MERRY CHRISTMAS

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NEWS-SUN

Highlands County's Hometown Newspaper Since 1927

Lady Devils torch SHS

PAGE 1B

Keep your house ship shape in '11

PAGE 1B

Friday-Saturday, December 24-25, 2010 | www.newssun.com | Volume 91/Number 156 | 50 cents

Forecast

Sunny for most of the day

High	Low
68	43

Complete Forecast PAGE #A

Online

YOUR VOICE

Question: Have you finished your Christmas shopping?

Yes 63.4%

No 36.6%

Total votes: **71**

Next question: Have you seen as much 'Christmas spirit' this year as in the past?

Make your voice heard at www.newssun.com

Obituaries

Nicholas Chickerell
Age 92, of Avon Park

Regina Leedy
Age 94, of Sebring

Robert Skipper
Age 87, of Sebring

Leo Strapp
Age 77, of Avon Park

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Today is Santa's last chance to shop

By CHRISTOPHER TUFFLEY
christopher.tuffley@newssun.com

SEBRING — There were shoppers out and about at the Lakeshore Mall Thursday, but stores weren't crowded.

Local retailers have to analyze their numbers before any conclusions can be made regarding the success of this Christmas season, but anecdotal reports from private retailers is mixed.

"It's not as busy as you might think," said Liane Page, who sells therapeutic magnetic jewelry at the Time to Stop the Pain kiosk at the mall.

"I expect a last-minute flurry," Page added. "Several people have stopped to shop and told me they would be back (today), which is a pay day.

"We're doing okay, but not what we'd like."

It was the first time Page

See HOLIDAY, page 8A

News-Sun photos by KATARA SIMMONS

Seven-month-old Abbigail Skalski isn't thrilled about her first visit with Santa Claus on Thursday morning at the Lakeshore Mall in Sebring.

A community Christmas

APPD's Christmas feast a success

By ED BALDRIDGE
ed.baldridge@newssun.com

AVON PARK — It has only happened once so far, but there is hope that it will happen again.

At least that is what the Avon Park Police Department Chief Michael Rowan has on his wish list when it comes to community.

"This is really a unique event. Several officers planned a dinner to help out, and what they got was a lot of community response that was unexpected," Rowan said on Wednesday as he greeted people at the Avon Park Community Center for a traditional Christmas feast.

The dinner idea was proposed by Det. Sgt. David Sass, Det. Christy Harbaugh and Det. Nate Coogan around the first week of December, and they were hoping originally to feed a 100 or so people and give back to the community they serve.

News-Sun photo by ED BALDRIDGE

Avon Park's city manager presented his list to Santa during the Community Feast hosted by the Avon Park Police Department on Wednesday.

"It was something that we have kicked around for some time, but Christy and Nate said 'Let's get moving on this' the last time I brought it up. But the contributions front the community have just amazed me," Sass said.

After the three officers began contacting people about the idea, the food started pouring in.

"We have 20 turkeys and 20 hams donated by local businesses. We can feed over 500," Sass said the day before the event.

"The businesses have really put forward a lot of Christmas cheer. Bill Jarrett

See FEAST, page 8A

Water outage affects 8,000

12-inch main break forces shutdown in AP

By ED BALDRIDGE
ed.baldridge@newssun.com

AVON PARK — Almost 8,000 residents around Avon Park were without water or experienced low pressure on Tuesday as crews struggled to restore a broken water main damaged by construction. Until Thursday, the city, Sebring Ridge and the Crossing residents were under a boil water notice.

"We just got the all clear from the Health Department testing, and we are calling restaurants individually," said Julian Deleon, Avon Park's director of Public Works, Thursday morning.

According to Deleon, his department was notified around 2 p.m. on Tuesday that the 12-inch transmission line was damaged during construction on the Murphy's Oil gas station in front of the Avon Park Walmart.

"This is a 20-year-old line. We believe the construction activities on site may have disturbed or compromised the structural integrity on the water main. At approximately this time, the Avon Park Lakes service area was experiencing low water pressure," Deleon wrote in a report to the city manager.

From 2:30 p.m. until 5 p.m. the city attempted to isolate the break to the north of the city by turning off the valves around the system in order to repair the ruptured 12-inch line without affecting the other service areas, Deleon said.

"In total, 19 main line valves were turned off by

See WATER, page 5A

Avon Park Fire Department helps Santa in busy season

By ED BALDRIDGE
ed.baldridge@newssun.com

AVON PARK — It all happens at the end of the year, but the hustle is worth the effort, according to Lt. Robert Remick of the Avon Park Fire Department.

Remick organizes the Toys for Tots program in Avon Park, and has done so for the last four years.

"We have to put it together fast, and everyone pitches in," Remick said on Tuesday night as he checked off another bag of toys.

"The local businesses help a lot, and the Flywheelers pitch in for collection. This year we have 80 kids on our list, and there is plenty for them," Remick said.

Local organizations provide the lists, and they pass those along to Remick, who organizes them by gender and age.

'We have to put it together fast, and everyone pitches in.'

LT. ROBERT REMICK
Avon Park Fire Department

The toys were collected at the Avon Park Community Center the week before Christmas, where volunteers from the Middle School and the High School FFA program showed up to wrap and bag.

This year, every child on the list got at least one big toy and several smaller ones, wrapped and bundled by number, so that they could retain anonymity.

"We are make sure that the child or the family does not experience any embarrassment. It is about the spirit of Christmas, and we don't want to ruin that," Remick said while checking another name and number from his list, which was borrowed from

See APFD, page 8A

News-Sun photo by ED BALDRIDGE

Sheri and Jerry Whidden lend a hand to Santa on Tuesday as they wrap Toys for Tots.

Scott's proposals stirring debate

Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE — Private school vouchers for all children and a merger of Florida's environmental, community planning and transportation agencies were among the suggestions of Gov-elect Rick Scott's transition teams that were already stirring debate Wednesday.

The incoming Republican governor, who takes office Jan. 4, has previously expressed support for universal vouchers.

What his education transition team calls "education savings accounts" would provide a voucher worth 85 percent of what the state spends on a student in public school to each child who goes instead to a private school.

The vouchers also could be used for private tutoring, virtual schools and colleges or to purchase books for dual enrollment programs. The money also could be put into college savings plans.

The education transition team is chaired by Patricia Levesque, executive director of former Gov. Jeb Bush's Foundation for Florida's Future. Bush has been a strong voucher supporter.

In a report to Scott this week, the team says the state would save 15 percent for every student who gets a voucher.

Wayne Blanton, executive director of the Florida School Boards Association, questioned that math.

"What do you do with the 500,000 kids already in private schools?" Blanton asked. "It's a simple solution to a complicated problem that just won't work."

Blanton said another problem is private schools are not held to the same accountability standards as public schools.

Ron Meyer, a lawyer for the Florida Education Association, said the proposal also faces "a huge constitutional issue."

The Florida Supreme Court stuck down a more limited voucher program that Bush launched, ruling that it violated a provision in the Florida Constitution requiring a uniform system of public schools. Meyer had argued the case on behalf of the statewide teachers union and other challengers.

The transition team acknowledged that pitfall by also recommending a review of the constitution's education article to determine if it "is still appropriate for the changing environment of the 21st century."

LP resident wins big from Martha Stewart

Courtesy photo

Lake Placid resident Vicky Tanabe was given the Christmas gift of a lifetime when Martha Stewart personally called her from her studio set to let her know she was the winner of an entire sleigh full of prizes accumulated throughout the month of December on The Martha Stewart Show (Hallmark Channel, 10 a.m.). Tanabe's surprise call will be featured today on a special 'Holiday Party Show' edition marking the end of Martha's Merry Gifts sweepstakes. Tanabe's list of fabulous gifts, totaling almost $5,000, includes everything from an LG Kompressor vacuum to a New York Yankee-signed baseball. When Stewart told Tanabe she was that lucky viewer, she couldn't believe her ears. Overcome with emotion, all Tanabe could reply was, "I can't believe I'm talking to you, this is nuts!"

Flu season getting early start this year; shots urged

Special to the News-Sun

TALLAHASSEE—With signs that flu is increasing earlier than usual in some Florida communities, Florida Department of Health (DOH) officials are urging residents and visitors to take precautions to limit their risk of exposure to seasonal flu.

"The most effective precautions we can take to fight illness are getting vaccinated against the flu virus and diligently practicing good hygiene," said Julia Gill, Ph.D., M.P.H., Disease Control Division director.

"This season, everyone 6 months and older should get vaccinated, even if they got a seasonal or 2009 H1N1 vaccine last season. With the holidays in full swing and many people traveling, this simple precaution can lessen your risk of exposure to the virus or transmission to others."

Seasonal flu is an infection of the respiratory tract caused by the influenza virus. Compared with most other viral respiratory infections, such as the common cold, influenza infection often causes a more severe illness. Symptoms of influenza include headache, fever, cough, body aches or extreme tiredness.

The following preventive measures can also help reduce risk of contracting the flu:

♦ Get re-vaccinated every flu season because flu viruses change each year.

♦ Persons who are sick with flu-like illness should stay home for at least 24 hours after fever has subsided without the use of fever-reducing medicine, except to get medical care.

♦ Persons with a chronic illness, or who are pregnant, should contact their health care provider if they suspect their illness that might be influenza. Health care providers can prescribe antiviral medication.

♦ Everyone should cover his or her nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and throw the tissue in the trash after use. It is advisable to avoid touching one's eyes, nose and mouth.

♦ Despite being sick or in good health, everyone should wash his or her hands with soap and water often. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Regardless of age, persons with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, emphysema, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and cancer are at higher risk for having a more severe case of influenza or of suffering from complications caused by influenza. In addition, people who have neurological and developmental disorders and who are obese are also at increased risk of severe influenza.

To locate flu vaccine in the area, contact a local health care provider or visit www.doh.state.fl.us/Disease_ctrl/immune/flu/flu_locator.htm or contact a local county health department http://www.doh.state.fl.us/chdsitelist.htm.

Purse from school board shooting purchased on eBay for $13,100

PANAMA CITY (AP) — The purse a Florida school board member used to smack a man who was holding other board members at gunpoint has sold for more than $13,000 in an auction.

Authorities say the Brahmin purse Ginger Littleton used Dec. 14 in an unsuccessful attempt to disarm gunman Clay Duke after sneaking up on him sold Wednesday for $13,100 on eBay. The buyer lives in Alexandria, Va., and asked to remain anonymous.

The purse manufacturer, based in Fairhaven, Mass., says it will match the bid. That means the charity founded by Mike Jones, the security guard who shot and wounded Duke before he killed himself, will get a total of $26,200 from the sale.

Police Blotter

The News-Sun would like to remind the readers that the names listed below reflect those who have been charged with a crime, but they are all innocent until proven guilty by a court of law. If anyone listed here is acquitted or has charges dropped, they can bring in proof of such decision or mail a copy to the paper and the News-Sun will be happy to report that information. The News-Sun is at 2227 U.S. 27 South, Sebring, FL 33870.

The following people were booked into the Highlands County Jail on Wednesday, Dec. 22:

♦ Angela Michelle Abner, 20, of Wauchula, was arrested on an out-of-county warrant reference violation of probation ACC after the fact.

♦ Mayumi Elvira Benitez, 32, of Lake Placid, was charged with possession and or use of drug equipment.

♦ Antonio Alphonso Brown, 31, of Sebring, was charged with forgery of/alter bank bill note check draft, fraud/utter false bank bill note, and petit theft.

♦ Karen Lynn Largent, 34, of Lake Placid, was charged with fraud-insufficient funds.

♦ Michael Thomas McGrath, 34, of Avon Park, was charged with possession of a controlled substance without a prescription.

♦ Clifford Claud Melvin, 42, of Venus, was charged with possession of marijuana, battery and petit theft.

♦ Ernest Lee Moore, 53, of Lake Placid, was charged with resisting an officer without violence, possession of cocaine within 1,000 feet of a place of worship or business, distribution of cocaine within 1,000 feet of a place of worship or business.

♦ Mercedes Martille Muniz, 19, of Sebring, was charged with possession and or use of drug equipment, possession of a controlled substance without a prescription, and possession of marijuana.

♦ William Carl Ostrander, 26, of Lake Placid, was charged with failure to appear reference petit theft.

♦ Ryan William Schmidt, 27, of Tampa, was charged with violation of probation reference fleeing to elude.

♦ Brett Adrian Taylor, 46, of Lake Placid, was charged with two counts of failure to appear reference possession of cocaine, and possession or use of drug paraphernalia.

♦ Rodney Wayne Woodard, 21, of Sebring, was charged with possession of marijuana, and grand theft.

The following people were booked into the Highlands County Jail on Tuesday, Dec. 21:

♦ Averi Anne Ammerman, 54, of Avon Park, was charged with DUI.

♦ Robert Alan Edwardson, 22, of Sebring, was charged with sex offender violation for failing to properly register.

♦ Christina Anne Hall, 31, of Lake Placid, was arrested on three out-of-county warrants reference open container of alcohol, driving while license suspended, and DUI.

♦ Tavaris Benjamin Harris, 30, of Atlantic Beach, was charged with violation of probation reference domestic violence battery and failure to appear reference knowingly driving with license suspended or revoked.

♦ Gianna Larecia Jacobs, 19, of Sebring, was charged with battery.

♦ Bobby Lee Jones, 46, of Lorida, was arrested on an out-of-state warrant reference flagrant non-support.

♦ Jessica Hope Kerce, 27, of Lake Placid, was arrested on an out-of-county and out-of-state warrant reference violation of parole for theft by taking.

♦ Duaine Andrew Knisely, 32, of Port St. Lucie, was charged with two counts of violation of probation reference utter forged instrument and forgery.

♦ Michael Anthony Lamb, 26, of Fort Myers, was charged with failure to appear reference misdemeanor offense.

♦ Sharon Jeanette Manganiello, 27, of Sebring, was charged with three counts of possession of a controlled substance without a prescription, possession of marijuana, and possession and or use of drug equipment.

♦ Gerardo Abagail Matos,

Continued on page 5A

Lottery Center

Florida Lotto

Dec. 22	6	12	16	37	46	52	x:3
Next jackpot $6 million							
Dec. 18	6	8	15	36	40	47	x:4
Dec. 15	3	4	21	25	35	40	x:4

Fantasy 5 with ezmatch

Dec. 22	3	4	9	24	25
Dec. 21	17	22	23	35	36
Dec. 20	12	14	15	22	25
Dec. 19	5	6	17	22	26

Play 4

Dec. 22 (n)	1	1	5	4	
Dec. 22 (d)	6	1	6	4	
Dec. 21 (n)	5	1	5	2	
Dec. 21 (d)	7	0	7	2	

Mega Money

Dec. 21	14	15	37	42	MB	18
Dec. 17	2	38	39	40	MB	1
Dec. 14	3	11	14	37	MB	7
Dec. 10	9	20	27	32	MB	13

Cash 3

Dec. 22 (n)	5	5	5
Dec. 22 (d)	0	7	3
Dec. 21 (n)	9	9	1
Dec. 21 (d)	7	7	3

Florida Powerball Powerplay

Dec. 22	11	33	44	46	47	**PB:** 12	**PP:** 2	
Next jackpot $46 million								
Dec. 18	4	11	19	33	43	**PB:** 14	**PP:** 4	
Dec. 15	10	11	18	32	45	**PB:** 18	**PP:** 5	

Note: Cash 3 and Play 4 drawings are twice per day: (d) is the daytime drawing, (n) is the nighttime drawing.
PB: Power Ball PP: Power Play

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Editorial & Opinion

Today's Editorial

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

Eight-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon wrote a letter to the editor of New York's Sun, and an editorial reponse was printed Sept. 21, 1897. The work of veteran newsman Francis Pharcellus Church has since become history's most reprinted newspaper editorial. The News-Sun is happy to reprint it each Christmas.

We take pleasure in answering thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of The Sun:

"Dear Editor: I am 8 years old.

"Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus.

"Papa says, 'If you see it in The Sun it's so.'

"Please tell me the truth; is there a Santa Claus?

"Virginia O'Hanlon.

"115 West Ninety-Fifth Street."

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except (what) they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

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Why Christmas has become better every year

Guest Column

Tom Purcell

I still wish I hadn't peeked in the attic that year.

It was Christmas 1972 and I was 10. It was the first year when I no longer believed in Santa Claus.

Until that point, Christmas had been a magical time for me.

A few weeks after Thanksgiving, I would join with my father to pick out our tree. He'd wear his rattiest coat and work his mastery on the helpless Christmas-tree guy to knock the price down two or three bucks.

Soon, my father and I would have our giant platform in place and the tree perfectly positioned.

We'd string the lights — thick old bulbs that burned fingers when touched — and head to the attic to bring down boxes of Christmas decorations.

My sisters would be called and our whole family would decorate the tree. As our stack of scratchy old Christmas records would play — as Mitch Miller, Bing Crosby and the Chipmunks would sing — our mother would make special note of old ornaments handed down from family members long gone and my sisters would show me how to hang the tinsel expertly, one strand at a time.

The sun soon would go down and the light of our Christmas-tree bulbs reflecting off the tinsel would transform our living room into a kaleidoscope — a brilliant glow of colors dancing on the walls and ceiling.

My mother, a master at building up suspense, would talk about the days ahead — church, family and the gifts Santa might bring.

We would have the sense that a real event was about to happen. And it was.

The next few weeks would take forever to pass.

Finally, Christmas Eve would arrive. There would be no harder night, then or now, for a kid to sleep.

But as Bing Crosby would sing "White Christmas" on the old stereo console — as our father would grumble to our mother, "For godssakes, Betty, I'll never get this thing together by morning ..." — we'd finally fall asleep, only to wake three hours later to the glorious surprise awaiting us downstairs.

All that magic left me in 1972. What a fraud it all seemed to be.

Yet there was my mother, as cheerful and hopeful as ever. She whistled along with our Christmas albums as she decorated the house. She did everything she could to build up mystery and suspense, but I wanted none of it that year.

I had become a cynic.

All I cared about was that my gifts were hidden in the attic. I had pulled down the attic stairs and snuck up inside with a flashlight.

I had been surprised to see one gift I really wanted but didn't think my parents could afford: a table-top hockey game!

My excitement had quickly turned to sadness. I had cheated my mother.

I had robbed her of the mystery and suspense she put so much effort into building.

I had to fake my surprise on Christmas morning. I felt like a rat.

That happened 38 years ago. Here's what also happened: Every Christmas got better after that. They're getting better still.

My mother and father are doing well in their 70s. My mother is whistling along with old Christmas records as you read this.

Despite all the noise our country faces every year — materialism and arguing over public Christmas displays — Christmas is very simple to me.

In addition to its spiritual origin, it is a celebration of the abundance of love and security my parents gave my sisters and me so many years ago — the love and security we give each other still.

I don't peek into attics anymore.

Tom Purcell, a freelance writer, is also a humor columnist for the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, and is nationally syndicated exclusively by Cagle Cartoons newspaper syndicate. E-mail Tom at Purcell@caglecartoons.com.

Today's Letters

More good news stories are wanted

Editor:

Annually around this time of the year the media treats us with many stories about the goodness of life both here in America and around the world. For that I am extremely thankful. But it also makes me wonder if that's the only time of the year people actually do good things or does the media only focus on those events during the season.

I tend to believe there are many, many good people in this world and they are performing little acts of kindness and goodwill on a daily basis. I don't just mean the billionaire, millionaire or celebrity stories either.

Why then do we mostly hear about them during the Christmas season?

I suspect it sells better when everyone is in the Christmas spirit. There are many organizations that exist soley to help those that need that step up; there are churches that meet individual needs throughout the year as well as many individuals that give year round to those that have been less fortunate than themselves.

Some say we don't make the stories, we just report them, however, the powers that be in any media select what they desire to report. Some say they report what the public desires, however, many in the circles in which I travel tend to disagree. Could this be why so many are tuning out and not reading, watching or listening to the media?

Lou Mezie
Sebring

Update on von Walter siblings

Editor:

I could not let this momentum of Christmas spirit and celebration pass without giving thanks to our merciful, loving, Almighty God, through his Son, our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ for all the blessings He has bestowed on my children and me every second of our lives. ... I am talking about everything, including the accomplishments that my children, Astrid Ruth von Walter and Hans Friedrich von Walter, have attained so far, thanks to His magnificent and fabulous guidance and wisdom.

Astrid is presently finishing her third year of residence in OBGYN at the University of Southern California (USC) downtown Los Angeles, after graduating doctor from the University of Loma Linda, Calif. Hans Friedrich recently gave the residents of Avon Park something exciting to follow on the small screen when he competed and finished third in the Jeopardy College Championship TV show with Alex Trebek. He represented not only Southern Adventist University of Collegedale, Tenn., where he is a junior of bio-chemistry, but also the city of Avon Park, where he is a resident and the state of Florida in general.

I extend my deepest gratitude to everybody who has been involved in the spiritual, intellectual and emotional development of these young people, because I believe what somebody said that "It takes a village to raise a child." God works through many "angels" in the form of humans to touch the lives of our children, to water that small "seed" in order to flourish and become honest and respectful citizens who will, in turn, be inspiration and an example to others coming after them. ...

Some of those groups of individuals that I want to mention in a special place are my blood family, my brothers (Gilbert Gilson and Alberto Rodriguez) and sisters (Yolanda Sawica and Maria Balbina Mojocoa) and their families and my mother (when she was alive), my thoughtful neighbor Luis Zapata, my many understanding and non-encumbered friends, my dear church family (the Avon Park Seventh-day Adventist Church, English and Spanish speaking) from where we have received so much love and support, along with the Walker Memorial Academy, its principal Mr. William Farmer, its teachers who did not spare any effort to make it possible to receive the financial aid that I needed as a single mother ...

There would not be enough space to thank everybody, like I said before, who have contributed to touch in a positive way our lives. ...

Also I want to give thanks to my children themselves for receiving and accepting the wisdom and guidance from the Holy Spirit to take advantage of all the opportunities, talents and blessings they have received from God ...

Doralba von Walter
Avon Park

Bouquet

Pleasure dealing with Hayes Automotive

Editor:

Monday morning I discovered an oil stain in my carport under my car and I made an appointment to bring it in to Hayes Automotive Service Center.

This is my third visit there at 2805 U.S. 27 N just north of the Aldi store. They made repairs and had me back on the road in no time.

I had been told by a neighbor that they were auto knowledgeable and honest and I have found this to be true every time. It is a pleasure dealing with John Hayes, an honest, local small business man.

Mert Daniels
Avon Park

Editorial Page Policy

Make sure to sign your letter and include your address and phone number. Anonymous letters will be automatically rejected.

Please keep your letters to a maximum of 400 words. We have to make room for everybody. Letters of local concern take priority.

Send your letter to 2227 U.S. 27 South, Sebring, FL 33870; drop it off at the same address; fax 385-1954; or e-mail *editor@newssun.com*.

To make sure the editorial pages aren't dominated by the same writers, letters are limited to two per month and a guest column can be submitted once every three months.

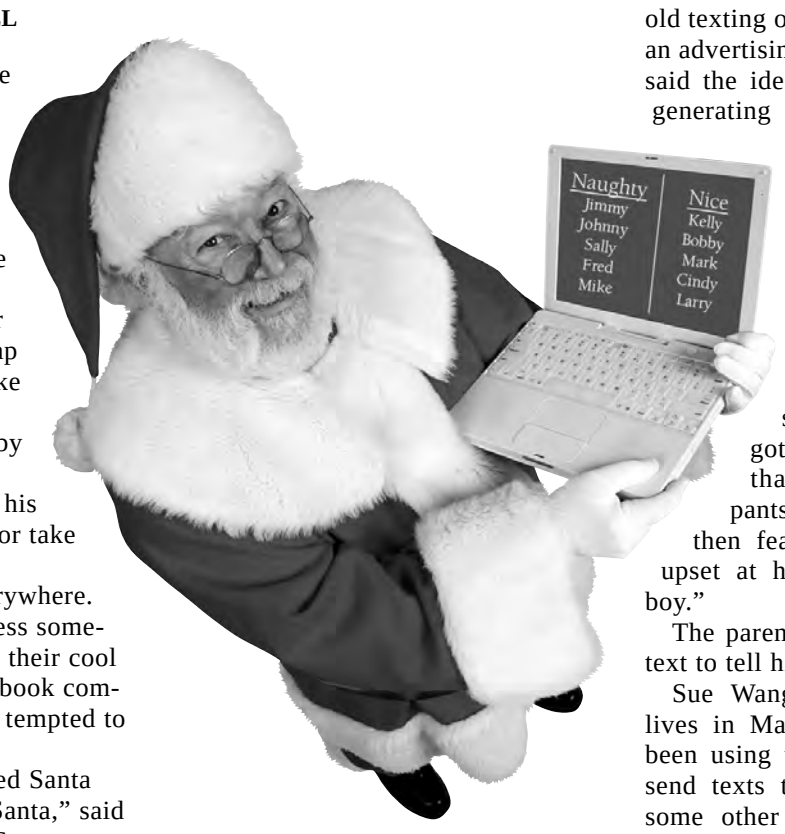
Opinions expressed in letters or columns are solely the opinion of that author and not necessarily the opinion of the staff or editors of the *News-Sun*.

All items will run on a first-come basis as space permits, although more timely ones could be moved up.

We believe your viewpoints are just as important as any community leader or government official, so consider this a personal invitation to get your two cents in. The *News-Sun* has a long history of encouraging public discussion through letters, guest columns, and Reader's Response questionnaires.

Texts, Web really do allow Santa to be everywhere these days

GEOFF MULVIHILL
Associated Press



He sees you when you're sleeping, he knows when you're awake, and he knows how many followers you have on Twitter.

Not long ago, there were two ways to tell Santa Claus what you wanted for Christmas: sitting on his lap or writing a letter. Now, like with just about everything else, St. Nick is available by text or e-mail, Twitter or Facebook. Kids can watch his worldwide journey online or take a phone call.

Santa Claus is truly everywhere. And just as unfettered access sometimes tempts adults to lose their cool on e-mail listservs or Facebook comments, spoiled kids can be tempted to flame out on Santa.

"Some people have texted Santa that aren't so happy with Santa," said Drew Olanoff, who plays Santa on a text messaging system. "They've been a little rude. I've let them know that would be considered bad behavior. You really shouldn't talk to Santa like that."

The increased use of electronic services to reach Santa Claus reflects another reality of life outside the North Pole. Some major post offices, including Philadelphia, say they're handling far less mail directed to him. Chicago has handled about 10,000 letters to Santa this year, down from 15,000 to 20,000 in 2009.

So tech services are finding they can get a promotional boost from Kris Kringle without renting a red suit and a white beard. Most of them are in their first few years and use the gimmicks to show the power of their techologies.

Portable North Pole, a project launched by Montreal-based video web developer UgroupMedia, sends kids personalized videos from Santa — even those who deserve a lump of coal. Tell the site your kid hasn't been so good, and the video Santa peers over his glasses and tells the child: "You're on my naughty watch."

Another site, TextSanta.net, expects to send out close to 100,000 texts this year.

T.J. Kirgin Jr., CEO of the 2-year-old texting operation and also leader of an advertising firm in St. Charles, Mo., said the idea is to be greener — not generating all those paper letters — and to raise money for charity. From every $3.99 text, $1 is donated to the March of Dimes.

Kirgin said it's a thrill for children not just to write to Santa, but to hear from him.

"One parent said (his son) was so excited that he got a text message from Santa that he actually peed his pants," Kirgin said. The child then feared that Santa would be upset at him for not being a "big boy."

The parents had Santa send another text to tell him it was OK.

Sue Wangler, a grandmother who lives in Maryland Heights, Mo., has been using the service to have Santa send texts to her granddaughter and some other young friends for three years.

She said the messages are helpful for her granddaughter and a close friend, both 9, who have been wondering whether Santa's real. "This text from Santa has prolonged the belief system a little longer," she said.

Gogii, a mobile application development firm in Marina del Rey, Calif., for which Olanoff plays Santa, has an irreverent take on children's Christmas lists. Olanoff posts some requests on his blog at textingsantaclaus.com, along with some cheeky responses.

One texter asked for a pony. "Really?" Olanoff wrote on the blog (not back to the child). "Kids still ask for those? Ponies are so like 1993."

Water main break knocks out service

Continued from page 1A

staff to try to isolate this northern area for repairs," Deleon said. "Unfortunately, we believe one or more of these valves did not hold."

As water continued to flow towards the broken line, Deleon and City manager Bruce Behrens decided to shut down the entire water treatment plant.

Repairs were completed around 7:50 p.m., according to Deleon, and the water treatment plant was back online by 8:10 p.m. Water service was restored to most residents by 8:40 p.m.

"One of the issues was that not all of the valves were mapped on the master plans, and that some of the older valves were not holding. Getting all of those mapped onto the master plan and tracing out the older valves will be a priority this upcoming year," Deleon said.

Police Blotter

Continued from page 2A

27, of Sebring, was charged with failure to appear reference sex offender fail report change of address.

♦ Ivonne Duarte Montes, 49, of Laurinburg, N.C., was charged with DUI.

♦ Cody Adam Nicholas, 19, of Sebring, was charged with violation of probation reference possession of cannabis and possession of drug paraphernalia.

♦ Joshua Patrick Oshea, 18, of Sebring, was charged with possession of a harmful new legend drug without prescription, possession of marijuana and possession and or use of drug equipment.

♦ John Gerard Peloquin, 51, of Sebring, was charged with petit theft.

♦ David Lee Sharp, 51, of Sebring, was charged with two counts of violation of probation reference domestic violence and resisting arrest without violence, and withhold support of children or spouse.

♦ James Monroe Smith, 44, of Sebring, was charged with violation of probation reference simple battery.

Community Briefs

Blood mobile sets up in Lake Placid

LAKE PLACID – The Florida Blood Centers-Highlands blood mobile will be at the Publix Shopping Plaza in Lake Placid from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. today.

Blood donors will receive a free movie ticket in the mail.

Resurrection Lutheran plans sale

AVON PARK – The Avon Park Resurrection Lutheran Church yard sale will be from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 15. The huge yard sale will feature many donated articles offered at great prices.

The church is at 324 E. Main St., corner of Main and Memorial, Avon Park. Proceeds will go for a feed-the- hungry program in Avon Park.

Dance Club plans Christmas Eve Party

SEBRING – The Highlands Social Dance Club will host a Christmas Eve Party with ballroom dancing from 7-9:30 p.m. today at 3400 Sebring Parkway (former Lion's clubhouse). Music by Uptown Country.

Admission is $5 for members and $7 for non-members. Appropriate dress required.

Snack bar is closed, so bring your own drinks and snacks

For more information call 314-9215

Events planned at lodges, posts

AVON PARK

The Combat Veterans Memorial VFW Post 9853 will have music by Joe and Jackie from 5-8 p.m. today. Schedules are subject to change; call for details. For more information, call 452-9853.

LAKE PLACID

The Lake Placid Moose 2374 will have Texas Hold-em at 2 p.m. today. Music with Larry Musgrave will be from 6-10 p.m. For more information, call 465-0131.

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Obituaries

Nicholas Chickerell

Nicholas Chickerell, 92, of Avon Park died Dec. 21, 2010. Born in Oneonta, N.Y., he was a veteran of the U.S. Army serving in World War II. He was a retired salesman and of the Catholic faith.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Marion; daughter, Olivia Scott; two granddaughters and four grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be sent to Good Shepherd Hospice, 4410 Sun 'N Lake Blvd., Sebring, FL 33872. Condolences may be expressed at www.morrisfuneralchapel.com. Cremation arrangements entrusted to Morris Funeral Chapel, Sebring.

Regina Leedy

Regina Eileen Hiatt Leedy, 94, of Sebring died Dec. 22, 2010. Born in Kokomo, Ind., she had been a resident of Sebring. She attended Peru Brethren Church and the Grace Church of Sebring.

Regina is survived by her loving husband of 64 years, Ralph R.; her daughter, Jean A. Stuber; four grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandson.

A memorial service will take place at 2 p.m. Monday at Grace Church of Sebring with the Rev. Randall Smith officiating. Memorial contributions may be made to Hope Hospice, 4840 Sun 'N Lake Blvd., Sebring, FL 33872 in her memory. Arrangements were entrusted to Stephenson-Nelson Funeral Home, Sebring.

Robert Skipper

Robert Dink Skipper, 87, of Sebring died Dec. 20, 2010. Born in Crewsville, he was a fifth generation Floridian. He was a welder by profession and was involved in the citrus and cattle business. In the early 1970s he ran for and was elected to the Highlands County Board of County Commissoners, serving a total of 16 years.

He is survived by a brother, Roland; children, Leta Mathews, Wendell Skipper, Kelvin Skipper, and Caroline Hanken; four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Visitation will be from noon to 1 p.m. Friday, Dec. 24 at Crewsville Baptist Church with a service to follow at 1 p.m. Burial to follow at Crewsville Baptist Church Cemetery. Memorials are requested to Hope Hospice, 9470 HealthPark Circle, Fort Myers, FL 33908. Condolences may be expressed at www.morrisfuneralchapel.com. Morris Funeral Chapel, Sebring, is in charge of arrangements.

Leo Strapp

Leo Michael Strapp, 77, died Dec. 18, 2010. Born in Columbus, Ohio he had been a resident of Avon Park since 2000.

He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Amy; children, Cynthia Mathis, Karen Napper, Laurianne Rieser, Patricia Ramsey and Kenny Strapp; eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

A funeral service and burial will be held in Columbus later this month. A celebration of Leo's life will be held in late January at Reflections in Avon Park. Stephenson-Nelson Funeral Home, Avon Park, is in charge of local arrangements. Condolences may be expressed at stephensonnelsonfh.com.

"BUZZY" PETER C. RUSSO

Miss you on your Birthday December 22nd.
You and Mommy are in our Hearts For Ever!

Dad, Kathy, Mari and Tony.

IMOGENE ROSALEE KENNEDY HENDRY

Imogene Rosalee Kennedy Hendry died December 17, 2010. Born February 5, 1931 to parents, Inez Lee Johnson Kennedy and Luther Edwin Kennedy in Manatee County. Imogene married Robert Lee Hendry on August 2, 1949.

Imogene is preceded in death by her son, Robert Lee, Jr.; grandson, Lance Pierce; brothers, Luther Edwin, Jr. and Ottis W inifred; sisters, Hermenia, Jacy Mercer, Doretha Lassiter, Christine Mott, Teddy Roberts and Lillian Smith.

She is survived by husband, Robert; son, James Earl; daughter, Debra Ann Pierce; grandchildren, Ryan Swartzendruber, Ayla Pierce and Leah Marie Hendry; great-granddaughters, Kylie, Teagan and Lara Swartzendruber. Burial to take place at Bethany Baptist Church Cemetery.

Arrangements by Griffith-Cline Funeral Home.

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S-XW

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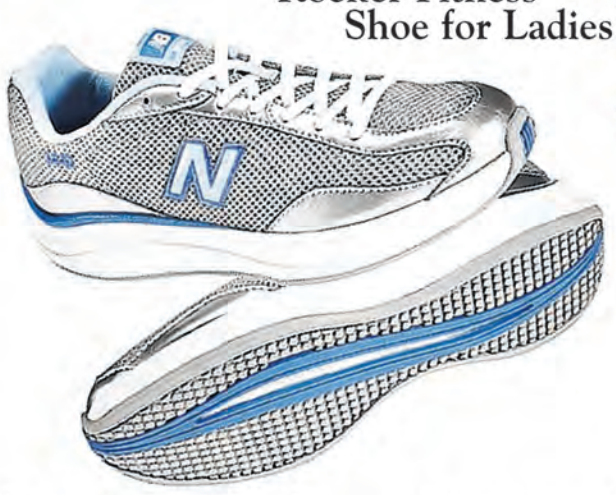

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LETTERS TO SANTA

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Dear, Santa
I have some qwestens for you. Can you give me some raindeer food? Is Jack frost mean at all? What is or number 1 efls name? Who is or fafret kid out of me and Will? Bay the whay my brother sed you are not rily. Who is or fafret raindeer? Myn is rodof.
Love Haylee Brunner
Age 10
Cracker Trail Elementary School

Fred Wild Elementary
Mrs. Regina Jones' First Grade Class

Dear Santa,
I have been good this year.I want a bike for christmos. Happy christmas.
Love, Kashone B.

Dear Santa,
I have been good this year.
I want a Jaklbee and legos for Christmas.
Thank you.
Love, Tyler B.

Dear Santa,
I have deen good this year.
I want a DS and a mps player for christmas. Can I Please have new clothes too?
Love, Madilynn M.

Dear Santa,
I have been good this year.
I want a Pokit Rocit. and remote control car for christmas
Thank you Santa!
Love, Tilon S.

Dear Santa,
I hav veen good this ye
I want a remote cot truck.
Love, Miguel C.

Dear Santa,
I have been good this year. I want a wii & xbox360 for christmas.
Love, Alex M.

Dear Santa,
I have good this Year.
I Want a wwe toy and a xBox for christmos.
Love, David G.

Dear Santa,
I have been good this year.I want a trampoline. big and a tiger control.Have a safe trip and bring all of the gifts.
Love, Kyrie B.

Dear Santa,
I have been good this year. I want a ds and a doll house for christmas please.
Love, Yeimi L.

Dear Santa,
I have been good this year. I want a Remote control truck anda train track. Merry chistmas Santa!
Love, Jacob J.

Dear Santa,
I have been good this year. I want a doll house anda Teapster for christmas.
Merry Christmas.
I wanta X box 360 and a mp3 player please.
Love, Mary A.

Dear Santa,
I have Been good this year.
I want a P.S. forchristmas.
Love, Patrick L.

Dear Santa,
Ihave been dood this year.I want a train track for christmas.
Love, Jorge F.

Dear Santa,
I have been good this year.I want a P.S3 and a WWe toy for Christmas. Thank you.
Love, Ivan L.

Dear Santa,
I have been good this yea.I want a DS for christmas please.
Love, Daisy R.

Mrs. Ouellette's Class

Dear Santa,
for Christmas I want A DSi and lots of games.
Love, Malaysia O.

Dear Santag,
For Christmas I want a cun ppt
Love, Iangelys C.

Dear Santa,
For Christmas, I want a dsi and I want the game Moreo and Cooke mama.
Love, Liliana A.

Dear Santa,
I want for Christmas is a Tagol game and a Tagol casoll.
Love, Emma N.

Dear Santa,
for christmas I want The book of Harry Potter and I want all of the books of Janny B. Jons. I Love Jonny B. Jons and I love Harry Potter and I want The D.S.I. I want the game of Moryos.
Love Jailene F.

Dear Santa,
For Christmas, I want teck deck.
Love, Roland R.

Dear Santag,
For christmas I want a bie Nreuf gun.
Love, Sam C.

Dear Santa,
For christmas I want a patsosnn
Love, Pedro S.

Dear Santa,
For christmas I want a wii.
Love Cirenea B.

Dear Santa,
For Christmas, I want a adsi.
Love, Mikey E.

Dear Santa,
for ol you dun for me brine tieme have a god christmas.
Love, Matthew D.

Dear Santa,
I want a. toy samychruckfor. Christmas.
Love, Jeremy W.

Dear Santa,
for Christmas I want EXBXO6
Love, Christian V.

Dear Santa,
I wouldwant a Drum. I would want a micphone. I am Leavingmilk and cookies.
Love, Loxie A.

Dear Santa,
I wish for rip stik. I would leave you Chocolate milk for you for the carrotts for the reindeer.
Love, Abby P.

Dear Santa,
I whont a DS. My mom is gono doo cookis for you. And I'm going Leave carrotts and milks for the reindeers.
Love, Nelson L.

Dear Santa,
I wood likea rip stik scooter. I will leave you chocolate milk.
Love, Wyatt D.

Dear Santa,
I would like a toy Qr. I am leaving cookies and milk for reindeer.
Love, Pedro C.

Mrs. Whidden's First Grade Class

Dear Santa,
I want a stuff anmale monkey that is 10000 feet. And I want real money. And I want rerarıng rabbits travl in time. I also want a trampoling. And I wanta new lego starwars.
Love, Joshua

Dear Santa,
I want to be rich. How do you get your elfsi. You give as books and toys. How do you get your work shop.
Love, Ahrendo

Dear Santa,
I don't know how you make toys. And I Wish I can ride in your slay.I want a XBOX 360 with Halo Reach.
Love, Isaac

Dear Santa,
I want a computer. And my whole family want's a nice new car. My sister want's a toy car.
Stop. Love, Trista

Dear Santa,
I want a x box 360. I want a Legos.
Love, Pete

Dear Santa,
My mom wants to spend time with Me and my sister. My dad wants to play with me and my sister. I want to be happy. My sister wants a toy. Santa, I will set cooks and milk for you.
Love, Chris

Dear Santa,
I Love you Santa how do you make so much toys? I would like an amaricen Girl Doll.
Love, Hayley

Dear Santa,
Can you make me a pranset? If you cant I still love you so. I want a Doll and piant stuff.
Love, Jermiara

Dear Santa Claus,
May I have a Kit Doll for Haley? Can I have a Julie and a Molly Doll for Mema. Can I have Monstebig Dolls.
Love, Laci

Dear Jesus,
I want a little little four-wheeler for my sister.I want a car that is fake.I want my car keys and some for my sister and we want some cake and candy and fruit.
Love, Jasmine

Dear Santa,
I would really like a real horse in a barn.
Love, Emma

Dear Santa,
How are you Santa? What are you doing Santa? I want a psp.
Love, Damian

Dear Jesus,
I hope you are tacking care of my bruther.Dear Jesus I want a camra for christmas.
Love, Kani

Dear Santa,
I want a wii with wii sports. And a real phone.And a 20 inch bike with a stand and a 26 inch for my Dad.And a baseball mitt for my mom.
Love, Zachary

Dear Santa,
Howdid you get yourelfs? Howdo yuor reindeerfly. And how did yougot your workshop.KNight armour.
Love, Ridge

Dear Santa,
How do you get the rainders to fly?How do you get your elfs?How did you get your workshop?
Love, Morgan

Dear Santa,
I hope you come to my house. And I want a lot of presents. And I hope you give me money.
Love, David

Dear Santa,
I wot a wii and I wot a eshoX box.
Love, Anthony

Dear Santa,
I want a be 2 crismis efru and a X doX 3 6 d.
Love, Xiomara

Dear Santa,
sf What I whot for crismis is a BaBey Doll.
Love, Shyhogani

Dear Santa,
I Want a barbie doll hoes.
Love, Chaliz

Dear Santa,
I wi ii ick a no Mozdrtuck F6r Ciz iz o2 I cun P a o wiFr it.
Love, Morgan

Dear Santa,
for chistmas i wot a scadrosrd.
Love, Luiz

Dear Santa,
all I wot for kismes is a new powerwheel frotsets with siBelts nad Batsds with siBelts.
Love, Nakeia

Dear Santa, I wot a bisuc add a tantds.
Love, Pedro

Dear Santa,
I wot A BiBe house Kab A Lotof AAb A noowhos.
Love, Estrella

Dear Santa,
I Wot u too Ples. Ne Mea tede brair. and Bro hosoo with some Bredoll.
Love, Chloe

Dear Santa,
for crismis I wunt a Ntendods and a new playstachin and with a game.
Love, Gaige

Dear Santa,
I wont some clos. and theledr spidmun clos and a spudr and a Lutop.
Love, Emone'a

Dear Santa,
Helo gord up? Klun guin.
Love, Jake

Dear Santa,
I like To get a toy a legos box bekus. I lik lego in a box bekus thar aer fafiel.

Woodlawn Elementary

Dear Santa,
Imiam six years old. I am in first grade. Ho does Rudof's nose glow up? I wot a Ipod. I want a stuffed animal horse. I want roller skates.
Merry Christmas, Rowan Moulds

Dear Santa,
Do you like toys? Hi my name is Madison.I love toys! I want Barbie Video Girl Tetty Bear.TinkerBell!
Merry Christmas, Madison Dixon

Dear Santa,
Do you be sick on christmas days? I am in first grade.I live in Floridea. I will like a dollhouse, a pillow petanda gator shirt.
Merry Chirtmas, Britney St. George

Dear Santa,
How long does it take to dliver peresints?I'm six years old. I like to spend time with my family.I want a dsi, a laptop, and a bunny.
Merry christmas, Tori Morris

Dear Santa,
How old are you.I like dogs verry much.I wold like a puppy, a art kitt and a earring kitt.
Marry Christmas and Thank You!
Love, Ashley Bible

Dear Santa,
Do you ever visit florida, thats where I live? For Christmas I want cowboy boots, brown or black, you choose.I also want a d s i x l and a megamind game for that, please.I also want cowboy pants,shirt,and hat.Merry Christmas.
Love, Alex Henry

Dear Santa,
Are you goiging to give me a lot of toys? Hi santa, my name is Lexi. I want a lot of toys. I love those toys that you got last christmas. Merry Christmas Santa.
Love, Lexi Newgent
P.S. I love you santa so much.

Dear Santa,
Do you ever get a massage? I am in Frirst Grade. This is what I want for Christmas. I want Jessie from toy Story. Your Love, and Christmas earrings. Merry Christmas.
Love, Addyson Gose

Dear Santa,
Do you like the north Pole. My name is Madeline. I would like a plowpet. A Barbie, a Tinte bell Movie. Merry christmas.
Love, Madeline Swaine

Dear Santa,
Doe's Dancer Dance? I Live in Florida. I lived with my mom and dad when I was tow. I want a Dsi, a guitar, and a American Gill Doll.Merry Christmas Santa.
Love, Hannah Faith Hages
P.S. I love Santa!

Dear Santa,
How is the other ways to get in My house? I like to set out food for the deers.I whint a newchristmas tree and a Charlie Brown Coloring Book anda deesI. Merry christmas.
Love, Christiana Tomblin.
P.S. I love you Santa.

Dear Santa,
How do you make all those toys in one night?I like to play outside with my little brother.I want for Chistmas is the joy of God's birth and some colt's stuff and a p neklis. Merry Christmas.
Love, Peyton Spencer

Dear Santa,
How much elf's do you have? Does Dancer dances? I Live in forlda. I wantatv. I wanta stuffet dofan. I want a dsi. Merr christmas!
Love, Jaidyn Britt

Dear Santa,
Do you ever lissen to DMXs music? I love palying football and baseball. I want a DS. And a xbox3sixty.also a Laptop. merry chismas.
Love, Dimitri Vega

Dear Santa,
How does Roodof's nose glows up? I have a cat.His name is sam.What I wfant for Christmas is a kitten, a bell on your sleigh.and I want is everyone to have a best Christmas ever!!I blive in you Santa. Merry Christmas!
Love, Jasmine

Dear Santa,
What are you geting my Sister? I am in frist grade. I want a laptop. I want dsi. A justin bieber Shrit. Merry hristmas.
Love, Kiara Garcia

Dear Santa,
Hou wrere The elfe brnerne? Santa Iiam in First Grade and I am 6 hers old. Hers Whte I want for Christmas. I wanta baby or Kitty and a Aouther2 kite. Merrre Christmas.
Love, Marie Medina Dobson

Dear Santa,
How doow you get all of thos presins? I Hav Bieengood and would like You too Breing me a BMX bike. Merry Christma.
Love, Xavier.

Dear Santa,
Wut Dus Tne rupyLp Look Like? I wut a iPoD and a camra. I Ben a Good Girl in Woodlawn. I have 21 SyB us. Merry Christmas!
Love, Macia

Dear Santa,
How Dus cair fli? War do yau git avs? Wut do yau like too et? I hav bin gud. I wuta electc gatrand a selfon. Merry chnistmas!
Love, Braxton

Dear Santa,
Wiy do youiy haf to find elfs? I hav Ben a gooD Boy. Can I get a PlayStash3? Merry Christmas!
Love, Michael

Dear Santa,
Werer do yuo get Thot hat? Can I ples have The best Chrimis ever? I wont a CDr decares onbo mosir trukc. Merry Chrimis.
Love, Jevin

Dear Santa,
Wut si yor Wif name? Dear Santa I wut new make up and I wut a fone. Merry Chistmas!
Love, Yessena

Dear Santa,
How do you get all the presis? I want for crismas a NeteDoDesixl. Merry Christmas!
Love, Yasmin

Dear Santa,
How do you getels? Canyou PLes getmea Dsi anDa GoGoDog. Merry Christmas!
Love, Alayna

Dear Santa,
What Dose yor raber look lik? I've Been relgood. I want a zooful and a livw19. Merry Christmas!
Love, Brigitte

Dear Santa,
My dos'e the reder fly? I bin a good girl all I want for crismis IwantacPootr. Merry Christmas!
Love, Jackie Manuel

Dear Santa,
Wher Did you get your sleigh? I wod like if you wod give me legostarwars the toy and Yogey the wii. Merry Christmas!
Love, Austin

Dear Santa,
Whant do your elfst look like? Dear Santa I've bin very good. I want a dsiand I want a sckatbord. Merry Christmas!
Love, Laurel

Dear Santa,
What Does Your Wife look like? I Bin very good. I wont to haveacumplowdr and a DSI. Merry Christmas!
Love, Serena P.L.

Dear Santa,
How Do You Get Yor elf? I wnte to Hav a vedeo camru. I wnte a babey Doll. Merry Christmas!
Love, Angie
P.S. I ben good.

Dear Santa,
How do you get the elfs?I would like a baby Doll.I have bin very good and would like Cloes too. Merry Christmas!
Love, Tatianna

Dear Santa,
Wit culr is youR sLay? I wat a baby a Lif. Merry Christmas.
Love, Ianniya

Dear Santa,
Whant do your elfst look like? Dear Santa I've bin very good. I want a dsiand I want a sckatbord. Merry Christmas!
Love, Alexis

News-Sun photo by KATARA SIMMONS

Julie Dean is selling artwork and bamboo plants Thursday morning and says she has been pleased with her sales during the holiday season at the Lakeshore Mall in Sebring.

Holiday sales up and down

Continued from page 1A

has sold in the mall, so she couldn't say if sales were up or down from last year.

The Butlers, on the other hand, have sold customized, hand-crafted fabric and wood items — like sports team cushions and dolls, bread boxes and napkin holders — for five Christmas seasons at the mall.

"I figure we're 10 to 12 percent behind last year," said John Butler, who with his wife Karen make their products with their own hands.

Butler added, however, that last year had been an exceptionally good year.

"The last two shopping days are usually our busiest," he said, because of special gifts needed at the last minute. He said that their price range and variety made them popular with secret Santas.

The Butlers, who travel to craft shows, are known in Highlands County because of their regular participation at the Lake Placid Fair and Sebring's Roaring 20s event.

Julie Dean, of Julie's Gifts and Art, said considering the economy, sales were not too bad.

"I came here four years ago, when the economy was much better and didn't do well," Dean said. "You have to think positive. If I do well I'm going to open a permanent gallery."

Dean had warm words of praise for the Lakeshore Mall's management. She said other malls wanted four times as much rent as she is paying here.

"The mall management is very good. They help me to give a good price to my customers."

Dean sells quality art prints and smaller items like lucky bamboo and wine caddies.

Kim Gauger, a mother donating her time for Project Graduation, was busy turning purchases into Christmas gifts by wrapping them with colorful paper and fancy bows. In exchange, shoppers make a donation to the project, which provides graduating seniors a safe place to celebrate.

"They've kept us busy wrapping, especially since the 15th" she said with a smile, as she curled ribbons with the edge of her scissors. "Sometimes there's no time to even get a drink," she said. "Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday were busier than the weekend. One day we made $2,000."

News-Sun photo by KATARA SIMMONS

John Butler says sales are down this year for he and his wife Karen, who operate a kiosk during the holiday season at Lakeshore Mall.

JoAnn Nicodemus was relaxed as she strolled the mall. "I posted our gifts two weeks ago," she said with a twinkle, "so we did good."

In fact, she said, she has already received a photo from her grandchildren posing in the pajamas she'd sent them, holding the accompanying dolls which are dressed in the same pajamas.

Eileen May, CEO of the Lake Placid Chamber of Commerce, said that the feedback she's getting indicates while sales are not where retailers hoped they would be, they were better than last year.

"I think in general it's a good year," she said. "Many winter residents are back and have guests. We're getting a lot of visitors stopping at the Chamber and asking for the names of stores and restaurants."

According to a report by Michelle Chapman in the Associated Press, nationally retail revenue went up 5.5 percent last weekend. The number of shoppers that weekend rose by 3 percent over 2009.

ShopperTrak, which collects and analyses retail spending, anticipates a 4 percent rise in national sales for the holiday season. Sales fell by 0.4 percent during the 2009 Christmas season.

Anything over 4 percent is considered a healthy gain.

ShopperTrak reported Black Friday sales nationally were $10.69 billion.

The Associated Press also reported online sales have been strong. As of Dec. 17, $27.5 billion has been spent online since Nov. 1 — up 12 percent from 2009.

In fact, she said, she has already received a photo from her grandchildren posing in the pajamas she'd sent them, holding the accompanying dolls which are dressed in the same pajamas.

Feast brings AP community together

Continued from page 1A

Ford, the Wild Turkey Tavern, just to name a few, are the ones that made this happen. Without them, and a lot of others, this would have never happened," Sass said.

Once the idea got started, the City of Avon Park opened the doors to the Community Center, and as the word got out, members of the VFW and families of the officers stepped up to help cook and to serve.

"We were at the point quickly where we had to turn volunteers away, there just wasn't enough to do," said Harbaugh, who ran the serving and the assembly in the kitchen with military precision.

As the date was getting closer, Avon Park's Code Enforcement Officers stepped in to act as hosts and to bus the tables.

When the logistics of cooking that many turkeys and hams began to become a reality, the Avon Park Correctional Institute took action and lent the large grills and volunteers to handle the meat.

"Man, can they cook or what? This is some of the best turkey I have ever tasted. It's moist and flavorful. It is wonderful," said Violet Simmon.

At the dinner, over 200 people were fed in the first hour, and the service came partially from the City Manger Bruce Behrens.

News-Sun photo by ED BALDRIDGE

Big Vince Forest (left) and his son Officer Vincent Forest serve Christmas dinner at the Community Center on Wednesday.

'We were at the point quickly where we had to turn volunteers away, there just wasn't enough to do.'

CHRISTY HARBAUGH
APPD officer

"Isn't this great?" Behrens asked as he waited in line to sit on Santa's lap with his list.

"This is real community spirit."

Councilman Paul Miller also attend the dinner, and lent a hand by wearing the beard and red coat for the kids.

"Ho, ho, ho," was all the comment he had for the record.

"The contributions from the community have just amazed me," Sass said around 6:30 p.m. as citizens continued to trickle in as the event wound down.

The event was officially scheduled from 3 p.m. until 5 p.m., but it kept going because there was plenty of food.

"We started about 3 a.m. today, and I am a little tired, but it was worth it," Sass said.

Officer Coogan, who is officially on leave with a newborn boy, could not be stopped for comment.

He was busy serving pie.

APFD wraps Toys for Tots

Continued from page 1A

Santa, of course.

After being bundled and numbered, the presents this year are returned to the APFD, where the families can come and pick up the toys.

The reward, says Remick, is seeing the kids when they realized that Santa made a stop at the APFD and because of his busy schedule, left presents there instead of a home delivery.

"Sometimes, you have to go out on a call, and you see the presents or the toys out there, and you know that you helped make that happen. And the look they have when they recognize you. They know they have a friend out there," Remick added.

"This year, we have grown as to how many toys and families we can touch. We hope to expand that next year. Our goal is to get over 100," Remick added, taking a breather as the pizzas were delivered to feed the volunteers.

"This is a great program, and there is definitely a need out there, and these folks are making it happen," he said.

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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
FOR THE TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO.: 10-790-GCS
HIGHLANDS INDEPENDENT BANK,
Plaintiff,
vs.
CASA BELLA DEVELOPERS, LLC; C & G FAMILY VENTURES, LLC; THREE (3) TEAM HOLDINGS, LLC; RICARDO D. GOMEZ; DENNISE S. AUSTIN; ANTHONY D. CASERTA; HIGHLANDS PARK ESTATES ASSOCIATION, INC; AND ANY AND ALL UNKNOWN PARTIES CLAIMING BY, THROUGH, UNDER, AND AGAINST THEREIN NAMED DEFENDANT(S) WHO ARE NOT KNOWN TO BE DEAD OR ALIVE, WHETHER SAID UNKNOWN PARTIES MAY CLAIM AN INTEREST AS SPOUSES, HEIRS, DEVISEES, GRANTEES, OR OTHER CLAIMANTS; TENANT #1, TENANT #2, TENANT #3, AND TENANT #4, THE NAMES BEING FICTITIOUS TO ACCOUNT FOR PARTIES IN POSSESSION,
Defendants.
Notice of Action
TO: Anthony D. Casserta, Three (3) Team Holdings, LLC; and C&G Family Ventures, LLC
Last Known Address: 12121 NE 16th Avenue,
Pembroke Pines, FL 33161
Current Mailing Address: unknown
Current Residence: unknown
Dennis S. Austin
Last Known Address: 415 SW 183rd Way,
Pembroke Pines, FL
Current Mailing Address: unknown
Current Residence: unknown
YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action to Foreclosure of Mortgage on the following described property in Highlands County, Florida:
Lot 17, in Bock 10, of HIGHLANDS PARK ESTATES, SECTION D, according to the plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 4, Page 86, of the Public Records of Highlands County, Florida.
Real Property Address: 106 Marshall Avenue,
Lake Placid, FL 33852.
Real Property tax ID #:
C-20-36-30-040-0100-0170.
AND
Lot 3, in Block 10, of HIGHLANDS PARK ESTATES, SECTION D, according to the Plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 4, Page 86, of the Public Records of Highlands County, Florida.
Real Property Address: 134 Marshall Avenue,
Lake Placid, FL 33852.
Real Property tax ID #:
C-20-36-30-040-0100-0030.
has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on Mark A. Sessums, Plaintiff's Attorney, whose address is 625 Commerce Drive, Suite 304, Lakeland, FL 33813, on or before the 28th day of January, 2011, a date which is within thirty (30) days after the first publication of this Notice in the NEWS-SUN and file the original with the Clerk of this Court either before service on Plaintiff's Attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise, a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.
DATED this 20th day of December, 2010
Bob Germaine
Clerk of the Circuit Court
By: /s/ Toni Kopp
As Deputy Clerk
December 24, 31, 2010

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
FOR THE TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO.: 10-874-GCS
HIGHLANDS INDEPENDENT BANK,
Plaintiff,
vs.
GUILLERMO F. RUBIO; ERICA D. BROWN; AND ANY AND ALL UNKNOWN PARTIES CLAIMING BY, THROUGH, UNDER, AND AGAINST THEREIN NAMED DEFENDANT(S) WHO ARE NOT KNOWN TO BE DEAD OR ALIVE, WHETHER SAID UNKNOWN PARTIES MAY CLAIM AN INTEREST AS SPOUSES, HEIRS, DEVISEES, GRANTEES, OR OTHER CLAIMANTS; TENANT #1, TENANT #2, TENANT #3, AND TENANT #4, THE NAMES BEING FICTITIOUS TO ACCOUNT FOR PARTIES IN POSSESSION,
Defendants.
Notice of Action
TO: Guillermo F. Rubio
Last Known Address: 11019 148th Ct., S.W.,
Miami, fL 33196
Current Mailing Address: unknown
Current Residence: unknown
Erica D. Brown
Last Known Address: 820 Tivoli Circle, #208,
Deerfield Beach, FL 33441
Current Mailing Address: unknown
Current Residence: unknown
YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action to Foreclosure of Mortgage on the following described property in Highlands County, Florida:
Lot 5, in Bock 25, of SECOND RESUBDIVISION OF HOFFMAN'S GROVE ADDITION TO LAKE STEARNS, according to the plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 1, Page 96, of the Public Records of Highlands County, Florida.
Real Property Address: 204 Palmetto Avenue,
Lake
Placid, FL 33852; f/k/a 210 Palmetto Avenue,
Lake Placid, FL 33852.
Real Property tax identification number is:
P-06-37-30-040-0250-0050.
has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on Mark A. Sessums, Plaintiff's Attorney, whose address is 625 Commerce Drive, Suite 304, Lakeland, FL 33813, on or before the 28th day of January, 2011, a date which is within thirty (30) days after the first publication of this Notice in the NEWS-SUN and file the original with the Clerk of this Court either before service on Plaintiff's Attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise, a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.
DATED this 20th day of December, 2010
Bob Germaine
Clerk of the Circuit Court
By: /s/ Toni Kopp
As Deputy Clerk
December 24, 31, 2010

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
FOR THE TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO.: 10-953-GCS
HIGHLANDS INDEPENDENT BANK,
Plaintiff,
vs.
GEORGE N. JACOBS; DELORES A. JACOBS; Husband and Wife; THE GROVE ON LAKE FRANCIS PROPERTY OWNERS' ASSOCIATION, INC.; AND ANY AND ALL UNKNOWN PARTIES CLAIMING BY, THROUGH, UNDER, AND AGAINST THEREIN NAMED DEFENDANT(S) WHO ARE NOT KNOWN TO BE DEAD OR ALIVE, WHETHER SAID UNKNOWN PARTIES MAY CLAIM AN INTEREST AS SPOUSES, HEIRS, DEVISEES, GRANTEES, OR OTHER CLAIMANTS; TENANT #1, TENANT #2, TENANT #3, AND TENANT #4, THE NAMES BEING FICTITIOUS TO ACCOUNT FOR PARTIES IN POSSESSION,
Defendants.
Notice of Action
TO: George N. Jacobs and Delores A. Jacobs
Last Known Address: 47 Meadowlake Circle S., Lake Placid, FL 33852
Current Mailing Address: unknown
Current Residence: unknown
YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action to Foreclosure of Mortgage on the following described property in Highlands County, Florida:
Lot 7 and 16, THE GROVE ON LAKE FRANCIS, according to the plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 16, Page 68, of the Public Records of Highlands County, Florida.
Real Property Address: 2029 Jack Creek Drive,
Lake Placid, FL 33852; and 2065 Jack Creek Drive, Lake Placid, FL 33852.
Real Property tax identification numbers are:
C-22-36-29-020-0000-0070; &
C-22-36-29-020-0000-0160.
has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on Mark A. Sessums, Plaintiff's Attorney, whose address is 625 Commerce Drive, Suite 304, Lakeland, FL 33813, on or before the 28th day of January, 2011, a date which is within thirty (30) days after the first publication of this Notice in the NEWS-SUN and file the original with the Clerk of this Court either before service on Plaintiff's Attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise, a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.
DATED this 17th day of December, 2010
Bob Germaine
Clerk of the Circuit Court
By: /s/ Toni Kopp
As Deputy Clerk
December 24, 31, 2010

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
FOR THE TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO.: 10-1169-GCS
HIGHLANDS INDEPENDENT BANK,
Plaintiff,
vs.
SUN 'N LAKE BUILDERS, INC.; WILLIAM C. HAMM; JEFF ENDSLEY; JOSEPH D. ENDSLEY; FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL YACHTS, LLC; AND ANY AND ALL UNKNOWN PARTIES CLAIMING BY, THROUGH, UNDER, AND AGAINST THEREIN NAMED DEFENDANT(S) WHO ARE NOT KNOWN TO BE DEAD OR ALIVE, WHETHER SAID UNKNOWN PARTIES MAY CLAIM AN INTEREST AS SPOUSES, HEIRS, DEVISEES, GRANTEES, OR OTHER CLAIMANTS; TENANT #1, TENANT #2, TENANT #3, AND TENANT #4, THE NAMES BEING FICTITIOUS TO ACCOUNT FOR PARTIES IN POSSESSION,
Defendants.
Notice of Action
TO: William C. Hamm, III and Sun 'N Lake Builders, Inc.
Last Known Address: 3131 West Xavier Road,
Avon Park, FL 33825
Current Mailing Address: unknown
Current Residence: unknown
YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action to Foreclosure of Mortgage on the following described property in Highlands County, Florida:
Lots 26, 27 & 28, in Block 344, of SUN 'N LAKE ESTATES OF SEBRING, UNIT 16, according to the plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 10, Page 4, of the Public Records of Highlands County, Florida.
Real Property Address: 4982, 4988, 4994 Myrtle Beach Drive, Sebring, FL 33872
Real Property tax ID #:
C-04-34-28-160-3440-0280;
C-04-34-28-160-3440-0270;
C-04-34-28-160-3440-0260.
has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on Mark A. Sessums, Plaintiff's Attorney, whose address is 625 Commerce Drive, Suite 304, Lakeland, FL 33813, on or before the 28th day of January, 2011, a date which is within thirty (30) days after the first publication of this Notice in the NEWS-SUN and file the original with the Clerk of this Court either before service on Plaintiff's Attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise, a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.
DATED this 20th day of December, 2010
Bob Germaine
Clerk of the Circuit Court
By: /s/ Toni Kopp
As Deputy Clerk
December 24, 31, 2010

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
OF THE TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA
IN AND FOR HIGHLANDS COUNTY
CASE NO. 10001205GCS
PHH MORTGAGE CORPORATION,
Plaintiff,
vs.
WILLIAM J. MORAN, et. al.
Defendants.
NOTICE OF ACTION
TO: WILLIAM J. MORAN
Whose residence is: 125 LIME RD NW, LAKE PLACID, FL 33852; 247 MADISON TERR, BRIDGEPORT, CT 06606; 22 DORIS ST., TRUMBULL, CT 06611; 1251 NW 90TH DRIVE, PLANTATION, FL 33322
TO: GAYLE P. MORAN
Whose residence is 125 LIME RD NW, LAKE PLACID, FL 33852; 247 MADISON TERR, BRIDGEPORT, CT 06606; 22 DORIS ST., TRUMBULL, CT 06611; 1251 NW 90TH DRIVE, PLANTATION, FL 33322
If alive, and if dead, all parties claiming interest by, through, under or against WILLIAM J. MORAN; GAYLE P. MORAN and all parties having or claiming to have any right, title or interest in the property described herein.
YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action for Foreclosure of Mortgage on the following described property:
LOT 30, BOCK 60, OF PLACID LAKES, SECTION SIX, ACCORDING TO THE MAP OR PLAT THEREOF AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 7, PAGE 68, PUBLIC RECORDS OF HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA.
a/k/a 125 LIME RD NW LAKE PLACID, FL 33825
has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if an, to it, on Diana Chung, Attorney for Plaintiff, whose address is 2901 Stirling Road, Suite 300, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33312 either on or before January 29, 2011.
and file the original with the Clerk of this Court either before service on Plaintiff's attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint.
WITNESS my hand and the seal of this Court this 20th day of December, 2010.
ROBERT W. GERMAINE
As Clerk of the Court
By: /s/ Annette E. Daff
As Deputy Clerk
December 24, 31, 2010

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
IN AND FOR HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
Case No. 10-602-GCS
WALKHAMPTON CAPITAL CORPORATION,
Plaintiff,
vs.
ANY UNKNOWN PARTY WHO MAY CLAIM AS HEIR, DEVISEE, GRANTEE, ASSIGNEE, LIENOR, CREDITOR,, TRUSTEE, OR OTHER CLAIMANT, BY, THROUGH, UNDER OR AGAINST WILLIAM COLE; UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF WILLIAM L. COLE; PAULA LAMAR; UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF PAULA LAMAR; CITY OF SEBRING; FIRST HOME FEDERAL SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION; and UNKNOWN TENANT,
Defendants.
NOTICE OF ACTION
TO: ANY UNKNOWN PARTY WHO MAY CLAIM AS HEIR, DEVISEE, GRANTEE, ASSIGNEE, LIENOR, CREDITOR, TRUSTEE, OR OTHER CLAIMANT, BY, THROUGH, UNDER OR AGAINST WILLIAM COLE, last known address 400 Walnut Street, Sebring, FL 33870.
Notice is hereby given to the ANY UNKNOWN PARTY WHO MAY CLAIM AS HEIR, DEVISEE, GRANTEE, ASSIGNEE, LIENOR, CREDITOR, TRUSTEE, OR OTHER CLAIMANT, BY, THROUGH, UNDER OR AGAINST WILLIAM COLE that an action to foreclose on the following property in Highlands County, Florida:
Legal: LOT 5, BLOCK 122, LA PALOMA, ACCORDING TO THE MAP OR PLAT THEREOF AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 1, PAGE 44, PUBLIC RECORDS OF HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on Leslie S. White, Esquire, the Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is, 109 E. Church Street, 5th Floor, P.O. Box 3146, Orlando, Florida 32802-3146 on or before January 7, 2011, and file the original with the clerk of the court either before service on the Plaintiff's attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint or petition.
DATED ON November 29, 2010.
(SEAL)
Highlands County
Clerk of Circuit Court
By: /s/ Toni Kopp
Deputy Clerk
December 17, 24, 2010

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
FOR HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
PROBATE DIVISION
FILE NO. PC 10-494
IN RE: ESTATE OF
EDWARD HERMSEN
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
The administration of the estate of EDWARD HERMSEN, deceased, whose date of death was June 25, 2010, is pending in the Circuit Court for Highlands County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 590 S. Commerce Avenue, Sebring, FL 33870. 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 December 24, 2010.
Personal Representative:
/s/ Janet Hermsen
410 Mac Lane
Sebring, Florida 33875
Attorney for Personal Representative:
/s/ Charlotte C. Stone
Attorney for Janet Hermsen
Florida Bar Number: 21297
Stone & Walder, P.L.
3200 US Hwy 27 S., Suite 304
Sebring, FL 33870
Telephone: (863)402-5424
Fax: (863)402-5425
E-Mail: Charlotte@StoneandWalder.com
December 24, 31, 2010

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
OF THE TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
PROBATE DIVISION
FILE NO. PC 10-493
IN RE: ESTATE OF
JOHN CLINTON ELLER AKA
JOHN C. ELLER
Deceased.
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
The administration of the estate of JOHN CLINTON ELLER AKA JOHN C. ELLER,
deceased, whose date of death was October 22, 2010, is pending in the Circuit Court for Highlands Court, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 590 S. Commerce Ave., Sebring, FL 33870. 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 served must file their claims with this court WITHIN THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE 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 persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claim with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.
ALL CLAIMS NOT SO FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN SECTION 733.702 OF THE FLORIDA PROBATE CODE WILL BE FOREVER BARRED.
NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIOD SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OF MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.
The date of first publication of this Notice is December 17, 2010.
Personal Representative:
/s/ JOHN THOMAS ELLER

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT YOUR HOMETOWN PAPER THE NEWS-SUN

1050 Legals

4035 FOREST AVE.
WESTERN SPRINGS, IL 60558
Attorneys for Personal Representative:
CLIFFORD M. ABLES, P.A.
551 SOUTH COMMERCE AVE.
SEBRING, FL. 33870
(863) 385-0112
(863)385-1284 (FAX)
cmables@cmablespa.net
CLIFFORD M. ABLES, III
Florida Bar Number 178379
JANE M. HANCOCK
Florida BarNumber 341002
December 17, 24, 2010

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
PROBATE DIVISION
FILE NO. PC 10-492
IN RE: ESTATE OF
MILDRED JEAN RENFRO
a.k.a. M. JEAN RENFRO TODD
a.k.a. M. JEAN TODD
a.k.a. JEAN JORDAN TODD
a.k.a. JEAN M. TODD
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The administration of the estate of MILDRED JEAN RENFRO a.k.a. M. JEAN RENFRO TODD a.k.a. M. JEAN TODD a.k.a. JEAN JORDAN TODD a.k.a. JEAN M. TODD, deceased, whose date of death was August 26, 2010, and whose social security number is 308-12-6328, is pending in the Circuit Court forHighlands County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 590 S. Commerce Avenue, Sebring, FL 33870. The names and addresses of the personal representatives 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 December 17, 2010.

Personal Representatives:
/s/ James A. Renfro
61 Grafton Road
Upton, Massachusetts 01568
/s/ Jan L. Smith
1805 Crystal Street
Anderson, Indiana 46012
Attorney for Personal Representatives:
/s/ David F. Lanier
E-Mail Address: lanier@embarqmail.com
Florida Bar No. 045399
DAVID F. LANIER
P.O. Box 400
Avon Park, Florida 33826-0400
Telephone: (863)453-4457
December 17, 24, 2010

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
OF THE TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO.: 10-1140 GCS
J. RUDY REINHARDT and
SHIRLEY A. REINHARDT, his wife,
Plaintiff,
vs.
ROBERT HOGGATT and PAULA
HOGGATT a/k/a PAULA R. WOERDEMAN,
husband and wife,
Defendants.
NOTICE OF SUIT-PROPERTY

TO: Robert Hoggatt and Paula Hoggatt, a/k/a Paula R. Woerdeman and all other parties or persons claiming by or through them,
1933 N. Morningside Drive
Avon Park, Florida 33825

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that an action to foreclose on the following property in Highlands County, Florida:

Lot 567 and Lot 568, AVON PARK LAKES, UNIT NO. 2, according to the plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 4, Page 89, of the Public Records of Highlands County, Florida.

has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to Loretta J. Thompson, Esquire, MCCLURE & LOBOZZO, 211 South Ridgewood Drive, Sebring, FL 33870, the Plaintiff's attorney, and file the original with the Clerk of the above styled court on or before January 21, 2011; otherwise a default may be entered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

WITNESS my hand and seal of said Court on the 8th day of December, 2010.

ROBERT W. GERMAINE
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
BY: /s/ Toni Kopp
Deputy Clerk

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the Office of the Court Administrator 255 N. Broadway Avenue, Bartow, Florida 33830, (863)534-4686, at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.
December 17, 24, 2010

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
OF THE TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO.: 28-2009-CA-000746
SUNTRUST MORTGAGE, INC.,
Plaintiff,
vs.
GERALD CLOSE A/K/A GERALD W. CLOSE, et al,
Defendant(s).
NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to a Final Judgment of Mortgage Foreclosure dated December 06, 2010 and entered in Case No. 28-2009-CA-000746 of the Circuit Court of the TENTH Judicial Circuit in and for HIGHLANDS County, Florida wherein SUNTRUST MORTGAGE, INC., is the Plaintiff and GERALD CLOSE A/K/A GERALD W. CLOSE; REGIONS BANK D/B/A AMSOUTH BANK; TENANT #1 N/K/A JENNIFER EZELLE; are the Defendants. The Clerk of the Court will sell to the highest and best bidder for cash at JURY ASSEMBLY ROOM IN THE BASEMENT OF THE HIGHLANDS COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 430 SOUTH COMMERCE AVENUE at 11:00 AM, on the 4th day of January, 2011, the following described property as set forth in said Final Judgment:

THE SOUTH 1/2 OF LOT 1, BLOCK 104, ORIGINAL TOWN OF SEBRING, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF, RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 3, PAGE 1, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF DESOTO COUNTY, FLORIDA, OF WHICH HIGHLANDS COUNTY WAS FORMERLY A PART, AND IN TRANSCRIPT OF PLATS BOOK 1, PAGE 6, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA, BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

BEGINNING AT THE SOUTHWESTERLY CORNER OF SAID LOT 1 ON LAKEVIEW DRIVE, THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG LAKEVIEW DRIVE ON THE WESTERLY LINE OF SAID LOT 1 A DISTANCE OF 50 FEET; THENCE NORTHEASTERLY PARALLEL TO AND 50 FEET NORTH OF LINE DIVIDING LOTS 1 AND 2 A DISTANCE OF 150 FEET MORE OR LESS TO THE WEST LINE OF FRANKLIN STREET, SAME BEING THE EASTERLY LINE OF LOT 1; THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY ALONG THE EASTERLY LINE OF SAID LOT 1 A DISTANCE OF 50 FEET TO THE SOUTHEASTERLY CORNER OF SAID LOT 1; THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE LINE DIVIDING LOTS 1 AND 2, A DISTANCE OF 150 FEET MORE OR LESS TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

A/K/A 401 S. FRANKLIN STREET, SEBRING, FL 33870

Any person claiming an interest in the surplus from the sale, if any, other than the property owner as of the date of the Lis Pendens must file a claim within sixty (60) days after the sale.

WITNESS MY HAND and the seal of the Court on December 6, 2010.

ROBERT W. GERMAINE
Clerk of the Circuit Court
By: /s/ Priscilla Michalak
Deputy Clerk
Florida Default Law Group, P.L.
P.O. Box 25018
Tampa, Florida 33622-5018
F09054324 SUNTRUST-SPECFHLMC
**See Americans with Disabilities Act

In accordance with the Americans Disabilities Act, persons with disabilities needing a special accommodation to participate in this proceeding should contact the individual or agency sending the notice at Echevarria & Associates, P.A., P.O. Box 25018, Tampa, FL 33622-5018, telephone (813) 251-4766, not later than seven (7) days prior to the proceeding. If hearing impaired, (TDD) 1-800-955-8771, or voice (V) 1-800-955-8770, via Florida Relay Service.
December 17, 24, 2010

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
OF THE TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
CIVIL ACTION
CASE NO.: 28-2009-CA-001611
SAXON MORTGAGE SERVICES, INC.,
Plaintiff,
vs.
MARK F. SMICIKLAS, et al,
Defendant(s).
NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to a Final Judgment of Mortgage Foreclosure dated December 06, 2010 and entered in Case No. 28-2009-CA-001611 of the Circuit Court of the TENTH Judicial Circuit in and for HIGHLANDS County, Florida wherein SAXON MORTGAGE SERVICES, INC., is the Plaintiff and MARK F. SMICIKLAS; JANET K. SMICIKLAS; are the Defendants. The Clerk of the Court will sell to the highest and best bidder for cash at JURY ASSEMBLY ROOM IN THE BASEMENT OF THE HIGHLANDS COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 430 SOUTH COMMERCE AVENUE at 11:00 AM, on the 4th day of January, 2011, the following described property as set forth in said Final Judgment:

LOTS 3 AND 4, BLOCK K, SUN N LAKES ESTATES SECTION 4, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF, RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 8, PAGE 34, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA.

A/K/A 105 SUNFISH LANE, LAKE PLACID, FL 33852

Any person claiming an interest in the surplus from the sale, if any, other than the property owner as of the date of the Lis Pendens must file a claim within sixty (60) days after the sale.

WITNESS MY HAND and the seal of the Court on December 6, 2010.

ROBERT W. GERMAINE
Clerk of the Circuit Court
By: /s/ Priscilla Michalak
Deputy Clerk
Florida Default Law Group, P.L.
P.O. Box 25018
Tampa, Florida 33622-5018
F09104542 SAXONFID-SPECFHLMC
**See Americans with Disabilities Act

In accordance with the Americans Disabilities Act, persons with disabilities needing a special accommodation to participate in this proceeding should contact the individual or agency sending the notice at Echevarria & Associates, P.A., P.O. Box 25018, Tampa, FL 33622-5018, telephone (813) 251-4766, not later than seven (7) days prior to the proceeding. If hearing impaired, (TDD) 1-800-955-8771, or voice (V) 1-800-955-8770, via Florida Relay Service.
December 17, 2010

NOTICE OF DISPOSITION

ACCORDING TO THE FLORIDA SELF STORAGE FACILITY ACT THE FOLLOWING STORAGE UNITS LOCATED AT THE STORAGE PLACE OF AVON PARK, 395 CR 17A WEST, AVON PARK, FL 33825 WILL BE DISPOSED OF ON JANUARY 17, 2011, AT 10:00AM. ALL UNITS ARE SAID TO CONTAIN HOUSEHOLD GOODS UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.

Names and unit numbers are as follows:

NAME	UNIT NUMBER
Irene Handley	353
Calvin Crowell II	339
Eric Boswell	307

DISPOSITION BEING MADE TO SATISFY LANDLORD'S LIEN, MANAGEMENT RESERVES ALL RIGHTS, UNDER FLORIDA LAW, ALL PAYMENTS MUST BE IN CASH.
December 24, 31, 2010

NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Pursuant to a WRIT OF EXECUTION issued out of the County County Court of the Tenth Judicial Circuit in and for Highlands County, Florida, on the 29th day of September, 2010, in the cause wherein AUTO OWNERS INSURANCE COMPANY, is Plaintiff, and KENNETH R. WACASTER, and PATRICIA WACASTER, are Defendants, being Case No. 2008-SC-000606 in the said Court, I, Susan Benton, Sheriff of Highlands County, Florida,have levied upon all of the Defendant, PATRICIA WACASTER's right, title and interest in and to the following described PERSONAL property in Highlands County, Florida, to-wit:

Blue 2001 Lincoln Navigator - 4 Dr Wagon Sport
VIN Number: 5LMFU28R11LJ08374

and on the 18th day of January, 2011 at Duck's Body Shop, 1153 Hawthorne Drive, in the City of Sebring, Highlands County, Florida, at the hour of 11:00 a.m., or as soon thereafter as possible, I will offer for sale all of the said defendant, PATRICIA WACASTER's, right, title and interest in aforesaid property at public outcry and will sell the same, subject to all prior liens, encumbrances and judgments, if any, to the highest and best bidder or bidders for CASH, the proceeds to be applied as far as may be to the payment of costs and the satisfaction of the above-described execution.

Dated this, December 14, 2010
SUSAN BENTON, SHERIFF OF
HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
By: /s/ Kevin Awbrey
Deputy Kevin Awbrey
DEPUTY SHERIFF

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons with disabilities needing a special accommodation to participate in this proceeding should contact the agency sending this notice at 434 Fernleaf Ave., Sebring, FL 33870, Telephone 863/402-7228 not later than seven days prior to the proceeding. If hearing impaired, (TTD) 1-800-955-8771, or Voice (V) 1-800-955-8770, via Florida Relay Services.
December 17, 24, 31, 2010; January 7, 2011

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
OF THE 10TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO.: 09000778GCS
RIVERSIDE NATIONAL BANK OF FLORIDA,
Plaintiff,
v.
EDMOND MARTINO, III and MARY MARTINO,
Defendants.
NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE i hereby given pursuant to a Final Judgment of Foreclosure dated March 17, 2010, and entered in Civil Action No. 09000778GCS in the Circuit Court of the Tenth Judicial Circuit in and for Highlands County, Florida, wherein RIVERSIDE NATIONAL BANK OF FLORIDA, is the Plaintiff, and EDMOND MARTINO, III and MARY MARTINO are the Defendants, I will sell to the highest bidder for cash at the 430 S. Commerce Avenue, Sebring, FL 33870 at 11:00 A.M. on January 12, 2011, the following described property, as set forth in said Final Judgment of Foreclosure, to-wit:

LOT NUMBERED 4 AND 5, IN BLOCK NUMBER 4, SECTION R, OF HIGHLANDS PARK ESTATES, A SUBDIVISION, ACCORDING TO THE MAP FILED MAP BOOK 5, PAGE 17, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA.

The sad property as aforesaid, together with all tenements, hereditaments and appurtenances thereunto belonging, or in anywise appertaining are being sold to satisfy the said judgment.

DATED this 17th day of December, 2010.

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT,
HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
By: /s/ Priscilla Michalak
Deputy Clerk
(Circuit Court Seal)
December 24, 31, 2010

1050 Legals

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
OF THE TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
IN AND FOR HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO: 10001500FCS
JACK P. YOUNG, JR.
Petitioner,
And
ANGELA DAWN TAYLOR
Respondent.
NOTICE OF ACTION

To: Angela Dawn Taylor

YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action for dissolution of marriage has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of written defenses if any to: Jack P. Young, Jr., Petitioners, 2164 State Road 17 S. #2, Avon Park, Florida 33825, on or before January 3, 2011, and file the original with the Clerk of Court, 430 S. Commerce Ave., Sebring, Florida 33870, either before service on Petitioner or immediately Thereafter, otherwise a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the petition.

Date: November 30, 2010
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
By: s/s Allie Riley
Deputy Clerk
December 3, 10, 17, 24, 2010

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
OF THE TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
CIVIL DIVISION
Case No.: GC-09-1793
SEACOAST NATIONAL BANK,
Plaintiff,
vs.
THOMAS E. HAAKE and
WENDY ANN HAAKE,
Defendants.
NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to the "Final Summary Judgment" entered in the above-styled action, the property described below will be sold by the Clerk of this Court at public sale, 11:00 a.m. on January 4, 2011, to the highest bidder, for cash at 430 South Commerce Avenue, Sebring, Florida 33870-3867:

Lot 1, Block 3, of Lake Blue Estates, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 4, Page 59, of the Public Records of Highlands County, Florida.

Any person claiming an interest in the surplus from the sale, if any, other than the property owner as of the date of the lis pendens must file a claim within 60 days after the sale.

Bob Germaine
Clerk of the Circuit Court
Highlands County, Florida
/s/ Priscilla Michalak
Deputy Clerk
December 17, 24, 2010

1055 Highlands County Legals

****
HIGHLANDS COUNTY
LEGAL NOTICES
****

The following legal notices are from the Highlands
County Board of County Commissioners and are be-
ing published in the font, size, and leading as per their specifications.

1100 Announcements

CHECK YOUR AD

Please check your ad on the first day it runs to make sure it is correct. Sometimes instructions over the phone are misunderstood and an error can occur. If this happens to you, please call us the first day your ad appears and we will be happy to fix it as soon as we can.

If We can assist you, please call us:

385-6155
News-Sun
Classified

2000 Employment

2100 Help Wanted

HAIR STYLISTS / NAIL TECHS / MASSAGE THERAPISTS needed for new Salon by Southgate Plaza. Be your own boss! Booths & private rooms to rent. 518-866-1172 or 863-655-6025

THE **HOME BUILDERS INSTITUTE** has an immediate need for a **PAINTING INSTRUCTOR.** In this role, you will instruct program participants using approved curriculum, and develop supporting training materials; coordinate hands-on training activities including on-site projects, emphasizing proper tool and equipment use, safety, and standard painting practices; monitor and coach trainees; and perform various administrative and reporting functions, as required. Qualifications include a HS diploma or equivalent; at least seven years painting experience; teaching/training experience preferred; strong communications skills; the ability to work with at-risk youth; satisfactory results of an extensive criminal background screening; completion of Protective Action Response training; completion of the Test of Adult Basic Education; and proficiency with computers and MS Office. Apply at www.hbi.org/jobs. EOE/AA/M/F/D/V

3000 Financial

3050 Business Opportunities

ANTIQUE & Gift mall opening January 6th on Sebring Circle. Booth and showcases available for collectibles and antiques. Rent starting at $150 and up. Reserve your space now. Will be open Thurs, Fri. & Sat. Nancy 954-295-7194.

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FAX (863) 382-2750 Sebring, FL 33870

Firemen's Indoor Flea Market
Sandy's Dollar Store
Beckie's Avon 863-449-1298
Firemen's Field Fairgrounds
Kenilworth Blvd & Rt. 17
Fri-Sat • 8am-2pm Year Round

BUGS BEE-WARE Exterminating, Inc.
863 385-0404
Now Offering: Animal Nuisance Control and Removal

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Service by People Who Care
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Avon Park, FL 33826-6987 cklawn@strato.net

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See what one drop of your blood indicates as to YOUR nutritional health and well-being.
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$10.95 Per Room
3 Rooms Minimum
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Tues & Fri - 6:30 P.M.Preview: 4-6:30 P.M.
Household Items • Tools • Appliances
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50/50 Drawing & Give Aways Every Auction
Estates Bought & Sold
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4490 US 27, S., Sebring, FL 33870

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All Service Calls $40
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Avon Park, FL 33825
863-452-0389

SUE IS BACK
Sue Leninsky from Titusville, Pa. with 42 years experience is working
Mon. 8-4 • Sat. 8-noon
at Salon Tazmania
1505 N. Lake Ave., Avon Park
863-452-2396
Judi's Place of Hair & Nails
271 US 27 North, Sebring
Wed. – Fri. 8-4
863-382-9911
Call for an appointment with Sue

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4000
Real Estate

4040 Homes For Sale

ATTENTION: CASH for your Home, Duplex, Apartment, Commercial Property. Rapid Closing, "As Is" Condition. 863-441-2689. **STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

AVON PARK - 3BR, 2BA, 1CG 1400 sq ft home. $68,900. Available after Feb. 28, 2011. Owner Financing possible with 10% down, good credit report and work record. 863-453-5631

4080 Homes for Sale Sebring

SEBRING - 3BR, 2BA home for sale. 1902 Orange Blossom Dr. Financing available for qualified buyers. Please call 877-330-8727.

SEBRING - Edgewater Village Lakeview Dr. 2BR, 2BA, 1CG Villa. Beautifully furnished. New kitchen, laundry, TV. Low Maintenance fee includes Cable TV, Clubhouse, heated pool. Private street. Avail Immed. 863-402-9138

5000
Mobile Homes

5050 Mobile Homes For Sale

LAKE PLACID - **$6,800**. 2BR, 2BA Double Wide Mobile Home in Great, Active 55+ Park with 2 Pools & Docks. Bargain Priced. Good Condition. Pets OK. Call 1-239-455-7509

6000
Rentals

6050 Duplexes for Rent

LAKE PLACID - Placid Lakes, unfurnished 2BR / 2BA. 863-699-0897 or 863-840-2013

SEBRING - 3008 Spinks Rd., 2BR, 1BA, W/D hookup, new appliances, ceramic tile throughout. No Pets. Close to HRMC & Sebring High School. Avail. Immediately $500/mo. 863-273-1756.

SEBRING - CUTE 2BR, 1BA, new tile floors & insulation. Kids and most pets ok. 4911 Manatee. $490/mo. + $300 security deposit to move in. 863-446-7274 or 863-471-0840

6150 Furnished Apartments

SEBRING, ON Circle Park. One bedrooms and studios, furnished or unfurnished, includes water, no pets. Ref needed. Starting at $375 and up. 863-386-9100 or 954-295-7195.

6200 Unfurnished Apartments

AVON PARK ** Highlands Apartments 1680 North Delaware 1BR, 1BA & 2BR, 2BA Available. Central Heat & Air. Extra insulation. 1st & Sec. Call 863-449-0195

AVON PARK - Apartment with balcony overlooking Lake Verona and City Park. 100 E. Main St. Laundry Facilities. *SPECIAL*: $325/mo. 863-453-8538

AVON PARK - Clean, Quiet; Studios / 1BR. 1BA / 2BR, 2BA Apts., from $375/mo. New tile, New paint, New appliances, Screened patios & W/D hook ups. Call 863-452-0469.

NORTH AVON PARK 1BR, 1BA, G/W/S, you pay electric. No pets, Deposit $300. $420 Monthly. 863-453-7218

RELAX AT Lake Isis Villas
Luxurious 2BR Apartment.
Clean & Quiet Setting.
Call **863-453-2669**

6200 Unfurnished Apartments

LEMONTREE APARTMENTS
1015 West Bell St.
Avon Park, FL 33825
(off US 27, behind Wendy's)

1BR, 1BA - $495/Month
+ 200 security deposit
(Water, Sewer & Garbage Incl)
* Pets Welcome*
*** Full Size Washer/Dryer**

Open 8 am - 7 pm * 7 Days a Week
Call Alan, (386) 503-8953

LOOK

CASTLE HILL Apartments of Avon Park

Accepting Applications for 1 & 2 Bedroom Apts. Available to individuals 62 years or older, handicap/disabled, regardless of age. For rental information & applications please call: 863-452-6565
TDD: 1-800-955-8771
THIS INSTITUTION IS AN **Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer**

Los Apt. de Castle Hill de Avon Park

Estan aceptando aplicaciones para Apts. de 1 y 2 recamaras. Disponible a personas de 62 ancs o mas, incapacidad fisica/mental, no importa la edad.
Para mas informacion favor de llamar 863-452-6565. TDD: 1-800-955-8771
Esta Institucion Es De **Igualdad De Oportunidad Al Proveedor, Y Empleador**

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ACCUWEATHER®

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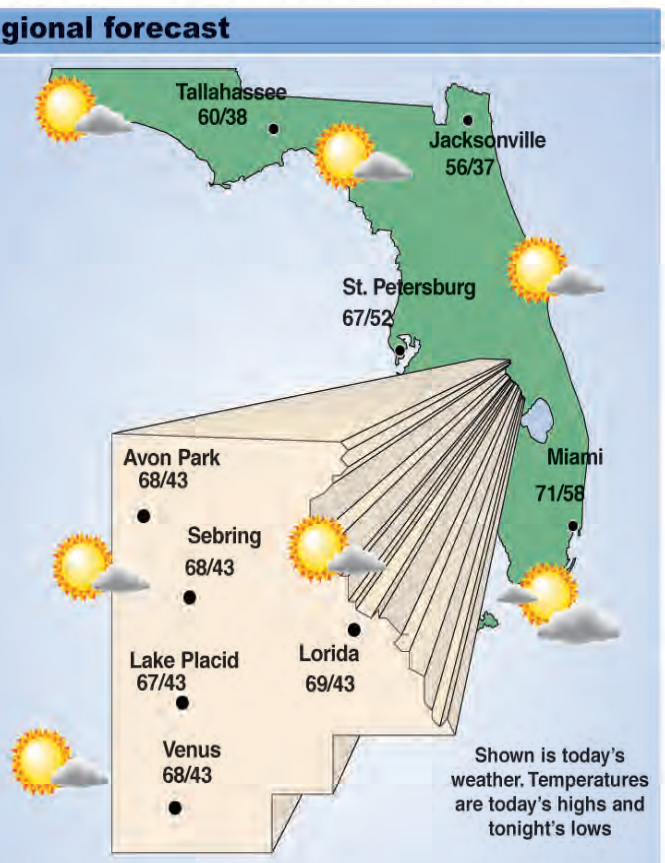
AccuWeather.com

Five-Day forecast for Highlands County

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Sunny much of the time	Partial sunshine	Partly sunny, breezy and cooler	Bright and sunny, but cool	Cool with plenty of sunshine
High 68/Low 43	High 72/Low 52	High 62/Low 36	High 60/Low 35	High 59/Low 38
Winds: ENE at 6-12 mph.	Winds: SSW at 4-8 mph.	Winds: NW at 10-20 mph.	Winds: NNW at 8-16 mph.	Winds: NNW at 8-16 mph.

Regional forecast



Regional summary: Sunny much of the time today. Partly cloudy tonight. Partial sunshine tomorrow. Sunday: partly sunny, breezy and cooler. Monday and Tuesday: bright and sunny, but cool.

Heat index

For 3 p.m. today

Relative humidity 41%
Expected air temperature ..... 66°
Makes it feel like ..... 66°

Weather History

From AccuWeather, we send you this greeting: Happy Holidays to all and we hope it is not sleeting! We trust that jolly old St. Nick will plan the best route that he can pick.

Farm report

Sunny much of the time today. Winds east-northeast 6-12 mph. Expect 6-10 hours of sunshine with average relative humidity 60% and good drying conditions. Partly cloudy tonight.

Water restrictions

If your address (house number) ends in...
- ...0 or 1, water only on Monday
- ...2 or 3, water only on Tuesday
- ...4 or 5, water only on Wednesday
- ...6 or 7, water only on Thursday
- ...8 or 9*, water only on Friday

* and locations without a discernible address

AccuWeather UV Index™

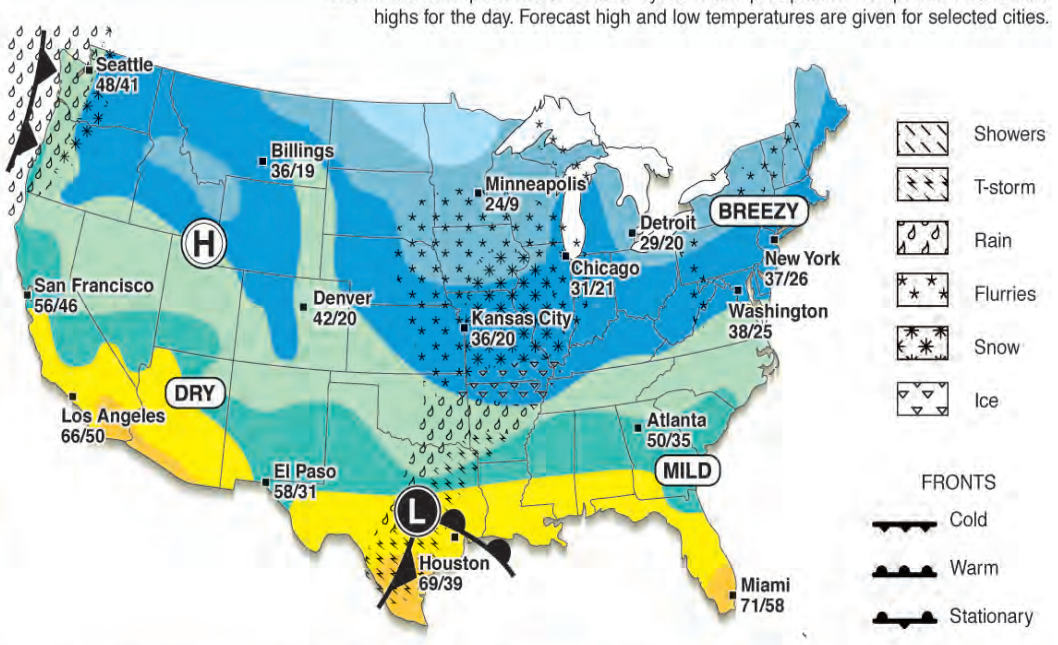
For today

9 a.m.	11 a.m.	1 p.m.	3 p.m.	5 p.m.
1	3	5	3	1

The higher the UV index number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.
0-2, Low; 3-5, Moderate; 6-7, High; 8-10, Very High; 11+ Extreme

National Forecast for December 24

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day. Forecast high and low temperatures are given for selected cities.



-10s	-0s	0s	10s	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	70s	80s	90s	100s	110s

National summary: Brisk winds blowing on the backside of a storm offshore of Newfoundland will once again chill the Northeast this Christmas Eve. The stage will be set for snow showers to stream downwind of the Great Lakes and over the central Appalachians. Meanwhile, a storm will spread disruptive snow across the mid-Mississippi Valley. At the same time, much-needed rain will fall from Arkansas to central Texas. Ahead of the storm, an area of high pressure will promote dry and seasonable conditions across the South.

Sun and moon

Today	Sunrise	7:10 a.m.
	Sunset	5:41 p.m.
	Moonrise	9:26 p.m.
	Moonset	9:46 a.m.
Saturday	Sunrise	7:11 a.m.
	Sunset	5:41 p.m.
	Moonrise	10:29 p.m.
	Moonset	10:26 a.m.

Moon phases

Last	New	First	Full
Dec 27	Jan 4	Jan 12	Jan 19

Almanac

Temperature
(Readings at Archbold Biological Station in Lake Placid)

High Monday	65
Low Monday	36
High Tuesday	74
Low Tuesday	36
High Wednesday	N.A.
Low Wednesday	N.A.

Precipitation

Monday	0.00"
Tuesday	0.00"
Wednesday	0.00"
Month to date	1.20"
Year to date	56.02"

Barometer

Monday	30.14
Tuesday	30.18
Wednesday	N.A.

Tides
(Readings at St. Petersburg)

High	2:40 a.m.
Low	10:35 a.m.
High	5:29 p.m.
Low	9:26 p.m.

(Readings at Palm Beach)

High	10:45 a.m.
Low	4:01 a.m.
High	11:03 p.m.
Low	4:33 p.m.

Lake Levels

Lake Jackson	78.36'
Lake Okeechobee	12.55'
Normal	14.51'

Florida cities

City	Today Hi	Lo	W	Tomorrow Hi	Lo	W	Sunday Hi	Lo	W
Daytona Beach	60	42	s	71	45	pc	59	34	pc
Ft. Laud. Bch	73	59	pc	74	63	pc	71	44	pc
Fort Myers	70	48	s	74	57	pc	67	40	pc
Gainesville	60	37	s	68	41	sh	52	27	pc
Homestead AFB	72	53	pc	73	61	pc	71	42	pc
Jacksonville	56	37	s	68	38	sh	51	27	pc
Key West	70	62	pc	72	63	pc	72	56	pc
Miami	71	58	pc	74	62	pc	72	45	pc
Orlando	68	43	s	71	50	pc	59	35	pc
Pensacola	60	51	s	58	33	t	49	29	s
Sarasota	68	47	s	71	55	pc	61	41	pc
Tallahassee	60	38	s	64	35	t	51	23	s
Tampa	69	54	s	72	52	pc	56	37	pc
W. Palm Bch	70	53	pc	74	59	pc	70	38	pc

U.S. cities

City	Today Hi	Lo	W	Tomorrow Hi	Lo	W	Sunday Hi	Lo	W
Albuquerque	51	30	s	52	30	s	54	31	pc
Atlanta	50	35	s	40	27	sn	39	22	pc
Baltimore	38	22	pc	36	24	pc	32	20	sn
Birmingham	56	38	pc	42	25	sn	40	23	pc
Boston	36	24	pc	34	28	s	33	26	c
Charlotte	51	36	s	44	27	sn	38	23	sn
Cheyenne	40	22	s	49	25	s	48	22	pc
Chicago	31	21	sn	30	17	sf	27	13	sf
Cleveland	30	22	pc	31	20	sf	28	18	sf
Columbus	32	23	pc	34	20	sf	30	17	c
Dallas	48	32	r	46	26	pc	48	29	s
Denver	42	20	s	51	25	s	53	20	pc
Detroit	29	20	pc	32	19	c	28	18	sf
Harrisburg	36	21	pc	34	23	pc	29	19	c
Honolulu	79	69	c	80	71	c	81	72	c
Houston	69	39	sh	54	32	s	53	30	s
Indianapolis	34	22	sn	31	15	sf	26	12	c
Jacksonville	56	37	s	68	38	sh	51	27	pc
Kansas City	36	20	sn	30	14	c	25	8	s
Lexington	36	20	pc	33	20	sf	27	18	c
Little Rock	40	31	r	44	26	c	39	23	s
Los Angeles	66	50	s	64	52	c	62	48	r
Louisville	36	28	sn	36	20	sf	29	19	c
Memphis	48	34	pc	36	25	c	37	23	pc
Miami	71	58	pc	74	62	pc	72	45	pc
Minneapolis	24	9	sn	15	-1	pc	9	-4	c
Nashville	44	29	pc	36	24	sf	35	23	c
New Orleans	64	50	s	56	34	r	48	31	s
New York City	37	26	pc	35	29	s	33	26	sn
Norfolk	44	27	s	40	31	c	41	25	sn
Oklahoma City	42	23	r	37	20	pc	40	20	s
Philadelphia	38	25	pc	35	27	s	32	24	sn
Phoenix	68	46	s	72	49	s	68	48	pc
Pittsburgh	31	22	sf	29	18	sf	29	16	sf
Portland	32	15	pc	31	19	s	29	20	pc
Raleigh	47	35	s	40	28	sn	40	25	sn
Rochester	28	20	c	28	19	sf	27	16	sn
St. Louis	34	25	sn	36	18	c	25	15	c
San Francisco	56	46	c	55	46	r	55	44	r
Seattle	48	41	r	51	39	r	46	37	r
Tampa	69	54	s	72	52	pc	56	37	pc
Washington, DC	38	25	pc	38	25	pc	36	24	sn

World cities

City	Today Hi	Lo	W	City	Today Hi	Lo	W
Acapulco	86	68	s	London	32	25	pc
Berlin	35	24	sn	Montreal	27	12	pc
Calgary	38	19	pc	Nice	62	46	sh
Dublin	32	23	s	Ottawa	22	12	pc
Edmonton	11	3	s	Quebec	22	13	pc
Freeport	69	52	pc	Rio de Janeiro	83	74	sh
Geneva	45	31	sn	Sydney	77	65	s
Hong Kong	66	56	pc	Toronto	28	17	c
Jerusalem	62	48	s	Vancouver	49	46	r
Kiev	42	39	c	Winnipeg	20	8	pc

Weather (**W**): **s**-sunny, **pc**-partly cloudy, **c**-cloudy, **sh**-showers, **t**-thunderstorms, **r**-rain, **sf**-snow flurries, **sn**-snow, **i**-ice.

Ciao Down for Christmas!

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Christmas Eve - open til 6pm
Christmas Day - open noon-8pm
Featuring Prime Rib or New Strip Steak - **only $13.95**

Our **$9.95** Early Bird Dinners will also be available throughout the entire day.
Regular menu also available.

Don't forget our Spiral cut ham take-out dinners. Includes mashed sweet potatoes, broccoli & carrots, cinnamon butter sauce and rolls- feeds 8 - must be ordered by 4pm Friday, Christmas Eve and picked up by Christmas day by 1pm.

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And Another Thing...

Dan Hoehne

The right ending for Favre? Yep

It shouldn't have ended the way it did – at least that's what we said a few weeks ago when Brett Favre's amazing career seemed done in by a shoulder injury suffered in a game against Buffalo.

They way it went down this past Monday night, to me anyway, now *that* was the more appropriate ending.

Granted, it should have ended last offseason, when it seemed fitting that after perhaps the best regular season of his career, a costly mistake from the gunslinger ended his season just short of the Super Bowl.

For that was Favre's career in a nutshell.

The excitement and exuberance that made for so many wins.

It also lead to those heartbreaking losses, but to the end, he stayed who he was, played it his way.

And so while it was somewhat shocking to see him suited up and ready to go Monday night – barely more than two weeks after the shoulder injury that most thought had ended his season, if not career – in a way it shouldn't have been.

All those years on the frozen tundra of Green Bay, those meaningful December games with wind chill temperatures in the single digits.

So much of his legend was made in those games, in that setting.

With the collapse of the Metrodome taking Monday night's game from the comfortable climbs of an indoor stadium to the outdoors of the University of Minnesota's TFC Bank Stadium, in the middle of a Minnesota winter, it must have been too perfect for him to pass up.

That it was against his oldest and most often played against foe, the Chicago Bears, well, that just tipped it over the edge.

I mean, in the waning weeks of a lost season, Minnesota finishes up against Philadelphia and Detroit – yawn.

But a Monday Night Football contest, out in the bitter cold, wind swirling, snow and sleet falling, against 'da Bears?

That was the stage, setting and foe he should strap it on for, one more time.

Hobbled and beaten down, it was almost inevitable he would get knocked out of the game in some way, shape or form.

Perhaps it was the mindset of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid as they made that final charge against the Bolivian army.

Knowing it would end badly, but sucking it up one last time.

Some say it would have been the perfect ending for him to reach 300 regular season games started in a row and then hanging it up.

But as we've known for so long and as this season has exemplified more fully, Brett Favre is not perfect.

Which is why, getting knocked out of Monday night's game, by the Bears, on a frozen field seems much more fitting.

News-Sun photo by DAN HOEHNE

Markida Hawthorne goes up and under for two of her game-high 25 points in Avon Park's rout of Sebring Tuesday.

Lady Red Devils scorch Sebring

By KATE ROWLAND
Special to the News-Sun

SEBRING – Sebring's youth and inexperience came into play in Monday afternoon's 58-27 non-district girls basketball loss to the more seasoned, senior-loaded Avon Park Red Devils.

"This was just a good old-fashioned butt whipping, that's all this was," said Sebring coach Mike Lee. "They took advantage of our mistakes and capitalized. That's what a well-coached, experienced team is going to do.

"Avon Park has some great athletes who play hard, come prepared and play to win. I have a lot of respect for them."

Avon Park 58
Sebring 27

Sebring led 3-2 early on, but that was the team's only advantage in the game.

Lone Blue Streak senior Shannon Williams brought her team to within one, 9-8, as the first quarter came to an end, but Avon Park responded with 14 straight points to put the Red Devils up 23-8 halfway through the second quarter.

Red Devil senior Markida Hawthorne scored three of her four 3-point field goals in the second quarter, and teammate Brekayla English sank three 3-pointers in the first half.

The Red Devils aren't a big team, Lee said, but they are predominantly seniors with plenty of experience and that makes them difficult to defend.

"If you play a zone against teams like this you give up outside shots," Lee said. "If you go man-to-man and guard players like Markida and Brekayla, who know how to penetrate and have been playing together a long time, if Markida drives, she knows exactly where Brekayla is and can dish to her.

"It's a trade off. You pick your poison. We're five sophomores and a freshman. We're working, but it's difficult against a team that's well-coached and has good athletes."

Hawthorne led all scorers with 25 points. English tallied 12 and sophomore Tay Perry contributed 11 points for the Red Devils.

"It makes it easier on you as a coach when you have seasoned, veteran players," said Avon Park coach Paulette Daly. "They understand the game and they see the game.

"At certain times, Markida can see things on the floor and make a suggestion. It helps."

Sebring sophomore Allie Mann stopped Avon Park's 14-point stretch with a 3-pointer of her own, and the Blue Streaks trailed 42-18 at halftime.

"They're a rival and I feel it," said Mann, who led her team with 11 points. "But we're a young team and we have to learn things like how to break a press. It's a journey.

"They were definitely more experienced shooting wide. I think we'll come out

See AP, page 4B

Robertson, Clarke help South to win in FACA

By KATE ROWLAND
Special to the News-Sun

SEBRING – Sebring's Devin Clarke and Avon Park's Alonzo Robertson were key players for the South squad in its 27-0 victory in Wednesday's 56th annual Florida Athletic Coaches Association North/South All Star Football Classic at Firemen's Field.

Despite the lopsided score, defense was the name of the game, as the South All Stars led 6-0 at the end of the third quarter on two field goals from Lake Wales' kicker Marcelo Bonani.

Bonani's 51-yard field goal about two minutes into the game was the longest in FACA All-Star game history.

South's defense kept North off the scoreboard twice from within 20 yards, and twice blocked punts and passes.

After a quiet start, Robertson was a defensive warrior for the South and a terror to the North squad.

His sack, along with two tackles behind the line of scrimmage, resulted in losses.

The Red Devil also knocked a pass out of mid-air and recorded three quarterback hurries.

'I saw him at the last minute and I just closed my eyes and went 'Oh, no.'

DEVIN CLARKE

"I kind of started slow and then I picked it up and started putting more pressure on the ball," Robertson said. "It felt pretty good."

Clarke saw plenty of action, including a 23-yard catch in the first quarter and two kick-off returns for 27 yards.

Clarke's second kick-off return came in the second quarter.

Shaking off three defenders, Clarke stayed on his feet and kept going until two North defensive players were finally able to take him down.

"It was fun," Clarke said. "It was a great experience just going against the North team."

News-Sun photo by DAN HOEHNE

Red Devil Alonzo Robertson gets an armful of ball carrier as he makes this tackle Wednesday night at Firemen's Field. Robertson was on the South team in the 56th Annual FACA All-Star Football Classic.

Clarke was set to return a punt in the fourth quarter when the ball took a funny bounce.

Before he could touch the ball, he was leveled by a North defender, resulting in a 15-yard penalty against the North.

"I saw him at the last minute and I just closed my eyes and went 'Oh, no'," Clarke said. "He just knocked the wind out of me. I could have gone back in the game. Sometimes hits aren't as hard as they look."

The North turned to an aggressive offense in the

See CLASSIC, page 4B

Two Polk County lakes receive fish attractors

MyFWC.com

Anglers who plan on fishing during the holiday season may have some extra luck at lakes Walk-in-Water and Tiger, off State Road 60 near Lake Wales.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management staff, along with volunteers, recently installed five new fish attractors in 7,000-acre Lake Walk-in-Water, also known as Lake Weohyakapka.

The fish attractors are marked by large, white buoys.

Three brush piles were placed along the western side of the lake, while two others were placed on the eastern side.

Tiger Lake, a 2,200-acre body of water northeast of Lake Walk-in-Water, received two fish attractors: one on the north side and the other on the south end of the lake.

Each site contains approximately 100 individual pieces of brush in a 50-foot diameter around the buoy.

The submerged brush piles, which were sunk in 7-10 feet of water, are composed of either orange or oak trees and should last many years.

Crappie anglers should find the attractors especially productive for fishing this time of year, as crappie often school in large numbers and seek thick cover.

Bass, panfish and catfish anglers who target the brush piles also will be rewarded, since these species are attracted to woody cover as well.

For more information on freshwater fishing opportunities, go to MyFWC.com/Fishing or call the FWC regional office in Lakeland at 863-648-3200 during regular working hours.

The Scoreboard

Major League Baseball

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-New England	12	2	0	.857	446	303
N.Y. Jets	10	4	0	.714	295	259
Miami	7	7	0	.500	239	261
Buffalo	4	10	0	.286	273	353

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Indianapolis	8	6	0	.571	381	342
Jacksonville	8	6	0	.571	319	365
Tennessee	6	8	0	.429	322	282
Houston	5	9	0	.357	333	386

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Pittsburgh	10	4	0	.714	307	220
Baltimore	10	4	0	.714	324	253
Cleveland	5	9	0	.357	252	271
Cincinnati	3	11	0	.214	281	362

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	9	5	0	.643	322	281
San Diego	8	6	0	.571	388	260
Oakland	7	7	0	.500	353	330
Denver	3	11	0	.214	292	415

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Philadelphia	10	4	0	.714	412	339
N.Y. Giants	9	5	0	.643	360	288
Washington	5	9	0	.357	268	343
Dallas	5	9	0	.357	354	396

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Atlanta	12	2	0	.857	369	261
New Orleans	10	4	0	.714	354	270
Tampa Bay	8	6	0	.571	280	290
Carolina	2	12	0	.143	183	350

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Chicago	10	4	0	.714	293	242
Green Bay	8	6	0	.571	333	220
Minnesota	5	9	0	.357	244	314
Detroit	4	10	0	.286	308	329

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
St. Louis	6	8	0	.429	258	295
Seattle	6	8	0	.429	279	363
San Francisco	5	9	0	.357	250	314
Arizona	4	10	0	.286	255	370

x-clinched playoff spot

Thursday's Game

Carolina at Pittsburgh, late

Saturday's Game

Dallas at Arizona, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 26

Tennessee at Kansas City, 1 p.m.
San Francisco at St. Louis, 1 p.m.
N.Y. Jets at Chicago, 1 p.m.
Baltimore at Cleveland, 1 p.m.
New England at Buffalo, 1 p.m.
Detroit at Miami, 1 p.m.
Washington at Jacksonville, 1 p.m.
Indianapolis at Oakland, 4:05 p.m.
Houston at Denver, 4:05 p.m.
San Diego at Cincinnati, 4:05 p.m.
N.Y. Giants at Green Bay, 4:15 p.m.
Seattle at Tampa Bay, 4:15 p.m.
Minnesota at Philadelphia, 8:20 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 27

New Orleans at Atlanta, 8:30 p.m.

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	23	4	.852	—
New York	17	12	.586	7
Philadelphia	11	18	.379	13
Toronto	10	19	.345	14
New Jersey	9	21	.300	15½

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	21	9	.700	—
Atlanta	19	12	.613	2½
Orlando	16	12	.571	4
Charlotte	9	19	.321	11
Washington	7	20	.259	12½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	18	9	.667	—
Indiana	13	14	.481	5
Milwaukee	11	16	.407	7
Detroit	10	19	.345	9
Cleveland	8	21	.276	11

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	25	3	.893	—
Dallas	23	5	.821	2
New Orleans	17	12	.586	8½
Houston	14	15	.483	11½
Memphis	12	17	.414	13½

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Utah	21	9	.700	—
Oklahoma City	20	10	.667	1
Denver	16	11	.593	3½
Portland	15	14	.517	5½
Minnesota	6	24	.200	15

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Lakers	21	8	.724	—
Phoenix	13	14	.481	7
Golden State	10	18	.357	10½
L.A. Clippers	8	22	.267	13½
Sacramento	5	21	.192	14½

Tuesday's Games

Oklahoma City 99, Charlotte 81
Dallas 105, Orlando 99
Chicago 121, Philadelphia 76
New Jersey 101, Memphis 94
Golden State 117, Sacramento 109, OT
Milwaukee 98, L.A. Lakers 79

Wednesday's Games

Atlanta 98, Cleveland 84
Detroit 115, Toronto 93
Chicago 87, Washington 80
Boston 84, Philadelphia 80
New York 112, Oklahoma City 98
Utah 112, Minnesota 107
New Orleans 105, New Jersey 91
San Antonio 109, Denver 103
Houston 97, L.A. Clippers 92

Thursday's Games

San Antonio at Orlando, late
Milwaukee at Sacramento, late
Miami at Phoenix, late

Friday's Games

No Games Scheduled

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Philadelphia	22	8	5	49	117	87
Pittsburgh	23	10	2	48	115	81
N.Y. Rangers	20	14	1	41	105	91
N.Y. Islanders	7	18	6	20	67	105
New Jersey	9	22	2	20	59	103

Northeast Division

	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Montreal	19	13	2	40	89	77
Boston	17	11	4	38	89	68
Buffalo	14	16	4	32	89	97
Ottawa	14	17	4	32	81	106
Toronto	12	17	4	28	75	102

Southeast Division

	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	20	12	4	44	109	100
Tampa Bay	19	10	5	43	105	111
Atlanta	19	12	5	43	117	104
Carolina	15	13	4	34	90	99
Florida	15	17	0	30	87	83

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Central Division

	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Detroit	21	8	4	46	110	92
Chicago	19	14	3	41	115	104
Nashville	17	10	6	40	84	83
Columbus	17	13	3	37	85	91
St. Louis	16	12	5	37	86	93

Northwest Division

	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vancouver	19	8	5	43	105	83
Colorado	19	11	4	42	121	110
Minnesota	15	13	4	34	79	91
Calgary	14	18	3	31	92	103
Edmonton	12	15	5	29	85	110

Pacific Division

	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Dallas	21	10	3	45	100	92
San Jose	18	11	5	41	102	95
Anaheim	18	16	4	40	98	111
Los Angeles	19	12	1	39	95	75
Phoenix	15	10	7	37	89	93

NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Tuesday's Games

Buffalo 5, Anaheim 2
St. Louis 4, Atlanta 2
Columbus 3, Calgary 1
Washington 5, New Jersey 1
Dallas 5, Montreal 2
Los Angeles 5, Colorado 0
San Jose 2, Edmonton 1

Wednesday's Games

N.Y. Islanders 2, Tampa Bay 1, OT
Pittsburgh 5, Florida 2
Detroit 5, Vancouver 4, OT
Chicago 4, Nashville 1

Thursday's Games

Atlanta at Boston, late
Florida at Buffalo, late
N.Y. Islanders at New Jersey, late
Tampa Bay at N.Y. Rangers, late
Pittsburgh at Washington, late
Montreal at Carolina, late
Vancouver at Columbus, late
Detroit at St. Louis, late
Ottawa at Nashville, late
Calgary at Dallas, late
Minnesota at Colorado, late
Edmonton at Los Angeles, late
Phoenix at San Jose, late

Friday's Games

No Games Scheduled

College Basketball

EAST

Albany, N.Y. 63, Colgate 61
Boston College 84, Bucknell 80
Cent. Connecticut St. 71, New Hampshire 50
Connecticut 81, Harvard 52
Dayton 69, Seton Hall 65
Elon 73, Navy 58
Fordham 80, Kennesaw St. 63
George Mason 85, Duquesne 79, 2OT
George Washington 82, East Carolina 80
Hofstra 71, Holy Cross 56
Penn 78, Delaware 68
Pittsburgh 61, American U. 46
Princeton 75, Towson 65
Quinnipiac 88, Niagara 63
Rhode Island 73, Lafayette 65
Rider 77, La Salle 68
Siena 62, Georgia Tech 57
Syracuse 93, Drexel 65
UCF 64, Massachusetts 59
Vermont 84, Iona 79
Villanova 76, Monmouth, N.J. 36

SOUTH

Campbell 57, UNC Wilmington 56
Charlotte 57, Wright St. 53
Clemson 66, Coll. of Charleston 59
Fla. International 87, Florida A&M 82
Florida 66, Radford 55
Furman 91, South Carolina 75
Georgia Southern 74, Georgia St. 72, OT
Hampton 62, Liberty 59
Howard 69, Loyola, Md. 65
Idaho St. 77, Troy 73
James Madison 80, Marshall 73
Kentucky 89, Winthrop 52
Louisiana-Monroe 78, N. Colorado 75
Louisville 114, W. Kentucky 82
Maryland 89, N.J. Tech 50
Mississippi 83, Texas St. 72
N.C. State 72, Delaware St. 70
New Orleans 73, Huntingdon 68
North Texas 75, LSU 55
Richmond 63, UNC Greensboro 53
Seattle 59, Virginia 53
The Citadel 67, S. Carolina St. 57

MIDWEST

Bowling Green 70, Manhattan 57
Bradley 73, Detroit 65
Cent. Michigan 63, Cornerstone 60
Cleveland St. 69, South Florida 62
Creighton 58, Samford 40
DePaul 71, Florida Atlantic 62
Missouri 75, Illinois 64
Missouri St. 77, Arkansas St. 70
Mount Union 57, Muskingum 51
Notre Dame 93, UMBC 53
Otterbein 78, Wittenberg 64
S. Illinois 61, N. Illinois 49
South Dakota 82, Loyola Marymount 70
St. Thomas, Minn. 61, Wis.-Stevens Pt. 54
Temple 76, Ohio 65
Texas 67, Michigan St. 55

SOUTHWEST

Arkansas 67, Texas Southern 59
Canisius 78, Lamar 72
Loyola of Chicago 84, Texas-Pan American 76
SMU 49, Alabama St. 38
Texas Tech 73, Texas-Arlington 56

FAR WEST

Akron 72, Stetson 56
Arizona 82, Robert Morris 56
Ark.-Little Rock 52, Oral Roberts 49
CS Bakersfield 89, UC Riverside 80
Gonzaga 64, Xavier 54
Kansas 78, California 63
Miami 73, Rice 67
Montana 71, Cal St.-Fullerton 57
N. Arizona 74, Air Force 63
N. Iowa 67, Indiana 61
New Mexico 89, Colorado 76
Oregon St. 74, Ill.-Chicago 54
Portland 88, Boise St. 79
SIU-Edwardsville 78, Longwood 71
San Diego St. 56, IUPUI 54
San Jose St. 95, Puget Sound 62
Santa Clara 99, CS Northridge 79
Utah St. 78, W. Michigan 57
Washington 90, Nevada 60
Wis.-Green Bay 68, Wyoming 62

TOURNAMENT

Cancun Governor's Cup

First Round

Colorado St. 82, Appalachian St. 79
Saint Louis 71, Northeastern 49
Southern Miss. 64, ETSU 60

Hawaiian Airlines Diamond Head Classic

First Round

Baylor 83, San Diego 50
Butler 74, Utah 62
Washington St. 83, Mississippi St. 57

Transactions

BASEBALL

American League

BOSTON RED SOX–Named Arnie Beyeler manager of Pawtucket (IL), Kevin Boles manager of Portland (EL), Bruce Crabbe manager, Kevin Walker pitching coach and Alex Ochoa hitting coach for Salem (Carolina), Dick Such pitching coach at Greenville (SAL), Carlos Febles manager and Paul Abbott pitching coach for Lowell (N.Y.-Penn), George Lombard manager and Dave Tomlin pitching coach for Gulf Coast Red Sox.
KANSAS CITY ROYALS–Assigned INF Joaquin Arias and INF Lance Zawadzki outright to Omaha (AAA).
TAMPA BAY RAYS–Named Dave Eiland as a special assistant.

National League

HOUSTON ASTROS–Agreed to terms with LHP Gustavo Chacin on a minor-league contract.
MILWAUKEE BREWERS–Agreed to terms with RHP Sean Green and INF Craig Counsell on one-year contracts.
PITTSBURGH PIRATES–Designated RHP Joe Martinez for assignment. Named Dean Treanor manager of Indianapolis (IL), P.J. Forbes manager of Altoona (EL), Carlos Garcia of Bradenton (FSL), Gary Robinson manager of West Virginia (SAL), Dave Turgeon manager and Justin Meccage pitching coach for State College (NY-Penn), Brad Fischer advisor-player development, Frank Kremblas coordinator of instruction, Jeff Livesey hitting coordinator, Gary Green infield coordinator, Luis Dorante, Latin America field coordinator and Scott Mitchell assistant pitching coordinator.
SAN DIEGO PADRES–Named John Abbamondi vice president of strategy and business analysis.
WASHINGTON NATIONALS–Assigned LHP Matt Chico outright to Syracuse (IL)

BASKETBALL

National Basketball Association

CHARLOTTE BOBCATS–Announced the resignation of coach Larry Brown.
LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS–Signed F Ike Diogu.

Live Sports On TV

College Basketball

Friday

7 p.m. Governor's Cup – Teams TBA. ESPN2
9 p.m. Governor's Cup Final – Teams TBA . . . ESPN2

Saturday

7:30 p.m. Diamond Head Classic – Teams TBA . . ESPN2
9:30 p.m. Diamond Head Classic – Teams TBA . . ESPN2

College Football

Friday

8 p.m. Hawaii Bowl – Hawaii vs. Tulsa. . . . . ESPN

NBA

Saturday

Noon Chicago at N.Y. Knicks . . . . . ESPN
2:30 p.m. Boston at Orlando . . . . . ABC
5 p.m. Miami at L.A. Lakers . . . . . ABC
8 p.m. Denver at Oklahoma City . . . . . ESPN
10:30 p.m. Portland at Golden State . . . . . ESPN

Skiing

Saturday

1 p.m. 2010 American Ski Classic CBS-10

Times, games, channels all subject to change

Local Schedule

Avon Park

TUESDAY, Dec. 28: Boys Basketball at Hitchcock Challenge, Santa Fe, TBA
WEDNESDAY, Dec. 29: Boys Basketball at Hitchcock Challenge, Santa Fe, TBA; Girls Weightlifting at Charlotte, 2 p.m.
TUESDAY, Jan. 4: Boys Basketball at McKeel, 6/7:30 p.m.; Girls Basketball vs. McKeel, 6/7:30 p.m.; Boys Soccer vs. Tenoroc, 6:30 p.m.; Girls Soccer at Tenoroc, 6:30 p.m.

Lake Placid

MONDAY, Jan. 3: Girls Basketball at Sebring, 6/7:30 p.m.
TUESDAY, Jan. 4: Boys Basketball at Mulberry, 6/7:30 p.m.; Girls Basketball vs. Mulberry, 6/7:30 p.m.; Boys Soccer at McKeel, 6/7:30 p.m.; Girls Soccer vs. McKeel, 6/7:30 p.m.

Sebring

MONDAY, Dec. 27: Boys Basketball hosts Taveniere Tournament, TBA
TUESDAY, Dec. 28: Boys Basketball hosts Taveniere Tournament, TBA
WEDNESDAY, Dec. 29: Boys Basketball hosts Taveniere Tournament, TBA; Girls Weightlifting at Charlotte, 2 p.m.

Heartland Christian

TUESDAY, Jan. 4: Boys Basketball at Wellington Christian, American Airlines Arena, Miami, 2 p.m.
THURSDAY, Jan. 6: JV Basketball vs. Moore Haven, 6 p.m.
SATURDAY, Jan. 8: Boys Basketball vs. Walker Memorial, 6:30/8 p.m.

Walker

TUESDAY, Jan. 4: Girls Basketball at Sebring JV, 6 p.m.
THURSDAY, Jan. 6: Girls Basketball at Victory Christian, 6 p.m.; Boys Basketball at Victory Christian, 7:30 p.m.
SATURDAY, Jan. 8: Boys Basketball at Heartland Christian, 6:30/8 p.m.

Sports Snapshots

Sebring Elks Lodge 1529 Monthly Golf Tournament

SEBRING – The monthly Elks golf tournament will be held on Monday Jan. 3 at Harder Hall Country Club.

Cost for the 8 a.m. shotgun start is $32 per player.

To register either your team or as an individual player, contact Jack McLaughlin at 471-3295 or by email at *jacknjudy33872@gmail.com*.

Check in not later than 7:40 AM in the Harder Hall Golf Course restaurant area.

New Year Golf Benefit

SEBRING – A New Year's golf tournament to benefit Eddie Bateman will tee off Saturday, Jan. 15 on the Deer Run course at Sun 'N Lake.

The four-person scramble format will kick off with a shotgun start at 8 a.m.

Cost is $55 per person/$220 per team.

There are also sponsorships available.

A Gold sponsorship is $1,000 and gets four hole signs, a banner and one team entry.

A Silver sponsorship is $500 and includes two hole signs, a banner and one team entry.

A Bronze sponsorship gets two hole signs and a banner and a single hole sponsorship, for $100, gets one hole sign.

There are also single sponsor donations available for $25.

For more information, contact Jady Prescott at 381-2117 or *jady_52@hotmail.com*.

Panther Volleyball Camp

AVON PARK – The South Florida Community College Volleyball program will be hosting a four week training camp running from Jan. 6-Feb. 3 for players from 6th to 12th grade.

The camp will meet Tuesday's and Thursday's from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and provides individual skill development and basic tactics in a positive learning environment.

All campers will receive individual and team instruction from Coach Kim Crawford and members of the 2010-11 Lady Panthers.

Crawford is a three-time college All-American and played professionally in Europe, on the Bud Light Professional Beach Tour for Team Nike and on the Pro California Grass Tour.

She has been trained by many Olympic coaches and looks forward to sharing her vast volleyball knowledge with all camp participants.

The camp cost is $100 and is limited to the first 30 to register.

To register, go to *www.southflorida.edu*, and select the volleyball site.

Click on "volleyball camp," print out Admissions Application and Emergency Treatment forms.

Mail Admissions Application and Emergency Treatment forms as indicated on application form, or bring to the Cashier's Office in Building B.

For more information, contact the SFCC Athletic Department at the following campus phone numbers at extension 7037 – Avon Park/Sebring, 784-7037; Lake Placid, 465-5300; DeSoto, 494-7500; Hardee, 773-2252; or email *kim.crawford@southflorida.edu*.

YMCA New Year's 5K

SEBRING – The Highlands County Family YMCA will hold it's first annual New Year's Day 5K Run/Walk starting at 9 a.m. at Highlands Hammock State Park on Saturday, Jan. 1, 2011.

To register for the 5k run go to the YMCA to pick up an entry form.

Race day registration starts at 8 a.m.

Entry fee is $20.

For more information contact Jonathan at the YMCA, 863-382-9622.

Panther 5K

AVON PARK – The second annual South Florida Community College Panther 5K Run/Walk has been planned for Saturday, Feb. 26 at the SFCC Highland Campus.

The SFCC Foundation, Inc. and Bill Jarrett Ford Mercury are sponsoring the event, and proceeds benefit the college's intercollegiate athletics programs.

The entry fee for the SFCC Panther 5K Run/Walk is $20 through Feb. 16 and $25 from Feb. 17 through the day of the race.

Students with a current I.D. may register for $15.

Every participant receives a Dri-Fit long-sleeve shirt – sizes cannot be guaranteed for those who enter after Feb. 17.

Registration is 7-7:45 a.m. on race day in the parking lot in front of the SFCC University Center.

The race begins at 8 a.m.

Entry forms are available online at *www.southflorida.edu/panther5k*.

Participants can mail their copies and entry fees to the SFCC Foundation, Inc., 13 East Main Street, Avon Park, FL 33825; or fax forms to 863-453-8023 and call 863-453-3133 with credit card information.

For more information about the SFCC Panther 5K, call the SFCC Foundation at 863-453-3133.

The Foundation will be closed for winter break Saturday, Dec. 18 through Tuesday, Jan. 4.

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of

the entire Roman World. This is the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his son, purifies us from all sin.

Luke 2:1-11; I John 1:5-7

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LOCAL GOLF REPORT

Golf Hammock

Last Monday, Dec. 13, the Mezza group played Individual Pro-Am Points at Golf Hammock.

Winning first place in A group was Jim Gulick at minus 1, while second place was a tie at minus 6 and went to Mike Anselm

and Doug Haire.

B group first place was Danny Geirer at plus 3 and Jerry Patterson took second place while Aaron Heidemann took third place at minus 4.

C group first place was Sal Sboto with plus 4, second place was Bill Alesi with plus 3 and third place went to Vince Johnston at minus 2.

Next Monday will be a shotgun start beginning at 8:30 a.m. at Golf Hammock.Please arrive early to register.

To play or sign up, please call Pete at 382-1280.

Pinecrest

The Men's Association played Team and Individual Pro-Am Points on Wednesday, Dec. 22.

The team of Bob Watkins, Larry Holzworth and Roger Dowe took top honors with +11 while Don Lamb, Bib Kistler, Norm Demina and Bill Kays were second with +3.

Jim Underwood won A Division with +8 and Watkins was second with +2.

B Division saw a tie between Jack Litalien and Jim Elliott at +2 while Earl Plemmons took C Division with +5 and Terry Crocker, Demina and Ed Truax were tied for second at +3.

D Divison went to Dowe at +7 with Bob Fidlin second at +3.

River Greens

A morning scramble was played Friday, Dec. 17.

Tying for first/second/third/fourth/fifth places were David and Anne Kelly, Jeannie and Leo Persails, Terry Lewis, Keith and Pat Kincer, Harold Lee, Cliff Steele and Jack Sayre with 57 each.

An afternoon scramble was played Friday, Dec. 17.

Tying for first/second places were the teams of John and Laura Smutnick, Tim Thomas, John Hierholzer and Dick McClay; Emilo and Bobbie Mora, Tony Lankford, Dale Duncan, Jim Sizemore and Aurel Mack with 14-under each.

The ladies association played a pro am tournament on Thursday, Dec. 116.

Winning first place was the team of Dianne Stoddart, Pat Kincer, Marybeth Conroy and Donna Johnson with plus-15.

Individual winners were: First place, Pat Kincer with plus-7.5; and second place, Pat Gower with plus-6.5.

The day of the "Pats."

The Morrison Group played a game Thursday, Dec. 16.

The winners were: First place, Cliff Steele and Romy Febre with minus-15; second place, Lefty St. Pierre and Jim Cercy with minus-14; and third place, Vince Boever and Larry Roy with minus-13.

The men's association played a pro am tournament on Wednesday, Dec. 15.

Winning first place was the team of Peter March, J.R. Messier, Vince Boever and Johnny Wehunt with plus-11; and second place, Leo Persails, Ken Brunswick, Lefty St. Pierre and Clark Austin with plus-3.5.

Individual winners were: A Flight: Vince Boever with plus-4.5. B Flight: Ken Brunswick with plus-2.5. C Flight: Johnny Wehunt with plus-7.5.

SpringLake

After several weeks of no golf, the SpringLake Women's Golf Association members were certainly ready for some warmer, sunnier days.

A four-person team Pro-Am Points Tournament was held Wednesday, Dec. 22 on the Panther Course with five teams competing.

First place winners were Pearl Bradford, Debbie Delaney, Ann McWilliams and Julia Starr who finished with a total of 58 points.

Second place was won by the team of Barb Stevens, Jan Nelson, Rosie Foote and Carolyn Irvine with 48 points.

The Spring Lake Men's Golf Association held a Two Man Team Points tournament on Tuesday, Dec. 21.

In this competition, a bogey counted as one point, a par was two points, a birdie as four points and an eagle as six points on a net-of-handicap basis.

The A Flight was won by Edd Vowels and Bob Rogers with 84 points, strongly influenced by Mr. Vowels hot net 67.

Second place was taken by Wayne Nelson and Gene Hearn, who scored 80 points.

In third place was Joe Austin and Ron Brochu, who came in with 79 points.

The B Flight was won by Gale Monda and Dave Docherty with 96 points.

In second place was Dan Porter and Bill Robbins with 87 points – also heavily influenced by (88 year old) Mr. Robbins net 67.

Coming in third was Chips Ryan and Ken Willey with 72 points.

The warmer weather was greatly appreciated.

Final Florida High School Football Rankings

CLASS 6A
1. Miami Central (6), 14-1, 60, 3
2. Orlando Dr. Phillips, 14-1, 54, 1
3. Sanford Seminole, 11-3, 37, 10
4. Weston Cypress Bay, 11-3, 34, NR
5. Homestead South Dade, 11-2, 33, 6
6. Miami Northwestern, 9-3, 24, 7
7. Miami Southridge, 10-2, 17, 8
T8. Loxahatchee Seminole Ridge, 11-2, 15, NR
T8. Miami Columbus, 10-1, 15, NR
10. Winter Park, 11-1, 14, 5

Others Receiving Votes: Apopka 11, Oakland Park Northeast 8, Orange Park 8

CLASS 5A
1. Fort Lauderdale St. Thomas Aquinas (6), 15-0, 60, 1
2. Tampa Plant, 12-3, 54, 6
3. Bradenton Manatee, 13-1, 48, 2
4. Lakeland, 13-1, 41, 3
T5. Clearwater Countryside, 12-1, 30, 8
T5. Fleming Island, 12-1, 30, 6
7. Jacksonville First Coast, 11-1, 18, 3
8. Lauderdale Lakes Boyd Anderson, 9-4, 17, NR
9. Venice, 8-4, 8, NR
T10. Palm Bay Bayside, 10-4, NR
T10. Pompano Beach Blanche Ely, 9-3, 9

Others Receiving Votes: Hollywood South Broward 5, St. Petersburg 5, Tampa Bay Tech 2

CLASS 4A
1. Tallahassee Lincoln (6), 11-4, 60, NR
2. Seffner Armwood, 14-1, 54, 1
3. Dwyer, 12-2, 46, 2
T4. Navarre, 11-2, 35, 8
T4. Punta Gorda Charlotte, 12-1, 35, 3
6. Melbourne Palm Bay, 12-1, 32, 4
7. Gainesville, 11-3, 26, 7
8. Pensacola Pine Forest, 9-3, 18, 5
9. Cape Coral, 10-2, 8, 6
10. Lakeland Lake Gibson, 9-4, 7, NR

Others Receiving Votes: Niceville 5, Tampa Hillsborough 4

CLASS 3A
1. Tampa Jefferson (6), 15-0, 60, 1
2. Miami Norland, 13-2, 54, NR
3. St. Augustine, 13-1, 47, 3
4. South Fort Myers, 12-1, 42, 5
5. Pensacola, 12-1, 33, 2
6. Bradenton Southeast, 10-3, 25, NR
T7. Naples, 11-1, 16, 6
T7. Ocala Vanguard, 10-3, 16, NR
9. Southwest Ranches Archbishop McCarthy, 10-2, 8, NR
T10. Citra North Marion, 10-2, 7, NR
T10. Winter Haven, 10-2, 7, NR

Others Receiving Votes: Fort Pierce Westwood 4, Green Cove Springs Clay 4, Miami Belen Jesuit 4, Lake Wales 2, Miami Washington 1

CLASS 2A
1. Cocoa (6), 14-0, 60, 1
2. Belle Glade Glades Central, 13-2, 54, 4
3. Madison County, 12-1, 48, 2
4. Tampa Robinson, 11-2, 40, 7
T5. Orlando Bishop Moore, 9-3, 31, 5
T5. Orlando Jones, 9-2, 31, 7
7. Tampa Jesuit, 11-1, 23, 3
8. Plantation American Heritage, 7-5, 13, 10
9. Jacksonville Ribault, 8-3, 10, 6
10. Jacksonville Raines, 8-3, 7, NR

Others Receiving Votes: Fort Lauderdale Cardinal Gibbons 5, Titusville Astronaut 5, Tallahassee Godby 3

CLASS 2B
1. Ocala Trinity Catholic (6), 14-0, 60, 2
2. Davie University School, 13-1, 54, 3
3. Pensacola Catholic, 8-5, 44, 4
4. Jacksonville Bolles, 11-1, 39, 1
5. Cape Coral Island Coast, 11-2, 35, 7
6. Perry Taylor County, 11-1, 30, 6
7. Miami Monsignor Pace, 10-1, 26, 5
8. Orlando Lake Highland Prep, 9-3, 17,9
9. Yulee, 8-3, 16, 8
10. West Palm Beach Cardinal Newman, 7-4, 5, NR

Others Receiving Votes: Fort White 3, Mount Dora 1

CLASS 1A
1. Jacksonville Trinity Christian (6), 12-2, 60, 1
2. Delray Beach American Heritage, 10-4, 54, 7
3. Fort Meade, 11-2, 46, 3
4. Jacksonville Providence, 10-2, 37, 4
5. Tampa Berkeley Prep, 9-3, 30, 5
6. West Palm Beach King's Academy, 10-2, 25, 8
7. Melbourne Central Catholic, 10-1, 23, 2
8. Bratt Northview, 11-2, 14, NR
9. Orlando First Academy, 9-2, 11, 6
10. Jasper Hamilton County, 7-4, 10, NR

Others Receiving Votes: Freeport 9, Miami Dade Christian 9, Bristol Liberty County 2, The Villages 1

CLASS 1B
1. Belle Glade Glades Day (6), 10-4, 60, 10
2. South Daytona Warner Christian, 13-1, 54, 1
3. Lakeland Victory Christian, 12-1, 45, 2
4. Monticello Jefferson County, 10-3, 39, 7
5. Jupiter Christian, 10-2, 36, 3
6. St. Petersburg Admiral Farragut, 10-2, 29, 8
7. Mayo Lafayette, 10-2, 28, 4
8. Fort Myers Evangelical Christian, 9-2, 17, 5
9. Deltona Trinity Christian, 10-2, 11, 6
10. Florida City Barrington Christian, 7-3, 7, NR

Others Receiving Votes: Hawthorne 3

AP goes to break on a winning note

Continued from 1B

stronger the rest of the year, especially in district games."

The Red Devils began the second half with a 12-point streak and outscored the Blue Streaks 12-2 in the third quarter.

Hawthorne's lay up with a couple of minutes to go in the third put Avon Park on top 54-18, putting the running clock into effect.

Sebring freshman Jamiese Wiley was fouled at the end of the third and sank both free throws to account for her team's total points in the quarter.

"Every time we play Sebring we play our hardest," said Hawthorne. "They're a rival and we wanted to win. This was my last game against Sebring, so I'm happy.

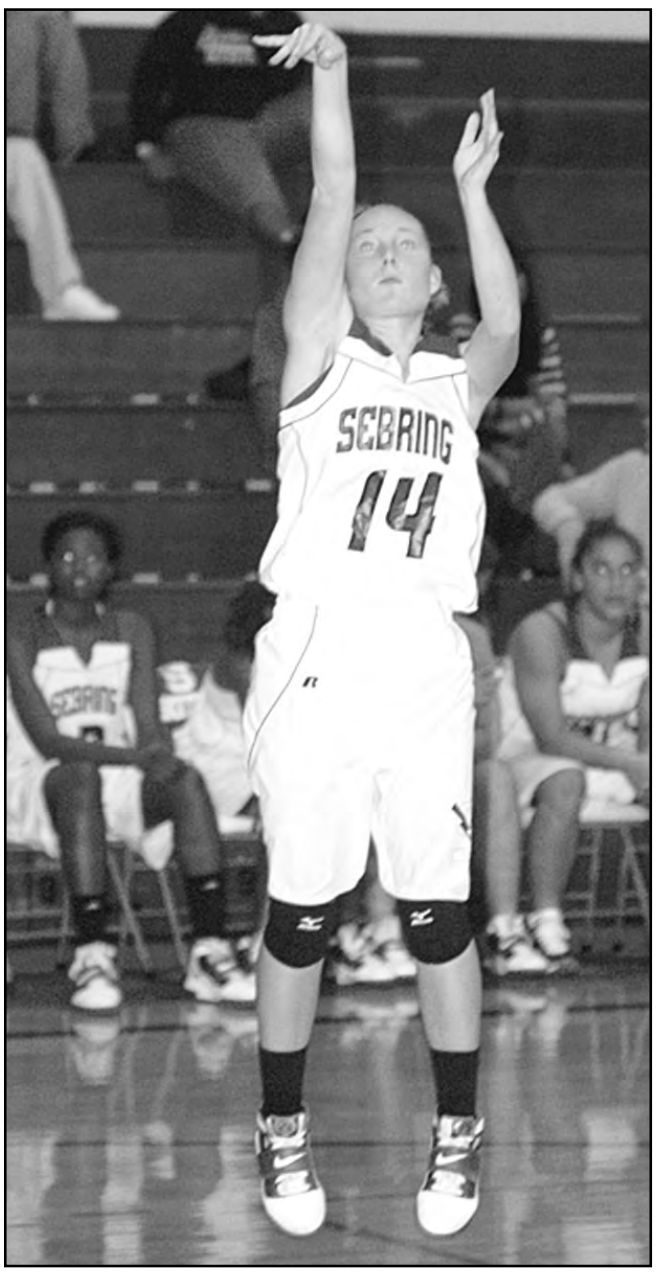
"We want to win districts. That's our next main goal."

The two teams played a closer game in mid-November, with Avon Park winning 57-42 at home.

Sebring senior Shannon Williams said she has played the Red Devils eight times during her high school career and can recall two victories, once as a freshman and the second last year.

"I'm glad I'm done playing them," she said. "I don't really pay attention to the rivalry, though. I'm looking forward to college, hopefully."

Sebring travels to Lake Placid for a non-district game on Jan. 3 and Avon Park is off until Jan. 6, when they travel to Lake Region.



News-Sun photo by DAN HOEHNE

Allie Mann lead Sebring with 11 points Tuesday but it wasn't nearly enough as the Lady Streaks took a loss to visiting Avon Park.

News-Sun photo by DAN HOEHNE

Sebring's Devin Clarke makes a move on this screen pass, leading to a 20-yard gain, in Wednesday's FACA All-Star Football Classic.

Classic sees a win for the South

Continued from 1B

fourth quarter, resulting in two South interceptions for touchdowns as Robertson and his teammates hurried the quarterback.

Robertson said the game was a big boost and made him feel better about his ability to play college ball.

"My confidence is pretty high going into the next level," he said.

Clarke will be playing in one last all-star game, the NUC All-World Gridiron Classic in Charleston, S.C.

"I have four days to rest up and get ready for that one and I leave on the 27th," Clarke said. "I'm really looking forward to it."

HEALTHY LIVING

Doctors should do unto others...

Dear Pharmacist

Suzy Cohen

Dear Readers: Each holiday season I become more introspective. Recently, I counted my blessings and I realized how fortunate I am to have a great doctor. Feeling well is one of the best gifts in life.

My story is about one man who has made it his mission to help others. He's brought over 10,000 babies into this world during his career. His name is Dr. Douglas Hall. Although 70 years old, he looks 50 and has the energy of a 30 something. I imagine it's because he has a really good physician ... himself. He will laugh out loud when he reads this, but allow me to digress.

Hall is what I call "good people" and we have these wonderful souls all over the world. Doctors who take care of strangers as they wish to be treated themselves. It's a good message this holiday season: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.

I have met many physicians in my life and while I'm grateful for their expertise and attempts to heal the ills of humanity, I've noticed that most are an overly stressed and busy lot. Too many confine their education to drug company-sponsored seminars only. Most finish studying once they have that coveted medical diploma in hand. Very few ever review clinical trials as if your life depends on it. News flash, it does!

Being a functional medicine practitioner, Dr. Hall orders unique tests to find out exactly what is wrong and uses dietary supplements as part of his protocol. Sometimes medications are needed, but you are not reduced to a disease requiring a prescription for the drug of the month.

Having shadowed him, I know it would be easier to hand out prescriptions all day rather than explain your nutrient deficiency and offer high quality supplements which correct it. Sometimes, he runs late, but that's because he's busy explaining (with powerpoint slides) what needs to change in order for you to get well. Is it an iron-deficiency? Mercury overload? Estrogen dominance? Testosterone deficiency? Gluten allergy? Parasites? Candida overgrowth? These are common misdiagnosed conditions that cause terrible symptoms.

I've often seen him do a fist pump like a champ in his hallway because he was so excited to have made an important discovery for a sick patient. And when was the last time your doctor high-fived you over your newest blood work? I got one when my vitamin D levels normalized.

By Dr. Hall's age, most physicians retire. I asked him why still practices, and pores over medical studies like this. "Suzy," he emphatically replied, "If I help even one patient today by learning something new, then I have done my job." So serious is he, that he wakes at 4 a.m. every morning to review new studies before opening the clinic. To some, ignorance may be bliss, but if you are a physician, it's downright dangerous.

I hope you feel inspired this Christmas to give yourself the gift of health, by finding a local physician who stays current and really cares about you.

Suzy Cohen is a registered pharmacist and the author of 'The 24-Hour Pharmacist' and 'Real Solutions.' For more information, visit www. DearPharmacist. com. This information is not intended to treat, diagnose or cure your condition.

Exercise does the elderly body good

Special to the News-Sun

HOUSTON – Exercise can't stop the aging process, but experts at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston say that for the elderly, whether it's weight training, walking, swimming or biking, 30 minutes of exercise three to five times a week is a good prescription for aging.

"It's never too late to start exercising," said Dr. Robert Roush, an associate professor of medicine-geriatrics at BCM. "Being physically active and exercising regularly can help prevent or delay some diseases and disabilities as people age."

Loss of muscle mass typically begins in the 30s or 40s. As muscles shrink, fat cells take their place and that leads to a slowdown in metabolism and weight gain even if caloric intake and expenditure remains the same.

"Any type of movement can be considered exercise, but resistance weight training has been shown to be the best way to reduce the loss of lean muscle," Roush said.

Family Features

Technological advances have made it possible to house full wireless connectivity in one small hearing aid - at the push of a button, you can connect a hearing device to telephones, TV, MP3 music players and other audio transmitters.

How to chose the right hearing aid

Family Features

One in every 10 Americans has hearing loss. Yet research indicates that most wait up to ten years before seeking help. While 95 percent of Americans with hearing loss could be successfully treated with hearing aids, only 22 percent currently use them.

Often neglected due to the stigma associated with the condition, hearing loss can create social and emotional barriers for the individuals living with it, or the families of those it affects. When left untreated, hearing loss can lead to reduced earning power, disruptions in family life and can cause a wide range of other psychological problems.

If you are experiencing hearing loss, speak to a local hearing health professional who can do a full hearing screening and walk you through available solutions. Modern hearing aids are small, comfortable, nearly invisible and work with digital technology to ensure better sound quality and even wireless connectivity. The AudÈo S Smart by Phonak, for example, is the world's smallest hearing system with full wireless functionality - allowing you to connect to telephones, TV, MP3 music players and other audio transmitters at the push of a button. Modern hearing devices improve hearing ability, speech recognition and hearing comfort and have made it possible for those who need a hearing aid to wear their devices with ease and confidence.

The earlier you recognize hearing loss and take action, the earlier you are able to recover your hearing ability and increase your quality of life. There are two basic types of hearing aids:

— Custom models are made to fit the shape of your ear canal for maximum benefit, cosmetic appeal and the best possible comfort. These models are suitable for mild to severe hearing loss.

— Behind-the-ear models are available for all degrees of hearing loss and can be worn comfortably behind the ear. Incoming signals are amplified and transmitted into the ear via very small, unobtrusive tubes.

If it's time to improve your hearing with a hearing aid, or you need to upgrade to a new one, here are three easy steps to choosing the one that's right for you.

— Step 1: Consult with a hearing health professional or ENT doctor

When deciding what hearing aid is best for you, it is important to consider the degree of hearing loss you have, the shape of your ear canals, your personal needs, your taste and your budget. Your local hearing health professional or ENT doctor can help you answer these questions.

— Step 2: Have your hearing aids fitted

Your hearing health professional will adjust your hearing aid to your hearing loss and your hearing preferences. Over the first few days, you should wear it for a few hours per day to familiarize yourself with it. Take note on how you feel in different hearing situations. Additional fine-tuning might be necessary after your initial fitting.

— Step 3: Using your new hearing aids

Just like glasses or contact lenses, a hearing aid can feel strange at first. This will change. Give yourself a little time to get used to it. You will learn how to make the best use of your hearing aid and will soon be enjoying all the benefits it has to offer. However, if you experience any problems or pain, please contact your local hearing health professional.

For more about finding the right hearing solution for you, visit www.phonak.com.

Sink: Medicaid proposal would cost Fla. millions

Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE — Chief Financial Officer Alex Sink has released a study showing a proposal to shield Medicaid doctors from malpractice claims would cost Florida $69 million annually.

Sink, a Democrat who narrowly lost to Republican Rick Scott in last month's gubernatorial election, sent a letter to leaders of the GOP-controlled Legislature outlining the potential costs Tuesday.

Lawmakers are considering a proposal to extend the state's limited immunity from lawsuits to Medicaid providers.

Sink said that means taxpayers, rather than doctors and their insurers, would pay verdicts or settlements of up to $100,000 per person for their mistakes — a limit that will increase to $200,000 next October.

The Legislature also can lift the cap on a case-by-case basis.

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HEALTHY LIVING

Family still in awe of mom, baby's recovery after Christmas Eve miracle

By DAN ELLIOTT
Associated Press

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — Strangers sometimes ask if they can touch 1-year-old Coltyn Hermanstorfer on the head or take his photo after he and his mother, Tracy, recovered from a near-death experience during childbirth last Christmas Eve.

"People feel that he is, like, somehow connected right directly with God," said Coltyn's father, Mike Hermanstorfer.

Mike Hermanstorfer isn't convinced of that — "We'll find that out later in life," he said — but he has no doubt it was a miracle, and he understands if others want to get as close to it as they can.

"I'm not going to deny anybody," he said.

Tracy Hermanstorfer, now 34, went into cardiac arrest while preparing to give birth at Memorial Hospital in Colorado Springs on Dec. 24. Doctors quickly delivered Coltyn by emergency Cesarean section, but he appeared lifeless, Mike Hermanstorfer said.

Hermanstorfer was at his wife's side when her heart stopped beating. He thought he had lost both her and their newborn son. But doctors revived Coltyn in his father's arms. And then a nurse told Hermanstorfer his wife's pulse had inexplicably returned and that she would probably survive.

She was without a pulse for about four minutes, her doctor said.

Mother and child are healthy, with no apparent after effects and no medical explanation for what happened.

"That's why I mark this up as a miracle," said Hermanstorfer, 38. "There's no other explanation anywhere from anybody that can explain anything different to me."

Coltyn squirmed, pushed and babbled happily as his parents and two brothers watched during a recent interview.

"He's developing and at the right level he's supposed to," Tracy Hermanstorfer said in a quiet, happy voice.

MCT photo
Tracy Hermanstorfer kisses her son, Coltyn, in the hospital shortly after his birth last year.

"I've done a couple tests and I come out just perfectly healthy. We still haven't figured it out, how it happened and why it happened."

Stephanie Martin, a maternal fetal medicine specialist at Memorial Hospital, said she referred Tracy Hermanstorfer to specialists who explored various theories but came up empty.

"We don't have a medical explanation for what happened," she said. "We have theories but nothing we can prove."

Those theories included an overactive component of the nervous system and a reaction to an anesthetic, but neither held up.

Mike Hermanstorfer still seems rattled by the experience.

"I witnessed my wife die in front of my face. I witnessed my child — I don't really want to say dead, because you've got to live first. But he wasn't breathing," Hermanstorfer said.

Hermanstorfer said he suffers nightmares and frequently awakens at night to make sure his wife and baby are still there.

"With Tracy already going into cardiac arrest ... you never know if it's going to happen again," he said.

> *'I witnessed my wife die in front of my face. I witnessed my child — I don't really want to say dead, because you've got to live first. But he wasn't breathing.'*
>
> **MIKE HERMANSTORFER**
> father

The Hermanstorfers have hit hard times since Coltyn was born. Mike Hermanstorfer said he lost his job with a towing company because he missed so much work looking after his wife and baby. The family was evicted from their home when they fell behind on the rent and had to move in with Tracy's mother.

Hermanstorfer said he also fell behind on alimony payments to an ex-wife and spent time in jail because of it.

The couple said they have no health insurance.

"We're having trouble finding the tunnel, let alone the light at the end of it," Mike Hermanstorfer said.

The couple said they have found comfort in family, which they say has drawn closer since Coltyn's birth.

Their 4-year-old son, Kanyen, has become Coltyn's "big brother-protector." Twelve-year-old Austin, Tracy Hermanstorfer's son from a previous marriage, has buckled down at school.

The only sign that either older brother felt left out amid the fuss about Coltyn was when producers for "Oprah" didn't invite them to accompany their parents and baby brother to Chicago in February to tape a segment for the show.

A spokeswoman for the show said she did not know when it might be broadcast.

Austin was upset by that, Tracy Hermanstorfer said.

"He was like, 'OK, we're part of this family.' And I think we're learning that with a lot of people now. We point out to them that we're a family of five, not three."

Diabetics eye obesity surgery to tame blood sugar levels

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — For nearly a decade, Cristina Iaboni tried to tame her diabetes the usual way, through daily shots of insulin and other medicine.

Still, her blood sugar raged out of control. So Iaboni combed the Internet for another solution and found a doctor who is testing weight loss surgery on diabetics who, like herself, are merely overweight or a tad obese in an attempt to curb the chronic disease.

Scientists in recent years have discovered that diabetes all but disappears in some obese patients soon after the operation. Many were able to achieve normal blood sugar and ditch their medications.

But does the benefit extend to diabetics who are not quite as hefty? Performing surgery on the not-as-obese with the goal of reversing diabetes is provocative. Iaboni's surgeon is one of a handful of doctors around the world stretching the rules to see if the weight loss operation helps.

Iaboni had gastric bypass surgery last fall at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center as part of a study. In gastric bypass or stomach stapling surgery, the stomach is reduced to a thumb-sized pouch that holds less food.

Now 50 pounds lighter, she has stopped taking diabetes medications. Her blood sugar is almost normal.

"I didn't care if I lost any weight. I just wanted the diabetes to go away," said the 45-year-old Connecticut mother of two teenagers.

The twin epidemics of obesity and diabetes are fueling an international public health threat. In the United States, one out of five people with obesity-linked Type 2 diabetes are morbidly obese — defined as 100 pounds overweight.

There are strict rules for who can go under the knife.

Federal guidelines say surgery candidates must be morbidly obese with a body mass index over 40, or a BMI over 35 plus a weight-related medical problem like diabetes or high blood pressure.

Insurers use the cutoffs in deciding whether to pay for the procedure.

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Panic attack and anxiety support group

Panic Relief Inc., a nonprofit educational organization, is now offering free telephone support groups and seminars from 7-7:30 p.m., each Wednesday.

The groups will discuss how you can feel better as well as creating a life that can be filled with joy and satisfaction.

Discussion is very important. For those who do not want to talk, you will benefit from what others have to say.

Each week is independent so if you cannot join the call, you can just participate at a time that works for you. Call (218) 844-3388, access code 121942.

For more information, visit panicreliefinc.com.

Snapshots

Community outreach

Ace Homecare community outreach events for the upcoming week:

— Monday, 1 p.m., Caregivers Support Group, Crown Pointe Assisted Living Community, Sun 'n Lake Blvd., Sebring.

— Tuesday, 9 a.m., Health Fair, Groves, behind Sebring Diner, U.S. 27, Sebring.

— Wednesday, 9 a.m., Health Fair, Avon Park Meal Site, Main Street, Avon Park.

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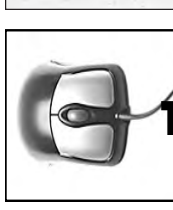
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RELIGION

Courtesy photo

Lynda Randle has been an integral part of the Gaither Homecoming Tour for more than 13 years. She brings comes to Sebring on Jan. 8.

Lynda Randle in concert Jan. 8

Special to the News-Sun

SEBRING – Bible Fellowship Church of Sebring welcomes Lynda Randle in concert at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 8.

Randle is an accomplished Christian vocalist, author and speaker who has touched countless people worldwide with her cross-cultural and cross-generational message in music. She has been an integral part of the Gaither Homecoming Tour for more than 13 years, and is bringing her talents and gifts to Sebring for a one-night-only concert.

Tickets are only $15 general admission and $20 for preferred seating. Seating is limited. Tickets are available at the Bible Fellowship Church office at 3750 Hammock Road, or by PayPal at www.bfcsebring.com. Call the church at 385-1024.

Marriage Mentor

Aleta Kay

Decorating on a shoestring

Part of being a good wife is being thrifty. Now I'm not the most creative person in the world but I remember some simple things from my childhood. My mom was an eclectic hoarder of mismatched whatnots, but she sure knew how to decorate a Christmas tree.

When I was a young child we didn't have much money. That didn't stop my mom from making things pretty. I remember cutting strips of colored construction paper and stapling or taping the ends together. We would loop the ends through other rings, thus making a chain. We would pop popcorn and string it on thread. We would use white paper and cut out snowflakes and angels. We would decorate the tree with them and sprinkle tinsel over the branches of the tree. We would ball up small pieces of aluminum foil and lay them among the branches to add some sparkle.

Pieces of felt cut in shapes of bells, balls, or other Christmasy objects can be placed in strategic places around the room. Mom enjoyed life when she wasn't stewing about something that upset her long ago. When she wasn't moody she could make home a fun place to be.

I learned that if we couldn't afford wrapping paper, a paper bag with a few splashes of water color paint or the comics from a discarded Sunday newspaper would still brighten up a package.

We didn't have to spend a lot of money on presents. We didn't have much money. Mom sometimes found some neat toys that had been discarded by others. She would put them away and wrap them up. There were a few times that we didn't have anything, but there were more times when Mom would use her imagination and make something special out of nothing. You can too.

Aleta Kay can be reached at themarriagementor@yahoo.com

No ordinary baby: Part 1

Come To The River

Leslie Deese

For believers, we are in a special time of year in which we emphasize the birth of Jesus. Realistically, we should appreciate His birth all year. In my previous article, "Take Time to Have Holiday Coffee with Jesus," I encouraged you to sit and have some holiday coffee with Him so that you could turn your cares over to Him and shift your focus onto His greatness and off of the difficult circumstances in your life that may have a tendency to pull you down.

Now that your focus is back on Christ, let's take time to actually consider the true significance of His birth. Some of you might be saying to yourself, "I know already, I hear the story every year." Others might say, "Babies are born every day." What is so much more special about Christ's birth compared to other babies?

Luke 2:1-20 gives a short version of Christ's conception and His birth. Verse 7 points out that Mary wrapped the baby in swaddling clothes." Swaddling clothes were strips of cloth. In most cases today, babies are dressed with cute outfits that may cost a little more economically.

After Jesus was wrapped up, he was placed in a manger, which was a trough that animals normally would eat from. Considering where Jesus was born and what He was dressed in, it would seem evident He was brought into a family who was very poor. Humility was an obvious characteristic of this family because they were thankful to sleep in the barn outside of the hotel in order to care for baby Jesus. This shows that God had a special plan for this baby's life because He provided shelter and protection for Him and His family.

Verses 8-11 announce the birth of Jesus from an angel sent by the Lord. In verse 11, the baby is referred to as "a Savior." Matthew 1:23 refers to Him as "Immanuel" or "God with us." In other words, God sent His son into the world in human form to be the Savior of the world. In the Old Testament, the coming of Jesus was prophesied in Isaiah 9:6. "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God; Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

In our human minds, it is normal to think that this child, who was the son of God, would have the most perfect life on earth. It would be easy to perceive this considering He would have such a position rewarded to Him by His Heavenly Father. However, this was not the case.

Jesus lived the most difficult and sacrificial life on earth, and He lived it all for the honor and glory of God for us out of pure love. Please note that the life that Christ lived was more difficult than any human being has ever lived or ever will live, and He remained sinless in the process.

Part 2 and 3 will go into more detail about Jesus' life on earth, but until then, let's focus on celebrating His birth and rejoice in our salvation. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Leslie Deese is a Sebring resident. She can be reached at ljb_628@yahoo.com.

Snapshots

Eastside Christian Church has candlelight service

LAKE PLACID — Everyone is welcome to Eastside Christian Church for a special Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 6:30 p.m. today.

Church of Brethren plans Christmas Eve service

SEBRING — Sebring Church of the Brethren will have its Christmas Eve service at 7 p.m. today. It will be a service of music. The Scripture reading will be Matthew 2:1-12.

'The Angels Sing'

SEBRING — "The Angels Sing," taken from Luke 2:1-20, will be the topic for candlelight services to be held at 5 and 7 p.m. today at St. John United Methodist Church. The Rev. Ronald De Genaro's topic for Sunday morning will be "The God Who Saves," with text from Isaiah 63:7-9.

FBC Sebring has service tonight

SEBRING — Sebring First Baptist Church will host a Christmas Eve service at 5 p.m. today.

The church office will be closed today through Monday and again on Friday, Dec. 31.

First Baptist will host the annual return of Tim Zimmerman and The King's Brass at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 11.

This evening of horn showmanship is free to the public.

Atonement Lutheran Church plans Christmas Eve service

SEBRING — Atonement Lutheran Church will have a special Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Communion at 7 p.m. today. Dave Thoresen will be the worship leader for this special service.

Heart pillows

Courtesy photo

Spring Lake Presbyterian Women were recognized for their work on the heart pillow project after which a heart pillow blessing was done in November. Four hundred heart pillows have been completed by this group and sent to Highlands Regional Medical Center. This year heart pillows are now being made for shut-ins. Pictured are (from left) Dottie Baird, district coordinator from Central Florida Presbytery, Linda Ross, Kitty Singh, Tillie Bohanon, Ilene Stephey, Jackie Hunt, Vee Brammeier, Jeanette Donahoe and Mary Schantz. Those not pictured include Margaret Miles, Mary Ulmer, Dori Schmiedeknecht and Betty Baughman.

Atonement Lutheran

SEBRING — Everyone is invited to join today at 7 p.m. for a special Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Communion. Dave Thoresen will be the worship leader for this special service. With minor modifications, this is the identical service that was done by the beloved former interim pastor, the Rev. Dr. Harry L. (Jack) Biemiller. This service is being performed in memory of Jack.

Sunday of Christmas worship will be led by the Rev. Jim Hornwith Holy Eucharist. The church will also have the installation of the new council members.

The council meeting is at 6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 3.

At 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 16 Thoresen will be consecrated as a Deacon in ELCA. Bishop Ed Benoway of the Florida Bahams Synod and other dignitaries will participate in the service.

Avon Park Church of Christ

AVON PARK — "Getting Spiritually Ready for 2011" (Philippians 2:14-16) will be the message Sunday morning presented by Minister Larry Roberts.

The Sunday evening service will be a Bible study from the book of Psalms.

Avon Park Church of Christ is at 200 S. Forest Ave. Call 453-4692.

Christ Lutheran

AVON PARK — Pastor Scott McLean will preach a sermon today titled "It's About Time!" The traditional Lutheran Candlelight, Carols and Communion service is at 7 p.m.

The church is at 1320 County Road 64, east the Avon Park High School. Call 471-2663 or search the Internet for christlutheranavonpark.org.

Christian Science

SEBRING — The lesson sermon on Sunday morning is titled "Christian Science." The keynote is from Isaiah 60:1 thy, "...thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

The church is at 146 N. Franklin St.

Christian Training

SEBRING — Associate Minister Casey L. Downing will bring the message titled "After Christmas" at the Sunday morning service. The Wednesday night Bible study will continue the book of Hebrews.

Eastside Christian

LAKE PLACID — A special Christmas Eve Candlelight Service is planned for 6:30 p.m. today.

There was not a Bible study Wednesday, but it will start again at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 29.

Emmanuel United Church of Christ

SEBRING — Christmas Eve Candlelight Service of hymns, lessons and carols is at 7 p.m. today.

The Rev. George Miller will deliver a message Sunday morning based on Matthew 2:12.

The church is 1.7 miles west of U.S. 27 on County Road 634 (Hammock Road). Call 471-1999 or visit sebringemmanuelucc.com.

First Baptist Church of Placid Lakes

LAKE PLACID — Pastor Darryl George will preach on Sunday the sermon titled "The Purity Series - The Heresy of Partial Obedience!" with regards to I Timothy 4:1-10.

The church is at the corner of Washington and Kemper Avenues in Placid Lakes. Call 465-5126 from 8 a.m. to noon Monday through Thursday or e-mail the church at placidlakes@hotmail.com.

First Baptist Church of Sebring

SEBRING — Sebring First Baptist Church will host a Christmas Eve Service at 5 p.m. today. The church office will be closed today through Monday and again on Friday, Dec. 31. Dr. David Richardson announced that Sunday, Dec. 26 the only service of the day will be at 10:30 a.m. and will be a combined morning celebration of our Savior's birth.

First Christian

AVON PARK — Saturday is the day that we celebrate the birthday of Christ Jesus our King. As you celebrate with family and/or friends take time to remember why we celebrate and why we give. God gave His one and only son for you. This gift of Jesus is the ultimate gift ever given.

President Bill Behrman of Florida Christian College will teach the Sunday school hour Sunday and preach the sermon during the worship hour.

The next Sunday evening program will be at 6 p.m. Jan. 9 and the next Wednesday program will be at 6 p.m. Jan. 12.

First Christian Church of Avon Park is at 1016 W. Camphor (behind the Wachovia Bank). Call 453-

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RELIGION

Continued from page 7B

5334 or e-mail firstchristianap@embarqmail.com. The church Web site is www.firstchristianap.com.

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

SEBRING — At the Lord's Table this Sunday morning will be Betty Simpson and Betty Harcourt. Communion will be served by Michael Graves, Marla Null, Barbara Slinkard and Carol Graves.

Greeting the congregation will be Jayne Weldy. Lynne Warman will lead the Call to Worship.

Noel and Juanita Roberts will work with children's church.

Lighting the candles during the month of December has been Nina Kunsak. Sherry Kunsak will be with the children in the nursery.

The Rev. Juanita Roberts will bring the message. Her sermon title is "Time for Action," taken from Matthew 21:28-31.

The church is at 510 Poinsettia Ave. Call 385-0352.

First Presbyterian Church - A. R. P.

AVON PARK — On Sunday, the pastor's sermon is titled "The Strong Shepherd" based on Matthew 2:1-12.

Special music will be provided by Bob and Maxine Johnson. Guest organist will be Lenora Copsey.

Maxine Johnson, adult Bible study teacher, continues the study of David in II Samuel Chapter 8 in which David extends his kingdom.

The church office will reopen Jan. 3.

The church is at 215 E. Circle St. Call 453-3242.

First Presbyterian

SEBRING — "The Best New Year's Resolution" is the title of Sunday morning's sermon given by the Rev. Darrell A. Peer.

First United Methodist Church of Sebring

SEBRING — The Christmas Eve Services include a 5 and 7 p.m. traditional service in the Sanctuary with Communion following each service. A 9 p.m. Contemporary Service will be held in the Family Life Center with Communion.

The Rev. A.C. Bryant will bring the message on Sunday.

Wednesday, Jan. 5 at 5:30 p.m. the "Growing with God" family night resumes in the Family Life Center.

The church is downtown at 126 S. Pine St. Visit the Web site at www.sebringfirstumc.com.

Call 385-5184.

Heartland Christian

SEBRING — The Praise and Worship Service begins at 10 a.m. with George Kelly singing "Mary Did You Know?" and Walt Malinowski singing "Beautiful Star of Bethlehem."

Pastor Ted Moore's sermon this week will be "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" with Scripture from Haggai 2: 3-7.

"I & II Peter and Jude" is the Sunday Bible study lesson taught by Fran VanHooreweghe.

At 6 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 2 the church will have its 10-year birthday celebration.

Starting on Sunday, Jan. 9 there will be two morning services.

The church is at 2705 Alternate Route 17 South (behind Publix).

Memorial United Methodist Church

LAKE PLACID — There will be one combined worship service in the sanctuary at 9:30 a.m. Sunday. Claude Burnett, pastoral assistant, will preach the sermon.

There is no Sunday school, youth fellowship, or Sunday evening Bible fellowship today.

The church is at 500 Kent Ave. Call 465-2422.

Parkway Free Will Baptist Church

SEBRING — The Sunday morning Bible lesson, "I Will Be With You," is taken from the 43rd chapter of Isaiah. Pastor Jim Scaggs will bring the message Sunday morning.

Resurrection Lutheran

AVON PARK — On the First Sunday of Christmas, the pastor's sermon will be based on the second chapter of Matthew. Bob Theil will be the Worship assistant at the early service. Ed Mosser will be the Communion assistant and Barb Marazza will be the Lector.

At the mid-morning service, Paul Willcox will be the Worship assistant, Sonia Altman will be the Communion assistant, Betty Serff will be the Lector and Nicholas McGinnis will be the acolyte.

St. John United Methodist Church

SEBRING — "The Angels Sing," taken from Luke 2:1-20, will be the topic for candlelight services to be held at 5 and 7 p.m. today.

The Rev. Ronald De Genaro's topic for Sunday morning will be "The God Who Saves" with text from Isaiah 63:7-9.

Sebring Church of the Brethren

SEBRING — Ellen Swihart will preach on "What God is Like." The Scripture will be on Isaiah 63:7 and 64:12.

Sunday school will be led by the Rev. Wendell Bohrer and will meet in the Fidelis Room. They will study "I Will Be With You." They will also look at the Scripture Isaiah 43:1-7, 11-12.

Don't forget "The Kids' Zone" on Wednesdays after the meal.

Southside Baptist Church

SEBRING — The Rev. David Altman will bring a Christmas message in the Sunday morning worship service. Special music will be presented by Stacy Jingst. There will be no Sunday evening service this Sunday only.

The church is at 379 S. Commerce Ave. Call 385-0752.

Spring Lake Presbyterian

SEBRING — "Responding to God's Call" is the title of Sunday morning's sermon given by the Rev. Barbara Laucks.

Spring Lake United Methodist Church

SEBRING — Spring Lake United Methodist Church is at 8170 Cozumel Lane.

The Rev. Clyde Weaver's sermon will be "Where is He That is Born a King? Fellowship follows the service.

There will be a Watch Night Service at 11:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 31. Fellowship and refreshments at 11 p.m.

The Way Church

SEBRING — "Out With the Old" will be Pastor Reinhold Buxbaum's message the Sunday morning after Christmas.

On Christmas Eve at 8 p.m. there will be a candlelight service.

The Way Church is at 1005 N. Ridgewood Drive. The church phone is 471-6140; the pastor's cell is 214-6190. For church information and the pastor's messages go to www.thewaychurch.org.

PLACES TO WORSHIP

Places to Worship is a paid advertisement in the *News-Sun* that is published Friday and Sunday. To find out more information on how to place a listing in this directory, call the *News-Sun* at 385-6155, ext. 502.

APOSTOLIC

■ **Greater Faith Apostolic Church,** 24 Rainer Drive, Lake Placid, FL 33852. invites you to come worship with us in spirit and truth at 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Sunday, and at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday. For information contact 840-0152. Pastor Larry Carmody.

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

■ **Christ Fellowship Church (Assembly of God),** 2935 New Life Way. Bearing His Name; Preaching His Doctrine; and Awaiting His Coming. "Worshiping God in Spirit and in Truth." Sunday School, 9 a.m.; Morning Worship, 10 a.m.; Evening Worship, 5 p.m. Wednesday: Worship, 7 p.m. Pastor Eugene Haas. Phone 471-0924.

■ **Crossroads Community Church**, 114 South Central Ave., Avon Park, FL 33825. Phone: 453-4453. Sunday School: 9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship: 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m. Sunday Children's Church: 10:45 a.m. Wednesday Adult Bible Study and Youth/Royal Explorers, 7 p.m. Pastor: John E. Dumas.

■ **First Assembly of God,** 4301 Kenilworth Blvd., Sebring. The Rev. Wilmont McCrary, pastor. Sunday School, 10 a.m.; Morning Worship and KIDS Church, 11 a.m.; Evening Worship, 7 p.m. Wednesday Family Night, (Adult Bible Study), LIFE Youth Group, Royal Rangers, Missionettes, 7:30 p.m. Phone 385-6431.

BAPTIST

■ **Avon Park Lakes Baptist Church,** 2600 N. Highlands Blvd., Avon Park, FL 33825. George Hall, Pastor. Christ centered and biblically based. Sunday worship services, 8:30 a.m., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Nursery facilities are available. Bible studies at 9:45 a.m. Sunday and 7 p.m. Wednesday. Prayer Time 6 p.m. on Wednesday. Bible classes at 9:45 a.m. are centered for all ages. Choir practice at 5 p.m. Sunday. Church phone: 452-6556.

■ **Bethany Baptist Church (GARBC)** We are located at the corner of SR17 and C-17A (truck route) in Avon Park. Join us Sunday morning at 9:00 AM for coffee and doughnuts, followed with Sunday School for all ages at 9:30. Sunday morning worship service begins at 10:30 a.m., and evening worship service is at 6 p.m. On Wednesdays, the Word of Life teen ministry and the Catylist class (20's+) begin at 6:30 PM. The adult Bible and Prayer Time begins at 7 p.m. For more information go to www.bethanybaptistap.com or call the church office at 863-452-1136.

■ **Faith Missionary Baptist Church,** off State Road 17 North of Sebring at 1708 LaGrange Ave. Sunday School, 10 a.m.; Morning Worship, 11 a.m.; Evening Worship, 6 p.m. Wednesday Service, 7 p.m. Deaf interpretation available. Ken Lambert, Pastor. Phone 386-5055.

■ **Fellowship Baptist Church,** 1000 Maxwell St., Avon Park, FL 33825. Sunday: Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; Morning Worship, 10:45 a.m.; Wednesday: Evening Service, 7 p.m.; Children/Youth, 7 p.m. Telephone: 453-4256. Fax: 453-6986. E-mail: *office@apfellowship.org;* Web site, *www.apfellowship.org.*

■ **First Baptist Church of Avon Park**, 100 N. Lake Ave., Avon Park. Rev. Jon Beck, pastor; Jared Hewitt, youth minister; and Joy Loomis, music director. Regular Sunday schedule: 8:30 a.m. Orchestra rehearsal; 9 a.m. Library open; 9:30 a.m. Sunday School; 11 a.m. Morning Worship; 11 a.m. Children's Church; 4 p.m. Evening Service. Tuesday schedule: 8-10 a.m., basic computer class/Sonshine House; 7-9 p.m. conversational English and citizenship classes/Sonshine House. Regular Wednesday schedule: 5:15 p.m. Family Night Supper; 6 p.m. Bible Study and Prayer; 6 p.m. Adult Choir Practice; 6:30 p.m. children's choir rehearsals; 7 p.m. children's mission groups. Call 453-6681 for details. Primera Mision Bautista, 100 N. Lake Ave., Avon Park, Johnattan Soltero, Pastor. Regular Sunday schedule: 10 a.m., Bible Study; 11 a.m., Worship Service. Wednesday schedule: 7 p.m., Bible study.

■ **First Baptist Church of Lake Josephine,** 111 Lake Josephine Drive, Sebring (just off U.S. 27 midway between Sebring and Lake Placid). Your place for family, friends and faith. Sunday morning worship service is 11 a.m. Nursery is provided for both services with Children's Church at 11 a.m. Life changing Bible Study for all ages starts at 9:45 a.m. Associate Pastor Allen Altvater leads the youth in their quest to become more like Christ. Sunday night worship at 6 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study and Prayer meeting at 7 p.m. along with youth worship in the youth facility, and missions training for all children. Call the church at 655-1524.

■ **First Baptist Church of Lake Placid,** Knowing God's Heart and Sharing God's Hope, 119 E. Royal Palm Street. (2 blocks south of Interlake Blvd) Lake Placid, FL 33852 (863) 465-3721, Email: www.fbclp.com. Pastor Brett Morey, senior pastor. Sunday services - Traditional Service 9 a.m., Contemporary Service 10:30 a.m. Link Groups at 9 and 10:30 a..m., Senior Sunday Night and Sunday Evening Bible study at 6 p.m. Wednesday Activities: Family dinner at 5 p.m. ($3 per person, reservations required). Adult-LifeSource classes, prayer meeting, Youth Intersections, and Kids K-5-MaxKidz Extreme meet at 6:15 p.m. Men meet at 8 a.m. every Tuesday for prayer breakfast and women's prayer breakfast is at 8 a.m. every Wednesday, both at the Family Restaurant.

■ **First Baptist Church of Lorida** located right on U.S. 98 in Lorida. Sunday School begins at 9:45 a.m. for all ages. Sunday worship services are at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. Preschool care is provided at the 11 a.m. worship service. Wednesday evening Bible Study and Prayer meeting is at 6:30 p.m., followed by adult choir rehearsal. From September to May our youth group meets. First Lorida is the "Place to discover God's love." For more information about the church or the ministries offered, call 655-1878.

■ **First Baptist Church, Sebring,** 200 East Center Ave., Sebring, FL 33870. Telephone: 385-5154. Dr. David E. Richardson, senior pastor; Rev. Joe Delph, minister of youth and activities. Contemporary Service, 8:30 a.m.; Group Bible Studies, 9:45 a.m.; Traditional Worship, 11 a.m.; Mision Buatista Hispana, 2 p.m.; Sunday Evening Worship, 6 p.m. Wednesday night programs at the ROC begin 5:30 p.m., at church begin 6:30 p.m. Preschool and Mother's Day Out for children age 6 weeks to 5 years old. Becky Gotsch, director. Call 385-4704.

■ **Florida Avenue Baptist Church,** 401 S. Florida Ave., Avon Park. Mailing address is 710 W. Bell St., Avon Park, FL 33825. Telephone, 453-5339. Rev. John D. Girdley, pastor. Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; Sunday Worship, 11 a.m.; 11 a.m. Children's Church; Sunday Evening Worship, 6 p.m. Wednesday night programs for children, youth and adults at 7 p.m.

■ **Independent Baptist Church**, 5704 County Road 17 South, Sebring, FL 33876. Sunday School, 9:30 a.m. Sunday worship, 10:30 a.m. Sunday evening, 6 p.m. Wednesday service, 7 p.m. Fundamental, soul-winning, mission-minded, King James Bible Church. Larry Ruse, pastor. Phone 655-1899. Bus transportation.

■ **Leisure Lakes Baptist Church**, 808 Gardenia St., Lake Placid (just off of Miller at the west end of Lake June) "Where the old fashion gospel is preached." Sunday School begins at 9:45 a.m.; Sunday Worship service at 11 a.m.; Sunday Evening Service is at 6 p.m. Wednesday Prayer Meeting and Bible Study at 7 p.m. Call the church at 699-0671 for more information.

■ **Maranatha Baptist Church (GARBC),** 35 Maranatha Blvd., Sebring, FL 33870 (A half mile east of Highlands Avenue on Arbuckle Creek Road.) Sunday School, 9 a.m.; Morning Worship, 10:15 a.m.; Evening Service, 6 p.m. Mid-week service, Wednesday, 6 p.m. Daily Prayer and Bible Study, 8 a.m., Hamman Hall. Pastor Gerald Webber and Associate Pastors Don Messenger and Ted Ertle. Phone 382-4301.

■ **Parkway Free Will Baptist Church,** 3413 Sebring Parkway, Sebring, FL 33870. Welcome to the church where the "Son" always shines. Sunday School, 10 a.m.; Morning Worship, 11 a.m.; Sunday Evening Worship, 6 p.m.; and Wednesday Evening Worship, 7 p.m. End-of-the-Month-Sing at 6 p.m. on the last Sunday of each month. The Rev. J.S. Scaggs, pastor. Church phone: 382-3552. Home phone: 214-3025. Affiliated with the National Association of Free Will Baptists, Nashville, Tenn.

■ **Sparta Road Baptist Church, (SBC)** 4400 Sparta Road. Rev. Ken Geren, interim pastor. Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.; Sunday Morning Worship, 11 a.m.; Sunday Evening Worship, 6 p.m. Wednesday: Prayer/Bible Study, 6 p.m. Nursery provided. For information, call 382-0869.

■ **Southside Baptist Church (GARBC),** 379 S. Commerce Ave., Sebring. David C. Altman, Pastor; Aaron Snider, Youth Pastor. Sunday School for all ages, 9:30 a.m.; Morning Worship Service, 10:45 a.m.; Awana kindergarten through fifth grade, 5:30 p.m.; Evening Worship, 6 p.m. Wednesday: Student ministry, 6:30 p.m.; Adult Midweek Prayer and Bible Study, 7 p.m. A nursery for under age 3 is available at all services. Provisions for handicapped and hard-of-hearing. Office phone, 385-0752.

■ **Sunridge Baptist Church, (SBC)** 3704 Valerie Blvd. (U.S. 27 and Valerie, across from Florida Hospital), Sebring. Ed Howell, transitional pastor. Sunday School, 9;30 a.m.; Sunday Morning Worship, 10:45 a.m.; and Sunday Evening Service, 6 p.m. Wednesday: Prayer, Bible Study, and Youth, 6:30 p.m.Nursery provided. For information, call 382-3695.

CATHOLIC

■ **Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church,** 595 East Main St., Avon Park, 453-4757. Father Nicholas McLoughlin, pastor. Saturday Vigil Mass is 4 p.m. in English and 7 p.m. in Spanish; Sunday mass 8 and 10:30 a.m. in English; 6 p.m., Life Teen Mass. Weekday mass at 8 a.m. Confessions are at 3:30 p.m. Saturday. Religious Education Classes are 9-10:20 a.m. Sunday for grades K through 8th. Confirmation class is from 6:30-8 p.m. Wednesday. Youth Nights grades 6th and up, 6:30-8 p.m. Wednesday.

■ **St. Catherine Catholic Church,** 820 Hickory St., Sebring. Mailing address: 882 Bay St., Sebring, FL 33870, 385-0049. *www.stcathe.com*. Very Rev. José González, V.F., Pastor. Masses – Saturday Vigil: 4 p.m. Sunday: 7:30, 9 and 10:30 a.m. and noon Spanish Mass. Daily Masses 8 a.m. and noon Monday-Friday; 9 a.m. Saturday. Confessions: 3-3:45 p.m. Saturdays, 7:15-7:45 a.m. first Friday, or by appointment. Enrollment for Catholic School grades K3 through 5 not being accepted.

■ **St. James Catholic Church,** 3380 Placidview Drive, Lake Placid, 465-3215. Father Michael J. Cannon. Mass schedule: Summer (May 1 to Oct. 31) - Saturday Vigil, 4 p.m.; Sunday 8 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.; Weekdays, 9 a.m. December thru Easter - Saturday, 4 p.m.; Sunday, 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.; Weekdays 9 a.m.; and Holy Days 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 7 p.m., first Saturday at 9 a.m.

CHRISTIAN

■ **Eastside Christian Church,** 101 Peace Ave., Lake Placid, FL 33852 (two miles east of U.S. 27 on County Road 621), 465-7065. Ray Culpepper, senior pastor. Sunday: Bible classes, 9 a.m.; Worship Celebration with the Lord's Supper each week 10:15 a.m. Thelma Hall, organist; and Pat Hjort, pianist. Wednesday: Praise and Prayer, 6:30 p.m.; "Building God's Kingdom for Everyone." "Jesus Christ, the Way, Truth and Life!" "Alive and Worth the Drive!"

■ **Sebring Christian Church,** 4514 Hammock Road, Sebring, FL 33872. Tod Schwingel, Preacher; Marco Gallardo, Youth Pastor. Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday School, 11 a.m.; Sunday Youth Service, 6 p.m; Evening service at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday night meals, 5:30 p.m. followed by classes at 6:30 p.m. Office hours, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday-Friday. Phone 382-6676.

■ **First Christian Church,** 1016 W. Camphor St., Avon Park, FL 33825; (863) 453-5334; on the Web at www.firstchristianap.com. Our motto is *"Jesus is First at First Christian Church."* Greg Ratliff, Senior Minister; Ray Culpepper, Family Life Minister; Jon Carter, Music Director. Bible School 9 a.m.; Worship 10 a.m.; Bible Study, 6 p.m.; Wednesday studies for all ages, 6 p.m. Nursery provided for all events.

■ **First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**, 510 Poinsettia Avenue, (corner of Poinsettia and Eucalyptus), Sebring, FL 33870. Phone: 385-0358 or 385-3435. The Rev. Ronald Norton, Pastor; Sunday School, 9 a.m.; Praise Breakfast, 10 a..m., Morning Worship, 10:30 a.m.; Children's Church, 10:30 a.m. Thursday, Praise and Worship, 6:45 p.m. Youth Fellowship, 7:15 p.m.; Midweek Bible Study, 7:15 p.m.

CHRISTIAN & MISSIONARY ALLIANCE

■ The **Alliance Church of Sebring,** 4451 Sparta Road, Sebring, FL 33875. Call 382-1343. Rev. Steve Hagen, pastor. Sunday services: Sunday School meets at 9:30 a.m.; Sunday Morning Worship Service meets at 10:30 a.m.; Sunday Evening Bible Study meets at 6 p.m. (off site); Wednesday Prayer Gathering meets at 6 p.m.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

■ **Christian Science Church,** 146 N. Franklin St. Sunday: 10:30 a.m. morning worship and Sunday school. Testimonial meetings at 4 p.m. each second and fourth Wednesday. A free public reading room/bookstore, located in the church, is open before and after church services. The Bible and the Christian Science textbook, 'Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures' by Mary Baker Eddy are our only preachers. All are welcome to come and partake of the comfort, guidance, support and healing found in the lesson-sermons.

CHURCH OF BRETHREN

■ **Church of the Brethren**, 700 S. Pine St., Sebring, FL 33870. Sunday: Church School, 9 a.m.; Morning Worship, 10:15 a.m. Wednesday: Temple Choir, 7:30 p.m. Phone 385-1597.

CHURCH OF CHRIST

■ **Avon Park Church of Christ,** 200 S. Forest Ave., Avon Park, FL 33825. Minister: Larry Roberts. Sunday Worship Services, 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. Nursery facilities are available at every service. Bible Study: Sunday, 9:30 a.m. and Wednesday, 7 p.m. Bible centered classes for all ages. Church phone: 453-4692.

■ **Sebring Parkway Church of Christ,** 3800 Sebring Parkway, Sebring, FL 33870; 385-7443. We would like to extend an invitation for you and your family to visit with us here at Sebring Parkway. Our hours of service are: Sunday Worship Service, 9 a.m.; Sunday Bible Class, 10:15 a.m.; Sunday Evening Service, 6 p.m.; Wednesday Service, 7 p.m.

CHURCH OF NAZARENE

■ **First Church of the Nazarene of Avon Park,** P.O. Box 1118., Avon Park, FL 33825-1118. 707 W. Main St. Randall Rupert, Pastor. Sunday: Sunday school begins at 9:45 a.m. for all ages; morning worship at 10:45 a.m.; and evening service at 6 p.m. Wednesday evening service is at 7 p.m. with special services for children and adults. Special services once a month for seniors (Prime Time) and Ladies ministries. If you need any more information, call 453-4851.

■ **First Church of the Nazarene of Lake Placid,** 512 W. Interlake Blvd., Lake Placid, FL 33852. Sunday school, 9:30 a.m.; Morning worship, 10:45 a.m.; Evening service, 6 p.m. Wednesday evening, 7 p.m. Classes for adult children and youth. Call 465-6916. Pastor Tim Taylor.

CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN CHRISTIAN UNION

■ **Community Bible Church - Churches of Christ in Christian Union,** (Orange Blossom Conference Center) 1400 C-17A North (truck route), Avon Park. Presenting Jesus Christ as the answer for time and eternity. Sunday morning worship service, 10:30 a.m. Nursery provided. Junior Church activities at same time for K-6 grade. Sunday School Bible hour (all ages), 9:30 a.m. (Transportation available.) Sunday evening praise and worship service, 6 p.m. Wednesday evening prayer service, 7 p.m. Children and youth activities at 7 p.m. Wednesday. Everyone is welcome, please come worship with us. Don Seymour, Senior Pastor. Phone 452-0088.

RELIGION

Luke's version of the story of Jesus' birth

Last week we determined Matthew possibly received his version of the birth story from his Uncle Joseph. So how did Luke receive his information? In Luke 1:2 he tells Theophilus, possibly a benefactor, his account is from "those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word".

Looking at the details, the conversations and minute descriptions, it is evident Luke's source was Mary, the only eyewitness to many of these events.

Knowing his account was accurate, Luke felt obligated to fill in parts of the birth story he knew were missing from Matthew's account.

Luke begins his version with the angel, Gabriel, visiting Zechariah as he was performing a once in a lifetime service in the temple. Then Luke describes every detail of Mary's conversation with Gabriel.

According to Luke 1:39, "At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea." Who would have known this and why did Mary hurry? She had just been bestowed the greatest honor possible for any Jewish woman. Why didn't she stay and celebrate with her friends and family?

Matthew tells us Joseph didn't believe Mary's story. Having been branded as an adulteress, Mary knew she could be stoned to death. She had to wonder why Gabriel didn't appear to Joseph to tell him the awesome truth. Searching for an answer, the young, pregnant girl recalled her conversation with Gabriel. She realized the angel was directing her path when he said Cousin Elizabeth was also with child. Fearing for her life, Mary hurried to her cousin's house.

Luke's detailed descriptions of this visit: John leaping in Elizabeth's womb, Mary's heartfelt song, John's birth and Zechariah's song had to come from Mary, who was an eyewitness.

Mary's View

Mary Bailey

God sent Mary to Elizabeth's house because He knew Mary needed to hear the devout woman's confirmation that Mary truly was bearing the seed of her Lord. God also wanted Mary to learn all she could from the birthing experiences of Elizabeth because He knew where Mary was going to be when she gave birth to His son.

The other details in Luke's writing are things a young mother would have remembered: the frantic search for a room as her labor pains increased, Joseph filling the feeding trough with fresh straw, wrapping the newborn baby Jesus in swaddling cloths, and carefully laying the baby in the makeshift manger.

Mary would have cherished the visit from the shepherds and the way they knelt at the manger to worship their Savior. In 2:19, Luke identifies Mary as his source for this story by writing "Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart."

At Jesus' presentation in the temple, the meeting of Anna and Simeon's prophecy of the sword piercing Mary's own soul was a divine revelation Mary would not forget.

Since the family left for Egypt in such a hurry, Mary did not have a chance to tell anyone about that visit. The writer of Luke could only assume the family returned to Nazareth.

Luke is the only writer who tells about the incident in the temple when Jesus was 12 years old. Again Luke identifies Mary as his source in 2:51, "His mother treasured all these things in her heart."

Luke further shows a relationship with Mary by tracing Jesus' lineage from David through the line of Mary.

In verse 1:3, Luke says he "investigated everything carefully from the beginning." Did the young doctor talk to Mary who, through God's direction, related the entire story from the beginning? Did his father, who was probably also a doctor, care for Mary or her son while they were in Bethlehem those forty-one days between the birth and the presentation in the temple? We only know someone heard theses stories from Mary while they were still fresh in her mind and God inspired Luke to write them in his gospel so we would know the complete story.

I pray you have received a blessing from sharing Mary's view of the birth story. I also pray your new year is filled with all the blessings God wants you to have.

Mary Bailey is the author of 'Jesus My Son: Mary's Journal of Jesus' Early Life.' For more information, visit www.jesusmyson.com.

PLACES TO WORSHIP

EPISCOPAL

■ **The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer**.Service time is 9:30 with Holy Communion. Coffee hour following services. Newcomers welcome. Call 453-5664 or e-mail *redeemer1895@aol.com* Web site: *redeemeravon.com*. The church is at 839 Howe's Way, Avon Park (two miles north of Sun 'N Lake Boulevard, across from Wells Dodge.)

■ **St. Agnes Episcopal Church**, 3840 Lakeview Drive, Sebring, FL 33870. Sunday Services: Holy Eucharist Rite I - 7:45 a.m., Holy Eucharist Rite II - 10 a.m. Midweek service on Wednesday at 6 p.m. Sunday School for all ages at 9 a.m. The nursery is open 8:45 a.m. until 15 minutes after the 10 a.m. service ends. Wednesday: Adult Bible study, 9:30 a.m. Visitors are always welcome. The Rev. Jim Kurtz, rector. Church office 385-7649, for more information.

■ **St. Francis of Assisi Episcopal Church,** 43 Lake June Road, Lake Placid, FL 33852. Phone: 465-0051. Rev. Elizabeth L. Myers, Rector. Sunday Worship, 8 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. Wednesday evening: Holy Communion with Healing Service, 6:15 p.m. Child care available at the 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Sunday service. Come see what makes us different.

GRACE BRETHREN

■ **Grace Brethren Church,** 3626 Thunderbird Road, (863) 835-0869. Dr. Randall Smith, senior pastor. Sunday services at 9 a.m., 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Wednesday services at 7 p.m. We offer "Kid City" Children's Ministry throughout all services, and there are variosu other classes for teens, married couples, "prime-timers," and Bible studies in Spanish. "Kid City" Day Care, Preschool and After-School Monday-Friday: 7 a.m.-6 p.m. (For registration call: 385-3111). Check us out on the Web at *www.sebring-grace.org*.

INTERDENOMINATIONAL

■ **World Harvest and Restoration Ministries,** (non-denominational) 2200 N. Avon Blvd., Avon Park, FL 33825. Phone: 452-9777 or 453-3771. Sunday service: Sunday School, 10 a.m. and worship, 11 a.m. Wednesday services: 7 p.m. prayer meeting/Bible study. Pastor: W.H. Rogers.

JEWISH

■ **Temple Israel of Highlands County,** 382-7744. Rabbi Lorraine Rudenberg; *www.templeisraelofhcfl.org*. Temple Israel is a Reform Temple that promotes the enduring and fundamental principles of Judaism. Through prayer, study and friendship we strive to enrich our lives and insure Jewish continuity in Highlands County. Friday Evening Erev Shabbat Service, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday Morning Shabbat Minyon Service, 9:30 a.m.; Saturday Morning Torah Study, 10:30 a.m.; Saturday Afternoon Shabbat Study, 3:30 p.m.; Havdallah, 5 p.m. On the following dates: Oct. 1-2, Simchat Torah; Oct. 14-15, Oct. 29-30, Nov. 12-13, Nov. 26-27, Dec. 10-11, Dec. 24-25, Jan. 7-8, Jan. 21-22, Feb. 4-5, Feb. 18-19. Every Thursday will be Hebrew and Bible classes with Howard Salles, 12:30-4:30 p.m.

LUTHERAN

■ **Atonement Lutheran Church (ELCA),** 1178 S.E. Lakeview Drive., Sebring. David Thoresen, Deacon, Spiritual Leader. Jim Helwig, organist/choir director. Worship service at 9:30 a.m.; Holy Eucharist is every Sunday. Coffee hour on the first and third Sunday of each month. Council meeting on the first Monday of month; Ladies Group WELCA meets at noon second Monday of month with lunch. Bring a dish to pass. Church Vegetable Garden Club meets as needed. Labyrinth Prayer Garden open seven days a week to congretation and community. Like to sing? Come join the choir. Visitors always welcome. Come grow with us. Phone 385-0797.

■ **Christ Lutheran Church Avon Park,** 1320 County Road 64, 1/2 mile east of Avon Park High School. Sunday Divine Worship is at 10 a.m. Holy Communion is celebrated every week with traditional Lutheran Liturgy, hymns and songs of praise. Fellowship time with coffee and refreshments follows worship. Come worship and fellowship with us. For information call Pastor Scott McLean at 471-2663 or see *christlutheranavonpark.org*.

■ **Faith Lutheran Church – LCMS,** 2740 Lakeview Drive, Sebring. Church phone: 385-7848, Faith Child Development Center, 385-3232. Gary Kindle, Pastor; Lea Ann Curry, Parish Nurse. Worship services: 8 a.m. Sunday; Sunday school for children and adult Bible classes is 9:15 a.m.; and Praise worship service, 10:30 a.m. Sunday. Communion is served the first and third and fifth Sunday of the month. Sunday worship service is broadcast on WITS 1340 AM at 8 a.m. each Sunday. Educational opportunities include weekly adult Bible studies. Faith's Closet Thrift Store (385-2782) is open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 9 a.m. to noon Saturday. All are warmly welcome in the Family of Faith.

■ **Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (AALC) American Association of Lutheran Churches,** 4348 Schumacher Road, Sebring, one mile west of Wal-Mart. James Weed, pastor. Worship Service, 9 a.m. Sunday. Bible Study, 11 a.m. Nursery provided. Social activities: Choir, Missions, Evangelism. Phone 385-1163.

■ **New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church,** 3725 Hammock Road, a Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) in fellowship with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). Sunday Worship at 10 a.m.; Bible Study, 9 a.m. For more information, call Pastor Brian Klebig at 385-2293 or visit the Web site at *www.newlifesebring.com*.

■ **Resurrection Lutheran Church - ELCA**, 324 E. Main St., Avon Park. Pastor: Rev. John C. Grodzinski. Early Sunday service, 8 a.., Sunday school at 9:10 a.m. and the second service at 10:30 a.m. Coffee and fellowship hour follow the service. Midweek Fragrance Free Wednesday worship, (year round) 7 p.m. Office phone number is 453-6858.

■ **Trinity Lutheran Church - LCMS,** 25 Lakeview St., Lake Placid, FL 33852; 465-5253. The Rev. Richard A. Norris, pastor; and Noel Johnson, youth and family life. Worship schedule for December through Easter: Worship service 8 and 11 a.m.; Communion services, first and third Sundays; (Children's Church, 11 a.m. only); and Education Hour, 9:30 a.m. Worship schedule for summer through fall: Worship service, 9 a.m.; Communion services, first and third Sundays; Education Hour 10:30 a.m. Additional services: Lent and Advent season, 6 p.m.; Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, 7 p.m.; Easter Sunday, 7 and 10 a.m.; Christmas Eve, 7 p.m.; Christmas Day, 10 a.m.; Thanksgiving Eve, Wednesday, 7 p.m. Fellowship activities: Youth Group, Senior Citizens, Younger Side Adults, Ladies Missionary League, Ladies Guild, Small group studies as scheduled. Music: Choir and hand chimes. Trinity Tots Preschool (3-5 years old): 8:15 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. License: C14H10020: Susan Norris, director. Visit us online at: *www.vchurches.com/trinity/lutheranlp*.

NON-DENOMINATIONAL

■ **Bible Fellowship Church,** 3750 Hammock Road, Sebring, FL 33872. Sunday: American Sign Language: First Worship sermon, songs signed first and second Worship services. First Worship service, 9 a.m.; Second Worship service, 10:45 a.m. Nursery (up to 2 years old) and Sunday school classes both hours. BFC Youth, 6 p.m.; Evening Service, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday: Children, ages 4 years to fifth grade, 6 p.m.; Youth, 6-7:30 p.m.; Prayer time, 6:15 p.m. Todd Patterson, pastor; Andy McQuaid, associate pastor. Church office 385-1024.

■ **Calvary Church,** 1825 Hammock Road, Sebring, FL 33872; 386-4900. An independent community church. Sunday morning worship, 10 a.m.; Bible study, 11:15 a.m.; Sunday evening worship, 6 p.m. Youth group meets at 5 p.m. Friday. Pastor Lester Osbeck. A small friendly church waiting for your visit.

■ **Christian Training Ministries Inc.,** on Sebring Parkway. Enter off County Road 17 on Simpson Avenue. Sunday service is at 10 a.m.; Wednesday Bible study at 7 p.m. A nursery and children's church are provided. The church is part of Christian International Ministries Network, a full gospel, non-denominational ministry. Linda M. Downing, minister: Phone, 314-0482, *lindadowning@live.com.* Casey L. Downing, associate minister: Phone, 385-8171, *caseydowning@hotmail.com.* Web site is www.*christiantrainingministries.net*

■ **Grace Bible Church,** 4541 Thunderbird Road, (second church on left) Sebring, FL 33872. Phone, 382-1085. Andrew Katsanis, senior pastor. Saturday Worship, 6:30 p.m. Sunday, 9 and 11 a.m. Tuesday 6 p.m. Grace Bible Academy Adult Investigating Truth; first and third Tuesday, Prayer Gathering, 7:15 p.m.; Wednesday, Children's & Youth Programs, 6 p.m.; Wednesday, 8:30 p.m., College Ministry. *www.GBCconnected.org*

■ **Highlands Community Church**, a casual contemporary church, meets at 3005 New Life Way. Coffee at 9:30 a.m.; Worship at 10 a.m. Nursery and Kid's World classes. Small groups meet throughout the week. Church phone is 402-1684; Pastor Bruce A. Linhart.

■ **Union Congregational Church**, 106 N. Butler Ave., Avon Park, FL 33825. Sunday worship services are at 7:45 a.m. (informal), 9:15 a.m. (traditional) and 10:45 a.m. (contemporary) in the main sanctuary. Sunday school for all ages is at 9:15 a.m. We also offer Wednesday and Saturday services at 6;15 a.m. and 6 p.m., respectively. Nursery/child care is available for all services. Senior Pastor is Bill Breylinger. Office: 453-3345. Web page at *www.weareunion.org*. All teachings are taken from the Manufacturer's Handbook - The Holy Bible. Come join us.

■ **Unity Life Enrichment Centre,** new location, 10417 Orange Blossom Blvd. S., Sebring, FL 33875; 471-1122; e-mail unity@vistanet.net. Web site, www.unityofsebring.org. 10:30 a.m. Sunday Celebration Service, Nursery and Children's Church. Weekly Classes, Christian Bookstore and Cafe, Prayer Ministry, Life Enrichment Groups. Rev. Andrew C. Conyer, senior minister transforming lives from ordinary to extraordinary.

■ **The Way Church,** 1005 N. Ridgewood Drive, Sebring. Sunday school and worship service at 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Youth activities, 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays. The Way is a church family who gathers for contemporary worship, teaching of God's Word, prayer and fellowship. Come early and stay after for fellowship time. Child care and children's church are provided. Reinhold Buxbaum is pastor. The Way – A place for you. Office Phone:471-6140, Church Cell Phone:381-6190. Email: *thewaychurch@hotmail.com*. Web site: *www.TheWayChurch.org*

PRESBYTERIAN

■ **Covenant Presbyterian Church (PCA)**, 4500 Sun 'N Lake Blvd., Sebring, 33872-2113. A Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America. Worship services: Sunday morning worship, informal, 8 a.m.; regular, 10:30 a.m. Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; Sunday evening, 6:30 p.m.; Wednesday evening Prayer Meeting, 6 p.m.; Youth Group and Kids Quest, 5:30-7 p.m.; choir practice, 7:15 p.m. Phone: 385-3234; Fax: 385-2759; e-mail: *covpres@strato.net*; Web site: *www.cpcsebring.org*. Rev. W. Darrell Arnold, pastor. Office hours: 8:30-11:30 a.m. Monday through Thursday.

■ **First Presbyterian Church ARP,** 215 E. Circle St., (two entrances on LaGrande), Avon Park, FL 33825. Phone: 453-3242. The Rev. Robert Johnson is the pastor. Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; Sunday Worship, 10:45 a.m.; Wednesday Bible study, 10:30 a.m.; Potluck dinner, 6 p.m. third Wednesday; choir practice, 6:30 p.m. each Wednesday; Esther and Mary Circles business meeting, 3:30 p.m. third Thursday; Sarah Circle business meeting, 7 p.m. second Tuesday; Women's Ministries Combined Bible study, 4 p.m. third Thursday; Family Movie, 4 p.m. third Sunday. Be a part of a warm, caring church family with traditional services, following biblical truth.

■ **First Presbyterian Church, ARP,** 319 Poinsettia Ave., Sebring, FL 33870. 385-0107. Sunday School, all ages, 9:30 a.m.; Worship Service, 11 a.m.; Tuesday: Youth Group, 6-7:30 p.m.; Senior High Youth Group, 6:30-8:15 p.m. Wednesday: Adult Bible Study, 10:30 a.m.; choir rehearsal, 5:30 p.m. Nursery available for Sunday worship. Call the church office for more information and other classes. Rev. Darrell A. Peer, pastor. Gayle Sparks, director of youth ministry.

■ **First Presbyterian Church, ARP,** *www.fpclp.com,* 118 N. Oak Ave., Lake Placid, 465-2742. The Rev. Ray Cameron, senior pastor; the Rev. Drew Severance, associate pastor. Sunday morning traditional worship is at 8:15 and 9:30 a.m.; and contemporary worship is at 11 a.m. in Friendship Hall. A variety of Sunday school classes for adults and children are at 9:45 and 11 a.m. in the educational building. Call the church office for more information about the classes offered. Nursery is provided for babies and toddlers; while young children up to second grade have a special Children's Church offered during the worship service to help them grow in their spiritual knowledge.

■ **Spring Lake Presbyterian Church (USA),** 5887 U.S. 98, Sebring, FL 33876. Sunday School, 9 a.m.; Worship Service, 10 a.m. Session meets at 6:30 p.m. the second Thursday of the month, September through June. Board of Deacon's meet at 5:30 p.m. first Monday of the month. Choir rehearses at 7 p.m. each Wednesday, September through April. Presbyterian Women meet at 10 a.m. the third Thursday of the month. Organist: Richard Wedig. Choir Director: Suzan Wedig. Church phone, 655-0713; e-mail, *springlakepc@embarqmail.com,* Web site, *http://slpc.presbychurch.org.*

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST

■ **Avon Park Seventh-day Adventist Church**, 1410 West Avon Blvd., Avon Park. Phone: 453-6641 or e-mail: *avonparksda@embarqmail.com,* Sabbath School, 9:30 a.m Saturday. Church Service 10:45 a.m. Saturday. Wednesday prayer meeting 7 p.m. Community Service hours on Tuesday and Thursday is from 9:00 a.m. till 2 p.m. A sale takes place the first Sunday of each month. Senior Pastor Paul Boling; and Associate Pastor Kameron DeVasher. Walker Memorial Academy Christian School offering education for kindergarten through 12th grades. ALL ARE WELCOME. Website is *www.discoverjesus.org*

■ **Sebring Seventh-Day Adventist Church,** 2106 N. State Road 17, Sebring; 385-2438. Worship Services: 9:15 a.m. Worship hour, 11 a.m. Prayer meeting, Tuesday, 7:15 p.m. Community service: every Monday 9-11 a.m. Health Seminar with Dr. Seralde, every Friday, 10:00 a.m. Pastor Amado Luzbet.

THE CHURCH OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

■ **The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints**, 3235 Grand Prix Drive, Sebring, FL 33870. Phone: 382-9092. Dale Bargar, bishop; David Ward, first counselor; and Steve Austin, second counselor. Family History Center: 382-1822. Sunday services: Sacrament meeting, 10 a.m.; Sunday school, 11:20 a.m.; and Priesthood/Relief Society, 12 p.m. Primary for children, 11:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. Youth activities from 7-8:20 p.m. Wednesday: 11-year-old Scouts, 7-8:20 p.m. first and third Wednesday; and activity days for 8-11 year old boys and girls from 7-8:20 p.m. second and fourth Wednesday.

THE SALVATION ARMY

■ **The Salvation Army – Center for Worship**. Sunday: Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; Holiness meeting, 11 a.m.; and Praise meeting and lunch, noon. Tuesday: Bible study, 6:30 p.m.; and Women's Ministries, 7 p.m. Wednesday: Youth Ministries, 4 p.m. All meetings are at 120 N. Ridgewood Ave., Sebring. For more information, visit the Web site *www.salvationarmysebring.com* or call Major Bruce Stefanik at 385-7548, ext. 110.

UNITED METHODIST

■ **First United Methodist Church,** 105 S. Pine St., Sebring, FL 33870. The Rev. A.C. Bryant, pastor. Traditional Worship Service at 8:10 and 10:50 a.m. in the sanctuary, Contemporary Worship in the FLC at 9:30 a.m. Sunday School at 9:30 and 10:30 a.m. Methodist Youth Fellowship at 5:30 p.m. Sundays with Rick Heilig, youth director. The 10:55 a.m. Sunday worship service is broadcast over WITS 1340 on AM dial. There is a nursery available at all services.

■ **First United Methodist Church,** 200 South Lake Avenue, Avon Park, FL 33825. (863) 453-3759, R. James Weiss, Pastor, Summer Schedule, Sunday School - 9:00 a.m., Worship - 10:30 a.m.

■ **Memorial United Methodist Church,** 500 Kent Ave., (overlooking Lake Clay) Lake Placid, FL, 33852. The Rev. Fred Ball. pastor. Claude H.L. Burnett, pastoral assistant. Sunday schedule: Heritage Worship Service, 8:30 a.m. (October-May only); School School for all ages, 9:30 a.m.; Celebration Worship Service at 10:45 a.m.; New Song worship service at 10:45 a.m. Loving nursery care provided every Sunday morning. Youth Fellowship, 5 p.m. Bible Fellowship Class, 6 p.m. (October-May only). We offer Christ-centered Sunday school classes, youth programs, Bible studies, book studies and Christian fellowship. We are a congregation that want to know Christ and make Him known. Call the church office at 465-2422 or check out our church Web site at *www.memorialumc.com*.

■ **St. John United Methodist Church,** 3214 Grand Prix Drive, Sebring, FL 33872. The Rev. Ronald De Genaro Jr., Pastor. Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday Morning Worship, 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Nursery provided for all services. Phone 382-1736. www.stjohnsebring.org

■ **Spring Lake United Methodist Church,** 8170 Cozumel Lane, (Hwy 98) Sebring. The Rev. Clyde Weaver Jr., Pastor. Worship service starts at 9:55 a.m. Bible Study meets at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday. Choir Practice at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday. Church office phone: 655-0040.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

■ **Emmanuel United Church of Christ,** where God is still speaking. 3115 Hope Street, Sebring, FL 33875 (1.8 miles west of U.S. 27 and Hammock Road). Sunday worship, 9:30 a.m.; Communion with worship first Sunday of month; Chapel Communion, 8:45 a.m. all other Sundays. All are welcome to receive the sacrament. For more information, call the church office at 471-1999 or e-mail *eucc@earthlink.net* or check the Web site *sebringemmanuelucc.com.* No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here.

New Years Eve at Chicanes

Early Bird Seatings – 12 Noon to 3pm
Dinner Seating – 4pm - 8:00pm
Special Menu

New Years Eve Party Seating Begins 9pm
Three course dinner and the party –
$75.00 per person

Party alone seating after 10pm
$25.00 cover charge
Tapas menu available

HOTEL PACKAGES

Gold *$211.00 per couple includes Hotel Room, 3 course dinner, party and breakfast for two New Years Day*
Silver Package *$111.00 per couple includes Hotel Room, party and breakfast for two New Years Day.*

NEW YEARS PARTY

Featuring Dj Mad Max, dancing, party favors, Champage toast and one complimentary house cocktail.

SEBRING'S FINEST HOTEL

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Located in Inn on the Lakes
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DIVERSIONS

Paramount Pictures

Jeff Bridges stars as Rooster Cogburn in 'True Grit.'

'True Grit' a screwball western

CHRISTY LEMIRE
AP Movie Critic

"True Grit" is one of the most mainstream, crowd-pleasing films Joel and Ethan Coen have ever made.

It's sort of a screwball Western, if you will, with vivid performances and strikingly vast, picturesque vistas, the always gorgeous work of the always great Roger Deakins, the Coens' frequent cinematographer.

But it's a minor entry from the writing-directing brothers, especially when you consider the inventiveness and strength of their canon and the close aesthetic resemblance to "No Country for Old Men," their masterpiece. While "True Grit" is entertaining, it's also surprisingly lacking in emotional resonance, as well as the intriguing sense of ambiguity that so often permeates Coen pictures. Only toward the end does it feel like anything is at stake, but at least it's enjoyable while you're waiting.

Based on the title, this would seem like a remake of the 1969 Western that earned John Wayne his only Academy Award, for best actor. But the Coens were actually more interested in creating a truer version of the original source material, Charles Portis' novel of the same name.

The absurd humor that is one of the Coens' trademarks exists here alongside the kinds of quick bursts of violence that often erupt in their films. And the dialogue is so Coens-y: the specificity of the word choices; the cadence of the exchanges; the repetition of certain phrases.

Movie Review

'True Grit'

Rating: PG-13 (some intense sequences of violence, disturbing images)
Running time: 110 minutes
Review: ★★★ (of 4)

And while Jeff Bridges is stepping into a role so closely associated with The Duke, he infuses it with unmistakable shadings of The Dude.

Bridges plays U.S. Marshal Rooster Cogburn as a guy who is gruff and grizzled, lived a long and well-lubricated life, but who has also attained a certain Zen-like self-possession about it. There's a pleasingly shambling way about him, an easygoing ramble to his storytelling. He even says the word "abide" at one point. If you're a fan — or even an "achiever" — it will make you smile.

That's just part of what makes this version of "True Grit" so amusing, though. There's also Bridges' competitive interplay with Matt Damon, a bit of a buffoon as a preening Texas Ranger, which Damon plays with some of the same goofy humor he showed last year in "The Informant!" It's yet another reminder that he can do anything.

But the real revelation is Hailee Steinfeld, making her astonishingly self-assured film debut as Mattie Ross, the 19th-century pioneer girl who sets the story's action in motion. She was only 13 when she shot the movie, and to say she holds her own with Bridges, Damon, Josh Brolin and the rest of the cast would be an understatement. She dominates "True Grit" — carries the film, practically — handling the difficult language as well as the physical challenges with equal aplomb.

The determined, puritanical Mattie intends to find her father's killer, a wanderer named Tom Chaney (Brolin, the "No Country" star who doesn't appear here nearly enough). She uses her formidable wit and unshakable sense of right and wrong to persuade pretty much whomever she wants to do whatever she wants, as evidenced by an early scene in which she goes toe-to-toe with a veteran horse trader (Dakin Matthews, who's perfect in just a couple of scenes).

'Fockers' is house guest that just won't leave

By DAVID GERMAIN
AP Movie Writer

Meet "Little Fockers," the latest in Robert De Niro and Ben Stiller's comedy franchise. Grit your teeth through the fairly short though agonizing duration of its stay.

Then wave goodbye in relief as its huge cast of characters departs like the annoying in-laws they are.

"Meet the Parents" from 2000 was a tolerable trifle and 2004's "Meet the Fockers" was a bloated bore. But "Little Fockers" is tasteless trash, filled with abysmally unfunny gags involving vomit, enemas, erectile dysfunction and the like as De Niro's Byrnes clan and Stiller's Focker family stumble through another mindless reunion.

The only positive thing De Niro, Stiller and such co-stars as Barbra Streisand, Dustin Hoffman, Jessica Alba and Owen Wilson honestly could say about "Little Fockers" is that they were paid well.

Jay Roach, who directed the first two movies, only produces this time, with Paul Weitz filling in as director on "Little Fockers."

Weitz's past work ranges from sweet and sharp ("About a Boy") to gross but edgy ("American Pie"). He's delivered an awful mess here, working from a witless screenplay credited to John Hamburg, co-writer of the first two movies and a producer on this one, and Larry Stuckey, an associate producer on "Meet the Fockers."

A string of dumb episodes, "Little Fockers" strains to find new reasons for De Niro's father-in-law from hell Jack Byrnes to revive his suspicions about Stiller's Greg Focker, the male nurse his darling daughter Pam (Teri Polo) has chosen for a mate.

It all goes down as Jack and his wife (Blythe Danner) visit Greg and Pam for the birthday bash of the couple's twins. Ex-CIA agent Jack resumes his surveillance of Greg, who has an innocent flirtation with a gorgeous pharmaceutical rep (Alba) peddling Sustengo, a new drug to treat impotence.

Movie Review

'Little Fockers'

Rating: PG-13 (mature sexual humor throughout, language and some drug content)
Running time: 98 minutes
Review: ★½ (of 4)

Really. This is what the filmmakers expect you to pay to see.

Wilson is back as Pam's old flame, doing the same passive-aggressive pining and whining he did in the first two movies.

Streisand and Hoffman return as Greg's touchy-feely parents, whose sexual frankness again leaves the upright Jack unsettled.

Laura Dern joins the cast in a pointless role as head of a school that Greg and Pam are considering for their kids. A confrontation between De Niro and Harvey Keitel as Greg's housing contractor could have been a real hoot given the long history between the two actors, pals since their early days in Martin Scorsese films. But it's just stiff, awkward and humorless, like the rest of the movie.

The jokes are beyond lame, including a terrible play on words involving "The Godfather" that apparently had the filmmakers in stitches, since the movie repeats it so often. There's even a dreadful, prolonged "Jaws" gag (the same studio made both movies, so at least the "Fockers" gang could poach the "Jaws" theme music on the cheap).

It's remarkable so many stars could be lured into this rubbish, no matter how big the paychecks.

But then, Hoffman initially said no to reprising his role, coming on board only after most of "Little Fockers" had been shot.

His scenes were added later, pairing him mostly with Streisand and Stiller, then clumsily interspersed amid the main action.

Hopefully, there will be no call for any of the actors to repeat their roles after this. Let's pray these in-laws never come to visit again

SUDOKU

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

Level: Intermediate

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

ANSWER:

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

Small acts of kindness can give hope

Dear Abby

Dear Abby: From time to time you print letters about random acts of kindness. May I share something that happened to me? On Jan. 30, 2009, my husband and I took our three kids to a restaurant for breakfast to celebrate our twins' fourth birthday. When it was time to pay our bill, the waiter told us that a couple who had been sitting behind us had taken care of our tab.

What that couple didn't know was that the day before, my doctor had informed me a lump in my neck was probably lymphoma and that he needed to do a biopsy as soon as possible. He had wanted me to meet with a surgeon that morning, but I told him no. It was the twins' birthday, and I didn't want them to associate their birthday with the day Mommy got sick.

What that couple did was more than pay for our meal; it gave me hope. I felt it was a sign that everything would be "taken care of." To pay it forward, we left the waiter a large tip.

I did end up with Hodgkin's disease, but I have been in remission since August 2009.

– Blessed in Wisconsin

Dear Blessed: Your letter made me smile. Your hope was rewarded and everything was "taken care of." And because Hodgkin's lymphoma is a treatable cancer, I hope you will continue to enjoy good health for many decades to come.

Dear Abby: I have a big problem. My father refuses to spend time with me. He is a firefighter and says he has a busy schedule. I understand that. But when he has extra time, he will find anything else to do. I tried talking to him – it was like talking to a brick wall.

My mom has comforted me a lot, but I feel there is something missing in my life. That missing part is my dad. Please help me to figure out how I can make the situation better.

– Girl in Need in Baltimore

Dear Girl in Need: You have already done as much as you can. It is now up to your mother and/or your grandparents to help your father understand that there is more to being a parent than providing financial support. I hope he gets the message before it's too late – for him, not you.

Dear Abby: An odd custom is beginning to surface in my local church. Showers for new brides and new mothers are being announced from the pulpit at Sunday services. All church members are invited to attend, and in one or two instances even told what to bring for gifts.

I have always understood that showers are given by close friends, relatives, associates, etc. Just what is proper procedure for this? How does one respond to these "open" invitations? I have not responded. Am I wrong? Please help.

– Socially Naive in South Carolina

Dear Socially Naive: You are not wrong; you are correct. Approach your pastor and ask why this is being done. If the reason is that the bride-to-be or mother-to-be is financially needy, and you would like to contribute, then attend the showers. If not, then treat the announcement as you would any open invitation. If you choose not to attend, you are not obligated to give a gift.

P.S. I agree with you. It is an "odd" custom.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069. Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: 'Abby's Favorite Recipes' and 'More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby.' Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $12 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in price.)

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2:00 4:30 7:00 9:30
FASTER R
(The Rock)
2:15 4:15 7:15 9:15
UNSTOPPABLE PG13
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Home maintenance calendar

Just a few simple projects a month, and you can make this the year your house stays in tip-top shape

BY JOAN MORRIS/CONTRA COSTA TIMES

JANUARY

New year, fresh start. Instead of making resolutions, make a list of projects you want to complete this year, then post it somewhere that you'll see it every day. Nothing like a little guilt to motivate you. Be careful when taking down those holiday decorations. Pack and label the boxes, invest in some Christmas light reels to keep those strands tidy — you'll thank us later — and take some time to cull out any broken ornaments or decorations you don't care for.

FEBRUARY

You know what's romantic? Fixing that leaky toilet. Well, no, it's not, but it will be more appreciated than that $26 box of chocolates. To check for leaks, add a drop or two of food coloring in the tank at bedtime. If the water in the bowl is tinged the same color, your flapper is leaking. It's an easy fix by replacing the mechanism. And while you're in a bathroom state of mind, how about replacing those old shower heads with low-flow models? Check with your water provider for deals or discounts. A few minutes of work can save a lot of water — and money — throughout the year.

MARCH

Can you feel it? Spring is just around the corner. Time to get the house and yard ready for the warm weather and sunshine. Start by fixing window screens, repairing sagging fences and arbors, and making sure your deck is shipshape. Now would be a good time to give the deck a good cleaning and a fresh coat of sealer. Check for dry and rotted wood. Consider renting a power washer to scrub the deck, siding, driveway and even your house. And here's something we don't think about often: the mailbox. Do you need a new one? Or maybe the old one would look better with a new paint job? Stretch those creative muscles and paint a unique design.

APRIL

A fresh coat of paint can brighten up the old homestead. Not up to painting? Then get outside and scrub that aluminum siding and wash down the stucco. While you're at it, check for damage. Fixing cracks and breaks now can prevent trouble down the road. And as long as we're in a cleaning mood, those windows can use a wash (use newspaper to wash and dry for a streak-free finish). Inside, clean your blinds, ceiling fans and heating/air conditioning vents. Schedule a checkup on your heating and cooling system.

MAY

Ah, May. Memorial Day. Backyard barbecues. Smart you, working on your deck in the spring. Now it's time to pull out the Weber and fire up the grill. But before striking a match, remove rust from the grill with a little elbow grease and a stiff brush. Freshen up the trim on your home, wash off your driveway and check for damage that may have worsened over the winter. This also would be a good time to check the foundation around your home and crawl space, looking for signs of termite damage. You also can expect to find ants out and about. Keep them out of your home by sealing cracks and putting bait traps around. Be careful using them around children and pets.

JUNE

Before you hang the stars and stripes for Flag Day, check your flagpole holder to make sure it's still secure. As we reach the midway point in the year, check that list of projects you made in January. How are you doing? Rethink the list by moving some projects to the bottom, some to the top and adding a few more. Then look at all those "once a year" chores, such as cleaning behind the refrigerator and vacuuming coils, checking and replacing, if needed, the water hoses to the washing machine, checking for leaks under the sinks and dishwasher, and testing circuit breakers. If you haven't already, label the breakers so you'll know what switch controls what part of the house.

JULY

We may be cranking up the air conditioner this month, so make sure the condensation drip tube flows freely. And take the time to update your emergency kit. Don't have one? Then make one. Experts recommend a three-day supply of drinking water and food you don't have to refrigerate or cook; first aid supplies; a portable NOAA weather radio; a wrench and other basic tools; a flashlight; work gloves; emergency cooking equipment; portable lanterns; fresh batteries for each piece of equipment; clothing; blankets; baby items; prescription medications; extra car and house keys; extra eyeglasses; credit cards and cash; important documents, including insurance policies.

AUGUST

If you're planning a vacation this month, update your security with door and window alarms, motion-sensor lights and timers. Don't forget to stop newspaper and mail deliveries, and ask a trusted neighbor to keep an eye on things. Give them contact information in case there's an emergency. If you're planning a staycation, how about devoting a few hours to organize your gardening and household tools in your garage or shed. Sell or donate tools that you aren't using. Seriously? How many drills and rusty pruners does one person need?

SEPTEMBER

Take a look at your landscape with an eye toward safety. Your trees grew this spring and summer. Are they crowding power lines or brushing against your roof? Contact a professional to trim them. Check for plants growing too close to the foundation. They can encourage insect damage, weaken the foundation or create a fire hazard. And as loath as we are to admit it, cooler weather is just around the corner. Caulk windows and doors, add weather stripping and new sweeps on doors, and check to see if you've got enough insulation in your attic or crawl spaces and that loose insulation isn't blocking vents.

OCTOBER

Ugh, it's time to clean those gutters and downspouts. For fun, replace a downspout with a decorative "rain chain." A rain barrel or two wouldn't go amiss, either. Time to start wrapping up the house for the coming winter, and don't forget the hot water heater. If it's warm to the touch and in an unheated garage or utility room, invest in an insulating blanket. Decorators may hate those ceiling fans, but they can help move warm air around your house. Reverse the fans to blow upward in the winter, pushing warm air across the ceiling and down the walls.

NOVEMBER

You may have some unexpected company this month, and we're not talking about crazy Uncle Harry and Aunt Prudence. We're talking, gulp, mice and rats who will be looking for a home in your garage and house. Seal holes in the foundation — especially those around pipes and wires — and look for places where they might sneak in. An easy way is to plug holes with steel wool. Make sure doors fit at the bottom. Have your fireplace and chimney inspected and cleaned before lighting fires. Test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, and replace batteries.

DECEMBER

The first rule of hanging holiday lights and decorations: "Stay off the roof." Not only is it dangerous to be up there, you can damage tiles and create leaks in the roof. Don't hammer directly into the roof to secure decorations; you're only asking for problems when it starts raining. If you followed our advice in January about storing lights and decorations, you'll be thanking us now when it's much easier to work with them. But still be mindful of damaged cords and old lights that may malfunction. Consider replacing older lights with newer LED lights that are safer and more energy efficient.

REID BROWN/SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS /MCT