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Freedom seeks new football coach
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Hearing on proposed high school expected in February

New school would be off Sunset Lane, near US 41

By B.C. Manion
bcmanion@cnewspubs.com

Learning Gate Community School wants to expand its brand of environmental education into high school and is proposing a new school near Nye Park, off Sunset Lane.

A public hearing on the request had been set for Jan. 23, but school officials have asked for a continuance until 6 p.m. on Feb. 20. That hearing will be at County Center, 601 E. Kennedy Blvd in downtown Tampa.

More time is needed to continue addressing neighbors' concerns, said Patti Girard, the founder of Learning Gate, a charter school that began as a private preschool in

See HEARING, page 13

From left are Cristi Skairus, Kim Harris, Mindy Turba and Jordan Harris at one of the two fundraising events for Jordan. (Photos courtesy of Jennifer Nelson)

CPUSA gives big assist to Jordan Harris

By Kyle LoJacono
klojacono@cnewspubs.com

Central Pasco United Soccer Association (CPUSA) normally focuses on developing talented young players, but for a few weeks the club put some of its efforts toward a greater goal.

CPUSA's U14 team organized two fundraising events for Jordan Harris, the older brother of one of its players, Dyllon Harris. Jordan, 16, was diagnosed with primitive neuroectodermal tumors, a rare brain cancer.

"We really wanted to help this family with medical expenses, especially during the holiday season," said Jennifer Nelson, manager of CPUSA's U14 squad.

The first event was Dec. 9 at the Beef O' Brady's near Sunlake High, which brought in $4,000.

The club followed up by putting together a technical and agility camp on Jan. 8 with the help of Eddie Oyakhilome and his EJJE Soccer Academy. The event included 70 campers and raised another $3,000 to help the New Tampa family.

The $7,000 gift was a big surprise for Jordan, especially because he has never played for the Land O' Lakes-based club.

"It was so nice of everyone and it really helped me and my family a lot," Jordan said.

Dyllon, 14, added, "It made me smile how so many people came out to support Jordan and our family."

Dyllon himself had only been with the club for a few weeks when CPUSA organizers started talking about having the fundraisers.

"They have been more than amazing with all the work and effort they have put into these events," said Jordan's mother Kim. "I thought the Beef O' Brady's was incredible, but then to hear that Eddie Oyakhilome was going to hold a 3-hour clinic and donate all of the proceeds to Jordan was unbelievable. CPUSA is a great place to be with so many caring people."

The pair of events brought the family some cheer after having their lives turned upside down since discovering Jordan's ailment last April. Jordan, a junior, had to give up playing soccer for Freedom High's team. He also had to withdraw from school and is enrolled with Hillsborough County's hospital/homebound program.

Jordan Harris signing a Nike ball for raffle at one of the two fundraising events put on by CPUSA.

See CPUSA, page 13

Principal Kathy Helean says having all of the students, staff and teachers under one roof will foster a greater degree of unity at the school. (Photo by B.C. Manion)

New school building opens to rave reviews

Students, staff and parents thrilled by new facility

By B.C. Manion
bcmanion@cnewspubs.com

Kids and parents were jazzed last week, as they toured the new elementary school building housing Imagine School at Land O' Lakes.

"This, to me, is like we're finally home," said Magarida Wainraich, who has been on the school's staff school since Day One.

"I'm jumping out of my skin, I'm so excited," she said. "This has been a long time coming — after trying to get into so many different places and the sites just always fell through."

The school previously was located in a professional office park, with classes held in individual buildings.

"It's a wonderful day – to see the smiles on everyone's faces," said Principal Kathy Helean, as people trooped past her during the open house.

"They've been waiting 3 1/2 years, but I think it has all been worth it.

"By all being under one roof, I think the culture of the school changes because we feel more unified. Teachers see each other in the hallways. Kids see each other in the hallways," Helean said.

In the school's media center, something it didn't have at its former location, a parent congratulated Helean and praised the school's look and feel.

"It's so functional. It just looks beautiful," said Jacki Hudnall, whose 7-year-old daughter Paige attends the school and whose other daughter, Adyson, will attend next year.

The new gym was a huge hit with the kids, who wasted no time in breaking it in.

Hudnall said she understands why the children are so excited about having an indoor gym: "Can you blame them? Three years of 95 degrees heat in that sun."

Teacher Aimee Wynacht also noted other advantages of having the gym. For one thing, it doubles as a lunchroom and is more spacious than the lunchroom at the previous location.

It also provides a great place to have school assemblies, she said.

"If we have any holiday shows or presentations for parents, we have some place we can hold that now," said

See SCHOOL, page 13

Members of the U.S. Air Force Honor Guard present the colors. (Photos by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Adam M. Stump)

Ceremonial Brass performs patriotic concert

Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

The Ceremonial Brass, the U.S. Air Force Band's all brass and percussion ensemble, kicked off its first American concert tour last week in Wesley Chapel at the Center for the Arts.

The band provides music for more than 1,100 events each year, including White House events, presidential inaugural parades, final honors at Arlington National Cemetery, sporting events like the Super Bowl and patriotic events in the nation's capital, but this is the first time the band has done a concert tour.

The Ceremonial Brass consists of 50 world-class brass players, percussionists and a drum major, who perform in combinations as small as a quintet. The group's next regional performance will be Monday, Jan. 23 at MacDill Air Force Base.

A veteran stands to be recognized during playing of the service songs by the U.S. Air Force Band Ceremonial Brass in Wesley Chapel.

Kurt Browning resigns as Secretary of State

May seek Pasco superintendent's post

By B.C. Manion
bcmanion@cnewspubs.com

Kurt Browning

Florida Secretary of State Kurt Browning is stepping down from his post, effective Feb. 17.

He announced his decision last week.

"I need to come home," Browning said, on Jan. 11, the afternoon he made his announcement.

He said he has tired of making the trek back and forth to Tallahassee, and wants to spend more time with his wife, Kathy.

Browning said he made the decision to leave for purely personal reasons.

"There is no bad blood. I wasn't forced. I wasn't cajoled. I wasn't encouraged to get out," said Browning, who added that he's pleased that Gov. Rick Scott allowed him to stay in his post to oversee the statewide presidential preference primary on Jan. 31 and have the vote certified before leaving his post.

The word that he's interested in running for superintendent of Pasco County public schools "is going around like wildfire," the 53-year-old said.

"It's an option," he acknowledged, but he said it is not the reason he decided to leave Tallahassee.

However, he also noted "there have been a number of folks throughout Pasco County that have been encouraging me very strongly (to run for superintendent)," he said.

Browning was named Florida's Secretary of State by Scott in January 2011, after serving in the same post under former Gov. Charlie Crist, from December of 2006 to April of 2010.

Before that, he spent 26 years as Pasco County's supervisor of elections.

Browning has an extensive record of community involvement, including volunteer work with the Boy Scouts of America and Pasco County United Way and a stint as president of Downtown Dade City Main Street Inc., according to his bio on the Florida Department of State website.

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Luxury apartments being built at Livingston Road and SR 54

By B.C. Manion
bcmanion@cnewspubs.com

Altis at Grand Cypress is a luxury apartment complex the developer expects to begin leasing in May. (Rendering courtesy of The Altman Companies)

The Altman Companies, a Florida-based luxury residential rental developer, is building a multi-million-dollar apartment development at the southwest corner of SR 54 and Livingston Road.

The development, Altis at Grand Cypress, is under construction on a 60-acre site which will include apartments, a lake and a forested cypress preserve. The community will feature 17 two-story apartment buildings, with private entries for each of the 258 apartment units.

Joel Altman, chairman of The Altman Companies, expressed optimism about the Pasco area in a news release by PR Newswire.

"We believe the Pasco County area has its best days ahead and we are looking forward to being part of it," he states in the news release.

Altman reiterated that positive outlook last week, in an email responding to questions about the project from The Laker/Lutz News.

He cited these strengths for Pasco County: "Its location, access to metro area, the natural beauty of the area, the available land for development and the new employer opportunities."

The apartments will have designer-style kitchens and energy-efficient appliances. Rents for the one- to three-bedroom apartments will range from $860 to $1,550, depending on market conditions, Altman said. Pets will be allowed, with restrictions.

Amenities will include a clubhouse with a billiards table, a kitchen/coffee bar area, a business center and a large fitness area with an adjoining fun and study room for children. Other amenities include a resort-style swimming pool, a private sunning deck, an outdoor lounge bar with TVs, a fireplace, multiple picnic and barbecue areas and a large playground.

The project is expected to bring more than 100 jobs to the county during the course of construction. It also will result in six to seven permanent jobs, as well as numerous outside vendors, once the development is completed, Altman said.

The first units are scheduled to be completed in July. Leasing is expected to begin in May.

The project is financed by an $18.4 million loan through City National Bank of Florida, with equity provided through Sarofim Realty Advisors and Altman, according to the report published in PR Newswire.

Altman Companies, based in Boca Raton, has developed, constructed, acquired and managed in excess of 20,000 multi-family units in Florida, Michigan, Illinois, Tennessee, Georgia, Texas and North Carolina. Altman said the company plans additional projects in the Tampa Bay area in 2013.

Altis at Grand Cypress is the company's fourth development in Tampa. The others are Lakes of Northdale, Mallory Square and Preserve at Tampa Palms.

Proposal set to protect troops' jobs

By Kyle LoJacono
klojacono@cnewspubs.com

U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis can't stand the idea of military veterans becoming homeless after serving and has introduced legislation to help protect their jobs when they return from deployment.

Bilirakis, R-Palm Harbor, is co-sponsoring a bill to keep troops out of unemployment statistics. H.R. 3670 would guarantee anyone called to active duty be given their job back when they return home, regardless if the position is in the public or private sector.

"When our National Guard and reservists are called to duty, it is our duty to ensure that they have the peace of mind of knowing that their jobs are secure when they return," Bilirakis said.

There is already legislation, Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), which protects soldiers' jobs, but certain professions are currently exempt. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is one of those not required to follow USERRA.

The bill would likely be especially helpful to those in Pasco County, which currently is home to 54,000 veterans and their families, just less than 12 percent of the county's population.

Bilirakis, whose ninth congressional district covers Lutz, Odessa, New Tampa and portions of northern Pinellas County and west Pasco, is the vice chairman of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs. He said he has been working toward adding protections like this for about a year.

"This legislation is a necessary step in supporting those who sign on to protect our nation and ensure our freedoms," Bilirakis said.

Bilirakis never served in the military, but one of the bill's co-sponsors is a 24-year Army National Guard veteran. Tim Walz, D-Minn., said protecting soldiers' employment is something that crosses political party lines.

"The unemployment rate among our service members is already far too high," Walz said. "Protecting the jobs they already have should be a top priority.

"A critical part of the obligation we have to support the troops includes ensuring a stable economic condition when they return from military service," Walz continued. "When Americans are deployed with the armed forces, they should not have to worry that they might be fired simply for being away on duty. This bipartisan legislation protects the jobs of American service members by ensuring that a call to serve doesn't amount to a pink slip for officers of the Transportation Security Administration."

The bill specifically mentions the TSA.

"The TSA employs thousands of veterans, reservists and members of the National Guard who should not have to worry about losing their jobs when called to active duty," Walz said. "They have earned and deserve this simple protection."

The Military Officers Association of America and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) have already supported the measure.

Raymond Kelley, legislative director of the VFW, released a statement stating, "This much-needed change in TSA policy sets a new standard in the federal government's full support of our Veterans. The VFW was adamant about working towards this legislative fix after helping to discover this loophole."

The TSA also released a statement stating it already complies with the legislation voluntarily. However, Bilirakis points out that at least two transportation security officers did not receive such protection during the last few years and lost their jobs while deployed.

"That has to stop," Bilirakis said.

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Send school news to bcmanion@cnewspubs.com

CINDERELLA'S FAVORITE DESSERT COMPETITION

Pasco County culinary arts students will compete for the title of Cinderella's Favorite Dessert on Thursday, Jan. 19, at the Academy of Culinary Arts at Land O' Lakes High, 20325 Gator Lane. Plating can be viewed at 5 p.m. and judging begins at 6 p.m.

Thirteen teams will compete. The top three winners will have their desserts featured at the annual Cinderella Ball, a fundraiser for the Pasco Education Foundation.

Tickets for the bake-off are available at the door for $25. Proceeds benefit the county's culinary arts program. Guests can tour the culinary arts facility and taste the desserts.

SAINT LEO UNIVERSITY SELECTED FOR AWARDS PROGRAM

The Algernon Sydney Sullivan Foundation has selected Saint Leo University as one of five colleges and universities to join a small group of distinguished schools from across the Southeast to participate in its awards program.

The others selected were Oglethorpe University, Berry College, Young Harris College, and Wesleyan.

Each institution bestows the awards upon students, alumni, or community members each year. The foundation is based in Oxford, Miss.

The Algernon Sydney Sullivan and Mary Mildred Sullivan Awards were created nearly 100 years ago to honor the service of the husband and wife for whom the awards are named. The awards are given annually to a man and a woman whose remarkable character and dedication to service sets them apart as examples for others.

"It is truly an honor to become part of the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Foundation legacy," Kenneth Posner, associate vice president for student services at Saint Leo said in a news release. Saint Leo University will present its first Sullivan Awards in spring 2012.

ODESSA WOMAN GRADUATES FROM FLAGLER COLLEGE

Sarah Kalen Flora, of Odessa, has received a bachelor of arts degree from Flagler College. She was among approximately 180 Flagler graduates in the Dec. 10 commencement ceremony.

PAYING FOR COLLEGE EXPENSES

Parents who need help in filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or who are interested in learning how colleges calculate student aid packages, or who have other college financial aid questions may find the answers to at least some of their questions at a Financial Aid Night set for 7 p.m. on Jan. 26 at Gaither High, 16200 N. Dale Mabry Highway.

SEEKING YOUTHS WITH TALENT

The Heritage Arts Center Association will present its 29th annual Spotlight on Talent for young people through high school seniors.

The entry deadline is Thursday, Jan. 26. The preliminary contest will be on Saturday, Feb. 11. The final competition will be Saturday, March 10 at the Center for the Arts at Wesley Chapel. For more information, visit spotlight@heritagearts.org or call (352) 567-1720.

GALLERY SHOW FEATURES ZEPHYRHILLS HIGH STUDENT

Hut no. 8 is proud to announce a gallery show featuring the work of Dustin Lee Lawrence, a senior at Zephyrhills High. The show will be from 5-8 p.m. on Jan. 26 at 38435 Fifth Ave.

A non-alcoholic champagne reception will follow unveiling of the artistic pieces, which include acrylics, watercolors and reclaimed furniture.

SPIRIT OF LIFE UU OFFERS CLASSES

Lifelong learning just got closer to home in Odessa. Community Learning Center at Spirit of Life Unitarian Universalist, at 18412 Burrell Road in Odessa, kicks off Jan. 21 with a diverse selection of course offerings.

Courses range from digital photography to meditation and healing, papermaking, gardening, birding and yoga.

Classes will run from January through June. The course catalog is available online at http://www.spiritoflifeuu.org/pdfs/CLCCatalogJan2012.pdf

Tuition varies, with most courses costing $30 or less.

The Community Learning Center seeks to provide learning opportunities, fun and community building. Online registration for upcoming courses is being accepted through Friday, Jan. 20.

HILLSBOROUGH TEACHERS, STUDENTS HIT HIGH NOTES

The Hillsborough County School District was well-represented in the 2012 Florida Music Educators Association All-State and Clinic-Conference, "Uniting Music Education: Building Relationships."

Fifty-three students in grades four through 12 from 69 schools were selected, by audition, to perform in all-state band, chorus, jazz band, and orchestra sessions.

CYBER AWARENESS PROGRAM

Gaither High School's Parent Teacher Student Association and the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office are hosting a community Cyber Awareness Program.

Two members of the Sheriff Office's special investigation division will present information on cyber bullying, hackers, scammers, sexting, and sexual predators. The meeting will be at 6 p.m. on Jan. 23 in Gaither High's auditorium, at 16200 N. Dale Mabry Highway.

LUTZ COLLEGE STUDENT ACHIEVES DEAN'S LIST

Aaron Pleus, of Lutz, achieved the dean's list at Clearwater Christian College for the fall 2011 semester. Students must earn a grade-point average exceeding 3.5 on a 4.0 scale to achieve the dean's list. Pleus is a sophomore majoring in Information Systems Management. The 2010 home school graduate is the son of Gene and Jocelyn Pleus of Lutz.

NATURE'S NOTEBOOK PROGRAM SEEKS CITIZEN SCIENTISTS

Volunteers are needed to gather information on plants and animals as part of ongoing research on the effects of climate change.

Those interested in learning more can attend a Nature's Notebook workshop from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Feb. 11, at the Hillsborough County Extension Service at 5339 County Road 579 in Seffner. The workshop will teach participants how to observe and record information on plants, insects and birds in their own backyard or nearby natural areas.

The workshop is free, but space is limited and registration is required. To register, go to www.tbep.org.

Workshop sponsors are Tampa Bay Estuary Program and the U.S. Geological Survey.

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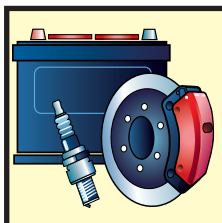

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Contempo Dance School performed for the crowd at last year's fest. (Photos courtesy of Suncoast Arts Fest)

Artsy weekend on tap at Wiregrass

Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

Put art on your shopping – and window-shopping – list for this weekend at The Shops at Wiregrass, when the Suncoast Arts Fest moves in.

More than 100 fine artists and craftspeople will show work in all media and price ranges on Saturday, Jan. 21 and Sunday, Jan. 22. Art will even be underfoot as the chalk artists are back by popular demand to adorn the streets of the mall.

New this year is the first Suncoast Run for the Arts, a one-mile walk/run to benefit Arts for Kids. The start time is Sunday at 9 a.m. for this race on the flat, fast course around Wiregrass. Runners and walkers can preregister through Friday at www.active.com. Race participants will receive a cotton T-shirt and fabric pens to create their own masterpiece. The run will be followed by a pancake breakfast by The Pancake Man in the children's activities area.

Performing arts students will provide entertainment all weekend. Performers include Hudson Middle School's drama/chorus group and the school's jazz band, and the Land O' Lakes High School band. Art lovers can groove through the weekend with an assortment of performances, including shows both afternoons at 2 p.m. Wesley Chapel's Josh Lamkin and his band Automatic Heat perform Saturday and Sol Caribe performs Sunday. Skippers Smokehouse in North Tampa is providing the sound system.

Artist Tim Decker portrayed pop icon Michael Jackson.

For more information visit www.SuncoastArtsFest.com or follow the fest on Facebook.

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Republicans get ready to vote

Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

If you are a member of the Grand Old Party, get ready to cast a ballot in the Presidential Preference Primary. Democrat? Sorry, Florida is a closed primary state, so only Republicans will be allowed to cast ballots. The primary date is Jan. 31, but early voting has opened in Hillsborough County and Pasco County voters can begin voting early on Saturday. Early voting ends Saturday, Jan. 28.

In Hillsborough County, as of Jan. 16, 231,953 voters were registered as Republicans. In Pasco, as of Jan. 13, 115,889 Republican voters were registered.

A voter must present both picture and signature identification. A Florida driver license or identification card will meet those requirements.

Voters can walk in to any early voting site. Nearby sites are:

In Pasco

East Pasco Gover nment Center
14236 Sixth St.
Dade City

Land O'Lakes Branch Library
2818 Collier Parkway
Land O'Lakes

New River Branch Library
34043 SR 54
Zephyrhills

Hours are Saturday, Jan. 21-Sunday, Jan. 22, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Monday, Jan. 23-Friday, Jan. 27, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 28, 9 a.m.-5p.m.

In Hillsborough

Jimmie B. Keel Regional Library
2902 West Bearss Ave.
Tampa

New Tampa Regional Library
10001 Cross Creek Blvd.
Tampa

Supervisor of Elections Northwest Office
12022 Anderson Road
Tampa

Hours are Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

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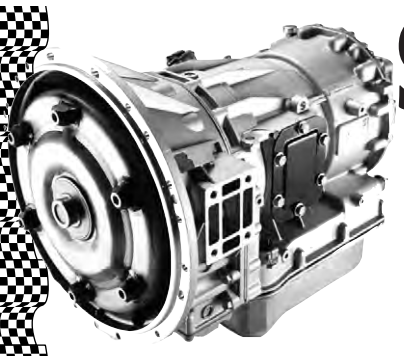
Campaign time

Election year is here in all its red, white and blue glory. Between now and Election Day on Tuesday, Nov. 6, campaigns will gear up and voters will get a chance to learn about candidates.

To assist voters in making informed choices, The Laker/Lutz News will print notices of campaign events received two weeks in advance. In the interest of fairness to all candidates, The Laker/Lutz News will not cover campaign events limited to one candidate and will not endorse candidates.

Please send notices of campaign events to cnews@cnewspubs.com.

Transmission Slipping?



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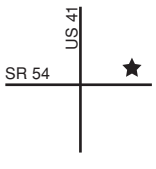

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67 - 88 lbs	$70	45 - 66 lbs	$70
89 - 132 lbs	$85	67 - 88 lbs	$90
		89 - 132 lbs	$105

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VACCINES CLINIC: Monday-Friday 1 - 2 pm
Walk-Ins Welcome. Subject to $3 medical, infectious & records fee. Includes exam & economy vaccines. Consult is add'l $30 on request.

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- Feline Leukemia **$18.00**
- Canine Distemper Combo **$25.00**
- Feline Distemper Combo **$18.00**
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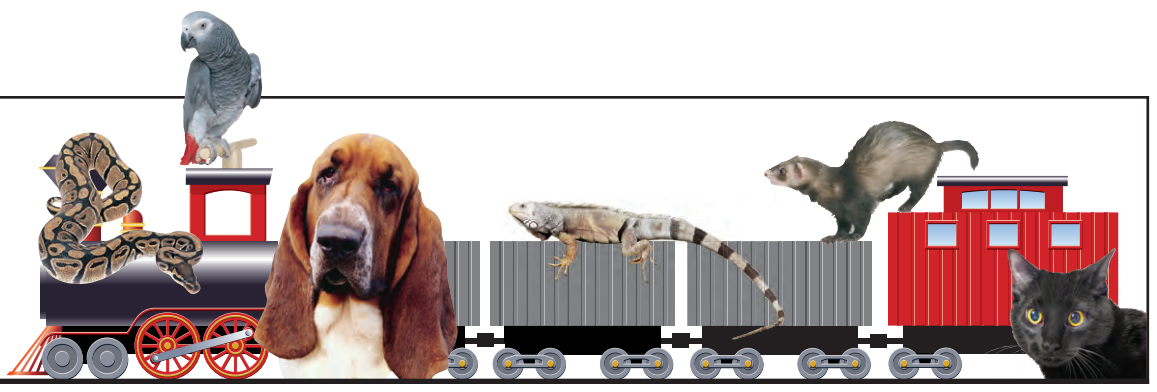

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What's Happening

Your Community Calendar • Submit 2 weeks in advance to: whatshappening@cnewspubs.com • All listings free of charge

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Pasco County Historical Society will discuss Jeff Cannon's recently published book, "Then and Now: New Port Richey" at its meeting Friday, Jan. 20 at 7 p.m., in the American Legion Hall, 37745 Church Ave. in Dade City. A covered-dish dinner will precede the program, so bring something to share, as well as your own table-service and drink. Visitors are welcome. For more information call Eddie Herrmann, (352) 567-2050 or Glen Thompson, (352) 567-7449.

GET FIT WITH FRIENDS

A group fitness class is being offered Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. at the Land O' Lakes Recreation Complex, 3032 Collier Parkway. The 60-minute total body workout will feature aerobics, strength, toning, and flexibility. All fitness levels are welcome, and the cost is $6 per class, pay as you go. For more information call (813) 996-7186 or email julbruc@yahoo.com.

REGISTER TO RUN

Registration is open for the second annual Honest Abe 5K Race presented by St. Leo University to benefit the Boy Scouts of America. Runners can preregister at www.active.com for the race on Feb. 11 at 8 a.m. Long-sleeve tee shirts are guaranteed for those who preregister. For more information, call Chrissy Kruse at (813) 929-6789.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum is showing "Troubleshooting," an exhibit by Mark Dion, through March 3. For decades, Dion has created drawings, prints, cabinets of curiosity, archaeological digs, and sprawling installations about the discrepancy between perceived knowledge and scientific inquiry, between common perception and advanced research. His works have addressed famous intellectuals in history, such as William Bartram, as well as important social and environmental sites, most recently the fragile Florida Everglades.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

BOTANICAL GARDENS WORKSHOPS

Two workshops are on tap this weekend at the University of South Florida Botanical Gardens. A fairy garden workshop will be held on Saturday, Jan. 21 from 10-11 p.m. The workshop, presented by Sarah Sanford, offers information on how to get started in designing your own fairy garden (fairies not included). Each participant receives a "starter kit" and can buy additional furniture. The workshop is $40 for general public and $35 for USF Botanical Garden members. Reservations are required, so call (813) 974-2329. A garden railroad workshop will be held from 10-11 a.m. in the conservatory. This workshop presented by Gulfcoast Garden Railroaders, offers participants information and displays on creating their own garden railway. The workshop is $10 for general public and $8 for USF Botanical Garden members. Reservations not required, but suggested, so call (813) 974-2329. The Garden website: www.cas.usf.edu/garden.

FOLK TALES

Story time at Westfield Citrus Park will feature the classic folktale "Tikki Tikki Tembo" by Arlene Mosel and Blair Lent, and "May I Bring a Friend?" by Beatrice de Regniers and Beni Montresor on Thursday, Jan. 19 at 4 p.m. The second book explores the tradition of English tea, and children will be served a snack and create cups to take home. The event will be held in the Macy's Court. For more information, call (813) 926-4644.

SNOWFLAKES

Bentley Commons at Zephyrhills will host a Snowflake Party on Thursday, Jan. 19 at 3:45pm. Enjoy the snow without the cold and keep warm with hot chocolate, treats and great entertainment by Midlife Crisis, performing popular songs from the '30s through the '70s. Wear white and lots of diamonds to this free, public event. Call (813) 779-4501 to make a reservation. Bentley Commons, 38130 Pretty Pond Road, is a community for adults age 55 and over.

CHEERIO

The British Commonwealth Society will hold its monthly meeting on Thursday, Jan. 19 at 6:30 p.m. at Keystone Park, 17928 Gunn Highway, Odessa. Refreshments will be served and guests are welcome. Club dues are $25 per year. For more information, call Wenda at (727) 939-0362 or Pearl at (813) 401-5711.

NATURISTS DINNER

Single Naturists of Tampa Bay will have a dinner Thursday, Jan. 19 at Caliente, 21240 Gran Via Blvd. in Land O' Lakes. Grounds fees are complimentary after 5 p.m. with purchase of a buffet dinner for $14. Social hour is from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Dinner starts at 6:30 p.m. To RSVP at least two days in advance, call Luna Adams at (813) 235-9547.

ARBOR DAY MEMORIAL TREES

The Dade City Garden Club will recognize those being honored or celebrated this Arbor Day with the planting of a memorial tree at its meeting Friday, Jan. 20 at 10 a.m. For 16 years the Dade City Garden Club has celebrated Arbor Day, and the club jointly sponsors Arbor Day programs with Dade City. The memorial tree program gives residents an opportunity to honor or celebrate someone by planting a tree in their memory. The diversity and quantity of trees in Dade City has helped make Dade City a Tree City USA. There is still time to donate a tree for this year's ceremony. For more information call Pennie Jefferson at (352) 521-6886.

FRESH MARKET

The next Fresh Market at the Shops at Wiregrass is Saturday, Jan. 21 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The market features 50-plus vendors offering organic, hydroponic and conventional produce, plants, locally made foods such as jams, salsas, dips, seasonings and sauces, and local artists showcasing their work. The market is the first and third Saturday of the month. For vendor information visit eternalbalanceliving@yahoo.com.

MEDICAL CENTER OF TRINITY:
HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Medical Center of Trinity is offering FREE community health and wellness programs.
Reservations are required.
For more information or to register, call **727-834-5630** or email MedicalCenterTrinity@hcahealthcare.com

Friday, January 20th, 1:00PM
Jared Frattini, MD: Colon-Rectal Surgery
"Constipation: Why Suffer?"

Tuesday, January 24th, 10:00AM
"Heart Healthy Nutrition"
This class reviews the concepts of heart healthy eating to control blood pressure and protect the heart. A healthy, balanced diet can play a key role in chronic disease prevention and management.

Wednesday, January 25th, 10:00AM
"Diabetes and Nutrition"
This class teaches the basic principles of nutrition, including how food affects blood glucose. Understanding how meal timing, carbohydrates, proteins and fats can affect blood sugar and can empower diabetics to make better food choices.

Thursday, January 26th, 10:00AM
"Weight Management"
This class explores the basic tips for living a healthy lifestyle including food choices and balancing these choices with exercise.
Eating right, maintaining a healthy weight and getting regular physical activity are some of the best ways to prevent serious, lifelong conditions.

Friday, January 27th, 1:00PM
Keith Chisholm, MD: General Surgery
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All lectures take place at **Medical Center of Trinity:**
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Medical Center of Trinity is not accepting patients at this time due to final building surveys. For the latest on our opening date, visit www.MedicalCenterTriniy.com.

MEDICAL CENTER OF TRINITY

NEW YOU IN THE NEW YEAR

Vida Community Church presents "New Year, New You!" Family Health Fair 2012 on Saturday, Jan. 21 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 410 County Line Road West in Lutz. The event includes health and vision screenings, flu shots, chair massages, and information sessions by local health and safety professionals. Activities for children include face painting, a bounce house, concessions, crafts and an engine demonstration by Hillsborough County Fire Rescue. Children also can meet Helmutt from the Brain Injury Association of Florida. For more information, go to Healthfair_vida@live.com.

100 CANDLES

First United Methodist Church of Zephyrhills is inviting the community to help celebrate its 100th birthday Sunday, Jan. 22 at 10:30 a.m. The worship service will feature elements of both the contemporary and traditional services with music by the church's Christian rock bank, Salvation's Rock, and the church choir. The church will open a time capsule and serve lunch following the service, featuring more than 35 desserts. For more information about the centennial celebration call (813) 782-5645.

CLUB MOM

Club Mom will meet Wednesday, Jan. 25 from 10 a.m.-noon at the Land O' Lakes Recreation Center, 3032 Collier Parkway, Land O' Lakes. The club provides friendship, support, activities, fun and more for moms and their children in the Lutz, Land O' Lakes and surrounding areas. Refreshments will be served and children are welcome. For more information, visit www.meetup.com/momsclub/

PIANO PERFORMANCE

Concert pianist Vladimir Svoysky will perform Thursday, Jan. 26 at 3:30 p.m. at Bentley Commons. Svoysky picked up his passion for music in his native Russia and is accomplished with the harpsichord and in front of an orchestra as well. For more on Svoysky visit www.vsconcerts.com. The concert is free and the public is welcome. To RSVP call (813) 779-4501.

ADOPT A PET

The Humane Society of the Nature Coast will hold an adoption event at its ReTAIL and adoption center at Gulf View Square Mall on Saturday, Jan. 28 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Rescue groups including Florida Boxer Rescue will be in attendance with dogs available for adoption.

CHILI COOKOFF

Centennial Aerie #4399 of Dade city will have a chili cookoff and basket auction Saturday, Jan. 28 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. The aerie is at 15924 US 301 North. For more information call (352) 567-9755.

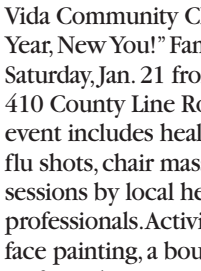
EAGER BEAVERS BINGO

A Bingo for Breast Cancer fundraiser will be held on Saturday, Jan. 28 at Song & Dance, 27221 Foamflower Blvd., in Wesley Chapel. The event starts at 6 p.m. with 10 games of bingo starting at 6:45 pm. Tickets are $25 and include a $5 gift certificate to spend at the event. Light snacks and non-alcoholic beverages will be provided. Proceeds will go to the Eager Beavers Breast Cancer 3-Day 60-Mile Walk team.

The 2012 walk will be the seventh year for the Eager Beavers, who walk in memory of Ann Beaver, the mother of member Tiffanie Kellog. For more information on upcoming Eager Beavers events, please go to www.theEagerBeavers.com or contact Stacey Janoske at (813) 334-8502.

QUEST FOR QUILTS

Quilt entries for the Pioneer Florida Museum 22nd Annual Farm Fest & Quilt Show must be received by 5 p.m. Friday, Jan. 27. The annual event is Feb. 4-5 and showcases "Old Florida" at the Pioneer Florida Museum and Village, one mile north of downtown Dade City. For more information, call (352) 567-0262 or go to www.pioneerfloridamuseum.org.



Closer Look

AN ADVERTISER PROFILE

Doctor Partners with Pinnacle Chiropractic

Dr. Deborah Fisher-Esenberg and Dr. Jeff Kirschner.

Dr. Deborah Fisher-Esenberg, who is an expert in practicing chiropractic medicine, has joined Dr. Jeff Kirschner and Pinnacle Chiropractic as of January 1, 2012 incorporating three decades of knowledge and combined experience. As a Chiropractic Physician, Dr. Debbie is trained to treat musculo-skeletal injuries from motor vehicle accidents, sports and work related injuries as well as aches, pains and stresses from daily living on our muscloskeletal systems.

Symptoms in which chiropractic physicians treat could include neck pain, headaches, mid and low back pain, arm and leg pain and numbness and tingling.

Dr. Debbie has received her certification as a Chiropractic Sports Physician and has completed the Foreman and Croft Masters Series for treating whiplash injuries. The Pinnacle Chiropractic team utilizes massage therapy, physio-therapy, dry hydrotherapy and manual therapy to treat patients. Our doctors routinely work with area medical physicians and physical therapists to achieve maximum results for the patient. Dr. Debbie will primarily be located in the Lutz/Land O' Lakes office located at: 24014 State Rd Lutz, FL and she will also be treating patients at the Wesley Chapel and Dade City locations.

Please visit: www.pinnacleofwesleychapel.com or www.pinnacleofdadecity.com for more information. www.pinnacleoflutzlandolakes.com coming soon!

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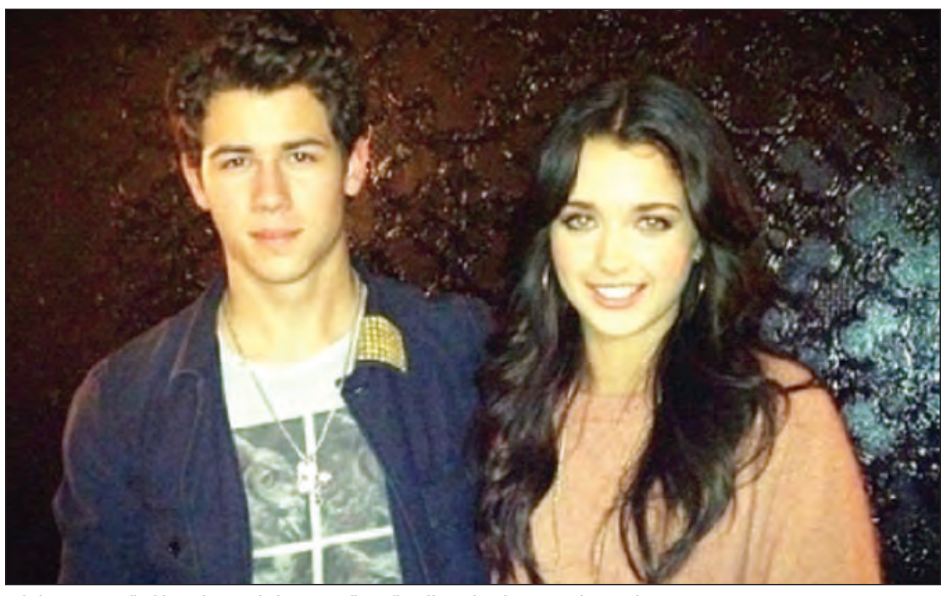
Land O' Lakes teenager wins national star search

Gabrielle Giguere signs on with the Jonas Group

By B.C. Manion
bcmanion@cnewspubs.com



Nick Jonas (left) selected the top five finalists in the Quaker Chewy Superstar contest. Gabrielle Giguere won the grand prize and recorded a song written by Jonas. (Photo courtesy of the Giguere family)

While most teenagers would be thrilled to get the lead in the school musical, 14-year-old Gabrielle Giguere is the star in a music video written and produced by Nick Jonas.

The Land O' Lakes teenager flew out to Los Angeles a few months ago to film the video, after winning the grand prize in the Quaker Chewy Superstar contest. (To watch the video go to www.ChewySuperstar.com).

The Steinbrenner High student became the first young vocalist to be singled out in the nationwide talent search, open to contestants ages 8 through 14. The star search hit the road last summer with mobile recording studios making stops in metro areas from New York to Los Angeles.

Since the mobile studio didn't stop in Tampa Bay, Giguere did her vocal audition on a video filmed at the family's Land O' Lakes home.

A panel of judges selected the top 35 videos, based on vocal performance, performance aesthetics and showmanship. Jonas then narrowed the pool to the top five, with a nationwide vote to choose the winner. The Quaker Oats Company and MTV Networks sponsored the contest.

At the outset, Jonas – who rose to fame as part of the Jonas Brothers — told MTV News that he was looking for someone with "the overall star power and star qualities of Willow Smith, with the artistry of a Greyson Chance."

After Giguere won, Jonas said "Gabrielle's passion, determination and sheer talent shows me she's ready to become the first Quaker Chewy Superstar."

Giguere recalled how she heard the news.

"I was hearing screaming coming out from my kitchen," she said. "I thought something was wrong."

She went to check it out, and she heard her mom, Sara, saying, "Are you serious? Are you serious?"

That's when Giguere found out she'd won the grand prize.

Giguere flew to Los Angeles to work with Jonas on a video showcasing the song, "My Time," which Jonas wrote for her.

Part of the video was recorded at EASTWEST Studios, the same studio used by Nat King Cole, Ella Fitzgerald, Elvis Presley, Eric Clapton, Paul McCartney, Michael Jackson and the Rolling Stones.

Film crews began shooting as soon as Giguere arrived, she said. They wanted to embed raw footage into the video, the 14-year-old said. The video shows scenes of her arriving at the airport, riding down a Los Angeles highway, doing some sightseeing, shopping and having her hair and makeup done.

And, of course, it showcases her vocal abilities.

Besides going to EASTWEST, she also did a photo shoot with famed celebrity photographer Jay Silverman.

Despite the excitement, when Giguere returned to her Land O' Lakes home she couldn't tell a soul until she was officially announced the winner on Nov. 10.

Next, she jetted to New York, where she and Jonas made the rounds doing interviews.

Her video also was included in Quaker Chewy commercials that aired on CMT, VH1 and Nick at Night, from Nov. 10 to Nov. 13.

This is the teenager's second major recognition. She won second runner-up in an international singing competition in Los Angeles that featured 400 singers between the ages of 5 and 25.

So, what's next for the aspiring vocalist?

She doesn't know, but she's excited about the possibilities.

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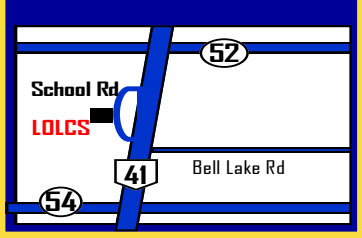

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Hearing on proposed high school in Lutz expected in February

By B.C. Manion
bcmanion@cnewspubs.com

Learning Gate Community School wants to expand its brand of environmental education into high school and is proposing a new school near Nye Park, off Sunset Lane.

A public hearing on the request had been set for Jan. 23, but school officials have asked for a continuance until 6 p.m. on Feb. 20. That hearing will be at County Center, 601 E. Kennedy Blvd in downtown Tampa.

More time is needed to continue addressing neighbors' concerns, said Patti Girard, the founder of Learning Gate, a charter school that began as a private preschool in 1983 and became a public charter school in 2000.

Learning Gate draws students from many communities in Hillsborough and Pasco counties, including Lutz, Trinity, Land O' Lakes and Wesley Chapel.

The school has an elementary campus on 27 wooded acres at 16215 Hanna Road, and leases space for grades seven through nine in an office building at 15316 N. Florida Ave.

It boasts a number of environmental awards, including the first modular school building in the country to achieve the platinum designation in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Schools program.

The proposed charter high school, which would open at its new location in two years, would be called Gates Senior High. It would serve students in grades seven through 12, Girard said, noting the high school program will added a grade a year until it has freshmen through senior classes.

The proposed school draws its name from its five areas of emphasis: Global outreach, the arts, technology, environment and sustainability in all ways, including finances.

Girard said she understands that neighbors are concerned about the new school's potential impacts.

"When you think high school, you think of a typical (high school) – like Gaither – coming out there. That's not the case at all," Girard said.

The proposed charter school would have a maximum of 1,000 students on a 66-acre campus, which has extensive wetlands, Girard said.

"We don't have one big huge building," she said. Instead, there will be several buildings with smaller footprints, scattered across campus.

The goal is to use energy-efficient materials and to produce enough energy on site, through such sources as solar, wind and water — to avoid needing an outside source of electricity, Girard said.

Gary Schutz, who lives in the Windemere subdivision, said he applauds what the school is trying to do, but he is concerned about the traffic congestion the project will create and potential safety hazards.

The project will overload Sunset Lane and could lead to traffic hazards on US 41, as cars attempt to make U-Turns to turn around, Schutz said.

Girard said traffic appears to be a key issue.

To minimize impacts, the school will require carpooling and will use two entrances – one off Sunset Lane and the other off US 41, she said. It also will stagger school starting and ending times to reduce congestion.

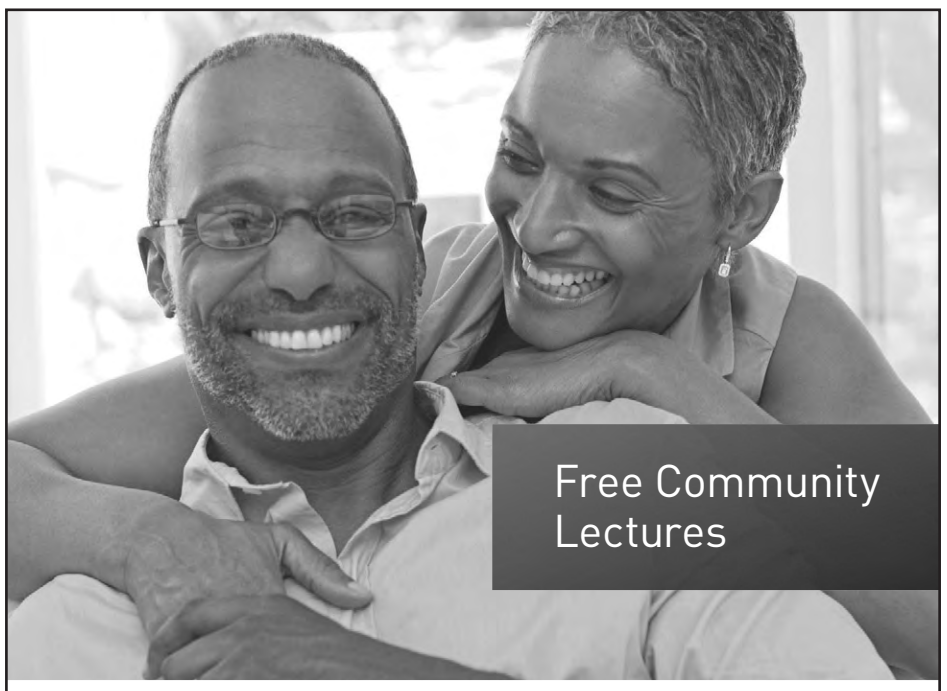
Denise Layne, of the Lutz Civic Association, said the association hasn't decided yet whether it will support or oppose the proposed high school. Progress has been made on the traffic issues, but there are still concerns about environmental impacts, Layne said.

Girard said she planned to meet with neighbors again on Monday, to continue working on their concerns.

"We want to be good partners. We're really trying to listen," she said.

From classics to hot r ods

Steven Tuck of Homosassa holds his trophy for best in show in the second annual Al and Ida Silver Memorial Car Show for his 1962 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz. A crowd turned out for the event at the Land O' Lakes Community Center to listen to music of the 1950s, '60s and '70s while strolling among the cars on display, ranging from the latest models to vintage and antique vehicles. (Photo by Glenn Gefers of photosby3g.com)



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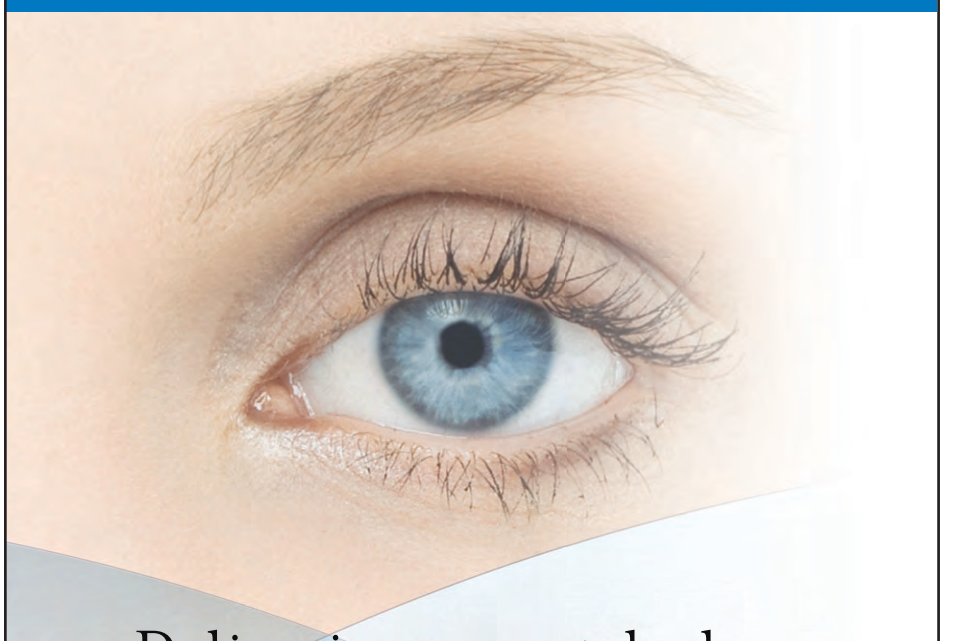

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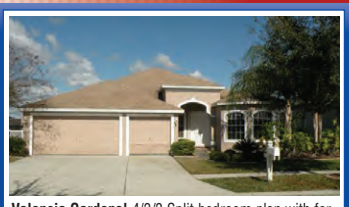
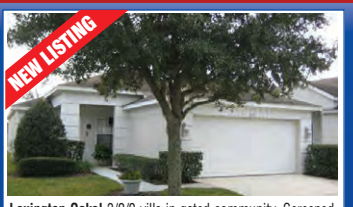
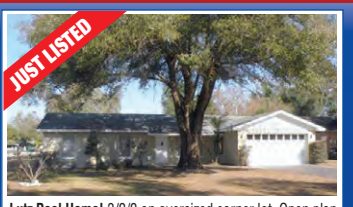


Valencia Gardens! 4/3/3 Split bedroom plan with formal living, dining & family room. Open kitchen w island. Home recently updated with new paint, carpet, & air conditioner. Screened lanai overlooks pond. Gated community w no CDD. **$239k.** (kil)

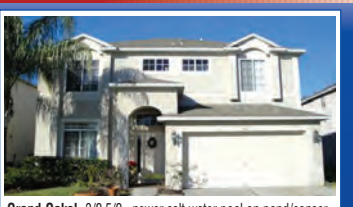
Great Lutz Location! Custom built 3/2/2 +pool in small, gated community. Low HOA & no CDD. Outdoor kitchen w Jenn Air grill and 1/2 acre lot w fenced backyard. Gas fireplace in family room, Intercom system, Plantation shutters, pool bath, trey ceilings & more! **$265k.** (row)



Lexington Oaks! 3/2/2 villa in gated community. Screened lanai w golf course view. Split bedroom plan w eat-in kitchen + formal dining. Community features golf course, pool, fitness center & tennis. Close to I-75 & short drive to Wiregrass Mall. **$129k.** (whi)

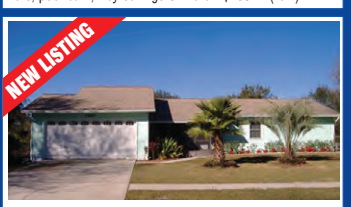


Lutz Pool Home! 3/2/2 on oversized corner lot. Open plan w formal living & dining rooms plus large family room. New carpet, paint & kitchen appliances. Screened lanai w in ground pool. Large fenced lot includes storage shed. No HOA or CDD. **$129k.** (art)

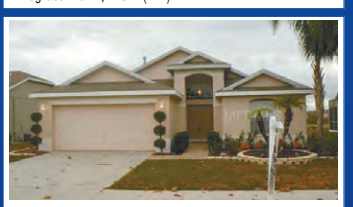


Grand Oaks! 3/2.5/2 +newer salt water pool on pond/conservation lot. Formal living/dining room, family room & large upstairs bonus room. Kitchen has oak cabinets w upgraded appliances. Tile floors downstairs. Cost saving natural gas & reclaimed water for irrigation. **$199,950.** (ged)

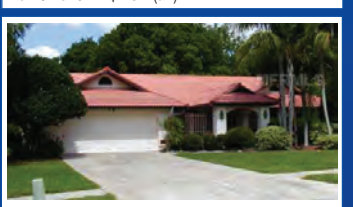
Lots of shade! 3/2.5/2 two story home nestled among towering oaks. Spacious floor plan w open kitchen/snack bar, formal dining room, separate living room, & enclosed Florida room. Large fenced yard has 2 storage sheds & wooden swing. **$189,990** (ste)



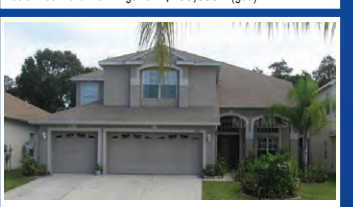
Waterfront home! 3/2/2 on canal w private dock. Interior features include new paint, all new doors & windows throughout plus lots of closet space. Screened lanai w in ground pool. Over 1/2 acre lot full of fruit trees. Great Lutz location w no CDD. **$172.5k.** (tur)



Oak Grove! Open 4/2/2 w great room floor plan features wood laminate floors, plant shelves, & cathedral ceilings. Kitchen has ample cabinets & counter space, large pantry and breakfast nook. Screened lanai offers view of conservation & pond. No CDD & low HOA. **$149k.** (avo)



Lake Cooper! Custom 4/2.5/2 +pool +workshop located on a 80 acre ski lake in a small, upscale gated community. Private boardwalk & dock. Upgraded kitchen & bathrooms, newer barrel tile roof, brick paver lanai w wet bar. Workshop has electric & phone. Must see! **$474.9k** (ple)



Plantation Palms! 5/3/3 Pool home in gated golf community. Screened lanai to enjoy pool and view of conservation. Many upgrades including wood floors, ceramic tile and corian counter tops. Short sale with bank approved price. Great Value! **$237,300.** (mor)

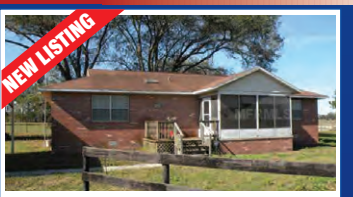
ZEPHYRHILLS/DADE CITY/OTHER AREAS • CALL 949-7444 x100

Zephyrhills! 2/2 Doublewide w 2 car carport. Remodeling includes new windows, flooring, baseboards, moldings and doors. Kitchen and baths updated also. Enclosed Florida room. Located in active adult community featuring club house, pool and shuffleboard. **$65k.** (ros)

Country Living! 3/2/2 Custom built home on 2.41acres. Family room w/ wood burning fireplace. Kitchen features corian countertops & island. Master suite with sitting room & fireplace. Beautiful brick courtyard for entertaining with wonderful view. Includes 2 stall barn. **$260k.** (woo)

Dade City! 3/2/1 Charming home situated on oversized lot with mature trees. Recent remodeling includes new kitchen cabinets, appliances & sink. Backyard is fenced. Great location close to St Leo College, golf course, shopping & I-75. **$112k.** (abb)

Port Richey! 2/1/1 with spacious open great room floor plan. Ceiling fans throughout. Enclosed florida room and screened lanai. Great location with just a short drive to US-19 & the Gulf Beaches. No CDD. **$49.9k.** (glo)



Dade City! Charming 2/2 home with a 2 car carport on over 5 acres! Included on the property is a 3/1 guest house, work shop & hay barn. Mature trees and wooded views surrounding property. Bring your horses, Rv, or boat. No HOA or CDD. **$125k.** (chr)

TAMPA • CALL 949-7444 x100

Grant Park! Cute 2/1 Block home w in walking distance to neighborhood park. Garage has been converted for extra storage space. Fully fenced yard. Easy access to downtown Tampa, shopping and restaurants. Priced to sell. Move in ready condition. **$29,999.** (54th)

Must see! Completely remodeled 4/3/2 offers 2 master suites. Impressive kitchen boasts slate counters, double convection ovens, pull out shelves & updated appliances incl Bosch dishwasher. Newer roof & energy efficient windows. Outdoor kitchen. **$209.9k.** (dal)

On Conservation! 3/2/2 situated on quiet cul de sac surrounded by mature trees. Completely remodeled to include new cabinets, granite countertops, stainless appliances, ceramic tile, laminate floors, carpet & paint inside and out. Great location with no CDD fees. **$139k.** (bec)

Waterfront! Charming 5/3/2 on the Dundee River on over 1/2 acre. 1920s property featuring formal dining room & formal living room w fireplace. Large Sunroom with French doors. Back patio overlooks pool, impressive back yard & river. **$999k.** (dun)

Hillsborough River! Cute 2/1 bungalow w/in minutes of Busch Gardens & Community park. Fenced yard is ideal for pets. Nestled under towering oaks, this home is situated directly on the river. With a little TLC, this can be a great investment or rental property. No HOA. **$47,990.** (ren)

RENTALS

$1150/mo.	3/2/2 in Zephyrhills on over an acre of fenced yard!	Patti Webster	310-0215
$1395/mo.	4/2.5/2 two story in Wesley Chapel w pond view.	Christy Laramay	451-6727
$1150/mo.	2/2 mobile home on large fenced lot in great location.	Pam Leece	235-5255
$1395/mo.	3/2/2 Lutz home w pool, covered lanai & fenced yard.	Josh Smith	699-0588
$1450/mo.	4/3/2 in Suncoast Meadows. New carpet & paint.	Bernice Miller	784-2812
$700/mo.	2/1.5/1 w screened lanai & fenced yard. Near beaches.	Laura Bloomer	541-9234
$1025/mo.	3/2/2 on over an acre. Fenced yard w storage shed.	Kim Joseph	352-835-1008
$1150/mo.	2/1 remodeled apt. in great downtown Tampa location.	Sheena Murray	966-5666
$900/mo.	2/1 with screened lanai & fenced yard. Convenient Tampa location.	Kim Zepp	928-3046
$600/mo.	2/1 Cozy lakefront cottage in Lutz. Bring your fishing rod!	Martha Julian	294-7723

LAND & COMMERCIAL

Waterfront! 2.23 acre lot on Lake Thonotosassa, near custom homes. **$450k.** Rob Rochlin 948-0999

.47 acre! Land O Lakes off Hwy 41. Zoned for MH. Utilities in place **$25k.** Patti Webster 310-0215

WC area! Almost 1 ac. near 54 w/school zoning. Reduced to **$139k** Owner/agent Amy Manion 454-7139

Professional/Medical Bldg. Hwy 54 in Lutz. 2982 sf. **$328k**. Call Mark Willett 731-1516

Warehouse/Office Hwy 54 in Lutz. 7500 sf. on 1.25 acre. Zoned C-2. **$695k**. Mark Willett 731-1516.

Professional/Medical Bldg. Hwy 54 in Wesley Chapel. 1980 sf. **$249k**. Mark Willett 731-1516

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SCHOOL, from page 1

Wynacht, who teaches writing and social studies to kindergartners through second-graders.

She's also delighted to have interior hallways.

"Where we were before, rainy days were quite a challenge," she said.

The new school building boasts other new features, too.

"Art and music have their own designated rooms," Wynacht said.

The school also has a science lab and a media center, said Jennifer Whitten, who teaches mathematics and social studies to children in kindergarten through second-grade.

Jennifer Whitten stands in front of the poster where she will post examples of good work by students. She's delighted about the school getting a permanent home. (Photo by B.C. Manion)

"We'll be able to send kids to the library to study and read. We're very excited about that," Whitten said.

Wainraich said the new facility enables the school to do more for its students.

"It's all about the kids and making things easier and more accessible for them. This new facility lets us do that," Wainraich said.

The charter school serves students in kindergarten through eighth-grade. It draws students primarily from Trinity, Odessa, Land O' Lakes, Lutz, Wesley Chapel and New Tampa, but also has some students from as far away as Spring Hill, New Port Richey and Riverview, Helean said.

It is authorized for up to 584 students this year, and has about 20 seats available at various grade levels.

The school has grown in size every year since it opened and hopes to get approval for 650 to 660 students next year, Helean said.

It can accept children from Pasco, Pinellas and Hillsborough counties.

For more information about the school, call (813) 428-7444 or visit www.imagineschoollandolakes.com.

HEARING, from page 1

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The project will overload Sunset Lane and could lead to traffic hazards on US 41, as cars attempt to make U-Turns to turn around, Schutz said.

Girard said traffic appears to be a key issue.

To minimize impacts, the school will require carpooling and will use two entrances – one off Sunset Lane and the other off US 41, she said. It also will stagger school starting and ending times to reduce congestion.

Access to the site will affect about1 percent of the site's wetlands, Girard said.

"There's no way for us to get to (US) 41 without impacting the wetlands to some degree," she said.

A suggestion was made to bridge the wetlands, but that option would cost about $1 million, which the school cannot afford, Girard said.

Denise Layne, of the Lutz Civic Association, said the association hasn't decided yet whether it will support or oppose the proposed high school. Progress has been made on the traffic issues, but there are still concerns about environmental impacts, Layne said.

Neighbors have also voiced worries about potential flooding, Girard said.

However, she said the school must meet the county's requirements to prevent that from occurring. She also noted that the school plans to use porous concrete and pavers – which allows water to be absorbed, rather than sheeting off.

Girard said she planned to meet with neighbors again on Monday, to continue working on their concerns.

"We want to be good partners. We're really trying to listen," she said. "I think some of them are still learning to trust me and what I say. Believe me, I understand," she said.

Seen are the 70 kids and others who attended the technical and agility fundraising camp on Jan. 8, which raised $3,000 for Jordan Harris. (Photo courtesy of Jennifer Nelson)

CPUSA, from page 1

"It has been hard for him not going to school and he really misses his friends and being able to just be a normal, healthy 16-year-old," Kim said.

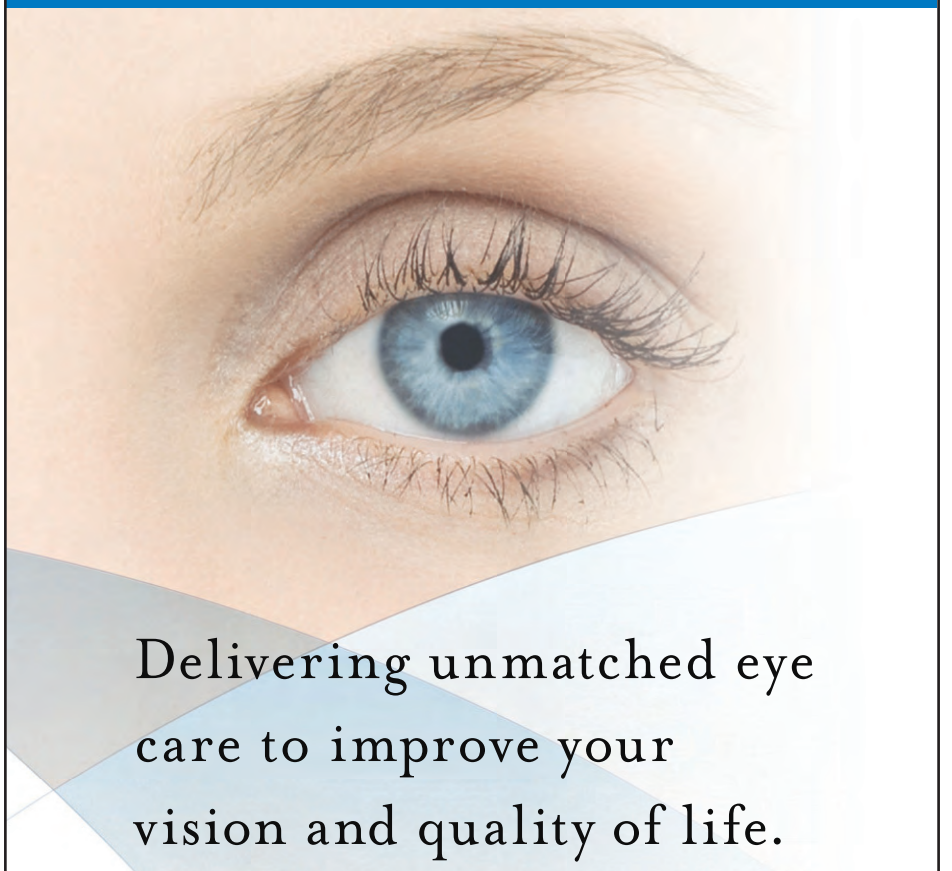
The diagnosis has had a profound impact on family life.

"My husband and I both work full time and it has been extremely challenging to continue to work while going through treatment," Kim said. "I work for USF College of Medicine and they have been very supportive through this. I have used 600 hours of sick leave to date. It has been very tough trying to juggle work and caring for my other son while trying to keep Jordan as happy as possible through all of this. I spend every day and night with him while he is hospitalized, which is four days a month for chemo."

Things have been looking up for Jordan in recent weeks and he just completed his last scheduled round of chemotherapy last Friday, Jan. 13.

"He had such a hard time with dehydration and malnutrition during the beginning of his treatment that he had to get a feeding tube surgically placed in his stomach in June," Kim said. "He had it removed two months ago and has been doing very well recently. He is definitely ready to get done with treatment and back to being a normal 16-year-old."

Now open in Wesley Chapel



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Freedom boys soccer regaining playoff form

By Kyle LoJacono
klojacono@cnewspubs.com

Three years ago the Freedom boys soccer team got one step away from the ultimate goal of any high school program — winning a state championship.

The Patriots (6-6-1) reached the Class 5A state finals in 2009, but fell to Palm Harbor University 2-1 to finish with a 17-3-5 record. Freedom lost 10 seniors from that runner-up season, and the program has been fighting to get back to championship contention ever since.

The Patriots went 8-8-2 in 2009-10 followed by a 6-12 campaign. They missed the playoffs both seasons, ending a six-year streak that started in 2004 when the school was in its second year.

"It's been difficult," said Dennis Derflinger, the only coach in program history. "We have a number of good players here, so it's not a matter of getting players on this team. It's about getting them all buying into the same philosophy. They're all coming from different clubs. It makes it a little difficult to one, get them to know how to play with each other and two, play with the style of play we want them too."

That's not to say the players haven't had the drive to get back to the final four and beyond, especially the seniors who were freshmen on that 2008-09 squad.

"I remember our defense was really strong that year," said senior defender Connor Limburg. "I remember from the finals game I got to play for a minute and a half because one of our guys got a yellow card. I always remember that."

Senior forward/midfielder Evan Kruk has even better memories. He scored the winning goal in the state semis to send Freedom to the finals.

Sophomore goalkeeper Nate Brown has been part of the resurgence of Freedom boys soccer this season.

Senior forward/midfielder Evan Kruk scored the winning goal in the state semifinals three years ago.

"That's been the highlight of my time playing here," Kruk said. "I got a through ball from Deion Jones, who was a senior, and I just onetimed it to the back post. Luckily the keeper couldn't get his hand on it. Everything was in slow motion when I shot it, and then the crowd just erupted."

Senior midfielder Michael Sacco said he took the deep playoff march for granted as it was his first season.

"Being a freshman then, my perspective is a lot different than where I'm at right now as a senior," Sacco said. "It's weird that we're the seniors now. We have to assume the responsibility to take this team."

Derflinger and his players had high expectations coming into this season.

"I felt we were going to be a lot better from last year," said sophomore goalkeeper Nate Brown, who has 63 saves and three shutouts this year. "Everybody is getting older and better. We're working better together and that aspect is going to help a lot, and our new freshmen are really good too.

"Last year it was difficult at the beginning because I broke my (right) shoulder, so throughout most of the year I was just watching," Brown continued. "When I got back I gave it my best, so did everyone else, but we just couldn't pull it out in districts."

Injuries derailed Brown's season last year and more medical problems threatened to do the same to the Patriots this year.

"We've had some serious injuries coming in that we weren't expecting, so we got off to a rough start," Derflinger said. "We were scrambling around to find people to fill those positions. I feel like we can compete and bring back another district title. We just have to play the way we're capable of. … My assistant coach and I were talking and reflecting on the season, and there were only three games where we weren't missing four or more starters."

Coach Dennis Derflinger, the only boys soccer coach in Freedom history, talks with his team after a recent practice. (Photos by Kyle LoJacono)

One of those games the Patriots were playing with most of their lineup was at district rival Gaither on Jan. 4.

The Cowboys (13-4-1), who reached the 5A final four last year, have eliminated Freedom from playoff contention the last two years, but that did not deter the Patriots. They defeated Gaither 1-0 to secure the No. 2 seed in the Class 4A-District 8 tournament. Kruk scored the lone goal in the contest set up by Sacco, and Brown made 10 saves to preserve the shutout.

"I think it gives us some confidence because Gaither is a quality team, and they always have a quality program over there," Derflinger said. "To get that win it helps us out, but then again you can't look at it too deeply because we may have to play them again in districts. We have to take it for what it's worth and improve a little more over the next couple of weeks."

The 4A-8 tournament is at Steinbrenner Jan. 24-27, with the championship game on Friday, Jan. 27 at 7 p.m. As the No. 2 seed in the six-team district Freedom earns a bye to the semifinals, meaning one victory in the tournament would clinch a playoff berth.

The Patriots travel to Robinson on Wednesday, Jan. 18 before closing out the regular season at Brandon on Thursday, Jan. 19. Both games are at 7 p.m.

—All stats as recorded to Maxpreps.com by coaches

Freedom senior midfielder Michael Sacco is one of several Patriots who were on the 2008-09 squad that reached the Class 5A state finals.

Freedom roster

No.	Player	Pos.	Yr.
0	Nathan Brown	GK	So.
1	Ruben Gutierrez	MF	Fr.
2	Chandler Howe	F	So.
2	Daniel Daniello	MF	Fr.
3	Brenton Vanfleet	F	So.
4	Kwabena Amankway	F	Fr.
5	Felipe Garcia	MF	Jr.
6	Andrew Anrolewics	D	Jr.
7	Brian Brenner	MF	Sr.
9	Derik Harvey	MF	Jr.
10	Daniell Thorpe	F	Jr.
11	Zack Arthur	MF	Sr.
12	Bryan Missana	MF	Fr.
13	Andre Frato	D	So.
14	Billy Chinchila	MF	Sr.
15	Jett Wright	D	Jr.
16	Ben Wasserman	MF	Fr.
17	Evan Kruk	F/M	Sr.
19	Calvin Works	F	Fr.
20	Connor Limburg	D	Sr.
21	Michael Sacco	MF	Sr.
22	Bryan Grubbs	D	Sr.
24	Patrick Watters	MF	Jr.
25	Juan Munoz	D	Fr.
26	Larry Thorpe	F	Sr.
72	Alec Grubbs	GK	So.
91	Zach Alger	GK	Sr.

Williams plays in Blue-Grey game

Land O' Lakes senior linebacker Shadow Williams closed out his high school career this past weekend when he played in the Blue-Grey All-Star game at Raymond James Stadium on Jan. 14.

Williams played for the Gators during his senior and junior seasons after transferring from Freedom. He finished his two-year stint at Land O' Lakes with 195 tackles, 14 sacks, six forced fumbles, two fumble recoveries and two passes defensed. While at Freedom in 2009 he posted 89 tackles, eight sacks and forced two fumbles.

The 6-foot, 221-pound Williams was named to the All-Sunshine Athletic Conference first team defense the last two years.

Land O' Lakes senior linebacker Shadow Williams played in the Blue-Grey All-Star game on Saturday at Raymond James Stadium. (File photo)

Wiregrass Ranch not slowed by big changes

By Kyle LoJacono
klojacono@cnewspubs.com

Bulls sophomore forward Logan Seoane is posting 7.4 points and 6.9 rebounds this season. (Photos by Glenn Gefers of www.photosby3g.com)

Wiregrass Ranch senior guard Kelly McCaffrey has a team-high 19.2 points, 8.9 rebounds, four assists and four steals per game this season.

Bulls freshman forward Amanda Melosky goes up for a layup during 65-55 win against River Ridge this season.

Question marks surrounded the Wiregrass Ranch girls basketball team entering the 2010-11 season.

The Bulls lost five seniors, including four of their top five scorers from a year ago. The departures accounted for 61 percent of the Wiregrass Ranch points.

To add to the uncertainty, the squad lost coach Greg Finkel. The only coach in program history resigned following a Florida High School Athletic Association investigation that found 10 violations within the program centering on the recruitment of guard Briahanna Jackson.

The squad finished with a 14-12 record and missed the playoffs for the first time in three seasons.

In stepped a new leader for the sixth-year program — John Gant.

Gant was a shooting guard in high school for a state champion team in Georgia. He also coached high school and AAU ball for about 10 years.

"My goals were to gel as a team," Gant said. "Any time you have a new coach it's a different system. They have to learn new defenses and offenses. Not that one is better than the other, but it's different, so that throws the program into psychological disarray. The goal was to try and make the transition as smooth as possible."

There have been few rough patches this year, as Wiregrass Ranch has posted a 15-6 record. The Bulls are also 4-2 in Class 7A-District 9 play, losing only to Steinbrenner.

"We've exceeded my expectations," Gant said. "We were picked by a lot of folks not to do very well at all probably because of the changes. We lost a lot from a senior-laden team from last year. Yet I set our goals really high for the girls so they can develop. I've never said to them we're not going to be good. We're in pursuit of excellence, and we have a lot to live up to because they've been very successful in the past."

Sophomore center Logan Seoane said Gant's coaching is different from Finkel's, but just as effective.

"He's brought in a lot of different drills, which is good to have a different way of doing things," said Seoane, who averages 7.4 points and 6.9 rebounds per game. "They're both great coaches, so we've been lucky."

Gant said the key to the turnaround this year has been the play and leadership of Kelly McCaffrey. The senior guard, who is closing in on 1,500 points for her career, is posting 19.2 points, 8.9 rebounds, four assists and four steals per game.

"She's the heart and soul of this team," Gant said. "The good thing is we don't have to have her score 25 points a night for us to win. It's letting her do other things, and right now she's leading our district in rebounding. That's really key for her development as a player. She's also a leader on and off the court."

McCaffrey played forward for most of last year, but an influx of younger players allowed her to move to her more natural position. One of those newcomers is freshman Amanda Melosky, who is averaging 10.4 points, 6.7 rebounds and a team-high four steals in her first year in high school.

"Amanda has really been a big help for us this year," McCaffrey said. "We're really glad she came in. She's a really strong player. I don't know where we'd be without her."

Melosky wasn't intimidated with the prospects of playing in high school as a freshman.

"I really wasn't that nervous," Melosky said. "Being a freshman I wanted to see how I was going to fit in. I guess I've been doing OK, and I'm surprised to be playing as much as I am."

Melosky, Seoane and junior forward Kristin Ibison have given Wiregrass Ranch a bigger advantage down low than in past years. The Bulls are pulling down 39.3 rebounds per game this year, more than any other 7A-9 squad.

"They have really given us an inside presence," Gant said. "That frees Kelly up to shoot and that makes us a lot better. Their development has been key. Logan has really

See CHANGES, page 16

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Ulrich Classic basketball event

Wiregrass Ranch High will host the second annual Ulrich Classic boys basketball event on Saturday, Jan. 21 at the school's gym, 2909 Mansfield Blvd. in Wesley Chapel.

The classic was created to honor the Ulrich family, who died in a plane crash during the summer of 2010. Lexi Ulrich would have been a senior at Wiregrass Ranch this school year.

The day will have four games starting at 3 p.m. and includes a ceremony to honor the Ulrich family before the final contest at 7:30 p.m. The matchups are:

—Clearwater vs. Bloomingdale at 3 p.m.
—Ridgewood vs. Seminole at 4:30 p.m.
—Freedom vs. Land O' Lakes at 6 p.m.
—Ulrich family ceremony
—Wharton vs. Wiregrass Ranch at 7:30 p.m.

Competitive basketball tryouts

The C & G Bulls basketball club is having tryouts for its boys and girls competitive travel squads. The program is looking for boys in fourth through 11th grade and girls in seventh through 11th grade. Tryouts are on Saturday from 4-7 p.m. at 5105 School Road in Land O' Lakes. For more information, call (813) 957-0929.

Winter tennis in Land O' Lakes

Certified tennis instructor Karen Turman is starting her winter clinics on Jan. 23 at the Land O' Lakes Recreation Complex on Collier Parkway. There are sessions for those ages 5-11 on Mondays and 8 and older on Tuesdays. The cost is $36 for a four-week session. For more information, call Turman at the complex (813) 929-1220. Those interested can also register at the complex's front desk.

CHANGES, from page 15

improved. I had a preseason chat with her about what she can mean for this team and she's done it. We're being successful because of those girls who have committed to doing their job."

Gant said he is very pleased with the squad's performance, but knows the players will have to continue to improve if they are to make it back to the postseason.

"It's a tough district with Steinbrenner and Freedom," Gant said. "To play with those teams and beat those teams we have to play our very best. We can't turn the ball over. Every possession counts. … If we do that we can play with them."

The 7A-9 tournament is at Steinbrenner Jan. 31-Feb. 3. The championship is on Friday, Feb. 3 at 7:30 p.m. Wiregrass Ranch is currently in second place in the district.

Wiregrass Ranch roster

No.	Player	Pos.	Yr.	Ht.
1	Amber Bruce	G	Jr.	5-5
2	Alexis Thompson	G	Jr.	5-7
3	Alex Deipholz	G	Jr.	5-7
4	Andy Rodriguez	G	Jr.	5-3
14	Jasmine Spitler	F	Sr.	5-10
15	Kristin Ibison	F	Jr.	5-11
20	Kelly McCaffrey	G	Sr.	5-9
21	Monica Mammah	F	So.	5-7
23	Ariele Thompson	G	Jr.	5-7
24	Amanda Melosky	F	Fr.	5-11
30	Logan Seoane	F	So.	6-0
32	Patricia Magwood	F	Sr.	5-11

The Bulls played at Sunlake on Jan. 16, but results were not available by press time. Wiregrass Ranch travels to district rival Freedom on Wednesday, Jan. 18 at 8 p.m.

—All stats as recorded to Maxpreps.com by coaches.

Gators, Hurricanes stalemate

By Eugenio Torrens
etorrens@cnewspubs.com

Land O' Lakes freshman defender Mitsy Audate, left, fights for position with Bishop McLaughlin junior forward Katie Hellman on Jan. 10. (Photos by Glenn Gefers of www.photosby3g.com)

Neither Land O' Lakes nor Bishop McLaughlin was at full strength for the two schools' girls soccer rematch on Jan. 10.

The squads wound up in a 0-0 tie in the grudge match.This after the Hurricanes (11-4-3) put up four goals en route to a 4-2 win against the Gators (12-6-3) in their first contest on Nov. 2. Since then, both teams have nearly identical records after each started out 1-1.

Land O' Lakes though has trudged through the back half of its season, with four losses coming in four straight decisions prior to the scoreless draw with the Hurricanes.

"It's frustrating because we've played well in the last few games and haven't had a positive result," said Gators coach Vicky King.

The Gators dropped a 1-0 match against powerhouse Mitchell before a 3-1 loss to River Ridge the night before the date with Bishop McLaughlin. King said her team expended so much energy against those two opponents that it was tough to muster up the same effort at Bishop McLaughlin.

King said the fact her team had three games in five days could have been a source of fatigue, but that it wasn't an excuse.

"If you let them go, they would run around all night. It's tough," King said."We'll take the tie. We expect a better decision than that, so that's tough."

King hoped after the abundance of time her team has spent together recently, that some time apart will right the ship.

"Maybe we've just seen too much of each other.We need a break," King said.

Hurricanes coach Tim Gronau has had to lead his team down an equally shaky path after the injury bug chomped the Hurricanes.

Gronau has seen both his starting backs, Andrea Broad and Angie Vascimini, lose their seasons to torn ACLs.

The coach has had to resort to moving his players around and sacrificing some of the offensive prowess of his better players to bolster a thin defense.

"It's been a difficult season, just trying to deal through those injuries," Gronau said.

The Hurricanes were able to manage their injuries, but not overcome them, in the tying effort.

"(A) 0-0 tie is kind of like kissing your sister, you know, but what are you going to do," Gronau said."You're always looking for the win, but I look at the pace of the game, what we did on the field and how many mistakes we made.

"(A) 0-0 tie is kind of like kissing your sister, you know, but what are you going to do."

—Tim Gronau, Bishop McLaughlin coach

"I'm pleased with our effort, I thought we played well with what we had on the field," Gronau added.

Land O' Lakes plays in the Class 3A-District 7 semifinals on Wednesday, Jan. 18 against tournament host Zephyrhills. The championship is on Friday, Jan. 20 at 7 p.m.

Bishop McLaughlin plays in the 1A-7 quarterfinals on Tuesday, Jan. 17 against Seffner Christian.The championship is on Friday, Jan. 20 at 7 p.m.

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Answer: Jane Horrocks

I was born on January 19, 1992, in Des Moines, IA. I struck gold on the balance beam at the 2008 Summer Games. Who am I?

Answer: Shawn Johnson

I was born on January 20, 1952, in Queens, NY. I am known as "The Starchild" in KISS. Who am I?

Answer: Paul Stanley

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Blount out at Freedom

By Kyle LoJacono
klojacono@cnewspubs.com

Tchecoy Blount will not return as Freedom's football coach for the 2012 season. (File photo)

Tchecoy Blount will not return as Freedom's football coach next season following his resignation on Jan. 11.

Patriots athletic director Elijah Thomas said he and principal Chris Farkas "wanted to go in a different direction" with the program.

"Coach Blount has been with the program for a long time and we're thankful for what he's done here," Thomas said. "After talking with coach after the break we all decided it was best to part ways."

Blount said he wanted the chance to stay with the program, but decided stepping down was the best option after listening to school administration. He will stay at Freedom as an exceptional student education instructor.

"I know I want to coach again," Blount said. "I'm going to take some time to talk about things with my family and see what's the best thing right now."

Blount's time with the Patriots' program goes back seven years when he became an assistant. He took over as the fifth coach in program history for the 2010 season.

Freedom amassed a 6-14 record under Blount, including a 2-8 campaign in 2011. The Patriots went 2-3 in Class 7A-District 7 play last year with victories over Wiregrass Ranch and Chamberlain.

Blount grew up in St. Petersburg and graduated from the University of South Florida where he played defensive end.

Thomas said the coaching position will be advertised soon and he wants a new coach in place by the time spring practice begins in May.

Running for the Bulls, Longhorns

The annual Long Run at the Ranch returns for its sixth installment on Saturday, Jan. 21 in support of the athletic programs at Wiregrass Ranch High and John Long Middle schools.

The day includes a 5-kilometer and a 1-mile race at the middle school, 2025 Mansfield Blvd. in Wesley Chapel. It will also include a health fair for the first time.

The day is organized by Bulls cross country coaches Don Howard and Chris Loth. Howard began the event when the school opened six years ago and Loth joined when he became the boys coach the next year.

"I wanted to have a 5K event in the area to promote running in the community and to raise money for the athletic programs of both schools," said Howard, who is also the Bulls girls track and field coach. "We have raised a total of approximately $12,000 in the first five years."

Howard said about 200 runners come out each year to the 5K, with another 100 running in the 1-miler. Awards are given for both races overall as well as for various age groups including the fastest male and female runner in elementary, middle and high school, as well as staff from either facility.

The 5K starts at 8:30 a.m., with the 1-mile run beginning at about 9:15 a.m. Those interested can sign up the day of the event until 8 a.m., or register at FitNiche at The Shops at Wiregrass on Friday, Jan. 20 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. For more information, call (813) 404-6350.

—Kyle LoJacono

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Closer Look

AN ADVERTISER PROFILE

Rebuilding transmissions still a passion after 41 years

Even after 41 years, Matt Safon still loves rebuilding transmissions. It is a skill (many consider it a talent) that he learned from his father while a boy in Miami.

"My dad not only had a transmission shop, but also ran a school where he certified technicians in rebuilding transmissions," said Safon. "I learned from the best and have been at it ever since."

Safon brings this multi-generational knowledge of transmissions to his customers at ATS All Car Care in Land O' Lakes. "I don't have any hobbies – don't own a boat, don't fish — just love working on cars," he said.

Before becoming owner of ATS All Car Care, Safon spent 5 years in Miami working for his father and the next 32 working for AAMCO Transmission in Florida, California, New York and Maryland.

He bought his shop, previously known as Wholesale Transmissions, about 4 years ago. It is located on US 41 behind NAPA Auto Parts and ABC Pizza. He wanted to own his own shop so he could work directly with customers.

"I like being able to explain what the problem is and how to best fix it. I can be more personable with the customer and make him more comfortable with the whole process," said Safon.

Owning a shop also allows Safon to set his own schedule. "If a customer has a problem with his transmission, I can fix it right away so it doesn't get put on the back burner and become a bigger problem later on," Safon said.

Safon typically rebuilds transmissions in three days or less. "My fast turn around really helps people who cannot afford to be without their vehicle for two weeks or more, which other transmission shops often require," said Safon.

The master technician also rebuilds transmissions for less than other shops because he keeps his overhead low.

"We typically charge around $1,500 for most of the transmissions we rebuild — about half what the major chains like AAMCO charge," said Safon. He guarantees his rebuilt transmissions with a 12-month/12,000-mile warranty and also offers extended warranties.

JoAnn Smith of Carrollwood is a very satisfied customer of ATS All Car Care.

"I brought in my grandson's car to have his transmission rebuilt and I was very pleased with Matt's knowledge and honesty," said Smith. "His service was quick, honest and the cost very reasonable.

"It's a bit of a drive for me, but it's worth it to get an honest technician you can trust and good service at a fair price. I'm so glad I found Matt."

About 75% of the work Safon does at his shop is transmission work. But he also takes care of normal maintenance and service for both domestic and foreign vehicles, including brakes, air conditioning, differentials, engines, alternators, and comprehensive diagnostics, including check engine lights.

"I can fix anything that comes into the shop," said Safon. "I work closely with customers on costs and come up with a plan to repair their vehicle so they can afford to have the work done," said Safon.

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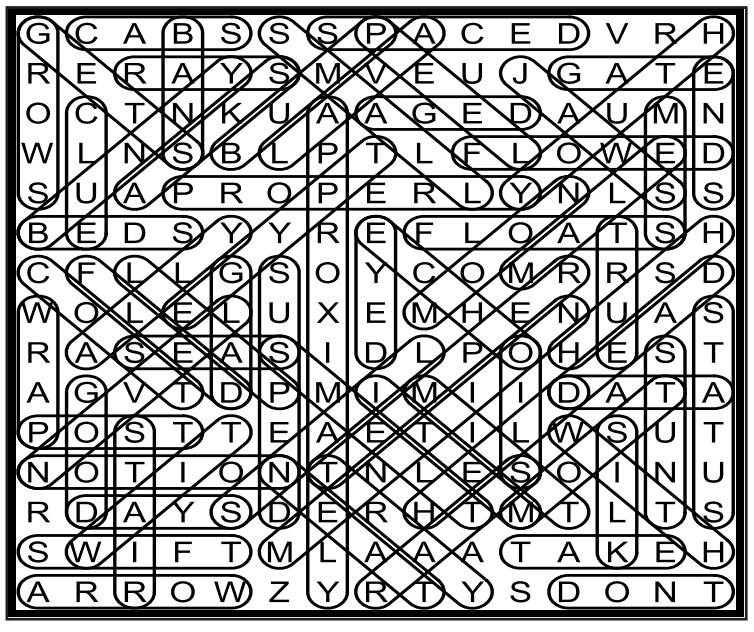

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