

WINTER HAVEN SUN



Wednesday, April 10, 2019

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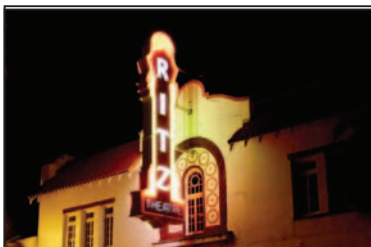
An Edition Of The Sun



Good Times for a good cause

Check out our photos from Rockin' on the River this past weekend.

PG 5



Settlement reached

A lawsuit involving the former manager of the Ritz Theatre and the Florida Attorney General has been settled.

PG 8



On the attack

This week's Athlete of the Week is Richard Bortoli, the leading scorer for the Lake Wales High boys lacrosse team.

PG 16

Good morning to:
Nicole Brown
Thanks for reading!

Eagles in Harmony



PHOTO PROVIDED

Zyan Busby, left, Shawn Klein and Jordan James are excited to perform as members of the Heralds of Harmony

Polk State trio added to elite men's chorus

By ANITA TODD
Contributing Writer

WINTER HAVEN – Fueled by their positive experiences and direction in the Polk State College's music education department, two current students and one alumnus recently were selected as new members of the Tampa Bay Heralds of Harmony — a barbershop style chorus currently ranked among the nation's best.

Current students Jordan James and Zyan Busby, along with 2018 grad Shawn Klein, each said they are honored to be a part of the men's capella chorus. The group has a strong national brand, has received international acclaim and recently placed sixth at the

Barbershop Harmony Society's 2018 International Convention.

Being chosen to join the Heralds was no small task, either.

For six weeks, the trio participated in a demanding audition process. Each week, they progressed through the requirements and ultimately were selected at the end to be permanent members.

James, a 2016 McKeel Academy of Technology graduate, came to Polk State as a theater major, but after observing the music department at length, changed his degree focus to vocal performance.

TRIO | 4

Union Tap Room may open by July

By CHARLES A. BAKER III
cbaker@scmginc.com

WINTER HAVEN – When the old Social Security building downtown reopens as North Arcade once renovations are complete, one of the businesses that will open within will be unique to Polk County.

Union Tap Room will feature 40 self serve beer and wine taps.

On April 2, the Winter Haven Planning Commission unanimously voted to recommend that the city commission approve the plan in the coming weeks.

This will be the first "brick and mortar" business venture for Winter Haven residents Colin and Meagan Wells. Colin Wells said he works for a global corporation and that he will be resigning soon to try and make it as a local business owner.

Union Tap Room will be located in the eastern half of North Arcade, in between the Ritz Theatre and El Olivo

TAP ROOM | 4



PHOTO BY CHARLES A. BAKER III
Winter Haven resident Colin Wells talks about Union Tap Room, his new business venture, to the Winter Haven Planning Commission April 2.

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CALENDAR



Not Alone: Isolation to Connection

When: April 10, 2019

**Where: Southeastern University -
Student Activities Center**

1000 Longfellow Blvd., Lakeland

Event will feature nationally-recognized author and speaker Hakeem Rahim. The mission of the event is to raise awareness about mental health, break stigmas and build support through an evening of community education and discussion. In addition to the main speaker, there will also be a panel discussion that will include SEU community members: Dr. Jennifer Angelidis, associate professor of social work; R-Jay Barsh, men's basketball coach; Meghan Wagner, assistant professor of biology; and Dr. Paula Whitaker, director of counseling, health and wellness. It is free and open to the public. For more information or questions, please email Dr. Erica Serrine at ehserrine@seu.edu.

Medicare 101

When: April 11, 2019 | 10:30 a.m.

Where: FWH & Associates

415 E. Main St., Suite 102, Bartow

Get the information you will need to build a healthy future. If you'll be eligible for Medicare soon, that means you have choices to make. It's natural to have questions and it's important to understand your healthcare options. Join Linda Carew for a free informational seminar. Other classes will take place April 25, May 9 and May 23. Call (863) 537-6686 for more information.

Pulitzer Prize winner Jack Davis

When: April 11, 2019 | 6 p.m.

Where: Lake Wales Public Library

290 Cypress Gardens Ln., Lake Wales

Award winning author, Jack Davis, will discuss his book "The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea" and the history of the Gulf of Mexico. Free event, held in the Schoenoff Meeting Room.

"Tuesdays with Morrie"

When: April 11-April 28 | Various times

Where: Theatre Winter Haven

210 Cypress Gardens Blvd. SW, Winter Haven

Co-produced by Alan Jay Automotive Network and the Cypress Gardens Lions Club, "Tuesdays with Morrie" is the autobiographical story of Mitch Albom, an accomplished journalist driven solely by his career, and Morrie Schwartz, his former college professor. Sixteen years after graduation, Mitch happens to catch Morrie's appearance on a television news program and learns that his old professor is battling Lou Gehrig's Disease. Mitch is reunited with Morrie, and what starts as a simple visit turns into a weekly pilgrimage and a last class in the meaning of life. More information at theatrewinterhaven.com.

2019 Walk for Animals

When: April 13, 2019 | 8 a.m.

Where: Lake Mirror Promenade

121 S. Lake Ave., Lakeland

Registration is \$35 and includes a limited edition t-shirt, Bow Wow Breakfast, and entry into all the canine demonstrations and contests, which include prize baskets. Walkers can enjoy main stage entertainment and demonstrations. The dog-friendly, family-fun event includes a bounce house, face painting, food, and specialty vendors. Walkers are encouraged to raise money to help homeless pets and compete for prizes and awards. Funds raised help SPCA Florida care for more than 7,000 homeless dogs and cats every year.

Digital Photography: You Can Take Pictures with Anything

When: April 13, 2019 | 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Where: Lake Wales Public Library

290 Cypress Gardens Ln., Lake Wales

Do you have an interest in photography — or would you just like your cellphone pictures to capture more than a blurry image? The Lake Wales Public Library's Lifelong Learning Series will present "Digital Photography: Take Better Pictures with Anything." Instructor and professional photographer, Beatrice, will lead students through adjusting camera or cell phone camera's exposure, lighting and cool temperature, comparing cameras and devices along with hands-on photographing. A light lunch will be served.

VFW Open House

When: April 13, 2019 | 1 p.m.

Where: VFW Post 4289

2441 Seventh St. SW, Winter Haven

Veterans of Foreign War (VFW) Post 4289 is hosting an open house April 13 and all are invited. The event will feature activities for young and old, along with music from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Pollinating with Words Poetry Fest

When: April 13, 2019 | 3 - 6 p.m.

Where: Bok Tower Gardens

1151 Tower Blvd., Lake Wales

Join accomplished poets William Maxwell and Sean Sexton and aspiring poets as they share their words and insights. \$7 for members, \$14 for non-members. BokTowerGardens.org for more information.

Lurking Down the Bunny Trail

When: April 13, 2019 | 6 p.m.

Where: Ramon Theater

15 E. Wall St., Frostproof

A murder mystery dinner. Figure out who murdered bunny

breeder Barney Benson during his busiest time of the year. \$40 per ticket — advanced reservations and more information can be found at RamonTheater.com.

"Toys in the Attic"

When: April 16, 2019 | 12:15 p.m. - 1 p.m.

Where: Polk County History Center

100 E. Main St., Bartow

Part of the Polk County History Center's "Out of the Archives" Speaker Series. "Toys in the Attic," is put together by Maria Trippe, curator of collections and exhibitions at the Polk County History Center. Have you ever wondered what kinds of artifacts are kept in the archives of a historical museum? Attend this new series to discover the hidden treasures of the Polk County History Center. Trippe will present the evolution of toys from the History Center's archive collection. Some of the artifacts she will present include games, dolls and dollhouses.

Tribute Tuesday: The Beatles

When: April 16, 2019 | 5 p.m., 8 p.m.

Where: Theatre Winter Haven

210 Cypress Gardens Blvd. SW, Winter Haven

Theatre Winter Haven's Tuesday Tribute Series continues with a tribute to The Beatles. Tickets are \$30 in advance, \$32 at the door. More information at theatrewinterhaven.com.

Titanic at the Movies

When: April 16, 2019 | 6 p.m.

Where: Haines City Public Library

111 N. Sixth St., Haines City

This is the fourth in the five-part series "The 100th Anniversary Titanic Memorial Cruise and Tales of Titanic" by Steve Mattis. His slide presentation will focus on several motion pictures commemorating the sinking of the RMS Titanic on April 15, 1912. The event is sponsored by Friends of the Haines City Public Library, Inc.

Bartow Ford Easter Egg Hunt

When: April 20, 2019 | 10 a.m.

Where: Bartow Ford

2800 U.S. Highway 98 N., Bartow

Bartow Ford Company invites the community to join them at their dealership for their first-ever Easter Egg Hunt. The hunt will begin promptly at 10 a.m. and end at 1pm. Over 5,000 stuffed eggs — some will include toys, others will include candy — will be placed in the designated areas at the dealership. Additionally, food vendors will be on hand selling lunch, snack and beverage options. Children who attend will enjoy a balloon artist — and, of course, the Easter Bunny will on hand!

Architectural Tour

When: April 20, 2019 | 11 a.m.

Where: Polk County History Center

100 E. Main St., Bartow

Join us for an architectural tour of the Polk County History Center and learn about neoclassical architecture, the construction of the building and the stories behind the iconic Old Polk County Courthouse. This month's tour features special emphasis on the beautiful tile floor. The architectural tour is at 11 a.m. on the third Saturday of each month.

SEND EVENTS TO:

polkcalendar@scmginc.com

WINTER HAVEN SUN

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COUNTY



County commission okays preliminary design funds for Northeast Government Center

By CATHY PALMER
Contributing Writer

The proposed \$17 million Northeast Polk County Government Center took another baby-step toward reality last week when the county commission okayed \$108,000 for preliminary design of the building.

The new facility, expected to be about 50,000 square feet in size, is going to sit on 10 to 20 acres of land somewhere near the U.S. 17/92 intersection with U.S. 27, according to Deputy County Manager Bill Beasley, and landowners have until April 15 to submit parcels for the county to consider before the county board chooses its exact location.

By next week, the county expects to have those property submittals in hand and, shortly after, Straughn Trout Architects of Lakeland will come up with three conceptual designs for the new facility.

The new building will provide offices for county services such as building and utility permits which now are only available in Bartow or at the existing Gil Jones Center in Winter Haven, officials said. Right now, about 60 workers occupy the Jones Center space.

County Real Estate Manager Wade Allen explained earlier that the county's lease on that facility expires next year, but he expects the board to extend that commitment for several more years while the new center is under construction.

The county board also expects the new center will pro-

vide space for the Property Appraiser, the Elections office and some additional court facilities. County Manager Jim Freeman said the current plans do not provide space for the county Tax Collector's Office, but added, "it depends on what property is selected."

Last fall, the county board approved a 10-year, \$150 million tax increase to pay for the new government center, build two more parks, hire more firefighters and build new fire stations.

The architects will have about 15 weeks to come up with three plans from which the county board will select one to move into the final design process. The money approved so far is only for the initial concepts, not detailed architectural plans.

Also last week, the county commission okayed spending \$770,000 for upgrades and integration of outdated computer systems. Freeman explained to the board that the county's information technology is old and utilizes various platforms that "don't talk to each other" leaving gaps in effective data exchanges.

Freeman said the software issues were in the county's utility services departments and involved billing, maintenance and performance monitoring.

The outgoing county manager, who started his career with the county in its IT offices, said, "This is a positive thing and since there is so much growth in these services, and this is such a large utility, we want to get this right."

"This is a vitally important system," said Commissioner

John Hall, "and this will help us move from reactive to proactive."

Freeman added the utility's master plans called for expanded services and the county has already invested substantially in providing increased capacity.

In other business, the county board also approved an \$809,124 expenditure to Tri-Sure Corp., for Phase I improvements to the reclaimed water mains at the county's County Road 547 system; and \$1.7 million to Garney Companies, Inc., for Phase I reclaimed water main improvements along Ernie Caldwell Boulevard. Both contracts are for 210 days.

Also last week, the board okayed a \$140,000 contract with the Peace River Center for Personal Development for follow-up care coordination services for clients who have been referred by the Crisis Stabilization Unit or the Crisis Response Team. The treatment and follow-up care program is expected to provide clients with additional services to avoid readmission or additional crisis intervention.

The contract, recommended by the county's health services oversight committee, is expected to provide services to about 450 clients over the life of the two-year contract.

Commission Chairman George Lindsey asked Freeman to see that the board had an update on the contract after six months to determine its effectiveness.



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ON THE COVER



TRIO

FROM PAGE 1

“Polk State opened my eyes to the opportunities I could have as a vocalist,” James said. “I am concentrating on developing my voice in classes and with the Heralds of Harmony.”

The young men gave credit to the faculty, particularly Michelle Manzi. The trio agreed that the staff is an integral part of what make Polk State’s music program comparable to those of top four-year university music departments.

“This is the most demanding, but also the most rewarding, program I’ve been in,” James said.

Busby, a 2016 Lake Wales High School graduate, is working toward his Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts and plans to transfer to Jacksonville University and finish his studies in Music Business.

“I tend to gravitate toward pop music and would eventually like to work in a studio with sound engineering or singing,” Busby explained.

Klein, who graduated from Polk State last semester,

said the college’s music program is the most professional environment he has been exposed to. To continue his college music career, Klein has auditioned for music programs at Stetson University, Jacksonville University and Florida Gulf Coast University.

“Here at Polk State, there are a lot of opportunities to interact with the campus ... plus a lot of avenues for performing opportunities,” Klein said.

Klein added that past Polk State President Eileen Holden, and current President Angela M. Garcia Falconetti, have each shown quite a bit of attention to the music department and that, in his opinion, it makes a difference.

“The quality of our professors here is what I enjoy most about the program,” Busby said. “They have taught at the university level and have experience in the field. We are getting the exact same quality – if not better quality – lessons as anywhere else.”

The 60-member Tampa Bay Heralds of Harmony Chorus has been together for more than 70 years, performing a capella and in the traditional barber-shop styling. The Tampa Chapter is part of the Barbershop Harmony Society. The Heralds of Harmony practice weekly for an intense three-hour session.

Their next performance is in Salt Lake City in July. For more information on the Heralds of Harmony, visit their website at heraldsofharmony.g3.groupanizer.com.

Join the trio and other members of the Polk State College music department for their “Rock Concert” on April 27 at 7 p.m. in the college’s Fine Arts Theater. The concert will feature small vocal ensembles with accompanying band members.

For more information on the concert and the Polk State College Music Program, visit <https://www.polk.edu/music/>.

TAP ROOM

FROM PAGE 1

Restaurant, and is being developed by Six/Ten LLC staff. Six/Ten President Kerry Wilson said the building may be open by summer, possibly by July.

Wilson said the building is mostly rented out already, but added there is still room for a new restaurant. Six/Ten staff are currently in negotiation with possible restaurant owners, but no deals have been made.

Wells told the planning commission that Union Tap Room customers would present an ID, start a tab with a credit card and be given a bracelet. Customers would then “swipe” their bracelet on an iPad attached to each of the 40 taps and then a computer would measure the amount of beer poured and charge the credit card accordingly.

After 32 ounces, the computer would block any future

sales and a staff person would have to determine if the customer could handle more before activating the bracelet again.

Wells said there would be four wine taps, two domestic beer taps and the 34 other taps would dispense craft beers.

Based on the floor plan submitted, Union Tap Room would feature multiple couches, comfy chairs and more than a dozen tables with chairs. An outdoor atrium would be open in the back.

The North Arcade, once built, will feature a 22-foot high, 12-foot wide walk through with skylights that will open a pedestrian path from the parking garage to Central Avenue. The tap room would be on the east side of the building and other vendors would be on the west side of the walk through.

“There is nothing quite like it in all of Polk County,”

Wells said. “We will be the first, the cutting edge.”

No food will be served. Wells said customers will be able to have food delivered.

“We want to support the restaurants downtown,” Wells said.

The planning commission also unanimously approved a plan to build approximately 37 more homes in Winter Haven off MLK Boulevard, in between Lake Buckeye and Lake Fannie, west of the bend at Country Club Road. The subdivision, if approved later by the city commission, would be called Willowbrook.

One of the concept drawings attached to this subdivision proposal showed that the developer may have future plans to build homes around Willowbrook Golf Course and build a road between MLK Boulevard and Lucerne Park Road.

Removing the Barriers Initiative carries forward with grand goals

By CHARLES A. BAKER III
cbaker@scmginc.com

LAKE WALES – Around 50 years ago, a young girl with cerebral palsy was at Lake Aurora Christian Camp in Lake Wales to watch her brother get baptized.

The girl had so much fun that, when she died, her family gave the camp a memorial gift.

At that moment, Lake Wales resident and former camp director Bill Redmon realized he rarely got thank you notes from disabled guests. Helping people with disabilities to enjoy the camp — and life — as much as anybody else became his “end of life project.” Redmond began dreaming up ways to help make life more inclusive for people with disabilities, but he knew building asphalt paths through the camp forest would not be enough to make a difference.

That is when the Removing the Barriers Initiative was born, a non-profit board that focuses on working with people with disabilities.

This past Saturday, the Initiative hosted its Big Kahuna Challenge. It is an event that pits 10-person teams piloting large, wheelchair accessible canoes against one another in a boat race to raise money.

Sponsored by Lake Wales Medical Group, the event took place on the Lake Caloosa on the campus of Webber International University in Babson Park. The proceeds benefited the Initiative, as well as one of its biggest projects: Stirring Waters.

Stirring Waters is a grand idea in scale: the largest water park for the disabled on the planet. Once built, the \$12 million-plus project will feature a football-field-sized water slide, a lazy river, housing on site and changing rooms designed for those who are wheelchair-bound.

Another of the Initiative’s main projects is providing wheelchair-accessible golf carts at various events, so wheelchair-bound people can enjoy events such as the Rockin on the River autism fundraiser concert this past weekend east Polk.

When Redmon retired as camp director in 2006, it was a retirement in name only. He kept doing all this volunteer work. This year Redmon turns 79 and he said he has been praying for a new generation of leaders to come forward and keep his effort through the Initiative ongoing.

As he grows older, the hours required have taken their toll. Bill and his wife, Wendy Redmon, woke up at 6:30

a.m. Saturday, April 6 to prepare for the Big Kahuna Challenge at Webber International University. They did not make it home until well after 10 p.m., after a long day that included volunteering at Rockin’ on the River.

“I’ll be 79 this year,” Redmon said. “I don’t want to be doing this when I’m 80. I need to find younger people so I can turn it over to them. I’m looking for that person.”

Some help has come already, though. Redmon said many have given financial commitments toward Stirring Waters and that students at Florida Polytechnic University have been helping to design the facility. The Veterans Administration is talking with the Removing the Barriers board in support, as there are plenty of disabled veterans who might benefit.

The Removing the Barriers board also started a second Christian camp specializing in serving the disabled located in the panhandle.

For those who want to get involved in the efforts of Removing the Barriers, there are numerous events year-round that can be sponsored. Those who would like to participate in one of these events, or simply want to donate time or money, are encouraged to check out <https://stirringh2o.com/>.

Rockin' for a good cause along the shore of Lake Pierce

People from near and far converged on the FFA Leadership Training Center, along the southeast shore of Lake Pierce in east Polk April 5-6 for the Fifth Annual Rockin' on the River event.

The event is the product of John Straughn's wish to bring attention to those on the autism spectrum, along with other special needs, by way of bringing people together for music and fun.

The event has been going since 2015 and this year the event moved to a new location.

Proceeds from the event were donated to Victory Ridge Academy, Side Street Art Beat, Circle of Friends, the Central Florida Autism Institute, Special Olympics of Polk County and more.

This past weekend's festivities included performances by The Nathan Baldwin Band and Darryl Worley.

— PHOTOS BY BILL SIEGEL



Seen here with Cathy Rayburn, Dr. Jerry Rayburn sports a Rockin' on the River hat.



The Darnley family — Bill, Willow and Breanne — take a break from the festivities at Rockin' on the River April 6.



Donnie and Julie Jordan brought their two dogs — Bear and Bailey — out to enjoy the event.



Cecil Watson and Peggy Donaldson were in a festive mood at Rockin' on the River.



Joan Christopher, left, Frances Hill and Debbie Johnson had a good time at the free event at the FFA Leadership Training Center.



A crowd of attendees gather under one of the pavilions at Rockin' on the River April 6.



Olivia Kaley, Vickie Cline and Gena Kaley enjoyed the event as a trio.

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PRWC lawyer files 5 eminent domain petitions

By CHARLES A. BAKER III
cbaker@scmginc.com

POLK COUNTY – Polk Regional Water Cooperative attorney Ed de la Parte filed five eminent domain court petitions March 11 seeking to temporarily seize some private property in Lakeland for well testing.

Experts say there is not enough clean, easy to reach fresh water in the Upper Floridan Aquifer to meet future water needs and that other sources of water must be found. County leaders are exploring the feasibility of using salt water in the Lower Floridan Aquifer under Polk County to meet future needs.

“Team One” engineers have already built two sets of Lower Floridan Aquifer (LFA) wells in between Lake Wales and Frostproof along Walk In Water Road, with a plan to build around a dozen more along the Lake Wales Ridge.

A third set of LFA wells has already been built in Lakeland, just east the Pepperidge Farms plant and south of Interstate 4. “Team One” is the group of engineers that won a \$23 million contract to study future water supply options.

Testing of the LFA wells near Frostproof for water quality is nearly complete. Starting in June, the PRWC board wants to start testing the quality of LFA water under Lake-

land. To do so, they applied for, and were approved for, a Southwest Florida Water Management District permit to pump 15.4 million gallons of saltwater under Lakeland.

Because it would not be legal to dump so much salt water on to the ground, PRWC staff applied to dilute this salt water with some normal well water and then let the 20 or so million gallons flow from the test site to Lake Parker, a distance of around two miles.

PRWC staff sent requests to around a dozen land owners in between the test site and Lake Parker seeking temporary use of the land to create a stream so the test water could flow into Lake Parker. Five did not respond and became parties in eminent domain petitions. Four are currently negotiating settlements and another four landowners are in early negotiations, PRWC staff said.

Judge Steven Selph will preside over the eminent domain petitions beginning May 21.

Also discussed by the PRWC board March 20 was the water quality from the salt water under the Lake Wales Ridge.

A Team One engineer told the PRWC board that reverse osmosis will get 75 to 80 percent of the total dissolved solids and sulfate out of the salt water pumped out of the LFA under the Lake Wales Ridge. The reverse osmo-

sis equipment is currently estimated to cost \$320 million. The Team One engineer said it would cost more to build additional treatment infrastructure to make that water clean enough to drink. The estimated cost of a desalination plant in Lakeland is \$166 million.

In addition, the PRWC board wants to spend \$120 million recharging the aquifer around Peace Creek, and to build a summer stormwater reservoir at a cost of around \$150 million. All four projects are estimated to provide around 60 million gallons per day of additional water supply.

That is double the 30 million gallons of additional water per day that Team One engineers have said the county needs by 2040. On March 20, one Team One engineer attempted to lobby the board not to cancel any of the four projects, suggesting that by 2068 an additional 162 million gallons per day will be needed.

At the onset of the PRWC meeting March 20, two Team One spokespeople said conservation efforts could solve the potential water shortage if the public took advantage of conservation programs to replace old shower heads, toilets and irrigation systems.

Check out <http://www.prwcwater.org/conservation/rebates-and-incentives> for more information about how you can help save water.

Municipalities to help shoulder costs of U.S. 27 bus route

By CHARLES A. BAKER III
cbaker@scmginc.com

LAKE WALES – Citrus Connection Director of External Affairs Erin Killebrew will soon be giving elected officials in Haines City, Dundee and Lake Hamilton a similar presentation to the one she gave in Lake Wales March 3.

Over the last few months, members of the Ridge League of Cities lobbied Citrus Connection staff and the Polk County Commission for a bus route along U.S. 27. Killebrew said that in February during the annual board retreat at Circle B Reserve, Polk County Commissioners agreed to pay 80 percent of the \$366,000 cost for the first year with the four cities mentioned paying the remaining 20 percent.

Killebrew said that the federal government has a history of paying 50 percent of mass transit costs for local governments, but because this bus route is being added somewhat suddenly, federal money is not applicable for the first year of service. Killebrew said Citrus Connection staff would apply to have this route subsequently subsidized with federal taxpayer dollars.

The “fair share” for Lake Wales residents starting October 1 will be \$25,130. If the federal government subsidizes

the route extension, that number may go down in subsequent years. Lake Wales has the highest share due to the amount of miles traveled, not ridership numbers.

Haines City residents are being asked to pay \$13,527 in the first year; Dundee residents will be on the hook for \$9,578 and Lake Hamilton residents are being asked to pay \$11,036 for the first year of service.

Currently there is a U.S. 27 bus route from the South County Jail in Frostproof, through Lake Wales and Eagle Ridge Mall to the Dundee police station. There is currently no service in Lake Hamilton. The new line will run from the Health Department building on State Road 60 in Lake Wales up through Posner Park, near the intersection of Interstate 4 and U.S. 27.

The Frostproof City Council has repeatedly voted not to approve any local funding for mass transit and will not be included in the new service.

Stops and route times have not been set because first Citrus Connection staff have to make sure elected officials in these Ridge communities approve of the plan and budget money

toward it.

Killebrew said that if the U.S. 27 Express Bus route is opened, it will vastly expand mass transit services for Polk County residents.

“Essentially you would be able to ride the bus from Bartow to Poinciana, to Orlando, and to Daytona,” Killebrew said. “You are going to need to pack a lunch, but you can get there on our system.”

Lake Wales City Manager Ken Fields and Mayor Eugene Fultz both expressed support of the plan.

“This is only going to help our residents who don’t have cars at the moment,” Fields said. “This is a small price to pay to really open up an opportunity that didn’t exist before.”

The addition of this line, if approved by vote possibly around summer time, would mean Lake Wales residents would be paying around \$90,000 per year for mass transit in 2020.



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- Zoning Board of Adjustment

To obtain an application or board description contact the City Clerk's Office at (863) 534-0100 ext. 1256 or visit the City Clerk section on the City's website: www.cityofbartow.net

Officials hope rebranding will boost Northeast Polk Chamber of Commerce

By ANITA TODD
Contributing Writer

HAINES CITY – It's official — the Northeast Polk Chamber of Commerce is the new moniker for what was formerly known as the Haines City Area Chamber of Commerce.

On March 21, the new logo was unveiled and the finalization of the change announced during the Chamber's monthly breakfast.

According to Chamber officials, the change was made in an effort to include the significant number of new businesses along U.S. 27, traveling north from Haines City into Davenport.

"The corridor is growing like crazy. Labeling the Chamber as Haines City's put us into a box," said Lana Stripling, the Chamber's Executive Director. "Changing the name and including those businesses gives everyone more of an opportunity to work together and network."

And, according to Karen Tiner, immediate past president and current treasurer, — as well as the co-owner of Ameriprise Financial — with the growth, the city limit lines have become a blur.

"Because of all of the annexation that is going on, there's really no borderline between Haines City and Davenport," Tiner said. "This name change will take away the borders even more."

Tiner said that part of the goal is to make new businesses feel welcome and like they belong too.

Currently, the Northeast Polk Chamber has approximately 330 members with new businesses joining frequently.

"March was our biggest month for new-member enrollment. I really have to think that the number of (additions) was due to the name change," Tiner said.

Stripling said that the cities of Haines City and Davenport have a good working relationship. She said that Davenport has always been a member of the Chamber and that, with this change, they have committed to continue to partner with them.

The social media sites — including the website — have been updated to reflect the change.

Now, when typing in



HainesCityChamber.com, visitors will automatically be redirected to NortheastPolkChamber.com.

"Most everything else stays the same," Stripling said, adding that the office will remain at its current location and the telephone number the same.

For the past 10 years or so, the Chamber has worked at finding the right name for itself. Originally named the Haines City Chamber of Commerce, the name changed in 2009 to Northeast Polk-Haines City Chamber of Commerce.

Then, in 2015, it was changed to the Haines City Area Chamber of Commerce.

Officials think they have it right this time around.

For more information about all the Northeast Polk Chamber has to offer, visit them at 35610 U.S. 27 in Haines City, as well as by phone at (863) 422-3751 or the website at www.northeastpolkchamber.com.

Polk voters cast ballots

By STEVEN RYZEWSKI
sryzewski@scmginc.com

POLK COUNTY — Voters in Polk had their say April 2 in local elections spanning eight municipalities.

In easily the evening's closest result, Seat 1 of the Haines City Commission was unofficially decided by all of two-votes. Jayne Hall had 682 votes to Don Mason's 680 votes.

In Davenport, incumbent Mayor H.B. "Rob" Robinson III earned more than twice as many votes (531) as that of challenger Darlene Bradley (230 votes). In the election for City Commission Seat 3, Bobby Lynch comfortably received well over 50 percent of

the vote — Lynch's 463 votes eclipsed Headley Oliver's 161 votes and John Lepley's 126 votes. Finally, a charter amendment to transition the city's mayoral role to one elected by the city commission was shot down with 577 votes against and 172 votes in favor.

Seat 5 on the Fort Meade City Commission was up for grabs, with Samuel Berrien's 433 votes (52.29 percent) topping James M. Parker's 395 votes (47.71 percent).

Seat 1 on the Frostproof City Commission was on the line Tuesday, with Michael B. Hutto comfortably earning a victory (220 votes, 73.83 percent) against Michael "Mike" Woodley (78 votes, 26.17 per-

cent).

Lake Alfred voters were given two votes to use between four candidates as the city elected Seats 1 and 2 of its city commission. Brent Eden (398 votes) and Albertus Maultsby (355 votes) were the top two vote earners, ahead of Edwin Van Smith (333 votes) and C. Diane Pereira (258 votes).

Finally, in Polk City, voters narrowly said yes to a charter amendment creating four commission districts, designating an at-large commission, establishing initial boundaries and creating a process to change boundaries. The narrow margin saw 172 votes cast in favor and 161 cast against.

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WINTER HAVEN



Florida Attorney General's office settles Ritz Theatre case

By CHARLES A. BAKER III
cbaker@scmginc.com

WINTER HAVEN – After years of allegations of fraud and mismanagement at the Ritz Theatre, former Ritz Theatre manager Stella Heath recently reached a settlement with Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody.

The settlement, announced within the past two weeks and finalized April 8, marked the end of a long and often controversial road.

Starting sometime around 2014, the Ritz Theatre stopped making enough money to cover its \$7,000 per month mortgage, as well as to make insurance and utility payments and to regularly pay Heath's salary.

Court documents state Heath would use personal money to pay the theater mortgage and utilities while she was still in her role managing the facility. In January 2017, the former Ritz board and Heath signed a \$250,000 lien stating that if the Ritz went out of business, that amount of money would have to be taken from the proceeds of a sale to pay Heath.

Shortly after, a group of people calling themselves "The Friends of the Ritz" alleged this lien was criminal, and asked State Attorney Brian Haas to investigate. After a yearlong investigation, Haas concluded the lien was legal, but had questions about how much money was owed, stating in court documents that paperwork documenting the debt was incomplete.

Haas referred the case to then-Florida Attorney Gen-

eral Pam Bondi for further investigation.

Around a year ago, Bondi's staff asked a local judge to forcibly remove the former Ritz board, block the private sale of the Ritz, contest the lien and appoint a third party to take over operations. After this, Heath resigned and filed a countersuit against the attorney general, alleging she was owed money.

According to her attorney, Benjamin Webster, of the Morgan & Morgan law firm, Heath settled with current Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody, sworn-in this past January, for more than half of the \$250,000 she believes she is owed.

"Anything the (Florida) Attorney General's Office, or anyone else, claimed about potential wrongdoing or a fraudulent lien was completely unfounded — simply not true," Webster said.

Part of the settlement was a joint statement, which read in part, "This settlement resolves the claims by Heath for compensation and other money owed, and any claims or issues raised by the attorney general relating to Heath."

However, in a press statement released March 29, the attorney general's office repeated past allegations and claims.

"Sufficient concerns were raised to warrant a referral to the attorney general," the statement read. "The Attorney General's Office then pursued action to impede the financial repercussions and get the Ritz back on track."

Webster responded to the statement.

"The AG's press release 'declaring a win' is befuddling,"

Webster said. "They tried to eliminate any chance of Ms. Heath receiving the money she is owed. ... These issues could have been resolved without (the attorney general's) involvement. It's still difficult to understand why taxpayer money was spent on this."

According to retired Judge Charles Davis, who was appointed as the third party "receiver" at the Ritz, the settlement was the last major hurdle to having a new board installed to take over operations at the theater.

Davis said that he will be submitting a list of financial donors to the theater for court approval. These people, who have yet to be publicly named, will then select the new board. Davis said he may be submitting this list and a final report to the judge any day now.

The exact amount of money Heath received is unknown, as the settlement agreement has not been publicly posted in online court documents. Webster said he and his legal team would have happily waited and continued to try to get Heath the full \$250,000 she sued for, but that Heath instructed Webster to settle the case.

"Stella very much wants to see the Ritz achieve success and serve the community in the future, and always wanted to see the Ritz succeed," Webster said. "Her claim was big enough that if she had gone forward, it would have caused additional complications for the Ritz, and that was not her goal. She was paid a significant portion of what she was owed and that was acceptable to her."

Staff with an insurance company representing the Ritz agreed to make the payment.

City staff, Project EAGLE volunteers make efforts to 'Clean it Up'

By CHARLES A. BAKER III
cbaker@scmginc.com

WINTER HAVEN – City staff were given the opportunity to "dress down" and participate in the annual "Clean it Up Winter Haven" the morning of April 10.

Staff and other volunteers met at the Winter Haven Recreation and Culture Center at 8 a.m. and cleaned up trash around the city until around 11 a.m., before returning to the recreation center for lunch and door prizes from Keep Winter Haven Clean and Beautiful supporters.

Winter Haven Assistant to the City Manager Donna Sheehan said that last year city staff and supporters collected 1.4 tons of garbage, 100 tires, six mattresses, a shopping cart and six office chairs.

If you missed the event but would still like to help keep the city clean, the

annual Project EAGLE event takes place April 27. On March 25, project coordinator Tracy Mercer told the Winter Haven City Commission that last year volunteers disposed of three tons — or 6,000 pounds — of litter including a dishwasher, several shopping carts and numerous tires.

Sheehan said city staff collected around 2,000

pounds of garbage and 32 tires during Project EAGLE.

Those interested in participating in Project EAGLE are encouraged to arrive at Lake Shipp Park around 8 a.m. April 27. Those with boats are encouraged to utilize them. Project EAGLE volunteers primarily focus on picking trash off lake shores.



PHOTO BY CHARLES A. BAKER III
Project EAGLE organizer Tracy Mercer spoke to the Winter Haven City Commission March 25.

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Garden Club unveils completed work on library entrance

By CHARLES A. BAKER III
cbaker@scmginc.com

WINTER HAVEN – Over the last few months, city staff and members of the Garden Club of Winter Haven partnered to give the Winter Haven Library entrance more “curb appeal.”

The fountain at the library’s southwest entrance was repaired, various types of flowers were planted and a path of hand decorated stones was built into the garden.

Club members, city

commissioners, city staff and supporters gathered at the library April 2 for a ribbon cutting.

Members of the Garden Club of Winter Haven said they were inspired by the Bok Tower Children’s Garden, which has a similar garden path.

City staff present expressed approval at the finished product.

“Talk about curb appeal — I’m really happy we have done this,” Win-

ter Haven Mayor Pro Tem Nat Birdsong said.

Each of the 31 stones built into the path weighed around 80 pounds, but that did not stop the ladies in the garden club from getting the volunteer work done.

“The most beautiful things in the community are made possible by our people,” Greater Winter Haven Chamber of Commerce President Katie Worthington said.



PHOTO BY CHARLES A. BAKER III
Members and supporters of the Garden Club of Winter Haven pose in front of Winter Haven Library April 2.

Appeal hearing for Overlook development set for April 16

By CHARLES A. BAKER III
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WINTER HAVEN – A proposed 157-unit residential development off Overlook Drive just outside Winter Haven city limits, near LeadFeather Guns and Archery, was denied by the Polk County Planning Commission March 6.

An appeal public hearing is being heard by the Polk County Board of County Commissioners on the afternoon of April 16.

In March, a dozen Winter Haven residents drove to Bartow to voice opposition to the plan. Some in attendance clapped when the planning commission

voted down the initial plan. County staff also received five opposition emails.

The developer sought a special permit to build 24 apartment units and 133 homes on 40 acres. Code currently allows 120 total residential units on the property.

Most of those who expressed opposition said they were not opposed to the property being developed, but instead with the density of the project plan. Some who live on Overlook Drive said it is already difficult getting in and out of their driveways during times were

commuters are traveling to and from work..

The March 6 hearing lasted nearly two hours.

If the county commission votes against the planning commission, the development plan would still need to clear level two reviews by county staff.

If the county commission votes as the planning commission did, the developer would have two options: return with a plan to build less than 120 units or seek annexation from the Winter Haven City Commission and to then submit the plan through the city.

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LAKE WALES



Work in progress session whets appetite for Lake Wales Connected

By STEVEN RYZEWSKI
sryzewski@scmginc.com

LAKE WALES — Victor Dover encountered a recurring theme as he spent most of last week chatting with local officials, stakeholders and other residents.

A founding principal for Dover, Kohl & Partners — the town planning firm tasked with putting together a plan for Lake Wales Connected, which seeks to reinvigorate the city's downtown and surrounding areas — Dover found that not only were the people he spoke with receptive and thoughtful, they were also quite eager.

“Every day this week, in conversations we had, mostly what we heard is ‘how fast can we go?’” Dover said, moments after wrapping up a work in progress session April 5 at the Lake Wales Women's Club. “I think there's a pent-up demand from years of waiting.”

Karen Thompson, the executive director for Lake Wales Main Street, one of the local groups leading the charge for Lake Wales Connected, can relate. Although what was presented this past Friday was just a working draft, the renderings and larger ideas that Dover and his team shared fired up Thompson and most of the roughly 80 residents in attendance at the session.

“(I'm) excited beyond measure,” Thompson said. “(Seeing the work in progress) begins to give you a sense of ‘oh — this is happening!’”

As exciting as the subject matter at hand was for area residents, it was also an informative evening, as Dover and his team not only ran down their ideas for the urban design of Lake Wales, but also the principles behind those ideas.

A recurring theme for the Dover, Kohl & Partners team was that of a skeleton already in place in Lake Wales. Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and his Olmsted Brothers firm designed the landscaping for Bok Tower Gardens, Mountain Lake community and the main core of the city.

That forethought, coupled with some of the unique existing buildings Lake Wales already has to its credit, suggest to Dover that the city has a leg up on other locales who want to create a sense of place.

“The people who actually drew the layouts of the streets, and who thought about the parks and the planning and the future of this place — they were, at the time, the best people at the practice of urban design and planning,” Dover said, referencing Olmsted. “I

think the basic bones and foundation ... the kinds of things that are already here are all good.”

In fact, the design team made a point of explaining that the Olmsted design philosophy for Lake Wales was one that emphasized greenery amidst urbanism.

“Think about that — the idea of a city in a garden,” Dover said to those gathered.

The rendering of familiar places with a facelift drew most of the audible approval from the audience, but the Dover team provided additional guiding principles that were equally informative: design, connect, activate, populate and empower.

Indeed the second item, design, was a key component throughout the talk, as the idea of connectivity from downtown Lake Wales, to the city northwest neighborhood, on up through to Bok Tower Gardens, was a central theme.

The week began with a kickoff, hands-on session April 1 and included design and feedback opportunities throughout the week. Dover not only praised the community's eagerness, but also its robust participation, suggestion that for a city of Lake Wales' size he would have anticipated half the crowd that turned up on both April 1 and 5.

Thompson, an advocate for reinvigorating the town's core, was pleased with the way the community responded.

“The community is ready and engaged,” Thompson said. “To see the flow of people in and out of the design studio all week was encouraging.”

As was emphasized several times, what was presented is a working draft. The process will continue now, and Thompson estimates a six-to-eight week process for the final draft to be drawn, after which city staff, CRA and other officials will review them and make adjustments.

A goal is to have a full presentation to make to the Lake Wales City Commission sometime in the fall, after which more sub-

stantial action can be taken.

So, while the process is still in its beginning stages, the excitement and energy that came out of last week's proceedings was tangible.

“I believe what we have here is the makings of a dramatic before and after picture,” Dover said.



PHOTO BY STEVEN RYZEWSKI

This rendering, on display at the work in progress session for Lake Wales Connected April 5, depicts one possibility for how the intersection of Park Ave. and Market St. could be reinvigorated in downtown Lake Wales

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Bok Tower Gardens nominated as one of North America's best botanical gardens

By STEVEN RYZEWSKI
sryzewski@scmginc.com

It was already debatable whether Bok Tower Gardens, which attracts visitors both domestic and international, could be considered a best kept secret.

Even if it was, though, it likely won't be for long — not with the Lake Wales destination among the 20 botanical gardens nominated in USA Today's 10Best Readers' Choice contest for Best Botanical Gardens.

Voting is currently underway in the contest and will run through noon on April 22. At that point, the 20 nominees will be whittled down to a definitive top-10 list via a public vote.

For Bok Tower staff, though, simply being included in the original list of nominees is a pretty cool bit of recognition. After all, that list of 20 botanical gardens from throughout all of North America was decided upon by a panel of experts — including Katy Moss Warner, currently President Emeritus of the American Horticultural Society (AHS), a national, not-for-profit, member-based organization with a bold vision of “making America a nation of gardeners, a land of gardens.”

“This list is the premiere gardens list in the world, basically,” explained Erica Smith, the Director of Marketing and Public Relations for Bok Tower Gardens. “It was a huge honor that we were able to join our sister gardens on the list.”

Other botanical gardens nominated for the 10Best contest include facilities from larger markets, including Washington D.C., San Francisco, Brooklyn, Montreal, Dallas and Chicago. And, as Smith noted, not only is

Bok Tower competing with facilities in much larger markets — it is competing with several facilities that are just plain larger.

“One of the things I think about is the fact that many (of the nominees) are gigantic gardens and we are probably one of the smaller ones listed on that list,” Smith said.

Bok Tower may well be in a smaller market, but it clearly has an outsized fan base. As of April 8, Bok Tower Gardens was ranked third out of the 20 nominees in online voting.

Smith said that in addition to Bok Tower staff getting the word out about where and how to vote — supporters can vote here: 10best.com/awards/travel/best-botanical-garden-2019/ — they have been pleasantly surprised with other community organizations throughout Polk and beyond who are also encouraging people to get out the vote.

“I've been so thrilled seeing other community organizations sharing — it's growing beyond just us asking people to vote,” Smith said. “It's really gratifying to know we have other people out in the community who want us to shine.”



Bok Academy students do their part to pitch in



PHOTO BY CHARLES A. BAKER III

Bok Academy 8th graders Sidnie Whitaker and Lily Weaver present a check for \$140 to the Lake Wales City Commission April 3. The girls raised the money as part of a school project and requested it be used to purchase athletic equipment at Kirkland Gym, a very old gym in Lake Wales which is need of multiple renovations, but which is still very popular with city youth.

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Mail-in ballots help elevate Simpson to re-election

By JEFF ROSLOW
Contributing Writer



W.H. "Billy" Simpson

BARTOW – The vote by mail system helped earn W.H. "Billy" Simpson his second term on the Bartow City Commission.

In the municipal election on April 2, Vice Mayor Simpson earned 48.39 percent (798 votes) of the vote to win Seat 3 over challenger Tanya Tucker's 41.9 percent (691). Running for the 27th consecutive time for a city commission seat, Gerald Cochran got 9.7 percent (160).

Seat 3 was the only one with a race in Bartow.

On Election Day, Tucker won the vote 209-198 over Simpson, with Cochran getting 25 votes. By mail, however, Simpson earned a 600-482 victory over Tucker, with Cochran getting 135 votes.

"The absentees was the key to the whole thing," Simpson said following

the victory.

For some time on Election Night the tally showed Tucker in the lead before the absentees were being counted.

"I was very proud of the outcome," Tucker said. "I had a small campaign team, not a big budget, and it was close."

Thinking of herself as the underdog in the race, Tucker said her goal to be part of "the voice and help the city in any way I can," was accomplished. At only 37 years old, the fifth-generation Bartow native said she will run again.

"I want to congratulate Mr. Simpson on his re-election, but Bartow hasn't heard the last of me," she said.

Simpson, 77, is a Summerlin Institute 1959 graduate. He said afterward he believes the voters in Bartow made the choice for experience.

"The premise is a good thing for Bartow," he said.

Simpson serves as the commission's representative on the Polk Regional Water Cooperative, of which Bartow is one of

the 17 Polk governments. Last week he was picked by his city colleagues to serve another year in that capacity.

"He added that, with as important an issue as the water supply, having to choose someone new would put Bartow at a disadvantage.

"If we don't make this happen by 2035, then we run out of water," he said.

Cochran, who is no stranger to running for office in Bartow, spent Election Day at the Bartow Civic Center parking lot, chatting with anyone walking by, as he's done in the past. He suggested that because no one received more than 50 percent of the vote, there should be a run off between the top two.

That won't happen, though, and on May 6, Simpson will be sworn in to his second three-year term on the city commission. Commissioners are paid \$7,298.

The turnout in Bartow for the municipal election include 14.88 percent of possible voters in the city.

Meals on Wheels seeks drivers

By SUN STAFF

POLK COUNTY – With temperatures climbing, snowbirds are already starting to head north, and that means Meals on Wheels of Polk County is facing its annual problem of finding replacement volunteers.

"Every year around this time we face the loss of our seasonal volunteer drivers," Meals on Wheels of Polk County Executive Director Susan Eldridge said.

Anyone who owns a car and has a driver's license and car insurance is eligible to help. Typically, volunteers deliver a dozen meals each and volunteer on average of around two hours per day. After joining, volunteers meet in the kitchen around 10 a.m. and are usually done by noon.

Substitute drivers are also needed.

In addition to drivers, cooks, thrift store clerks, fund raisers and board

member volunteers are also needed. For more information, check out www.mealsonwheelspolk.com or call at (863) 299-1616.

Combined, the non-profit delivers meals to around 370 homes, mostly to homebound residents over 65. They receive no government funding and rely solely on local donations of time and money.

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Wonderhouse gets approval for tours, thumbs down for weddings, other events

By JEFF ROSLOW
Contributing Writer

BARTOW – It wasn't everything Drew Davis wanted, but he walked away from a recent Bartow Board of Adjustment meeting with approval to offer tours of his historic Wonderhouse during the weekends.

"I'm not totally satisfied — but I'm happy," Davis said after the four-hour public hearing March 25.

The meeting saw 23 people speak on the matter, including attorney Ted Weeks, representing Harriett Harris, who spoke of problems with the application, noise, traffic and parking problems and ultimately encouraged the board to deny the application.

Weekend tours with on-site parking only was approved, but there will be no weddings or small gatherings allowed at the mansion.

Drew Davis and Krislin Kreis bought the house in 2015 which — for the second time — was in a state of disrepair. They bought it not only to live in, but also to restore. The couple paid \$162,000 for the house and so far has spent more than \$200,000 remodeling it.

To help to pay for the reconstruction, the couple thought to host tours and other small events. The idea of the house as an attraction has its roots in the structure's history.

Originally constructed in 1926, the Wonderhouse, at different times also called "The House of a Thousand Gadgets," was a popular tourist attraction from the 1930s to 1950s. Later, Lucy DuCharme bought the Wonderhouse and converted it into a luxurious home. She frequently threw lavish parties at the residence. The house was featured in a 1990 movie called "Judgement."

To be able to host such events, the couple had to get an okay from the city to operate as such. The building at 1075 Mann Road is on a 24-foot street in a residential area within the Mission Oaks neighborhood.

Despite two meetings with neighbors in which no serious objections were raised, the Board of Adjustment meeting brought in a full house of people — both for and against tours. On top of that, Bartow City Planner Bob Weigers said he had received 52 emails beforehand concerning the matter.

"I would love to tour it and so would my wife," Earl Jones, a resident of nearby George Street, said. "But I don't want the noise. Property values will go down."

Other residents also spoke. "I have no problem with the tours under guidelines," Kathy Hatch said. "(But) not an event aspect and turning it into an event venue with noise and traffic."

Hatch added that her grandchildren walk and play in the area and the traffic could make it more dangerous for youth.

The protests took the couple by surprise as both have said they had not heard previously that people were against their effort.

Davis and Kreis had twice previously appeared before city committees, as well as the city commission on two other occasions.

"This is not going to have an impact on them," Kreis said before the hearing. "We don't want to make their lives bad. This is my house where I live."

But Weeks said the application is full of flaws. Weeks said the application is not complete and that there are questions about the parking and noise.

"It seeks an introduction of non-resident (activity) into a residential neighborhood," Weeks said. "It will have a negative impact on this quiet, residential neighborhood."

Weeks pointed to what he considered to be at least a half dozen items that were wrong with the application, including his description of the application as a commercial project in a residential neighborhood.

Davis replied to some of the charges, saying at recent party he held at his house he fit 20 parked cars in his yard

and none had a problem getting out. Davis also mentioned that tours could only be booked online and would be by appointment, making the



likelihood of heavy traffic less. Ultimately, Davis offered to run tours only on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

He also took issue with the suggestion that property values of neighboring homes would be impacted negatively.

"In terms of the real estate value — what if I abandon the house and the weeds grow again to four or five feet high?" Davis asked, referencing one of the prior occasions when the house had become unkept. "With this, people's property values will go up."

The three-story Wonderhouse has its main living area on the second floor. Some features include a pool in front, resembling a moat, concrete foot-bridges, studded mosaic tiles set in concrete, 16 porches, hallowed walls that allow for water-flowing air conditioning before air conditioning was common in Florida, flower boxes that could be watered from one location and a mirror system that allowed residents to see who was at the front door.

The house was recently featured in a Netflix documentary.

In a final attempt to get some help in being able to cover the reconstruction costs, Davis made a final pitch to the board.

"I understand the slippery slope, but this (home) has historical value to Bartow," Davis said. "If we can't get some help from the community, this (reconstruction) won't happen at all."

Lending a helping hand



A group from First Methodist in Bartow recently visited a local member, Dorothy Tucker, and helped her with projects around her home including yard work, painting and pressure washing.

The group intends to do this for other church members who need help.

Those who participated include Bill Wright, Francisco Bocalandro, Elizabeth Roth, Darmaris Fonseca, Jessica Hamer, Clarice Roth, Cheryl Layton, Greg McMullan, Carolyn Presnell, Sylvia Spencer and David Brooks.

Food was provided by Linda Hutto, Karel Hammer and Bonnie Allen.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE CITY OF BARTOW CITY COMMISSION

Notice is hereby given that the City Commission of the City of Bartow will hold a public hearing at a Regular City Commission meeting on April 15, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers of Bartow City Hall located at 450 N. Wilson Avenue to consider the following resolution(s):

Resolution No. 19-4012-R - a resolution amending the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Annual Budget of the City of Bartow.

The proposed resolution(s) are available in the office of the City Clerk in the City Hall complex. Interested parties may examine them there or appear at the meeting and be heard with respect to the proposed resolution(s). Please be advised that if you desire to appeal from any decisions made as a result of the above hearing or meeting, you will need a record of the proceedings and in some cases, a verbatim record is required. You must make your own arrangements to produce this record. (Florida Statute 286.0105)

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and F.S. 286.26, persons with disabilities needing special accommodations to participate in this proceeding should contact the City Clerk's Office no later than five (5) days prior to this proceeding at telephone number 863-534-0100 for assistance; if hearing impaired call 1-800-955-8771 or voice impaired call 1-800-955-8770 (VOICE) for assistance.

Law enforcement report: PCSO deputies arrest two suspects for stealing thousands of dollars' worth of jewelry in a residential burglary

By SUN STAFF

On Friday, March 22, two suspects burglarized a home located on Queens Cove Loop in Winter Haven. Thousands of dollars worth of jewelry was stolen from the residence.

Video surveillance showed a red Chrysler 300 pulled up to the home and two men got out and entered the back door of the residence, which was not locked. The suspects were later observed leaving the home after stealing jewelry and other items.

On April 4, a Polk County Sheriff's Office detective learned 19-year-old Davon Brooks, of Winter Haven, attempted to cash a check for "landscaping" on March 27 at a local bank. According to the affidavit, the check belonged to the victim of the burglary and her name had been forged by the suspect. The investigation determined that Brooks also made a number of pawn transactions that matched the stolen property.

During the investigation, Cash America employees called the detective working the case informing him Brooks was in their store trying to pawn a bag full of gold with a second suspect, 21-year-old Frankie Rolle, of Winter Haven.

When deputies arrived, both suspects tried to flee, but were stopped.

Two large handfuls of jewelry were found in Mr. Rolle's jacket. The investigation revealed both men were the suspects in the residential burglary after both were found to be in possession of jewelry stolen from the home. They were arrested and taken to the county jail.

"We appreciate our local businesses cooperating with us to help catch these thieves," Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd said. "Both SunTrust bank and Cash America pawn fully cooperated with our investigation. We remind homeowners to always lock your residence and vehicles-let's make it more difficult for thieves like Books and Rolle."

Both men have an extensive criminal history.

Operation Pop Top leads to two arrests in Davenport

On Tuesday, April 2, Polk County Sheriff's Office school resource deputies conducted "Operation Pop Top"— an ongoing effort to enforce laws related to the sale of alcohol to minors.

Deputies send high school teenagers into stores to see if they can buy alcohol. The students are PCSO Explorers, which is a program designed for students who are interested in learning about law enforcement careers.

During the operation, 22-year-old Jatajah Graham of Haines City, was the only on-duty clerk at the 7-11 convenience store at 6205 Lake Wilson Rd. in Davenport, when she sold an alcoholic beverage to our 19-year-old Explorer.

Graham asked the Explorer his age in which he replied "I'm 19." Graham then asked the Explorer for his birthdate and ID and completed the sale of the alcoholic beverage. Graham was taken into custody and charged with selling alcohol to a person under 21 and transported to the Polk County Jail.

Deputies also arrested 62-year-old Mohamed Elyaman of Frostproof, who was the on-duty clerk at the E-Z Food Store located at 5945 Highway 17/92 North in Davenport. Elyaman sold the explorer an alcoholic beverage. He was taken into custody and charged with selling alcohol to a person under 21 and transported the county jail.

The following stores were found to be in compliance with Florida beverage laws: Wawa No. 5299, 8103 Lake Wilson Rd., Davenport; 7-11 No. 38193, 3141 Ronald Reagan Pkwy., Davenport; Loves Truck Stop No. 627, 45000 U.S. 27 S., Davenport; Circle K No. 2722125, 45489 U.S. 27 N., Davenport; and Circle K No. 2722209, 101 Polo Park BL E., Davenport; Circle K No. 2704883, 2444 U.S. 27 S., Davenport.

"We are going to hold store employees accountable for selling alcohol to those under 21 years old," Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd said. "It's their responsibility to check IDs at all times. The stores and employees found in com-

pliance did a great job following the law. We congratulate them."

PCSO investigating death of inmate who died at Winter Haven Hospital

Polk County Sheriff's detectives are investigating the death of a Polk County Jail inmate that occurred on Tuesday, April 2, at Winter Haven Hospital.

63-year-old Keith Garrard, Sr., was arrested by PCSO on August 10, for 68 counts possession of child pornography, two counts sexual battery by a custodian on a victim under 12 years old, and two counts sexual battery by a suspect over 18 on a victim under 12, and was being held on no bond.

Upon his initial medical screening at book-in, Garrard reported the following medical conditions: diabetes, hypertension, renal disease and renal failure. He was receiving dialysis three times per week before and after being booked in, and he was housed in the infirmary.

Garrard was sent to Winter Haven Hospital on March 20, March 21, and a final time on March 31, due to various health issues.

After being admitted to Winter Haven Hospital on Sunday, March 31, his medical condition did not improve, and in fact, it deteriorated. Despite all efforts of the medical staff, Garrard died — he was declared deceased at 3:54 p.m. on Tuesday, April 2.

Garrard (date of birth June 4, 1955) has a last known address of 378 Highway 630 E. in Frostproof.

This is an ongoing death investigation. It is standard PCSO policy for four separate mandated, independent investigations to be conducted when an inmate dies. All of the investigative findings will be forwarded to the State Attorney's Office for their investigative review.

Haines City couple arrested for child neglect

A Haines City couple was arrested for aggravated child neglect with great bodily harm, a second-degree felony, after a child, 2, in their custody was reported and observed with multiple injuries.

Alejandro Gallardo, 34, and live-in girlfriend Yuri Melgar, 33, were both arrested early April 1. Detectives initially received a complaint from the Department of Children and Families about 10 p.m. March 31 while the child was at Arnold Palmer Hospital in Orlando being treated for dual ear drainage.

Other injuries to the child included multiple scratches on his head, back and torso, multiple sores, very thin legs, a protruding rib cage as well as rotten and chipped teeth. The child had a fractured or broken left arm that was not properly treated and an open wound about two inches in diameter on the left forearm.

The child was unable to stand, walk or crawl and didn't appear to have been bathed in days.

Detectives arrived at the couple's apartment overnight March 31 and found a well-kept residence with three other children who appeared to be properly cared for. The apartment appeared to be neat and clean.

Gallardo said he has had custody of the child since January. Melgar is the child's primary caregiver.

Both Gallardo and Melgar are undocumented and are being detained by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. DCF has placed the child with a family friend.

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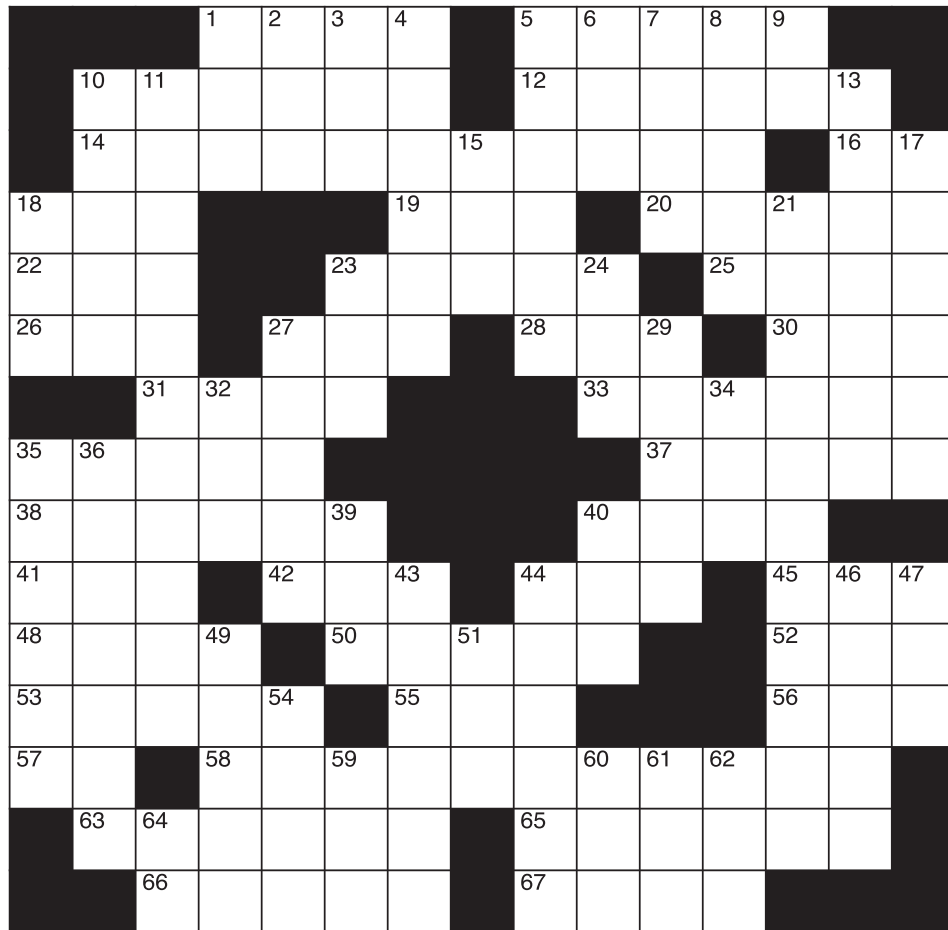
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CROSSWORD

FOR ANSWERS, TURN TO PAGE 22



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Often romantic composition
- 5. Lunar term
- 10. California mountain
- 12. Spiral staircase pillars
- 14. "Heat" director
- 16. Tellurium
- 18. Gateway (Arabic)
- 19. No (Scottish)
- 20. Greek prophetic
- 22. A team's best pitcher
- 23. Bard's way of saying "have"
- 25. Indigenous group of the Philippines
- 26. Danish krone
- 27. Type of squad
- 28. Possesses
- 30. Part of the face
- 31. Very small amount of time (abbr.)
- 33. Churches have lots of them
- 35. Modern day "letter"
- 37. Della __, singer
- 38. Informed upon
- 40. Type of house
- 41. Folk singer DiFranco
- 42. A baglike structure in a plant or animal
- 44. Car mechanics group
- 45. Belonging to us
- 48. Pack neatly
- 50. Forming the bottom layer
- 52. How fast you're going
- 53. Sea eagles
- 55. Cool!
- 56. Military mailbox
- 57. Type of lawyer
- 58. Type of monk
- 63. Respect due to an ancestor
- 65. Took to the sea
- 66. Members of a Semitic peop
- 67. A way to march

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Political action committee
- 2. __kosh, near Lake Winnebago
- 3. When you hope to get there
- 4. Woman who followed Bacchu
- 5. Cause to become entangled
- 6. Green veggie
- 7. Stiff bristles
- 8. Pass in Alps
- 9. Atomic #81
- 10. A sharp blow
- 11. Bears engage in it
- 13. Prevents progress
- 15. Young boy
- 17. A way to go on
- 18. Not good
- 21. A ballet enthusiast
- 23. Ad __
- 24. Bar bill
- 27. A genus of badgers
- 29. "No __!"
- 32. Get off your feet
- 34. Franklin was one
- 35. Removed
- 36. Used to catch poachers
- 39. Hit lightly
- 40. Crony
- 43. Stroke
- 44. One who obtains pleasure by inflicting pain on others
- 46. __ the ante
- 47. Greek letter
- 49. "Wings" actor Steven
- 51. Unhappy
- 54. Hair-like structure
- 59. Pick up
- 60. Type of transportation
- 61. Worn with a suit
- 62. Something similar to another already referred to
- 64. Farm state



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COUNTY SPORTS



Athlete of the Week: Richard Bortoli

By STEVEN RYZEWSKI
sryzewski@scmginc.com

Richard Bortoli is a junior attacker and midfielder for the second-year Lake Wales High School boys lacrosse team (7-4). Bortoli has registered a team-high 45 goals so far this season and is also second on the team in assists behind Garret Reynolds, with 29. Bortoli's strong play has helped the Highlanders to earn a playoff berth in the program's second season.

The team is in its second season and experiencing some success. How do you think this season has gone so far?

It was definitely a great start to the season. Last year we didn't do as well, it was our first year and everyone was still learning the game. This year was our redemption season. Everyone got in shape and everyone is doing their job, basically.

What's it like to be part of a new program?

It's a lot of fun. I kind of get to lead the team since I have more experience. I just love to see improvement in everyone's game.

Which game these past two seasons has been the most memorable?

100 percent the Lakeland Christian School game. Last year we lost to LCS in double-overtime by one goal and this year we won in overtime by one goal.

Are you hoping to play lacrosse in college? If so, how are you approaching the recruiting process?

I just started the whole recruiting process. ... A big thing is to do well in school and have a higher GPA, which solidifies you to be recruited. ... I'm looking for a good school overall, in a good area. I'd like to stay in state, maybe. I just want a good school with good academics.

Do you have a favorite lacrosse player you look up to?

I would say for college, right now, definitely Pat Spencer from Loyola. And in Major League Lacrosse, I'd have to say Marcus Holman.

How did you get started playing lacrosse?

I used to go to All Saints Academy and I started playing in seventh grade. My best friend said "hey do you want to try lacrosse?" I had never picked up a lacrosse stick — I had only played soccer. In Italy, all the kids there played soccer. I tried lacrosse and I started practicing and I hated it. I quit the team. ... The next

year, I tried again and started practicing a little more and I finished as the top-scorer of my eighth-grade season.

What was it like growing up between Italy and Florida?

It was definitely a good experience. Sometimes it was challenging — there was a lot of traveling. I met a lot of people and I thought it was cool.

Growing up between America and Italy, which place do you prefer?

I would say America. The whole process, the whole education process, I think it's a lot simpler here and a lot easier here.

What do you enjoy learning about the most?

I definitely like studying business, the economy and maybe history.

What are you hoping to study in college?

I'd like to study international business management. My parents own an international business, so I'd like to lead from their paths and continue the business.

Being bilingual, speaking English and Italian, which language do you think in and which did you learn first?

I think in English. I honestly couldn't tell you which language I learned first, I learned them both at the same time. English is more natural to me. It's a lot easier of a language.

Any hobbies?

I play video games — I like FIFA, the soccer game. I was born into soccer and I love soccer. I'm just better at lacrosse.

What is the coolest place you've visited and where is somewhere that is atop your list of places to go?

The coolest place I've been to was in Italy, it was Capri. Beautiful city, beautiful beaches. A place I'd love to go to is Monaco.



About Richard

Height: 6-foot-4

Birthplace: Davenport

Year: Junior

Position: Attacker/
Midfielder

Club team:

Apprentice Athletics

FHSAA announces new locations for football state championships

By SUN STAFF

GAINESVILLE – The 2019, 2020 and 2021 Florida High School Football State Championships will take place at Gene Cox Stadium in Tallahassee (Classes 1A-3A) and Daytona Stadium in Daytona Beach (Classes 4A-8A), the Florida High School Athletic Association announced April 5.

"After listening to feedback from our membership, we felt having two locations stretched out over two weeks made the most sense," FHSAA Executive Director George Tomin said. "This new schedule gives families and fans the most flexibility when it comes to supporting their student-athletes and we are thrilled both Visit Tallahassee and DME Marketing made this possible."

Previously, the championships have been in Orlando at what is now known as Camping World Stadium (formerly the Citrus Bowl).

Daytona Stadium has a capacity of 10,000 and has hosted the championships six times previously (1989-90, 1993-96), while Gene Cox Stadium, with a capacity of 6,500, played host to the 1986 Class 3A State Championship Game between Tallahassee Godby and Clewiston.

The last time multiple venues hosted the event was in 2005, when Dolphin Stadium in Miami featured Classes 3A-6A and FIU Community Stadium in Miami held Classes 1A-2A.

Both venues recently underwent significant renovations.

Daytona's \$20 million renovation included new field turf, remodeled locker rooms, an open-air VIP club, VIP space with theater seating and a completely redesigned expansive concourse area.

Gene Cox Stadium underwent an \$800,000 renovation featuring installations of completely new field turf and a pair of HD video boards.

For more information, visit FHSAA.org.



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FEELING FIT

Health Notepad:

Watson Clinic honored with prestigious award by American Medical Group Association

By SUN STAFF



The American Medical Group Association (AMGA) recently honored Watson Clinic with its 2019 Foundation Star Award, a distinction that recognizes a commitment to initiatives and innovations that enable an exceptional quality of care.

Watson Clinic is one of only 13 organizations throughout the entire country to receive this honor in 2019.

The centerpiece of Watson Clinic's relationship with AMGA revolves around the Together 2 Goal innovator Track, a series of collaborative efforts designed to implement care processes, interventions and measures to improve various courses of care. The Clinic has engaged in several of

these initiatives and has provided invaluable contributions that are helping to shape the delivery of care both in our community and across the country.

Through advocacy, performance measurement and improvement tools, AMGA has led the transformation of healthcare in America and enabled healthier communities in the process. The Foundation Star Award reflects Watson Clinic's long-term focus on quality improvement and setting new standards of excellence in healthcare.

LAWS OF FITNESS TO HOST RIBBON-CUTTING, OPEN HOUSE

Opened as a second location in January 2019, Laws of Fitness Downtown in Winter Haven is a locally-owned fitness center whose mission is to empower people and help them maximize their lifestyle through a variety of effective exercise programs.

The facility is formally celebrating its grand opening with a ribbon-cutting April 10, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., and an open house April 13, from 9 a.m. to noon.

More information is available online at facebook.com/lawsoffitness-downtown/.



Wellness Calendar

April 13 - Yoga with Lindsay; 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Bring a mat and being your yoga journey with a gentle practice for all. Cost is donation-based, with a \$5 minimum. Lindsay, the instructor, believes in making yoga accessible to every shape and size — maintaining a challenging environment for intermediate students while setting yoga fundamentals to help guide new students to a safe and comfortable practice.

April 14 - IRONMAN 70.3 Florida; 7 a.m.

The 2019 IRONMAN 70.3 Florida offers 40 qualifying slots for the 2019 IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship in Nice, France. Takes place in Haines City. More information available at ironman.com/triathlon/events/americas/ironman-70.3/florida.

April 15 TO YOUR HEALTH! SHOP SMART; Noon

Do you know what is really in the food you buy? Do you understand nutrition labeling, the long list of ingredients and how to find the Best Buy? This workshop will focus on food shopping, where to find the healthiest food in the store, how to read the nutrition label, ingredients and pricing so you can get the best bang for the buck! A light, healthy lunch will be served. The class is free, however, registration is required. Call (863) 678-4004 to register.

April 27 - JUDD JOG 5K; 8 a.m.

The Judd Jog is an annual 5k presented by Polk Sheriff's Charities, Inc. with all proceeds benefiting the United Way. The course is paved and begins and ends at the front of the Polk County Sheriff's Office main office in Winter Haven. There will be additional activities available for your family and friends during the event, including: Polk County Sheriff's Office Special Operations vehicles on display, K-9 meet and greet, and more! Restrooms will be available for public use during the event. More info: juddjog.org.

April 29 - TO YOUR HEALTH! PLAN SMART - Rethink What Your Eat; Noon

This workshop will focus on meal-planning, including how to repurpose leftovers. With just a few staples in your pantry, you can make a tasty "new" meal. We'll use "My Plate" as a base for meals and snacks, while making meal prep and eating a special event! A light, healthy lunch will be served. The class is free, however, registration is required. Call (836) 678-4004, ext. 221, to register.

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Senate makes changes amid felons' voting debate

By DARA KAM
News Service of Florida

TALLAHASSEE — Everyone agrees a constitutional amendment that appeared on the November ballot was designed to automatically restore the right to vote for some of Florida's convicted felons.

But a sharp divide over who exactly the amendment was aimed at has become one of the 2019 legislative session's most contentious issues.

House Republican leaders believe the proposal, which appeared on the ballot as Amendment 4, was aimed at felons who've completed all the terms of their sentences, including repayment of all financial obligations. They're relying on words in the ballot initiative and what backers of the measure said in court and on their website before and after more voters approved the measure.

But the amendment's supporters are also relying on language in the proposal, which they maintain is less restrictive than the GOP plans to carry it out. They've likened House and Senate proposals to Jim Crow-era policies, such as "poll taxes," aimed at keeping black voters from casting their ballots. In this case, the amendments' supporters say, lawmakers are trying to exclude low-income felons from the automatic rights restoration process.

On Monday, a key Senate panel made what appeared to be significant concessions toward what proponents of the measure — who maintain that the amendment does not need legislation to take effect — had sought.

The constitutional amendment granted restoration of voting rights to felons "who have completed all terms of their sentence, including parole or probation." The voter-approved amendment excluded people "convicted of murder or a felony sexual offense."

Wordsmithing over what constitutes "murder," "felony sexual offense," and completion of "all terms of their sentence" is the source of the firestorm.

The Senate Judiciary Committee on Monday revised an earlier version of a Senate bill (SB 7086) to strip out attempted murder as an offense that could prevent felons from getting the right to vote. The proposal, approved by the committee in a party-line, 3-2 vote, also eliminated fees and fines that have been converted to civil liens from the financial obligations that felons would have to repay to be eligible for voting restoration.

And the Senate plan would define felony sexual offense as a crime that "serves as a predicate to registration as a sexual offender," while the House's version of

the proposal (HB 7089) includes more than three dozen sex-related crimes, including a third conviction of prostitution.

Both the House and Senate measures would require full payment of restitution, including restitution that has been converted to a civil judgment, the main point of contention during Monday's vetting of the bill.

With time running out in the committee meeting, Desmond Meade, executive director of the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition, spoke on behalf of dozens of the amendment's supporters who didn't have a chance to address the Senate panel.

Meade, a felon whose voting rights were restored as a result of the amendment's passage, said he and other "returning citizens" turned to the ballot initiative because the "Florida Legislature refused to act."

"They walked away from people like me who served our time and all we wanted to do was just be part of this democracy, and all we wanted to do was move on with our lives. But the Florida Legislature ignored our cries, ignored the cries of our family, for years and years and years," an emotional Meade, choking back tears, said.

Meade and others called the Senate proposal a step in the right direction, but they remained opposed to the bill because of the requirement of full repayment of restitution.

Meade pointed out that 5.1 million Floridians supported the constitutional amendment.

"They were votes that were based on love, forgiveness and redemption," he said, adding that felons have "done our time and .. just want to move on."

He pleaded with lawmakers to "look beyond the partisan politics" and "stop that partisan drumbeat from drowning out the voices of the people."

But Sen. Jeff Brandes, a St. Petersburg Republican who's sponsoring the legislation, said the Senate measure reflects what former University of Florida law school dean Jon Mills told the Florida Supreme Court during an argument of the proposal and on information provided to the public by backers of the amendment.

Brandes remained in the committee room after

the meeting ended to speak with advocates, at his invitation, who lined up to share their frustrations about the legislation.

"I was a supporter of Amendment 4. But I truly believe this language needs to be clarified. The simple fact is that I can't get a straight answer for what the definition of 'murder' is. That is just telling about some of the deeper questions that have to be answered here. And the Legislature has the responsibility to put forth their ideas, hear from the public, refine and hone this legislation as we put an implementing bill forward," Brandes, who has long been an advocate for criminal justice reform, told The News Service of Florida.

Brandes said he thinks the Senate is "moving in the right direction," and that the House and Senate still have "many, many conversations" ahead before they reach consensus on a final bill.

The House plan goes further by requiring full payment of fines and fees that have been converted to civil judgments and including the laundry list of sex-related offenses not covered by the Senate measure.

Even if the House and Senate finally settle their differences before the legislative session ends on May 3 as expected, that may not be the end of the debate on the issue.

"I think everybody expects that this all will probably end up back before the Supreme Court at some juncture. We're going in, providing what we think is the voters' intent here, as we clarify those three areas. What does all terms of sentence mean? What does murder mean? And what is felony sex offense?" Brandes said. "I fully expect at some juncture (it) will be litigated."



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VIEWPOINTS



80? It's a good start



Thinking Out Loud
S.L. Frisbie

Two essentials for a successful high school reunion:

- Name tags
- Large printing on those name tags

Neither memory nor visual acuity improves with the passage of years, and when the time that has passed since graduation is approaching 60 years, that is a dramatic reality.

But there's one thing that should be cause for celebration: the overall improvement in health for our generation of chronologically gifted citizens.

A few days ago, the Summerlin Institute Classes of 1957 and 1958 held a joint reunion. Why those two classes?

"We had a lot of intermarriage," quipped Jimmy Whidden, president of the Class of '57.

The event drew 28 alumni and 14 spouses and significant others, and when the celebration drew to a close, one of our classmates pointed out to me how fortunate we were to have so many healthy classmates remaining among our ranks.

At 78, I was the baby of the bunch — the youngest member of the Class of 1958 — with a growing number having turned 79. Members of the Class of 1957 were mostly 79 and 80.

Marriages that have lasted 50 years or longer — once a milestone of remarkable attainment — are hardly a rarity these days.

Early in my journalistic career, say in the 1960s and 1970s, our newspaper photographed and interviewed members of our community who had reached 50 years of marriage. As a general rule, only one member of the couple (more often the wife) was still mentally sharp, while the other was showing significant loss of mental acuity.

Yes, we have lost many classmates in the 60-plus years since we graduated, and some who remain with us are less than physically or mentally robust.

In my continuing project of cleaning out volumes of papers accumulated in our newspaper business of 75-plus years, I found a column I wrote about Dad on the approach of his 80th birthday in 1995.

He was in the second of what would be three retirements — none of which took — and had circled the globe more times than America's early astronauts.

I reflected how fortunate he and I both were that he was still able to take an active role in the business, while leaving the day-to-day management responsibilities to his son. Ours was a great partnership.

Anybody who uses the term "80 years young" makes himself or herself look pretty silly. Eighty ain't young, but thanks to advances in medical science and healthier lifestyles, it can still be a happy, active milestone.

(S. L. Frisbie is retired. A few weeks ago, he read this observation: "What if the world ended tomorrow, and the only things you had left were the things you gave thanks for yesterday." There's a great message there.)

False reports to law enforcement



Polk County Sheriff
Grady Judd

I'm sure everyone is familiar with the case where an actor reported to the Chicago Police Department that he had been physically attacked and called some pretty nasty things. We know how that turned out, but the case did shed some light on a big problem.

For various reasons, people often try to report false crimes.

Two recent cases here in Polk County come to mind.

There was an 18-year-old girl in Poinciana who purchased some headphones from a 14-year-old boy for about \$20. She then determined that they didn't work properly and she wanted her money back. The boy said he no longer had the money.

Her way of handling the problem was to report that she had been beaten and robbed of \$50 from the boy.

Well, her story quickly fell apart, and she eventually admitted that she lied because she wanted to get the boy in trouble.

Another case involved a guy who reported that he had been robbed. We had an Air Unit and K9 respond, as well as many other deputies. His story also fell apart, and he confessed that he made it all up ... because he didn't want to go to work.

In addition to being a crime, making false reports ties up valuable resources, such as 911 operators, deputies, and Air and K9 Units. Lots of money is wasted — especially if the investigation drags on — and responses to real emergencies could be delayed because deputies are busy elsewhere.

Whether it is in Chicago or Polk County, false reports waste time and money, and will get the person who made the false report in serious trouble.

Honesty really is the best policy.

Winter Haven in the 1980s — the good and the bad



Beneath the Chinaberry Tree
Bob Gernert

Last week, we noted the 1980s were a mixed blessing for Winter Haven, as the city marked its founding some 100 years earlier. This week we note a few more of the ups — and the downs.

Political transition

The decade of the 1980s began with registered Democrats holding a 2-1 margin over Republicans. By decade's end, the Republicans held the majority on the Polk County Commission and the Democrats' lead

had slipped to a three to two lead.

Andy Ireland, who switched from Democrat to Republican, saw his stature grow and he was re-elected to a seventh term in Congress in 1968.

Sheriff gets the boot!

Following a grand jury investigation, Polk Sheriff Dan Daniels submitted his resignation. He was forced to resign due to his department's questionable record keeping. The grand jury report sealed his fate when they labeled him "incompetent."

He was replaced by Lakeland Police Chief Lawrence Crow, who was later elected Polk's first Republican sheriff since Reconstruction.

Church bus crash

The First Baptist Church and the Winter Haven community reeled in the aftermath when a bus crashed filled with young summer campers. The accident occurred in the mountains of north Georgia.

The church bus was traveling down a steep grade when it lost its brakes and plunged down a fifty-foot ravine. Fourteen-year-old Angela Jones was killed. Twenty-nine others were injured.

What's in a name?

Florida financial institutions had a tumultuous decade.

First, Federal Savings and Loan became Meritor when it purchased by Philadelphia Savings Fund Society in June of 1985 (Now Wells Fargo). The merger faced an uphill battle due to undercapitalization. NCNB bought popular Exchange National Bank (now part of Bank of America). Exchange Bank had grown from the Snell National Bank — Winter Haven's first.

Any assets remaining from the Snell Bank are now held by Bank of America. The downtown BOA sits on the site of Henry Snell's original store. A new locally focused Commerce Bank opened its doors. President Ed Stephens noted the bank's philosophy, "banking with neighbors you know" (now at home at BB&T).

Like a good neighbor

State Farm Insurance, an economic mainstay since 1962, announced plans to relocate its regional offices from U.S. 17, north of Winter Haven, to a 96-acre site on Cypress Gardens Boulevard.

New chamber

Efforts to revitalize downtown were underway with Meritor a key advocate. The Winter Haven Chamber of Commerce set an example by moving into a new, three-story Gene Leedy-designed building on Avenue B at Fifth Street, NW.

Expanding retail

The Winter Haven Mall (demolished for Citi-Centre in the late 90s) underwent renovation to an English Garden theme and Spring Lake Shopping Center opened its doors.

The 80s were a busy decade for Winter Haven — and it wasn't always a picnic.

This weeks column is based on personal recollection and a review of the decade by the News Chief.

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NOTICES

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COMPASS BANK, Plaintiff,
vs.
CARLOS RIBAS TAVARNARO; VIVIAN RICKLI CHRISTOFORO TAVARNARO; SOLTERRA RESORT HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.; and UNKNOWN TENANT IN POSSESSION, Defendants.
CASE NO. 2018-CA-000922
Division

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Attorney for Plaintiff
April 10, 17, 2019
23387 6266

Public Notice

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA
PROBATE DIVISION
IN RE: ESTATE OF SUSAN B. HAMRE, Deceased.
File No. 2019CP-0737
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The administration of the estate of SUSAN B. HAMRE, deceased, whose date of death was January 24, 2019, and whose Social Security Number is xxx-xx-6300, is pending in the Circuit Court for Polk County, Florida, Probate Division; the address of which is P. O. Box 9000, Drawer CC-4, Bartow, Florida 33830. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served must file their claims with this court WITHIN THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN SECTION 733.702 OF THE FLORIDA PROBATE CODE WILL BE FOREVER BARRED.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The date of first publication of this notice is Wednesday, April 10, 2019.
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Durham, North Carolina 27701
Attorney for Personal Representative:

Rex P. Cowan
Attorney
Florida Bar No. 187748
Rex P. Cowan
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Langston Farm , LLC . – 20 Temporary workers needed in Calhoun, Webster, Big Creek, and Grenada County, MS. from approximately 05/15/2019 – 11/10/2019. Must be 18 years or older. Three months experience needed in hand cutting slips, use of mechanical transplanter. Duties may vary from time to time . All tools, supplies and equipment will be provided at no cost to the workers. Clearing ground of rocks, sticks & roots by hand, clear brush and trees with chain saw. General Field & fence maintenance. Manually weeding fields by hand or using hand tools. Work in packinghouse to wash and pack sweet potatoes. Drain water from fields with hand tools and shovel when needed. Load & unload plant boxes on trucks. H2A workers will not be asked or allowed to drive tractors. Sweet Potatoes- Planting/Harvesting-Three months experience needed for Planting/ harvesting sweet potatoes. Planting-Cut slips by hand with knife and place in plant boxes. Ride Mechanical Transplanter to load slips in planting cups. Walk behind mechanical transplanter to fill in slips by hand. Harvest sweet potatoes by hand with use of buckets. Workers may be asked to drive bucket trucks in the field to pick up potatoes and drive skid loader to load and unload potato crates on trucks. Must be able to sort, grade & pack potatoes by size quality or type. Workers may also harvest peas. May transport workers to fields and grocery. Appropriate driver's license required. General Specifications and Physical Requirements of the Job: Lifting requirements 5-60 lbs. No cell phone usage during working hours. Cell phone can only be used during breaks and emergencies. The majority of the workday is spent on one's feet. Worker must be able to withstand working in the direct sunlight and weather conditions ranging from hot and humid weather, moderate rain and cold while performing their required job duties. Hours and days of work may vary due to weather conditions. During the growing season, workers can expect little to no work. Workers should expect periods of little/no work during growing time. Hours and days of work may vary due to weather conditions. Due to possible Date of Need changes, worker is required to purchase travel insurance if available. We will reimburse the worker for transportation cost (including travel insurance) and subsistence to the employers' work site from the place of recruitment upon completion of 50 percent of the contract period. Transportation payment will be no less (and is not required to be more) than the most economical and reasonable common carrier transportation charges for the distances involved. A copy of the work contract or a copy of the ETA 790 in lieu of a work contract, and any modifications, will be provided to the worker on or before the day the work commences. If the employee is unable or unfit to perform the duties listed after the 14 day pretrial, the employee will receive warnings, hours may be reduced to the minimum allowed in the certified petition or terminated. Workers will be paid \$11.33 per hr or applicable piece rates depending on crop activity. Three fourth's guarantee, 35 hrs per week. There is a possibility of earning a higher piece rate. Workers may be offered more than the standard hours of work in a single workday. Workers may volunteer to work additional hours when work is available. Hours of work may increase / decrease depending on crop yield and or weather and can occur at anytime throughout the season. Housing, equipment and transportation provided at no cost to workers who cannot reasonably return to their permanent residence at the end of each work day. We participate in the E-Verify program and workers must have valid identification for I-9 preparation when they report to begin work. Complete job description can be found at your local SWA/Job Enter. **Apply for this job at the State Workforce/Job Center office in your area, please call for the nearest office in your area MS 601-584-1202, AL 256-259-1835, LA 318-676-7705, FL 863-385-3672 using Job Order # MS296645**

Langston Farm, LLC – 64 Workers needed in Calhoun City, Webster, Big Creek and Grenada County, MS. From 05/15/2019-6/30/2019. Must be 18 years or older. Three months experience needed in hand cutting slips and use of mechanical transplanter. May transport workers to fields and grocery. Appropriate driver's license required. Duties may vary from time to time. Clearing ground of rocks, sticks & roots by hand, clear brush and trees with chain saw. All tools, supplies and equipment will be provided at no cost to the workers. General Field & fence maintenance. Manually weeding fields by hand or using hand tools. Work in packinghouse to wash and pack sweet potatoes. Drain water from fields with hand tools and shovel when needed. Load & unload plant boxes on trucks. Planting Sweet Potatoes – Cut slips by hand with knife and place in plant boxes. Ride mechanical transplanter to load slips in planting cups. Walk behind mechanical transplanter to fill in slips by hand. H2A workers will not be allowed or asked to drive or operate tractors. No cell phone usage during working hours. General Specifications and Physical Requirements of the Job: Lifting requirements 5-60 lbs. The majority of the workday is spent on one's feet . Workers must be able to climb, stand, sit, stoop, squat, kneel, crouch, bend (from the waist), push, pull, reach and lift. Worker must be able to withstand working in the direct sunlight and weather conditions ranging from hot and humid weather, moderate rain and cold while performing their required job duties. Hours and days of work may vary due to weather conditions. Workers should expect periods of little/no work during growing time. Hours and days of work may vary due to weather conditions. Due to possible Date of Need changes, worker is required to purchase travel insurance if available. We will reimburse the worker for transportation cost (including travel insurance) and subsistence to the employers' work site from the place of recruitment upon completion of 50 percent of the contract period. Transportation payment will be no less (and is not required to be more) than the most economical and reasonable common carrier transportation charges for the distances involved. A copy of the work contract or a copy of the ETA 790 in lieu of a work contract, and any modifications, will be provided to the worker on or before the day the work commences. If the employee is unable or unfit to perform the duties listed after the 14 day pretrial, the employee will receive warnings, hours may be reduced to the minimum allowed in the certified petition or terminated. Workers will be paid \$11.33 per hr, three fourth's guarantee, 35 hrs per week. Workers may be offered more than the standard hours of work in a single workday. Workers may volunteer to work additional hours when work is available. Hours of work may increase / decrease depending on crop yield and or weather and can occur at anytime throughout the season. Housing, equipment and transportation provided at no cost to workers who cannot reasonably return to their permanent residence at the end of each work day. We participate in the E-Verify program and workers must have valid identification for I-9 preparation when they report to begin work. Complete job description can be found at your local SWA/Job Enter. **Apply for this job at the State Workforce/Job Center office in your area, please call for the nearest office in your area MS 601-584-1202, AL 256-259-1835, LA 318-676-7705, FL 863-385-3672 using Job Order # MS 296632**

Rodgers Farm – 41 Temporary needed in Calhoun County, MS, from approximately 05/15/2019 – 11/01/2019. Workers must be 18 years or older. Three months experience needed in hand cutting slips and use of mechanical transplanter and mechanical diggers, sorting and grading sweet potatoes. The company may conduct background checks. Workers will perform assigned duties as instructed by their supervisor. Duties may vary from time to time. - All tools, supplies, and equipment will be provided at no cost to workers. Work in extreme weather conditions. Planting Sweet Potatoes - Covering potatoes with use of bedding machine & covering with plastic. Cut slips by hand with knife, place in boxes to load & unload onto trucks. Walk behind potato transplanter and fill in slips by hand. Riding mechanical transplanter and loading slips in planting cups. May also plant, cultivate & harvest the following: Purple Hull Peas, Watermelons, Beans and Corn. Harvesting Sweet Potatoes: Use of mechanical digging equipment to dig potatoes. May harvest sweet potatoes by hand with use of buckets. Must be able to sort, grade & pack potatoes by size quality or type. Load and unload boxes on trucks trailers or sweet potatoes harvesters. Repair, maintain and clean all hand tools and mechanical equipment prior to and after use. Workers may be asked to operate tractor, pulling mechanical digger. May also operate skid loader to load and unload trucks and trailers. * Safety training for use of farm equipment and tractors will be provided. To ensure the safety of all employees, those interested in operating machinery must be able to communicate with and adequately follow instructions given by management. Management reserves the right to restrict employees from operational duties who do not show proficiency to effectively communicate with management, and may therefore place other employees' safety in risk. ** May transport workers to fields and grocery store. Valid driver's license required. Lifting requirement 5-60 lbs. The majority of the workday is spent on one's feet and outdoors. Workers should expect periods of little/no work during growing time. Hours and days of work may vary due to weather conditions. Proper work attire is required. Due to possible Date of Need changes, worker is required to purchase travel insurance if available. We will reimburse the worker for transportation cost (including travel insurance) and subsistence to the employers work site from the place of recruitment upon completion of 50 percent of the contract period. Transportation payment will be no less (and is not required to be more) than the most economical and reasonable common carrier transportation charges for the distances involved. A copy of the work contract or a copy of the ETA 790 in lieu of a work contract, and any modifications, will be provided to the worker on the day the work commences. If the employee is unable or unfit to perform the duties listed after the 14 day pretrial, the employee will receive warnings, hours may be reduced to the minimum allowed in the certified petition or terminated. Workers will be paid \$11.33 per hour, three fourth's guarantee, 35 hours per week. Workers may be offered more than the standard hours of work in a single workday. Workers may volunteer to work additional hours when work is available. Hours of work may increase/decrease depending on crop yield and or weather and can occur at any time throughout the season. Housing, equipment and transportation provided at no cost to workers who cannot reasonably return to their permanent residence at the end of each workday. We participate in the E-Verify program and workers must have valid identification for I-9 preparation when they report to begin work. Complete job description can be found at your local SWA/Job Center. **Apply for this job at the State Workforce/Job Center office in your area or call your nearest office. MS (662) 842-2175, AL (256) 259-1835, LA (318) 676-7705, FL (863) 385-3672, use Job Order# MS 296627**

10TH ANNIVERSARY



“Swing for the Cure”

Golf Tournament & Cocktail Party

Kick-Off Cocktail Party

Friday, April 26, 2019 | 5:30pm
Nora Mayo Hall
500 Third Street, NW, Winter Haven

Scramble Golf Tournament

Saturday, April 27, 2019 | 9:00am
Southern Dunes Golf & Country Club
2888 Southern Dunes Blvd., Haines City



Cocktail Party Open to Non-Golf Participants



All proceeds from the 2019 events will go to support the Winter Haven Hospital Cassidy Cancer Center patients.



Featuring Fuzzy Zoeller

Winner of '79 Masters, '84 U.S. Open, 2002 Senior PGA Championship



For More Information, call:

Josh Lewis (863) 287-2106 | WHH Foundation (863) 292-4138
whhfoundation@baycare.org



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