



Seminole Voice



UCF beauty > 8
Second Knight in two years crowned Miss Florida



Stage dream > 9
This local actress is a role model for girls



Kickoff > 14
High school football across the county starts Friday

www.SeminoleVoice.com

August 27 – September 9, 2010

Free!

Big night for Seminole

SARAH WILSON
GUEST REPORTER

On Tuesday, newcomer John Horan just barely edged out incumbent Michael McLean to secure the Seminole County Commission District 2 seat.

Friends, family and supporters of Horan's flocked to his home in Winter Springs to watch the voting results.

People crowded around a laptop perched on the kitchen counter crunching the numbers as each precinct's results was reported.

"We're 680 ahead with six precincts left!" someone shouted, sending the nearly 30 people in attendance into jubilation with hugs, cheers and applause.

Horan, however, insisted it wasn't over until it was over and brushed off the congratulations until, he said, it was official.

The countdown continued until just after 9:10 p.m. when it became official, by only 593 votes, the Winter Springs lawyer had beaten out incumbent McLean.

"It feels very, very good, I'm very relieved," Horan said. "It was obviously a very, very close race."

As he spoke to those in attendance, arms around his son JR and wife Joette, you could hear both the relief and gratitude in his

> turn to SEMINOLE on PAGE 3



Adams clinches it

PHOTO BY MICHAEL CLINTON — THE VOICE

Florida Rep. Sandy Adams, right, hugs a friend after winning her bid for U.S. Representative District 24 Republican nomination.

Adams wins by just 600 votes, while Brodeur and Altman win easily in races

MICHAEL CLINTON
AND ISAAC BABCOCK
THE VOICE

In the Republican primary for U.S. Representative in District 24, it was a nail-biter between State Rep. Sandy Adams and former

Winter Park Commissioner Karen Diebel, who were within one percentage point of each other four hours after the polls closed. Adams prevailed.

The District 33 representative and former Orange County deputy gathered

with supporters at her Oviedo campaign office on Tuesday night, just miles north of the University of Central Florida.

Everyone was huddled around a tiny television watching and waiting as the poll results came in. After

a back and forth struggle, Adams edged out Diebel by less than 600 votes.

Adams waited until the last minute to accept what her supporters had been alluding to all night, that she, in fact, had won.

> turn to ELECTION on PAGE 3

It's a mall, not a market

Merchants hope new signs and name change will bring more business to Oviedo

JENNY ANDREASSON
THE VOICE

A small change can make a world of difference.

That's what the Oviedo Marketplace merchants are hoping for with the replacement of the word "Marketplace" with "Mall" on the signs at the Red Bug Lake Road exit of Highway 417.

Jim Pridemore, president of the Oviedo Marketplace Merchants Association, said that for the last 11 years, when travelers saw the word "Marketplace" they thought it was

a farmers market, which led many to pass the shopping mall by.

"I know that for a good five years, I had many customers and friends and merchants share the same concern that they wanted that sign changed," Pridemore said.

He was particularly worried that Europeans and Canadians would misconstrue the meaning of the sign and then pass it by on their way to the theme parks from the Orlando Sanford International Air-

> turn to MALL on PAGE 4



PHOTO COURTESY OF JIM PRIDEMORE

Fearing that some customers might pass it by, merchants at the Oviedo Marketplace renamed their freeway signs.

USPS 008-093
Publisher statement on page 5.

What's goin' on?

The UCF "Give for the Gulf" concert will be held from noon to 7 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 28 at the Memory Mall grassy area.

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Cinema > Page 16

A group of criminals pull off perfect bank robberies, but one tenacious detective is determined to catch them. When the crooks risk it all for one last job, they just might get caught.



THIS WEEK



THIS WEEK in history

Aug. 27, 1883 —
 Krakatoa, a small Indonesian island, explodes as the volcano that inhabits the island erupts. The explosions could be heard over 3,000 miles away. An estimated 36,000 people died from the volcanic eruption.

Banks optimistic through chaos

With customers looking for new ways to save and borrow, banks are rushing to adapt to changes

KAREN MCENANY-PHILLIPS
 THE VOICE

for our customers who are struggling.”

Local community banks remain optimistic that careful business practices and strong community ties will be enough to steer them through the financial chaos nearly two years after the national bail outs.

Central Florida is faring slightly better than Tampa, Miami and Jacksonville included in the top five U.S. markets in free fall whose economic indicators ‘have gone from bad to worse with no signs of recovery,’ according to Forbes.com.

Citizens Bank of Florida

Customers now look for different qualities in a bank, according to Rick Lee, President and CEO. “Before the recession people were chasing the best interest rates, now they look for customer service, strength and stability.”

To assess the strength of a bank Lee suggests consumers review websites like bankrate.com, FDIC.gov and bauerfinancial.com. Citizens Bank of Florida and Commerce National Bank & Trust of Florida are two of a handful of banks in the Orlando area with a four-star designation by Bauer Financial.

“We have always been careful with arranging loans. I’d like to see an end to the too-big-to-fail policies which got us into this mess,” said Lee, who anticipates some impact from additional regulations when the upcoming Financial Regulation Bill is passed by Congress.

Lee bears in mind that behind the statistics are stories of citizens trying to deal with economic hardships. “We have to be focused and have a heart

Commerce National Bank & Trust of Florida

President Ray Colado said customers like that they operate and solve problems at the local level. “When customers find their way to a community bank they don’t go back. Our customers’ problems are solved right here in Winter Park Florida, and there is value to that,” he said.

Colado believes problem loans without short term solutions will influence more bank failures in the state and the country.

Colado’s bank is still lending but keeping an eye on the percent of problem loans to capital. Banks are regulated by that percent and may come under federal scrutiny if the percent is too high. Colado said, “When that percent rises, it is much harder on the next person who comes in my office with a problem loan and on us to not raise the percent.”

Colado explained that two years ago some of these loans would have been acceptable but today must be categorized as problem loans. “The bank and the auditors should have more flexibility to work things out because as a small bank we virtually know all the customers. In these times it is prudent business and customer service.”

Federal Trust Bank

After several months of negotiation, Federal Trust Bank was able to secure The Hartford as its sole shareholder which was great news for President



ARCHIVE PHOTO BY ISAAC BABCOCK — THE VOICE

Risky banking practices that led to failures and bailouts have led customers to look for more solid, smaller banks.

and CEO Dennis Ward. “This has helped us address issues and think positively about the future,” Ward said.

Headquartered in Sanford with 11 locations across five Central Florida counties, FTB knows its community customers from Winter Park to Palm Coast and Eustis to Port Orange. “We’ve learned that if we know the people we’re dealing with, it makes the interaction much more productive. It’s incredibly helpful for a bank to know its customers which larger institutions can’t do.”

The 35-year banking veteran hopes to see more regulation for other players in the banking services industry like rating agencies and mortgage brokers. He hopes that the legislators will be thoughtful about the impact and benefit of future regulations on the consumer.

“There can be unintended consequences on borrowers,” Ward said. The former CEO of Regions Bank has seen a change in what customers look for in a bank. “No one paid much attention to their bank before, it was a commodity, now they are more discerning.”

First Colony Bank

CEO Bruce May experienced the customer shift to community banks since First Colony’s recent opening in 2008.

“Because of failing and closing banks due to fraud and loan problems there has been a huge shift

toward community banks. When you know the Board of Directors personally and what they stand for, it makes a difference,” said May.

Technology has also leveled the playing field for community banks as customers depend less on multiple brick and mortar locations and more on debit cards, scanning, remote deposit capture and online banking.

May remains optimistic about Maitland’s economy and growth.

“We want to continue to be good stewards to our shareholders and do loans that make sense. There is always an opportunity for good buys especially in real estate for those who have resources. May predicts 2010 will be more challenging because many businesses used up their rainy day funds in 2009.

“I do expect to see more bank consolidations.”

May would like to see existing regulations applied more consistently and for the free market to work.

Community banks value the unique relationships formed with customers

“You earn your money by how you handle a mistake. We are not bound by policies of a complex corporate structure, so our employees can often make on the spot decisions,” he said. “There are no layers between us and the customers we see every day. This is a satisfying way to do business.”

Economist point of view

Sean Snaith, director of the University of Central Flori-

da’s Institute for Economic Competitiveness believes that “although many community banks are on solid ground there will be more failures before the banking crisis is over.”

The commercial real estate fallout will be the aftershock from the residential real estate crisis and has not fully manifested itself, Snaith said. Developers are beginning to run out of money as businesses find rent difficult to pay resulting in empty retail space. Snaith views it as a wave poised to crash as the number of real estate foreclosures accelerate this year and into 2011.

Snaith described the last year as a historic episode in our economic lifetime. “A lot of it was shocking but there have been no new twists or turns in the last six months.”

Snaith said the labor market will remain in a troubled state throughout the 2010 and improve in 2011. He sees professional white collar jobs coming back in the health sector as well as in higher tech manufacturing like high speed rail.



Local banks

<p>Citizens Bank of Florida www.mycbfl.com 407-365-6611</p>	<p>Federal Trust Bank www.federaltrust.com 407-323-1121</p>
<p>Commerce National Bank & Trust of Florida www.cnbt-fl.com 407-622-8181</p>	<p>First Colony Bank www.firstcolonybank.net 407-740-0401</p>

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ELECTION | Diebel nearly upset veteran District 33 representative

< continued from the front page

She is prepared to continue her campaign, as she will face incumbent Suzanne Kosmas in the November general election.

"We have done the right thing, and will continue to do the right thing," Adams said.

At the end of a long campaign, Diebel said she was happy to be at her victory party.

"It feels great to be here with my family and all the people who supported me," Diebel said. "I'd do this all again in a heartbeat."

In the Democratic primary, Kosmas faced former Winter Springs Mayor Paul Partyka and won in a landslide.

Kosmas reeled in nearly 17,000 more votes than Partyka, much to the delight of the congresswoman, who was celebrating with family and supporters in New Smyrna Beach.

"I am excited to be here with family and supporters," she said.

But she does want to send a message to the voters in the district that she appreciates their realization that this is a critical election for

Florida.

"We are prepared to do everything to help people realize that there is a clear choice," she said.

State District 24

In the lightly contested Florida State Senate District 24 race, Republican incumbent Thad Altman handily defeated GOP primary challenger Bart Carmichael by a gap of 68 percent to 32 percent.

State District 33

Florida House District 33 cuts a wide swath across Seminole County, and Jason Brodeur is a step closer to being its next representative after defeating Alice Sterling and James Decocq by a broad margin. Brodeur won with 51 percent of the vote. The remaining minority was split between Sterling and Decocq.

Brodeur was running for the seat held by Sandy Adams, who was term limited out of the district she's represented for eight years.

In the Libertarian primary for Florida House District 33, frequent candidate Franklin Perez won with 72 percent of the vote over Ellen Paul's 28 percent.



PHOTO BY ISAAC BABCOCK — THE VOICE

Supporters for Jason Brodeur and Jeff Dowdy wave to passersby on election day Tuesday.

SEMINOLE | Oviedo amendment passes

< continued from the front page

voice.

His wife stood, her eyes glassy, as her husband spoke. It was the Horan family's first endeavor in running for public office.

"Little by little I learned each week what had to be done ... everything that was happening, I was new to it, but then I realized 'I can do this!'" Joette said, reaffirming herself. "I'm glad it's a victory party," she added with a laugh.

Horan's speech was interrupted consistently by his cell phone ringing — each time blaring the fight song to his alma mater, Notre Dame. He stopped to answer three times, once from election officials confirming the victory, again for his mother and once more for a congratulatory concession call from McLean.

"As you can tell by the margin of victory, it's very difficult to take on an incumbent," Horan said with a laugh. "It was a very difficult race and I had a lot of help and a lot of good people helping me, and now it's going to be up to me to live up to those expectations and represent the people who voted for me and those who didn't, as well."

County Commission District 4

In District 4, incumbent Carlton Henley won his bid to keep his seat, earning 47 percent of the vote. Henley said he was thankful to the people of Seminole County for re-electing him to the Commission seat.

"I am certainly grateful that the people sought to return me to office for another four-year term," he said. "It's been an honor to serve the people."

Henley beat out challengers Don Epps, who received 33 percent of the vote, and Win Adams, who won 19 percent.

"I certainly look forward to trying to deal with the challenges that

we are going to face in the next four years," Henley said.

Oviedo

Oviedo asked for \$36 million in revenue bonds to purchase water treatment facilities from Alafaya Utilities, and successfully persuaded voters to let the city do it. That charter amendment passed with 64 percent of the vote.

Casselberry

In Casselberry an incumbent city commissioner retained her seat. Susan Doerner was running for her third term in office against challenger Craig Tull. She won with 61 percent of the vote.

School Board

Two school board district seats were up for grabs in Tuesday's election.

Karen Almond won a narrow 52 percent vote against Paul J. Ackerman, who earned 48 percent. She'll take the District 2 seat formerly held for 20 years by Sandra Robinson, who decided not to run for re-election this year.

The District 5 seat was upended as longtime school board district representative Jeanne Morris fell by a wide margin to her challengers. Tina Calderone got nearly 41 percent of the vote, followed by Becky Erwin with 38 percent and Morris with 21 percent. A runoff between Calderone and Erwin will be held Nov. 2.

County Judge

In his third bid for a judgeship, Longwood workman's compensation lawyer Fred Schott won the County Court Judge Group 3 seat, with 36 percent of the vote. His next closest competitor, Debra Krause, earned 28 percent of the vote.

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These are a few of my favorite things



While I was driving home the other day, the radio was playing "My Favorite Things" from "The Sound of Music", which was very appropriate as it was thundering, lightning and raining like crazy. I'm sorry to say that these are not a few of my favorite things — the rain I'll take but leave out the rest and include the heat along with Mr. Thunder. Well, you must admit the rain is doing great for our lawns, gardens and whatever.

Did you happen to notice the Oviedo Historical Society's Lawton House? The city has been working like crazy on the area surrounding the house with a new walkway to the park behind the house, new furnishings in the park and new hanging plants on the house's front porch. The place looks lovely, and we should all thank the

city. I am not sure exactly when Friendship Park will be open for public use, but I am sure it will be in the next couple of weeks.

Congratulations Jim Weber, my youngest son, on completing The Battle at Fort Desoto Triathlon — Publix FFW#7 at St. Petersburg on Saturday, Aug. 21. Jim completed the race in one hour and 15 minutes with an overall placement of 342 out of 736, gender placement of 245 out of 417 and category placement of 28 out of 50. Jim has been doing these triathlons for a while and trains mainly on the weekends. His mom is proud.

Goodies for sale

How about joining the crowd on Saturday, Aug. 28 by visiting Palm Valley community to attend the Flea Market and Bake Sale?

The event will be held in their clubhouse from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. I am assured there will be lots of good buys and goodies for sale. Breakfast and lunch will be sold, and this is definitely open to the public.

Volunteers needed

Help! Volunteers are need at the thrift store and food pantry run by the HOPE Foundation, whose mission is to prevent and reduce homelessness by helping people become self-sufficient through Housing, Outreach, Prevention and Education. The group seeks adults who can volunteer at least twice a month for 3-4 hours at a time. The store is open Mondays through Saturdays. Please visit www.helpforthehomeless.net for an application or orientation information or call 407-366-3422 and ask for Karol.

Making jewelry

Do you like jewelry? Well then come and learn to make earrings, bracelets and necklaces in the new Jewelry Making Class taught by Linda Courtney at the Rural Heritage Center, located in the

Historic Geneva School House on First and Main Streets, Geneva. Class is from 10-11:30 a.m. and the cost is \$15 with all supplies provided. To sign up, e-mail genevaschoolhouse@gmail.com or call 407-729-1449.

Concert time

Don't forget St. Luke's Concert Series from 2-7 p.m. on Sept. 11 at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 2021 W. State Road 426, Oviedo. The Brass Band of Central Florida will present an "American Salute", featuring a program rich with patriotic overtones. Admission is free. If you need more information, please call 407-365-3408.

It's date night

Date Night at the Gardens starts at 8:30 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 3 and Oct. 1 at Harry P. Leu Gardens, 1920 N. Forest Ave., Orlando. See a feature film on one of the largest outdoor screens in Central Florida, which is set up in the botanical gardens. The gates open at 6 p.m. Bring a dinner picnic basket, blanket or chairs. Concessions will also be sold. The cost is \$7 plus tax for adults, \$2 plus tax for a

child and free for Garden members.

Business plans 101

A small-business seminar will be held from 1-2:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 16 at the north branch of the Seminole County Public Library, 310 N. Division St., Oviedo.

The Seminole County Public Library Systems, a joint venture with the Small Business Development Center at the Seminole State College of Florida, offers "Business Plans 101", which covers the essentials for creating a blueprint for new business success. Advance registration is required. Admission is free. For more information, please call 407-665-1505.

A thought

"I have learned that everyone can use a prayer." —H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

TALK TO JANET

Send word to Janet Foley about events and let her know what's going on around town by e-mailing celerystalks@bellsouth.net.

MALL | Store owners hopeful that new management will bring big events

< continued from the front page

port. Now he hopes they will know there's a place to shop off Red Bug Lake Road. He said locals will also get a constant reminder to support their local retail center, which has been struggling in a dismal economy.

The word change happened on both the southbound and northbound approaches to the exit, including at the exit itself. There's also a mini directional sign once you get to Red Bug Lake Road.

At first, the Seminole County Expressway Authority wanted the city to pay

for new signs, which would have cost about \$17,000 each, for a total of \$68,000. But the city can't spend public money on private interests, said Oviedo engineer Tom Radzai, who spearheaded the project.

"We worked back and forth and ended up doing an overlay," Radzai said. "We just took a piece of sign and put a label on that and attached it to the existing sign."

The price was right, thanks to Eric Gordon at Florida's Turnpike Enterprise.

"They didn't even charge us anything," he said.

Oviedo Mayor Dominic Persampiere got the ball rolling on the project about a year ago.

"Anything the city can do to help the mall out," he said. "I'm just happy we were able to get this done. I wish we could have gotten it done a bit quicker."

Pridemore said he suggested it to mall management for the past three years, but it didn't go anywhere. Then he found out he didn't need the management's permission to make the change because the mall doesn't own the signs.

"I don't think they didn't want to do it, but it was not

high on the local manager's priority list," he said.

New management

The Oviedo Marketplace is managed by its owner, General Growth Properties, which is undergoing Ch. 11 bankruptcy protection.

On Wednesday, GGP registered a spinoff company, Spinco, which will become a separate company from GGP and will gain control over a group of properties, including the Oviedo Marketplace, according to an Aug. 18 SEC filing. Altamonte Mall, another GGP property, is not on the list. Brookfield Asset Man-

agement, one of several investors helping GGP exit bankruptcy, will initially run Spinco.

Merchants hope they can convince the new management that continuous and reoccurring community events held there are the key to turning things around.

Pridemore has been pushing management to hire a full-time event coordinator, and he said with Brookfield coming in, he's going to solicit to fill that position himself.

"I've basically been doing it for a year and a half anyway," he said with a laugh.



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STETSON'S CORNER

By Karen McEnany-Phillips

Afternoon storms are occurring more frequently now that we're in the later stages of summer and when those Gulf and Atlantic systems collide over us, the rain can be torrential.

Ms. Imogene Yarborough told me recently that big drops mean the rain will pass quickly, while small drops last longer. But even fast-moving rainstorms demand our full attention when driving through them, especially in steady traffic.

Driving home through these downpours, I've noticed a disturbing trend: many folks drive in the rain without their headlights

on. This is of concern on roads such as State Road 46 A and State Road 46 where the after-work traffic is heavy, semi-trucks abound and passing can be frequent. The silver sprays of the big rigs and dump trucks on portions of the road with standing water can easily obscure a driver's vision.

Florida law requires that low-beam headlights be turned on from sunset to sunrise, including twilight and in rain, smoke and fog. This means low-beam headlights, not parking lights or flashers. Flashing hazard lights are only to be used when the car is dis-

abled or pulled onto the side of the road. The reason for this is that flashers disable the turn signals and make it impossible for an oncoming driver to know if you are pumping your breaks or are fully disabled.

These are surely basic tips, but important ones, and they should be shared with all driving members of your household, especially your teens. Be sure they know how to clear fogged-up windows quickly and understand how to safely adjust their speed and braking on wet pavement. The next eight weeks will most likely be soggy ones, so let's all be safe on our roads.

Spin your partner

One way to stay safe on Sunday afternoons this fall is to join the new square dancing class with the BrenDon Squares at the Rural Heritage Center

in Geneva. Throughout the year, we applaud the BrenDon Squares for all they do in the community and for their genuine, heartfelt and significant contributions to our rural heritage. Whether you come as a couple, an individual or with a friend, mark Sunday, Sept. 12 at 2 p.m. on your calendar and come see what square dancing is all about.

Don Whittaker is a nationally known square dance caller who settled his family here in the greater Geneva area and folks couldn't be happier. Don and his lovely wife, Brenda, seem like they have been here for years. As Don says, it's a great excuse to hold hands, get some exercise and forget your troubles while you are learning the rhythms and moves of a true American art form.

The two hours will truly fly by as you dance on the beautiful wood floors of

our own Rural Heritage Center. Don is an amazing talent not only as a caller but as a patient teacher. He's seen it all — the clumsy and the coordinated, the smooth and the stumblers. In the beginners' class, everyone pretty much starts on an even dancing field, and you'll all giggle together when you turn the wrong way, bump into each other and look equally confused. My favorite line from Don is, "No honey, your other left." He's probably said that thousands of times in his career, so don't worry, you won't be the first. How he can direct dozens of novice dancers simultaneously never ceases to amaze me.

Check out www.brendonsquares.com and the video on You Tube for more information on this fun opportunity. For a list of many other great activities at the Rural Heritage Center, a k a the original Geneva Schoolhouse, visit www.genevaschoolhouse.org. You'll find classes on food preservation, dulcimer playing, basket weaving, stained glass and many more. Consider joining the Rural Heritage Center as a paid member so these classes and this wonderful building can continue to enrich our rural community.

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TALK TO KAREN

Please share your thoughts about Geneva at **407-221-7002**, kphillips@observernewspapers.com with "Stetson's Corner" in the subject line, or **fax 407-349-2800**. Thanks!

This column is dedicated to Deputy Sheriff Gene "Stetson" Gregory, killed in the line of duty on July 8, 1998. Geneva will never be the same because of Deputy Gregory — it will be better.

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Video stores to pawnshops

Locally owned La Familia Pawn Shops benefits from Blockbuster's woes — First of a two-part series

SARAH WILSON
GUEST REPORTER

Royal blue and fluorescent yellow paint still edge the building at the corner of the strip mall. People mill in and out; some bringing along items to return, while others come looking for something new to take home.

Inside, merchandise is stacked, sorted and sectioned throughout the orderly aisles and televisions still border the expansive room flickering scenes of yesterday's hit movies.

A middle-aged woman aimlessly peruses the store's DVD collection in the far back corner. At her side is a shop employee just waiting to make a suggestion, to her left — a display case of diamond rings, locket necklaces and brand-name watches; to her right — an aisle lined with buzz saws and power drills.

Blockbuster may have gone through some major business restructuring recently, but handsaws have not become the new rental item.

Central Florida-based La Familia Pawn Shops have made this, and other former Blockbuster retail locations throughout Florida and Puerto Rico, its new home.

"They're providing a great opportunity for us to take over; they're in great spots. We need about 6,000 to 8,000 square feet, so they

meet our needs. So they're available and they meet our needs — this is good!" said La Familia owner and CEO John Thedford, clapping his hands.

This first Central Florida location, located on Curry Ford Road in Orlando, is one of as many as 20 stores he hopes to open by year's end. He estimates that one-third of them will end up in former Blockbuster video rental stores.

According to a Blockbuster press release, 342 locations nationwide closed up shop from Jan. 3 to April 4.

About a year ago, in this same building, you would have found candies and popcorn lining the counter, but now there are guitars, a ukulele and even an accordion on display behind the registers.

What happens, however, when a family comes out in search of the newest movie releases to find new and used bicycles, lawnmowers and stereo equipment out front?

After the initial shock, Thedford says it's nothing but business as usual.

He said that he has yet to receive any negative feedback about his shop's presence. In fact, he says that by being in locations that maybe would not traditionally be filled by pawnshops, it gives more people the opportunity to experience and accept the practice.



PHOTO BY ISAAC BABCOCK — THE VOICE
Sales associate Juan Hernandez shows off a guitar inside a La Familia Pawn shop, built in a converted Blockbuster store.

La Familia manager Jackie Garcia, who has worked in the pawn business for the past nine years under Thedford's previous company Value Pawn and Jewelry, said La Familia offers customers a more family-friendly retail environment than they would typically expect from a pawnshop.

With her petite frame and well-manicured style, she says it's hard for some people to believe she works in the pawn business.

"My hairstylist couldn't believe I worked in a pawn shop ... but I just say, 'Imagine that it's your favorite store where you always want to go and buy your favorite stuff, but imagine the same thing just with better prices,'" she said with a laugh.

Those better prices are what keep pawnshops in business in the bad economy.

"Our business is not counter cyclical," Thedford said. "If our customers have jobs they pay on their loans; if they don't pay on their loans, our business fails. So in a down economy we feel it too, and in an up economy we feel it the same way."

Thedford said the stigma that pawnshops are only

a place where criminals come to sell their goods is overly exaggerated. To sell any item to any pawnshop, or to receive a pawn loan, all patrons must present ID and get fingerprinted. The serial numbers to all items also must be noted.

"It's our corporate policy if somebody had something stolen and it was in one of our stores, we just give it back. Because you know why? It never happens," he said. "Your stolen stuff goes on eBay or Craigslist. Thieves know that if you come in here, you get fingerprinted, so they don't come in here."

La Familia, Thedford said, prides itself on its high level of customer service. The store is kept clean and organized, and team member employees wear dress shirts, ties and name tags and greet every customer at the door.

"Where are groceries cheaper," he asked, "Publix or Winn-Dixie?"

Winn-Dixie. "But who gets the most business?"

Publix. "Exactly. Because they're clean and have good people. So our strategy is great people — that means excel-

lence in every role — and clean stores. It works!" he said.

First-time customer Patti McCormick would not be your stereotypical pawn shopper. With her grayed-blond hair pulled back, khaki Bermuda shorts and Kentucky-drawl, she is exactly who La Familia is trying to extend pawn business to.

After checking out the DVDs, she meanders around the rest of the store as her husband makes a deal with the clerk at the register.

"It's nice to come in and have someone come ask if they can help you ... I'm not afraid to come in here, where some of the pawn places I wouldn't want to come in at all," she said.

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La Familia Pawn in Orlando is located at 4205 Curry Ford Road. For more information on the shop and its services visit www.lafamiliapawn.com or call the store at 407-440-8800.

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From my GARDEN to yours Tom Carey



instead of bulb garlic. Its roots are sturdy, almost woody clumps, which can easily be separated for propagation. The fact that the garlic chives endured through drought and flood earned them a permanent position in my garden.

Imagine my surprise when the peppermint surfaced in a burst of holiday reminiscences. Mint grows from runners, always seeking moist, fresh soil. Although it was competing with some invasive grasses (Bermuda and St. Augustine), the strength of the mint's invasion ensured its existence. Setting pots of mint in areas of the garden not cultivated on a frequent, seasonal rotation allows escaping runners to naturalize this herb into the landscape. As mint seeks new terrain, train this juggernaut to manage its empire.

The ease to which rosemary propagates by cloning as rooted cuttings is a testament to its natural survival. A forsaken plant's branches eventually drooped to the ground. Where contact with the soil occurred, roots formed, and whole new individuals commenced growing. These rooted

stems, which disembarked from the ground and were carefully set into a container of potting soil, quickly responded to produce whole new specimens. I have taken advantage of this natural reproductive method with other woody perennials such as azaleas and bay leaf (*Laurus nobilis*).

Recognizing these survivors and the traits that commend their continued production is a gardening skill that can easily be overlooked in the chaos of daily life. Stop, turn off the electronic devices, breathe deep, relax and focus on the whole of the garden. Seek to understand the garden, not the task at hand. When these opportunistic crops present themselves, enable their benefits to your commerce. Free food always tastes better!

Natural selection in the garden

A few seasons ago, following a several-year hiatus, the only crops visible above a morass of 6-foot-tall weeds were the citrus trees planted at the north end of my garden.

After an arduous session using a bush-hog mower and metal-encrusted string trimmer, followed by the shear muscle of a three-point hitched, PTO-driven tiller, I was able to consider replanting. A funny thing happened on the way to a semblance of normalcy in the garden: Criss-crossing the ground

with heavy equipment released several bouts of aromatic discourse from long-lost herbal plantings. The fact that these crops survived total wanton neglect immediately earned them a revered position on my planting schedule.

While mowing the garden, I hit a cluster of garlic chives, releasing a surprising cloud of odiferous delight. Garlic chive (*Allium tuberosum*) is a perennial herb that is used for its greens. I use them in stir-fry, soups and pesto

WHO IS CAREY

Tom Carey is the owner of Sundew Gardens, a you-pick gardening business in Oviedo. Visit the Sundew Gardens Facebook page.



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INTERESTS



THIS WEEK in human history

Sep. 6, 1522 —

Ferdinand Magellan's fleet completes the circumnavigation of the world. Magellan and his crew had agreed to help the chief of a Philippine island conquer a neighboring island tribe during their journey. Magellan died in the Philippines in April of 1521 from a poisoned arrow but is still credited with the circumnavigation.

From tomboy to Miss Florida

This UCF student used to shy away from makeup, now she dreams of being a top news anchor

BRITNI JOHNSON
GUEST REPORTER

Jaclyn Raulerson was what you might call a jock or a tomboy as a kid. What she really wanted to be was an Olympic swimmer, and manicures and makeup don't quite work in the pool.

"I was the least likely to

be a pageant person," she said. "It was kind of a mistake."

But one day, when her neighbor got what looked like a modeling try-out in the mail, Jaclyn went along for fun. It turned out to be a pageant. And then she just "fell into it," mom Shirley Raulerson said. She placed, and what started as a whim one weekend became a passion.

"She kind of got the bug at that point," said Dan Raulerson, Jaclyn's dad.

And so her dreams changed. Swimsuits and goggles were traded for gowns and curlers. Jaclyn loved the friendships she made and the competitive aspect of the pageants. Her new goal — be Miss America. Now she's well on her way.

The Plant City native was crowned Miss Florida on July 10 and will be competing for Miss America in January. Though to date it could be one of the greatest moments of the University of Central Florida student's life, Jaclyn said she doesn't remember much of winning the Florida crown.

"I don't remember that moment ... because I was so shocked; it was very surreal," she said.

But she does remember fellow UCF student and last year's Miss Florida Rachael Todd, an Oviedo native, handing over the title.

"It's so crazy how it worked out, and she was able to crown me," Jaclyn said.

Mary Sullivan, executive director of the Miss Florida Pageant, said that Jaclyn is an excellent representative of the organization, which is why she won.

"She's passionate about her platform, passionate about the job and loves this state," Sullivan said.

Todd agreed.

"She sees Miss Florida as a job, and will make a difference," Todd said. "What you're able to accomplish is endless."

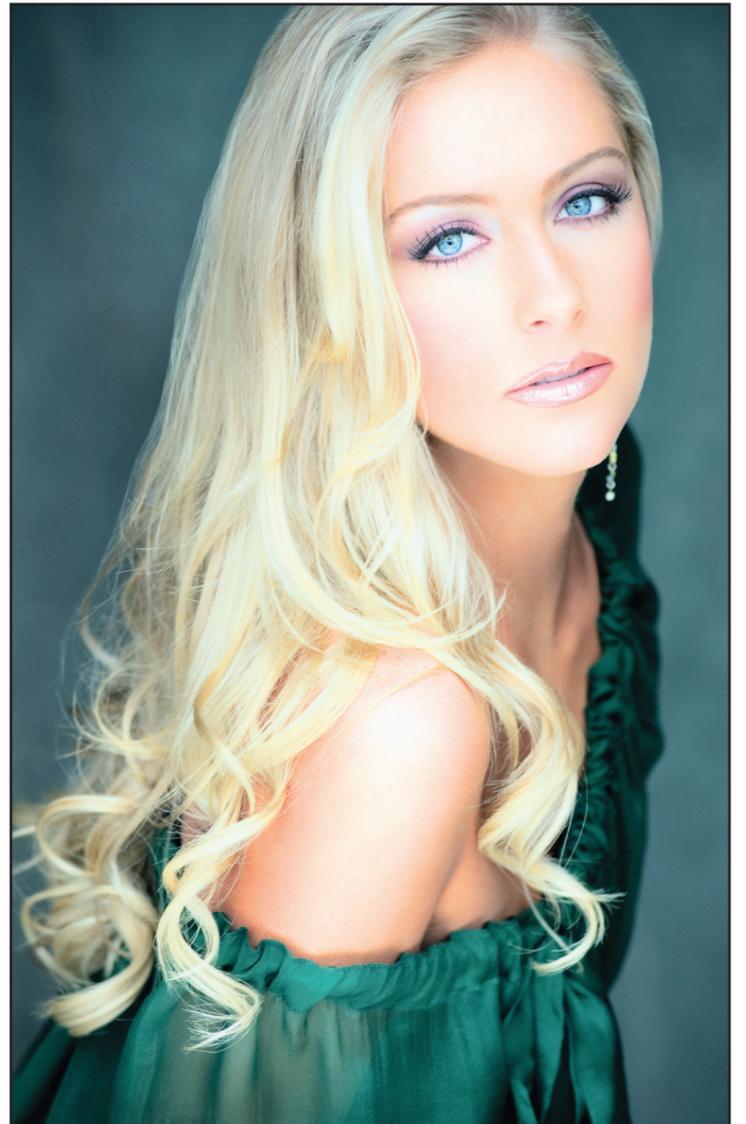
The issue Jaclyn wants to make a difference with is something that she's been passionate about since she started in pageants. When she was in the fifth grade, she was bullied so severely that she had to change schools. Being the tallest, even taller than the boys, made her an "easy target," she said. Now she's speaking out about bullying as Miss Florida, and will be working with several anti-bullying organizations.

"My platform is important to me because I lived it," she said.

And while it was a difficult time for Jaclyn and her family, her dad said that what caused kids to bully her then is what makes her so successful today.

"She paid the price for being an independent thinker, but she never gave that up," Dan said.

Pageants became a refuge from the bullying, and were a way to express that independence and win back the self-esteem she



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JACLYN RAULERSON

Jaclyn Raulerson is one of a trio of UCF students to win the Miss Florida pageant in just the last decade alone. Oviedoan Rachel Todd handed her the crown.

lost, Shirley said.

Not only have pageants found her great friends, but they've also taught her perseverance when she

didn't win and that goals are important when she did win. The pageants have also helped her get experience in her future career field as a broadcast journalist. One day Jaclyn hopes to be on TV not as a pageant contestant, but as a national news anchor on a major television network. It might sound like a lofty goal, but her mom said that if anyone can do it, Jaclyn can.

"She gets a big kick out of accomplishing things most people don't think are possible," Shirley said.

But before she does that, she's got her sights set on Miss America.

"She'll be a force at Miss America," Sullivan said, "and we'll be very proud to share her with the nation."



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Root for our hometown girl, Miss Florida Jaclyn Raulerson, to become the next Miss America on ABC on Jan. 15 at 8 p.m.

Family Calendar

The Family Miniature Golf Tournament, which raised money for REACH, will be held from 4-7 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 29 at Congo River Golf, 531 W. State Road 436, Altamonte Springs. Contact Jennifer Evans, Be Center Stage, at 407-970-3804 or e-mail jenniferle58@yahoo.com for details.

Attend Create a Rain Garden class on Saturday, Sept. 11 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Seminole County Extension Auditorium, 250 W. County Home Road, Sanford. For more information, contact Gabrielle Milch, FYN Coordinator, at 407-665-5575 or e-mail fyn@seminolecountyfl.gov.

The Orlando JCC is in the running for a 2010 Nickelodeon's Parents' Picks Award for Best Preschool in Orlando. You can vote for them once daily until Aug. 31 at www.parentsconnect.com/parents-picks/orlando-fl-usa/best-orlando-preschool

The University of Central Florida Art Alumni Chapter invites you to "IgKNIGHT" creativity with its Knightro's Creative Kits program. This art-supply drive will benefit elementary schools in Central Florida. Visit any drop-off location and donate new, unwrapped art supplies. For a list of locations, visit www.ucfalumni.com/art

The Wayne Densch Performing Arts Center is looking for interns. They give high school, college students and recent graduates the opportunity to engage in hands-on theatre training from the Center's staff and artists. All applicants must be at least 16 years old and have met educational requirements for the internship they are applying for. Internships in acting are not offered. For more information or to download the application, visit www.wdpac.com and look under the 'About Us' category and click on 'Internship Opportunities.'

To join the Adopt-A-Park Program, which facilitates the monitoring, cleanup and enhancement of parks, natural lands, trails and trailheads maintained in Seminole County, contact Seminole County Leisure Services at 407-665-2001.

Help educate students about the environment through the use of Enviroscope, Wetland Model, Aquifer Model, river trash, story books and Powerpoint presentations from now until Thursday, Sept. 30. All volunteers must register through the Seminole County Schools Dividends Program. For more information, contact Natalee Wilson at 407-665-2457 or at waysem@seminolecountyfl.gov.

No boys allowed

Longwood teen named ambassador for Girl Power! conference this Saturday

SARAH WILSON
GUEST REPORTER

Amanda Kronhaus has a resume that could put people twice her age to shame.

Community theater performances, pageant titles, dance team membership, academic honors, work with the American Heart Association — it goes on and on. Then you get down to the bottom of the page and realize she hasn't even graduated middle school yet.

The 13-year-old from Longwood, who most recently added Girl Power! Ambassador to her long list of accomplishments, knows how important it is to take advantage of every second of life she has.

Dubbed a "miracle child" by her family, Amanda has made it her mission in life to inspire other people to live their lives to the fullest.

"It's a miracle I'm alive," she said. "I almost died as a child, so being on this Earth is just a big blessing for me. I feel like there was a reason I was put on this Earth...I feel that I need to do something in my life, and that's just my main goal in my life is just to inspire people."

As the Girl Power! Ambassador she is getting to do just that. The second annual Girl Power! conference, set for Saturday, Aug. 28, is a branch off of WMFE and Orlando Health's annual Oh, Woman event. The conference gives girls, ages 8 through 13, an opportunity to bond with their caregivers through a day of learning, laughing and listening.

"Sometimes girls tend to get lost in the shuffle, especially at that age, and we wanted to make sure they had a time just for them," said Catherine McManus, senior vice president and chief philanthropy officer of WMFE.

Poised with a grace far beyond her years, Amanda, a student at Lake Highland Preparatory School, hopes to use her life experiences as a "real girl" to inspire girls her age to be comfortable with who they are.

"Some girls just need a friend. This is an awkward stage in life and I'm



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMANDA KRONHAUS
Amanda Kronhaus, a role model for teenage girls, aspires to be a professional actor. The big "Glee" fan will be speaking about peer pressure at the Girl Power! conference on Aug. 28.

not going to judge someone because they're different. I'm different. I'm very different," she said with a giggle.

She will speak with those who attend the conference about how to live a happy, healthy life void of peer pressure. She will present alongside keynote speakers such as nurse, advice columnist and educator Suzette Boyette.

"I want to show girls that being a different kind of person in middle school in the long run, really won't matter ... It's just being yourself and being true to who you are and working to the main goal you want to reach in your life that's just more important," she said. "It doesn't matter what anyone else thinks. That's what I want to inspire people to do."

Amanda's mother, Julie Kronhaus, lives in awe of all her daughter has been able to accomplish despite the odds that were stacked against her as a young child.

"I just remember when I brought her home from the

hospital when they gave me the breathing machine for sleep apnea to put on her with the monitors to make sure if she stopped breathing in the night, I just remember thinking, how am I even ever going to get her to kindergarten? Let alone this," her mother said, her face gleaming with pride.

Thirteen years later and their mother-daughter bond is what fuels Amanda's need to inspire others and her desire to be a part of the Girl Power! event.

"There's really nothing I don't tell her because I can trust her a lot," she said. "I want girls to have that kind of relationship with their moms. I know if I didn't have that with my mom I'd be missing a lot in my life."

Her mom agreed. "I like that she really can ask me anything, even if I don't want to answer it."

When she's not busy inspiring girls to follow her dreams, she's out pursuing her own on stage.

"I love theater, so that is a main part of my life. I would love to be able to do that

professionally if that's possible ... I can't even picture my favorite performance, but just getting the opportunity to get out there is my favorite thing in the world," Amanda said.

At 13, she may have done more than the average teen, but she still insists she's just your normal, everyday girl at heart, who loves getting manicures and pedicures with her mom, hanging with friends and "gleeking" out over "Glee".

Meeting her idol "Glee" star Kristin Chenoweth, also from the Broadway production of "Wicked", came close to being the best moment in her life thus far, but after a thoughtful pause Amanda decides she's got way too much life ahead of her to pick that one.

"I think I am blessed with such an amazing life that I don't really have a favorite moment," she said. "Just my life is my favorite moment, if that makes any sense at all."

Power event

WMFE and Orlando Health will host the second annual Girl Power! A Healthy Woman Event from 1-5:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 28 at the Orange County Convention Center. Connect with your daughter through fun interactive exhibits with breakout sessions featuring safety, nutrition, self-esteem and communication. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at wmfe.org/girlpower

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Miracle horses

ISAAC BABCOCK
THE VOICE

At 9 years old, Talia hadn't said a word to anyone outside her home in her entire life. Doctors didn't really know why, but the shy, skinny brown-haired girl couldn't speak. They called it global developmental delay with selective mutism — the closest a diagnosis comes to explaining a mystery trapped inside a child's head.

One day, Talia met Titan, who had never talked at all. Titan, a chestnut quarter horse, was used to helping children. At Freedom Ride therapeutic horseback riding, he had seen many medical miracles happen atop his saddle.

The huge animal had a special bond with disabled people. He helped set them free.

Atop Titan, children and adults with muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis who were told they'd physically degenerate for the rest of their lives grew

stronger and gained better balance. Autistics, locked away in an inner world, came out of their shells.

But Talia was a rarity. Atop Titan, she couldn't say "go" or "whoa". She just sat there.

"You'd see her try to make sounds, but she never said a word," Freedom Ride Executive Director Linda Chapman said.

A year crept by as Talia saw Titan every week. She would hop out of her mother's car, walk over to her horse and touch him without a word to anyone.

"You didn't know if she could hear you," Chapman said. "We had no idea what she was taking in."

Volunteers at the stables didn't know if she'd ever improve. But then, one day there was a peep — Talia was trying to speak to her horse.

With just a whisper, she said hello to a new world.

That's the point of Freedom Ride, housed in a barn along Lee Road just west of Winter Park, catering to disabled people from all over Central Florida. Riding horses gives people a sense of freedom from their disabilities, Chapman said.

"There's something about the horse ... the horse brings it out in them," Chapman said. "They seem to really connect with the horse. Some say that horses even see the world the way people with autism do."

All of Freedom Ride's hundreds of riders, who span all age groups, have some form of disability, but

all are connected by riding.

David Sitts found that connection another way. While the 25-year-old Floridian was at his sister's home near Chicago, he spent eight months riding. When he came back to his home in Longwood, he was a man without a horse.

That's where Freedom Ride came in. He couldn't participate in the program, but he could volunteer. He'd never worked with disabled people before, but he knew horses. Now he joins an army of more than 300 Seminole and Orange County Freedom Ride volunteers bridging the gap.

"Everything that you get there is unique in and of its own way," Sitts said. "It's definitely an interesting experience working there. I enjoy every minute of it."

On any given day, Sitts may go from shoveling hay to helping a rider onto a horse.

This fall, he's hoping to volunteer three days a week.

"I love working with the horses even if I don't get to ride," he said.

For some of Chapman's volunteers, Freedom Ride is the most accessible way they can be around horses. The program's 13 horses cost \$1,500 a month just to feed. That's a cost many horse lovers can't bear on their own, she said.

"You ask why they come, and it's for the horses," she said. "Owning a horse is an expensive sport. This is a good way to be around horses and get outside."

And while volunteers

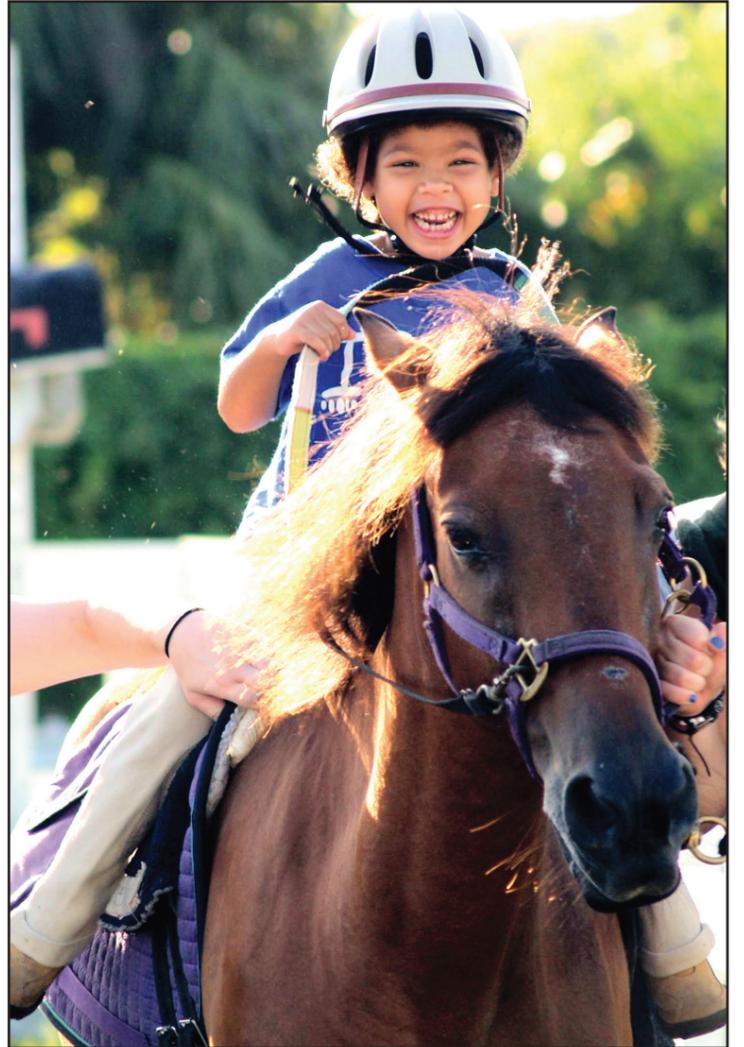


PHOTO COURTESY OF FREEDOM RIDE
Disabled people connect with horses at Freedom Ride therapeutic horseback riding, which has volunteers and riders from across Central Florida.

such as Sitts get to work with horses, they get to watch miracles happen, like Talia.

That tiny whisper to Titan was just the start. Soon she was giving commands.

"Go...whoa." Then she was smiling and laughing.

Then there was that moment that Chapman won't forget.

"One day she got out of the car, came to the barn, and said hello to everybody," Chapman said. "She knew our names, the horses' names, asked us questions. We were all in awe."

Talia's mother walked behind her in tears.

"She never said a word to anyone before," Chapman said. "Now we can't get her to stop talking."

Horse therapy

Freedom Ride, a nonprofit organization, enriches the lives of disabled children and adults in the Central Florida area through therapeutic horseback riding. It is located at 1905 Lee Road, Orlando. For more information about the program and volunteer opportunities, call 407-293-0411.

Equestrian Calendar

The Greater Orlando Hunter Jumper Association will host the Barrett Farm Horse Show starting Sept. 10. The show begins at 5 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 10 and runs until Saturday, Sept. 11 at 5 p.m. at Clarcona-Ocoee Horseman's Park.

Freedom Ride therapeutic horseback riding will host a Texas Hold'em tournament, sponsored by the Moose Lodge. The event starts at 2 p.m. on Aug. 29, at the Moose Lodge, 5001 N. Orange Blossom Trail, Orlando. Registration is at 1 p.m. and play begins at 2 p.m. Door prizes, a raffle and a Chinese auction will be held. All proceeds will benefit Freedom Ride. Call 407-925-7806 for more information.

Tryouts are being held for the University of Central Florida Equestrian Club's Dressage team continuing until Sept. 18. Please contact Liz Isaacson-Jett to set up a time and date for your tryout. Her number is 407-721-6474.

Join or volunteer for the Florida 4-H club! The Seminole County 4-H club is taking continuous applications. Visit www.seminolecountyfl.gov/leisure/coopext/4H/4h.asp for more information.

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Notes



Bieber fever in Seminole

Singer Justin Bieber surprised Seminole High School summer band camp students with a special appearance recently, including a presentation of a \$5,000 donation on behalf of Best Buy and the GRAMMY Foundation to support the school's music program.

Kari Langsenkamp, a resident of Longwood and a sophomore at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, is listed on the honor roll.

The Mane Attraction, Oviedo High School's dance team, earned 1st Place for their home routine and qualified for the 2011 Universal Dance Association National Dance Competition at UDA dance camp at the University of Central Florida last month.

Seminole County Public Schools food service will make a variety of seasonal Florida fresh produce available in all cafeterias due in large part to a \$300,000 grant.

Stormy weather didn't slow down 30 volunteers from Physicians United Plan (PUP), who spent over 10 hours renovating Share the Care adult day care center in Oviedo. They repainted the interior, created a garden area and donated a new media center.

Michael Cox and **William Powell**, the two newest officers in the Oviedo Police Department, were sworn in Aug. 9.

The Oviedo Preservation Project is accepting photographic entries of historic structures in the Oviedo area for its free calendar. The deadline is Aug. 30. Visit www.oviedotraditions.org or call 407-365-1433.

The Winter Springs Bears football team has a new website that will feature all Bears football news — www.wsbearsfootball.com. If you have player news or information you would like considered for the site, send it to treyking@aol.com.



Two new officers

Calendar

The Temple Shir Shalom of Oviedo hosts **Shabbat Groove on Friday, Aug. 27 at 7:30 p.m. at their new Shabbat location, the EPICenter at University** Carillon United Methodist Church, 1395 Campus View Court, Oviedo. Please call 407-366-3556 or visit www.templeshirshalom.org for more information.

The UCF "Give for the Gulf" concert will be held from noon to 7 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 28 at Memory Mall grassy area. Tickets are \$7 for students with ID or guests younger than 18 and older than 54. Admission for others will cost \$15. For more information, visit www.ucfgivesforthegulf.org

Head downtown for the UKNIGHT Ultimate Tailgate Party at Wall Street Plaza and learn the techniques for rallying behind the Knights through sun and rain, glory and pain. This free

event will happen on Saturday, Aug. 28 from 2-6 p.m. at Wall Street Plaza, 19 N. Orange Ave. For more information, visit www.wallstplaza.net/ucf-tailgate-party.

The Red Chair Affair, with performances including the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, will be held Saturday, Aug. 28 at 8 p.m. at the Bob Carr Performing Arts Center, 401 W. Livingston St. Admission is \$22 and \$15 for students. Visit www.redchairproject.com for details.

The Orlando Area Alumnae Chapter of Alpha Chi Omega Sorority is inviting sisters in the area to join their group. Summer Luncheon is Saturday, Aug. 28 at Houlihan's in Colonial Plaza. Lunch bunch and monthly meeting details are available by e-mailing axo_orlando@yahoo.com.

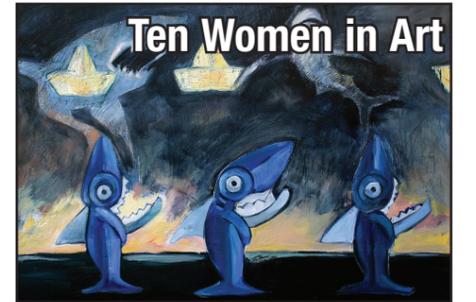
Legends of Doo Wop is coming Saturday, Aug. 28 at 7:30 p.m. to Wayne Densch Performing Arts Center in downtown historic Sanford, 201-203 S. Magnolia Ave. For tickets, visit www.wdpac.com or call 407-321-8111. Tickets, which range from \$10 to \$35, are also available on show date.

Upcoming Oviedo Winter Springs Chamber events include a Business Roundtable Forum at the Oviedo Winter Springs Regional Chamber of Commerce Offices on Thursday, Sept. 2 from 8-9:30 a.m. Visit www.oviedowintersprings.org for more information.

The Fine Arts Gallery at Seminole State College of Florida will open its 2010-11 season with an exhibit of works by Ten Women in Art, a group of professional artists whose mission is to educate the public about the diversity in women's art through group exhibitions. The exhibit will open with a reception at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 2, in the Gallery (building G) on the Sanford/Lake Mary Campus. For more information, please visit www.seminolestate.edu/arts or call 407-708-2040.

Come participate in the Early Bird Relay starting at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 2, at the Canterbury Retreat and Conference Center, 1601 Alafaya Trail, Oviedo. For more information, e-mail RFLoviedo@aol.com

On Saturday, Sept. 4 from 9 a.m. to noon, the Rural Heritage Center in Geneva will host a hydroponics class conducted by Rest Haven Farm. The cost is \$30 for materials and instruction. You get a container, nutrient



Ten Women in Art

and seeds to grow 12 heads of lettuce twice (24 heads total). You must preregister and pay before the class. Contact Bonnie at 407-366-2784 or e-mail chefbb@bellsouth.net.

Join partygoers in historic downtown Sanford and listen to live music while sampling food and beverages from more than 40 stations at the Alive After Five Hometown Motown from 5-8 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 9. Tickets cost \$7.

Enjoy live performances of "Red Riding Hood" at 1:30 p.m. and "Hansel & Gretel" at 3 p.m. every Saturday and Sunday from Sept. 11 to Nov. 21 at The Stage, 1425 Tuskawilla Road. Tickets are \$5 for children younger than 12 and \$8 for adults. For more information, visit www.winterspringsarts.org.

The Create a Rain Garden Class is from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Sept. 11 at the Seminole County Extension Auditorium, 250 West County Home Road, Sanford. For registration or more information, please contact Gabrielle Milch, FYN coordinator, at 407-665-5575 or e-mail fyn@seminolecountyfl.gov.

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VOICES



THIS WEEK in political history

Sep. 9, 1893 —

President Grover Cleveland becomes a father as his daughter Esther is born in the White House. She is the only child of a president to be born in the White House.

Leave kind words about old bosses

EMPLOYMENT

Ask Sandi



Recently I have met with several people who did not want to share why they had left their last job. It turned out, after further probing, they had been fired. We discussed handling this question in an interview. It is important to be honest and answer the question, but a dissertation on how terrible your last boss or company was is not appro-

priate for an interview. Usually in this case, the less said the better.

Many people have a false sense of security about reference checks. There is a common belief that employers can only give out name and dates of employment. While it is true many companies choose to go that route, it is not true they are not allowed to give more information.

The law in Florida actually protects employers from liability for giving truthful references. You can find statute 768.095, which is called employer immunity from liability; disclosure of information regarding former or current employees, at www.myflorida-house.gov.

house.gov.

It reads: "An employer who discloses information about a former or current employee to a prospective employer of the former or current employee upon request of the prospective employer or of the former or current employee is immune from civil liability for such disclosure or its consequences unless it is shown by clear and convincing evidence that the information disclosed by the former or current employer was knowingly false or violated any civil right of the former or current employee protected under chapter 760."

Keeping this in mind, it is important to know what employ-

ers are saying about you. It might be prudent to have a friend who owns a business take your references for a test run. This will give you confidence or help you come up with an action plan dependent on the results.

If you have more questions on this subject, please call or e-mail me.

TALK TO SANDI

Sandi Vidal is the executive director for Christian HELP and the Central Florida Employment Council, with more than 10 years of recruiting and human resources experience. Please send questions about employment by fax 407-260-2949, sandi@christianhelp.org, or mail Ask Sandi C/O Christian HELP, 450 Seminola Blvd., Casselberry, FL 32707.

Letter to the Editor

Is our drinking water safe?

Once again, the Winter Springs City Commission seems to be out of touch with the average constituent and more than ever appears to be emulating the Washington administration by forcing projects not fully approved and by failing to follow the lawful established procedures.

The Commission approved the first reading and moved the application of the Sonesta Pointe development to a second reading. In order to defeat the efforts of the residents of the St. John's Landing subdivision, who almost unanimously oppose the project, the Commission — without having the second reading nor allowing the Planning and Zoning Board to have input — allowed the proposed project to start development before the final engineering plan goes through a second reading and final approval.

Furthermore, it is a

kick in the pants of the well-planned and bragged-about city green project to permit this developer to raze the entire site of existing woodlands.

What happens to tree city? Why aren't these people fined a definite amount of money for removing specially dedicated trees as we did to the developer of the subdivision on State Road 434, across from the entrance to Central Winds Park?

This is just another of several efforts by the city administration to thwart the will of the people since early 2008, and it's exactly what Washington has done to the people of America since 2009.

They have approved zone changes, land-use changes and are ready to lift the C-2 restrictions on a property that has been fined by the Environmental Protection Agency for a total of \$37,000 for violations of environmental laws.

The city of Winter Springs issued code violations to the same concern six or seven years ago, which the proprietor fought without avail until he was sure he had a friendly Commission. On April 12, the Commission reduced this total fine to \$500. Has the City Commission ever forgiven a citizen the late fee charge of \$5 for being late with payment of her water bill?

To put the icing on the cake, this site is located in the immediacy of wetlands that feed the aquifer that supplies our drinking water. Is our drinking water being poisoned?

The City Commission has no answers, given the fact that only one and a half miles away (U.S. Highway 17-92 and Shepherd Road), the EPA has found badly contaminated water close to a well that does provide drinking water for our city. The Commission will not touch this one with a 10-foot pole.

Editorial Cartoon



To add insult to injury, the Commission appoints an individual directly attached to the property in question to the Planning and Zoning Board of the city of Winter Springs at a time when that site is pending the approval of a C-2 zoning change *without restrictions*.

Like the president clearly stated during his cam-

paign effort — *transparency*, something very lacking during his administration and much more so in our great city.

Pay attention to what has and is happening at City Hall and let your voices be heard.

Thank you.

—Edward Martinez Jr.
Winter Springs

Young Voices

Here's what young thespians had to say about their acting workshop and roles in "The Wizard of Foz".



I learned that acting is not just saying lines — you have to become the character. I play the Good Fairy in the play that we wrote.

—Angelica R.
12 years old



I like acting as somebody that you are not. We learned how to be different characters by thinking how they will act, talk or think. I play the scarecrow in our play.

—Emily L.
10 years old



I learned that it takes trust on your part that other actors will do their part. It takes teamwork. I play the Bad Witch tonight.

—Julia C.
11 years old



In our workshop I learned to speak louder without a microphone. I gained confidence and made new friends. I play Lady Leopard in our play.

—Sophia R.
10 years old



We played games ... to help with our reaction and impromptu action. I want to be in the performing arts program at Millennium Middle school. I play the Cowardly Lion.

—Ashely H.
13 years old

We would love to hear from **your** Young **Voices!**

Call 407-563-7026 or e-mail editor@observernewspapers.com to have The Voice visit your class or group.

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professional services

Mobile Art Show
Ms. Charlie Sandry Wilson (a Mary Sandry original) is a "Story-Artist" who travels to homes, businesses, elsewhere since 1988, exhibiting "live" art. Mother was a painter and I am the canvas; a real work of art! I portray SageBrush: A Painter of Words.
321-279-1089

Charlie Wilson
321-279-1089

SeminoleVoice.com

merchandise

WANTED: David Hunter Biblical Etchings
Small (about 2" x 2"), signed etchings by Florida artist David Hunter from his Old Testament or Prophet Series. Older prints in series preferred.

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Oldmax92@msn.com

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Mike Schmidt
407-622-1462
mjschmidt@aol.com

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Please call Dennis at 207-685-8003.

I'm selling my loving mother's home, it's on the water with afternoon breeze blowing into a very large screened porch. Lots of trees with a 2 car garage, new roof and new paint inside and outside. This house needs nothing to be done. 3 bedroom, 2 bath, seller will pay closing cost. It's in the nice town of Cocoa, Florida. \$345,000. Have a nice life.

John
256.829.0676



Saturday, August 28, 2-5 p.m.
1630 King Arthur Circle, Maitland
\$565,000
Hosted by Rhonda Chesmore

Saturday, August 28, 2-5 p.m.
140 E. Morse Blvd Unit B, Winter Park
\$1,450,000
Hosted by Kelly Price at Unit F

Sunday, August 29, 2-5 p.m.
1302 Azalea Lane, Maitland
\$2,750,000
Hosted by Kelly Price

Sunday, August 29, 2-5 p.m.
323 W. Trotters Drive, Maitland
\$1,175,000
Hosted by Audra Wilks

Sunday, August 29, 2-5 p.m.
1919 Lakeside Drive, Orlando
\$925,000
Hosted by Catherine D'Amico

Sunday, August 29, 2-5 p.m.
1710 Lake Shore Drive, Orlando
\$1,289,000
Hosted by Cyn Watson

Sunday, August 29, 2-5 p.m.
9664 Weatherstone Court, Windermere
\$1,299,000
Hosted by Patrick Higgins

Sunday, August 29, 2-5 p.m.
1310 Summerland Avenue, Winter Park
\$749,000
Hosted by Pam Birthisel

Sunday, August 29, 1-4 p.m.
NEW LISTING IN ARBOR POINTE
2931 Moorcroft Court, Orlando. 4BD/2BA, 1,902SF. Large covered/screened-in porch. Beautiful master bedroom with attached bathroom that includes a garden tub. Eat-in kitchen that opens to a fabulous family room. Two car garage. \$235,000

workforce job listings

Seminole County
Log on to WorkforceCentralFlorida.com where you can enter the Job Title in the "Search For Jobs" box to see more information on these jobs and search thousands of additional openings throughout Central Florida, at NO COST. Apply by following the directions listed. For further help visit the WORKFORCE CENTRAL FLORIDA Office at 5166 East Colonial Drive or call (407) 531-1227.

Substation Electrician
Job Description: Responsible for maintaining and/or constructing structures and substation equipment as directed. Installs and/or maintains substation equipment with the aid of electrical prints and manufacturer's instruction books. Work days and hours may vary.
Pay Rate: Salary based upon experience
Job Order Number: 9507792

Technical Support Representative - Tier 1
Job Description: Responsible for handling questions via the telephone addressing both hardware and software related issues. Work days and hours may vary.
Pay Rate: \$11.00 per hour
Job Order Number: 9507319

Command Center Security Officer
Job Description: Responsible for remotely monitoring facilities nationwide from a corporate headquarters in-office command center. Work days and hours may vary.
Pay Rate: \$9.00-\$11.00 per hour
Job Order Number: 9507356



Fun & Games

HOCUS - FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Cap is different. 2. Stripe on shorts is gone. 3. Two skis instead of one. 4. Rope is black. 5. No land on horizon. 6. Boat trim is black.

Answers

King Crossword

Weekly SUDOKU

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

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Tobacco type
- 5 Possesses XVI, e.g.
- 12 Places
- 13 Group of scenes
- 14 Acknowledge
- 15 Unoriginal one
- 16 Geese-in-flight formation
- 17 Rose or Townshend
- 18 Shrew
- 20 Go sightseeing
- 22 Accepts the truth
- 26 Make one
- 29 Speck
- 30 Feedbag morsel
- 31 Logical
- 32 Wrestling victory
- 33 Carvey or

DOWN

- 1 Balkan native
- 2 Arizona tribe
- 3 Big name in desktop PCs
- 4 He can hold
- 34 Citric drink
- 35 Pendulum site?
- 36 Brave
- 37 Office equipment
- 40 Chess piece
- 41 Gunman's missile
- 45 Connections
- 47 Egos' counterparts
- 49 Tiny bit
- 50 Drudgery
- 51 Poolroom stick
- 52 Wound cover
- 53 On the — (unfriendly)
- 54 Bart, to Homer
- 55 Throw

his head high

- 5 Destruction
- 6 Blackjack component
- 7 Cowboy hat
- 8 — New Guinea
- 9 Cold-weather gear
- 10 Cauldron
- 11 Ram's mate
- 19 Festive
- 21 Frequently
- 23 Archie's wife
- 24 Catches some rays
- 25 Remain
- 26 Mil. branch
- 27 Zilch
- 28 Unskilled Eaters
- 32 outings
- 33 Swordplay specialist
- 35 Manhandle
- 36 Wildebeest
- 38 Mardi Gras "faces"
- 39 "Peer Gynt"

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15					16				17			
18				19		20	21					
			22			23				24	25	
26	27	28				29				30		
31					32				33			
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37			38				39					
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45	46					47	48			49		
50						51				52		
53						54				55		

playwright
42 Crazy
43 H H H, in

Greece
44 Surveillance
45 Pair

46 Debtor's letters
48 Pair

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ★

★ Moderate ★★ Challenging
★★★ HOO BOY!

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ATHLETICS



THIS WEEK in sports history

Aug. 27, 1982 —

Rickey Henderson, an outfielder for the Oakland Athletics, steals his 119th base of the year, breaking St. Louis Cardinal left fielder Lou Brock's 1979 record for stolen bases in a single season.

Back under the Friday night lights

This weekend, Central Florida gridirons will be inundated with preseason kickoff football games

ISAAC BABCOCK
THE VOICE

It's football season again as teams around Seminole County rush to prepare for the upcoming Sept. 3 show-downs under the Friday night lights. This weekend is a bit of a preview, as kickoff preseason games get fans pumped for the season ahead.

All eyes will be on Hagerty as the top-rated high school quarterback in the country, Jeff Driskel, leads a team that finished a dismal 2-8 last season. At 7:30 tonight, they'll face off against one of the perennial district contenders in Central Florida — Edgewater.

The Eagles are coming off another strong postseason run last time around, and are one of the highest-ranked teams in Central Florida in preseason polls.

Just up the road at 7:30 p.m., Lake Brantley, which has built a strong team in

the offseason, will take on Wekiva, still a fledgling team after a few losing seasons.

Oviedo will travel all the way to Cypress Creek for its kickoff classic at 7:30 p.m., debuting new quarterback Johnny Boston, who hadn't thrown since Pop Warner football.

Lyman raised some much-needed money at their annual preseason scrimmage last weekend, but this Friday things get real. They play frequent district contender Osceola in their kickoff game at 7:30 p.m. Fortunately for the Greyhounds, they'll be on their home turf against one of the strongest teams they'll face all year.

Meanwhile, Seminole is enjoying the position of the favorite in a 7 p.m. matchup against Deltona. But the Seminoles will have to win on the road to prove they've earned their ranking among the best in Central Florida.



PHOTO BY ISAAC BABCOCK — THE VOICE
Streaking across the field, half of Lyman's varsity team battled fellow players in their annual scrimmage to raise money for the football team on Aug. 20. The Greyhounds will play Osceola at home starting at 7:30 p.m. Friday.

Getting to know your new Knights

Fans got to meet and greet UCF football players Saturday, though the team still doesn't have a QB

ISAAC BABCOCK
THE VOICE

A week closer to the college football season, the University of Central Florida still hasn't announced who will be running the show from the field. Head Coach George O'Leary has been so tight-lipped about the decision of which quarterback will start that he said it might come down to game day.

And in the meantime, two players are still battling for that slot. Junior Rob Calabrese has earned the reputation of a hard worker on the practice field, but freshman Jeff Godfrey drew big cheers at practice scrimmages during UCF Football Fan Fest on Saturday. Not that Calabrese didn't, but they were louder for Godfrey's high-energy playing style.

Neither has been assured the starting quarterback spot, though O'Leary did say both players would get playing time this season. Godfrey had played multiple positions in the past, but said that one of the top reasons he signed with the Knights is that O'Leary saw him as a quarterback.

In past seasons when the

Knights didn't have a dedicated quarterback, they platooned two or even three quarterbacks during games. At one point in 2008, Calabrese, then a freshman, was part of a three-man quarterback rotation that included Michael Greco and Joe Weatherford. Of the 12 games the Knights played that season, Calabrese received the most playing time, throwing in nine games. Greco threw in eight, while Weatherford threw in three.

But O'Leary has proven likely to change out his starting quarterback at a moment's notice. In 2008, Calabrese was the only quarterback on the field in the first two games. By the end of the season, Greco got all the playing time.

Now Calabrese is in the older man's shoes, competing for playing time against a freshman.

But as far as precedent goes, history is on Calabrese's side for standing on the field for the opening play at home at 6 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 4 against South Dakota. Since taking over as coach in 2004, O'Leary has never started a freshman quarterback on opening day.



PHOTO BY ISAAC BABCOCK — THE VOICE
UCF freshman Marquee Williams says hello to some young fans at the Knights' annual Fan Fest, held Aug. 21. Rain moved the festivities indoors, but a scrimmage to show off players' skills and an autograph-signing session gave fans a taste of the new team.

Voice Homes





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How's the real estate market?

"How is the real estate market going for you these days?" This is the question that is routinely posed to realtors, in Winter Park and elsewhere. Often the question is posed with a tilted head and sympathetic tone, in anticipation of a negative response. The

truth is that right now real estate is moving and realtors are very busy. With housing prices at levels not seen since the turn of the century - you know, the year 2000 - and with short sales and foreclosures o'plenty, investors and deal-seekers are coming out of the proverbial

woodwork. Yes, even in Winter Park! At the penning of this article, there sits a foreclosure listing in the prestigious "Vias" for \$189,900. In addition, the rental market has increased exponentially, due both to homes that will not sell, and to renters who are unwilling or unable to buy. After the real estate drought of the last couple of years, everyone is enjoying the current downpour of activity. The perfect storm of unprecedented interest rates (under 5% for qualified buyers) and affordable prices has made Winter Park suddenly affordable to previously excluded individuals.

The real estate market that we are currently experiencing is active and functional, but it is a very different marketplace from five years ago, one year ago, and maybe even last week, as the rules are in a state of constant flux. There have been tax incentives for first time home buyers, tax incentives for move-up buyers, changes in lending rules, changes in settlement statements and multiple new programs for home owners "under water." It's hard to avoid the new real estate paradigm even in Winter Park where approximately 28% of the homes on the market are either bank owned or "short sales." Buying or selling a home these days is certainly more complicated. It could take a bit longer to close; it may require more paperwork; it definitely requires a hefty amount of patience, but buyers and sellers are negotiating fair prices and properties are moving.

In Winter Park, we are seeing our greatest activity in the \$200,000 to \$400,000 price range (with 78 sales since January of this year and another 21 currently pending.) Conversely, the overall Central Florida market is seeing most of the activity for homes priced less than \$200,000. Winter Park has only had 20 sales of homes priced over \$1 million since January, and this is less than

half as many as was seen over the same time period in both 2005 and 2006. Surprisingly, it is more than twice the number of million dollar sales in the same period for both 2002 and 2003, before the market lost control of its self. So while the high end market seems depressed, it is comparatively more active than it was in more moderate times.

The rental market in Winter Park has experienced a sharp upswing in recent years, as more and more homes that do not sell are placed into the rental pool. These rentals are being absorbed by individuals who are still waiting for "the perfect deal" before making a purchase, or by those who have themselves lost homes to a short sale or foreclosure. The MLS, which only reflects homes that are rented by a real estate professional, shows that the number of Winter Park rentals increased from 65 in 2005 to a whopping 371 in 2009. In 2005, none of these homes rented for as much as \$3,000 per month, however in 2009 there were 22 such rentals. This year, 173 homes have rented so far in Winter Park, 14 of which have rented for \$3,000 or over. The increase in the number of high end rentals is commensurate with the recent decrease in the sale figures for these same homes.

So next time you ask your Realtor, "How's business?" don't be so worried. Things are looking up. Both sales volume and median sales price have been steadily increasing since January of 2010. And as we muddle through the inventory of distressed properties, we look toward a bright tomorrow of real estate normalcy - whatever that is!

—Brenda Cole & Laura Carroll of Gould and Company

***statistical data provided by Orlando Regional Board of Realtors Multiple Listing Service.*

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Cinema

A showcase of this week's releases, and a look ahead to upcoming movies.

Coming Sept. 10



Photo courtesy Screen Gems

'Resident Evil: Afterlife'

Coming Sept. 17



Photo courtesy Screen Gems

'Easy A'

'Takers' — Opens Friday



Photo courtesy Screen Gems

A group of criminals pull off perfect bank robberies, leaving behind no evidence. One tenacious detective is determined to catch the robbers. When the crooks risk it all for one last job, they just might get caught.

PG-13 - 1 hour 47 minutes

Coming Sept. 24



Photo courtesy Warner Bros. Pictures

'Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga'Hoole'

Also opening: 'The Last Exorcism' (PG-13)



Photo courtesy Lionsgate

Reverend Cotton Marcus has spent years fooling people out of their money by performing "exorcisms." But when Louis Sweetzer contacts Marcus, the reverend encounters a true evil in Sweetzer's teenage daughter, Nell.

Coming next week



Photo courtesy New Line Cinema

'Going the Distance' (R)


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Doctors pictured: Amish M. Parikh, MD; Khalid Yaqoob, MD; B. Alex Vakili, MD; Wasim Ahmar, MD; Vikas Verma, MD. Not pictured: J. B. Bitar, MD; John Chow, MD; Jorge Gomez-Amador, MD; Nandkishore V. Ranadive, MD; Rajesh A. Shah, MD

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