The LAKER PARK NEWS

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Details on page 11

Philadelphia Phillies left fielder and former Pasco High standout Domonic Brown struck out in his only at-bat during the 84th annual MLB All-Star Game, but told MLB.com that the entire experience was "a lot of fun." (File photos)

Phillies' Brown unfazed in All-Star Game spotlight

Zephyrhills native in Midsummer Classic

By Jeff Odom
jodom@cnewspubs.com

When Philadelphia Phillies manager Charlie Manuel called Domonic Brown into his office on July 7, the former Pasco High standout could only think of one reason — he was being traded.

Manuel and Phillies general manager Ruben Amaro sat Brown down and closed the door. They told him he needed to pack his bags, but not because he was being dealt away from the organization. No, this news was much better.

Brown was going to the MLB All-Star Game.

"I was always (rumored to be) being traded," Brown told MLB.com during Media Day at Citi Field in New York where the 84th Midsummer Classic was on July 16. "I was always hoping I wouldn't be, but my name was always being mentioned."

The 25-year-old Brown, a Zephyrhills native, spent his first three years of high school at Pasco, before moving to Stone Mountain, Ga. for his senior year. He was the second player from Pasco High to make a major-league roster. The only other Pirate to make it to the big leagues was Gene Nelson, who played parts of 13 seasons with six different teams.

And, although he did not have a marquee night in the National League's 3-0 loss against the American League, striking out on just three pitches in his only at-bat against Toronto Blue Jays reliever Brett Cecil, Brown said he still enjoyed his first trip to the All-Star Game.

"It was unbelievable to be out there with all those great All-Stars," Brown said. "It was a lot of fun, a lot of fun. I can't believe it's already over."

Brown almost had another opportunity to put a ball in play in the bottom of the ninth, but was left in the on-deck circle

See BROWN, page 7

Female county administrator ready to prove herself

By B.C. Manion
bcmanion@cnewspubs.com

Michele Baker – Pasco County's first female administrator – brings a broad range of experiences to her current post.

As a teenager, she was involved in Civil Air Patrol and then went on to become a member of the U.S. Air Force Reserve.

Over the years, she's worked as a waitress, a movie theater manager and a flight attendant.

It was a temp secretary job in the Office of Emergency Management in Miami-Dade County, however, that led her to a career in government work.

"I just found myself really attracted to public service. I fell in love with it. I like being able to do something that contributes to the community," said Baker, who went on to become operations manager in the Office of Emergency Management.

She was in that role when Hurricane Andrew wreaked havoc on Miami.

"In Andrew, I could not do everything, be everything for everybody," Baker said.

As a leader, she knew she had to rely on teams and procedures she had developed and to empower people to do their jobs.

"In a stressful situation – lots of new information comes in, and so a trusted agent says to you, 'Hey, I've got this problem. I've got this recommendation.' You develop a gut and you say, 'O.K., that's a good recommendation, run with it.'

"It was good training for this job — baptism by fire."

Baker joined Pasco County's staff in March of 1993.

She'd interviewed with John Gallagher – the county's administrator for 31 years – on March 12. The following day the "Storm of the Century" also known as the "No-Name Storm" slammed into the county.

Baker had gone from her interview to a vacation in Atlanta.

"They tracked me down in Atlanta," Baker said, and told her that if she wanted to work in Pasco it would be a good time to begin.

"I started on the Sunday after the storm, so I was here for the recovery from the

See BAKER, page 9

Eagle Scout aims to protect lives

Go-box project keeps communication open during severe weather

By Marie Abramov
Special to The Laker/Park News

Kiran Shila, a 17-year-old amateur licensed radio operator, confidently displayed a colorful map of emergency radio communications with lines stretching to Steinbrenner High.

Six fellow boy scouts listened intently, as Shila explained basic physics principals — such as wavelengths and frequencies — and talked about how the group would work together to build a small radio network.

Shila is leading the project in his quest to become an Eagle Scout, the highest rank attainable in Boy Scouts.

The group will construct three portable radio stations, which will be placed at three schools that serve as Red Cross emergency shelters. The two schools other than Steinbrenner have not yet been identified.

When the stations are operating, the three high schools will be able to communicate with a clear signal to other radio operators within a 30 to 50-mile radius.

Shila will use a 2-meter radio wavelength. Towers from members of the Tampa Amateur Radio Club may then pick up and relay communication signals to long-distance terminals using 8- to 10-meter wavelengths.

The young men are members of Boy Scout Troop 314. The number of their troop, when expressed as 3.14, represents Pi, the ratio of circumference to diameter.

"We called it Troop Pi because our scoutmasters and parents are all engineers, and most of the kids are pretty much math and science-oriented," Shila said.

After Shila introduced the concepts of the project, the group began building the first portable station. They took a black case, which is 2 feet long, 1 ½ feet tall and 1 foot wide, and started wiring, drilling and

See EAGLE SCOUT, page 8

Ready for the big storm? Check out our Hurricane Guide, page 8

Fellow boy scouts listen to Kiran Shila as he explains the project he's working on to provide communications during hurricanes. (Photos by Marie Abramov)

Pasco hires Urban Land Institute for study

By B.C. Manion
bcmanion@cnewspubs.com

The Pasco County Commission voted to spend $125,000 on a study that aims to bolster the county's ability to attract new businesses and jobs.

The board approved an agreement with the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to bring a panel of experts to the county to provide guidance on future development.

The panel of experts will meet with government, business and community representatives to look at progress the county has made since a previous ULI study was conducted five years ago. It will also recommend ways for the county to go forward.

The panel is expected to convene for no less than five days in October.

In its previous study, ULI helped the county to identify strategic market areas. It also laid the groundwork for enticing more job-creators to Pasco, by suggesting that the county identify market areas, offer incentives to attract job-creators and streamline permitting to make it easier for companies to choose Pasco.

The ULI is an organization that aims to benefit the general public through improved planning and use of urban land.

During this study, it will devote about 20 percent of its efforts toward reviewing how well is previous recommendations are being implemented. It will recognize strengths, identify weaknesses and prescribe steps to take for improvement.

The other 80 percent of its work will address issues such as the county's regional economic role, its residential growth dynamics, its quality of life, transportation issues and its investment tools, including public-private partnerships.

The county is partnering with the Pasco Economic Development Council, Inc., and both groups want to use ULI's services to position the county "to maximize its current resources and identify options for economic development and potential revenue sources."

The study will include recommendations aimed at helping to carry out the County Commission's vision for the county, as expressed through the board's strategic plan, according to county documents.

County commissioners have been focused in recent years on the goal of attracting jobs, to help boost the local economy and to improve quality of life by helping residents finding work in the area, instead of being forced to make daily commutes to other communities.

The ULI panel and its staff will study the area, will gather research from local officials and will consult with public and private officials, representatives of relevant organizations and others.

It will prepare its conclusions and recommendations, which it will present at the end of its visit. It will present a draft report within 30 days and a final report within 90 days.

In preparation for ULI's work, the county and PEDC are seeking feedback from citizens and business regarding the county's progress on development readiness as it relates to recommendations made during the previous ULI panel.

Before the panel comes back, the county and PEDC would like to determine, from our collective viewpoint, what has been accomplished, where improvements have been made and what is missing or still needs work.

To take the survey, go to http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/J2CTSNL.

Send business news to bcmanion@cnewspubs.com

SEN. JOHN LEGG TO SPEAK AT BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE

State Sen. John Legg will participate in a roundtable discussion on "Linking Education to Workforce Needs" from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Aug. 2.

The lunch is free for members of the Greater Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce and $10 for guests. The event will be at Microtel Inn & Suites, 7839 Gall Blvd. in Zephyrhills. Seating is limited. To reserve your spot, call (813) 782-1913.

The Business Leaders Roundtable is a program of the Greater Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce and is an opportunity for small business owners and leaders to openly discuss issues and trends impacting local business.

FLORIDA HOSPITAL ZEPHYRHILLS IS AMONG MOST-WIRED HOSPITALS

Hospitals & Health Networks has named the Most Wired Hospitals and Health Systems, based on the Health Care's Most Wired Survey.

Adventist Health System, comprised of 44 hospital campuses, including Florida Hospital Zephyrhills, is on the list.

"Florida Hospital Zephyrhills has a more than 85 percent physician adoption rate for computerized provider order entry, utilizes clinical decision support and evidence-based protocols, and employs technologies like closed-loop medication with positive patient identification to reduce the likelihood of medication errors," said Don Welch, chief operating officer, according to a news release. "Our focus is on utilizing technology to continually improve patient care, and we are honored to be recognized for our effective technology adoption."

The July Hospitals & Health Networks cover story detailing the results is available at www.hhnmag.com.

MOODY'S INVESTORS' REPORT FORECASTS FLORIDA'S REBOUND

Moody's Investors has issued a report that forecasts Florida's 2013 employment growth to increase 1.9 percent, surpassing the national rate of 1.3 percent and to remain higher than the national growth through 2017.

Over the long term, the report says that Florida's economic performance is expected to be strong due to the state's favorable climate and low cost of living, as well as strong demographic and economic fundamentals, according to a news release issued by Gov. Rick Scott's office.

CATERING AND CAFÉ BUSINESS CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY

Rose's Cafe and Catering, 38426 Fifth Ave. in Zephyrhills, celebrated its two-year anniversary with a ribbon cutting on July 15 and a block party on Fifth Avenue on July 20. The block party featured live jazz, food and shopping.

KAUFMAN EYE INSTITUTE ADDS NEW STAFFER

The Kaufman Eye Institute, with offices in Zephyrhills, Sun City Center, Wesley Chapel and Bushnell, has added board-certified ophthalmologist and neurologist Dr. Steven Gross to its staff.

Gross sees patients in all of the Kaufman Eye Institute's locations. His services include cosmetic and functional eyelid lifts and tucks, blepharoplasty, entropion, ectropion, DCRs, browlifts, Botox, fillers, adult strabismus and neuro ophthalmologic evaluations.

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Special occasions bring friends together

By Helene Rubenstein
Grand Horizons

Friends from Grand Horizons attend the Rubensteins' 50th anniversary party. Seated from left are Andy Gisondi, Del O'Hara, Laurie Carter, Tom Carter and Karen Donlon. Standing from left are Helene Rubenstein, Marty Rubenstein, Bob and Marilyn, and Bill Donlon. (Photo by Buz Smuckler)

While the summer months may be here, there are still "special" functions that go on at Grand Horizons and one of them happened to be a potluck for Independence Day. But, before I tell you about the potluck at Grand Horizons, I would like to go back to the last newsletter that was sent in, where I mentioned that at the time of printing that specific issue, my husband and I were in Connecticut and celebrating our 50th anniversary. I had mentioned that I will explain more in this publication.

We had the party at the Manchester Country Club in beautiful surroundings. All people attending were treated to a very nice view with lakes in the background and a golf course adjacent to the building. There were approximately 50 people (friends, relatives and long-ago coworkers) that came to celebrate with us.

I am happy to say that several couples from Grand Horizons attended along with other friends from the Florida area. It was a nice mix and there was plenty of dancing, eating and mingling. There were many decorations with a banner stating "Happy 50th" hanging in the background. There were also balloons to commemorate the occasion. Hanging from the chandeliers were additional swirls with a "50" on top. Of course, just like in a wedding, my husband fed me some cake, and I did the same to him. That was fun!

The entertainer did a marvelous job with a good assortment of songs. Many requests were made, and he did his utmost to accommodate them. He played the keyboard and sang and had a very nice voice. It seemed like everyone had a good time. It also seemed like the party just flew by, but since some friends took pictures, we now have those to reminisce about the fun time we had.

Now on to July 4, where Grand Horizons had a potluck to celebrate Independence Day in style. Nancy Martin mentioned that her husband, Eugene, spoke to Chris Fulton, and there were approximately 80 people at the potluck. She went on to say that the Social Club provided the chicken, and the individual people who attended the function brought the rest of the food.

From reading the newsletter, I understand that Marion Allen and Chris Fulton hosted this function, but I also heard that Annmarie Shackeywc helped set up the tables and serve the chicken. Chris Fulton also mentioned that at the end of the meal many people cleaned up, and there were too many to even try to list. Thanks go out to one and all. A special email was sent, and from it I learned that there were many desserts that were served. Marion and Chris did quite a job at arranging this function and our thanks go out to the two of them. Nancy Martin also mentioned to me that after the meal, Eugene made an announcement that they would have Mexican Train at 5:45 p.m. This gave everyone time to go home and put their leftover food away and for the kitchen workers to finish up. They had three tables of Mexican Train, and it definitely is proving to be very popular with the residents.

In addition to the above, pool exercises have been loads of fun, and it is good for your health in several ways. The weather determines the size of the group, as the amount of people that attend does vary. Also, such activities like cards, bingo, coffee and doughnuts, mah-jongg, different luncheons, the writing group (where different prompts are sent via email) and more, are still going on.

On July 12, Grand Horizons had their monthly connoisseur lunch, and they went to the Cracker Barrel. Sam and Fred Sage hosted the lunch, and this is a get-together that any resident of Grand Horizons can attend. While in Florida, my husband and I try to attend these functions, as it is great to be with all our friends. I spoke to Sam Sage and she told me that approximately 20 people attended and the food was very good, as it always is at the Cracker Barrel.

I also spoke to Fred Sage and he told me that a new home and a few used homes have been added to Grand Horizons. It seems that a few people that had resided in other parks decided to join our little family at Grand Horizons. So, it sounds like our park is growing larger and larger each day. The more the merrier is what I say.

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Autism charter school approved for Zephyrhills

The Laker/Lutz News staff report

The Florida Autism Center for Excellence, Inc., plans to open a charter school in Pasco County, specifically intended to serve students with autism.

The Pasco County School Board approved the charter at its July 2 meeting.

The board approved a five-year charter contract for the school, which will be operated by Quest, Inc., which also operates the Florida Autism Center of Excellence - Hillsborough campus.

Students enrolled during the first year will be capped at 38 students, in prekindergarten through fifth grade. In the second year, enrollment will increase to 68 students. In year three, the enrollment will increase to a maximum of 92 students in grades prekindergarten through 12. In year four, up to 102 students will be allowed; and, in year five, the maximum will be 110 students.

The school will offer only a Special Diploma option.

In the first year, members of the founding board of the Florida Center of Excellence - Hillsborough campus will serve together with local Pasco County board members during the transition period.

The principal of the school has been hired and the governing board has entered into a lease to utilize the portable units on the property of Agape Baptist Church at 39735 Chancey Road in Zephyrhills.

Staff from Pasco County Schools will conduct annual reviews to ensure the school is in compliance with its charter and federal and state laws.

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Premier group to help enroll uninsured

The Laker/Lutz News staff report

Premier Community HealthCare Group in Dade City is one of 1,159 health care centers nationwide that has been awarded a federal grant to help enroll uninsured people under the Affordable Care Act.

The center was awarded $138,189, which will help support three additional staff members to help thousands of people in Pasco County who will qualify for coverage under the Affordable Care Act. Open enrollment begins Oct. 1.

Statistics show that 78 percent of Floridians are unfamiliar with the health insurance marketplace, and 83 percent of the people who may be eligible for Medicaid expansion are not aware of that, according to a news release from Premier Community HealthCare Group.

"With a lack of knowledge or a clear understanding about the new health insurance marketplace, people simply need direction, and this funding will enable us to provide community education and enrollment assistance," Kim Schuknecht, CEO of Premier Community HealthCare Group, said in the news release.

Forty percent of the 18,000 patients currently using Premier Community HealthCare Group's services are currently uninsured.

Premier's efforts to engage uninsured patients in health care coverage will be in concert with broad community outreach efforts.

"We are part of a nationwide effort as this grant will enable all community health center recipients to help people become more knowledgeable consumers and access resources that were never available to them previously," Schuknecht said.

"It is about taking care of people in our community so they can live healthy and productive lives. Many patients forego preventative and routine health care due to being uninsured," Schuknecht said.

Premier Community HealthCare Group, Inc. is a nonprofit community health center serving Medicaid/Medicare recipients, uninsured and underserved communities of Pasco County. It has six offices throughout Pasco and provides primary care medical services including family medicine, dental, behavioral health, obstetrics and gynecology. It has operated in Pasco for more than 24 years.

For more information about outreach and enrollment in Pasco County, contact Premier Community HealthCare Group at (352) 518-2000.

Centers nationwide have received $150 million in grant awards from the Department of Health and Human Services – Human Resources and Services Administration.

To see a list of the health centers receiving the funding in all 50 states, visit: http://www.hrsa.gov/about/2013tables/outreachandenrollment.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Nominate a caregiver for cruise

Home Instead, Inc., is sponsoring a cruise for one lucky caregiving hero and guest on Royal Caribbean Enchantment of the Seas. Florida residents are invited to nominate deserving family caregivers, including themselves, for the opportunity to win a free four-night, five-day cruise from Cape Canaveral to stops in CocoCay and Nassau, Bahamas. The cruise is scheduled for Feb. 3 to Feb. 7, 2014. The winning recipient will also receive 40 hours of free care from a Home Instead Senior Care professional for his or her loved one while away. For information and to submit your nomination by Aug. 24, visit http://cruise.caregiverstress.com/.

Hospital needs volunteers

Florida Hospital Zephyrhills is looking for volunteers to help with a variety of tasks including transporting patients to and from tests, driving the shuttle, distributing mail, cafeteria, clerical/administrative and more. Volunteers must be at least 14 years old. There is a minimum requirement of four volunteer hours per week. Volunteers receive a complimentary meal in the café on the days they work and recognition at the annual volunteer banquet. Orientation sessions are twice a month. If interested, applications are available online at www.fhzeph.org/Careers/Volunteer.aspx or by calling (813) 779-6256.

Pasco Regional adds events

Pasco Regional Medical Center, 13100 Fort King Road in Dade City, now offers the following:

—Free Senior Extra Breakfast and Walking Club. The club meets every Monday from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. in Medical Plaza I, Suite 108, for an invigorating walk and breakfast. For information, call (352) 518-1087.

—"Living With Diabetes," a four-week education program. The class is limited to six participants per session. For information, call (352) 521-1100 ext. 1423.

—Diabetic Support Group. The group will meet from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Sept. 5 and Dec. 5 in Medical Plaza I Suite 107. For information, call (352) 521-1100 ext. 1423.

Tools to Quit program

Florida Hospital Zephyrhills is partnering with Gulfcoast North Area Health Education Center to provide a free tobacco cessation seminar from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. July 25. The Tools to Quit program is a one-time, 2.5-hour program providing all the information, tools and resources needed to quit using tobacco. Participants will receive four weeks of optional nicotine replacement therapy including patches, gum or lozenges. The seminar is at Florida Hospital Zephyrhills, 7050 Gall Blvd. Space is limited. To register, call (813) 929-1000.

Senior wellness

The following wellness services are offered at The Commons, 38130 Pretty Pond Road in Zephyrhills:

—Ask a Community Care Coordinator: Every Tuesday from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Learn about various senior services offered by Community Aging and Retirement Services. No appointment necessary.

—Free amplified telephones: Third Wednesday of every month from 10 a.m. to noon. Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services of Florida offers amplified and text telephones and ring signaling devices to Florida residents. For an appointment, call (727) 853-1010.

—Hearing clinic by Affordable Hearing Solutions: Third Wednesday of every month from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Includes earwax checks, earwax removal, hearing screenings and cleaning and servicing of hearing aids. The services are free. For information, call (727) 807-7082.

—A Matter of Balance: Tuesday and Thursday from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. starting Sept. 10. This is an eight-week program designed to help older adults learn methods to reduce falling and the fear of falling. The program is free. Space is limited. To preregister, call Peggy Johnson at (813) 788-0471.

Support for stroke patients

Florida Hospital Zephyrhills has formed a new stroke support group that meets from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. the third Thursday of every month. The group offers support to patients who have had a stroke, as well as their caregivers. The meetings are in the hospital's Wellness Conference Room at the hospital, 7050 US 301. For information, visit www.fhzeph.org.

—Health notes are run for free on a first come, first served basis. Please send all information at least two weeks before an event.

Local students compete at national FBLA

By B.C. Manion and Steve Schwarzkopf
bcmanion@cnewspubs.com

Alexander Santa – a recent graduate of Wesley Chapel High – placed in the top 40 of students from around the nation at the 2013 Future Business Leaders of America National Leadership Conference.

Santa jetted out to Anaheim, Calif., along with other local students Madison Jacoves, Lindsay and Kaitlyn King and FBLA advisor Renee Marsella to test their skills against their peers.

While none of the students made it to the finals, Santa and Jacoves made it to the preliminary rounds, which means they were among the top 40, Marsella said.

They qualified to compete in Anaheim, by placing in the top three at the state competition, Marsella said. Santa won first place in web design at the state competition in Orlando. Jacoves won second place in the electronic career portfolio category and the Kings, who are twin sisters, took third place in the banking and financial systems category, Marsella said.

The Pasco County Schools district covered Santa's expenses, because he was the first place winner at state, said Marsella, whose expenses were also picked up by the district. The female competitors raised their own money to cover their costs, she said.

While Santa didn't win any prizes this year, he was seventh in the nation last year, Marsella said. He won first place at state in the ebusiness category last year, she said.

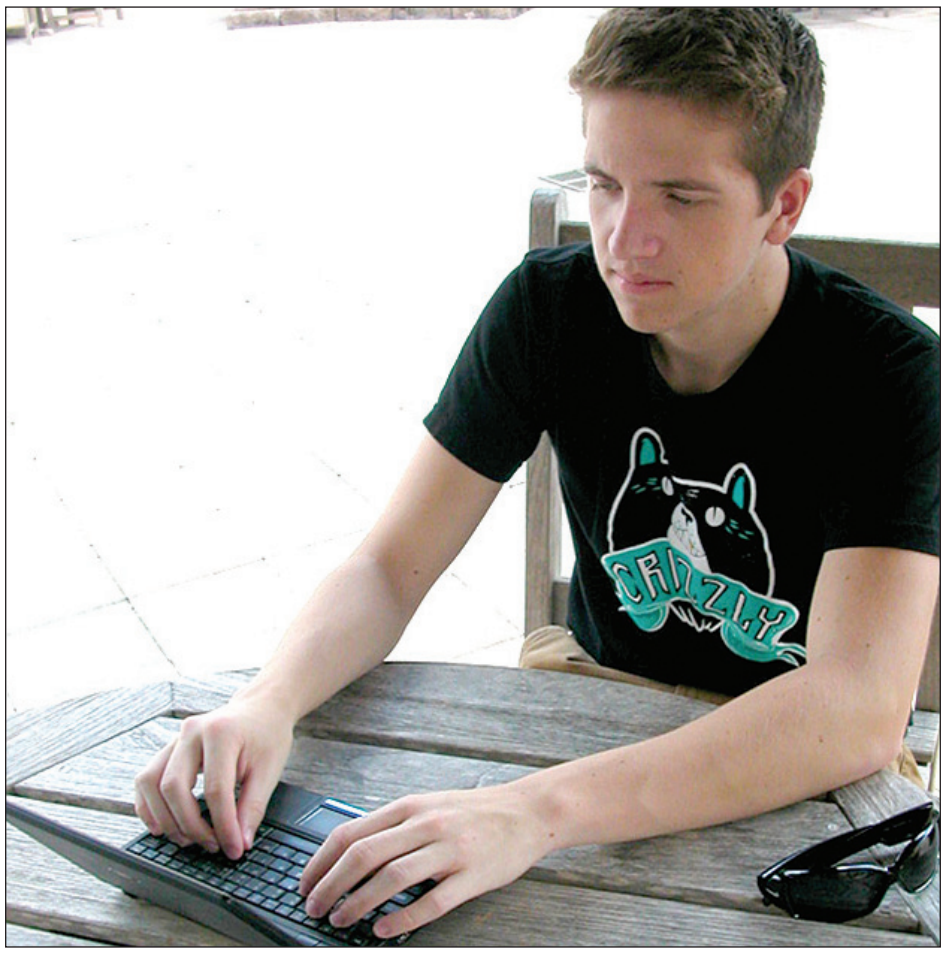
A group of local students attended the Future Business Leaders of America National Conference in Anaheim. Shown from left are Renee Marsella (advisor), Alexander Santa, Kaitlyn King, Madison Jacoves and Lindsay King. (Photo courtesy of Alexander Santa)

Even though he didn't bring home a prize, Santa said he enjoyed attending the conference in Anaheim. He said he had a chance to attend sessions to bolster his networking and marketing skills, which he's sure will come in handy in promoting his DJ business.

Santa credited Marsella for helping him succeed. He said she "has definitely pushed me hard and taught me to reach for my goals as an entrepreneur."

He also said his parents have played a key role. "They have always been there and supported me in all my projects," he said.

Santa's winning submission in the state competition was based on his online design and marketing business, Xigence Media. The business helps companies gain brand recognition on the Web.



Alexander Santa surfs the Web at The Shops at Wiregrass in Wesley Chapel. (Photo by Steve Schwarzkopf)

Santa's interest in computers began early.

"I was 11-years-old when I got my first computer," he said. "I began to design in 2007 and am pretty much self-taught. I picked it up by looking at the coding of other pages on the Web. I work with HTML, PHP, CSS and some other programming languages."

Santa is enrolled at the University of South Florida, where he is pursuing a degree in business and information management. The major merges business and technology, which Santa said is perfect for him because he's interested in both areas.

His career plans are uncertain at this point.

"Right now, I am just taking all possible paths to see where they lead."

To see his FBLA entry, visit xmdevs.com.

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HISTORICAL GROUP FUNDRAISER

The Zephyrhills Historical Association will have an all-day fundraiser at Ruby Tuesday's in Zephyrhills on July 25. The association will receive 20 percent of all sales from anyone who eats there on that day and presents a Community Give Back flyer to their server. The proceeds will go to the Rosemary Trottman Scholarship Fund. For a flyer, contact Clereen Brunty at (813) 782-8763 or Clereen@tampabay.rr.com.

BACKSTAGE TOURS

Tampa Theatre is hosting a balcony-to-backstage tour of the 1926 historical downtown theater at 11:30 a.m. July 27. During the 90-minute tour, visitors will learn about the theater's secrets, stories, art and architecture. Tickets are $5 for adults and $2 for children ages 2 to 12. Theater members are free. The theater is at 711 N. Franklin St. For information, call (813) 274-8286.

VBS AT RICHLAND BAPTIST

Richland Baptist Church will host a free vacation bible school from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. July 28 to Aug. 1. Classes will be available for children one year of age through teens. There will also be an adult class. Bible lessons, music, recreation, crafts and snacks will also be a part of the program. For information, call (352) 567-2990 between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

First Congregational Church of Zephyrhills will host a free "Colossal Coaster" vacation Bible school from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. July 29 to Aug. 2 for kids in first grade through fifth grade. To reserve a spot, call the church office at (813) 780-6027 Tuesday through Friday from 9 a.m. to noon.

FREE SHOWS AT COBB

Cobb Grove 16 in Wesley Chapel will host free summer movies at 10 a.m. on July 30 through Aug. 1. Doors open at 9:30 a.m. Small groups, schools and camps are invited. The movies are Open Season 3 (PG) and Puss in Boots (PG). The theater is at 6222 Wesley Grove Blvd. For information, visit www.CobbTheatres.com.

WONDERFUL WEDNESDAYS

Goin' Postal and Hut no. 8 are hosting two free local events on the lawn of Goin' Postal HQ, 4941 Fourth St. in Zephyrhills.

—Aug. 7: Bike Decorating and Safety Fun, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

—Aug. 14: Back to School Costume Party in the Park, 10 a.m. to noon

BOOK BAZAAR

The Friends of the Hugh Embry Library will host a book bazaar from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Aug. 9 and Aug. 10. There will be a diverse selection of slightly used books, audio and video media, magazines and related materials. Many items will be available for less than $3. The library is at 14215 Fourth St. in Dade City. For information, call (352) 567-3576.

CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

Habitat for Humanity of East and Central Pasco County will host a Habitat Business Challenge and 2013 Charity Golf Tournament on Aug. 9 and Aug. 10 at Silverado Golf and Country Club, 36841 Clubhouse Drive in Zephyrhills. Proceeds will benefit Habitat and the Zephyrhills and Pasco high school golf teams. The tournament is for all skill levels. For information, call (813) 788-1225.

FREE FINGERPRINT KITS

Goin' Postal, 38439 Fifth Ave., and Hut no. 8, 38435 Fifth Ave., in Zephyrhills, are once again offering free child fingerprinting and ID kits, while supplies last. Both businesses have offered the free kits to the community for many years.

EAGLES AERIE EVENTS

Zephyrhills Eagles Aerie 3752 meets on the first and third Tuesday every month at 7 p.m. The Ladies Auxiliary meets on the first and third Wednesday every month at 7 p.m. Euchre is played at 1 p.m. on Friday. The coin club meets the first Saturday of every month. Breakfast is served every Sunday from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. There is a pool tournament at 2 p.m. every Sunday. Bingo and auxiliary dinners are canceled for the summer. Music every Friday is karaoke with Bill Cole from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. and music every Saturday is karaoke with Pat & Phil starting at 3 p.m. Every Sunday there is music by Joe Nelson from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Auxiliary dinners are canceled for the summer. For information or to rent the social hall, call Phil Tripp at (813) 780-1558.

AMERICAN LEGION MEETINGS

American Legion Zephyr Post 118 will meet the third Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the post home, 5340 Eighth St. in Zephyrhills. The club is open from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. There are no fish fries during the summer. Membership to the club is open to all eligible veterans. For information, call Keith Holz at (813) 782-0481.

LEARN MODERN TENNIS

Modern tennis will be taught by USPTA coach Jeanette Marcus at a private facility at 35949 Bozeman Road in Dade City. Lessons are offered by appointment in singles, doubles and private and group instruction. Juniors, adults and all levels welcome. For information, email jmarcusddm@gmail.com or call (813) 417-0061.

RECREATIONAL CLASSES

The following recreational classes are offered at The Commons, 38130 Pretty Pond Road in Zephyrhills:

—Computer classes by appointment: Learn the basics in six 2-hour sessions. Cost is $99 and includes textbook. For information, call (727) 514-5002.

—Learn to make greeting cards: Second and fourth Thursday of every month from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Cost is $10. Participants must bring small paper scissors. Reservations are required. Call (352) 206-0277.

—Watercolor classes: Every Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Cost is $10. Bring your own supplies. Reservations required. Call (813) 788-0471.

PASCO GENEALOGY

The Genies, a small informal genealogical group, meets every Friday from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Church of Latter Day Saints, 9016 Fort King Road in Dade City. For information, call Janet at (813) 788-8894 or Peggy at (813) 715-7133.

AMVETS EVENTS

AMVETS Post 550, 4645 Airport Road in Zephyrhills, offers bingo on Mondays from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. On Fridays and Saturdays from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. visitors can enjoy delicious meals ranging in price from $7 to $10. Check out the entertainment schedule at www.amvets.org or on Facebook AMVEST POST 550. For information, call (813) 780-8180.

BINGO AT SWEETWATER

Sweetwater RV Park will host its summer bingo every Thursday. Doors open at 4 p.m. Sweetwater is located at 37647 Chancey Road in Zephyrhills. For information, call (813) 715-7452.

SHOWS AT SOUTHERN CHARM

Southern Charm RV Resort, 37811 Chancey Road in Zephyrhills, has complete package and individual show tickets for 2014 available to purchase at the office. The package price is $49. Individual show tickets are $8, with the exception of Brian Gurl's An American Rhapsody at $9. The first show is Jan. 11 with Steve Jeffris. Others performing are The Browns, Crystal Gage, Brian Gurl, Jimmy Smith and Sarah Getto. For information, call the office at (813) 783-3477 or Walt Hershberger at (813) 783-3346.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

The Dade City Woman's Club is hosting its annual School Supply Drive during July and August to help families that do not have the means to buy their children necessary school supplies. Needed supplies include pencils, crayons, markers, erasers, notebooks, folders, glue sticks, book bags, shampoo and soap. Items can be dropped off at the Greater Dade City Chamber of Commerce, 14112 Eighth St. in Dade City. For information, call (352) 567-3769.

STUFF THE BACKPACK

The First National Bank of Pasco is having its annual Stuff The Backpack Drive through Aug. 2. Items accepted include pencils, index cards, folders, paper, crayons, highlighters, pencil boxes, rulers and backpacks. Monetary donations will be used to purchase additional school supplies. All items are distributed to Pasco County schools. Items can be dropped off at any of the bank's three locations: 13315 US 301 in Dade City, 4518 Gall Blvd. in Zephyrhills and 37215 SR 54 in Zephyrhills.

THRIFT STORE SUPPLY DRIVE

The Kiwanis Club of Greater West Pasco is hosting a Back to School Supply Drive through Aug. 3. Anyone who donates to the drive will receive 25 percent off a single item (sale items and furniture excluded) at any Gulfside Thrift Shoppe location. Supplies needed include backpacks, glue sticks, markers, pencil cases, scissors and more. Items can be dropped off at the Dade City Thrift Shoppe at 37925 Sky Ridge Circle or the Zephyrhills Thrift Shoppe at 36524 SR 54. For information, visit www.grhospice.org.

BACKPACK GIVEAWAY

His Storehouse Outreach and First Presbyterian Church in Zephyrhills will host a back-to-school event from 10 a.m. to noon on Aug. 10. There will be one backpack with school supplies per child, while supplies last. The event will also include a puppet show, bounce house, petting zoo, games and more. The church is at 5510 19th St. For information, call (813) 783-2141.

PACK THE BACKPACK

CenterState Bank in Zephyrhills is having a back-to-school Pack The Backpack Drive to benefit West Zephyrhills Elementary and Woodland Elementary. The bank will also accept donations of Box Tops and Labels for Education. Supplies will be collected through Aug. 12 at 6930 Gall Blvd. Items needed include baby wipes, erasers, lined paper, notebooks, Ziploc bags, folders with pockets and more.

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BROWN, from page 1

when Pittsburgh Pirates third baseman Pedro Alverez popped out to center field to end the game.

"I was hoping Pedro would hit one and I'd come up in a special situation," Brown quipped. "Maybe next year. I just have to keep working hard."

During the first half of the season, Brown was one of the best hitters in baseball by batting .273 with 23 home runs and 67 RBIs. He's currently tied for second in the NL for homers and is third in total bases with 175.

Production wasn't always easy for Brown, though.

Despite being rated as Baseball America's No. 1 minor-league prospect three seasons ago, Brown, who was a 20th round pick by the Phillies in 2006, struggled throughout his first two seasons at the professional ranks, before turning the corner this year.

"It takes some guys longer than other guys," Brown said of his past struggles. "You definitely have to go through your own journey and see how it works out. But the biggest thing is never giving up. You just keep working on what you have to do, keep working hard and everything maybe works out."

This season's All-Star Game also featured another prominent talent from the Tampa Bay area as former Alonso High standout Jose Fernandez of the Miami Marlins pitched for the National League.

The 20-year-old Fernandez, a 2011 graduate and former first-round draft pick, was called up to the Marlins at the beginning of the season after never playing higher than Class-A minor-league ball. So far, the right-hander has performed well for Miami going 5-5 with a 2.75 ERA.

Fernandez, the Marlins' lone representative at the Midsummer classic, pitched a perfect sixth inning for the NL, striking out two batters, including former AL MVP Dustin Pedroia of the Boston Red Sox and current home run leader, Chris Davis, of the Baltimore Orioles.

"It was unbelievable to be out there with all those great All-Stars. It was a lot of fun, a lot of fun. I can't believe it's already over." —Domonic Brown

"I'm proud of how I went out there and didn't try to overdo anything," Fernandez said. "That was one of things that I look back and I'm pretty happy about. The result was good, but I'm happy I wasn't trying to overdo stuff."

—Information from MLB.com was used in this report. Follow Jeff Odom on Twitter @JOdomLaker

Tax collector leaves lasting legacy

By B.C. Manion
bcmanion@cnewspubs.com

Mike Olson, Pasco County's tax collector since 1981, died on June 26, three days after suffering a massive stroke.

Gov. Rick Scott will name a successor to fill Olson's post until 2014 when voters choose a successor to complete his unexpired term. They will vote again in 2016 to fill the seat for a four-year term.

Mike Olson

John Tupps of Scott's press office said last week that a timetable had not been set for naming Olson's successor.

Olson served as the county's tax collector since 1981 — holding the office longer than any other tax collector in Florida. He was also the sole Democrat to hold a county office in Pasco, and he assumed that office after a six-year stint on the Pasco County Commission.

Attorney Clyde Hobby, a longtime friend of Olson, described him as a meticulous man who cared deeply about public service.

During Olson's tenure on the county commission, the county introduced zoning laws and began providing water, sewer, fire and rescue services, Hobby said.

As tax collector, Olson was ahead of the curve in adopting efficient standards for his office, Hobby added.

"He implemented computer services before most tax collectors in the state knew what a computer was," Hobby said.

He began selling driver's licenses long before the state began requiring tax collectors to do so, Hobby said. And, in the days before he died, he told Hobby that Supervisor of Elections Brian Corley had informed him that 65 percent of the new voters in Pasco County came through the tax collector's office.

Olson took customer service seriously and routinely read all of the hundreds of comment cards that came into his office. On more than one occasion, he disciplined employees based on information he developed after first learning about an incident through a comment card, Hobby said.

Shortly before his death, Olson was actively seeking new locations in Central Pasco and East Pasco to improve services for customers.

Pasco County Commissioner Pat Mulieri said, via email, that she knew Olson since about 1990.

"He was all about tending to residents' needs," Mulieri said, noting she or her assistant called him frequently, and he was always helpful.

One of the biggest issues came up when identification requirements changed for driver's licenses, Mulieri said. She recalled an instance when a 92-year-old veteran had a problem because his first name didn't match on his documents. One call to Olson resolved the problem, the county commissioner said.

Olson came from a family with deep roots in service to others, Hobby said. His grandfather was a school board member and his late mother, Mitttye P. Locke, was a longtime principal who has an elementary school named for her in New Port Richey.

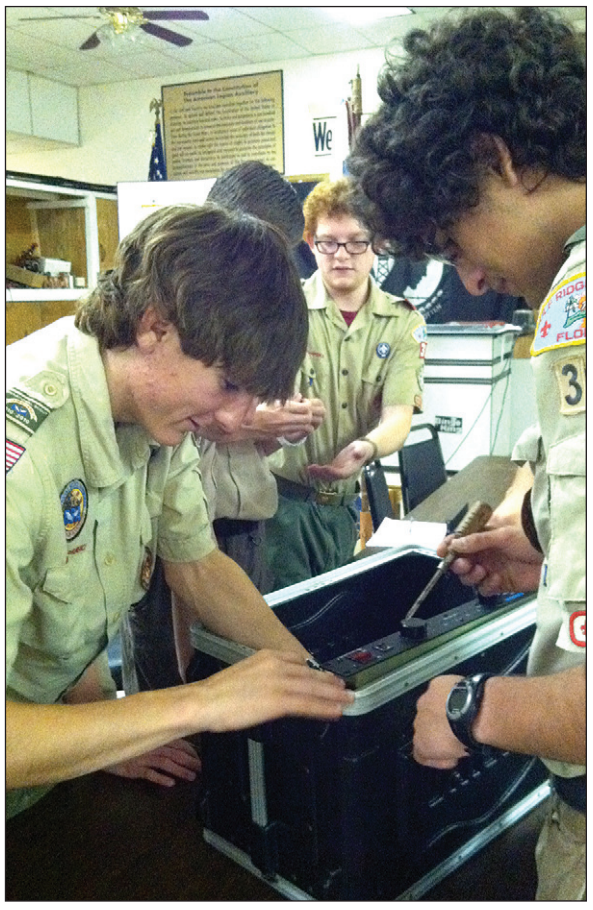
EAGLE SCOUT, from page 1

working with the battery. When the work on the case is finished, the radios, antennas, wiring and lights will be compactly and neatly stored on racks inside the go-box.

For the next couple of months, Shila and his scout team will work on making the antennas from scratch, assembling all the parts and building the stations.

The project is especially timely this year, as The Weather Channel experts have put Tampa at the top of the list of the 10 U.S. cities most at risk this hurricane season, which runs June 1 through Nov. 30.

The Weather Channel's list bases a city's vulnerability on its population, storm surge data, evacuation times and the number of years since it was hit by a hurricane. The last direct hit in Tampa was in 1921, so Tampa may be due for another one, the report says.



Kevin Cucchi works on the go-box that will enable radio communications from emergency shelters during storms.

An AccuWeather forecast predicts 16 tropical storms, eight hurricanes and four major hurricanes developing over the Atlantic Ocean in this hurricane season. Three hurricanes are expected to make U.S. landfall in 2013, the report says.

Tampa Bay already has felt the effects of the first storm — Tropical Storm Andrea, which swept across the region on June 6, causing heavy rain, winds and tornadoes.

Shila's project aims to produce quick and easy communications during a natural disaster. That's important because schools and other shelters generally have no way to communicate when telephone lines and cell towers go down during a storm, said William E. Bode, president of the Tampa Bay Amateur Radio Society.

"When they activate for some emergency, a lot of times the people who have to go to those shelters have to bring (radio) equipment with them," Bode said. "Sometimes they have difficulty establishing communication initially, so established systems would be an ideal scenario."

Kiran's interest in ham radio began when he was young. By the time he was 12, he had received his ham radio license.

He said he wanted to create an organized system of emergency communications because he felt it was lacking.

"I've always really liked electronics, tinkering with things, taking things apart and figuring out what exactly makes them tick," Shila said. "The whole concept behind physics and engineering really intrigues me, and ham radio is a perfect outlet for all of it because it has the physics application … (and) circuit construction from electrical engineering."

Shila's uncle, Jon Pairitz, a long-time licensed radio operator himself, fostered Shila's childhood radio activity by helping him understand basic radio mechanics and getting him to take the amateur radio exam.

"A lot of people took the exam that day, but he was the youngest, by far," Pairitz said. "A lot of them didn't pass, but he did."

Pairitz said people rarely, if ever, tap into amateur radio as an emergency resource because of the police, fire and Federal Emergency Management Agency emergency communications systems that are firmly in place.

But this amateur radio project can prove valuable in its own right because it could pique the interest of the youth to develop radio skills and take responsibility for disaster relief, Pairitz said.

Kevin Cucchi, a member of Shila's crew, said he is interested in learning about the inner workings of emergency radio.

"I'm very interested in the practical applications of math, especially into physics," Cucchi said.

He pitched in to help build the first one when the group gathered at the American Legion club. He has known Shila for about 10 years, since they both became scouts.

While the young men keep working on the project, Shila continues raising funds. He needs about $2,500 to pay for parts necessary for the other two stations.

Anyone who would like to support the project or learn more about it can call Shila at (813) 422-8343 or email him at Kiran.Shila@yahoo.com.

Getting ready for the big storm
And dealing with the aftermath

Bracing for hurricanes

Hurricane season runs from June 1 to Nov. 30. Prepare before the big storm threatens, to minimize its impacts on you and loved ones.

Take these steps

—Prepare a hurricane kit. It should include one gallon of water per person per day for several days; nonperishable food items including juices, crackers, breakfast and protein bars, canned and dried fruit, peanut butter and bread; utensils for eating, including paper cups and plates, plastic utensils

—Have these items available: blankets and pillows; hygiene supplies, moisture wipes and toilet paper; waterproof and seasonal clothing and reliable shoes; first-aid kit and special medications; flashlights, batteries, tools and tarpaulins; cameras

—Protect your documents in a watertight plastic bag or waterproof container.

—Fill your gas tank and have plenty of cash on hand, in case the storm knocks out power from gas pumps and ATMs.

—Protect your car from flooding damage by moving it as far inland as possible and to higher ground. Do not park next to trees.

Protect your home:

—Protect your windows with permanent storm shutters or sheets of plywood.

—Remove objects around the home that act as projectiles in high winds, such as potted plants, barbecue grills, garden gnomes and garbage cans.

Protect your family:

—Make an evacuation plan with family members. Learn the quickest evacuation routes and shelters. Bring an emergency kit. Have mobile phones or radios to maintain communications. Watch for road hazards when traveling on an evacuation route.

Pointers to help with a storm's aftermath

—Contact your insurance agent to notify the company of any covered damage to your home, apartment or vehicle and to find out the extent of your coverage.

—Take detailed photographs of damaged items to submit with claims.

—Save receipts for all dining, hotel, medical, hygiene and even entertainment for reimbursement. The receipts should be saved from the time you leave your home until you are able to return to live in it. Also, even spoiled food items, up to a limit, may be covered by your homeowner's insurance.

In case of flooding:

—If water has flooded the interior of your car, do not try to start it because that may cause additional damage.

—Cover broken windows and put tarp on roof leaks.

Keep yourself safe after the storm:

—Avoid walking or driving through floodwaters immediately after a hurricane.

—Be aware that metal fences, mailboxes, poles and even nonmetal objects, such as wood and standing water, become conduits for electrical lines, so use care when assessing damage to your home and car.

—Watch out for scams and unlicensed contractors. Verify the contractor's business license and insurance. Don't accept verbal quotes. Make them put it in writing.

—Compiled for The Laker/Lutz News by Marie Abramov

Sources: hurricane.com, fda.gov, ehow.com, about.com, weltmanhomeservices.com and whitehouse.gov.

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BAKER, from page 1

storm," Baker said.

She ascended through the ranks to become Gallagher's chief assistant, and then served as the interim administrator when he retired after a 31-year-old career at the county's helm on June 1.

Baker makes history

After a national search, commissioners voted to offer the county's top job to Tomas "Tommy" Gonzalez, the city manager from Irving, Texas.

After those negotiations fell through, commissioners voted July 9 to make Baker the first woman to hold the county's top job since Pasco was established in 1887.

In her new role, Baker oversees a staff of more than 2,000 county employees providing public services for about 467,000 residents living within a county that covers about 750 square miles.

She was hired at a salary of $170,000, plus a monthly car allowance of $450. Her contract calls for a $10,000 bump in pay, after a year on the job – contingent upon an evaluation by commissioners that she merits the increase.

"This is a really tough job. I'm willing to prove that I'm worth it," said Baker.

She intends to draft performance measures for the board to include in her evaluation.

The goal is to base her performance on objectives the board deems important, Baker said.

"I will propose some measures to the board, based on their strategic plan. By putting the priorities out there, it makes me focus on what's important to the Board of County Commissioners and not allow myself to get distracted by all of the fires that go on.

Michele Baker pages through the county's budget. Managing the county's resources and staff are two of her primary responsibilities. (Photo by B.C. Manion)

"We're going to do that for the entire organization, so we're working on what's important, not just urgent," Baker said.

She has identified some specific areas she intends to tackle immediately.

One top priority is to improve Pasco's permitting system.

"What I hear from people is that it's difficult – it has a reputation as being difficult," Baker said.

She plans to streamline the system, making it more efficient and customer-friendly.

The changes will be based on recommendations from builders, contractors and county staff, she said.

Many of these recommendations will be put into place within 90 days.

"We're a learning organization," Baker said. "Those things that work, we're going to keep using. Those things that don't work, we're going to swap out and try something else."

The county also plans to introduce walk-through permitting, which will make it possible – in some circumstances – to pull a permit in a day.

Fostering employee engagement

Baker also plans to emphasize efforts aimed at maximizing the use of employee talents, Baker said.

Baker, who describes her management style as being collaborative, said the county's employees are its most important resource.

"What we do is, we deliver services, and we do that through our frontline personnel. They are most critical," Baker said.

Noting that employees haven't had a raise in several years, Baker said she's pleased the board has built a 3 percent raise for employees into the proposed 2013-14 budget.

"It's been tough," Baker said, noting that shrinking revenues has caused employees to take on more responsibilities, without additional pay.

"We have amazing employees," Baker said. "They've really doubled down."

One change calls for employees to have their evaluations completed at the same time, Baker said. That will provide a better understanding about how well employee teams are functioning, she said. By looking across a team, it will be easier to identify areas of strength and those needing to improve, she explained.

The county administrator said the county has challenges, but she's enthusiastic about its future.

"When we say — 'Pasco County, Florida's premier county' — we mean it."

"We have great bones. We're in the right place. We have good infrastructure. We have good housing. We have good people. Fabulous things are going to occur here," Baker said.

She credits Gallagher for taking the county from its infancy through its turbulent teen years. She's eager to help it reach full maturation, she said.

She said she's also pleased to be working with a team of professionals who care about creating a thriving community.

"It's really nice to be able to work, shoulder-to-shoulder, with people who share a common mission," Baker said.

They share values, too, she said.

"People who choose to work in government are not in it for the money, they're not in it for the personal glory," Baker said. "You're not just making a widget, you are contributing."

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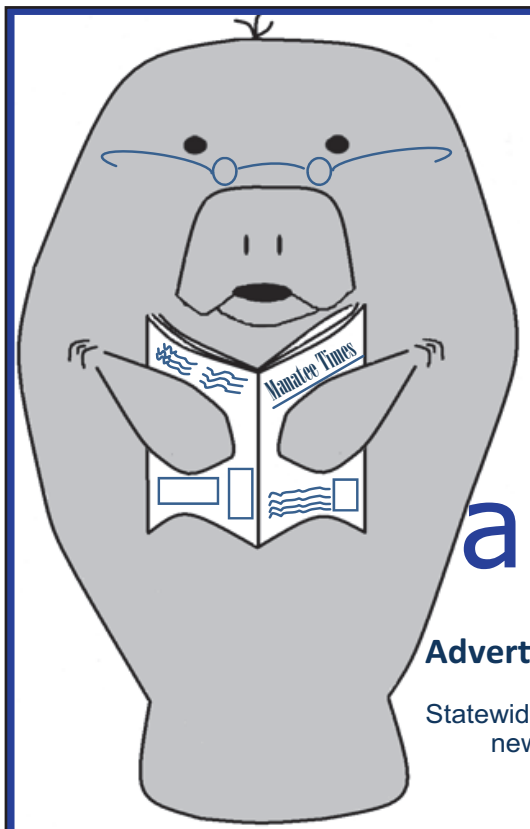

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SEE SOLUTION, PAGE 14

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters in each word to spell something pertaining to National Ice Cream Month.

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ANSWER: Fried Ice Cream

CRYPTOQUIZ

Each of the following cryptograms is a clue to the identity of a hero of the American Revolution. Using the hints G=R and I=A, decipher the clues to name the hero.

1. FVGIJLKF _____
2. WICQ _____
3. BLV GKDLIGE _____
4. GVIG IENKGIP _____
5. DZAWBVFF _____

Oh, what an impact this Scottish native made in the war: _____

Answers: 1) Seraphis, 2) Navy, 3) The Richard, 4) Rear Admiral, 5) Countess, John Paul Jones

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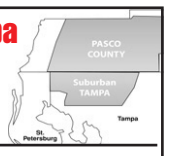

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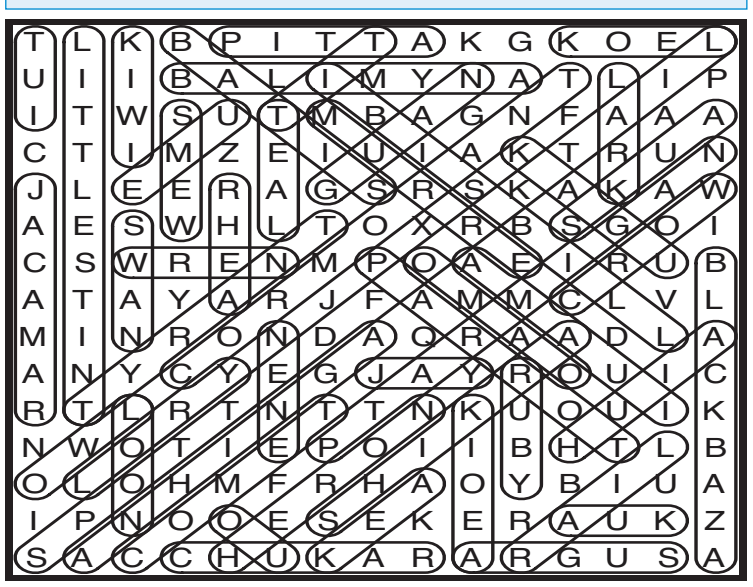

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Summer Food Drive

HELP FIGHT HUNGER LOCALLY

The need is especially great during the summer months because those children that rely on getting adequate meals while attending school will need help when school is not in session. In general, 1 out of 4 children in the Tampa Bay area do not have enough to eat.

The Laker/Park News Donations Collection Box For Feeding American Tampa Bay-Suncoast Branch

3632 LAND O'LAKES BLVD., SUITE 102 COPPERSTONE EXECUTIVE SUITES

Items needed most are:

- Canned meats (tuna, chicken, ham, sausage)
- Canned fruits & vegetable
- Canned & boxed meals (soups, chili, stew, macaroni & cheese)
- Pasta & rice
- Peanut butter

No glass please. Pop-top items preferred.
No donation is too big or small.

We appreciate our readers' efforts in helping in this mission.

The LAKER / PARK *NEWS*

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