



Seminole Voice



Santa cops > 4
Winter Springs police gave kids a happier Christmas



Flying high > 4
America's largest balloon launches in Central Florida



Booktastic > 11
Twelve-year-old gives gifts to charity for his birthday

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Jan. 13 - Jan. 26, 2012

Free!

Mayors talk up economy for 2012

ISAAC BABCOCK
The Voice

The economic forecast for Seminole County is tenuously positive, at least according to the mayors of Oviedo and Winter Springs, who gave their State of the Cities addresses on Jan. 5.

That event included an introduction for the new most powerful city staffer in Oviedo, City Manager Kathryn Breazeale, who rose through the ranks at the city in less than two years. She outlined some changes on the horizon for the city's dealing with business. The mantra: build business by making it easy to set up shop.

"Our responsibility must be to make business and economic development as painless as possible," Breazeale said.

Oviedo Mayor Dominic Persampiere said he saw business and economic growth slowly moving upward in 2012, and shared some city secrets in the process.

"I think we're all starting to see a little light at the end of the tunnel," Persampiere said. "Property values probably won't drop as much as last year."

Will the city get a hospital any time soon? The mayor was reluctant.

■ Please see **STATE** on page 3

Kilts and cabers



ISAAC BABCOCK
The Voice

It's game time for a group of unusual athletes who throw giant logs by day and dance to bagpipe music at night. But the 35th annual Central Florida Scottish Highland Games is more than just kilted caber tossers on a mist-shrouded field, it's the largest cultural event in Seminole County. And it's coming to Winter Springs' Central Winds Park on Jan. 14-15.

"It's a weekend full of fun and activities for our residents as well as drawing a worldwide crowd," Winter Springs Mayor Charles Lacey said. "We're planning on 20-25,000 attendees if the weather holds out for us."

The games meld together Scottish heritage with sport, music and dancing, mixed with a plate of haggis and a glass of Dunedin Brewery beer.

"I think for the last five years ours has been the biggest games in Florida," said Robert Miller, president of the Central Florida St. Andrews Society, which promotes Scottish heritage.

Visitors will have plenty of time to pop in and out of the games this weekend, as the event runs 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday. Visit the calendar on Page 12 or <http://www.flascot.com> for more information.

Short leases, more choices

The Oviedo Mall is seeing more businesses choosing short-term leases, which has lowered merchants' risk

BRITNI JOHNSON
The Voice

Short-term leases are on the rise at the Oviedo Mall, and two brand new businesses are taking advantage of the opportunity.

"It became really popular as the time changed, you know, with the economic crunch ... with the uncertainty," said Crystal Hanley, specialty leasing representative for the mall.

House of Da'Le, a fitness center, and Vagabond Traveler, a leather luggage store, both opened in December under the Oviedo Mall's Specialty Retail Program. The program offers business owners leases that are a year or less, versus the traditional lease of two years or more. Generally the leases are at least six months, and a year is the most common length.

The mall has always had the program,

which is popular with seasonal carts that offer products particular to holidays, for example Christmas and Valentine's Day gifts, and the kiosks seen along the walkways selling belts or customizable shirts. But since the economy has had its downturn, many stores are choosing the shorter lease option. Hanley said at least eight stores in the mall have now gone with shorter leases.

Low risk

It gives new businesses an opportunity to test the waters without the risk of long-term commitment, officials say.

"Just because of the way the economy is and the way the market is, people are nervous," said Sara Steffes, marketing manager for the mall. "They want to open their own store, but they're nervous about doing it in an environment like this, and this

■ Please see **MALL** on page 2



PHOTO BY ISAAC BABCOCK — THE VOICE
House of Da'Le is taking advantage of a new short-term lease program that's attracted new business to the mall.

USPS 008-093
Publisher statement on page 2

What's goin' on?

The Central Florida Law Enforcement Car Show runs at the Oviedo Mall Jan. 21. Admission is free. Go to www.CopsandCarsForKids.com

Calendar > 12

INDEX

Celery Stalks	5
Stetson's Corner	5
Interests	6
Calendar	12
Athletics	14
Ask Sandi	15
Young Voices	15
Classifieds	16



Opening this week: 'The Iron Lady'

Margaret Thatcher rises to the role of Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and makes personal sacrifices to get there.



THIS WEEK



THIS WEEK in history

Jan. 24, 1908 —

The Boy Scouts movement begins in England with the publication of the first installment of Robert Baden-Powell's Scouting for Boys. In September 1909, 10,000 Scouts showed up at the first national Boy Scout meeting in London.

MALL | Two new businesses bring high-end leather bags, dance and fitness to the Oviedo Mall for 2012

■ CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

gives them that opportunity."

House of Da'Le owners Annette Escoffery and Patrizio Merlo jumped at the chance to see if the mall would be a good fit for their business, which offers the popular Zumba, yoga and many other fitness classes.

"There's very little risk involved," Merlo said.

And the little risk they have taken has seemed to pay off. While the mall sees a visitor here and there early on a Monday morning, 20 women sweat off the pounds dancing during a Zumba class led by the two owners. It's almost like

a dance club in the studio, where Merlo and Escoffery shake it for their class, grinning as if they're not even at work.

"We love what we do," Escoffery said. "We get to do what we're passionate about."

Here to stay

And while the mall is opening its options and expanding the idea of what fits in a mall — a couple years ago they never would've thought there'd be Zumba classes taught there — they are still cautious of what they choose to fill their storefronts, Hanley said.

They want to continue with the success seen since their manage-

ment changeover in November 2010 to Urban Retail Properties and General Manager Brian Olivi. The mall has had 2.9 million shoppers during the past six months, a figure they're happy with, Steffes said. Long-term tenants have noticed the increase in visitors this holiday season compared to 2010, too.

"In general I think the traffic is up," said Shirley Gonel, owner of Sassy's Bridal. "If they're not buying it doesn't matter, they'll know that we're here and they'll come back. At least they see that we're here."

Prudence Manolov, owner of Glass Slipper Cakery and Glass

Slipper Academy, said she's heard positive reactions from customers.

"You can tell the mall isn't going anywhere," she said.

Escoffery agreed, and although she does hear customers ask if the mall is here to stay, she and Merlo are confident in its future success.

"We wouldn't be here if we didn't think it was staying open," she said. "We see their vision so we're comfortable with being here."

Embracing choices

Vagabond Traveler owner Long Zhang said he had pretty good business during the holidays, but it's slowed down since. His store isn't the cheapest, his leather bags can reach more than \$300, but he hopes that the high quality of his product and unique feel will bring shoppers in.

"I have something people don't have," he said. "You carry personality."

The mall certainly receives benefits for taking chances on new ideas, and choices are what draw shoppers in, said Brian Olivi, general manager. A place to shop, exercise, see a movie, get a shirt embroidered and attend a city-sponsored event such as the Jan. 21 car show — options.

"It's not just about shopping ... that's the key is to provide a venue that has a variety of activities going on," he said.



Learn more

For more information about the Specialty Retail Program, email Crystal Hanley at hanleyc@urbanretail.com. To browse product from Vagabond Traveler, visit www.vagabondtraveler.com, and for more information about House of Da'Le and to see class schedules, visit www.houseofdalestudios.com or call 407-739-8151.



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STATE | Oviedo to get a Panera

■ CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

tant to give a definite yes, but said that things were moving forward with making some city property suitable for a medical facility of some kind.

"It's nothing insurmountable," Persampiere said.

In the meantime, shovels are already hitting the ground for two new restaurants that will likely open early- to mid-2012. An Ale House restaurant is already in the early stages of construction sandwiched between the city's driving range and Sushi Pop restaurant on Mitchell Hammock Road. Less than a quarter mile away, a Panera Bread restaurant, patterned after the updated Winter Park location, is also scheduled to spring up in front of L.A. Fitness, adjacent to the stagnant new downtown development, Oviedo on the Park.

"That's something we've been clamoring for for a long time, and we finally landed one in Oviedo," Persampiere said.

On the topic of the long-awaited downtown revival, the mayor said that there have been discussions with developers to finally move forward.

"We are getting very excited about that," he said. He did not give specifics about potential development.

Winter Springs Mayor Charles Lacey offered bolder predictions for 2012, saying the city was changing the way that government operates.

"We don't live in ordinary times," Lacey said. "Governments need to adapt the way business has had to adapt. I think that attitude is what sets us apart from any city in the county. We're going to form a new model, a permanent model for how government is going to operate."

Specifically he was talking about budget cuts that shrank the amount of money the government needed to operate, therefore allowing the city to run at low property tax rates.

"Our department heads have been able to do it through attrition and frankly an increased workload on the employees," Lacey said. "In 2007 we were the most streamlined city in the county. Now we're even more streamlined."

He said that would not lead to any drops in service or cancellations of city events, particularly a repeat of the canceled 2008 4th of July celebration due to lack of funds.

"Fortunately the answer to any of those concerns is an emphatic no," Lacey said to questions of whether that could happen again.

Chamber's new mission

MICHELLEY ERTEL
TheVoice

While much of the country continues to struggle with challenges from a lagging economy, the Oviedo-Winter Springs Regional Chamber of Commerce has set the wheels in motion that could mean an increase in momentum for businesses this year.

Cory Skeates, formerly known as the Chamber's executive director, now has a new title: president and chief executive officer. For Skeates, it means a change on his business cards. For local businesses, it means when he goes to meetings he can more quickly get things done because he's now on a level playing field with others in the same position at other chambers of commerce.

"It was tough when I would go to meetings and tell them that I was the executive director. People generally thought I worked part time at the Chamber and they'd ask me what my full-time job was. Now people know that I'm 'the guy' who runs the show," Skeates said. "It's a title usually reserved for the executive staff member."

In order to give Skeates the new title, the titles among the Board of the Directors had to be changed. Before this year, the person elected to head up the Board was known as president and the person next in line was called the president-elect. Now, they are called the chairman and the chairman-elect. Skeates said that these title changes were important

for corporate consistency with other chambers and businesses throughout the area.

New mission

Paul Sladek, the new chairman of the board, said besides the title changes, changes were also made to the by-laws and mission statement.

"Our mission statement used to be a 200-word monster that nobody could remember," Sladek said. So the board of directors changed it to make it simple.

Now, the statement reads, "An advocate for business and civic interests within our communities."

Sladek said though the Chamber had seen a decline in memberships, over the past six months, things have improved.

"Smaller businesses are opening in the area and have been joining the Chamber," Sladek said. "It's not necessarily a sign that either national or local economies are going to have a banner year, but it gave us hope that things have started to turn a little."

Though there are some new titles and a new mission statement, nothing is as important to Chamber members as their success, Skeates said.

"I think there will be further partnership opportunities and growth based on everything happening with UCF and Medical City," he said. "Because of [State Road] 417, this area has positioned itself to be a really positive spot for businesses to set up. You can get to the Medical City from Oviedo in a shorter

time than from East Orange County. As long as the schools in Seminole County can keep up — and we think they will — people are going to want to have businesses and families here where the schools are so good."

One new Chamber undertaking includes a new location for its biggest event, A Taste of Oviedo. The event, most recently held on Oviedo Boulevard, will now be held at the Oviedo Mall. The mall, Skeates said, has really stepped up its game by bringing events to their property.

More sun

Winter Springs Mayor Charles Lacey said his city is busy with new development, especially residential.

"In the past few months, Winter Springs has seen a tremendous pick-up in development activity," Lacey said. "Several commercial projects have been before the Commission, but the real surge is in housing — both single family and multi-family."

Rick Brown, who owns Tijuana Flats in Winter Springs and is also a city commissioner, is looking forward to a better 2012.

"The economic situation for Winter Springs looks strong," Brown said. "We have had a couple of housing projects kick off, a couple of new businesses open, and lots of development inquiries."

"Personally we finished our year up in sales and had a very good December. We are not back to 2008 and 2007 levels, but the trend is certainly there."

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Orlando Balloon Rides officially launched America's largest balloon on Dec. 16 in Reunion.

Shopping with cops



PHOTO BY ISAAC BABCOCK — THEVOICE

Winter Springs Police helped needy kids at the annual Shop with a Cop event on Dec. 17.

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Presents:

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Mayor Dominic Persampiere
City of Oviedo



Mayor Charles Lacey
City of Winter Springs

Wednesday, January 25

5:30pm-7:30pm

Oviedo Mall (former FYE)

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Between the CELERY Stalks

By Janet Foley

Go outside at winter events

Happy New Year! I hope all had a very good one. Parties and fun things are over now, Christmas decorations all put away for another year, and now it is time to get back to business. I know some moms and dads were delighted when Monday, Jan. 9, rolled around last week. Schools days are here again! Happy parents and sad children, but kids do like to go to school to see all their best buddies, but they of course are not thrilled with the studies and that homework mess.

New stores at Mall

Looks like this month will be quite busy. We have two new stores that opened up in the Oviedo Mall — former Casa de Vibe Studio Operators are now running a new fitness studio, House of Da'Le, which is located in the former Sports Fanatic space and offers a variety of specialized fitness classes with a focus on Zumba as well as personal training and products including Herbal Life. For complete information and schedule, please call 407-739-8152. The studio does plan to move into a large space within the next three to six months.

The second store, Vagabond Traveler, has leased a 1700 square feet next to JoS. A. Bank and offers handbags, brief cases, wallets, purses and related accessories. Online sales make up the majority of the business, but adding a retail storefront allows customers to interact with the product before making a purchase.

Please check out the Mall's events calendar for this month:

Jan. 14 — Orlando Music Club Playathon, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the Food Court and admission is free. It's a full day of music at the Mall provided by the Orlando Music Club students and teachers.

Jan. 15 — Sassy's Bridal Prom Fashion Show is 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. located in the West Court, near Dillard's. It's free admission. Goody bags will be presented to the first 50 guests, door prizes and a grand prize valued at \$300.

Also on Jan. 15 — Food Truck Crazy is 5-9 p.m. located in the parking lot between Chamberlin's and the North Entrance. The event is free, but the food is not, and they will be there rain or shine.

MLK celebration

The City of Oviedo and Oviedo Citizens in Action, Inc. presents the Dr. Martin Luther King Celebration on Monday, Jan. 16, starting with the parade at 10 a.m. Family Fun Day follows at Round Lake Park.

Strawberry pickin'

Everybody loves Strawberries and now Pappy's Patch, our

local strawberry patch, is open. The patch is located on Florida Avenue. I would call first for directions, days and times the berries are ready for picking. Their number is 407-366-8512.

OHS meets

The Oviedo Historical Society will hold its first general meeting of the New Year on Tuesday, Jan. 17, at 7 p.m. at the Memorial Building on Central Avenue. The society will present its guest speaker, Lars White, Oviedo's fire chief and president of the society, speaking about the Fire Department. Do come, the meeting is open to the public and light refreshments will be served.

Free concert

St. Luke's Concert Series is 7 p.m. Jan. 21 at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 2021 W. State Road 426 in Oviedo. The Orlando Concert Band will present the program "Pillars", a tribute to the work and icons of the musical world. It's free admission, and if you need more information, please call 407-365-3408.

Cops and cars

There was a busy last Saturday among vendors and visitors, especially the men, at the Farmer's Market last Saturday about the Central Florida Law Enforcement Car Show; they all said it is getting bigger and better than ever. The show is 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 21 at the Oviedo Mall. The Winter Springs Optimist Club in cooperation with the Oviedo Police Department will host the event.

The show will include hundreds of classic, modern and antique show vehicles of all types, numerous law enforcement, EMS and Fire-Rescue and safety vehicles, military vehicles, and helicopters for the sheriff's, office and Orlando Health, K-9 demonstrations, and more. Individuals and area clubs can also compete in a variety of public classes. Vehicle registration is \$25-\$35 depending on date of registration. Proceeds benefit the Optimist Club's youth, family and special needs programs, as well as childhood cancer campaigns. Admission to the event is free, and if you need more information, call 407-971-5711

A thought

"One advantage of marriage is that, when you fall out of love with him or he falls out of love with you, it keeps you together until you fall in again." — Judith Viorst in Redbook

TALK TO JANET

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

STETSON'S CORNER

By Karen McEnany-Phillips

Geneva honors newest Eagle Scout

"Now I see the secret of making the best persons, it is to grow in the open air and to eat and sleep with the earth."

— Walt Whitman

Geneva celebrated a milestone of one of its own as Talon Michael Falconer was officially inducted into very select company. Falconer earned the Eagle Scout award, Scouting's greatest honor, an achievement that less than five percent of most Boy Scouts attain. The ceremony known as the Eagle Scout Court of Honor was held in the First United Methodist Church of Geneva on a beautiful Sunday afternoon the week before Christmas. Reverend Lisa Carboni began with a moving invocation recognizing that God created the ponds in which Talon swam, the trails that he forged and the animals and nature that caused him wonder.

Scouting has British roots

The audience learned that British military leader Lord Baden-Powell founded the world Scouting movement in the early 1900s and is fondly revered as "Chief Scout of the World". His book "Scouting for Boys" was a bestseller as small groups of boys earned badges from mastering key scouting skills.

Talon's journey

Talon's trail to Eagle began as most boys do as Cub Scout and Weblo. Later he became Assistant Senior Patrol leader and soon was voted Patrol Leader. He enjoyed water activities, especially small boat sailing and canoeing. He liked tracking animals and firearms and systematically earned his badges along the way. His family, friends and mentors watched with pride as candles were lit representing the Scout Spirit, Scout Oath and Scout Law.

Trail to the Eagle

The process from Life Scout to Eagle is rigorous. It involves not only earning many more Eagle Badges but also an Eagle Service Project with its own application process and strict guidelines and requirements. They have been working years developing the leadership and management skills which will be put to the test as they plan, present and coordinate their project idea.

Thanks to parents & community

Most Eagle Scouts have very supportive and involved parents and Talon was no exception. In recognition of the critical role that parents play, Talon's mother

and father were honored and also involved in the ceremony. It was beautiful to see Talon affix a pin to his mother and then she in turn affixed a pin to him. Then his dad was recognized as was his Scoutmaster, his troop and the community who supported him.

Always an Eagle

But the young Eagle's flight has just begun. The Eagle Award is a lifelong rank and each recipient is admonished to live up to its expectations. Astronauts, presidents, military commanders and men of significant accomplishment are often found to be Eagle Scouts. Sincere congratulations to Eagle Scout Talon Michael Falconer, his family Scoutmaster Randy Deavers, Committee Chair Cindy Deavers and all the members of Troop 837 and Pack 837.

Save the Date: Saturday, Feb. 4

Geneva's Annual Historical Bus Tour and Pancake Breakfast is just three weeks away and reservations for those coveted bus seats are going fast. Call 407-947-4412 or email margieilj@aol.com and leave your name, phone number or email, number of people and which tour you prefer, 9:30 a.m. or 11:30 a.m. You will receive a call or email back for confirmation. Both tours start and end at the Geneva Community Center and are \$10 per person.

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.



From my GARDEN to yours

Tom Carey

Do you innovate?

A decade or two ago, with my flock of children staring down the road toward college, I took a several year hiatus from growing my garden while pursuing a less risky career option (as an electrician at the Mousehouse). Upon my return to the daily dance with Mother Nature, the remnants of my garden were in dire need of refurbishment. Once the framework of fences, greenhouse, water supply, growing beds and other functional pieces were in place, the routine of growing crops commenced. Never one to be satisfied with a routine, I began to innovate.

After the basics are initially created, wanting to improvise and improve the garden are as much of the fun as sticking seeds in the soil. During long hours of seemingly repetitive work, the gears of my mind are

churning to the point of distraction. Dreaming is free, but creation beyond the dream requires commitment and cash. The dedication of spending choices toward innovation instead of merely reaping the profits of labor is recognized by many as the first steps toward sainthood. Gardening is a labor of love for me, plus I would rather spend the cash in my backyard than at the mall.

Innovating beyond success appears to be the problem behind many of the world's symptoms. If a little fertilizer grows the plants to their full potential, why not add a lot of fertilizer? Spraying for bugs when damage is first noticed may control the holes in the beets, but spraying on a Monday and Thursday just in case now disrupts the beneficial predatory insect cycle.

The feedback loop of innovation must be recognized as important as the implementation.

Irrigation is an area where we can easily apply the principles of innovation. Never one to stand idly by while schlepping a watering can through the garden, a succession of sprinklers were tried and discarded. Based on the design and shape of my garden, I cobbled together PVC pipes and fittings into a hot-rod contraption that waters several long growing beds in a few easy moves. Not leaving well enough alone, a timer on the hose allows me to tackle other projects and not to worry about wasting water and inconsistent soil saturation. But the timer valve constricted the water flow to the point of leaving the plants on the edges dry.

Our civilization has more potential to innovate than at any other time in history. The blank canvases our gardens provide allow us to easily practice this esoteric science. Pick a project you love, immerse yourself in that project, and enjoy the art of innovating for its own sake.

WHO IS CAREY

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

INTERESTS



THIS WEEK in human history

Jan. 18, 1912 —

After a two-month ordeal, the expedition of British explorer Robert Falcon Scott arrives at the South Pole, only to find that Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen had preceded them by just more than a month. Caught in a storm on the way back to base camp, Scott and two others perished.



Ball all night

High school softball standouts from across Central Florida make up America's Team, and are hoping to raise money to play their sport in Italy with a 24-hour softball game

PHOTO BY BRITTNI JOHNSON — THE VOICE

America's Team, above, will need \$30,000 to get to Europe, but they're expecting sponsor teams to have fun playing softball all night in their fundraising tournament, which is open to the public.

BRITTNI JOHNSON
The Voice

It's 3 a.m. and they're still playing. Hundreds of runs have been ticked up on the scoreboard; the bright spotlights shine on the now worn field, bases smashed by dozens of cleats. It's the longest game of softball ever played in Florida, and there's still a chance to see it happen, because it hasn't happened quite yet.

High school softball standouts from across Central Florida make up America's Team, and they're working to raise \$56,000 to go on a July trip to Italy to play soft-

ball against local Italian teams. They hope to raise \$30,000 of that through a marathon softball game in Winter Springs, 24 hours of ball with 48 teams, and a score that keeps going with each pairing's hour-long play.

"I don't want money to stand in the way of this opportunity," Coach Cindy Corrado said.

High hopes

And that's why they need this fundraiser to be a homerun. It costs \$10 a player, with each team requiring 10 players, and anyone can play. They've got about half the teams they need to play the

game, and will also raise funds through concession stand sales, a silent auction and meet and greets with Olympians. But with only \$8,000 in the bank, they've got a long way to go. But Corrado has the passion to make it work, said Jim Lucas of Jim Lucas Sports, the man behind the marathon idea and the company helping the team organize the event.

"She's got a never say die attitude," Lucas said.

Experience of a lifetime

Corrado is the embodiment of "coach" — a tough motivator with a commanding tone when

they talk about committing to make the trip a reality, which takes work. Corrado has been a professional softball player, and her current job as an Orange County Jail correctional officer makes sense. The girls naturally, and respectfully, perk up when she speaks. But when it turns disappointing — two teammates have backed out because of the cost of the trip at \$4,000 per girl — she gets emotional. Corrado is dedicated to seeing her team make the trip.

"It's a dream for me," she said.

It's an experience most will never have in their lives, and the 14 girls on America's Team have

that chance, and they know it.

"I thought it was like the opportunity of a lifetime, how could you not take it?" said Sable Lee, a senior at Oviedo High School.

Showing the world America's pastime

They'll get to see the sights in three Italian cities, and play against two teams in each. The America's Team organization pairs the students — chosen by Corrado based on their academic achievement, attitude and softball skills — with guides in each city so that they can get an educational and cultural experience while exposing America's pastime to a country that doesn't quite appreciate it the way we do. Their goal is, of course, to win. But it's also to promote the sport and try to get softball back in the Olympics.

"It's important to travel to other countries, to reach out," Lee said.

"To show them the love of the game," added Kiersten Coffman, a senior at Winter Springs High School.

And they do love it. They itch to play after a couple weeks off, antsy to feel the rush and calm that comes with their favorite thing to do in the world. Nothing exists when the game is on. No school worries, no stress, only them and the ball.

"There's nothing better," Coffman said. "It's the game I love."

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Learn more

Visit www.hometorome.net for more information about the game, to register your team and to contribute to their fundraising. The game will start at noon on Jan. 28 and end at noon on Jan. 29 at Central Winds Park in Winter Springs. There's a cost to participate, but it's free to watch.



Cops 'n Cars for Kids

Jan. 21

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Oviedo Mall

1700 Oviedo Mall Blvd., Oviedo

The Seventh Annual Central Florida Law Enforcement Car Show returns to the Oviedo Mall on Saturday, Jan. 21 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with activities, vendors and displays to thrill children, adult family members and car enthusiasts alike. There is no admission cost for spectators of any age.

In addition to hundreds of classic, modern and antique show vehicles of all types from Florida and beyond, there will be displays and demonstrations spread across acres of the Oviedo Mall parking lot and its adjacent green spaces. Numerous law enforcement, EMS and Fire-Rescue vehicles will be staged with U.S. Army vehicles from the 143rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary). Last year's show also included helicopters from the Sheriff's Office and Orlando Health; K-9 demos; the Oviedo Fire-Rescue safety trailer; Florida's Blood Centers "Big Red Bus"; and specialized public safety equipment from multiple agencies. Kids and adults should bring cameras to photograph the amazing sights and special guests.

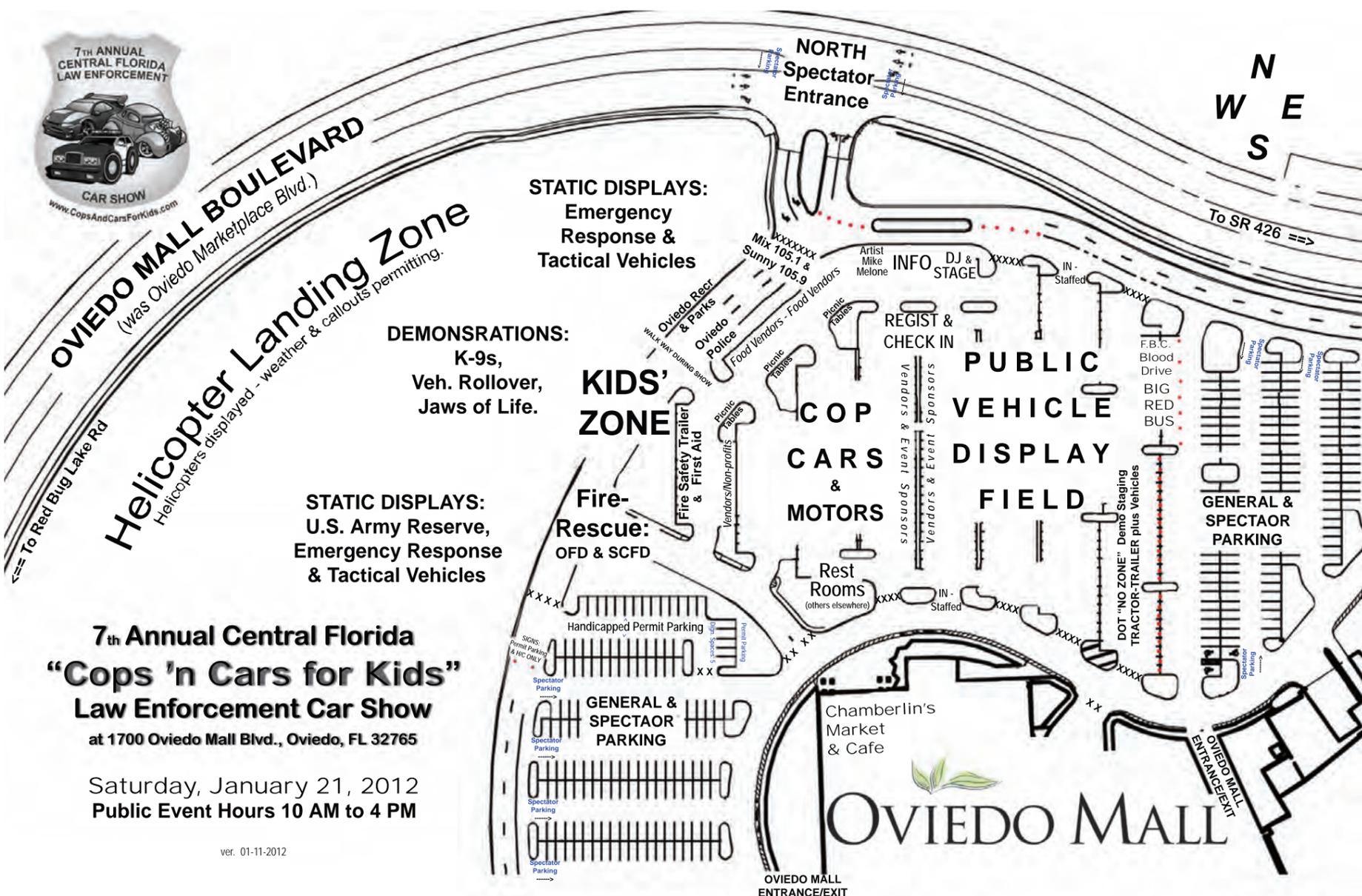
Each year, a dedicated Kids' Zone offers inflatable play areas, games, face-painting, safety education, crafts and a race track for kids' homemade pine racecars.

Hosted by the Oviedo-Winter Springs Optimist Club in cooperation with the Oviedo Police Department, this year the Winter Springs Police Department has joined as a co-host. Car show entry fees as well as corporate and business sponsorship donations will benefit the Oviedo-Winter Springs Optimist Club's many youth, family and special needs programs, as well as childhood cancer campaigns.

A "Kids' Choice" award will be picked based on youth spectator voting while experienced independent judges will select multiple standouts in the various vehicle classes, as well as "Best of" in each class and the overall "Best in Show." In 2012, about 90 awards will be earned by "Best of" winners and others for specialty awards.

Personal vehicles may be pre-registered for \$35. Drivers 21 years of age or younger can enter a vehicle in the "Young Guns" class and pay only their age (\$16 to \$21) even on the day of the show.

Whether you will be among the thousands who attend "Cops 'n Cars for Kids" to have a great time without admission costs, or you want your company or business represented at the show, full event and sponsorship information plus photos and video of the last show are online at www.CopsAndCarsForKids.com or www.OviedoOptimist.com



**7th Annual Central Florida
"Cops 'n Cars for Kids"
Law Enforcement Car Show**
at 1700 Oviedo Mall Blvd., Oviedo, FL 32765

Saturday, January 21, 2012
Public Event Hours 10 AM to 4 PM

ver. 01-11-2012

Auto parts become trophies at Cops 'n Cars for Kids



Cash America is a proud sponsor of the Central Florida Law Enforcement Car Show, serving local Optimist Youth Programs and Childhood Cancer Campaigns.

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Mike Melone was raised on a farm. He learned very quickly to adapt and to repair things with whatever could be found to get the job done.

His skills developed further as he worked in service stations and numerous automotive dealerships, as a master technician in most of them. Throughout that time, "out of the box" thinking became a normal approach for Mike to complete many challenging repairs. In 2008 the purchase of a new welder to repair a boat trailer revealed his gift for a different kind of creativity.

Mike began using that welder to create figures out of scrap metal and he recycled those objects into birds, people and animals that others recognized as art. Twelve of his pieces were taken to a folk art gallery in Sanford, where they were placed on display and sold. Mike Melone the master technician met Mike Melone the artist. Since that time, his pieces and characters have found homes in museums and in permanent collections across Florida in Orlando, Eustis and Lakeland as well as in Davis, California, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina and at the House of Blues in Orlando. Many of his pieces have been donated to good causes, including the start up of a children's art gallery in New Jersey in 2008 and to a Winter Park day care center in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

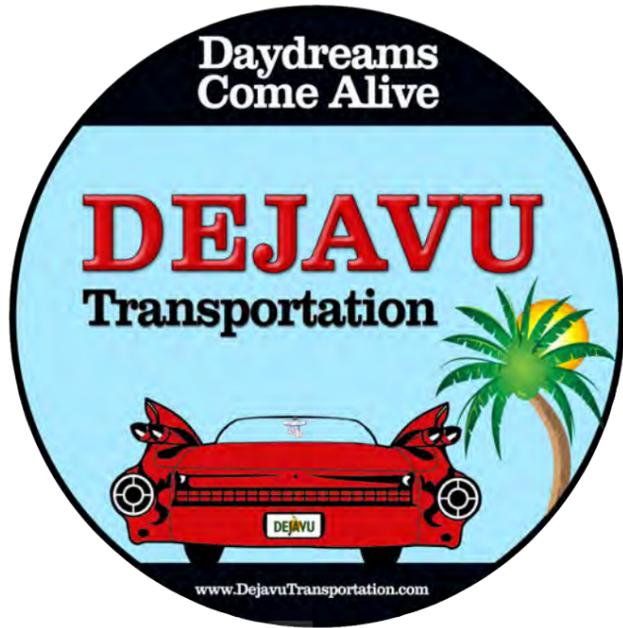
"Southern Metal Folk Art" grew from the creativity of Mike, his belief in the recycling of found objects and his philosophy "Go Green! Go Rust." Mike's creations now are sold in galleries throughout the U.S. and have become part of the lives of interested children — young and old — at over 100 art shows, which have featured his work.

In 2012, some of Mike's unique, one-of-a-kind welded metal sculptures have been created from auto parts specifically to be donated to be the top tier trophies for the annual Central Florida "Cops 'n Cars for Kids" Law Enforcement Car Show, which last year had nearly 200 vehicles on display. Held in Mike's hometown of Oviedo, since 2005 and hosted by the Oviedo Police Department, the Winter Springs Police Department and the Oviedo-Winter Springs Optimist Club, this regional car show draws participants and spectators from across the state and beyond.

Mike's donation of the one-of-a-kind top tier trophies for "Cops 'n Cars for Kids" helps set this car show apart from all others. In doing so, Mike's talent helps benefit the many youth, family-focused and special needs programs offered by the Oviedo-Winter Springs Optimist Club to serve the people of Central Florida.

Thank you, Mike!

Mike Melone is based out of Oviedo. Visit www.southernmetalfolkart.com



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Cops 'n Cars for Kids

2012 EVENT SCHEDULE

All Events Tentative and Subject to Change

10:00

OPENING CEREMONY with emcee JR Goodman

10:30

Static Displays all day in west green space.

11:00

Fire-Rescue Demonstration: "Jaws of Life" Extraction

11:30

Police K-9 Demonstration

NOON

HOSTS' WELCOME CEREMONY

Chief Jeff Chudnow, Oviedo Police

Chief Kevin Brunelle, Winter Springs Police

Philip S. Kaprow, Optimist President

12:30

Static Displays all day in west green space.

1:00

Fire-Rescue Demonstration: "Jaws of Life" Extraction

1:30

Police K-9 Demonstration

2:00

Static Displays all day in west green space.

2:30

Static Displays all day in west green space.

3:00

AWARDS PRESENTATION CEREMONY

Oviedo Mayor Dominic Persampiere, Event Hosts and 2012 Award Winners.

4:00

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Family Calendar

Take a firsthand look at what **St. Luke's Lutheran School** has to offer during two upcoming open house events, taking place on Friday, Jan. 13, and Friday, Feb. 17, starting at 8 a.m.

If you are not able to attend one of our open house events, please contact Sherry Abell, School Admissions Director, for a personalized tour of campus, at 407-365-3228 or sabell@stlukes-oviedo.org

The Orlando Music Club Playathon is 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 14, at the Oviedo Mall food court. Orlando Music Club students and teachers will provide a full day of music. The event is free.

Sassy's Bridal is hosting a **prom fashion show** 1-2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 15, at the Oviedo Mall's West Court, near Dillard's. The first 50 guests receive a free goody bag, will be entered to win door prizes and have a chance at a grand prize valued at \$300. Entrance to the show is free. Visit www.my-oviedomall.com for details.

Kids pottery classes begin Sunday Jan. 15th.

Adult evening pottery classes begin Thursday, Jan. 19 and on Tuesday, Jan. 31.

Adult day pottery classes begin Wednesday Jan. 18. It's all at the Cup O' Pottery, 1977 Alafaya Trail, Suite #1091, Oviedo. Call 407-421-5460 or visit www.cupopottery.com

SAK Comedy Lab comes to Winter Springs High School for a great night out without having to drive downtown or pay for parking! Tickets are on sale now for the show, which happens on Jan. 20 at 7 p.m. at the Winter Springs High School Auditorium. General Admission in advance is \$15 and at the door \$18. Reserved seating is \$20. Contact phylliscrawley@gmail.com for information.

HOPE volunteers will be located in the Oviedo Mall at the old Kirkland space near Sears through Jan. 29 collecting, counting and weighing non-perishable food items for our biggest food drive ever! All items will be counted/ weighed, and the winner of the largest donation will be announced at Oviedo Mall, along with HOPE staff and leaders from our community, Jan. 31 at 7 p.m.

Join Seminole County Natural Lands Program for **guided hikes and programs throughout the county**. Come learn about habitats and the wonderful and sometimes mysterious creatures that live there. For information about any of the hikes or programs, call 407-349-0959. It's \$3 per person. Please register in advance. (*for swamp walks, children must have completed fifth grade).

Email calendar submissions to editor@observernewspapers.com



PHOTOS BY ISAAC BABCOCK — THEVOICE

Ryan Hart, 12, turned a punishment into a philanthropic hobby, donating books to local needy children.

Ryan's birthday wish

Every year he forfeits presents and gives to childrens' charities

SARAH WILSON
The Voice

Cleaning your room and getting in trouble with your parents are two necessary evils every adolescent tries, yet fails to avoid while growing up.

Twelve-year-old Ryan Hart of Oviedo is no stranger to the pitfalls of both. However instead of sulking, Ryan decided to learn his lesson and try to make the best out of both situations.

For his sixth birthday, Ryan's parents decided none of his friends would be allowed to bring him presents for his birthday party.

"We thought he wasn't acting grateful or realizing how lucky he

was to have all that he had," his mother, Lisa Hart, said, "so we made him tell his friends to each bring a stuffed animal to the party to be donated to a local children's shelter, instead of regular gifts."

The next year, when his birthday rolled around, and every year since, it has been Ryan's own idea to forfeit gifts and instead ask his friends to donate money to the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Not only did the 'punishment' work, but Ryan said it also made him more conscious of different ways he could help his community.

Every summer, Ryan said his parents make him clean out his entire room to get rid of things he no longer needs, wants or uses. The most daunting part of this: his bookshelf.

For the boy with the second most Accelerated Reader points to ever graduate from Rainbow Elementary, sifting through and parting with his books, his mother said, has always been an ordeal.

Usually, his mother said, the books would be passed down to his younger sister, but this past August, with a stack of giveaways nearly 100 tall, Ryan decided he had a better idea.

"I thought it was just a waste to throw them out or just put them up in the attic or something, so I talked to my mom about trying to get a project started to give books to other kids that really need them," Ryan said.

With that, Project Book Storm was born. Since Aug. 22, Ryan has collected more than 3,000 books from friends, family members and local schools to donate to different local organizations to give to kids in need. In December, the Sanford Middle School sixth-grader was recognized by the Seminole County School Board for his efforts.

Hooked on books

Books, Ryan said, give him an escape from everyday life. On one page, he's a wizard dueling a dragon, and the next he's in the trenches of war, ducking from enemy fire.

"My favorite part of reading is probably just the mystery of a book and all the adventures you can have visualizing what's happening in your head," he said.

He hopes the books he's collecting and donating to kids in need provides them with the same sort of joy and escape, and also brings

families together like reading has in his own.

But his dreams don't stop there.

"I feel like maybe I could be doing something to help change the world, something that'll make the world a better place," he said. "This is helping kids learn to read, which makes the literacy rate go up. That makes them have a better chance at jobs, so that means the country gets better workers."

After collecting more than 1,000 books after his first month of book drives at Ryan's school and with his basketball team, the Harts decided to think bigger, enlisting the help of the Seminole County Public School's Title 1 Department and partnering with their Families in Transition program. There are an estimated 1,000 homeless students in Seminole County. The project hit the 3,000-book milestone just three months later.

Ryan has seen his books donated to kids in need at events at both Winter Springs and Seminole high schools, and has plans for two more large donations in January to celebrate literacy month at Indian Trails and Lawton Chiles middle schools.

Ryan said Project Book Storm has grown far larger than he ever anticipated, but hopes to keep it growing, with each new book donated getting him a step closer to his ultimate goal.

"I want to try and give all the kids in Seminole County in need something they can enjoy and have fun with," Ryan said. "... I'm hoping to change as many kids' lives as we can."

Learn more

For more information on Project Book Storm and how you can get involved and sign your business up as a book drop-off location, visit their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/projectbookstorm or email projectbookstorm@gmail.com

Their only current public donation location is Integrity Dance Studio at 853 E. State Road 434 in Winter Springs, where books can be dropped off Mondays and Fridays from 4 to 8 p.m.

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Calendar

“From the Gut”

The Jeanine Taylor Folk Art gallery is hosting the opening for Matt Sesow's “From the Gut” 6-9 p.m. Friday, Jan. 27 at 211 E. 1st St., Sanford. The event is free. Hours are Tuesday – Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday from noon to 5 p.m.; and Monday by appointment. Visit www.jtfolkart.com



JAN. 13

The Central Florida Scottish Highland Games are happy to offer **Whisky Tasting** at the Altamonte Hilton, 350 N. Lake Blvd. It will be held from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 13. Space is limited to adults, 21 and older. Tickets are \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door (cash only).

JAN. 14

The **35th annual Central Florida Scottish Highland Games** is Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 14-15 at Central Winds Park in Winter Springs. It's open 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturday and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets for adults on Saturday are \$17 in advance and \$20 at the gate. Tick-

ets for adults on Sunday are \$12 in advance or \$15 at the gate. Children ages 6-11 can get in both days for \$5, and students age 12-17 can get a two-day pass for \$10. For tickets visit tinyurl.com/scottishgames or call 407-426-7268.

The **Cuplet Fern Chapter** of the Florida Native Plant Society's January field trip is 9 a.m. Jan. 14 at the Chuluota Wilderness Area, 3895 Curryville Road. Sherry Williams, chapter vice-president, will lead this hike through the 625-acre preserve located in southeast Seminole County. It's free and open to the public. Call 407-302-7616 for more information.

The “**Refuse to Be A Victim**” seminar teaches tips to avoid dangerous situations. Topics include: Home, Personal, Automobile and Workplace Security. The class is at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 14 at the Rural Heritage Center, 101 E. Main St., Geneva. The cost is \$20. Please contact Dawn Kight to register: dmkight4@att.net

Dinner & Movie Night at the Geneva Bijou is 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 14. There will be pizza followed by a movie at 7 p.m. Admission is a \$5 donation for adults and a \$3 donation for kids younger than 16. The event is at the Rural Heritage Center, 101 E. Main, Geneva. Send an email to GenevaHGS@aol.com join their movie club list.

JAN. 18

Tuskawilla United Methodist Church will present **Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University**. The class helps people transform their financial lives.

Classes are 6-8 p.m. Wednesdays beginning Jan. 18 at Tuskawilla UMC, 3925 Red Bug Lake Road, Casselberry. Child care will be provided. Contact Jo-Anne Holleran at shellqueen@juno.com or call 407-699-8155 for further information.

JAN. 19

The Fine Arts gallery at Seminole State College will host an exhibit by artists Jeff Hoffman and Aaron Vaaler called “**Flat Planes.**” The exhibit opening reception is at 5 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 19. For information, visit www.seminolestate.edu/arts, or call 407-708-2040.

JAN. 21

The **Central Florida Law Enforcement Car Show** runs at the Oviedo Mall from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 21. Admission is free. Find more details at www.CopsAndCarsForKids.com

St. Luke's concert series presents “**Pillars,**” on 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 21. The performance will be at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 2021 W. S.R. 426, Oviedo. For information, call church office 407-365-3408 or visit

www.stlukes-oviedo.org

Join us for the 10th Annual **Air Potato Raid** at the Spring Hammock preserve, 2985 Osprey Trail, Longwood, from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Jan. 21. For information contact Lori Hartsock at 407-349-0959 or lhartsock@seminolecountyfl.gov

Healthy Yeast **bread baking class** runs from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 21 at the Seminole County Extension Services kitchen, 250 W. County Home Road, Sanford. Class size is limited. Call 407-665-5560 to register. Each class is \$10.

Goldenrule Housing is assisting first-time homeowners who wish to receive down payment assistance. This mandatory class is 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 21. Participants must register in advance. No walk-ins will be accepted. Call 407-878-3759.

The Geneva community center will host a free evening of music at the **Geneva Jam** with acoustic music including bluegrass, old country and gospel. The Jam is 6 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 21. There will be a 50-50 raffle to benefit the Community Center.

The **Orlando Area Citrus Drive** will be 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 21 at Oviedo's First United Methodist Church, 263 King St. Fruit collected will be distributed to local food pantries. For information contact Amanda Rich, Society of St. Andrew at 407-650-1956.

JAN. 25

Learn about **FairTax** at the Seminole County Sheriff's Annex, 1225 E. Broadway, Oviedo from 7-8:30 Wednesday, Jan. 25. For information, call 407-949-2959. The event is free.

The Planetarium at Seminole State College will offer “**Backyard Astronomy,**” a free course for those interested in learning about the night sky. The course is 6:30-9:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 25.

JAN. 26

Breakthrough Fitness is hosting a four-week Fat Loss Workshop 6-7 p.m. beginning Thursday, Jan. 26 at 269 Aulin Ave. Ste. 1011, Oviedo.

JAN. 27

The Lake Mary Senior Center is hosting an **Abstract Painting Class** 1:30-2:45 p.m. Friday, Jan. 27, at 911 Wallace Ct. Class fee is \$12. Registration and supplies are required. E-mail Rusty at rstywahl@bellsouth.net or call 407-688-0537.

JAN. 28

The All Around Geneva Relay for Life Team **Chili Cook-Off** is from noon to 6 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 28. Enjoy chili, live music, kid's fun at the Jolly Gator Fish Camp, 4650 E. St. Road. 46, Geneva. Registration is \$5 in advance and \$10 the day of. Email mconsolato@bellsouth.net

A **24-hour softball game** fundraiser begins noon on Jan. 28 and ends at noon on Jan. 29 at Central Winds Park in Winter Springs. Visit www.hometorome.net for more information. There's a cost to participate, but it's free to watch.



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Notes

Unexpected New Year's arrival

It was a busy New Year's at Winnie Palmer Hospital where many families rang in the New Year with a bundle of joy. One baby in particular had an interesting story to share. The Klammer-Sherman family of Oviedo was visiting Sea World on Saturday, New Year's Eve, when mom went into labor. An ambulance brought her to Winnie Palmer Hospital where she delivered Max Wade Sherman at 1:01 a.m. By 8 a.m. New Years Day, more than a dozen babies had been born at Winnie Palmer Hospital.



Lewis reenlists

Sergeant Linda Lewis from Winter Springs has reenlisted to continue service with the 1569th Transportation Company of the New York Army National Guard.

GRADUATIONS

Belhaven

The following local students graduated from Belhaven University on Dec. 8:

- James Coppinger of Casselberry earned a Bachelor of Science in Management.
- Sharon Schaefer of Winter Springs earned a Bachelor of Health Administration.

- Karen Alexander of Longwood applied for December Graduation and is pursuing a Master of Science in Leadership.

Nebraska-Lincoln

Cheryl Knodel of Longwood was among nearly 1,500 students who received degrees from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln at commencement exercises Dec. 16 and 17. Knodel received a master of science.

Flagler

The following students were awarded bachelor's degrees from Flagler College in St. Augustine, Fla.:

- Lauren Rae Back of Winter Springs
- Kevin Patrick Bolton of Winter

- Springs
- Randi Layne Mitchell of Winter Springs
 - Jaclyn Danielle Wilmers of Winter Springs
 - Mark Alan Leavy of Longwood

Excelsior

Riya R. Mehan, a resident of Oviedo, has earned a Bachelor of Science from Excelsior College.

40K pounds donated

Duda Farm Fresh Foods announced today that it has donated 40,000 pounds of fresh produce to Seminole County Public Schools (SCPS) Families in Transition (FIT) program. The retail value of the donated produce is about \$30,000.

417 extension opens

Motorists now have a newer and quicker way to access International Parkway in the Heathrow and Sanford area. The State Road 417 extension opened Dec. 14. The new road takes travelers beyond Interstate 4 — farther west — and increases mobility in northwestern Seminole County and into Lake County.

Spirit Cares needs donations

Due to the current economic crisis, there is an increase in the number of Geneva families that are in need. Geneva Elementary, along with the PTA, have partnered with Second Harvest Food Bank to address this need in Geneva. In addition to the support of the entire community, the success of

the Spirit Cares program depends on cash donations, which are now graciously being accepted. Checks may be made payable to Geneva Elementary PTA, with "Spirit Cares" on the memo line, and can be sent to school with students or mailed to: Geneva PTA, 275 1st St., Geneva FL 32732. Questions? Contact Cindy Decker at genevapta@gmail.com or Barb Atkins at Barbara_Atkins@scps.k12.fl.us

BIZ NEWS

Sushi Pop in top 100

Sushi Pop in Oviedo has been named a winner of OpenTable Diners' Choice Awards for the top 100 best restaurants in the United States. The list of winners is derived from more than 10 million reviews submitted by OpenTable diners. "We are very pleased by this acknowledgment from our OpenTable diners," manager Michael Ring said. "We are proud to know that our guests thoroughly enjoyed their

overall experience at Sushi Pop and gave us such high marks."

New signs for Incubator

The University of Central Florida Business Incubator, along with the Oviedo-Winter Springs Regional Chamber of Commerce, recently held a ceremony and reception to recognize and light up new street-level signs at the UCF Business Incubator Winter Springs, 1511 E. State Road 434.

Densch sets up scholarship

Seminole State College of Florida has received \$2 million from the Wayne M. Densch Charities to establish a scholarship program for first-generation college students. The donation, which will be distributed in \$200,000 increments over 10 years, also gives the Orlando-based Densch trust naming rights to the Partnership Center that opened in 2010 as the centerpiece of the Sanford/Lake Mary Campus.

First bachelor's

Eighteen students made history at Seminole State College of Florida on Friday, Dec. 9, becoming the first graduates to earn a four-year degree in the College's 46-year history. The students, whose journey began in January 2010, crossed the stage at the Fall 2011 Commencement Ceremony, earning their bachelor's degrees in interior design.





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ATHLETICS



THIS WEEK in sports history

Jan. 20, 1980 —

Bleachers at a bullring in Sincelejo, Colombia, collapse, killing 222 people. The deadliest tragedy at a sporting event in Colombia's history was the result of overcrowding and poor construction.

Lions feed Hagerty streak

ISAAC BABCOCK
The Voice

An up-and-down season for the Lions again took a turn south as they fell to cross-town rival Hagerty 87-72 on Jan. 6. That dropped the Lions to 9-7 to start the week, which featured a Jan. 11 showdown against Winter Springs at press time.

Against Hagerty, the Lions showed more offensive spark than they had since the start of the season, lagging early but then exploding on offense to try to close a massive gap. Jarrell Green's 18 points provided the Lion's share of scoring. R.J. June wasn't far behind with 12 points, and Thomas Wixted and Colby Bortles had 11 points each. Wixted was the sharpshooter of the night, hitting 80 percent of his shots.

Lackluster rebounding by the Lions may have done them in, as they only picked up a total of 23 on the night.

Hagerty (10-3) opened up scoring early and often in that game, nailing 50 by halftime as they seemingly ran away with the game. But they tired in the third quarter, and then in the fourth, they let Oviedo back into the game as the Lions scored 27 points in a failed comeback at-

tempt.

For the Huskies the win was the fifth of a six-game winning streak they've carried over since December.

Winter Springs and Lake Howell will take to the court and possibly revive an old rivalry this Friday, but they'll be coming from two very different places.

For the Bears, a tough season has landed them at 3-13 with district play still remaining. Their only win in the last 10 games came against a Pace team that had only won one game all season. Against a much smaller Lake Mary Prep team on Jan. 9, they struggled to contain the Griffins' offense, giving up a 90-68 loss.

Longtime Coach Steve Kohn's Silver Hawks are 6-6 so far, and even at 1-1 in district play. They already played the Bears once this season, and dominated them in a 62-40 win.

For the Lions, a road trip to Evans will tip off at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 13, then they'll head home for a 7:30 p.m. Jan. 17 game against Lyman. Hagerty will host DeLand starting 7:30 p.m. Jan. 13 before hosting Seminole at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 17. Winter Springs hosts Lake Howell (6-6), coming off a 53-46 loss to Seminole, at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 13, then heads to Orange-wood for a 7:30 p.m. Jan. 17 showdown.

Knights exorcise C-USA demons

ISAAC BABCOCK
The Voice

The Knights are already beginning to exorcise demons they had on the basketball court last year, storming into conference play with two straight wins heading into the start of the week. Now they're starting down the thick of C-USA play with an eye on the championships.

They headed into a showdown against Houston at press time Jan. 11 with a fresh set of conference wins under their belts. Their most recent, on Jan. 7, came on the road at East Carolina, where the Knights (12-3, 2-0) blew out the Pirates 81-63.

Much of that offensive firepower came thanks to the increasing prowess of rising star Isaiah Sykes, who hit 20 points and grabbed 10 boards to bamboozle the Pirate defense on both ends of the court.

A.J. Rompza was in top form against East Carolina, with 16 points, 9 assists, 7 re-

bounds and 5 steals in an energetic performance that ran circles around the Pirates. Adding some energy of his own, Keith Clanton picked up 16 points, 6 rebounds 3 blocks and 2 steals.

If the Knights can keep up that kind of intensity for the remainder of the season, they'll have a strong chance at making it to the final round of the championships.

That fight continues starting this weekend with a road trip to Marshall, tipping off at 7 p.m. Jan. 14. Then the Knights will swing back to the UCF Arena for an 8 p.m. Jan. 18 tip-off against Memphis.

New leader in athletics

UCF athletics has a new head after the Knights announced Jan. 10 that former Oregon State University Executive Associate Athletic Director Todd Stansbury will have an only slightly shorter title at UCF.

Stansbury was officially hired as UCF vice president and director of athletics, cementing the biggest hole in the Knights athletic program in the wake of a recruiting scandal that rapidly gutted the school's two biggest sports programs.

Stansbury had helped run the business side of Oregon State's athletic program since 2003. Now he'll lead the Knights as they enter the Big East Conference in all sports, which will first occur in 2013.



Stansbury

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VOICES



THIS WEEK in political history

Jan. 17, 1893 —

On the Hawaiian Islands, a group of American sugar planters under Sanford Ballard Dole overthrow Queen Liliuokalani, the Hawaiian monarch, and establish a new provincial government with Dole as president. Three hundred U.S. Marines were called to Hawaii, allegedly to protect American lives.

EMPLOYMENT

Ask Sandi



Is your New Year's resolution going to serve you well?

Being unemployed could be a very demoralizing phenomenon. However as believed in cognitive psychology over a 100 years ago, then coined for "The Secret" again, your thoughts guide your actions. If you are a hard working individual, with drive and motivation, clarity of goals and persistence, but have not found that right job, challenge yourself this 2012 into doing things differently.

Attend some new networking events, seminars and job centers. It is believed that our brain needs stimulation to perform at its peak. Put a little fire under your own "chimney" and evaluate what job finding techniques have and have not worked for you in 2011.

Dare to think outside the box and be creative during these stressful times. Stress is the enemy of creativity, forcing us to stick to routine and the status quo. Pump up your veins with some oxygen, and give your brain the adrenaline it needs by being proactive about your job search. Oh yeah, and leave behind that source of negativity. Wouldn't it be nice if you found someone like yourself who was eager to get out there and find the right job? Your friends at Christian Help are always here to connect you to employers and provide resume assistance.

If you need extra help finding what you are good at and what organizations out there are a good match for you, we are by your side as well.

—Farnaz Namin-Hedayati

Doctor of Corporate Psychology and HR Strategist and Peak Performance Consultant

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.

A farewell, and a thank you

DONALD F. ESLINGER
Guest Writer

On Jan. 4, the Seminole County Sheriff's Office faced a day no law enforcement agency ever wants to see when we laid one of our finest to rest. Deputy Matt Miller, a 28-year law enforcement veteran, became the sixth deputy to make the ultimate sacrifice when he lost his life the day after Christmas.

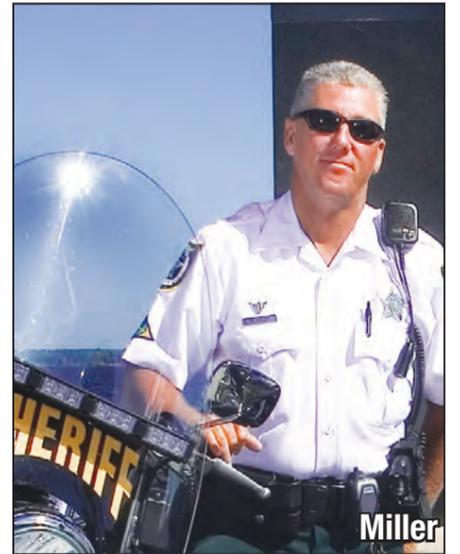
While it's never easy to say goodbye, we did not do so alone. Our fellow law enforcement agencies and this community came out in full force to express sympathies and support. Police departments, sheriff's offices and state law enforcement agencies from across the southeast joined us in paying tribute to Deputy Miller. Many others from across the nation

reached out to offer condolences.

The outpouring of support from the community was tremendous. People called, sent cards, offered to volunteer and brought food. Many posted online messages. Businesses reached out with offers of help. Our community filled Northland Church and families lined the processional route, holding up signs and waving flags to honor Deputy Miller.

The men and women of the Seminole County Sheriff's Office are proud to have worked alongside Deputy Miller, and we are proud to serve this county. We join Deputy Miller's family in thanking the residents of our county and the Central Florida community for uniting with us to honor his memory.

Eslinger is Seminole County sheriff.



Letters to the editor

Be prepared for cold weather

The coldest weather of this season is upon us in Central Florida. Unfortunately, this often means public safety officials will experience busy nights fighting fires and responding to cold-related injuries. Remember to practice fire safety on this coldest time of the season.

Persons that work outside should take special care. Wear layered clothing, gloves and a hat. Cover your mouth to protect your lungs from extremely cold air. Watch for signs of hypothermia. Keep dry. Change wet clothing frequently to prevent a loss of body heat.

Remember the five "P's" of cold weather safety:

People: Prolonged exposure to cold temperatures, even in Florida, runs the risk of hypothermia. This is especially true if you are wet, including from sweating.

Plants: The hard freeze temperatures predicted can easily kill outdoor plants, which are not cold tolerant. Bring them indoors, if possible, or cover them up.

Pets: Just like you, pets in

Florida are not accustomed or equipped (thin undercoat) to these temperatures. Please bring them indoors.

Pipes: Exposed pipes run the risk of freezing and bursting. The same is true for irrigation systems; do not turn sidewalks into ice rinks.

Practice Fire Safety: "Give space heaters space", carefully monitor fireplaces.

The Rescue Outreach Mission of Central Florida, 1701 W 13th St., Sanford, opens its doors to persons seeking refuge from the cold weather when temperatures dip below 40 degrees. Seminole County Office of Emergency Management urges all citizens to take extra care when trying to stay warm. Cold weather shelter plans will be activated for the extreme cold. Visit www.seminolecountyfl.gov for more information.

—Alan Harris

Emergency manager
Seminole County Office of Emergency Management

Bank on this: a return to lending in 2012

As 2011 comes to a close, America's big banks remain in

the spotlight. Large banking corporations have made headlines with layoffs, proposed debit card fees have infuriated customers, and the country's financial institutions continue to draw the ire of the Occupy Wall Street movement.

It certainly is an interesting time to be in banking. But I believe the year ahead will bring a return to the traditional strengths of banks, helping to enhance customer satisfaction and cultivate business growth in our community.

First, interest rates on deposits will continue to drop. Customers who rely heavily on CDs as an investment strategy may be disappointed in the rates offered at both large and small banks.

Another trend to anticipate is a renewed emphasis on the complete banking relationship. Traditionally, the goal for big banks was to acquire as many customers as possible. Community banks have always been different — we want loyal customers who bank only with us.

Taking your financial temperature

Though there are signs our

economy is on the mend — consumer confidence is on the upswing and in October, Central Florida home sales increased 17 percent from the previous year — I believe each of us should make a New Year's resolution to improve our fiscal fitness.

As a community bank, Florida Bank of Commerce cares about our customers' total financial well-being. That's why we recommend an annual "checkup" with a professional banking representative or financial adviser. By evaluating your lifestyle and prioritizing monthly expenses, you can identify saving opportunities. You may be surprised how small savings add up to a significant reserve fund after just one year.

As we kick off a New Year of hope and possibilities, now is the time to get your finances in shape. Just think: By this time next year, you could be the picture of financial fitness. For more information, visit FBCbank.com

—Rosemary Maisenholder

Vice president of Florida Bank of Commerce's Winter Park branch

Young Voices

Here's what students at Lawton Chiles Preparatory School in Casselberry said about their water project exhibits.



We planted vegetable seeds. We learned about the water cycle and how rain happens. We made a gallon man with water and Gatorade bottles and their bottle caps.

—Abigail A.
12 years old



We made a movie about clouds. It's the first time we made a video. We drew our own clouds with blue crayons and paint. I also like pottery; it's my favorite. I'd like to open a pottery store someday.

—Mia W.
14 years old



I'm on a team and we're partners. Our project is about clouds. We used cotton balls for the clouds and we used crayons too. This project was medium-hard but fun too.

—Luke P.
14 years old



We did a rap song about clouds. The water evaporates and goes into the sky, becomes water vapor and then clouds. When it is too heavy it comes down like rain, snow or hail.

—CJ H.
14 years old



I made a story about a water droplet. She has a family and then she gets evaporated. I read it to the little kids. I'm also making a cloud video.

—Isabella 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.

