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SEMINOLEVOICE.COM | FRIDAY, DEC. 13, 2013 | Published weekly | FREE

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Want to do every holiday event at once? Oviedo has you covered with the holiday parade and snow mountain coming up this weekend.

MORE IN CALENDAR, PAGE 5

Ashley's perfect match

Raising awareness for a rare blood disorder

SARAH WILSON
The Voice

Dirty blonde and down to the small of her back, with a few snips of scissors the bottom 2 inches of Ashley Komanetsky's flowing locks fell to the salon floor. Blue eyes locked on the mirror, the 15-year-old knew this could be the last time shears would be necessary. Next time, her hair would fall out in clumps on its own.

From diagnosis to partial remission, Ashley spent all of 2013 fighting through on-and-off hospital stays and sluggish sick days taking treatments to keep up her blood counts. But the week she sat, skin milky-pale, in the salon chair, her hemoglobin counts clocked in at 7.9 – just barely more than half the 14 total a healthy body should have.

Her numbers steadily falling, Ashley headed straight toward a relapse, knowing this time her Severe Aplastic Anemia would likely take everything it could with it – including her hair.

"Barring a miracle, she'll need a transplant," said Ashley's mother Tina Komanetsky.

"This'll probably be her last haircut before she loses all of it."

The bone marrow transplant process kills off everything inside of you, only to bring you back to life, Tina explained. With radiation, chemotherapy, a minimum 100-day hospital stay, six-month recovery period and a mandatory year before the current Hagerty High 10th grader could return to school – there's a long road ahead

to get Ashley back to healthy. And it's a road that first starts with a match.

A stranger somewhere in the world who signed up to swab their cheek and join the global Be The Match Registry for bone marrow could be Ashley's lifeline. So far the registry has identified only one potential marrow match for the Oviedo teen. Tina hopes that if all goes well Ashley's transplant process can begin in the next four to six months.

"Not everyone is so lucky," Tina said. "There's tons of people out there in need who haven't found a match."

Julie Honohan with Clix Hair & Nails in Oviedo, having heard Ashley's story as she sat in her salon chair for her final haircut earlier in November, decided she wanted to do what she could to help the cause. As Ashley relayed her plans to dye her waist-length hair red while she still has it to raise awareness for Aplastic Anemia, Julie drafted plans of her own.

"You come here and I'll do it for free," she said, "and bring your friends and I'll do theirs' too!"

That's how two weeks later on



PHOTO BY SARAH WILSON — THE VOICE

Julie Honohan colors Ashley Komanetsky's hair an eye-catching red to help spark conversations.

Dec. 9 Ashley found herself once again in Julie's chair, this time a bowl of Kool-Aid red colored hair dye nearby, as her family and friends sat in the salon lobby filling out forms and swabbing cheeks to sign up for the Be The Match Registry.

It's the most recent of a string of donor registry drives Ashley's helped inspire and organize since her diagnosis in November 2011. Events at churches, schools and now, hair salons, Tina said, each have helped increase the chances of not only Ashley finding a match, but all those suffering with bone and blood disorders in need.

Katie Begin stood first in line after Ashley for her free red hair highlight. At 7 years old, Katie's been battling Severe Aplastic Anemia for two and a half years – diagnosed just six months be-

fore Ashley. Her seat raised high so her big brown eyes could see in the mirror as Julie applied the dye, a wide baby-toothed smile spread across her face as the red-stained foil folded over her chocolate brown hair.

Katie's mom Barbara said the little girl is still in partial remission, but if and when her transplant time comes, as of now she's still without a match. That's why as Katie sat waiting for her color to sink in, Barb stood behind a nearby table swabbing cheeks. Since her daughter's diagnosis, she's registered herself as a Be The Match donor coordinator helping sign up willing donors from her hometown in Brevard to here in Oviedo and across Central Florida.

"I know I probably won't find her a match, but if I can find any-

■ Please see **ASHLEY** on page 2

City ponders water rate change

New study could dictate future water rates

TIM FREED
The Voice

A new study of Oviedo's water utility systems will reveal how much revenue the city needs to maintain its quality of service over the next 10 years – findings that may bring about changes to the city's water rates.

The City Council voted during Monday's meeting to accept a study agreement with Willdan Financial Services, who will recommend a baseline for both expenditures and costs for the city's water, sewer, reclaimed water and stormwater utilities.

"They'll make sure that the



PHOTO BY TIM FREED — THE VOICE

Oviedo's water rates have been steady in recent years.

[current prices] we're charging are sufficient to run the plants over the long-term and to keep up with the capital improvements needed in the plan," Mayor Dominic Persampiere said.

The city has kept its water rates stable in recent years, with the exception of a 1 percent increase in 2011.

Oviedo's purchase of the wastewater plant off of McKinnon Avenue more than three years ago played a big role in that stability. Reclaimed water company Utilities Inc. originally owned the plant and provided wastewater services to a large eastern portion of Oviedo. But Persampiere said the private company frequently

raised rates, causing an imbalance in cost between the eastern and western parts of the city.

"Now that we've bought the plant, we've been able to stabilize the rates," Persampiere said. "They used to give rate increases all the time."

He said the study will help address how to bring the western and eastern parts of town back to similar rates.

"They'll look at the new revenues generated by us turning the wastewater around and now we're processing it rather than others," Persampiere said. "Obviously we'll keep all the revenue here rather than paying somebody else to do it."

Oviedo's neighbor Chuluota continues to suffer from poor water quality all while facing rate increases brought about by a brand

■ Please see **BILLS** on page 2

USPS 00-093
Publisher statement on page 4.
In home delivery by Friday, Dec. 13



0 94922 58042 9

THIS WEEK

THIS WEEK IN WORLD HISTORY — DEC. 17, 1843 — Charles Dickens' classic story "A Christmas Carol" is published. Dickens never lost momentum as a writer, churning out major novels every year or two, often in serial form. He would go on to write "Great Expectations" (1861) and "A Tale of Two Cities" (1859).

ASHLEY | Mom turned into a cheerleader to get more strangers to become marrow donors to help others



PHOTO BY SARAH WILSON — THE VOICE
Katie Begin gets her hair dyed to raise questions and awareness.

■ CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE
one a match ... it's so incredibly worth it," Barbara said.

As 20 friends, family and strangers filed in and out of the Clix Hair & Nails for their free red hair highlights, Barbara managed to register seven new members to the registry — each one incrementally upping the odds that when the time comes, kids and adults like Ashley and Katie can find the match they need.

"Where do you want it?" hairdresser Julie asked Amanda, the third woman in her chair ready to dye her red streak.

"Not too big, but big enough where people will

see it and ask me about it so I can tell [Ashley's] story," Amanda said.

In six months, these highlights will have faded, and Ashley's red flame-tipped hair may be gone — but Tina said she and her family will keep fighting for awareness, as Ashley fights her way through her transplant with 80-percent survival rate odds.

"[Ashley] hasn't made this just about her, she's made it her mission to help everyone out there going through what she has," Tina said, her tear-welling eyes wandering across the salon to meet Ashley's. "... She's

so tough. We just know she's going to get through this."

For now, the Komanetskys wait anxiously for the day Ashley's golden hair grows so long it needs cutting again, when her cheeks glow again. Two years from the day of the transplant, doctors finally tally transplant patients as "survivors."

Until then, Tina said she'll be dreaming of that day when she can talk about her daughter with that five letter word she's been waiting years to hear:
"Cured."

BILLS | Water quality issue still plagues homes

■ CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE
new \$2.1 million ion-exchange water treatment system installed in 2010.

Chuluota's neighbor to the south, Bithlo, also suffers from poor water quality. The Orange County Environmental Protection Division conducted a study of Bithlo to see if public water would be a good fit for the town.

The 2012 study of 1,900 homes and 115 commercial businesses revealed that Bithlo would need 38 miles of new pipes, costing \$20.5 million, or \$555 per resident each year for 10 years.

The last Oviedo study of the overall utility system more than three years ago showed that rates could be kept stable as long as the city kept up with inflation.

Oviedo plans to bring in more revenue and keep rates down by rerouting pipes in eastern Oviedo, bringing between 1,500 to

2,000 Oviedo residents into the city's utility system so they won't have to pay an Orange County rate for having water sent to Iron Bridge Regional Water Pollution Control Facility, Persampiere said.

The northwestern side of town will eventually be routed into the city's sewer system as well, replacing the septic tanks currently used in the area and bringing more residents in Oviedo proper under the water system.

Councilman Stephen Schenck said the City Council continues to do everything it can to try to keep rates down.

"I think we've mitigated as much as we can for long-term impact, it's now a matter of things that are going to hit everybody throughout the state," Schenck said. "As long as there's state increases and the impacts of those are being felt, then of course we're going to be hit."

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19
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Wednesday, December 25th.
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of Events at
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INTERESTS

THIS WEEK IN HUMAN HISTORY — DEC. 22, 1956 — A baby gorilla named Colo enters the world at the Columbus Zoo in Ohio, becoming the first-ever born in captivity. She has been a great-grandmother since 1996.

More than an athlete

UCF student up for national award

TIM FREED
The Voice

A typical week seems like a blur for UCF senior and varsity soccer player Tishia Jewell. A Monday morning spent poring over textbooks and online class lectures quickly leads into a brutal three-hour soccer practice. She and her teammates trudge through passing and shooting drills, weight training and studying video.

Jewell can catch her breath afterward on most days, but twice a week she's off to her three-hour night class. The cycle of studying and soccer practice repeats itself five more times during the week — not to mention the soccer matches every Friday and Saturday.

Her coaches and teachers would call her dedicated to soccer and academics, but Jewell remains passionate about something else: volunteerism.

Jewell ranked among the top 140 female student athletes in the nation who were eligible for the NCAA Woman of the Year award, a distinction that recognizes grades, leadership, volunteerism and other accomplishments on and off the field.

The NCAA Woman of the Year Award nomination comes on the heels of another award she won last year, the NCAA Senior CLASS Award — a similar accolade that measures the same criteria.

The UCF senior and Central Florida native didn't make it through the second cut that nar-



PHOTO BY TIM FREED — THE VOICE

Tishia Jewell got her kicks on the field, and won out in the classroom at UCF.

rowed down the list to 30 girls, but that's not holding Jewell back.

"I think it's an awesome award; I was honored just to be considered for it," Jewell said.

Jewell got a head start with grades by starting early in high school, taking colleges classes and graduating with an A.A. degree in addition to her diploma. She entered UCF with two years of college already finished, making room for everything she took on with soccer and academics.

"She has kept the focus, understanding that education is very, very important," said Jewell's mother Telethia. "Soccer is her love, but she understood that the education was why she was there."

But that didn't make her let up in soccer. Jewell made the Con-

ference USA All-Conference First Team and was chosen as the Conference USA Offensive Player of the Year during her sophomore year at UCF. She was also selected for the NSCAA/Continental Tire All-America Third Team and appeared in Soccer America's list of the top 100 players in the country at No. 31.

"Tishia's a very gifted player that didn't need a whole lot of extra individual help," said Amanda Cromwell, former head coach of the UCF women's soccer team.

"She was very fast, very quick on the dribble, hard to defend because of the talent she brought to the field and she could score goals. Ultimately, she had a very good shot."

Cromwell admired Jewell's ability to balance the different parts of her life.

"Soccer in itself is like having a job," Cromwell said.

"It speaks to her ability to manage her time, be diligent in her studies and get everything done she needed to do ... someone being able to take on that much and be successful at anything is pretty special."

But amidst the soccer and her schoolwork, Jewell still found time to volunteer, spending time

■ Please see TISHIA on next page

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Seminole Voice

Friday, Dec. 13, 2013
Volume 23, Issue 50

PHONE: 407-563-7000
FAX: 407-563-7099
SEMINOLEVOICE.COM
Orlando, FL 32835-5705

PUBLISHER

Tracy Craft
407.515.2605
TCraft@TurnstileMediaGroup.com

MANAGING EDITOR

Isaac Babcock
407.563.7023
IBabcock@TurnstileMediaGroup.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Sarah Wilson
407.563.7026
SWilson@TurnstileMediaGroup.com

DESIGNER

Tom Miller
407.563.7032
TMiller@TurnstileMediaGroup.com

STAFF WRITERS

Brittini Larson
Megan Stokes
Tim Freed
Allison Olcsvary
Kristy Vickery

COLUMNISTS

Janet Foley
jwfoley75@gmail.com

Sandi Vidal
Sandi@ChristianHelp.org

Tom Carey
SundewGardens@gmail.com

Karen Phillips
KarenMPhillips@bellsouth.net

Josh Garrick
JoshGarrick9@gmail.com

ADVERTISING SALES
(Display & Classifieds)

Deborah Sheehy
407.563.7009
DSheehy@TurnstileMediaGroup.com

LEGAL NOTICE ADVERTISING
(Orange & Seminole Counties)

Ashley McBride
407.286.0807
Legal@FLALegals.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS/CIRCULATION

Luana Baez
407.563.7013
LBaez@TurnstileMediaGroup.com

MEMBER OF:
Florida Press Association
Oviedo-Winter Springs Regional
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TURNSTILE MEDIA GROUP

CHAIRMAN
Rance Crain

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Francis X. Farrell

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Patti Green & Jeff Babineau

USPS #008-093
Periodicals postage is paid at Oviedo, Fla.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
Seminole Voice, 1500 Park Center Drive
Orlando, FL 32835

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FAMILY CALENDAR

DEC. 13-15

The villainous Barnaby has fallen in love with sweet Mistress Mary Quite Contrary. If he can't buy her love, then he'll force her to marry him by threatening to foreclose on her mother, the poor widow Piper. Mary already has her heart set on marrying Barnaby's nephew Alan - but not if Barnaby can help it! It's **"Babes in Toyland"** at the Princess Theater, 115 W. First St. in Sanford. It's playing at 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays. Visit spotlightcf.org for more information.

DEC. 13

Casselberry's official **tree lighting ceremony and holiday movie** in the park starts at 6 p.m. Dec. 13 at 95 Triplet Lake Drive at Lake Concord Park. Holiday entertainment will delight visitors from 6 to 7 p.m. followed by a tree lighting at 7 p.m.

and the movie in the park, "Rise of the Guardians," from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Bring the family for Santa, artisan booths, a Food Truck Bazaar and more! For more information, call 407-262-7700, ext. 1507.

DEC. 14

It's the Oviedo Winter Springs **Holiday Parade and Snow Mountain!** The parade gets going along Oviedo Mall Boulevard at 4 p.m. heading toward the mall, and the Snow Mountain plus games, music and more await at the end. It's from 3:30 to 9 p.m. on Dec. 14 at the Oviedo Mall parking lot, so there's plenty of parking.

HOPE Helps' annual **Christmas in the City** event will go from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Dec. 14 at the University Carillon United Methodist Church. Enjoy songs of the season, a shared meal, children play-

ing, giving and receiving. Last year more than 500 registered families received a pre-packaged Christmas dinner, new toys for each child, shoes, gift cards for teens, clothing, and more. Volunteer opportunities and donation drop-off locations are available on HOPE's website at hopehelps.org. Individuals and families in need must be current HOPE clients and pre-register at HOPE's facility (149 E. Broadway St.) or provide voucher from church or partner agency.

ONGOING

Light Up UCF continues to light up the holiday season at the CFE Arena. Running through Jan. 5 the event features 50 nights of music, lights, and ice, with ice-skating, ice slide, and a winter carnival atmosphere. Visit lightupucf.com for more information and tickets.

Calendar

DEC. 14 and 21

Need some neat **Geneva Christmas gifts**? The Geneva Historical Society will be having its annual Historical Society Post Office Sale on Dec. 14 and 21. We will be selling books on the history of Geneva, photo books, a new book on the story of Geneva's Lincoln Conspiracy Connection, Geneva T-shirts and more at the Geneva Post Office from 9 to 11 a.m.

DEC. 18

Business After Hours this month is at Fishing Ammo, with appetizers, refreshments and a "Duck Dynasty" theme. It's from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 18 at 1734 Kennedy Point, #1110, in Oviedo. For more information, visit oviedowintersprings.org

DEC. 19

Join the Oviedo-Winter Springs Regional Chamber of Commerce for its Chamber Knight on Dec. 19 at UCF's Light Up UCF ice-skating rink, luge and carnival. Come out from 5 to 8 p.m. and say hi.

Notes

Bar says he's Groot

Lonnie N. Groot of Daytona Beach Shores and the Lake Mary law firm of Stenstrom, McIntosh, Colbert & Whigham, P.A. has been awarded certification in the area of city, county & local government law by The Florida Bar for a new five-year period ending in 2018. Groot was initially awarded certification in 2008. Board certification recognizes attorneys' special knowledge, skills and proficiency in various areas of law and professionalism and ethics in practice. Board certified lawyers are evaluated for professionalism, and tested for expertise in their field. **Certification is The Florida Bar's highest level** of evaluation of the competency and experience of attorneys in the 24 areas of law approved for certification by the Supreme Court of Florida. Only six percent of eligible Florida Bar members, approximately 4,600 lawyers, are board certified.

TISHIA | Soccer star also getting double-master's degree

■ CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

helping in food drives around campus.

"It wasn't anything that I planned, but if I got the opportunity to do it I would jump on it," Jewell said.

She came into college with a strong background with volunteerism. In high school, Jewell went on a mission trip with her church to Greece, where she helped paint walls and tile the floors of a local's home. She also volunteered for the Humane So-

ciety, a women's shelter in Brevard County, and her mother's non-profit organization Szuba Guardians Care Solutions, which helps people who can't live independently to find proper housing, education and medical care.

"She has really grown to have a passion for helping people and serving the community," Telethia said.

Jewell plans to graduate from UCF this month with a double master's degree in public administration and nonprofit manage-

ment, a brand new program at the school.

She'll be the first student in the school's history to graduate from the program, Telethia said.

Jewell knows she's made her mark athletically and academically at UCF, but Telethia insisted that the biggest impact she'll make will be in the lives of others moving forward.

"We want her to reach for the sky, because she's going to help whoever she works with a lot," she said.

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An Open Letter To Our Community



How you can help Dr. Schmid! A Tale of a City...Then and Now

Oviedo has always met the needs of its community and its citizens. In 1947, the town's beloved doctor, Dr. William J. Martin moved away to retire. His retirement left Oviedo without a doctor nearby. People had to travel long distances to find a doctor and no house calls could be made since the doctors were so far away from their offices. The citizens of Oviedo and surrounding areas agreed that they would need to attract a physician by building a place especially for him, with an office and treating rooms. But where would they get the money? The answer was obvious, the same way they had asked for funds to build the memorial building and the canning kitchen in Oviedo! A financial drive was launched and the citizens gave donations large and small to build the clinic that is in existence today. With Dr. E.W. Stoner as resident physician, the clinic opened its doors for patients on March 5, 1952 serving the community once again. When Dr. Stoner retired in the early 1980's, Dr. Paul Schmid stepped in and continued offering the citizens the type of doctor-patient relationship that they had enjoyed for decades, sometimes calling on his patients after-hours to check on them. Dr. Schmid is loved by his patients and the community in which he serves is extremely grateful for his noble service.

The Oviedo citizens and community are united again to come together in 2013 to offer their support for their beloved, Dr. Schmid and help raise funds to offset his medical expenses. It is time for the citizens to do something in return for the doctor who has given so much to his patients and his community often times without compensation. There is an opportunity for us to show our appreciation and support to Dr. Schmid in his time of need!

If you would like to make a donation to this special cause, please make a **tax deductible** donation to the **Oviedo Community Service Award** in honor of Dr. Schmid by 12/31/2013. These funds will be used to assist him in his recovery and for his medical expenses. **Please include a phone number where you may be reached on the check.**

Donations can be dropped off at Dr. Schmid's office or at any Citizens Bank of Florida office. If mailed, send to:

Attention: Gloria Dunmire
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or
Office of Dr. Paul Schmid
71 S. Central Ave.
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On behalf of Dr. Schmid, thank you for your generosity in giving back to someone who has dedicated his life as a physician in serving our community. The tale of our city will continue on in history as future generations see how we reacted in 2013 in helping to fulfill another need in our community.

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ATHLETICS

THIS WEEK IN SPORTS HISTORY — DEC. 13, 1983 — The Detroit Pistons and Denver Nuggets played what would become the highest scoring game in NBA history. The Pistons would win 186-184 in triple overtime, setting multiple NBA records that still stand.

Knights face nation's top offense

ISAAC BABCOCK
The Voice

After struggling in the wake of defensive player injuries that took a toll but never knocked them off their eight-game win streak, the Knights will have more than 20 days to rest before the biggest game in team history. And after Sunday night's announcement they know they're heading to Glendale, Ariz., to face Baylor in the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl.

But until this weekend the Knights thought they'd be heading to the Sugar Bowl in New Orleans. The change of flight schedule was set into motion Friday night, when unranked Bowling Green upset the Northern Illinois Huskies, who were No. 14 in the BCS Standings at the time, with a 47-27 rout. That loss put UCF in position to play in NIU's place, a presumptive slot in the Fiesta Bowl. After UCF's win over SMU

in Dallas on Saturday night, their fate was all but sealed.

Ten years after head coach George O'Leary took the helm of the UCF Knights football team, they hammered in their final win in their best season ever en route to their biggest bowl game. The Knights (11-1, 8-0) kept things interesting, but controlled their destiny all the way to the closing siren in another nail-biter finish against SMU Saturday.

"They hung in there and made some good adjustments at halftime," Head Coach George O'Leary told UCFKnights.com after the game. "We came out in the no-huddle and Blake did an outstanding job of controlling the ball."

UCF had struggled against the bitter cold all game, which had been in the 20s on account of a morning kickoff in Central Time. The Knights dropped passes, flubbed throws and fumbled runs



PHOTO BY ISAAC BABCOCK — THE VOICE

Fans had lots of reasons to cheer during the Knights' record-setting season.

in the frigid weather in Dallas, where snow ringed the edges of the field all game. Quarterback Blake Bortles found the end zone himself in the deciding score, racing to the left sideline and cruising past the pylon to put the Knights up for good. Bortles would throw for 242 yards to lead the Knights to victory.

After barely cracking double-digit yardage in the first quarter, the Knights would go on to rack up 338 yards in the game after accelerating their offense in the second half. They would outgun the Mustangs offense, which had 313 yards, most of them on the ground. Where UCF led substantially was first downs, gaining 24 versus SMU's 15.

For the better half of the fourth quarter the Knights were in control, shutting down the Mustangs' defense and driving down the field, despite icy hands that had trouble on receptions and runs.

UCF receiver Rannell Hall had crucial catches all game to advance the offense, and the UCF defense found ways to stop the SMU offense in the second half after giving a concussion to SMU quarterback Neal Burcham in the

fourth quarter. Hall would catch 44 yards of receptions. Wide receiver Jeff Godfrey led the team in reception yardage with 62 yards.

The Knights had trouble early on after letting the Mustangs score first with a short field goal to put it to 3-0. The Knights overtook the Mustangs in the fourth quarter and held off another drive for the win.

Thanks to the win, which set a school record for the team's first sweep of conference play in team history, the Knights finish the regular season ranked No. 15 in the BCS Standings — an all-time high.

At 8:30 p.m. on New Year's Day they face the most prolific offense in NCAA Division 1 football this season. The Baylor Bears have gained an average of 624.5 total yards per game and 53.3 points per game, about 20 points more per game than the Knights.

But the Bears have also been known to give up big plays, making for high-scoring games for both teams. With the Knights' prolific offense that has turned on for blowout performances against Akron, FIU, UConn and Rutgers, it could be an offensive slugfest. The game will be aired on ESPN.

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Interest rates will rise, possibly in March

Housing trends in 2014; Tight inventory, rising interest rates and home value gains

Out with the old and in with the new! 2013 was a great year for many homeowners' neighborhoods and buyers alike as home values rose, interest rates remained affordable, and many communities in the greater-Orlando area saw fewer vacant homes and foreclosures. It's been said that slow and steady wins the race, and 2014 is projected to continue the



Christina Rordam
Keepin' it Real Estate

housing recovery this year began. Let's look at some of the expected trends for the New Year.

Home values will continue to make gains, specifically in the West and South.

Great news for Central Floridians here: According to the August/October Realtors Confidence Index Survey, 3,000 Realtors were asked about expectations for home values in 2014. The Western and Southern regions were ranked highest with professionals predicting gains of 4 to 8 percent. This is great news for local homeowners and it also echoes a poll taken earlier in the year by Realty Trac, which indicated that more than 8 million homeowners nationwide are

estimated to be in positive equity situations on their primary home loans this year.

Interest rates will rise, but that's not likely for a few months. Attention homebuyers on the proverbial fence! Buying before March may save you money on your monthly mortgage payments. As of print deadline, the Fed had not yet met for the last policy-making committee of the year. In this meeting the Fed will probably do one of two things, either begin to cut back on their bond purchasing campaign straight away, or schedule a more gradual pull back. The most likely time frame for these changes to take effect is March, according to experts like Vincent Reinhart.

Reinhart is the chief United States economist for Morgan Stanley, and he believes the Fed will set in motion a plan for reducing bond spending around that time. If this plays out as he expects, then we will likely avoid another mortgage rate spike in the immediate future like the one we saw back in June when Bernanke first announced he would be scaling back bond buying.

Inventory will remain tight, especially in hot neighborhoods.

In yet another continuation of 2013's market, Realtors are anticipating inventory to remain tight in high demand areas such as the Southern region we call home. This means we will continue to see what is considered a "sellers

market," and the hottest homes fetching top dollar and multiple bids. Sellers can maximize this opportunity by fixing a home up before putting it on the market and hiring an agent that has a wide digital reach so their home is seen by both local, out-of-state and out-of-country buyers. As for the buyers, rates are still currently in the 4-percent range and there are still plenty of homes for sale. Your dream home is within reach, just be sure to act fast once you find it.

Happy New Year!

Christina Rordam is a local Realtor. Contact her at 407-928-8294 or ChristinaSellsOrlando.com

Dusting off your fireplace? Don't get smoked

Q: This is our first year in a house that has a working fireplace, but we've never used one before. We'd like to have a crackling fire during holiday get-togethers and throughout the winter, but so far I can't get one to light. I just get a lot of smoke in the room and no flame. Any tips? — Dale C., Madison, Wis.



By Samantha Mazzotta

A: It can be a little tricky to get a nice fire going in the fireplace if you've never done it before, and there are some safety tips you need to follow as well.

First, be certain the fireplace is safe to use. If it was inspected and cleaned when you moved in, you're good to go; but if it hasn't, or you don't know when it was last inspected, contact a chimney

cleaning service.

Make sure the area around the fireplace is safe: flammable items several feet away. If you don't have a fire extinguisher nearby, get one and place it nearby.

To light a fire, you'll need several pieces of wood in various sizes, along with old newspaper or a fire starter stick. The small bundles of firewood sold in grocery stores and home improvement

stores are expensive, but they'll do for a first-time fire, as they're medium-size and usually cut to fit most fireboxes. You should also go out for a walk and collect an armful of fallen, dry twigs and small branches.

With your fuel ready, it's time to get started. Open the fireplace damper fully — this flap is located at the top of the firebox (the area in which the fire burns) and when opened allows air to flow up the chimney and outward. It's probably the reason your house was filling with smoke when you tried to light a fire before.

Twist a half-sheet of newspaper into a cylinder. Light one end. Hold the burning end a few inches underneath damper for about 30 seconds or until you see smoke

from the burning paper flowing freely upward into the chimney flue.

Carefully light the kindling, starting near the back of the log stack and working your way forward. Properly seasoned logs should catch within a few minutes, but don't be disappointed if you have to repeat the process.

Send your questions or home tips to ask@thisisahammer.com. My new e-book, "101 Best Home Tips," is available to download on Amazon Kindle! Pick it up today for just 99 cents.

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Young buyers exude optimism, confidence about homeownership

The Millennial generation — those 32 years old and younger — is made up of enthusiastic homebuyers that have more optimism and confidence about their recent home purchases than any other age group.

According to a recent National Association of Realtors study that evaluated the generational differences of recent homebuyers and sellers, 85 percent of buyers younger than age 32 believe their

home purchase was a good financial investment.

The oldest individuals of the Millennial generation are starting to buy their first homes. They understand that homeownership is one way to accumulate wealth, especially for younger families in today's world.

The Millennial generation is the largest in history after the baby boomers, and they are expected to give the housing market

a boost. However, there are challenges that might hinder their ability to purchase homes, in particular tight lending standards, student loan debt, and an uncertain job market.

"The impact of student loan debt is a concern for future generations and the ability to become homeowners," explains Orlando Regional Realtor Association Chairman Steve Merchant, owner-broker of Global Realty

International. "Those burdened with growing monthly debt payments will have restricted access to mortgage credit and could find it harder to save for a down payment."

Yet those challenges aren't changing younger buyers' attitudes about homeownership. In Orlando, Millennial buyers are fortunate to be in a housing market with record affordability and a rising inventory level,

which means more great homes to choose from.

"Today's market presents great opportunities for young buyers to own a home," says Merchant. "Orlando Realtors are committed to making sure those who are willing and able to own a home have the opportunity to do so, and can expertly guide young buyers through the complicated process."

— ORRA

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Josh Garrick Culture worthy of your calendar

Now through Dec. 29 – 'It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play'

The Orlando Shakespeare Theater invites us to share the holiday cheer of "It's a Wonderful Life," performed as a 1940s radio broadcast, running through Dec. 29. Inspired by the legendary film, "Wonderful Life" includes an ensemble of five actors who bring to life a dozen characters in a radio broadcast complete with commercial jingles. Orlando

Shakes invites us to fall in love, all over again, with George Bailey and the Angel who saves his life, on Christmas Eve. Call 407-447-1700 or visit orlandoshakes.org

Dec. 12, 13, and 14 – 'What Christmas Means to Me'

The Central Florida Community Choir and Orchestra will unite to present "What Christmas Means to Me," a concert of memories surrounding the holiday season. Filled with song and narration, this joyful



'BEST PAGEANT EVER'

show tugs at heartstrings with a 300-voice community choir and 90-piece orchestra. This concert for the whole family will be presented on Dec. 12, 13, and 14 at 7:30 p.m. at Northland Church in Longwood. Visit cfcarts.com/what-christmas-means-to-me or call 407-949-7170.

Dec. 12 to 22 – Breakthrough Theatre presents 'The Best Christmas Pageant Ever'

In this hilarious Christmas classic, a well-intentioned couple struggles to put on their church Christmas pageant with a cast that includes the Herdman kids, the most inventively awful kids in history. Its fun and mayhem as the Herdman kids collide head-on with the Christmas story! Running from Dec. 12 to 22, place your ticket reservation by calling 407-920-4034. The Theatre is at 419A W. Fairbanks Avenue in Winter Park.

Dec. 13 – Casselberry Tree Lighting Ceremony

Lots of family activities



accompany the Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony presented by the city of Casselberry on Dec. 13 beginning at 6 p.m. Art and music and food trucks will be in Lake Concord Park from 6 to 9 p.m., Santa will light the tree at 7 p.m., and the movie – "Rise of the Guardians" will be shown free at 7:30 p.m. For information (or to volunteer), call 407-262-7700, ext. 1507, or email mehrlich@casselberry.org

Dec. 14 – 'Clare and the Chocolate Nutcracker'

It's an up-tempo "Nutcracker" when Clare 'lives' her enchanted dream, traveling with the Chocolate Nutcracker to the Kingdom of Toys. Visiting Candy Land and New Orleans (Clare's birthplace), they arrive in time for Mardi Gras. This 'Nutcracker' is performed in ballet, jazz, modern, swing, gospel and hip hop as Tchaikovsky and Duke Ellington are fused to bring us a very contemporary version of the holiday classic. Call 407-403-5519 or visit clareandthechocolatenutcracker.net

Dec. 14 – Breakfast (or brunch) with Santa at the zoo

Santa really 'gets around' at this time of year, but what fun to have your little ones find St.

Nick among the animals at the Central Florida Zoo. Along with breakfast (at 9 a.m.) or brunch (at 11 a.m.) there will be holiday cheer and activities for the family. After sharing their wishes with Santa everyone will enjoy creating a special animal treat and watch as zookeepers give the animals their handmade holiday gifts. Reservations suggested. Call 407-323-4450, ext. 123, or visit centralfloridazoo.org

Dec. 14 – Snow Mountain in Oviedo

Snow in Florida!? – Visit Oviedo as the city of Oviedo presents its annual Snow Mountain event on Dec. 14 with a Holiday Parade beginning at 4 p.m. followed by the Snow Mountain from 5 p.m. until it melts (around 9 p.m.) Held at the Oviedo Mall, tickets are \$5 ahead and \$10 day of. Inflation games and entertainments are free, and vendors and crafters will be there for holiday shopping. Call 407-971-5568 or visit cityofoviedo.net

Dec. 14 – Parent & Child Ornament-Making Workshop

The Casselberry Art House will host the entertaining educator Marla E, artist and art teacher, in a special Ornament-Making Holiday Workshop specially created for parents and children to come together in the creative process. Marla visits area schools with her art events – always offering innovative projects to help kids learn about and explore the world of art. The workshop will begin at 1 p.m. at the Art House at 127 Quail Pond Circle in Casselberry. Call 407-262-7700, ext. 1122, or visit casselberry.org/register

Dec. 15 – Maitland Symphony free Holiday Concert

The Maitland Symphony Orchestra invites everyone to its annual free holiday concert on Dec. 15 beginning at 7:30 p.m. Including music from "The Nutcracker" and familiar melodies of the Christmas season, a special feature will be the Florida premiere of a work by Michael Mahadeen called "Winter Lights." Performing Arts of Maitland invites the whole family to dream together with music from the past, from the heavens and into the New Year. At the Maitland Presbyterian Church, call 321-303-1404 or visit pamaitland.org

Dec. 15 – Natalie and Shawn in a night of singing, swinging holiday fun

■ Please see CULTURE on page 10

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CULTURE | Out of ideas for where to escape your house during the holidays? Take a look at these events

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Two of the great singing actors of Central Florida – Natalie Cordone and Shawn Kilgore – will bring their “Taste of Christmas Cabaret” to the Plantation Gardens Clubhouse at 4270 S. Lake Underhill Road in Orlando on Dec. 15. The cabaret-concert of popular songs includes holiday favorites along with interactive fun including the Tacky Holiday Sweater Contest, and an audience sing-along. For ticket information, visit CordoneAndKilgore.com

Dec. 15 and 22 – Breakthrough Theatre's Cabaret Sunday goes 'Holidaze'

Winter Park's Breakthrough Theatre will present a special two-night-only cabaret called the “Breakthrough Family Christmas” on Sundays, Dec. 15 and 22, at 7 p.m. With a huge cast of Breakthrough alumni singing favorite Christmas songs and sharing stories of Christmas-past, this event-from-the-heart is the



CHRISTMAS CABARET



perfect way to put you and your family in the Christmas spirit. For reservations, call 407-920-4034.

Dec. 17 and 18 – Andrea McArdle's 'Sounds of the Season'

Broadway's “Original Annie” – Andrea McArdle – will celebrate the holiday season at The Abbey with “Sounds of the Season,” with performances on Dec. 17 and 18 at 8 p.m. The show business legend will offer traditional holiday favorites along with beloved Broadway hits from “Oliver” and “Annie.” McArdle was the youngest performer ever nominated for a Tony Award (in 1977) for the title role in “Annie” and has since appeared in



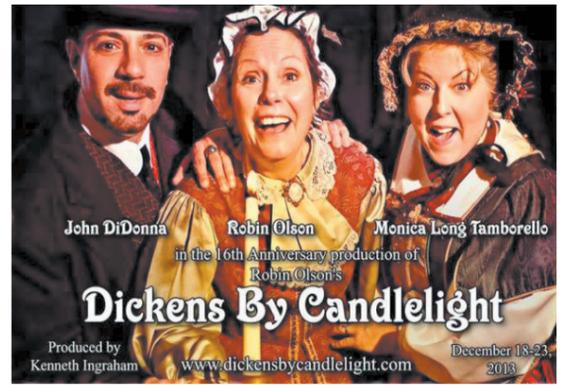
ANDREA MCARDLE

countless musicals and cabarets. For tickets, visit ticketweb.com

Dec. 18 to 23 – 'Dickens by Candlelight' – with Tea and Cookies

Of all the ways to experience Charles Dickens' “A Christmas Carol,” my favorite is the production called “Dickens by Candlelight.” While candle-

light is in the title, the production brings us ‘into the action’ by seating us at tables where we are served tea and homemade cookies as the extraordinary three actors (who play all the parts) ‘act’ among us. And this year is extra special to have Robin Olson, who created “Dickens by Candlelight” in 1997, return to the cast along with audience favorites John DiDonna and Monica Tamborello. Running Dec. 18 to 23, call 407-222-7669 or



visit Dickensbycandlelight.com

Josh Garrick is a writer, photographer, educator, and fine art curator. He is a member of the Curatorial Council for the Museum of Florida Art. Garrick can be reached at joshgarrick9@gmail.com or 407-522-3906.

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VOICES

THIS WEEK IN POLITICAL HISTORY — DEC. 19, 1732 — Benjamin Franklin of Philadelphia first published "Poor Richard's Almanack." The book, filled with proverbs preaching industry and prudence, was published continuously for 25 years and became one of the most popular publications in colonial America.

EMPLOYMENT

Ask
Sandi



Want that job? Get to know the company beforehand

One of my friends recently posted on Facebook that she would not hire a young person and would rather have an employee who was more experienced. She had interviewed several college grads who were totally ill equipped to interview for the job.

The biggest pet peeve she had was the lack of research they had done. Her company is very prominent on social media and she has worked hard to create her "brand," yet interviewee after interviewee could tell her very little about what they knew about the company.

She was also concerned about the de-

Several candidates were casually dressed, including one wore a sun dress and flip-flops.

mand for a high salary with very little, if any experience in the field. Some of the candidates had held retail or fast food jobs, but had never interned or worked in her type of business. She was willing to train, but at an entry-level salary.

The last issue she had was the lack of professionalism they displayed in the interview. Several candidates were casually dressed including one who wore a sundress and flip-flops. Others just wanted to know if they could have a flexible schedule or work from home.

When all was said and done, she decided to pay a little more for experience and polish. The lesson in this for new college graduates is to make sure you research the company, keep your expectations in line with your experience, and be professional.

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.

Your best gift? Time

STETSON'S CORNER

By Karen McEnany-Phillips

The holiday season is here and in the dozen or so days left before Christmas and the New Year there is an impossible amount to be done. How we choose to spend our time is composed of a thousand daily decisions. During the holidays it is easy to feel that we don't really have a choice in what we have to do, that saying no is not an option. How many Decembers do we push the autopilot button and shop, travel, entertain and rush about? We emerge in January and quietly admit that we didn't exactly enjoy the holidays, much less find a sliver of spiritual growth or solace.

Finding priorities

Over the past few years I have shed a number of material items that used to mean a lot to me. Books, china, kitchen gadgets, home décor, and clothes for example. Each item had been special at one time and yet when I was honest with myself, I had not used, worn or enjoyed them in months or years. A few years ago I had the privilege of meeting Winter Park interior designer Carolyn Moor. She

shared some personal stories of her own life where prioritizing and downsizing were needed. One great piece of advice she shared is to go into a room, write the number one on a sticky note and place it on the one thing above all you would keep. Then write the number two on the next and place it on the next highest-prized item you would keep, and so on. By the time you get to the eighth or tenth item you recognize the reality that most of the material items you have are replaceable.

One more day

The pressures and expectations of the holidays assail us from all sides. Friends, family and workplace press us to deliver life and death appointments, gifts, social engagements and extra errands. Then we add our own personal pres-

sure to the mix. In the last few months several friends of mine have lost friends and family members very unexpectedly. Quiet tragedies like this pull our mortality into sharp focus.

If we only had one more day, one more month, one more year, what would we do with that remaining time? What would sink into unimportance? These questions are difficult to work into the reality of our daily lives. And yet the truth is when we lose someone unexpectedly we think about the last thing we said or didn't say to each other. How we spent those last precious moments of time, and how we wished we had spent them differently. We face the irreplaceable reality that there are no do-overs, no second chances.

As you're counting the days to Christmas, New Years

or your special holiday, take a few moments to count your blessings and be generous with your time for the people and things that matter.

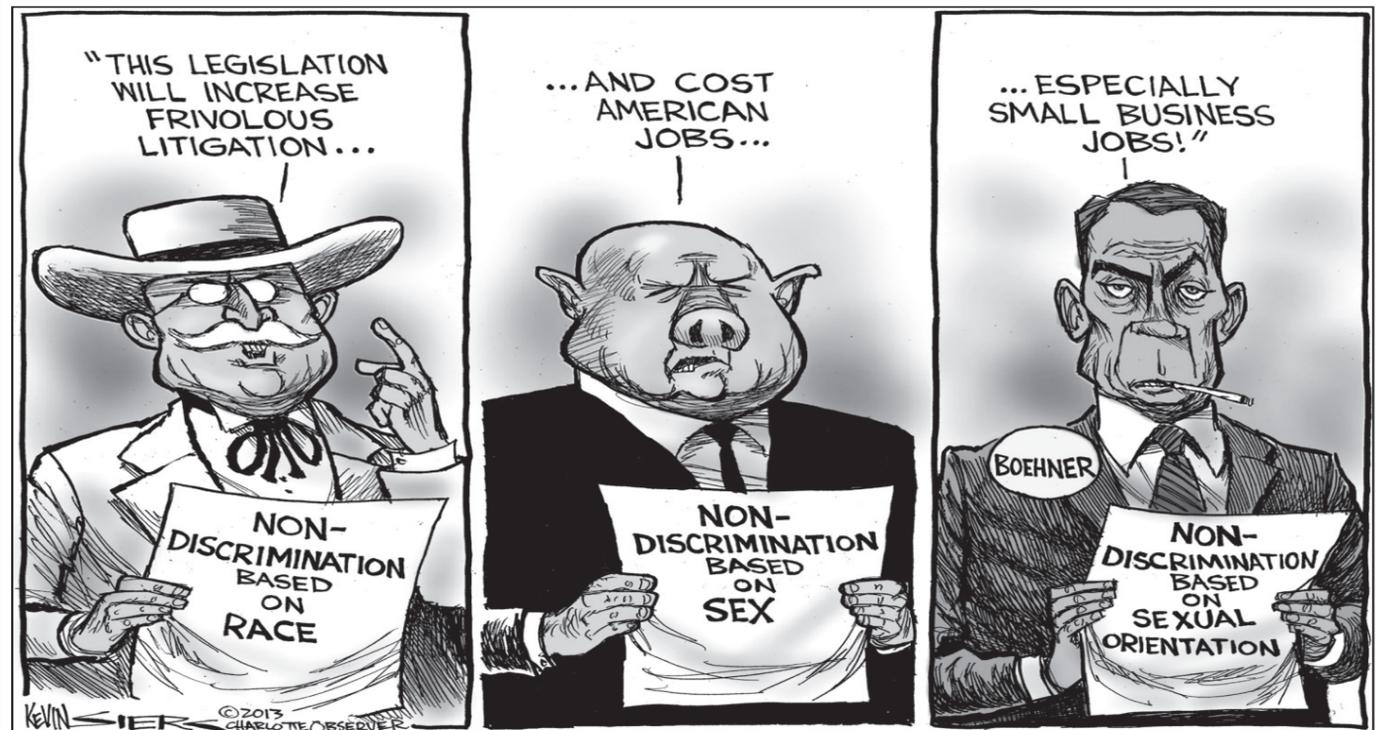
Merry Christmas and happy holidays to all!

Save the dates

The annual Geneva Historical Society Post Office sale will be held Saturdays, Dec. 14 and 21, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. under the trees outside the Geneva Post Office. Find unique gifts including Geneva t-shirts, historical books, cookbooks, photobooks, stocking stuffers, Geneva prints and new items such as colored hoodies.

Parents take a break by signing your kids up for the Winter Break Eco Camp at the Yarrowborough Nature Center from Dec. 30 through Jan. 6 (weekdays only except Jan. 1). They will enjoy outdoor adventure and environmental awareness by learning about the natural world from the folks at Seminole County Greenways and Natural Lands. Ages 7 to 12 are welcome, and the class is from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Contact lhartsock@seminolecountyfl.gov or call 407-349-0959 to sign up.

EDITORIAL CARTOON



Young Voices Here's what kids at the Winter Springs Holiday Parade said about how they prepare for the holidays.



We decorate with a Christmas tree and lights inside and I like to help with that. I look forward to Christmas; sometimes we make pies. We just moved to Winter Springs so this is my first time at this parade.
—Sarah B. 10 years old



I like opening presents and spending Christmas with my family and friends. We have six Christmas trees and I help decorate them. Also we set up a village by our fancy tree. Last year I was in this holiday parade.
—Lillian K. 8 years old



I like shopping for presents for my parents. My brother and I helped decorate our tree. We will also put out plastic candy canes and trees outside. I like opening presents with my family. This is my first time at the parade.
—Jordynn 9 years old



Our Christmas tree and all of our lights are up. Being with my family and friends, and opening presents is my favorite part of Christmas. We make sugar and crescent cookies. This is my 8th year coming to this parade!
—Aylah P. 8 years old



We celebrate Christmas and our tree is already up. We have lights inside and outside the house. We bake snowman cookies and will visit others in our family. Opening presents is the best! I have been to this parade before.
—Chloe P. 8 years old

We would love to hear from your **Young Voices!**
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140 Lyman Ave, Winter Park - needs items to sell: clothing, bedding, jewelry, kitchenware and bric-a-brac. Also needing volunteers. Contact Elizabeth Comer 407-647-8276. Open Tues & Fri at 9:30am; Sat 10am-1pm. All proceeds support children's programs & the Orlando Blind Association.

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HELP WANTED

Position Available: Club and House Administrator:
The Woman's Club of Winter Park, Inc., an almost century old non-profit civic and charitable organization, is seeking to fill a half time (20 hours per week) position by January 1, 2014. The successful candidate will have proven skills and experience in marketing, public relations, administration, communications, social media, budgeting, and event planning. Ability to work well with a variety of people is essential. This person will work with the club Board of Directors, members, and rental clients, as well as one other part-time employee, whose job entails house maintenance and technology. Salary range, \$16-\$18/hour depending upon experience and performance. Please submit a full resume and letters of reference to Sandra Blosssey, 1262 Melissa Ct. Winter Park, FL 32789

MISCELLANEOUS

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King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.



King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Use the couch
- 4 Fidel Castro, e.g.
- 9 Picks out of a lineup, briefly
- 12 Japanese pond carp
- 13 Last Greek letter
- 14 Ultramodernist
- 15 Office-holder
- 17 Pitcher's topper
- 18 Apiece
- 19 Merman and Mertz
- 21 Label founded by Clive Davis
- 24 Gets a gander at
- 25 Fellow
- 26 Pvt.'s superior
- 28 Takes five
- 31 Snapshots
- 33 Finish
- 35 Willy Wonka's creator
- 36 Narrow cuts
- 38 Sleuth, for short
- 40 Born
- 41 - moss
- 43 Fed well, as a Biblical calf
- 45 Twist in pain

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12				13						14		
15			16							17		
				18			19		20			
21	22	23				24						
25				26		27		28			29	30
31			32		33		34		35			
36				37		38		39		40		
			41			42		43		44		
45	46						47					
48				49		50				51	52	53
54					55					56		
57					58					59		

- 6 Spelling contest
- 7 Actress Moorehead
- 8 Talk on and on
- 9 Nonstop
- 10 Transaction
- 11 Bribes
- 16 - and downs
- 20 Pay attention
- 21 Rock band's gear
- 22 Bar
- 23 Just beginning
- 27 Explosive letters
- 29 You
- 30 Coaster
- 32 Undo a delete
- 34 Graffiti writer, e.g.
- 37 Masters, in old India
- 39 West Pointers
- 42 Doctrine
- 44 Scot's chapeau
- 45 Caprice
- 46 Mysterious character
- 50 Vegas-based crime show
- 51 Swelled head
- 52 Agree silently
- 53 Part of the foot

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