



# THIS WEEK BEST OF 2012

## THIS WEEK in history

Dec. 30, 1853 —

The United States acquires 30,000 square miles of land in what is now southern New Mexico and Arizona for \$15 million. The purchase settled the dispute over the location of the Mexican border west of El Paso, Texas, and established the final boundaries of the southern United States.

### RETAIL RISES IN SEMINOLE

In the economic rollercoaster of businesses coming and going, there was a new promise for hope of a turnaround this year, as the economy started switching from downturn to upswing, and new businesses made plans to move into the Oviedo-Winter Springs area. With the Ale House already open, and plans for a Panera Bread to kickoff Oviedo on the Park, the community is on the cusp of a business boom. Read the story we published June 8, "Retail rises in Seminole," at [tinyurl.com/Retailrises](http://tinyurl.com/Retailrises)



### OVIDO INSTRUCTOR WINS TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Valeria Brown has a long list of accomplishments — valedictorian of her high school, bachelor's degree from the University of Florida, two master's degrees and now Seminole County's Teacher of the Year for 2013. Drawing inspiration from current events, movies, even video games, she keeps her students engaged and invested in what they are learning. "More than just language arts, she teaches us life lessons," said sixth-grader Melanie Clark. Read the full story at [tinyurl.com/ValeriaBrown](http://tinyurl.com/ValeriaBrown)



### Notes

#### Earth Origins Outlet to open

NAI Realvest, working in conjunction with NAI Brannen Goddard in Atlanta, represented health food retailer Earth Origins Outlet recently in negotiations to lease 10,384 square feet of space in Oaks at Lake Mary Shopping Center.

#### SSC professor awarded for excellence in math

Martha Goshaw, a mathematics professor at Seminole State College of Florida, has been chosen to receive the Mathematics Excellence Award by the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges (AMATYC) for her "significant contributions to mathematics and mathematics education." The award was presented at the AMATYC's annual conference taking place Nov. 8-11 in Jacksonville.

#### Next generation of 911

NexGen's Global Technologies has successfully completed Beta testing of its new NexGen's 9-1-1 technology with the UCF Police Department 9-1-1 Communications Center. NexGen 9-1-1 is a cloud based technology which allows the general public to call in and speak to a 9-1-1 operator, after which they can be directed to send in photos, video and text to the Emergency Communications Center from their mobile phones.

#### Oviedo wins budget award

The city of Oviedo has won the Distinguished Budget Award for the seventh year in a row. The award is given to governments that excel in budgetary reporting.

### CITIES SET HEFTY RECYCLING GOALS



Cecilia Height's garbage can is about one-third full when it's picked up once a week, but her three recycling bins overflow. Height, and Oviedo are setting the bar as top recyclers as 2020 guidelines loom

that will make all cities have to drastically cut down on garbage. To read our full April 27 story "Hefty recycling goals" about local cities working to increase recycling initiatives, visit [tinyurl.com/RecyclingGoals](http://tinyurl.com/RecyclingGoals)

### NEW SUPERINTENDENT FOR SCPS

Bill Vogel pulled off his nametag for the last time in the early hours of July 1, handing his duties to successor Walt Griffin and saying goodbye to friends and coworkers. He'd worked in school systems in Central Florida for 40 years. Dozens of friends and fellow teachers and administrators turned out to the 11:59 p.m. changing of the guard, and to celebrate Vogel's long legacy. Read the full story of Seminole County Public School's changing of the guard at [tinyurl.com/Vogelsaysgoodbye](http://tinyurl.com/Vogelsaysgoodbye)



### VOICE NABS AWARDS

The Seminole Voice and its sister newspapers won seven awards against the best in the state at the Florida Press Association Better Weekly Newspaper awards on Saturday, July 7, in Destin. Editor Isaac Babcock's story "American dreamer," chronicling two Northland Church missionaries' fight to adopt a Namibian girl with spina bifida, earned first place in the faith and family reporting category. To read about it and other award-winning stories, visit [tinyurl.com/Voicewinsawards](http://tinyurl.com/Voicewinsawards)



### SEMINOLE WORKS TO RESTORE SCHOOL FUNDING

"He obviously needs no introduction," Seminole County School Board chairwoman Tina Calderone said. And then Stan Van Gundy told Oviedo it's time Seminole County residents took more responsibility for their schools. Van Gundy endorsed a one-mil tax increase on the Nov. 6 ballot that would cost \$1 per \$1,000 in taxable value, but would raise an estimated \$25 million for the school system that has seen a \$73 million drop in funding in five years. Read the full story of Van Gundy's eventually successful effort to pass the increase at [tinyurl.com/Magiclearning](http://tinyurl.com/Magiclearning)



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# Seminole Voice

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# INTERESTS

BEST OF 2012



## THIS WEEK in human history

Jan. 3, 1924 —

British archaeologist Howard Carter and his workers discover the solid-gold coffin holding the mummy of the boy-king Pharaoh Tutankhamen, preserved for more than 3,000 years.

### A WALK INTO THE RECORD BOOKS

Penny Gold threw away the first pair of Converse Chuck Taylor All Star sneakers she owned, but she's spent the rest of her life making up for it. Seven hundred and thirty three pairs later, she may own more Converse shoes than anyone else in the world. "A walk into the record books" in the Jan. 27 Voice detailed the long journey between Penny Gold's first and most recent pair of Converse shoes, with a Guinness World Record thrown in for good measure. To read the rest, visit [tinyurl.com/PennyGold](http://tinyurl.com/PennyGold)



### GOLD IN THE WATER

Rowdy Gaines won three Olympic gold medals in 1984. But being on top of the world in men's swimming translated to about \$100. Today a swimmer would pocket about \$100,000 after a year like that, and that's not including sponsorships. Daytona Beach native Ryan Lochte is set to earn about \$2.3 million this year, CNN Money reports, thanks to contracts with the likes of Gillette, Ralph Lauren and AT&T.



What's the world of competitive swimming like on an Olympic scale? The Voice's Jenny Andreasson got an exclusive interview with Olympic gold medalist, TV commentator and Lake Mary resident Rowdy Gaines in "Gold in the water," July 27. Read about it at [tinyurl.com/Goldinthewater](http://tinyurl.com/Goldinthewater)

### LEARNING TO WALK AGAIN

Life can change in an instant. One second a passionate dancer, competitive softball player or dedicated U.S. Marine, the next, they're given no hope to ever walk again.

In "Learning to walk again," published Feb. 24, The Voice followed a group that's changing that in Longwood. Project Walk Orlando uses innovative techniques to get paralyzed patients moving again,

even if they were told it would never be possible. With the help of an important piece of miracle-working equipment from the Maitland Men's Club, the organization is working some miracles of its own. Read about it at [tinyurl.com/Learningtowalkagain](http://tinyurl.com/Learningtowalkagain)



### RYAN'S BIRTHDAY WISH

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



We talked to Ryan about his incredible giving habit in "Ryan's birthday wish," which printed Jan. 13 in The Voice. It's all at [tinyurl.com/Ryan-swish](http://tinyurl.com/Ryan-swish)

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# Family Calendar

## DEC. 30

On Sunday, Dec. 30, in place of the United Methodist Church of Geneva's traditional nighttime Christmas caroling, the Church is having a Christmas carol sing-along at 10:30 a.m. Come and enjoy some good fun music. Then at noon a new women's small group study will begin. They will be reading and discussing "When Christians Get It Wrong" by Adam Hamilton.

## JAN. 1

Another year is on its way! Make plans now to join your Geneva neighbors for the third annual Peas & Plenty New Year's Day Meal at the Geneva Community Center on First Street. The meal will run from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Jan. 1. Barbecued pork, chicken, sandwich rolls and beverages will be provided. Bring a traditional New Year's Day side dish, or any family favorite side dish, and begin your New Year enjoying food, fun and fellowship. Call or email Wanda at 407-519-8838 or wanda\_currie@yahoo.com, or Cindy at 407-312-2204 or tacybell@earthlink.net with any questions.

## ONGOING

The Holiday Kid's Camp is open through Jan. 8 from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Wirz Park; 806 Mark David Blvd. in Casselberry. Camp will be closed New Year's Eve. The camp provides your child a safe, worry-free place to have fun during the holiday break, featuring arts and crafts, sports, holiday gift making, games, movies and more. Cost is \$20 per day for Casselberry residents and \$25 per day for non-residents. Register online at [casselberry.org](http://casselberry.org) or call 407-262-7700, extension 1576, for more information.

The city of Oviedo hosts a Special Needs Activity Program (SNAP) specifically designed for ages 15 and up who are mentally or physically challenged the first, second and third Wednesday of every month (next program Jan. 2). Participants must be accompanied by a companion. Enjoy the fun, games, craft time and movies. For more information call Jenette McKinney at 407-971-5591 or email [jdmcKinney@cityofoviedo.net](mailto:jdmcKinney@cityofoviedo.net)

From Jan. 2 to 8, the Christian Child Development Center (CCDC) at the Methodist Church in Geneva is having Winter Camp for elementary school children. For more information and to register your student, contact the CCDC through email at [ccdc@fumc-geneva.org](mailto:ccdc@fumc-geneva.org).

Weekdays Jan. 2 to 8, there will be a winter break camp, Wild Winter Wonders, at the Yarrowhough Nature Center on County Road 426 in Geneva from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Imagine a camp where you can have fun while learning about the natural world. It's an outdoor adventure and environmental education program for children ages 7 to 12. Call 407-349-0959 or email [lhartsock@seminolecountyfl.gov](mailto:lhartsock@seminolecountyfl.gov). Go to [seminolecountyfl.gov/parksrec/naturallands/index.aspx](http://seminolecountyfl.gov/parksrec/naturallands/index.aspx) for more information and registration form.

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## GENEVA RESIDENT BEATS THE WORST ODDS



On the night of March 5, 2010, Mary Smith was rushed to the emergency room at Central Florida Regional Hospital after her husband noticed that she was turning gray. An X-ray showed that her left lung was near collapsed and her right lung was not far behind.

Swine flu would paralyze Mary Smith, choke her, and nearly take her life. But by a miracle that defied a 99 percent chance of death, she survived and told the tale in a new book. "Geneva resident beats the worst odds" chronicled the serious nature of a killer disease and a multiple sclerosis patient's improbable fight to overcome it. It printed Sept. 20, but you can read it here: [tinyurl.com/Genevaswineflu](http://tinyurl.com/Genevaswineflu)



## WINTER SPRINGS IS FIFTH IN THE NATION

The rifle flying through the air and back into Michael

Drew's hands moves in a blur before it's caught with a shock of impacting metal. And with a split second echo, the terse report of halting steel repeats 12 times. Drew, 18, stares bullet straight, tension reining his reflexes just beneath the surface.

Winter Springs' JROTC cadets shipped off to nationals in May and returned with a top-five finish. On May 9 in "Winter Springs is fifth in the nation," The Voice let you know just how good they were. Read about it at [tinyurl.com/WSROTC](http://tinyurl.com/WSROTC)

## LOCAL GIRLS GO LIVE



"I can say that since June with everyone always around and supporting me, it's felt like my birthday every day," Robyn Ungaro said. "I wanted the girls, even for just a few days, to be able to see what that kind of support feels like."

When Chuluota's Robyn Ungaro found out she had rapidly spreading cancer, her friends made her feel like the queen of the world, even getting tattoos in her honor. The Voice told her story of hope and friendship in "Local girls go Live!" in the Feb. 10 issue. Though she passed away in November, her friends helped her have one great final year, punctuated by a surprise trip to New York City to be on "Live! With Kelly" and to hang around for a week with TV and movie stars. Read it all at [tinyurl.com/Localgirlsgolive](http://tinyurl.com/Localgirlsgolive)



## A CENTURY OF ST. LUKE'S

Back in 1911, a group of Lutheran farmers from Ohio resolved to bring their families to Florida to create a better environment in which to raise their children. By the end of the year, they had purchased 1,200 acres near the village of Oviedo and made plans to relocate. Shortly after their arrival, a group of men from the settlement met on March 17, 1912, and organized the church that would become St. Luke's Lutheran Church.

In "A century of St. Luke's," published March 9, The Voice told the tale of one of the city's most beautiful churches. Read about it at [tinyurl.com/St-Luke-s100](http://tinyurl.com/St-Luke-s100)

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# Calendar

## DEC. 28

If the Mayans were wrong, the final Sanford Art Walk of the year will be celebrating the lack of destruction on Dec. 28. On the fourth Friday of each month, multiple venues in Sanford's downtown historic district showcase local talent along with opportunities to meet visiting artists. The event is free and runs from 6 to 9 p.m., mixing art, wine and music in one pleasant walk just two blocks from the waterfront. For more info contact Mary Shaw at mary@jtfolkart.com

## DEC. 29

There is a Men's Breakfast and Leadership Discussion at 8:30 a.m. at the Oviedo Diner. All men are invited to meet with the Geneva Community Church of God and Oviedo Presbyterian Church men's fellow-

ship groups for breakfast and a leadership discussion led by Paul Simpkins, a founding partner in the John Maxwell Team of Certified Leadership.

The Orlando Last Saturday Contra Dance is held the last Saturday of each month in the Secret Lake Park Dance Hall; 200 N. Lake Triplet Drive in Casselberry. The December dance will be held on Saturday, Dec. 29, and we will dance from 8 to 11:30 p.m. Let's dress up for the occasion by wearing our holiday finery. Please bring your leftover holiday goodies to share at the break. Visit orlandocontradance.org

Come out to Jolly Gator Fish Camp for the last Blues on the River Open Jam of the year from 2 to 6 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 30. Jolly Gator Fish Camp is located at 4650

E. State Road 46 in Geneva. For more information, visit thejollygator.com

## DEC. 31

The German American Society of Central Florida will host a New Year's Eve gala beginning on Monday, Dec. 31, at 6 p.m. in its clubhouse at 381 Orange Lane in Casselberry. For more information, visit gasocf.com

Come ring in the new year at the Black Hammock! The Black Hammock New Year's Eve celebration is an exciting evening of fun, food, drinks and dancing. To attend this event, purchase of a special admission ticket is required, which includes a three-course dinner, three drinks, cover charge, party favor and raffle ticket. Enjoy music from Neon Dream 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. in the best place to watch fireworks around Lake Jesup. To purchase tickets, visit theblackhammock.com

## JAN. 3

The Lake Monroe Amateur Radio Society holds monthly meetings the first Thursday of each month at the Winter Springs Civic Center. (Jan. 3 this month) at 7:30 p.m. All interested parties are welcome to attend

## DEC. 28-29: Battle of wrestling champions

The Zac Jarzynka Memorial Ironman Tournament, a nationally recognized high school wrestling tournament held annually at Oviedo High School, will take place on Dec. 28 and 29. This is an individually bracketed tournament of 32 teams from across the United States. Contact Tom Coffman at jetscoop@msn.com for more information.



to learn about ham radio. Visit lmars.org

## ONGOING

Join Panera Bread's Hope for the Holidays campaign to help fight food insecurity in Central Florida. In partnership with its customers, Panera will raise more than \$200,000, which will directly help Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida.

From Dec. 26 through Dec. 31, Panera will award each donor of \$5 or more with a free scratch gift card - guaranteed to be valued between \$5 and \$200. The gift cards can be redeemed during future visits to the restaurant.

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# ATHLETICS

BEST OF 2012



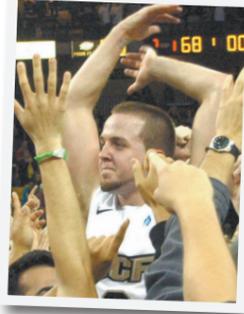
## THIS WEEK in sports history

Dec. 31, 1972 —

Roberto Clemente, future hall-of-fame baseball player, is killed along with four others when the cargo plane in which he is traveling crashes off the coast of Puerto Rico. At the end of September, Clemente had gotten his 3,000th hit in the final game of the season for the Pittsburgh Pirates.

### UCF BASKETBALL TEAM EARNS HISTORIC WIN

Thousands of fans mobbed the court, lifted A.J. Rompza into the air, and roared the name UCF over and over again Jan. 18, victorious over Memphis for the first time in school history. Seconds earlier the Knights' scrappy team captain had stolen a ball bound for a final shot attempt by Memphis as the score stood 68-67 with the Knights narrowly ahead. And as he turned with the clock ticking to zero and fired a final shot, the stands were already exploding with cheers. And as the clock ran out and Knights fans leapt onto the court to dance with their team, the Knights celebrated a victory that had been long in coming. In nearly a dozen meetings on the court, the Knights had never beaten the Tigers. To read the whole story on the Knights' historic win on Jan. 18, visit [tinyurl.com/Knightswin](http://tinyurl.com/Knightswin)



### WINTER SPRINGS WRESTLERS WIN BIG

Winter Springs may have seen higher rungs on the state wrestling championship ladder, but not by much. On Feb. 18 the Bears climbed nearly as high as they had ever been, setting team records in the process of placing fifth out of 124 teams at the FHSAA championships. "The kids had a great weekend," Coach Scott Gomrad said. "They had a lot of fun." In this case fun means a state champion, state runner-up, a third place and a fourth place finisher among the team's ranks. To read more about honors won by the Winter Springs wrestlers this year, read the Feb. 24 story "Bears win big" at [tinyurl.com/WSwrestlers](http://tinyurl.com/WSwrestlers)



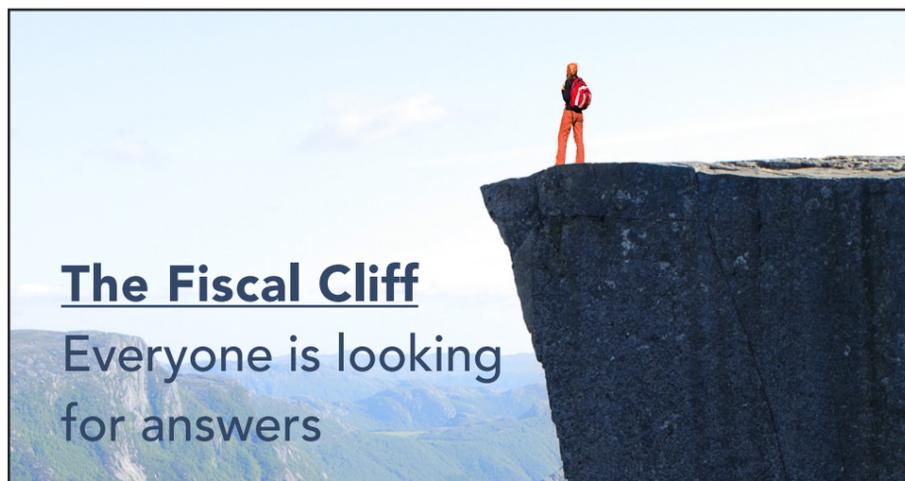
### CHEER SQUAD TAKES STATE TITLE FOR THE FIRST TIME

An Oviedo school had reason to cheer this February: its first state athletic championship ever. The Master's Academy's competitive cheerleading team brought home the gold on Feb. 3 from the FHSAA state championships in Kissimmee after tumbling their way through two minutes and 30 seconds of mesmerizing acrobatics and cheering. And in just that short time, they bested the rest of the state in the Class 1A Medium Varsity Competitive Cheer class to be the first Eagles team to win it all. Read how this underdog team readied to win it all in our Feb. 6 story "Cheer squad takes state title" at [tinyurl.com/Cheerchamps](http://tinyurl.com/Cheerchamps)



### SOFTBALL PLAYERS BALL ALL NIGHT

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. High school softball standouts from across Central Florida make up America's Team, and worked to raise \$56,000 to go on a July trip to Italy to play softball against local Italian teams. They hoped 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. Read the full story of how they pulled the all-night event together in the Voice's Jan. 11 story "Ball all night" at [tinyurl.com/BallAllNight](http://tinyurl.com/BallAllNight)

## The Fiscal Cliff

Everyone is looking for answers

The Fiscal Cliff is shaping up to be a congressional showdown that might have you caught in the cross-fire. Stay informed about the impact the Fiscal Cliff could have on your retirement plans for the years to come... and what you can do about it.

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# OurLifeToday

Celebrating Life, Family and the Power of Hope

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 8:12

*I know of only one starting place in the war against sorrow, and that is ...in the arms of Almighty God.*

*Robert Williams*

**T**his month, Charis counselor Tim Tedder

talks about the best gift you can give your child: A healthy relationship between you and your spouse. His downloadable GIFT GUIDE can be found on our Facebook page at OurLifeToday. Julia Jancek writes on Nurturing your child's spirit of giving, a timely guide to help your child make wise choices and Dr. Christopher Baur talks about the loss of a child. Sadly, a timely reminder of a recent tragedy and how fleeting this life can be. Dr Baur also gives us hope as we look at the profound

## Welcome to the December issue of OurLifeToday.

question of Why God allows these events to happen.

As we strive to include ever more relevant articles in today's hectic world, we'd like to ask for your feedback on what you would like to see on these pages. Let us know what you think or let us know if you have any suggestions or questions for our writers. We'd like to thank you for writing to us with a **Panera gift card** for something to have with your coffee. We would even like to invite you to submit your own inspirational stories for possible publication to [dy@OurLifeToday.Org](mailto:dy@OurLifeToday.Org).

### The Best Gift for Your Child

As parents during the holidays, we often spend time and effort trying to come up the right present for our child.

**F**inding a gift that will provide both immediate and long-term enjoyment is so difficult that we will often finally settle for just getting that thing they really, really want. We do this with the awareness that before next year is half over, the gift will probably be forgotten.

But there is one gift, more than any other, that will have tremendous long-lasting value to your children. *The best gift a child can receive is a healthy relationship between the parents.* Is this on your gift list? Some parents have resigned themselves to a relationship of disappointment or disconnection, but change is possible. It is a gift you may still be able to give. I would never suggest that a healthy marriage can be realized by following a few easy steps. As a counselor, I know better than that. But I also know that change often begins with a few specific

goals. So if you want to give this gift for your child, here are a three changes to consider:

#### Switch Your Focus.

Spend less time looking back on the hurts and disappointments of your marriage and look more toward the possibilities of your future. Determine to settle unresolved issues that compromise your connection to each other. This will likely require some apologies and forgiveness, but be willing to do whatever it takes to turn your thoughts and conversations to the hope that is ahead rather than hurts that are behind you.

#### Smooth Your Friction.

If stress or conflict causes you to either move away from each other or against each other, commit yourselves to learning how to *move toward* each other



instead. Your child should be aware of disagreements without being exposed to battles. Set aside a weekly time when the two of you will privately check in with each other and work through any necessary issues. If you don't know how to resolve conflict, ask for help.

#### Secure Your Friendship.

Commit to making daily investments into your relationship. Give affirmation and affection to each other without waiting for it to "feel natural." Be intentional with your intimacy, even if that means you start by making a daily checklist of the things you will do or say for their benefit.

**Tim Tedder, NCC-MSHC**  
Charis Counseling Center | Orlando, FL  
[CoupleCareOrlando.com](http://CoupleCareOrlando.com) 407-894-5202  
[www.chariscounselingcenter.com](http://www.chariscounselingcenter.com)

### Nurturing your Child's Spirit of Giving

**I**n the mall earlier this week I saw a young boy with someone I assume was his father. The boy was carrying a white envelope with the words "Christmas Money" carefully written across the front. He had a sparkle in his eye and was chatting easily with his father, as I followed behind him I heard him say, "I know I have enough money, but do you think mom will like it or LOVE it." He earnestly sought his dad's face for the answer. This boy has been on my mind all week long. What a great example of a young child learning the joy of giving. St. Francis of Assisi said "For it is in



giving that we receive" and as we head into this Christmas season it is important not only that we celebrate Christ and His birth, but that we foster in our children the joy that comes from giving. Use these tips to help show your children just

how fun giving can be.

**Start Young:** Don't wait for your children to make their own money to buy their own presents, start now! Help them save money all year long from allowances or birthdays to buy token gifts for their family or close

friends. Even better, get creative as a family and make ornaments or other gifts and talk about who you will gift them to. Make it fun and something your kids will remember.

**Change your focus:** Too often we can get caught up in the list making and "getting" of Christmas. This year intentionally set out to make it a year of giving instead of getting. This doesn't mean you can't buy your children gifts, just remember that our children are inundated at this time of year with commercials and magazine ads all with the newest toys or games that they want. It is tempting to spend time talking with your kids about all of it, instead shift the focus of the conversation to what they are giving. Talk regularly about who they want to give to and what they want to give. Get excited about it and they will too.

**Model thoughtful giving:** Are you hurrying out to buy gifts when the kids are asleep or ordering online? Of course there is nothing wrong with that, don't forget your children are watching you. Try to involve them in some of the process of your brainstorming, purchasing, wrapping etc. Show them

how excited you are to come up with a gift you think someone will enjoy, talk about it frequently.

**Give All Year:** You do not have to stop giving just because Christmas is over, make it a point in your family to give all year, talk about the details over dinner or game night, let your children help in the decision making process. The more involved your children are in the giving process the more they will take ownership of it and feel the importance of giving.

**Teach them how to receive:** When opening gifts on Christmas teach your children how to say thank you, and not just the words. Talk over Christmas dinner about the people who chose their gifts, the thoughtfulness behind them and how it makes them feel to have received such a nice gift. Help them write thank you notes. In learning how to receive gifts in a thoughtful way children develop a greater understanding for the process of giving which then creates in them a more giving spirit.



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[www.chariscounselingcenter.com](http://www.chariscounselingcenter.com)

Please share your thoughts with us OurLifeToday



# Asking Why?

## *The quest for understanding.*

***If you have a child, then you've probably had a sick child. Maybe your child was so sick you feared for his life. Worse yet, maybe you have lost a child to an illness or an accident. The tragic events in Newtown, Connecticut make us ask Why?***

***Until we have children, it is impossible to imagine the depth of grief people experience when they lose a child. But some people have found a hope that heals in the midst of such great loss. Some people are certain they will see their child again.***

**I**n 1974, my four-year-old brother Weston was admitted to the hospital for surgery to repair a heart valve damaged by a congenital defect and made worse by infection. My parents gathered my sister Jennifer and me and told us about his condition and the surgery. Then they mustered their faith and courage and reassured us that he would be okay. I believed them, I had confidence in their word. The surgery went well and today Weston is a faithful husband, devoted father of three, loving brother, and is adopting an earthquake orphan from Haiti.

Although the memories and lessons from Weston's illness are many, the one that sticks hardest in my soul and has grown greatest in its impact upon me doesn't involve him at all. It is a lesson for the ages taught by a six-year-old boy who shared the same hospital room with him.

Gavin's mom clutched his dad's hand tightly in dreaded anticipation as they waited for Dr. Dyer. When he arrived, Dr. Dyer would come to the point quickly, he wore enough wrinkles in his face to understand that there were no words, no matter how elegantly compassionate, to soften the blow when a child's life was on the line.

"Ted, Madeline, it's good to see you. I just came from the lab, Gavin's white count is up to seventy-six thousand and his hemoglobin continues to drop. The odds were four to one against him the first time he went into remission. We knew it would take a miracle for it to happen a second time. I'm sorry." With the doctor's words the forbearance of emotion could no longer hold the frozen waterfall. Madeline's stoic facade gave way to a torrent of agony.

Gavin's slight frame barely made an impression on the firm hospital mattress. Blanket and sheet at his ankles, warmth was retained by the large plush bear which never left his bed. Ted and Madeline entered silently and Gavin's eyes opened.

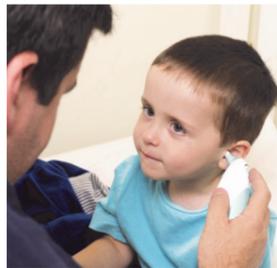


"Did you sleep well, sport?," asked Ted in tones as cheerful as he could assemble. But swollen, red faces betrayed their grief.

**"The shiny man said you'd be sad."** Replied the small patient in a barely audible voice. "We're not sad," lied Ted.

"What shiny man?" followed Madeline, quickly. "Was it Brian from the kitchen?" Gavin attempted to sit up. His parents immediately assisted him by propping a pillow behind his low back.

"No, silly." Gavin smiled. "The shiny man took a walk with me while I was sleeping."



Ted and Madeline quickly sat. Ted took Gavin's hand and Madeline placed her palm on his cool forehead.

"Tell us everything the shiny man said," Madeline requested urgently.

"I never saw him before, but I told him you wouldn't mind if I talked to him because he didn't seem like a stranger. He said I was going to move to his house and you would be very sad. Are you sad?" The pair's wide welling eyes answered without words.

***"He told me to thank you for taking care of me and that he would take care of me now. He said not to worry, you can be confident in Him."***

by Christopher Baur, M.D.

***Even greater, though, than our struggle to understand "what" and "how", is our need to understand "why".***

**T**he quest for understanding is at the core of what it means to be human. It is perhaps the deepest, most basic human desire. We yearn to know the mysteries of nature and our universe. We brave untold dangers to discover every part of our world and to examine its treasures. Even greater, than our struggle to understand "what" and "how," is our need to understand "why."

For what purpose did a situation arise? Why am I here? Such questions are made even more acute when the darkness of not understanding intersects with the apparent injustice of life's most difficult circumstances.

Many times in my life, I have reflected on Gavin and his family. Pain and sorrow may occur, but comfort can be provided even in the darkest time. Although Gavin's story has always meant a great deal to me, its impact in my life has become greater as my experience has increased. With the ever growing realization that I am unlikely to fully understand the mysteries of purpose in tragedy and injustice, knowing that in our darkest hours he reaches out to us, we are better able to yield to the one in whom we place our confidence. Stories like Gavin's give me great Hope.

***I do not need to know everything. I only need to know the One who does. My need for understanding may not be fulfilled, but comfort is offered and Hope is eternal. A deepening peace emerges and my faith relationship is strengthened.***

***And that in fact, is purpose enough.***

by Christopher Baur, M.D.

### ***You Are Not Alone.***

***The death of a child is the most devastating experience parents can face. And a perplexing experience for their Christian friends. We all ask why ....why the life of a child? But God has not left you alone with grief.***

***If events in your own life or those in Newtown, leave questions in your heart, we urge you to talk with your pastor, a spiritual advisor or Tim Teddar or Julia Jancek at Charis Counseling. Call 407- 894-5202 [www.charisorlando.com](http://www.charisorlando.com)***

Please share your thoughts with us  OurLifeToday

# VOICES



## THIS WEEK in political history

Jan. 2, 1980 —

In response to the December 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, President Jimmy Carter asks the Senate to postpone action on the SALT II nuclear weapons treaty. Carter feared that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan could lead to the USSR gaining control over much of the world's oil supplies.

### EMPLOYMENT

Ask  
Sandi



## Bone up on your job skills

I usually try not to make this column a commercial for my organization, but as we start to think about the new year, I just want to encourage you, if you need help with your job search, to reach out to us.

Christian HELP offers one-on-one employment counseling and coaching, resume assistance, and weekly job skills classes. Additionally, we have a program for professional job seekers called Boot Camp, which is a full-day intensive job skills workshop teaching you to market yourself to employers. Boot Campers also get a mentor to follow up with them for six weeks after the program.

We are launching a new jobs initiative in January, which will include six classes focused on everything from creating a job search plan to how to be an excellent employee, with lots of other good stuff in between. Many Central Florida employers are on board to interview our class graduates.

Our Central Florida Employment Council division hosts an online job board with lots of job listings, resources, a blog, and great tips and information for job seekers. It also has a listing of events for job seekers. The website is CFEC.org

We host six job fairs each year. The next one is on Jan. 23 at the Central Florida Fairgrounds from noon to 4 p.m. You can find details on the website listed above. We usually have 60-plus employers at the events who are looking to hire.

One other program we love is our community employment seminars. These seminars are presented by local human resources professionals, and are held twice a year. The first one will be on April 4 at College Park Baptist Church.

### 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. For questions, please call 407-834-4022 (fax 407-260-2949), sandi@christianhelp.org, or mail Ask Sandi C/O Christian HELP, 450 Seminola Blvd., Casselberry, FL 32707.

# Health costs need to drop first

JANET TRAUTWEIN  
Guest Writer

The Congressional Budget Office just announced that President Obama's health-care law will reduce the deficit by \$84 billion more than previously thought, thanks to the Supreme Court's decision to allow states to opt out of the law's Medicaid expansion.

Those savings may sound nice. But the law doesn't do much to address our country's chief healthcare challenge — spiraling costs. Health insurance is expensive because health care is expensive.

The cost of insurance continues to rise faster than inflation. Average individual premiums rose by 8 percent in 2011, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. Family premiums rose by 9 percent.

The Affordable Care Act will make insurance more expensive. The law levies new taxes on insurers, medical-device firms, and drug-makers that will inevitably be passed along to consumers as higher prices.

New federal mandates are also driving up the cost of coverage. Policies must cover all sorts of medical procedures—whether patients want them or not. The law also limits out-of-pocket spending and annual deductibles.

The law contains several attempts to rein in costs. But most are unlikely to work as intended.

A prime example is the individual mandate, which requires every American to obtain insurance. The mandate has no teeth. The penalty for going without coverage is a lot smaller than the cost of an average insurance policy.

According to the government's Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, annual individual premiums averaged \$4,940 in 2010. Assuming premiums increase at the historical rate of 6 percent per year, the maximum \$695 mandate fee will account for just 10 percent of an average premium.

So instead of spreading costs across a wider pool, people may pay the fine and wait to buy coverage when they need it. Consequently, those with insurance will gradually become sicker and more costly to insure. As prices for coverage go up, the fine will look more and more attractive. Through this repeating process of adverse selection, health insurance premiums will rise significantly.

Medicare's reimbursement rates for healthcare providers are also driving health costs up.

Spending in the program is projected to reach \$1 trillion by 2022. It will be insolvent by 2024. As more Americans enroll and Medicare's expenses grow, the primary tool for controlling costs will be reductions in payments to medical providers. The Affordable Care Act will likely slash them by about \$575 billion.

Providers are concerned about these reductions. Today, physicians treating Medicare beneficiaries receive just 81 percent of the rate that private insurers pay. According to one survey, physicians' top concern is whether they'd be adequately reimbursed by Medicare in the future.

These worries have caused some doctors to stop seeing Medicare patients. This year, the Texas Medical Association found that 12 percent fewer physicians were accepting new Medicare patients.

Seniors won't be the only ones who suffer. Doctors who swallow lower Medicare reimbursements may have to take on additional patients, slash visit times or raise prices for those with private insurance. And with America's population aging quickly, doctors' patterns of practice in Medicare are likely to spill over to their larger patient pool.

It doesn't have to be this way. There are several easy ways to alleviate the cost problems plaguing our healthcare system.

Insurance brokers have a critical money-saving role to play as the health-care law is implemented. Many individuals and small businesses struggle to find affordable coverage on their own. The

market is only growing more complicated.

A broker's expert counsel can therefore be invaluable. No less an authority than the Congressional Budget Office reports that brokers generate substantial savings for small businesses by finding plans and negotiating premiums. And brokers provide ongoing assistance to make sure consumers benefit from the plans they buy. In fact, agents often get claims amounting to thousands of dollars paid on their clients' behalf.

Demonstration projects that change the way Medicare reimburses providers should also be quickly advanced into actual use.

Take bundled payments, which link payments for the multiple services patients receive during a single episode of care. This coordinated payment structure provides incentives to deliver healthcare services more efficiently.

Value-based purchasing represents another way to reduce costs. This approach rewards efficiency — and punishes inefficiency and waste — by holding providers accountable for the quality and the cost of care that they deliver.

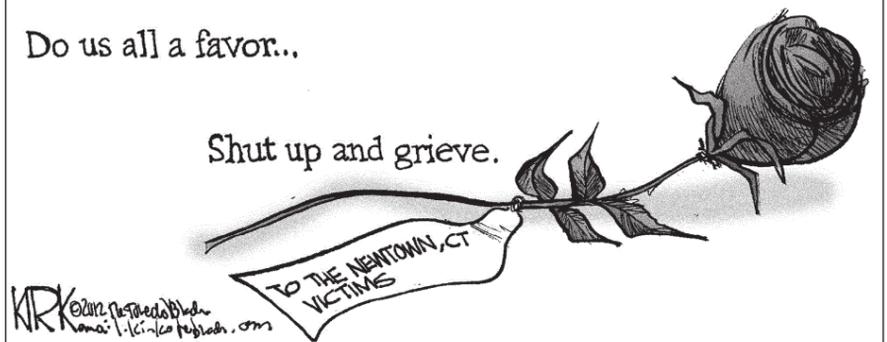
The healthcare law's efforts to improve access to insurance are admirable. But they'll be wasted if coverage remains unaffordable. Addressing the system's cost drivers is crucial to preventing that unfortunate outcome.

Janet Trautwein is CEO of the National Association of Health Underwriters.

To those who point fingers...  
To those who spew talking points...  
To those who offer instant analysis without knowing any facts...  
To those who exploit tragedy to score political points...

Do us all a favor...

Shut up and grieve.



Here's what kids at the Geneva Elementary Musical Mustangs performance said about how they prepared and decorated for the holidays.

## Young Voices



We had fun decorating our artificial tree and we decorated inside the house. Chocolate chip cookies are my favorite. We'll probably go to my aunt and uncle's house on Christmas Eve.

—Kamron B.  
10 years old



We have a big tree with lots of ornaments! We made Santa cookies with green sprinkles. On Dec. 1 I opened the Advent calendar. I'm in second grade, and I've been good this year.

—Jamie D.  
7 years old



We hung up stockings and wrapped green garland with lights on the stairway. It was fun learning our songs for this program, and the suspense of waiting for Santa Claus.

—Gracie D.  
10 years old



We have the Elf on the Shelf and lights inside and outside. We have an artificial tree and I helped decorate it. I like being with my family and any Christmas cookies,

—Jenna S.  
9 years old



I helped my dad get our Christmas tree out of the storage unit. I also have a LEGO Advent calendar and I get a new prize every day. This is the first time I'm in the Musical Mustang performance.

—Jason S.  
9 years old

We would love to hear from your Young Voices!

Call 407-563-7023 or email [ibabcock@turnstilemediagroup.com](mailto:ibabcock@turnstilemediagroup.com) to have The Voice visit your class or group.

## Between the CELERY Stalks

By Janet Foley

# Exciting January

I hope your Christmas holiday was wonderful and memorable. I know that my Christmases have been so loving and grand, being with the whole family on that special day — good food and great gifts, and a lot to be thankful for now and in the past. I suppose it will stay a wee-bit on the cool side now that “winter” arrived on this past Dec. 21. If you are waiting for snow, best pop up North.

The Oviedo Historical Society celebrated their Christmas spirit by having their annual Holiday Dinner on Dec. 27, at the Oviedo Woman’s Club. Great enjoyment was had by all.

Florida Horticulturist Tom MacCubbin is to address the Newcomers luncheon on Thursday, Jan. 17, at 11:30 a.m. at the Tuscawilla Country Club; 1500 Winter Springs Blvd. in Winter Springs. Mr. MacCubbin’s

presentation, “It’s Time to Think Spring Gardening,” will provide seasonal gardening information, and he’ll also answer questions from the audience. A retired extension environmental horticulturist with the University of Florida in Orange County, Mr. MacCubbin is the author of numerous gardening books as well as feature articles and question-and-answer columns run in the Orlando Sentinel. His popular horticulture reports air on Central Florida News 13, cable television and over Florida radio stations. Members and guests are welcome to the luncheon. Tickets are priced at \$23, and doors will open at 11:30 a.m. Advanced reservations are required. Please contact DeDe Fluhr at 407-366-9084 or email [wmfluhr@cfl.rr.com](mailto:wmfluhr@cfl.rr.com)

The city of Oviedo and Oviedo Citizens in Action will present a Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Cel-

ebration on Jan. 19 and Jan. 21:

Saturday, Jan. 19, will be a kick-off breakfast at 9 a.m. in the Memorial Building; 38 Central Ave. in downtown Oviedo. There is free admission, however donations will be accepted. Please RSVP to [ocianow@aol.com](mailto:ocianow@aol.com) or call Kathy at 407-366-5127.

On Monday, Jan. 21, the Martin Luther King Jr. parade will start at Oviedo High School at 10 a.m. and walk to Round Lake Park where there will be a Family Fun Day. The event includes fun, games, karaoke, live entertainment, vendors and food for sale. If you have questions, call Kathy Hunt at 407-366-5127.

Pappy’s Patch is now open and it is time to go picking those great fresh, delicious strawberries. Before you set out, call 407-366-8512 first for picking days, times and directions. Of course if you have picked before, you

don’t need directions to the patch on Florida Avenue off State Road 434. See you there!

St. Luke’s Concert Series will begin at 7 p.m. on Jan. 19 at the St. Luke’s Lutheran Church; 2021 State Road 426 in Oviedo. The series will feature the Orlando Concert Band performing, as well as pianist Julian Bond in “Rhapsody in Blue,” plus a variety of other rich musical colors. Admission is free. For more information, please call 407-365-3408.

A thought — “*Good humor is a tonic for mind and body. It is the best antidote for anxiety and depression. It is a business.*” — Grenville Kleiser

### TALK TO JANET

Send word to Janet Foley about events and let her know what’s going on around town by e-mailing [jwfoley@att.net](mailto:jwfoley@att.net)

## STETSON’S CORNER

By Karen McEnany-Phillips

# Our angels and demons

Our hearts are splintered in 27 jagged pieces from the tragedy that befell Newtown, Conn. What parent, grandparent, teacher, neighbor, coach, school employee or volunteer has not played the horrific scenario through their mind, understanding that this nightmare could have unfolded in their own community. In an elementary school the relationships, hopes and discoveries that radiate from each class and grade level are so unique. In addition to the victims’ families, the devastation felt by those who knew these children as classmates, teammates and best friends is palpable. It gives us little comfort that there are 20 brand new baby angels in heaven this Christmas.

Losing a child is devastating

under any circumstance. Families are confronted with the dynamics of grief and the event itself, but also the accompanying emotions that follow. All the families connected to this tragedy will need our prayers and support for many years to come as they walk through the valley of this terrible aftermath. I hope that they will reach out to organizations like New Hope for Kids in Maitland, which helps surviving children work through their grief.

How do you plan a celebration of life for a 6 or 7 year old? What were the dreams and wishes of these precious children, their last school picture now frozen in time, their list to Santa still held in anticipation? What were their favorite colors, animals,

books, movies, toys and games? Who were their favorite teachers, characters and best friends? What were their favorite smells and snacks in the kitchen? What made them laugh, cry, hesitate or try something new? What made them happy, share a secret and make a new friend? Did they play soccer or little league? Did they take karate or ballet? What was their favorite bedtime story?

Adam Lanza’s weapon may have been a firearm, but his intention and behavior was born years before. We need to admit that our culture has turned a blind-eye to violence in movies, video games and musical lyrics. Boys and men ages 10 to 25 are the target audience. Walk through an electronics store and look at the dark games that purposefully promote violence in a repetitive and addictive way. It’s like nicotine that feels good now but changes our cell structure to feed an invisible cancer. Young users unconsciously blur fantasy and reality and slowly become desensitized to violence. I believe parents must intervene to stop this addiction. Too many parents have given up their right to draw a line in the sand, and in doing so have given up their children. We have a responsibility to disappoint our children when they demand these addictive products that have unintended consequences.

Another element is how

*We need to admit that our culture has turned a blind-eye to violence in movies, video games and musical lyrics. Boys and men ages 10 to 25 are the target audience. Walk through an electronics store and look at the dark games that purposefully promote violence in a repetitive and addictive way.*

our culture tries to even out all outcomes. Our children are not taught to constructively deal with obstacles, disappointment, frustration and anger. We cannot solve these issues in 140 characters or less. Families, neighbors and communities need to take the time to admit to kids that life is not fair, and that they will not get a participation ribbon in the real world. The silent frustrations in young men that go unaddressed and build day after day, eventually erupt. And then are we surprised?

Mental illness is no stranger to Geneva. We lost Deputy Eugene Gregory, known as ‘Stetson,’ for whom this column was named, in 1998 during a 13-hour stand off at the hands of Geneva resident Alan Singletary who suffered from mental illness. Deputy Gregory’s widow Linda, Alan Singletary’s sister Linda Petree, and Seminole County

Sheriff Donald Eslinger made a difference at the local, state and national level by reforming legislation to advocate for more effective outpatient treatment of citizens suffering from severe mental illness. The effect of this legislation among the mentally ill population is far less homelessness, incarceration, hospitalization and arrest. We can only hope that the good that rose from our own Geneva tragedy will one day happen in Newtown.

### TALK TO KAREN

Please share your thoughts about Geneva at 407-221-7002, [kphillips@turnstilemediagroup.com](mailto:kphillips@turnstilemediagroup.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.

# Do you continue to innovate after building your garden?

Tom Carey had the week off this issue, so here’s one of his columns from the past to inspire your gardening as we enter the new year.

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,



**Tom Carey**  
From my garden to yours

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

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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

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