefit dinner Nov. 25 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., sponsored by In The Place of God Ministries Inc. The keynote speaker will be attorney Alfreda Coward. There also will be music, entertainment, raffle drawings and more. Tickets are \$25. For information and tickets, call Sandra Coward at (352) 467-0313, or visit MooreMickensBenefit.eventbrite.com.

PASSPORT SHOPPING EVENT

Brooksville Main Street will host a Shop Small Passport Event Nov. 25 from 10 a.m.

to 2 p.m. Passports can be picked up between those hours at the Brooksville Main Street Welcome Tent in front of the County Courthouse, on that day. Shoppers can get the passports stamped by all local participating businesses and then turn in a completed passport for a chance to win a prize. For information, call the Brooksville Vision Foundation at (352) 540-6409.

ART & CRAFT FESTIVAL

The 27th annual Thanksgiving Art & Craft Festival in Tarpon Springs is scheduled for Nov. 25 and Nov. 26, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The outdoor showcase will take place on historic Tarpon Avenue, and will feature many independently owned shops and restaurants. Admission and parking are free. For information, call (727) 322-5217.

BUILD-A-BEAR

RP&G Printing of Wesley Chapel will host "Build-A-Bear For a Cause" Nov. 27 and Nov. 29, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., at the Build-A-Bear Workshop at The Shops at Wiregrass. Guests are invited to come and build a bear or stuffed animal to be donated to children in the Wesley Chapel area elementary schools. Cash donations also will be accepted toward building bears. Participants that cannot make either of those dates, can stop the workshop anytime and then drop their donation off at RP&G Printing, 2664 Cypress Ridge Blvd., Suite 104, in Wesley Chapel. For information, call (813) 949-5700.

CCC BOOK CLUB

The CCC Book Club will meet Nov. 27 at 7 p.m., at the Carrollwood Cultural Center, 4537 Lowell Road in Tampa, to discuss "Victoria The Queen" by Julia Baird. For information, contact David Brayshaw at david8463@verizon.net.

HARRY POTTER & HATS

The Land O' Lakes Library, 2818 Collier Parkway, will host "Harry Potter and Pom Pom Hats" Nov. 28 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., for ages 13 and older. Guests can watch a Harry Potter movie and knit a hat or scarf using a loom. All the house colors from Harry Potter will be available in yarn. Supplies are limited. Guests must register to make a hat. For information, call (813) 929-1214.

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

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

HUGH EMBRY LIBRARY

The Hugh Embry Library, 14215 Fourth St., in Dade City, offers these clubs:

- Knitting Club at 12:30 p.m., Nov. 28
 - Canasta Club at 2 p.m., Nov. 28
 - Robot Club at 4 p.m., Nov. 28 for grades six to 12
 - Chess Club at 5 p.m., Nov. 29 for beginners to advanced
- For information, call (352) 567-3576.

DEMOCRATIC CLUB

The Trinity Democratic Club will meet Nov. 29 at Fox Hollow Golf Club, 10050 Robert Trent Jones Parkway. The guest speaker will be Christopher Cano, executive director of the Central Florida Chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. (self-pay dinner and happy hour), followed by the meeting at 6:30 p.m. For information, call (727) 482-8709, or email trinitydems@earthlink.net.

CANDY CANE ART

The Land O' Lakes Library, 2818 Collier Parkway, will offer a Kumihimo candy cane class Nov. 30 from 10 a.m. to noon, for ages 16 and older. Participants can learn the Japanese art to make candy canes for the holidays. Registration is required by calling (813) 929-1214.

CANDLE-MAKING

The Temple Terrace Public Library, 202 Bullard Parkway, will offer a class on candle-making Nov. 30 at 6 p.m., for teens. Participants can learn how to create festive beeswax candles. All supplied will be provided. The class is limited to 20 participants. Register by calling (813) 506-6770 or online at HCPLC.org.

BE IN A PARADE

Goin' Postal invites participants, young and older, for its walking unit in the Festival of Lights Parade in Zephyrhills, scheduled for Dec. 2. If interested, email M.J. Price at drmjpricegp@gmail.com, with the names, ages and sizes of the individuals in the group. Goin' Postal will send a confirmation via email instructions and information in return.

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It's that time again for the Lutz Arts & Crafts Show

Christmas at the Old Lutz School is coming up, too

By B.C. Manion

bcmajian@lakerlutznews.com

Preparations are underway for the 38th annual Lutz Arts & Crafts Show, which is being held for the second year on the campus of Keystone Prep High School, 18105 Gunn Highway in Odessa.

"We're going to have over 300 vendors. And, there's a larger expanded food court," said Faith Sincich, co-chair of the event.

She marvels at the transformation that takes place at the festival grounds, each year.

"You go out on Friday morning and you see a field, an empty field, and by Saturday morning you see a little village of tents set up. It's really incredible to see," Sincich said.

As usual, there will be a great number of returning vendors, Sincich said. But, she noted, "we have some new vendors with some new crafts."

The two-day event is always a hit with families because of its festive holiday atmosphere and its unique shopping opportunities. Shoppers can peruse booths featuring handcrafted jewelry, original artwork, photography, woodcrafts and metal work, and plants and yard art, to name just a few.

It is the primary annual fundraiser for the GFWC Lutz-Land O' Lakes Woman's Club.

Proceeds from the event benefit "hundreds, and I mean literally hundreds of charities and nonprofits that we support," Sincich said.

The venue changed last year, from Lake Park to Keystone Prep.

That didn't seem to hurt attendance, Sincich said. "We thought that the attendance was about the same."

Even so, organizers believe that attendance could increase this year.

"This year, now that more people are familiar with the new location, we expect more people," Sincich said. The new venue is also conveniently located for people from Pinellas County who want to check it out, she noted.

There's ample parking.

"There's a lot more room for public parking at this facility than there was at the old Lake Park," Sincich said.

This year, the event is on Dec. 2, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Dec. 3, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Admission is free, but there is a \$5

If you go

38TH ANNUAL LUTZ ARTS & CRAFTS SHOW

WHERE: Keystone Prep High School, 18105 Gunn Highway in Odessa
WHEN: Dec. 2, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Dec. 3, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
COST: Free admission; parking is \$5 per car.
INFO: Call (813) 833-3962

21ST ANNUAL CHRISTMAS AT THE OLD LUTZ SCHOOL

WHERE: 18819 U.S. 41 N.
WHEN: The evenings of Dec. 7, Dec. 9, Dec. 12, Dec. 14, Dec. 16, Dec. 19, Dec. 21, Dec. 22 and Dec. 26, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
COST: Free with donations being accepted.

charge for parking collected by the school, which receives the proceeds.

While the GFWC Lutz-Land O' Lakes Woman's Club gears up for its giant arts and crafts show, the Citizens for the Old Lutz School Building is preparing for its annual Christmas celebration at the school, 18819 U.S. 41 N. in Lutz.

"Two of the rooms will be set up with trains and displays around trains," said Stephanie Ensor, one of the event organizers. "The museum will be open."

"We have a tree room, where some different organizations will be bringing a tree to represent their organization."

"They have nutcrackers on display, throughout the building."

"The hallway is decorated by Steinbrenner (High School) student ambassadors," Ensor added.

There will be entertainment on select evenings, and more entertainers are welcome to sign up.

There is no admission for the evenings at the schoolhouse, Ensor said, but "there will be a barrel to collect nonperishable food items and unwrapped toys for those less fortunate."

The breakfast with Santa event costs \$4.

The event is meant to serve as "a thank-you to the community for its continued support," Ensor said.

It's a great way for people to reconnect with people they haven't seen in awhile, Ensor said.

"My daughters are 18 and 20 now."

"When I'm up there, I'm always running into someone I knew 15 years ago, when the kids were in kindergarten," she said.

She enjoys the annual tradition at the schoolhouse.

"It's really neat. It's one of our little small-town things that we treasure," Ensor said.



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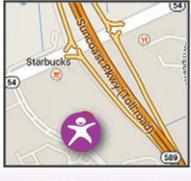
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Meet Santa And His Elves At Asturia

The second annual Holiday Festival is being hosted at Asturia — a master-planned community in Odessa — on Saturday, Dec. 16 from 2 to 4 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

Youngsters will enjoy a candy cane express train, face-painting elf, balloon-artist elf, holiday carnival games, meet-and-greet surprise holiday characters, holiday treats and, of course, sitting on Santa's lap and telling him what they want for Christmas.

And, when Holiday Festival guests are done playing, kids and their parents can tour Asturia's beautifully decorated model homes.

Ashton Woods, David Weekley Homes and ICI Homes are Asturia's exclusive builders. All have model homes open daily with on-site agents to assist homebuyers in selecting their next residence.

Ashton Woods' newest model home is the Suwanee. This unique, one-story home features a two-car garage at the rear of the home. The Suwanee boasts four bedrooms, two baths and a spacious front porch. Total square footage is 2,024 square feet, and pricing begins at \$274,990.

Ashton Woods has also recently completed its Lincoln showcase home, which is move-in ready. This 2,368-square-foot home is two stories, and features three bedrooms and 2.5 baths. Its spacious family room flows seamlessly into the kitchen, which features a large center island, upgraded granite countertops, custom backsplash, stainless steel appliances and 42-inch designer Timberlake cabinetry. All the bedrooms are located on the second floor, as well as the laundry room.



ICI Homes is the community's newest builder, and is opening its fully decorated Serena model in late December. This four-bedroom, three-bath home is 2,217 square feet and features a large gathering room, spacious gourmet kitchen and an owner's suite with a master bath that leads into a large, double-entry, walk-in closet. An office or guest bedroom is off the home's main living area, and two other bedrooms share a bathroom. The Serena has a two-car garage and begins at \$329,900.

David Weekley Homes also offers homes with the garage in the rear with eight distinct floor plans in its Cottage and Garden series. It also builds traditional floor plans in its Lake and Manor series, which combined offers 14 floor plans.

All Asturia builders provide a wide variety of home sizes and architectural styles. Pricing begins in the mid \$200,000s, and goes to over \$500,000.

AWARD WINNING AMENITY CENTER

Everyone enjoys Asturia's distinctive, 5,800-square-foot Amenity Center and Clubhouse, which earned the prestigious Silver Aurora for the Best Recreational Facility at the 2017 Southeast Building Conference.

The Amenity Center incorporates a fully equipped state-of-the-art fitness center, covered outdoor living rooms, a luxurious resort-style swimming pool and expansive lawn areas for recreation.

Asturia is a kid-friendly, family oriented lifestyle surrounded by miles of multi-use trails, interspersed with playgrounds, dog parks and pocket parks. The community has wide, meadow-like spaces, lovely ponds, thick stands of cypress and hardwood trees, and large tracts of scenic wetlands.

SECOND PHASE OPENS

It's been only two years since Asturia

began selling homes, and already the award-winning development has moved into its second phase.

This new second phase has 157 large home sites, adding to Asturia's first phase of 248 lots. Most Asturia homes back up to conservation areas, and all provide homeowners privacy and a peaceful, quiet surrounding.

Many families have been waiting for Asturia's second phase to open because its 55- and 65-foot lots offer some of the best woodland conservation views in the entire community.

A boardwalk has been built to connect the two smaller neighborhoods within Phase II, which will tie into the community's multi-use pathway that meanders for miles through residential areas, parks, playgrounds and the Amenity Center.

ABOUT ASTURIA

When Asturia's development is complete in a few years, it will likely have less than 550 single-family homes.

What makes Asturia stand out from other new home developments in the area is its smaller size. Other nearby planned communities have between 3,000 to over 5,000 homes, and are looking at several years of construction.

Asturia is a mixed-use, master-planned community located in the high-demand State Road 54 corridor in Pasco County. The community's central location is just five minutes from the Suncoast Parkway, and also provides close proximity to U.S. 41, U.S. 19 and I-75. Its master plan incorporates retail, office, multifamily and a variety of single-family residential offerings.

More information can be obtained by visiting Asturia's model homes, registering at the community's website, AsturiaFlorida.com, or by calling (813) 227-4148.

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In the two years that Air Hawk has been in business, Joe's commitment to customer service and technical expertise has resulted in the company growing to 12 employees and six service vans.

Air Hawk works with both residential and commercial customers out of its Odessa location. Most customers are from Land O' Lakes, Wesley Chapel, Lutz, Carrollwood, Odessa, Trinity and Palm Harbor.

You can reach Joe at 813-929-HAWK (4295), or by email at JMassa@AirHawkAC.com. Website: www.AirHawkAC.com. CAC License: 1817999.



PHOTO COURTESY OF IMPACT PHOTOGRAPHY/STOCK.ADOBE.COM

Get Your Home Ready for the Holidays

Whether you're hosting or just trying to get into the holiday spirit, preparing your home doesn't have to be daunting or expensive. Check out these five tips for getting your home in tip-top holiday shape on any budget.

DECK THE DINING TABLE

Fill glass vases with seasonal items such as ornaments, holly, faux snow or pinecones. Add extra light and warmth to the table with a flameless LED pillar candle. Place tea lights in small vases filled with cranberries, holly and water for an inexpensive and festive way to decorate the table.

DECORATE THE TREE

Embellish your tree by adding red or burlap ribbon from the top of each side and adding a topper. Then, consider coordinating the color scheme of your tree with gifts, using those that were wrapped early as decor throughout your house.

DECK THE FRONT DOOR

Make a DIY wreath by gluing bows or pinning ornaments to a foam wreath. Complete the look

with festive outdoor lighting.

DESIGN A FESTIVE MANTLE

Wrap a garland in mini string lights and hang leftover ornaments to continue the theme from your tree. Create handmade bows to place at each end of the mantle. If you don't have a mantle, you can create a fireplace-like space with a cluster of string lights or LED candles in a nook of your home. Then, remember to hang the stockings!

CREATE A CLEANING GAME PLAN

Create a day-by-day cleaning game plan, focusing on one area of your house at a time. This will save you stress and allow you more time to get organized. Be sure you're stocked up on all your holiday prep cleaning supplies, including sponges, microfiber cloths and wet mop refills.

Remember, getting into the holiday spirit doesn't have to break the bank. Save time and money decorating your home, so you can spend more stress-free moments with friends and family.

Story courtesy of StatePoint



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Sharon Molnar Johnson

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Sharon is a native of Tampa and resident of Land O' Lakes for 44 years. She is married to DuWayne Johnson and has been a realtor for 37 years. She has 2 daughters, Stephanie Meid and Holly Ruhlig, who are also realtors.

Gorgeous POOL home in Cypress Estates!

This beautiful 4 bedroom 3 bath home with over 2,500 square feet has been professionally decorated and has a newly remodeled kitchen with granite counter tops, custom Maple cabinetry, that include tons of cabinets with pull out drawers, a pull out pantry, and stainless appliances, truly a chefs delight! Oversized master bedroom with two closets. Master bath has been completely remodeled with granite tops and custom cabinetry, soaker tub and walk in shower. Formal living room and separate dining room with Sarworskye Crystal Chandelier. Family room has vaulted ceilings, a wood burning fireplace and opens to kitchen and overlooks porch and screened pool area that is surrounded by custom brick pavers. Large oversized yard is fenced and has a parking pad with electrical hookup for RV/Boat. New roof in 2011. Custom window treatments convey. Shopping, restaurants and major roads within minutes. Priced at \$365,000 Contact Sharon Molnar Johnson at 813-245-4971 or Stephanie Meid 813-695-0234



Save Water and Money During the Holidays

Here's six easy ways to prepare for your holiday meals and parties without running up your water bill.

1.) Defrost frozen foods in the refrigerator or the microwave instead of running hot water over them.

2.) Rinse vegetables and fruits in a sink or pan filled with water instead of under running water. This water can then be reused to water houseplants. A running faucet can use up to 4 gallons per minute.

3.) When washing dishes by hand, fill one sink or basin with soapy water and fill the rinsing sink one-third to one-half full. Avoid let-

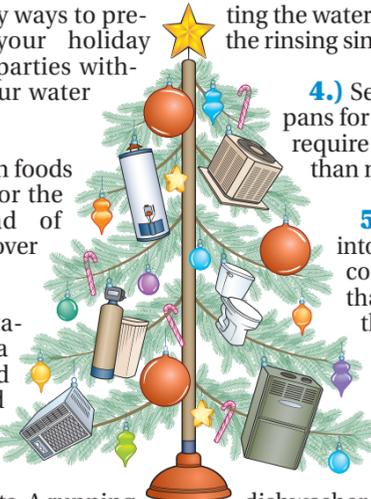
ting the water run continuously in the rinsing sink.

4.) Select the proper size pans for cooking. Large pans require more cooking water than may be necessary.

5.) Scrape food scraps into the garbage can or a composting bin, rather than rinsing them into the sink's garbage disposal. A garbage disposal uses up to 4.5 gallons of water per minute.

6.) Run your dishwasher only when you have a full load. Dishwashers use between 7 and 12 gallons per load.

Courtesy of Southwest Florida Water Management District. For more water conservation tips, go to WaterMatters.org/Conservation.



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Superb Location And Lutz Schools At Lakeshore Preserve

Close To The Veterans And St. Joseph's North

The second Fall Festival held earlier this month at Asturia, a master planned community in Odessa, was a tremendous success. Hundreds of local folks joined in the fun with hayrides, corn hole, bounce houses, crafts, face painting, carnival games and stuffing scarecrows for their yards back home.

Lakeshore Preserve by Mattamy Homes is a new townhome community in Lutz that is ideal for homebuyers looking for affordable new construction, maintenance-free living, excellent neighborhood schools and fast access to the Veterans Expressway.

Sales have excelled at the community of 102 homes, located on Van Dyke Road and Lakeshore Road, less than a half mile west of Dale Mabry Highway. Four beautifully decorated models are open daily, and several quick move-in homes are available.

The newest furnished home, the Marianna, was just completed in November and is ideal for first-time homebuyers. Its base price starts from an affordable \$199,990, and offers three bedrooms, 2.5 baths and a 1-car garage.

In October, Mattamy celebrated the completion of its 13,672-square-foot outdoor activity area, which was ready for the Lakeshore Preserve's first residents.

This outdoor area comes equipped with a 780-square-foot covered cabana with breeze fans, an outdoor kitchen, hammocks, shaded seating areas and a games area. It surrounds the 1,424-square-foot resort-style pool.

"Lakeshore Preserve's superb lo-



Driftwood End Plan at Harmony At Lakewood Ranch.

cation and thoughtfully designed townhomes make this community unique to the north Tampa area," said Lisette Minnick, director of sales for Mattamy Homes.

The community is situated in a desirable Lutz location, just minutes from St. Joseph's Hospital-North, and convenient to shopping, dining and entertainment venues in Carrollwood, Lutz, Land O' Lakes and Wesley Chapel. Its close proximity to the Veterans Expressway makes it an easy commute to Tampa, the airport and area beaches.

Schools zoned for the community are top-rated Steinbrenner High, Martinez Middle and Schwarzkopf Elementary. Charter school Sunlake Academy of Math and Science opens this fall, and several private schools are close-by, including Academy at the Lakes and Carrollwood Day School.

Lakeshore Preserve offers five

Lakeshore Preserve

- Van Dyke Road and Lakeshore Road location - 5 minutes from Veterans Expressway
- Close to A-rated schools, shopping and dining
- Gated entrance
- Resort-style community pool and cabana
- Island kitchens
- Covered lanais
- Mattamy Homes' quality and commitment to excellence

townhome plans that feature Mattamy's signature design style and distinctive architectural features. Meticulous attention was paid during the architectural design process to ensure that all usable living space is optimized and enhances any lifestyle.

Townhomes range in size from 1,667 to 2,608 square feet, and have 2 to 5 bedrooms, 2.5 to 4 baths, and 1- or 2-car attached garages. Base

prices range from \$199,900 to \$304,990. A wide array of quick, move-in townhomes are available for move in now and through this Spring.

Some of the interior features that are included with every home are granite kitchen countertops, hardwood 42-inch upper cabinets, 9'4" ceilings on the first floor, and sod with lawn irrigation. In addition, a first-year builder warranty and 10-year transferrable structural warranty are included.

On select homes, options are available such as an expanded

kitchen island and a second owner's suite, which combines the space of two smaller bedrooms and creates a second private retreat. A limited number of one plan is available that offers the owner's bedroom on the first floor.

The community encompasses 20 acres, and several of the buildings have conservation views.

To learn more, please visit Mattamyhomes.com or call Melanie Sikorski at (813) 659-5854.

Mattamy Homes has proven excellence by being North America's largest privately owned homebuilder with over 90,000 homeowners. Founded in 1978, it is the largest privately owned homebuilder in North America and has sold more than 90,000 homes in hundreds of communities, including the metropolitan areas of Tampa, Sarasota, Naples, Orlando, Jacksonville, Charlotte, Phoenix and Tucson.

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For more information, call 813-659-5854 or visit MattamyHomes.com/Tampa

*All pricing, availability, plans, rates, terms and conditions are subject to change without notice. *The financing and incentives stated above are for specific homes and are available only on new contracts signed 10/28/17 - 11/30/17 on specific homes. Buyer must meet qualifications for downpayment assistance for the Florida Hardest-Hit Fund. This is not a commitment to lend, nor is it a rate lock, pre-qualification or pre-approval. Closing and settlement costs, reserve deposits, interest rate and APR are subject to change. May not be combined with certain other mortgage programs. Income and purchase price limits apply. Assistance will be in the form of a 5 year 0% interest second mortgage loan that will be forgiven at the rate of 20% each year you have your mortgage and live in your home. The 2nd mortgage becomes due and payable if the borrower sells, transfers or disposes of the property, if borrower fails to occupy the property as the borrower's primary residence or if the borrower refinances or satisfies the first mortgage loan. This program is only offered through our preferred Lender for this program - Caliber Home Loans, Inc., 1525 S. Beltline Rd Coppell, TX 75019 (NMLS #15622). For complete details visit www.FLHardestHitHelp.org. Builder paid closing costs may vary based on loan program and maximum contribution loan limits. Minimum FICO score of 640 for conventional, FHA and VA. Housing costs may vary depending on location, homeowner's association dues, local and state fees, taxes, and hazard and mortgage insurance. All loans are subject to underwriting and loan qualifications of the lender. Services are not available in all states. Offer void where prohibited or otherwise restricted by law. Limited time offer, additional restrictions and limitations may apply. Visit a Mattamy New Home Counselor for full details. E.& O.E. Builder Lic # CGC1524054.



Cornerstone brings you safe, crystal clear water for your family

Plus, refined water that prevents scaling and doubles the life of appliances

Many people take for granted the water in their home — both working water used for taking showers and washing clothes, and drinking water for making coffee and ice cubes.

It's not until their showerheads become corroded with mineral build up, or their ice cubes look cloudy, do many families consider a water treatment and purification system for their home.

Unfortunately, by the time they do, the damage often has already been done to home appliances, faucets and grout which have become pitted, scratched, stained and may even require replacement.

The good news is that all of these symptoms of poor water quality can be resolved with a quality home water system that pays for itself in just a few years. Refined water also extends the life of a hot water heater because less sediment is deposited in the tank.

Like many of her customers, Dana Spears, owner of Cornerstone Air Conditioning, Plumbing & Electrical in Land O' Lakes, also waited too long before installing a water treatment and purification system in her home.

A wife and mother of five children, Dana and her husband, James, built a new home four years ago.

"We didn't think to put in a water system them, and that was a huge mistake because today my beautiful, expensive kitchen and bathroom faucets are pitted and scratched, my grout is cracking and there is so much corrosion in my dishwasher that we need to replace it," said Dana.

Cornerstone's Plumbing Department has always offered water treatment, but Dana found a real need to expand this area for her customers.

"Not only did my family home



need a water system, but many of our customers were also inquiring about what system was best for their home," said Dana.

Dana and her team researched dozens of manufacturers and systems, and selected Westinghouse because of its effectiveness, efficiency and 10-year guarantee.

"Westinghouse also offered Cornerstone exclusivity, which means we are the only plumbing company in the area that can sell their exceptional water systems," said Dana.

The Westinghouse Progressive Revolution Series works 24 hours a day delivering clean, soft working water to the entire house. Its refined water makes clothes and linens softer and brighter, and kitchen and bathroom faucets and showerheads become free of water spots, soap scum and scaling that restricts water flow.

For drinking water, the Westinghouse system delivers fresh, purified water on demand from a special faucet installed at the kitchen sink. Its technology removes nearly all of the contaminants in city water,

and leaves nothing but pure, clean, fresh tasting water.

"If you're buying bottled water, you can stop. And if you're relying on faucet or refrigerator filters, this gives your family a much higher level of purity," said Dana. "Essentially, you get unlimited bottled water — just think how much money you will save because you will no longer need to buy bottled water!"

As sediment builds up, it doesn't take long for water coming from a faucet that is not treated first by a purification system to taste like minerals and even look a bit cloudy. Many families spend \$20 or more on bottled water for their family a week, Dana explains.

Cornerstone also installs water treatment and purification systems for homes on well water. Well water is tested for iron, bacteria and other elements, and the system custom designed to meet the specific needs of a family's well.

The Westinghouse system can be installed same day or next in most homes with city water, especially in newer homes that are pre-plumbed for a water treatment system. Homes

Why Refined Water?

Pure, clean, fresh tasting water. The purification process removes nearly all of the contaminants in your city or well water and gives you a limitless supply of higher quality drinking water.

Save money: Pure, crystal clear water from your faucet means you can stop buying bottled water for your home.

No hard water spots and soap residue: Glassware comes straight from the dishwasher, crystal clear. The same goes for stemware and flatware.

Soft skin after shaving and bathing: Rinses away all soap and cleaning products completely, leaving you with soft manageable skin and hair. Razorblades last longer and you can shave you closer.

Water becomes a powerful solvent - all by itself. Refined water will lift stains and clean surfaces, plus eliminate tough stains brought on by your old harsh water. Refined water also reduces the time it takes to clean your home, and also the need for harsh and sometimes toxic cleaners.

on a well may take up to two weeks for the testing and installation to be completed

Cornerstone's licensed plumbers are trained by Westinghouse and are certified to install its systems. Every installation is different, and all are integrated with the home's water system. All work is guaranteed and under warranty for a full year.

Cornerstone was founded in 2006 as an air conditioning service company. In 2012, it expanded into plumbing services, and two years later added electrical services. Its phones are answered 24/7, and technicians are available around the clock, including weekends and holidays.

Call (813) 949-4445 anytime, day or night. For more information, visit their website at CornerstonePros.com.

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- No gritty scale keeps your faucets and tile squeaky clean and shiny
- 3. APPLIANCES LAST YEARS LONGER**
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HEALTH & WELLNESS

Send health news to news@lakerlutznews.com

5:30 p.m., at the Zephyrhills Public Library, 5347 Eighth St.
 Guests should bring proof of household income; Social Security number; immigration documentation for non-citizens; current insurance information; and, employer name, address and phone number.
 For information or to schedule an appointment, call (352) 518-2000.

YOGA FOR STRESS

The Land O' Lakes Library, 2818 Collier Parkway, will host "Yoga for Stress Relief" Nov. 27 at 6 p.m.

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

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

A completion of all forms and liability waivers is required.

For information and to register, call (813) 929-1214.

ONE-ON-ONE HELP WITH INSURANCE

The Land O' Lakes Library, 2818 Collier Parkway, will offer one-on-one appointments with SHINE (serving health insurance needs of elders), offered by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and the local Area Agency on Aging, Nov. 27 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Volunteers will assist with Medicare, Medicaid and health insurance questions by providing one-on-one counseling and information.

To schedule an appointment, call (800) 963-5337, or visit FloridaShine.org.

FOODS TO AVOID

Florida Hospital Zephyrhills will offer "The Top Ten Foods to Avoid" Nov. 27 at 1 p.m., at the CREATION Health Wellness Center, Education Room, 38233 Daughtery Road in Zephyrhills.

Reservations are required. For information, call (813) 779-6476.

LIONS CLUB SIGHT PROGRAM

The Zephyrhills Lions Club Sight Program will accept applications at 5827 Dean Dairy Road from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

The program is open to all Pasco County residents in need of basic eye care. Applicants must bring required documents which can be found online at Eclubhouse.org/sites/zephyrhills/.

For information, call (813) 788-1444.

HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES

Premier Community Healthcare will offer support services for migrant workers, the homeless, minorities and the indigent Nov. 28 from 9 a.m. to noon, at the Zephyrhills Public Library, 5347 Eighth St.

There will be education on insurance affordability programs, and ACCESS, CHIP and Health Insurance Marketplace applications.

For information, call (813) 780-0064.

HEALTHY SKIN SEMINAR

Florida Hospital Wesley Chapel will offer a free seminar on "Secrets to Healthy Skin" Nov. 28 at noon, in the fourth-floor classroom.

Dr. John Morrison will discuss tips and treatment options for preventing skin damage, premature aging and cancers of the skin. A light lunch will be provided.

For information and reservations, call (844) 504-9378.

HEALTHCARE MARKETPLACE

Premier Community HealthCare will host an enrollment session Nov. 29 from 4 p.m. to

HOLIDAY STRESS

Florida Hospital Zephyrhills will offer "Getting Off the Merry-Go-Round" Nov. 30 at 11 a.m., at the CREATION Health Wellness Center, Education Room, 38233 Daughtery Road in Zephyrhills.

Senior Pastor Doug Higgins will offer ways to find meaning in the midst of a busy season.

Reservations are required. For information, call (813) 779-6476.

MEDICARE ENROLLMENT

The Hugh Embry Library, 14215 Fourth St., in Dade City, will offer a Medicare enrollment event Dec. 1 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and will provide hands-on assistance.

For information and to make a reservation, call (352) 567-3576.

Also, on Dec. 6 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., Premier Community HealthCare will have an enrollment session at the library.

Guests should bring proof of household income; Social Security number; immigration documentation for non-citizens; current insurance information; and, employer name, address and phone number.

For information or to schedule an appointment, call (352) 518-2000.

ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE TECHNIQUES

Karen O'Rourke, a Reiki master and certified healing touch practitioner, will present "Activating the Right Side of Your Brain" Dec. 2 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., at the Zephyrhills Public Library, 5347 Eighth St.

Learn about complimentary alternative medicine techniques to use every day for health and well-being.

The program offers practical hands-on exercises and information about the body's core energy system, Reiki, and healing touch techniques that include nutrition and energy balancing.

A reading list and handouts will be available.

For information, call (813) 780-0064.

GRIEF WORKSHOP

Gulfside Hospice will offer a free Holiday Grief Workshop to help those struggling with the loss of a loved one.

The workshop will include talking about loved ones and favorite holiday traditions, learning how to address and work through grief, and creating a holiday craft project to remember those lost.

For residents in East Pasco, the workshop will take place at Gulfside Center for Hospice Care, 5760 Dean Dairy Road in Zephyrhills, Dec. 7 at 4 p.m.

For information, call Kelly Cavagnetto at (727) 845-5707.

SILVER SNEAKERS PROGRAM

Silver Sneakers Strength & Balance Classes take place every Wednesday at 9 a.m., and every Friday at 10:30 a.m., in The Groves Golf and Country Club Civic Center in Land O' Lakes.

The program is free for Silver Sneakers members and \$5 for non-members, per session.

These are low-impact classes for men and women designed to improve flexibility and balance, which can help prevent falls, broken hips and more.

For more information, please contact Tom Marbell at (352) 409-2984 or email him at Trainwithtomm@gmail.com.

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Please consider coming or making a donation towards building a bear and bring a smile to children in our local, Wesley Chapel area elementary schools. Our goal is 160 bears and we need your help! Bring the family! Tell your Friends!

We have contacted the schools to get a count of their needs and they are very excited about receiving these donations! Seven Oaks, Veterans, Quail Hollow, Double Branch, Wesley Chapel, New River, Wiregrass and Watergrass. If we end up with more than 160, they will go to other area elementary schools as well.

You can come and join the fun and build at the above times, or feel free to stop by anytime during the day as well, and the folks at Build A Bear will be happy to help you!

Please make your donations by Nov. 27th to Cindy Ross at RP&G Printing - 2664 Cypress Ridge Blvd., #104 Wesley Chapel, FL 33544

ALL donations will go to building bears!

Thank you!

For more information contact Cindy at 813-949-5700 or 813-205-6125

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STUDENT EARNS SOLO WINGS

Pasco-Hernando State College's professional pilot program student Dustin Snodgrass, of Spring Hill, earned his solo wings Oct. 11.

Snodgrass was the first student in PHSC's new aviation program to achieve this milestone after logging 14 hours of instructed flight time.

PHSC began offering associate in science degrees in professional pilot technology and aviation administration this past August. Two additional aviation degrees — unmanned vehicle systems operations and aviation maintenance administration — are slated to be available in 2018.

For information about the new program located at the East Campus in Dade City, visit PHSC.edu/aviation.

ACADEMY RECEIVES LEADERSHIP AWARD

Hillel Academy received the Innovation Award from the Tampa Jewish Community Centers and Federation at a ceremony on Oct. 19.

The school was recognized for its innovative way it lets students create through the school's Maker Lab, which is based on the worldwide Maker/DIY movement. It allows students a space to create and explore STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) concepts with proper tools and guidance.

As part of the award, Hillel was given the opportunity to create an award of its own, to be named the Hillel Academy Outstanding Service Award. In its inaugural year for this

award, Hillel chose Henry and Yael Hatfield to receive the award on behalf of their dedication to the school.

The Hatfields are committed to cultivating and developing Rachel's Garden, created by the Hillel Academy Class of 2020, in loving tribute to a classmate, Rachel Lia Hatfield.

CYPRESS CREEK CELEBRATES OPENING

Cypress Creek Middle High School students, staff and the community celebrated the school's opening with a dedication ceremony Nov. 14.

In addition to messages delivered by Superintendent Kurt Browning and Principal Carin Hetzler-Nettles, there was a ribbon cutting, photo opportunities, live music from the Cypress Creek High School band, refreshments and self-guided tours.

FREE ROCK SCHOOL JAM SESSION

The Patel Conservatory will host a free Rock School Jam Session and Open House Dec. 9 from 10 a.m. to noon, for fifth grade through adult. Rock School classes will start Jan. 20.

Jam session participants will jam together and get tips on musicianship from Rock School creator and instructor Lee Ahlin.

Instruments provided at the jam session will include keyboards, bass guitars and drum sets. Those playing other instruments, such as guitars, are asked to bring their own.

Those attending a jam session and register for Rock School before Jan. 1 will receive a 15 percent enrollment discount. If students cannot attend, they can still join Rock School by auditioning Jan. 6 or Jan. 9.

Registration for the jam session is available online at PatelConservatory.asapconnected.com, or by emailing musicprogram@strazcenter.org.

For more information about Patel Conservatory, call (813) 222-1040.



COURTESY OF TABETHA MERRITT

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The Thomas E. Weightman Middle School Marching Band proudly represented Pasco County when it took part in the annual James A. Haley Hospital's Veterans Day parade. The band is directed by Donald Scott.

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Sister Jean Abbott/Dade City

Sister Jean Abbott, who oversees the Daystar Hope Center Thrift Shop in Dade City, said "I am thankful for the generosity of the people who donate their time and their money and their items, or their food and household stuff to us.

"It keeps our doors open. It keeps us able to assist people who are needy, and I'm especially thankful for the volunteers who do all of the work of processing that stuff that comes in, and making sure it's in useful shape to go to the people who need it," she said.

She plans to spend Thanksgiving at Saint Anthony Parish Hall, helping to serve others and enjoying her holiday meal.

It will be her second Thanksgiving dinner, which makes it hard to follow her primary doctor's advice to watch her carbohydrates, she said.



Pat Wright/Dade City

Pat Wright, the circulation supervisor at Hugh Embry Branch Library in Dade City, said: "I'm thankful for the whole staff that I work with here at Hugh Embry."

The Webster woman said she's also grateful for family and friends, and planned to be making a traditional Thanksgiving dinner, with all of the trimmings, for her family.



Matt Badillo/Wesley Chapel

Matt Badillo, of Wesley Chapel, is thankful for a new employment opportunity. "I just got offered a job at the VA. It was a bit of a long process, but it's finally rolling through. It's really good. I'll be a nursing assistant there."

But, he's also grateful to be celebrating the holiday with his family.

"I just recently came back from living in Australia for three years. I came back in April," he said, noting he's looking forward to turkey and cranberry sauce, and for another favorite, too.

"My grandma makes this corn casserole that I've been waiting for, for awhile."



Suzanne Jasinski/Land O' Lakes

Suzanne Jasinski, of Land O' Lakes, is grateful to be able to celebrate another Thanksgiving with her family.

"A couple of years ago, I was shivering, I thought I was cold. I kept putting blanket after blanket after blanket. My son said, 'No, you're going to the hospital,'" she recalled.

She didn't want to go, but she went.

"It turned out to be septic. My kidneys were shutting down. I was in a coma for 3 1/2 weeks," she said. She was on dialysis, too.

"They took me off dialysis because my kidneys started working," she said. Her doctor called her "his little miracle."

Jasinski lives with her son, James, and her daughter-in-law, Michelle, and they expect about 20 people to celebrate Thanksgiving with them.

They'll be enjoying a feast, including turkey, ham, mashed potatoes and gravy, yams — "the whole nine yards," Jasinski said.

And, that includes dressing.

"Her oyster dressing is the best," said Kimberly Lucas, Jasinski's daughter, who was with her and Jasinski's granddaughter, Ashley Lucas, at The Shops at Wiregrass.



Edwina Kraemer/Lutz

"I am so blessed with family and a husband that survived a stroke and club members (GFWC Lutz-Land O' Lakes Woman's Club) and church (First United Methodist Church of Lutz), said Edwina Kraemer, of Lutz.

For Thanksgiving, she said, "We are having an organic turkey. And, my son and daughter-in-law and my beautiful granddaughter and some friends of ours are all coming over, and we're going to try to eat healthy."

Group.

Details and a date for the grand opening will be announced later.

The 7-acre lagoon at the center of Epperson is a mammoth swimming pool, with crystal blue, see-through waters. Epperson's lagoon will be the first in the nation.

"(Phelps is) big on promoting people being active in water sports," said Greg Singleton, president of Metro Development Group, which is developing Epperson. "Metro is big on having people swimming and being active in our lagoon."

Epperson residents can enjoy aquatic activities, including swimming, kayaking, paddle-boarding and sailing small boats. There also will be Caribbean-style beaches and cabanas, a waterslide, an entertainment plaza, a yoga lawn and an area for special events.

Singleton said the lagoon would have some limited guest opportunities, as well. But, he added, "It's not designed to be a public water park."

Instead, it will function more like a private golf course, Singleton said.

Metro is purchasing water from Pasco County to fill the lagoon. Once it is filled, Metro officials estimate the lagoon will use 50 times less water than a park of the same size and 30 times less water than a golf course.

Epperson will have about 2,000 homes when completed. Residents will participate in the first "smart gigabit community" in

the nation, with UltraFi technology as a built-in feature of the community, indoors and outdoors.

Epperson also will be the first residential community within the Connected City corridor.

Pasco County commissioners approved the framework for Connected City in February. The approximately 7,800 acres in northeastern Pasco is designated as a state-approved, 10-year pilot program designed to feature technology-based neighborhoods. However, full development of Connected City is anticipated to take about 50 years.

When completed, the area will have about 37,000 homes and more than 12 million square feet of commercial space.

Saint Leo University, Florida Hospital and Tampa General Hospital are partners in the development of a wellness district within Connected City, with plans to build hospitals, schools and research facilities.

The Connected City boundaries are Interstate 75, State Road 52, and Curley and Overpass roads. Epperson is at the juncture of Curley and Overpass roads.

Currently, about 200 homes have been built at Epperson, with another 200 lots available for construction. Singleton said homeowners occupy about 70 houses.

Metro also is developing Mirada, a master-planned community north of Epperson. It also will have a Crystal Lagoon.

"Mirada is underway," Singleton said. "We're moving dirt and developing lots."

Other lagoons are expected to open at developments in southern Hillsborough County and in Fort Myers.

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Academy at the Lakes relishes breakout season

By Kevin Weiss

kweiss@lakerlutznews.com

Academy at the Lakes football head coach Shawn Brown anticipated a team turnaround before the season.

He was right. After three consecutive losing seasons in the eight-man football ranks, the Wildcats are in the midst of one of its best in program history, with a state title in reach.

The team currently stands at 9-1, including a 7-0 mark in Florida Christian Region 2 — worthy enough for a No. 2 ranking in the state among all eight-man schools.

And, they're just a win away from reaching the FCAPPS (Florida Christian Association of Private and Parochial Schools) championship game.

Most recently, the Wildcats downed Canterbury 54 to 6 in the state quarterfinals on Nov. 17.

The playoff blowout isn't a shock. The Wildcats have scored an average of 51 points per game this season while allowing just 15.2 points per game.

That season-long dominance has allowed Brown and his coaching staff to build depth among its 24 active players — utilizing backups in place of starters during second-halves of several games.

"It's been really neat to watch the whole dynamics of a true team, overall," said Brown, who is in his fourth season as head coach. "Our starters giving up a lot of playing time for our backups to get in, and our backups this year have gotten a lot of playing time."

"Most teams don't beat people like we have, where the backups get a lot of playing time."

The team's next game is Dec. 1 against Orlando's Eastland Christian (10-1) — the only team to defeat the Wildcats this season, back on Sept. 7.

The Wildcats lost that matchup 50-35, despite entering halftime with a 28-14 lead. Brown explained dehydration and cramping issues among several starters stymied the team in the second half.

"We probably needed to be humbled,"

GAME-BY-GAME RESULTS:

AUG. 25: at Citi Christian Academy (40-22 win)
 SEPT. 7: Eastland Christian (50-35 loss)
 SEPT. 22: Canterbury (48-16 win)
 SEPT. 28: Solid Rock Community (80-0 win)
 OCT. 2: at Saint Lucie Christian (49-12 win)
 OCT. 13: Lakeside Christian (40-21 win)
 OCT. 20: at Donahue Catholic (36-0 win)
 OCT. 27: Seacoast Christian Academy (68-7 win)
 NOV. 3: at Hernando Christian Academy (57-29 win)
 NOV. 17: Canterbury (54-6 win)

Brown said, of the September loss. "We, as coaches, are reminding them that we've been on that losing side for so long, so we tell them to, 'Respect the game.'"

Academy at the Lakes went 2-8 in 2016, after finishing 4-7 and 3-5 the prior two seasons.

Much of the past struggle can be credited to youth and inexperience.

This year's team, however, is dotted with upperclassman and skill players.

Brown expected improvements this season, though not to this extent.

"Has it been a surprise to me to how we played? Absolutely. But, I can't say we were going to come here and mop people like we have," he said.

"At some point we were going to have a breakout season. It just happened to be this season," he said.

Brown credits the team's summer offseason program, which included weightlifting sessions three days a week, participating in Division I college camps, and competing in various seven-on-seven tournaments, sometimes facing 11-man schools from Classes 7A and 8A.

The work, Brown said, taught Wildcats "to be competitive."

Pure talent and execution on offense is another key reason for the team's historic run, added offensive coordinator Landon Smith.

Freshman quarterback Jalen Brown has displayed composure and maturity, throwing 11 touchdowns and just one interception.

Seniors Daniel Gonzalez (889 rushing yards, 19 touchdowns) and Isaiah Smith (17 receptions, 495 yards, 13 touchdowns) have



COURTESY OF ACADEMY AT THE LAKES

Academy at the Lakes' offense is averaging a staggering 51 points per game this season, aiding the team during its eight-game winning streak. The Wildcats downed Canterbury 54 to 6 in the state quarterfinals on Nov. 17.

been explosive playmakers, as has junior Jamaal Johnson (642 scrimmage yards, eight touchdowns).

"From one game to the next, we probably run about seven plays, and they just execute those plays very well. These kids are getting chunks of yards with the same play over and over," Landon Smith explained.

"A lot of these kids have been here since eighth-graders, so at this point, they've had a number of years to learn this system. I like to think it's the play calling, but I think it's more of the kids and their talent and execution that's making us, offensively, as good as we are," he said.

The team's defense likewise has flashed, posting a combined 59 sacks and 90 tackles for loss, 18 forced fumbles, and 13 interceptions — which includes 10 picks by freshman cornerback Jordan Oladokun, the younger brother of University of South Florida quarterback Chris Oladokun.

"I think what's really leading to our success this year is we're having fun," said Jalen

Brown, the son of head coach Shawn Brown.

"We're winning, and starting new traditions and everything. The atmosphere is totally different this year than it was last year. We've got handshake celebrations and everything. Our defense cheers for our offense, and our offense cheers for defense."

Seniors, too, are cherishing the 2017 campaign and what remains.

"It's been an honor. It's been an awesome ride," Daniel Gonzalez said. "I wouldn't want to end my senior year any other way. This is a heck of a ride. I'm having a lot of fun; all these guys are so into it, and everyone wants to win a state championship this year."

Isaiah Smith defined this season as "awesome and inspiring."

"Last year it was like having training wheels, and we were just getting our feet wet, to be honest. Now, this year, it's kind of showing what we can do now," Smith said.

"I think it's just a statement of how far we can go to reach the top."

Local high schools shine at state swim meets

By Kevin Weiss

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The 2017 Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) Swimming & Diving Championships wrapped up its meets across all four classes on Nov. 11.

Among local schools, Land O' Lakes and Sunlake displayed the strongest showings at the state event, held at Sailfish Splash Water Park in Stuart.

The Sunlake High School girls team placed fourth (out of 48 schools) in the Class 3A meet, marking the highest finish of any team in The Laker/Lutz News coverage area.

The showing yielded six state medals and six school records.

Seahawks sophomore Chloe Grimme exhibited perhaps the most impressive performance, placing first in the 50 free (23.11) and second in the 100 free (51.18), earning All-American honors.

Grimme also teamed with Tori Eurell, Elise Ballash and Hanna Barton win the 200 free relay (1:36.88). She, too, teamed with Eurell, Barton and Audrey Ballash to finish third in the 200 medley relay (1:48.13).

Other Seahawks highlights included Elise Ballash's seventh-place finish in the 100 breast (1:06.10) and Audrey Ballash's 11th-place finish in the 200 individual medley (2:09.91).

On the Sunlake boys side, sophomore Dominic Ortanez placed fourth in the 50 free (21.63), and sophomore Jay Jay Fonnatto placed 19th in the 100 fly. His time of 53:43 is a school record.

Land O' Lakes High School, meanwhile, thrived in the Class 2A swim meet.

The girls squad finished fifth (out of 47 teams), while the boys placed 10th (out of 39 teams).

Two-time defending state champion Jabari Ramsey earned his third straight gold medal in the 100 breaststroke, with a time of 56:11.

The Land O' Lakes senior became the first boy swimmer from Pasco County, and just the fifth from the area, to win three straight titles in the same event.

He tied former Mitchell standout Devin McCaffrey for the most career individual titles by a North Suncoast swimmer with three.

The hardware didn't end there for Ramsey. He teamed with Patryk Pilkowski, Zachary Davis and Zuri Ramsey to win the 200 medley relay in 1:35.97, smashing last year's school record of 1:39.09 — becoming



COURTESY OF BRIAN VAILE

Land O' Lakes High School shined in the Class 2A swim meet on Nov. 3 at the Sailfish Splashpark Aquatic Athletics Center in Stuart. The girls squad finished fifth (out of 47 teams), while the boys placed 10th (out of 39 teams).



COURTESY OF SHELLY KOUTRAS

Sunlake High's swim and dive program had several strong performances at the Class 3A state meet, including a fourth place finish by the girls team, along with strong individual performances on the boys side. Pictured front, left: Jay Jay Fonnatto (sophomore) and Dominic Ortanez (sophomore). Pictured back, from left: Coach Lorin Macdonald, Elise Ballash (junior), Audrey Ballash (sophomore), Alex Sprague (freshman), Hanna Barton (junior), Tori Eurell (sophomore), Chloe Grimme (sophomore) and Coach Shelly Koutras.

ing the first ever Pasco County relay team to win gold at the Class 2A state championships.

Along with Jabari Ramsey, Pilkowski reached the podium as an individual with his third-place finish in the 100 backstroke. His mark of 51:75 broke the previous school record by a full three seconds.

On the girls side, junior Taylor Ward earned a pair of second-place finishes in the 200 free (1:50.27) and the 500 free (4:56.57).

Ward also teamed with Romina McCloskey, Margarita Czupryn and Ashley

Schrader for third in the 200-yard free relay (1:39.71) and fourth in the 400 free relay (3:38.54) — both school records.

Another school record was set by McCloskey in the 100 free (53:07). The individual time was good enough for an eighth-place finish at states.

The FHSAA championships wrapped up an otherwise notable season for the Gators, historically one of the county's top high school swim programs.

Both boys and girls squads won district and Sunshine Athletic Conference titles, and finished runner-up at regionals. The confer-

2017 FHSAA Swimming & Diving Championships results:

CLASS 4A BOYS

STEINBRENNER HIGH SCHOOL (22ND PLACE—26 POINTS)

NOTABLE(S): Kyle Stoker finished seventh in the 200 free (1:42.67) and with teammates Max Martino, A.J. Harkness and Bradley Stoker 11th in the 200-yard free relay (1:29.81)

GIRLS

STEINBRENNER HIGH SCHOOL (14TH PLACE—63 POINTS)

NOTABLE(S): Freshman Lexie Mulvihill placed second in the 50 free (23.16) and with teammates Justine Answeeney, Taylor Holmes and Mackenzie Hall fifth in the 200 free relay (1:38.16) and ninth in the 400 free relay (3:36.83)

CLASS 3A BOYS

SUNLAKE HIGH SCHOOL (25TH PLACE—24 POINTS)

GIRLS

SUNLAKE HIGH SCHOOL (FOURTH PLACE—131 POINTS)

FREEDOM HIGH SCHOOL (10TH PLACE—86 POINTS)

NOTABLE(S): Sophomore Abigail Allaire finished fifth in the 200 individual medley (2:07.35), third in the 100 breaststroke (1:05.30) and with teammates McKaley Goldblum, Genevieve Clark and Hannah Labohn seventh in the 400 free relay.

CLASS 2A BOYS

LAND O' LAKES HIGH SCHOOL (10TH PLACE—92 POINTS)

GIRLS

LAND O' LAKES HIGH SCHOOL (FIFTH PLACE—114 POINTS)

WESLEY CHAPEL HIGH SCHOOL (29TH PLACE—23 POINTS)

NOTABLE(S): Senior Brooke Duncan placed fifth in the 50 yard free (24.52)

CLASS 1A GIRLS

ACADEMY AT THE LAKES (23RD PLACE—24 POINTS)

NOTABLE(S): Freshman McKenna Smith placed fourth in the 100 free (51.10)

ence titles marked the 17th straight for the boys team and ninth straight for the girls.

Other schools in The Laker/Lutz News coverage area with teams or individuals represented in the state meet were: Academy at the Lakes, Freedom, Steinbrenner and Wesley Chapel high schools.



B.C. MANION
Children in Bonnie Cothorn and Tina Miller's classes at Hammond Elementary are learning about the advantages of hydroponics gardening.

Garden yields lessons on math, science, conservation

By B.C. Manion
bcmanion@lakerlutznews.com

Children at Hammond Elementary School are learning all about water conservation, and honing their mathematics and science skills, too, in a class that uses a hydroponics garden to help bring the lessons home.

The school, at 8008 N. Mobley Road in Odessa, used a Splash! grant from the Southwest Florida Water Management District to cover the costs of creating the hydroponics garden. The grant also includes several other elements relating to water conservation.

Teachers Tina Miller and Bonnie Cothorn said that Urban Roots, of 11780 N. Dale Mabry Highway in Tampa, have also helped in the program by demonstrating how to put together the plant towers and letting students help, as well as allowing them to plant vegetables and herbs.

Students in Cothorn's gifted education classes are working with Miller's fifth-graders to help educate the entire school about hydroponics and water conservation.

They'll be reporting conservation tips monthly on the school's morning show, and will be making posters to raise awareness to the rest of the school and members of the community about the importance of water conservation.

Lessons also will include the importance of choosing Florida-friendly garden plants that are adapted to the state's climate to prevent unnecessary water use.

On a recent day, Cothorn and Miller were out in the garden with some of their students.

The children talked about some advantages of hydroponics gardening.

Third-grader Lyla Cullimore explained how the plant tower system works.

"The reservoir is right here," she said. "When you turn it on, the water goes through a pipe and it goes up, then the water goes down and it makes it so the plants get water."

The pump runs twice a day, for 15 minutes each time, the teachers said, via email, in a more detailed explanation of hydroponics.

The water drips from the top plant container, through the plant medium, which is composed of shredded coconut shell and perlite. Then, water in that planter drips to the one below, the teachers said.

Fifth-grader Ryan Dumont noted the water "can drip down through the angles of the planters, then, once it drops down, there's holes in the planters and it drips down into the reservoir, and we can reuse it."

The drip system, combined with a porous medium, conserves water and provides oxygenation to the root system of the plants. The water in the reservoir lasts 10 days to 14 days, the teachers said. The system is efficient because no water is wasted through runoff and evaporation.

Miller asked students, what does organic mean?

Fifth-grader Ethan Bezaury responded: "Organic means that it's not manmade."



Teacher Tina Miller checks on plants in a hydroponics garden at Hammond Elementary School.



Lyla Cullimore talks about how a hydroponics plant system works.

Miller then talked about the liquid fertilizer that provides nutrients to the plants.

By growing the plants in pots, arranged on a tower, more plants can be grown in a smaller area, she said.

"How many plants are in that little bit of a space?" Miller asked.

"There's about 20," answered third-grader Evan Rottenberger.

That's correct, Miller said, adding that students have been able to integrate math and science into what they are learning about hydroponics.

Students have been taking measurements of the plants and charting their observations in notebooks.

"When you guys were doing your data recording yesterday, what did you find about the different plants that you had taken your baseline data on?" Miller asked.

Fifth-grader Sophia Wyant responded:

"They were growing more and more each time."

The teacher explained: "We've been doing some long-term investigations because one of the claims of hydroponics is that the yield is greater."

It's too early to tell if that is true, but fifth-grader Angela Rosario has noticed that a plant she's been observing has achieved noticeable growth.

The first time they observed the garden was on Oct. 27.

"It was 10 centimeters, my longest leaf. I had seven leaves. The smallest leaf was 3 cm, and the height was 17 cm. After 10 days, my height was 21 cm, I had eight leaves. My smallest was 6; the longest was 11," Rosario said.

She said hydroponics helps conserve

water and reduces problems from weeds.

Cothorn's students began their observations a week after Miller's students.

She said she gave her students the freedom to choose how they wanted to observe their plant.

"I told them they could take whatever data they wanted to. They could measure the whole plant. They could measure the biggest leaf, the smallest leaf, whatever they decided to do," she said.

The teachers are pleased that the children are learning about water conservation and are excited about the students sharing what they have learned with the entire school community, as well as with their families at home.



Hammond Elementary School fifth-grader Angela Rosario has been observing a plant growing in the hydroponics garden. She keeps the data collected in her science journal.







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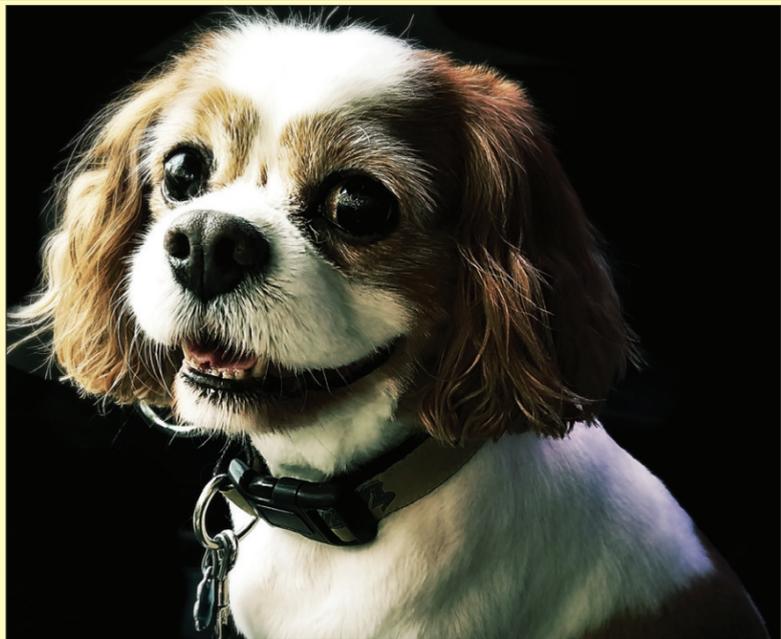
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Shiloh is a forever 'puppy'

Shiloh is 11 years old, and even though he has lost his hearing, he hasn't lost his spirit. Shiloh loves visiting his friends, Taz and Clementine, at both of his grandparent's houses. His favorite part of the day is helping Dad cook in the kitchen and making sure that all dropped food is quickly eaten, so no one steps on it. Shiloh enjoys watching shows like 'The Flash' and 'Stranger Things,' while eating popcorn with Mom and Dad on the couch. Shiloh's proud parents are Adam and Julia Haynes, of Land O Lakes.

PET OF THE WEEK FAMILIES RECEIVE A \$25 SHELL'S FEED & GARDEN GIFT CERTIFICATE TO USE IN ITS STORE FOR TREATS, TOYS, COLLARS, LEASHES & HOME GROOMING PRODUCTS.

Send us a picture and information on your favorite pet!

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

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

Adopt A Friend FOR LIFE



Lark loves to be petted

Lark is a sweet man who came to the shelter about three weeks ago from a hoarding case. He is quite sociable, and looks forward to visits and pets from the staff. Lark loves to be scratched along the side of his face, and will quickly rollover and twist and turn to help make sure you pet all the best spots.



Cherry likes to pick her friends

Cherry is a striking brindle beauty that came to the shelter in June. She is an active girl even at the age of 6, and very often is seen running along the fence lines. Originally, it was thought that Cherry did not like other pups, but after additional assessments with various different dogs, she was found to just be picky with her friends. A meet-and-greet is highly recommended.

If you would like to adopt Cherry or Lark, 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.

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- Feline Distemper Combo 3 yr \$30.00
- Bordetella/Kennel Cough \$18.00

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PET PAWS

DOG ADOPTIONS

Carter's Canine Rescues will host a dog adoption event Dec. 2 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Quality Pet Market, 1408 N. Dale Mabry Highway in Lutz (next to Smoothie King).

There will be six puppies, born on Sept 15, up for adoption.

For information call Quality Pet Store at (813) 909-1767 or Carter's Rescues at (813) 235-6366.

ANIMAL SERVICES BENEFIT

The pet-friendly Land O' Lakes Arts & Crafts & Seafood Festival will take place Dec. 16 and Dec. 17, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., at Land O' Lakes Heritage Park (formerly Land O' Lakes Community Center), 5401 Land O' Lakes Blvd.

This family event will benefit Pasco County Animal Services, and will include

food, shopping, and the Battle of the Bands featuring Priest, Rat Salad and Soul Circus Cowboys.

For information, visit Just Country Farms Events on Facebook.

SHARE YOUR PET NEWS

If you have pet news about adoptions, walks or other events for pet owners and their pets, you can let us know by sending us an email. We just need the basics: who, what, when, where and why.

The information should be submitted two weeks prior to the desired publication date. We also need a contact name and number, in case we have questions.

There is no guarantee of publication, but we consider each item we receive.

If you'd like to make a submission, send it to news@lakerlutznews.com.



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BUSINESS DIGEST

Send business news to news@lakerlutznews.com

CHILDREN'S PARTY

Market Technologies hosted a party for children, and their families, at the Shriners Hospital for Children on Nov. 11 in Tampa.

Market Technologies is a Wesley Chapel-based, family owned software company, at 5807 Old Pasco Road. Company owners partnered with the Shriners to donate a portion of Market Technologies' sales to benefit children receiving treatment through the hospital.

Partygoers were treated to food, games, and live interactive entertainment from children's performer, Mr. Tommy.

For information, visit the hospital at ShrinersHospitalForChildren.com, or call Market Technologies at (813) 973-0496.

DRIVING RANGE OPEN HOUSE

Green Chasers Driving Range will have a ribbon cutting and open house Nov. 25 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., at 35378 State Road 54 in Zephyrhills.

The event will be hosted by The Greater Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce.

For information, call the chamber at (813) 389-8621, or visit ZephyrhillsChamber.org.

NETWORKING GROUP

The East Pasco Networking Group will meet Nov. 28 at 7:30 a.m., at the IHOP, 13100 U.S. 301, in Dade City.

The guest speaker will be Sue Samson, program manager for the Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas Inc.

For information, contact Chairman Nils Lenz at nilslenz@gmail.com or (813) 782-9491; or Vice Chairwoman Vicky Jones at donlvic1@yahoo.com or (813) 431-1149.

OURTOWNFLA ANNIVERSARY

OurTownFLA, a community newspaper website, will have a ribbon cutting and a celebration of its 18th anniversary on Nov. 28 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., at 17743 Hunting Bow Circle in Lutz.

The event is free.

For more information, please email tony@ourtownfla.com.

CENTRAL PASCO MIXER

The Central Pasco Chamber of Commerce will have its monthly mixer Nov. 29 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., at Copperstone

Executive Suites, 3632 Land O' Lakes Blvd., in Land O' Lakes.

For information, call the chamber at (813) 909-2722, or email office@centralpascochamber.com.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

The Central Pasco Chamber of Commerce will host its Winter Wonderland Holiday Celebration on Dec. 1 from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., at the Heritage Harbor Golf & Country Club, the Harbor Terrace restaurant, at 19507 Heritage Harbor Parkway in Lutz.

There will be dinner and karaoke. Please bring one unwrapped toy as a donation and receive a free drawing ticket.

If preregistered by Nov. 28, the cost is \$30 per person. After and at the door, the cost will be \$40.

For information, call the chamber at (813) 909-2722, or email office@centralpascochamber.com.

WOMEN-N-CHARGE

Join Women-n-Charge for the Annual Christmas Party Luncheon & Gift Exchange on Dec. 1 from 11:15 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Pebble Creek Country Club, 10550 Regents Park Drive in New Tampa. The women share their talents and resources, and they build relationships with other women in business.

The cost is \$15 for members and \$18 for guests.

Bring a gift (no more than \$10) for the White Elephant Gift Exchange.

Register at Women-n-charge.com.

For information, call (813) 600-9848, or email info@women-n-charge.com.

WESLEY CHAPEL BREAKFAST

The Greater Wesley Chapel Chamber of Commerce will have its monthly breakfast meeting Dec. 5 from 7:30 a.m. to 9:15 a.m., at Pasco-Hernando State College, Porter Campus, at 2727 Mansfield Blvd., Wesley Chapel.

There will be an end-of-year summary.

The cost is \$15 for members who register in advance, and \$20 thereafter. Non-members pay \$20.

For information, call the chamber at (813) 994-8534, or email office@WesleyChapelChamber.com.

NETWORKING BREAKFAST

The Wednesday Morning Network Group will meet Dec. 6 at 7:30 a.m., at Hungry Harry's Family Bar-B-Que, at 3116 Land O' Lakes Blvd., in Land O' Lakes.

Each attendee will be able to present a 30-second pitch. The cost is \$7 for members, if preregistered by Nov. 30, or \$10 for members and non-members at the door.

Register online at CentralPascoChamber.com.

For more information, please call the chamber at (813) 909-2722, or send an email to office@centralpascochamber.com.



COURTESY STEPHEN JOHN PHOTOGRAPHY

Denyse Bales-Chubb, shown here with her husband Jack Chubb, received the Business Leader of the Year Award for 2017.

WESLEY CHAPEL HONORS EXCELLENCE

The Greater Wesley Chapel Chamber of Commerce honored business and community leaders at its 2017 Celebrating Excellence in Business Awards Celebration on Nov. 9.

The event was held at the Hilton Garden Inn Suncoast in Land O' Lakes.

The awards recognize the contributions of business and civic leaders to the regional economy. Categories included small businesses, large businesses, volunteers, civic organizations and business leaders.

The annual dinner attracts more than 200 business and community leaders to celebrate the year with a cocktail recep-

tion and dinner.

The winners for the excellence awards were:

- New Business of the Year: Pinot's Palette
- Small Business of the Year: RP&G Printing
- Large Business of the Year: Morton Plant North Bay Hospital
- Business Leader of the Year: Denyse Bales-Chubb of Florida Hospital Wesley Chapel
- The Dorothy Mitchell Lifetime Achievement: Bob Memoli of Florida Luxury Realty
- The Community Hero Award: Pasco County Commission Chairman Mike Moore

ZEPHYRHILLS BREAKFAST

The Greater Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce will have its monthly breakfast Dec. 7 from 7 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., at the Golden Corral, 6855 Gall Blvd., in Zephyrhills.

The sponsor is the San Antonio Citizens Federal Credit Union.

The cost is \$8 for chamber members and \$10 for non-members.

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

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION INNOVATIONS RIBBON CUTTING

Design and Construction Innovations will have a ribbon cutting Dec. 7 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., at 19337 Shumard Oak Drive, Suite 101, Land O' Lakes.

The event is free.

For more information, email The Greater Wesley Chapel Chamber of Commerce at office@WesleyChapelChamber.com, or visit DCInnovations.net.

BUSINESS LINK BREAKFAST

Business Link will have its monthly breakfast Dec. 13 from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m., at Wesley Chapel Toyota, 5300 Eagleston Blvd., in Wesley Chapel.

The monthly gathering, held at various locations, provides networking and an information-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 by calling (352) 588-2732 or emailing rgaddis@sacfcu.org.



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She trades Alaska for a floral shop in Pasco

By Kathy Steele

ksteele@lakerlutznews.com

More than 35 years ago, Susan Crenshaw made a life-changing decision.

A friend - who later became her husband - urged the New Port Richey native to move from her home base in Pasco County to Alaska.

"Alaska is the place you need to be," he told her.

At the time, there weren't many jobs available at home, so she took his advice.

She wound up loving it.

"I like the outdoors and love animals," Crenshaw said.

She also found plenty of opportunities to pursue her career passion - floral design.

Now, 35 years later, she is living in Spring Hill.

And, at age 58, she thought she was on a path to retirement, and living close to her children.

But, in October, she opened The Lakes Floral and Gifts Inc., at 6755 Land O' Lakes Blvd., in Wisteria Plaza.

After years of working for other shop owners, Crenshaw became a first-time business owner.

So much for retirement.

"I got bored," she explained.

Her shop offers custom-designed floral arrangements for all occasions.

She also offers an assortment of gifts and selected artwork.

There are fresh flowers, silk flowers, live plants, balloons, stuffed animals, soaps, and handcrafted cards, bottles and beadwork.

One gift item is a graphite pencil and a "Wishing Stone," created by sculptor Kelly Barker.



KATHY STEELE

Susan Crenshaw returned home from Alaska and opened her first floral business, The Lakes Floral and Gifts Inc.

Artwork can be painted on the stone's surface in water. As the water evaporates, the art disappears and the stone is ready for another artistic creation.

She also features works by local artists.

She plans to display artists' works on a rotating basis - featuring one artist's work for about two months and then bringing in new works from another artist.

Her own paintings are on display, too.

She began painting when she was young, noting that her mother painted, so she grew up with it.

Just as Alaska didn't become her permanent address, her career choice didn't follow the direction she expected it to take, either.

She attended what was then known as Pasco-Hernando Community College, majoring in art, with a minor in business.

Across the hallway, she noticed an adult education class on the basics of floral design.

She decided to give that a try, and was hooked.

"It gets into your blood," Crenshaw said. "You can't get away from it."

Though moving to Alaska might seem a leap to some people, Crenshaw said Anchorage, the state's largest city, worked well for her.

"It has a symphony orchestra that is fabulous, and opera," she said. "And, 10 minutes outside town, you're in the wilderness with moose and bears."

In Florida, people move from air-conditioned buildings to air-conditioned cars. In Alaska, it's from heated buildings to heated cars, Crenshaw said.

Not a big adjustment, she said.

"It was great."

She painted and was an avid photographer.

She worked as a florist.

At one time, she was florist at a base exchange at Elmendorf Air Base in Anchorage.

Crenshaw also worked in management for the supermarket company, Safeway, which is now owned by Albertson's.

Still, floral design is her first love.

She took classes in floral design in California from Phil Rulloda, a designer who is nationally known.

When she made the decision to open her Land O' Lakes shop, she researched and observed.

"We sat in parking lots and scoped areas out," she said.

Her son suggested she check out Land O' Lakes as a place where new development was happening.

"I remembered Land O' Lakes as the old Land O' Lakes," she said.

But, new subdivisions are coming, including one on former Lester Dairy farmland. More retail is coming, too.

Crenshaw saw "a nice, busy place," and settled on Wisteria Plaza, where Capital Tacos restaurant is located.

She also likes the family feel of the plaza.

"Everyone looks out for each other here," she said.

So, she is home again in Pasco County, doing what she loves.



Susan Crenshaw's floral shop, in Wisteria Plaza, has custom designed floral arrangements, balloons, gifts and artwork.

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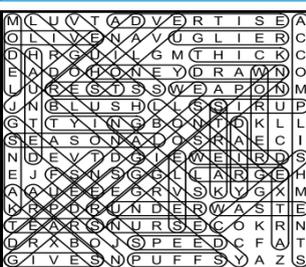
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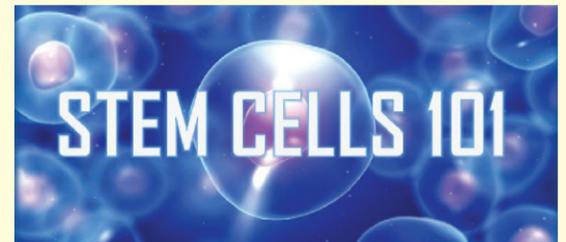
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