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## Goodbye Little League, Hello Babe Ruth

By Michael Hinman  
[mhinman@cnewspubs.com](mailto:mhinman@cnewspubs.com)

Last month, the national Little League organization released new rules for the 2014 baseball season that adjusted eligibility requirements and compensation for traveling expenses.

What was missing from the list is what irked Lutz baseball organizers the most — changes in Little League playing style that could help better develop young

players, and give them the skills they need to advance in the sport. Skills like stealing bases, leading off of base, bunting, and what players can gain from more tournament play.

But Little League isn't budging from its decades-old style, and after more than a half century of affiliation, Lutz will break away from Little League on Jan. 1, and join Babe Ruth League.

See BASEBALL, page 14



The late Oscar Cooler lobbied hard to get orange groves off Lutz Lake Fern Road turned into baseball fields to give Little League an expanded presence in Lutz. (Photo by Michael Hinman)

## Teen wins \$50,000 after memorizing 766 Bible verses

By Michael Hinman  
[mhinman@cnewspubs.com](mailto:mhinman@cnewspubs.com)

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy ...

Many remember their childhood Sunday school classes when memorizing the books of the Bible was a necessary step into spiritual adulthood.

But anyone who thought that was hard never had to compete at the level Katherine Forster has.

The 14-year-old Lutz girl recently won a \$50,000 scholarship for being the best in the country in her age division in memorizing Bible verses. And not a dozen, or 50, or even 100. Forster learned 766 verses — the equivalent of learning all of 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians with a touch of Malachi — on her way to winning the National Bible Bee in Sevierville, Tenn.

"To some extent, I had a system where I figured out that I would need to memorize 60 verses a week over 10 weeks, and then have a week and a half to review," Forster said. "Even on our way up to Tennessee, we drilled most of the way there."

The National Bible Bee is a rather new concept, developed just five years ago by the Shelby Kennedy Foundation, a nonprofit



The goal of the National Bible Bee is to join families together to learn more about the Bible — not just memorizing passages, but understanding what the passages mean. Katherine Forster, 14, learned more than 750 Bible verses with the help of long study times as well as her family, which includes, from left, mother Sue Forster, and brothers Samuel, 12, and Ben, 9. (Photo by Michael Hinman)

ministry established in the name of a young woman who died of cancer in 2005 at the age of 23. The organization's goal, according to its website, is to encourage parents "as they disciple their children through in-depth study" of the Bible, memorizing verses and prayer.

Katherine's mom, Sue Forster, first

learned about the program in 2009 through a home-school group she's a part of.

"I thought it would be a great thing to do," she said. "If you think about it, you have spelling bees, which are fun and the kids learn a lot. But I would much rather have

See BIBLE, page 14

## Son's death becomes catalyst for couple's life work in Uganda

By B.C. Manion  
[bcmalion@cnewspubs.com](mailto:bcmalion@cnewspubs.com)

Deb Gilbert never pictured herself as a missionary in Africa, but she also never imagined the immense pain she would experience when her son Sean died at 18.

"Your perspective on life changes a whole lot when something like that happens," she said.

The young man's death was the catalyst for Deb Gilbert and her husband, Mike, to close the family business, sell their Lutz home, liquidate their belongings and move to Africa to establish One City Ministries.

Before her son died, he was entrenched in a cycle of addiction, Deb Gilbert said. He would attempt to step away from his self-de-

structive lifestyle, but would be easily drawn back into it by his friends. Once the Gilberts knew their son had a serious problem, they tried to get him help. But Sean wasn't ready to make a change.

He finally had some close calls that even scared him and had reached a point when he realized he had to change, Deb Gilbert said. Sean talked to his parents about it on a Friday evening.

"He knew he had to stop seeing certain people. Everything seemed to be going in the right direction," she said. "On that Sunday evening, he was with some friends. And he said, 'This is the last time I'm going to party with you like this.' And, in fact, it was."



Mike and Deb Gilbert in front of Light Village, as the security posts are being built. (Photo courtesy of Mike and Deb Gilbert)

See CATALYST, page 14

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Dr. Michael Craven and his wife, Linda, are blessed with  
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A chiropractor for 35 years, Dr. Craven has lived  
in Land O' Lakes since 1980.



## Local consultant releases book's second edition

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report



United Kingdom.

In the second edition of the book, Simard explains how the growing trends toward aging in place and creating dedicated memory care settings have led to the adoption of her program by assisted living and hospice

Joyce Simard, a private geriatric consultant based in Land O' Lakes, has released a second edition of her book through Health Professions Press.

"The End-of-Life Namaste Care Program for People with Dementia," Simard reveals her recommendations for caregivers to connect in what she describes as meaningful and engaging ways with individuals in the last phases of Alzheimer's disease. Her system, which she calls "Namaste Care," focuses on the person rather than the disease, based on the "namaste" concept, Hindu for "honoring the spirit within."

Simard works with skilled nursing centers, assisted living communities and hospice organizations. She is also involved in research projects that are studying the outcomes of her system in Australia and the

settings. She also describes adaptations suited to the needs of these services, and expands her discussion of death and dying, to increase sensitivity and understanding for residents, families and staff.

For more information on the book, visit [HealthProPress.com/Namaste](http://HealthProPress.com/Namaste).

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By Appointment Only



# Seniors once again find hundreds of Santas in community

By Michael Hinman  
mhinman@cnewspubs.com

Wednesday is the last day that gifts can be collected for the Be a Santa to a Senior program, but there's still lots of work to do before now and Christmas.

The annual program, hosted by Home Instead Senior Care, brings gifts to senior citizens for the holiday season — a large segment of the population that is many times left out when it comes to Christmas.

"There are a lot of charities out there for the kids, and Christmas is for the kids, but far too often, so many are forgotten," said Cathleene Tokish, owner of Sweet Darling Quilts on Wesley Chapel Boulevard, who hosted one of the gift-giving trees. "When I do my spreadsheet, I cry, because they ask for so little."



Each ornament in the Be a Santa to a Senior program listed a gift request from a single senior citizen, with many of them as simple as every day needs like socks. Customers would collect ornaments, shop for the items, and then bring them back for pickup ahead of Christmas.

Tokish's store is one of the only non-chain stores participating in the program, run locally by Home Instead franchise owners Lynelle Bonneville and mother Michele Bonneville. Yet, she is one of the highest-producing, with many of her customers asking about what they should get for the nursing home residents as early as September.

Christmas trees go up in November at the Be a Santa to a Senior collection sites, with ornaments available displaying the wish list of an individual resident of facilities like the Edwinola Retirement Community and Heritage Park in Dade City, as well as the West Winds Assisted Living Facility in Zephyrhills.

Some of the ornaments handed out at Tokish's store included a pack of cards, a package of batteries, and one that asked for just one snack.

"Once they hit the nursing home level, Medicaid only gives them \$35 a month to spend on incidentals," Michele Bonneville said. "And that's why just the little things matter so much for them."

And when someone gets an ornament with a request of something like just one snack, they usually come back with so much more, the Bonnevilles said. Usually, they're filling an entire gift bag.

This year, the local Home Instead franchise hopes to hand out 1,000 wrapped gifts to senior citizens in assisted living facilities on Dec. 21. While nearly all the donations are provided unwrapped, volunteers will get together Dec. 20 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., at the home office of Home Instead, 29149 Chapel Park Drive in Wesley Chapel, to wrap gifts.

Home Instead's clientele are typically still living in their own houses and apartments, and are usually doing what they can to stay out of an assisted living facility as



Cathleene Tokish, center, owner of Sweet Darling Quilts in Wesley Chapel, has worked with local Home Instead Senior Care franchise owners Lynelle Bonneville, left, and mother Michele Bonneville. (Photos by Michael Hinman)

long as possible. But the program targets those who are no longer in their own homes, and many times missing the companionship and family so many others take for granted on the holidays.

"When you take gifts to them and see their eyes light up, it can be very special," Michele Bonneville said. "There are people who haven't spoken in a month who will suddenly get so excited, and they will start talking."

Be a Santa to a Senior is a nationwide program through Home Instead that has at-

tracted more than 60,000 volunteers, and provided 1.2 million gifts to 700,000 senior citizens over the last six years, according to the organization's website.

Collection sites were set up around the area, including the Florida Medical Clinic Foundation, T.J. Maxx, Bealls Outlet, the Pasco County Tax Collector's office, and Village Inn restaurant in Land O'Lakes.

For more information on how to volunteer or donate, visit the website at [BeASantaToASenior.com](http://BeASantaToASenior.com), or call (813) 991-7524.

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# Cookie recipes even Santa wants to know about



Delicious cookie recipes came in from across the readership area. And The Laker/Lutz News not only is including the best here, but also offering some fun healthy alternatives as well from Betsy Crisp, the "County Home Economist" who is a family and consumer services agent with Pasco County Extension.

Christmas is a time to be merry, and it all starts with that plate of cookies.



## 'LOOKS LIKE CHRISTMAS' COOKIES

By Diana Santore of Land O' Lakes

"These cookies look just like Christmas!"

3 cups flour  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
3/4 cup salt  
Cream  
2 sticks of butter (room temperature)  
1 cup golden brown sugar  
3/4 cup sugar  
2 large eggs  
1 tablespoon vanilla  
1-1/2 cup dried cranberries  
1-1/2 cup white chocolate chips  
1 cup chopped macadamia nuts

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line two baking sheets with parchment. Sift in bowl flour, baking soda and salt. In an electric mixer and large bowl, combine cream, butter, golden brown sugar, sugar. Add and mix eggs, vanilla. Add dry ingredients a little at a time, and mix. Remove beaters, scrape off. With spatula, stir in dried cranberries, white chocolate chips and chopped macadamia nuts. For 72 small cookies, bake for 18 minutes. For 36 large cookies, bake for 15 minutes.

## TOE TOES

By Patti Thomas of Wesley Chapel

"The Toe Toes are an old Italian cookie my mother used to make when I was a child. She died earlier this year, and I still have wonderful memories of these cookies."

6 cups sifted enriched flour  
2 cups sugar  
3/4 cup cocoa  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon cloves  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1 cup shortening  
1-3/4 cup milk  
1 cup chopped walnuts  
1/2 cup cooking oil

For the glaze:

1/2 box sifted confectioners sugar  
2 teaspoon vanilla  
1/4 cup warm milk

Sift together dry ingredients into a large mixing bowl. Make a hole in the center and add shortening, milk, and nuts. Mix well. Rub small amount of oil on palm of hands and roll dough into balls the size of a walnut. Place on aluminum foil-covered cookie sheets and bake in a hot oven (425 degrees) for 10 to 12 minutes. For the glaze, mix all the glaze ingredients in a large bowl and glaze warm cookies. Place on wax paper, and let stand until glaze dries.

## THE UNBELIEVABLE COOKIE

By Betsy Crisp, Pasco County Extension

"Each type of fat provides a different flavor and texture. In grandmother's day, butter and lard were main components to many foods. By the time I started baking, margarines and vegetable shortening had become popular. Now we know oils are much healthier for us, and that we can reduce the amount of fat by substituting applesauce or any fruit puree for half or more. Just remember to eat in moderation."

1 large egg  
1 cup sugar  
1 cup peanut butter  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 3.5-ounce package milk chocolate stars (or Hershey Kisses)

Mix together all ingredients except stars to form dough, and chill in the refrigerator for one hour. Once chilled, roll into balls and press a star into the center of each. Bake on ungreased cookie sheet at 350 degrees for approximately 10 minutes.

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## HARVEST PUMPKIN SUGAR COOKIES

By Frances Innace of Wesley Chapel

1-1/2 cups sugar  
1-1/2 sticks of butter  
2 eggs  
2 teaspoons milk  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
3-1/4 cups flour  
2-1/2 teaspoons baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon pumpkin spice  
1 teaspoon almond extract

White chocolate chunks, and either hazelnuts or shelled pecans (optional)

Mix ingredients together until well combined. Wrap in plastic and chill for two hours. Roll out dough, cut with floured cookie cutter. Place on highly greased baking sheet. Heat oven to 400 degrees, and bake for 8 minutes, or until light brown.

## CHRISTMAS BALLS

By Elizabeth Byrd of Land O' Lakes

"My mother made these cookie balls every Christmas when I was a kid, and I now make them for my kids just to keep the tradition going. They absolutely love them, and so do I!"

1 cup butter  
2 teaspoons vanilla  
1/3 cup sugar  
2 teaspoons water  
2 cups flour  
1 cup chopped walnuts  
Red and green sugars



Cream butter and vanilla. Add sugar, cream until fluffy. Add water. Stir in flour, mixing well. Add walnuts. Shape into 1-inch balls. Roll in sugar. Place on ungreased cookie sheet, 1 inch apart. Bake at 325 degrees for 20 minutes, or until firm to the touch.

## ALMONDS, OATS AND DARK CHOCOLATE — OH MY!

By Betsy Crisp, Pasco County Extension

"Happy holidays from my kitchen to yours!"

1/3 cup unsalted butter  
1/4 cup canola oil  
2 cups oatmeal, quick-cooking  
3/4 cup sugar  
1/3 cup whole wheat flour  
1/4 cup low-fat milk  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/2 cup almonds, finely chopped  
1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips  
1/2 cup all-fruit apricot spread

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Lightly spray/oil a baking sheet, or line with parchment.

Measure oil, oats, sugar, flour, milk, vanilla, salt and nuts into a mixing bowl. Melt butter in microwave oven, add to mixing bowl and stir well.

Using a teaspoon to measure dough, drop onto baking sheet 3 inches apart. Flatten into 2-inch rounds with bottom of drinking glass.

Bake 5 to 7 minutes, and let cool completely before removing from pan.



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## Who's who *Meet* Carlos Marinelli, M.D.



Dr. Carlos Marinelli graduated from medical school in Brazil in 1988. He moved to Tampa in 1997 after completing his medical residency and cardiology fellowship at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa. He is Board Certified in Internal Medicine and Cardiovascular Disease.

Dr. Marinelli lives in Carrollwood with his wife of 31 years, Claudiane, a retired pediatric dentist. The couple's daughter, Christine Desautels, is an attorney and mother of their only grandson, 18-month-old Russell.

Dr. Marinelli enjoys reading about antiquity history, especially Roman, Greek and Egyptian periods. He also enjoys reading about the art of wine production around the globe.

## Working together for GOOD HEALTH

### Grandmother's enlarged heart inspired Carlos Marinelli to become a cardiologist

Dr. Carlos Marinelli was a young boy in Brazil when he decided he wanted to be a heart doctor when he grew up.

He was just 6 or 7, but recalls vividly when his grandfather told him that his grandmother, who took care of him every day, had an enlarged heart and didn't have long to live.

"I loved my grandmother and remember crying so hard," said Dr. Marinelli. "Right then I decided I wanted to grow up to be a doctor so that I could help people like my grandma."

Fortunately, his grandmother did not die young and with good medical care lived another 30 years. In fact, Dr. Marinelli took care of her after he became a cardiologist.

The sensitivity and compassion Dr. Marinelli showed his grandmother is how he cares for his patients today. And it's why he specializes in working with chronically ill patients, many whom he's been seeing for more than 15 years.

"My focus is to manage my patients' conditions with lifestyle changes and drug therapy to prevent them from getting worse and needing hospitalization," said Dr. Marinelli.

However, when his patients do need hospitalization, Dr. Marinelli has privileges at St. Joseph's Hospital in Tampa and is able to oversee their care when their condition becomes acute.

Dr. Marinelli has been a cardiologist in Tampa since 1997, working in private practice for most of those



Dr. Carlos Marinelli, the 16th cardiologist to join Florida Medical Clinic, reads to his 18-month-old grandson, Russell.

years. In November he became the 16th physician to join the cardiology team at Florida Medical Clinic.

Dr. Marinelli joined FMC because he wanted to focus more on patient care and not worry about the details of managing a small business. He is FMC's only cardiologist who spends 100 percent of his time at the practice's Carrollwood office, which draws patients mostly from north Tampa, Carrollwood, Lutz and Land O' Lakes.

Dr. Marinelli describes his bedside manner as calm and attentive.

"I set my schedule so I am never

overbooked and have enough time with every patient so that we're not rushed," said Dr. Marinelli. "Because we do a good job scheduling, my patients seldom wait more than 15 to 20 minutes to see me."

His practice emphasizes advanced diagnostic imaging and is equipped to do echocardiograms, carotid ultrasound and nuclear stress testing in his office.

"Echocardiograms are ultrasound images of the heart, which allow a doctor to see the heart's anatomy," Dr. Marinelli explained. "Nuclear stress testing monitors the circulation of blood through the heart muscle."

"We use these tests to diagnose and determine the best treatment plans," he said. "They also help patients understand their conditions and are useful tools in patient education."

Conducting these tests are highly trained employees Melanie Kenney, a nuclear medical technologist, and Angel Rodriguez, an ultrasound technologist who also serves as the practice's office supervisor. Also part of Dr. Marinelli's team are medical assistants Alexandra Yatros and Heather Muller, and Holly Wagar on the front desk.

"I have worked with most of my staff for many years and am so happy they were able to join me at Florida Medical Clinic," said Dr. Marinelli.

Dr. Marinelli welcomes new patients and is scheduling new patient appointments usually within a week after someone calls.

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# HEALTH & WELLNESS

## Breast cancer support

Florida Hospital Wesley Chapel, 2700 Healing Way, hosts a breast cancer support group on the third Wednesday of every month at its Wellness Plaza, Suite 102. The next meeting is Dec. 18 from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The group will help participants find available resources, share successes and support, educate patients and survivors with guest speakers, and encourage in-depth discussions.

To register, call (813) 929-5432.

## Lymphedema group meeting

The Medical Center of Trinity, 9330 State Road 54, is hosting monthly lymphedema support groups on the third Thursday of every month. The next meeting is Dec. 19 at 3 p.m.

Lymphedema is a persistent swelling, usually affecting the arm or leg that sometimes occurs as a side effect of cancer treatment.

Seating is limited. Reservations are required.

For information, call (727) 834-5630.

## Access Health Care lecture

Access Health Care, 5350 Spring Hill Drive in Spring Hill, will present a lecture

on "Osteoarthritis & Osteoporosis: Two Different Problems; Both Need Your Attention" on Dec. 19 at 5:15 p.m.

Dr. Maria Scunziano-Singh, board-certified in internal medicine, will host the lecture.

For information and to register, call (352) 688-8116.

## Oak Hill names Star Associates

Oak Hill Hospital in Spring Hill has named its Star Associates for October: Registered nurses Christina Welsh and Christina Stodart.

Welsh joined the hospital's medical floor in September 2012. She has a bachelor's degree and 13 years experience in nursing. She, her husband Jim, and two sons live in New Port Richey.

Stodart joined the hospital's intensive care unit in 2004. She also has worked in wound care and the emergency room, among other places. She lives in Spring Hill.

## Chatterboxes meet

The Medical Center of Trinity, 9330 State Road 54, will host its Chatterboxes support group on Dec. 19 from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

The group meets to assist individuals suffering from communication deficits as a result of a cerebral vascular accident or

other neurological disorders. Caregivers and spouses are encouraged to attend.

For information, call (727) 834-4946.

## 'Man to Man' cancer support

Florida Cancer Affiliates, 5500 Little Road in New Port Richey, will host the "Man to Man" prostate cancer support group on Dec. 19 from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The topics include the importance of early detection, signs and symptoms, prognosis, disease stages, various treatments, and more.

For information, call (727) 372-9159.

## Huntington's disease

The Medical Center of Trinity, 9330 State Road 54, is offering a monthly support group for those affected by Huntington's disease. The next meeting is Dec. 19 from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

For information, call Nina Qualters at (727) 236-3578, or email npappasqualters@gmail.com.

## Gulfside volunteer orientations

Gulfside Regional Hospice will host a volunteer orientation on Dec. 23 from 9 a.m. to noon at its Lutz Thrift Shoppe, 1930 Land O' Lakes Blvd., for new shop volunteers in Central Pasco.

For information, call Jennifer Ball or Tracey Thompson at (813) 780-1235.

## Food addicts program

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Wesley Chapel, 33420 State Road 54, is hosting Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous on Thursdays from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. This is a 12-step program for men and women of all ages. There is no fee and no weigh-ins.

For information, visit FoodAddicts.org.

## NAMI support groups

The Pasco County Chapter of National Alliance on Mental Illness offers two types of support groups: one for family and friends of those with mental illness, and one for those living with mental illness.

Family and friends can meet at North Tampa Behavioral Health, 29910 State Road 56 in Wesley Chapel, on the first and third Tuesdays of each month, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

For those living with mental illness, recovery groups meet once a week from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., at the NAMI Pasco office, 6480 Land O' Lakes Blvd., in Land O' Lakes, and at Medical Center of Trinity West Pasco Campus, 5637 Marine Parkway in New Port Richey.

For information, call (727) 992-9653.

## I finally picked up the phone and called instead of just reading about Samantha's program.



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in her mid 50's

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## Veggie Art

Chef Adrian J. Barber, from Johnson & Wales University, recently gave a demonstration on edible centerpieces to students at Land O' Lakes High School's Academy of Culinary Arts. He showed them how they could take plain vegetables and turn them into eye-catching centerpieces. (Photos by B.C. Manion)



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## DENTAL BITES

There have been so many changes in how dentistry is practiced since we opened our dental office 25 years ago in Land O' Lakes. We want to use this dedicated space in The Laker and Lutz News to answer questions we are frequently asked and to share with you information about new innovations that make dentistry pain free and affordable.

### Q What should I do if I knock a tooth out?

**A** With proper emergency treatment, a permanent tooth that has been knocked out of its socket can be successfully replanted and last for years. The sooner the tooth is replaced, the greater the likelihood it will survive. Ideally get to your dentist within 30 minutes.

Find the tooth; do NOT handle it by the root. If it is dirty gently rinse the tooth in cool water, do NOT scrub or use soap. Do not wrap in tissue or attempt to dry off. Replace it in the socket if possible, holding it in with your finger or light biting pressure. If the tooth cannot be reinserted in the socket, place it in the cheek. Placing the tooth in milk is recommended if it cannot be left in the mouth. Do not allow tooth to dry out. Arrange to get to your dentist as soon as possible.



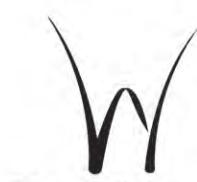
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## Symphony in lights at The Shops at Wiregrass

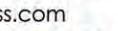


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up to 11 lbs	\$40	up to 11 lbs	\$50
12 - 33 lbs	\$45	12 - 22 lbs	\$55
34 - 66 lbs	\$55	23 - 44 lbs	\$60
67 - 88 lbs	\$70	45 - 66 lbs	\$70
89 - 132 lbs	\$85	67 - 88 lbs	\$90
		89 - 132 lbs	\$105

### Weekend Vaccine Clinics

SAT., DEC. 21 <sup>ST</sup> 1 to 2 pm <b>TREASURED PET RESORT</b> 2643 Narnia Way #101 LAND O' LAKES	SAT., DEC. 21 <sup>ST</sup> 2:30 to 3:30 pm <b>MIDWAY FARM &amp; RANCH</b> 19211 SR 52 LAND O' LAKES	SAT., DEC. 28 <sup>TH</sup> 1 to 2 pm <b>PET CITY</b> 2119 Collier Pkwy LAND O' LAKES	SAT., DEC. 28 <sup>TH</sup> 2:30 to 3:30 pm <b>WOOFGANG BAKERY</b> 18875 SR 54 LUTZ
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[Facebook.com/Gentlecare Pet Hospital](http://Facebook.com/Gentlecare Pet Hospital)



The engagement and approaching marriage of Sarah Elifson and Alex Fackler has been announced.

Parents of the couple are John and Donna Elifson of Land O' Lakes, Florida, and Ken and Michele Fackler of Oviedo, Florida. Grandparents of the couple are LaVonne Blakeslee of Livingston, Montana, the late William Blakeslee, and the late James and Elna Elifson, of Clinton, Iowa. Also, Ken and Sandy Fackler of Ocala, Florida, Mavis Monell, of Franklin, New Jersey, and the late Paul Burger of Wayne, New Jersey.

The bride-to-be is a graduate of UCF in '12, majoring in Health Services Administration and is employed with SimonMed as an Account Manager. Her fiance' is a graduate of UCF in '11, majoring in Marketing and is employed with the Orlando Sentinel as a Digital Account Executive.

Vows will be exchanged in Orlando, Florida on 12-13-14

# PET of the WEEK

## WEEKLY WINNERS

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### Cricket is a friendly dog

Cricket, a 10-year-old male Yorkie, wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Oblivious to his size, and eager for adventure, this dapper dog is friendly with all the other dogs and cats in the neighborhood, and knows exactly when it's 5 p.m., and time to make his rounds to say hi to all the neighbors coming home from work. Cricket loves to play kickball in the yard, but enjoys swimming in the pool the most. He is continually on alert watching for his best friends and neighbors Buddy, Charley and Soggy to come out and play. A true companion to his mom Tina Marie Schmidt of Lutz, Cricket lets dad, Loren Schmidt, know he's third in the pack most of the time and puts up with his parakeet brother CoCo and sister Tiki.

**PET OF THE WEEK FAMILIES RECEIVE A \$50 GIFT CERTIFICATE FROM RED HYDRANT PET SPA & BOUTIQUE TO USE IN ITS RETAIL STORE FOR TREATS, TOYS, COLLARS, LEASHES AND HOME GROOMING PRODUCTS**

**Send us a picture and information on your favorite pet!**

Write a short paragraph about why your pet is special along with a photo and mail to: Pet of the Week, c/o The Laker, P.O. Box 479, Lutz, FL 33548 or email to [kwelton@cnewspubs.com](mailto:kwelton@cnewspubs.com), ATTN: Pet of the Week

**PLEASE NOTE: OWNERS NAME AND ADDRESS MUST BE INCLUDED FOR YOUR PET TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PUBLICATION.**



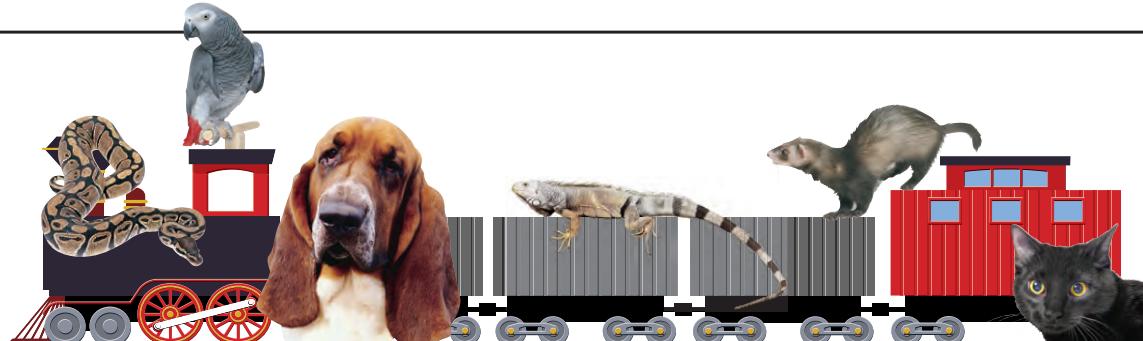
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# What's Happening

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

## RETIREE CLUB MEETING

The Grumman Retiree Club's Midwest Florida Chapter will meet on Dec. 19 at 11 a.m., at Buffet City, 13235 Cortez Blvd., in Brooksville. A business meeting starts at 11:30 a.m., followed by lunch. Cost is \$13 per person. There will be a Christmas program by the Coastal Chords. Guests are asked to bring an unwrapped toy for the Marine Corps League's Toys For Tots program. For information, call Hank Mehl at (352) 686-2735.

## AMERICAN VICTORY FUNDRAISER

The S.S. American Victory will host a viewing of Tampa's "Boat Parade of Lights" on Dec. 21 from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m., as a fundraiser to help support the maintenance of this historic World War II merchant steamship and national landmark. The steamship is located at 705 Channelside Drive in Tampa, behind The Florida Aquarium. Admission is \$12 for adults, and \$7 for children ages 4 to 12, senior citizens, military and veterans. Discounts apply to groups of 10 or more. Tickets can be purchased online at [TicketWeb.com](http://TicketWeb.com), by calling (866) 468-7630, or at the ship. For information, visit [AmericanVictory.org](http://AmericanVictory.org), or call (813) 228-8766.

## WRAP GIFTS FOR SENIORS

Home Instead Senior Care, 29149 Chapel Park Drive in Wesley Chapel, will host a community gift wrapping party on Dec. 20 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. The public is invited to help wrap gifts the organization collected through its Be a Santa to a Senior program. The gifts will be delivered Dec. 21 to senior citizens in the community. For information, call Alison Paladino at (888) 296-2411, ext. 9731.

## PARENT NIGHT OUT

Sports & Field Family Athletic Club, 2029 Arrowgrass Drive in Wesley Chapel, will host a parent night out on Dec. 20 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. The event includes pizza, drinks, crafts, games, movies and more. Cost is \$10. Early drop-off appointments will be available for an additional cost. For information, call Kayla Ramos at (813) 948-5500.

## 'IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE' BROADCAST

The Live Oak Theatre Co. in Brooksville will broadcast a performance of the radio adaptation of "It's a Wonderful Life" on 1450 WWJB-AM and 103.9 WWJB-FM on Dec. 21 from noon to 1 p.m. It also will be broadcast on 99.9 WXJB-FM on Dec. 22 at 9 a.m. The production was recorded in front of a live audience on Dec. 6 and Dec. 7 at the Fellowship Hall of Faith Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Brooksville.

## 'A CHRISTMAS OF GIVING'

Wesley Chapel Nissan, 28519 State Road 54, will host "A Christmas of Giving" through Dec. 21. Guests can visit the showroom and vote for their favorite decorated tree. Each dollar donation counts as a vote. Wesley Chapel Nissan will match donations up to \$500. There is a silent auction to bid on the trees. Proceeds will go to local charities. WJQB-FM, better known as True Oldies 106.3, will broadcast from the dealership on Dec. 21 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. For information, call (813) 751-1300.

## RELAY FOR LIFE GIFT WRAP BENEFIT

The Land O' Lakes Relay For Life Sun Rays team will host a benefit gift wrapping at the Belk store, State Road 54 and Collier Parkway in Land O' Lakes, on Dec. 21 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. For information, call Lilly Fontanez at (813) 746-9329.

## MODEL TRAIN SHOW, SALE

Golden Spike Enterprises will host its Model Train Show & Sale at the Florida State Fairgrounds, 4800 U.S. 301 in Tampa, on



## FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

First Baptist Church of Dade City, 37511 Church Ave., will present the Christmas drama "The Joy of Every Longing Heart" on Dec. 21 at 7 p.m. The church also will have two Christmas Eve candlelight services at 5 p.m., and 6:30 p.m. For information, call (352) 567-3265.

## KEYSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Keystone Community Church, 21010 State Road 54 in Lutz, will host "A Journey to the Manger," a holiday worship service on Dec. 22 at 10:30 a.m. Nursery care will be provided. The church will host a Christmas Eve service on Dec. 24 at 7 p.m. For information, call (813) 948-4522.

## FIRST UNITED METHODIST

First United Methodist Church of Lutz, 960 W. Lutz Lake Fern Road, will host three Christmas Sunday services on Dec. 22. There will be a chapel service at 8 a.m., a blended service at 9:45 a.m., and a contemporary service at 11:30 a.m. It also will host three candlelight services on Christmas Eve, at 3 p.m., 5 p.m., and 7 p.m. Nursery care will be provided. For information, call (813) 949-1751.

## PATH OF HOLINESS CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The Path of Holiness Christian Church, 6757 Land O' Lakes Blvd., in Land O' Lakes, will host a Christmas service on Dec. 22 at 1 p.m. There will be pastries, refreshments, music, and free gifts for children ages 2 months to 12 years. For information, call the church at (813) 991-0192, or call Lilly Fontanez at (813) 746-9329.

## FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

First Christian Church, 6040 Eighth St., in Zephyrhills, will have a Christmas Eve service on Dec. 24 at 7 p.m. For information, call (813) 782-1071, or visit [FirstChristianZihills.org](http://FirstChristianZihills.org).

## OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church, 2348 Collier Parkway in Land O' Lakes, will have mass at 4 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 24, with a pre-Christmas program starting 30 minutes prior to each mass. There also will be a Spanish mass on Dec. 24 at 8:30 p.m., as well as a midnight mass. On Dec. 25, the church will have a 9:30 a.m., and 11:30 a.m. mass. For information, call (813) 949-4565.

Dec. 21 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Dec. 22 from 10 a.m. to 4 pm. More than 350 dealers will have model items in all gauges and railroad antiques for sale. Admission is \$8. Children younger than 12 are free. There is a parking fee. Guests can get a discount coupon at [GSERR.com](http://GSERR.com). For information, call Alan Altman at (813) 949-7197.

## EMPTY THE SHELTER

Animal Services, 19640 Dogpatch Lane in Land O' Lakes, is hosting an Empty the Shelter event on Dec. 21 from noon to 7 p.m., when all adoptable cats and dogs are free. Santa will visit the shelter from noon to 4 p.m., and snacks will be served. For information, call (813) 929-1212.

## FREE ZUMBA CLASS

Local dance studio Inner Rhythm, 23600 State Road 54 in Lutz, is offering a free Zumba class on Dec. 21 from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. For information, email HYPERLINK "<mailto:DanceStudioLutz@gmail.com>"Danc eStudioLutz@gmail.com.

## 'CHRISTMAS IN SMALLTOWN'

Messiah Lutheran Church, 14920 Hutchison Road in Tampa, will celebrate "Christmas in Smalltown" on Dec. 22 from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Guests can visit Christmas village shops, make crafts and eat supper in the Smalltown Town Square. There will be a popcorn cart and snowman area. For information, call (813) 961-2182.

## HUDSON THEATER MUSICAL

Venue Theatre, 9125 U.S. 19 in Hudson, will present a new Christmas musical, "The Last Room," through Dec. 22. The show is an interpretation of the nativity of Jesus as seen through the eyes of the innkeeper. Friday and Saturday performances are at 8 p.m., and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20. Group rates are available. For

reservations, call (727) 822-6194, or email [venueactorstudio@gmail.com](mailto:venueactorstudio@gmail.com).

## BONSAI TREE DEMONSTRATIONS

Eve's Garden Gifts, 5602 Land O' Lakes Blvd., in Land O' Lakes, will host free bonsai tree demonstrations on Dec. 21 and Dec. 28 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Participants will learn to decorate and design a bonsai tree, and get ideas on trimming, potting, and shaping their tree. For information, call (813) 996-5012, or visit [EvesGardenGifts.com](http://EvesGardenGifts.com).

## ALMOST NEW YEAR PARTY FOR SENIORS

Keystone Park Center, 17928 Gunn Highway in Odessa, will host its Seniors Almost New Year Party on Dec. 28 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., for senior citizens age 49 and older. The event will feature refreshments, music, and games. For information, call Paul Russo at (813) 264-3819.

## FREE BREAKFAST AT WHOLE FOODS

Whole Foods Market, 3802 Northdale Blvd., in Carrollwood, will host "Rise N' Shine in the 'Wood" on Dec. 29 from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Guests can enjoy a complimentary light continental breakfast, including pastries, juice, fruit and coffee. For information, call (813) 264-3600.

## MOSI OFFER FOR CITY, COUNTY WORKERS

The Museum of Science and Industry, 4801 E. Fowler Ave., in Tampa, is offering city and county workers a buy one, get one free ticket deal through the remainder of 2013. The offer is good for all workers with a valid employee badge in Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, Polk, Citrus, Hernando, Hardee, Sarasota and Manatee counties. Some exclusions apply. For information, call (813) 987-6000.

## GIVE BEANIE BABIES, GET DISCOUNT

Gulfside Regional Hospice is collecting Beanie Babies at its thrift shops through December to be used in the Mending Hearts Kids' Program. The program visits local schools to perform puppet shows about grief. Each child who attends a show receives a Beanie Baby. Anyone donating a Beanie Baby will receive 25 percent off one item in the store. The shops are located at: • 1930 Land O' Lakes Blvd., Lutz, (813) 909-0485 • 6117 State Road 54, New Port Richey, (727) 842-7262

## VOLUNTEER FOR ARTS FEST

The Suncoast Arts Fest at The Shops at Wiregrass is slated for Jan. 18-19, and is looking for volunteers ages 18 and older. All volunteers will receive training and a show T-shirt. Assignments and tasks include set-up, registration, floaters, information booth, hospitality, booth sitting, teardown and cleanup. Multiple shifts are available with early registration. For information, visit [SuncoastArtsFest.com/volunteers](http://SuncoastArtsFest.com/volunteers).

## TAMPA THEATRE TO HOST COMICS

Tickets are now on sale for comics Dana Carvey on March 7 at 8 p.m., and Lily Tomlin on April 3 at 8 p.m., at the Tampa Theatre, 711 Franklin St., in downtown Tampa. Both shows will be presented by the Straz Center for the Performing Arts. Tickets can be purchased online at [TampaTheatre.org](http://TampaTheatre.org). For information, call (813) 274-8286.

## TAMPA BAY COIN CLUB

The Tampa Bay Coin Club meets the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m., at the Land O' Lakes Community Center, 5401 Land O' Lakes Blvd. The meetings include an auction, raffle, door prizes, guest speaker, free appraisals, and an opportunity to trade with other collectors. For information, visit [TampaBayCoinClub.org](http://TampaBayCoinClub.org).

## COMMUNITY BIBLE STUDY

The First United Methodist Church of Land O' Lakes, 6209 Land O' Lakes Blvd., hosts an interdenominational community Bible study every Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Children are welcome. For information, call Jeanine Coris at (813) 910-7670, email her at [ejcoris@live.com](mailto:ejcoris@live.com), or visit [CommunityBibleStudy.org](http://CommunityBibleStudy.org).

## FLORIDA STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL

Tickets are on sale now for the annual Florida Strawberry Festival in Plant City slated for Feb. 27 through March 9. The festival theme is "Florida's Best Family Recipe." Guests can visit [FLStrawberryFestival.com](http://FLStrawberryFestival.com) to buy tickets.

## BIBLE STUDY GROUP

The Storehouse Bible Study Group meets at the Senior Center, Wisteria Loop in Land O' Lakes, every Thursday at 7 p.m., except the second Thursday of the month. Pastor Dan Brockman leads the group, and refreshments are served. For information, call (813) 235-9239.

## HELP FIGHT HUNGER

The Laker/Lutz News is joining the ongoing fight to help feed community members in need through a food drive. We have a collection box in our office for our readers to drop off donations for Feeding America Tampa Bay-Suncoast Branch in Land O' Lakes, just one of the more than 200 food banks in the Feeding America network. The most needed items are: Canned meats (tuna, chicken, ham, sausage), canned fruits and vegetables, canned and boxed meals (soup, chili, stew, macaroni & cheese), pasta and rice, and peanut butter. No glass please. Pop-top items preferred. No donation is too big or small. The Laker/Lutz News office is in the Copperstone Executive Suites, 3632 U.S. 41, Suite 102, in Land O' Lakes.

# DECEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>



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# Vertige Café

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Chef Caroline tells everyone, "If you have trouble remembering, or pronouncing the name Vertige Café, just imagine "that French place at Wilderness Commons."

Every morning at 3:00 am, Chef Caroline begins her masterful creations for the day. It may be a Chicken and Brie Cheese Quiche, or Broccoli and Cheddar, Mushroom and Goat Cheese. It's what ever she feels her customers may be in the mood for.

Then it is on to the Flat Bread offerings for the day. She ponders for a moment. "Should it be Chicken, Red Pepper and Goat Cheese?, Shrimp Chipotle and Mango?, a Flamenkuchen? (that's Bacon and Onion, if you didn't know) And then moves on to some fresh bakery items. A Pumpkin Scone, or Honey and Cinnamon.

Fresh baked Muffins include, Peanut Butter & Chocolate, Brown Sugar, Oreo or M&M, and a holiday special Dried Fruit & Mixed Nut Christmas Muffin, to name a few.

If you live in the neighborhood and have met Chef Caroline, you already know she was born and raised in France, worked at the Four Seasons Hotel George V in Paris, France before immigrating to the Washington, D.C area, where she managed the Café at the world famous Watergate Hotel.

After moving to the Tampa area with her family, Caroline told us, "I immediately fell in love with the unique atmosphere of the Café, and knew, this was the new home for my Café creations, and my family."

"But it's not just about the food" Caroline tells us. "Our weekly community events are fun for all ages."

"Santa was here on Sunday for pictures with the children, and our Youth Cooking Class two weeks ago, featured the boys vs. the girls, and was enjoyed by the parents, as well as the children."

The Lost Angles Animal Adoption and Michelle's Kids Toy Drive, Putting Big Smiles on Little Faces will continue through the end of the holiday season."



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# BUSINESS DIGEST

Send business news to  
[mhinman@cnewspubs.com](mailto:mhinman@cnewspubs.com)

## RED HYDRANT MOVES, EXPANDS

Red Hydrant Pet Spa and Boutique is moving to a new expanded location at 21780 State Road 54 in Lutz.

The new space, located at Osprey Cove, is 4,700 square feet, and will feature all-breed dog grooming, natural and holistic treats, toys, and an assortment of goodies.

Red Hydrant also will add "indoor" doggy day care, off-leash playtime for pets. Each pet will be evaluated and assigned to a suitable and compatible playgroup. Each group will be closely supervised by trained coaches, who will help support safe play and assist in the acclimation of new dogs into each of the groups.

The new location has been up-fitted with special ventilation and a return air system that will support a clean and sanitary environment.

For more information, call (813) 388-6810, or visit [TheRedHydrant.com](http://TheRedHydrant.com).

## SUPPORT OUR TROOPS GET BIG BOOST FROM TAX COLLECTOR

The Pasco County Tax Collector's Office recently raised nearly \$7,700 for Support Our Troops, an organization dedicated to strengthening the morale and well-being of America's active-duty troops and their families.

The money was raised through sales of the specialty license plate that benefits the organization as well as cash donations.

"The brave men and women who leave their families behind to protect our great nation deserve everything we can do for them," said county tax collector Mike Fasano, in a release.

"These funds will ship hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of assistance to military families overseas, soldiers at the front, and help operate military kids' summer camps," said Martin Boire, president of Support Our Troops of Florida, in a release. "Looking out for the service members who are looking out for us is a tall moral obligation. And the generosity of the people of Pasco County will make a big impact at the personal level in the lives of our troops, their spouses, and their kids."

Support Our Troops operates with a non-program overhead of less than 1 percent, which means 99 percent of donations go to programs and services, which directly impact the troops and their families.

For more information on the organization, visit [www.SupportOurTroops.org](http://www.SupportOurTroops.org).

## WOMEN-N-CHARGE TO MEET IN JANUARY

Women-n-Charge will meet Jan. 3 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Pebble Creek Country Club, 10550 Regents Park Drive in Tampa.

The meeting includes lunch and networking.

Cost is \$15 for members by the Tuesday before the meeting, and \$18 for all guests and members paying after the early deadline.

For more information, call (813) 600-9848, or email [admin@women-n-charge.com](mailto:admin@women-n-charge.com).

## IAAP TO MEET DEC. 19

The City Center chapter of the International Association of Administrative Professionals will meet Dec. 19 beginning at noon at The Tampa Club, 101 E. Kennedy Blvd., in downtown Tampa.

The meeting will be the monthly luncheon, as well as an ornament exchange and food drive for Metropolitan Ministries.

Cost is \$17, with an additional \$2 for parking with validation.

RSVP is required at [treasurer@iaap-citycenter.org](mailto:treasurer@iaap-citycenter.org).

## DOG CARETAKER OPENS IN WESLEY CHAPEL

Bryan's Bow Wow Walks & Cleanup has opened in the Wesley Chapel area, offering daily dog walking, as well as regular pet waste cleanup and all-natural treats for dogs.

It is owned by Bryan Gavros, who says he wants to help people with busy schedules get

their dogs out for exercise and companionship. He also said he will donate canned food for each new pet client to the Humane Society of Pasco County.

For more information on the business, call (630) 788-6965, or email [bgavros@yahoo.com](mailto:bgavros@yahoo.com).

## UPCOMING SCORE SEMINARS

The Pasco-Hernando Chapter of SCORE, which historically stands for Service Corps of Retired Executives, will host the following upcoming free seminars:

- How to Really Start Your Own Business at Centennial Park Branch Library, 5730 Moog Road, Holiday, Jan. 7 at 5:30 p.m. It presents key issues needed to know to start a business, highlighting business structure, the importance of a business plan, cash flow charts, and finding money.

- Advanced QuickBooks at Hudson Regional Library, 8012 Library Road, Hudson, Jan. 14 at 5:30 p.m. The seminar is designed for people who have some reasonable experience using the basics of QuickBooks, but who would like to benefit from more advanced features.

- How to Really Start Your Own Business at Brooksville Main Library, 238 Howell Ave., Brooksville, Jan. 14 at 5 p.m. Presents key issues needed to know to start a business, highlighting business structure, the importance of a business plan, cash flow charts, and finding money.

For more information, or to register, visit [www.score439.org](http://www.score439.org).

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**PRICE REDUCED**  
**Flying Enthusiasts at Tampa Downs Heights!** Well maintained 3/2/2 with an easy floor plan, fabulous curb appeal, towering grand oaks, fully equipped galley kitchen, breakfast nook, huge laundry suite and a walk-in pantry. Exterior workshop. **\$169K.** (ste)



**Landings at Bell Lake Pool Home!** Excellent condition 4/2/2 home with screened solar heated pool. Formal living room & dining room with volume ceiling and ceiling fans, large family room, large kitchen with breakfast bar, and master with walk-in closet. **\$215K.** (ves)



**NEW LISTING**  
**Newly Remodeled in Lake Padgett Estates!** Access to 3 Ski Lakes, community horse stables and park, this 3/2/2 pool home has been completely remodeled to include newer home modern upgrades such as new wood laminate flooring in all main areas. **\$189.9K.** (fal)



**CONTRACT 5 DAYS**  
**Four Bedroom in Carpenter's Run!** Original model home and now "move-in ready". This 4/2/2 reflects one-owner care and affection. New roof, spacious screened lanai, screened front entrance and 6 foot stockade fence in back. Mature landscaping. **\$165K.** (woo)



**PRICE REDUCED**  
**Quail Hollow Pines!** Beautiful custom built 3/2/2 home on a 1 acre lot with lots of country charm, private well and septic, large fenced dog run, serene landscaping and no HOA or CDD fees, so you can bring your boat, RV or work truck home with you. **\$197.9K.** (thu)



**NEW LISTING**  
**Suncoast Pointe Villages!** Move-in ready 3Bedroom 2 Bathroom with a 2 Car Garage is a well cared for property with fenced back yard and comfortable screened lanai. Conveniently located near A-Rated schools, shopping and the Suncoast Parkway. **\$174.9K.** (bel)



**Mint Condition in Lakeshore Ranch!** Beautiful 4/3.5/3 on a cul-de-sac with 24 Hr. Guarded Front Gate & numerous amenities, pool/clubhouse. This house is "Oh" so move in ready. Park like setting in the back yard with a view of the pond. **\$365K.** (lon)



**PRICE REDUCED**  
**Four Bedroom in Concord Station!** Lovely 4/3/2 with an enormous great room with built-in entertainment center, eat-in kitchen, formal dining, mostly tile floors, neutral carpet in bedrooms, and a covered lanai all at a dead end cul-de-sac location. **\$179K.** (dun)



**NEW LISTING**  
**Beautiful Remington Model in Valencia Gardens!** 4 bedroom 3 bath 3 car garage home is move-in ready. Home features upgraded ceramic tile, hardwood flooring, custom window treatments and so much more. No CDD's. **\$271.9K.** (bay)

SURROUNDING AREAS • CALL 949-7444 x100



**Gorgeous Home in Historic Tampa Heights!** This two story 3/2.5 home boasts a great layout, with slate tile, rustic oak hardwood floors, granite counter tops in the kitchen and bathrooms, custom wood accents in the kitchen and stainless appliances. **\$199.9K.** (je)



**NEW LISTING**  
**Bungalow in Southeast Seminole Heights.** Cozy and charming 3 bedroom, 1 bath completely updated. Large living space with wood-burning fireplace and high ceilings. Eat in kitchen, indoor laundry, ample storage space, fenced yard on a corner lot. **\$89.9K.** (ida)



**PRICE REDUCED**  
**Perfect Carrollwood Location!** Townhome with 2 bedrooms and 2.5 baths has fantastic views of canal and lake from patio or from open deck off upstairs master bedroom. Eat-in kitchen overlooking the living room and dining room combo. Guest half bath. **\$79K.** (bri)



**NEW LISTING**  
**Vista Cove Townhomes in Indian Shores!** Unique 2 Bedroom 2 Bathroom 3 Car Garage townhome with deeded access across Gulf Blvd. for Gulf access. It has under building parking for several cars if parked tandem. Don't miss this opportunity! **\$99K.** (gul)



**PRICE REDUCED**  
**Keystone Park Colony in Odessa!** Country style 3/2 manufactured home on huge 1/2 acre lot. Fully equipped eat-in kitchen, spacious master suite, walk-in closet, no deed restrictions, well and septic so no water bill! Bring your boat or RV, & storage shed! **\$59.9K.** (row)

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**NEW LISTING**  
**Two Story with Big Fenced Backyard!** This 3/2.5/2 has wood laminate downstairs in the living & dining rooms, tile in the kitchen, 42" Maple cabinets, storage under stairs and carpet throughout the upstairs. **\$1525/mo.** (tim)



**PRICE REDUCED**  
**Beautiful 4 Bedroom in Belle Chase!** This beautiful 4/3.5/2 features extra office/den. Walk into a large spacious formal living room and dining room with vaulted ceilings. **\$1700/mo.** (nap)



**NEW LISTING**  
**Gorgeous Grand Hampton in Tampa!** Incredible 3/2/2 plus den, fitness Center with state-of-the-art equipment , multi-use Aquatic Center that includes separate competition and resort-style swimming pools and waterslide. **\$1400/mo.** (her)



**Stonegate Village!** This charming 3/2/2 is a 1st time rental, split bedrooms, a spacious great room, formal dining room, and a gourmet kitchen with stainless steel appliances. **\$1595/mo.** (sil)



**Willow Bend!** This 3 Bedroom 2 Bath home with 1 Car Garage is located on a large pond, an open floor plan, large covered and screened back porch with beautiful view. **\$1100/mo.** (sai)



**Rent This Picture Perfect Home!** This 3/2.5/2 is neat, clean and move-in ready. The downstairs is fully tiled and has a great room floor plan and breakfast bar in the kitchen. **\$1350/mo.** (mir)



**Spacious 5 Bedroom in Heritage Harbor!** This 5/3/2 has a large open kitchen with granite countertop and large breakfast bar. Living room features beautiful hardwood floors. **\$2195/mo.** (aqu)



**Plantation Palms Golf Course!** This beautiful 3/2/2 with office and master retreat offers over 2300 SF living space, Cherrywood floors as you enter and in the main areas. **\$1700/mo.** (est)



**Amazing Pool Home in Sable Ridge!** Bright open floor plan 4/3/3 with elegant formal living and dining rooms complete with gas fireplace. The kitchen features snack bar, built-in desk and separate breakfast nook. **\$1850/mo.** (eme)



**Asbel Creek!** Spacious and bright 3/2/2 screened lanai and good size privacy fenced back yard. Split plan with opened kitchen to the family room. Includes all appliances. **\$1200/mo.** (qua)

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## BASEBALL, from page 1

"What's been happening is a decline in membership and an increase in costs," said Rick Parker, a board member and coach for both the current Lutz Little League organization and the upcoming Lutz Baseball operation. "The evolution of the youth leagues have been more toward traveling teams, and that's where many are going. And during all this, Little League has been akin to the Vatican — they don't move, and they don't want to change their doctrine."

Little League and Babe Ruth have a lot of similarities. Both were born during the golden era of baseball, targeting youth to participate in America's Pastime. The Little League World Series is one of the best-known youth athletic events in the world, taking place every year in the league's birthplace of Williamsport, Pa., while Babe Ruth has its annual championship games in various parts of the country.

Where the two leagues split, however, is how they play the game. Little League holds on to its basic game style first established in the 1940s that focus intently on batting and fielding, but not running.

Yet, thanks to its growth at the profes-

sional levels, the running game — base stealing, leading off, fighting for extra bases — has become a key part of the sport. Running game skills are necessary not just at the professional and collegiate level, but even at the high school level, which puts Little League players at a disadvantage.

"Kids want to play baseball, they want to have fun," Parker said. "But when you get to ages of 7, 8 and 9, these are key development years. High school baseball is very competitive, and if you want a chance to potentially open the doors, you're going to have to know the broader nuances of baseball."

The Babe Ruth League, named after one of the sport's most famous players, has two divisions: Babe Ruth Baseball for teenagers, and Cal Ripken Baseball for younger ages.

Lutz joins New Tampa, Bloomingdale, North Brandon and other local communities to make the switch to Babe Ruth, and the decision was virtually unanimous among not only the Lutz board, but its parents and players as well.

"It was not an easy decision," said Dave Crawford, the president of Lutz Baseball, and formerly of Lutz Little League. "Little League has been good to us, but it's just a different way of doing business from Cal Ripken. Little League has been around for a long

time, and been able to grow and evolve. And just with any business model, they have to do what they need to do."

Little League officials in Pennsylvania would not comment on the status of its Lutz operation, but did say they would welcome the league back if it ever changed its mind.

"Little League is constantly changing to adapt to today's standards," spokesman Brian McClintock told The Laker/Lutz News in an email statement. "As the world's largest and most respected youth sports organization, we will continue to provide a positive, safe baseball and softball experience for every child in our programs."

McClintock added that Little League did amend its rules this year to allow for children to play for a Little League in the same boundaries their school is located. They also added an intermediate baseball division this past year for children 11 to 13.

But it was still difficult for the organization to bring in players that with other youth leagues, they'd be able to attract otherwise, Crawford said.

"The Little League boundary policy is the one they are set on. They do that for the protection of the local leagues, and that is very honorable," he said. "With Cal Ripken, we have a little more latitude, to expand our

boundaries for our continued growth, and it seemed very appropriate for us."

The new league will have much wider boundaries, allowing them to bring in players from parts of central Pasco County and northern Hillsborough County.

Although Ruth and Ripken are popular names in baseball, the Lutz program still has some work to do introducing the program locally, and moving people away from its Little League attachment at Oscar Cooler Park.

"Little League is similar to Kleenex," Parker said. "Everyone uses the phrase 'Little League,' but a larger percentage of them don't understand that Little League is kids baseball. That as you get to the older groups, the Little League brand is not necessary."

Registration costs for players will actually be less than last year, typically by \$10, Parker said. And the hope is that bringing in more tournaments through the new league will help generate more revenue, and defray even more costs in the future.

To learn more about the new league, how it will complement travel teams, and to register, visit LutzBaseball.com.

"There's no hard feelings on our end," Crawford said. "We just did some research on some options, and chose the one that was the best for our teams and our future."

## BIBLE, from page 1

them memorizing God's word than how to spell all these different words."

Katherine Forster had to memorize each verse perfectly. Any missed word would deduct points from her overall score.

This was her third trip to the national competition, and she earned her way there through Cornerstone Baptist Church's Kids Bee in June in Brandon. There, Katherine memorized just 24 Bible passages and studied the book of 1 John in depth.

At the finals in Tennessee, Katherine

competed against 60 other teenagers from across the country, and was just one of five representing Cornerstone.

Katherine already is planning on another trip to nationals next year, where she will compete at the seniors level (and a much bigger prize of \$100,000).

However, studying the verses did open her eyes to some aspects of life she hadn't realized before.

"1 John has a huge emphasis on sacrificial love," she said. "That's what sums up all the commandments, the love of God to keep his commandments, and these commandments are all summed up by loving God and loving others."

Katherine spent most of November studying the verses to focus on the bee, and spent December catching up on her other studies. On Sundays, they are regulars at Keystone Bible Church in Odessa, and that has fueled Katherine's desire to some day do mission work, either in person — or through words.

"I love to write stories," she said. "I have a book that I am writing, but I don't have time to write much right now. There might be something with writing, but I'll do whatever the Lord wants."

By memorizing verses, Katherine is learning how to organize a major project, and execute it, her mother said. But there's more

to it than just that, Katherine added.

"You have to be motivated to study," she said. "Bible Bee for me is almost like my life at times, and it's what I'm doing all day long."

Her brothers — Samuel, 12, and Ben, 9 — also participate in the regional bees, but are still looking for that way to bring all the work together.

"They have other stuff they like to do, so (memorizing) is not their big thing," Katherine said.

Also competing from the Tampa area Cornerstone group were Thomas Walter, Rutledge Dixon, Ellie Borah and Kevin Cravens.

## CATALYST, from page 1

The Gilberts' son's partying that night led to his death, and about six months after her son died, Deb Gilbert said she was in his room and having a conversation with God.

She said she was looking at Sean's ashes and telling God: "This is all I have left of my son."

In response, she said she heard God say: "Everything here is ashes, that's not the important thing."

Next, God told her to go to Africa, she said.

"I walked out of Sean's room and said to Mike, 'We're moving to Africa.'

At the time, Deb Gilbert said she knew almost nothing about the continent.

The death of their son was a pivotal moment, causing the couple to reevaluate their lives, Mike Gilbert said. They felt compelled to answer God's call: "God gave us distinctive marching orders."

Before moving to Uganda, however, they did some research on Africa and they visited another ministry that had operations there. Although that ministry didn't feel like the right fit for them, Uganda did, Mike Gilbert said.

So, they started One City Ministries, and moved to Africa.

That was six years ago.

The ministry they've established uses a holistic approach.

"We deal with the economic issues, we deal with the health issues, we deal with the spiritual issues," Mike Gilbert said. "You can't go in and pick one weed and feel like you've weeded the garden. I liken it to building a house. You have to first build the foundation. The foundation to me is opportunity, which brings empowerment, which will help whitewash away at injustices."

When they arrived at the village, they did not give any handouts, Deb Gilbert said.

"We didn't have enough to hand out," she said.

A woman came to them with baskets she had made, and Deb Gilbert bought them.

"Her reaction, I think just stuck with us forever," Deb Gilbert said. "She went to her knees and thanked us. She was able to buy for her family to eat that night."

The word started to get out that Mike and Deb were buying, and people would bring them things they were making. Some were beautiful, others not so much.

The idea, initially, was to bring the artworks to America to sell them and to help raise awareness of the little opportunity these villagers had.

"Our first year, we wanted to bring the stories back. We ended up having 16 giant boxes of things people had made. And, all had a story," Deb Gilbert said.

They brought those items to Grace Family Church in Lutz, where she previously worked, and set up an African marketplace in the sanctuary.

Over time, the program has evolved. Artists produce crafts, which the ministry buys and then ships to America to sell. The money raised from the program covers the ministry's administrative costs, and is reinvested to provide new services. It's also reinvested back into the village's economy, which is how economy gets created, Mike Gilbert said.

This year, the program shipped two tons of goods to be sold, he added.

Besides helping people become economically self-sufficient, the ministry aims to set a good example by refusing to pay bribes to local officials — a very common practice in Africa, Mike Gilbert said.

It also is working to create Light Village, an economically self-sustaining community that can serve as a model for others.

Although they live in Uganda, the couple comes back for about a month each year, staying with local families to defray their expenses. When they come back, they sell goods and share stories about the work of One City Ministries, which help generate support to expand its programs.

"What drives me there is just the injustices they have to endure," Deb Gilbert said.

For more information about One City Ministries, visit [OneCityMinistries.org](http://OneCityMinistries.org).

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# Dealing with grief, stress at holidays

By B.C. Manion  
bcmorian@cnewspubs.com

Heirloom ornaments, twinkling lights and festive wrapping paper can help set the scene for a magical holiday season. But the idealized notions that people carry around in their heads about the holidays rarely happen.

Indeed, no one really experiences the perfect holidays, and the season can be painful or difficult for those grieving the loss of a loved one or experiencing some kind of stress.

"I think a lot of people think, 'Everybody, but our family, is having the Waltons' Christmas, or the Norman Rockwell Christmas, or the Currier and Ives Christmas,'" said Grace Terry, founder of Grief Resolution Resources of Tampa. "Here's the truth: Nobody has the Waltons' Christmas, except the Waltons."

The holidays can be challenging for everyone, Terry said. At best, they may have peaceful and joyful moments, or perhaps, even hours.

"Rarely is there a joyful, peaceful full day, I'm afraid," she said. "Everybody has some stress. Everybody has some memories of past holidays — again, hopefully everybody has some positive memories, but you know, everybody also has some bittersweet memories, and some memories that are not so happy and joyful."

Any time there is a death of a loved one, whether it is a family member or dear friend, the first year after the death can be very challenging, Terry said. As the holidays approach, if the family plans to celebrate together, it's good to have the conversation in advance of the family gathering. That way, "people aren't taken by surprise and wondering, 'Oh, what



Grace Terry

should I do?'

"People will be less awkward or nervous, if we can mention ahead of time, 'I may want to talk about missing mom,' or 'I may want to talk about mom's famous Christmas cookies, or dad's snoring when he falls asleep'" after the holiday meal, she said.

Talking it out ahead of time can help reduce feelings of embarrassment or shame about how to handle the absence of the loved one at the holidays, Terry said. She encourages people to have the conversation, and that it's OK to mention the person's name who died, it's OK if a few tears are shed, and everyone remembers a loved one who is not with them this year.

"Nobody has to be embarrassed or ashamed if we tell our favorite story of the deceased loved one, or we mention 'We surely do miss him,'" Terry said. "If somebody becomes tearful, that's one way of honoring the deceased."

By talking in advance of holiday gatherings, family members may find out that they want to take a different approach this year, Terry said.

"A lot of people make assumptions about what everybody else wants without even asking," she said. "The majority of the people in (the) family might be really wishing that we could really downsize it this year, but everybody's thinking we've got to do what we've always done."

The grief counselor also encourages people to honor their own feelings about how they want to celebrate — or not celebrate — the holidays. Sometimes people

think they have to continue the traditions they've always had, even if they're not up to it, Terry said.

It's also important for people to remember that they are not obliged to do something they don't want to do, just to live up to others' expectations.

"They can take the year off, or they can scale back and streamline to a bare minimum," she said. "The world will keep right on turning. If it just feels like a huge burden and a chore, don't do it. Even if you've done it the same way all of your life, it's OK to do it differently this year if you want to do it differently."

Traditions are wonderful, Terry said, but "sometimes they just need to grow and evolve, and deal with present reality."

It's also important to remember that what works for one person may not work for another.

"People do grieve differently," Terry said.

Friends of the bereaved might also be at a loss as to how to help. Terry says to tell them they know that for a lot of people, the first holiday season after the death of a loved one can be painful and difficult.

"How are you feeling about the winter holidays that are coming up?" Terry suggests. "What do you think would be best for you, and how can I support that?

"Then, shut up and listen."

For those who are struggling with grief, Terry advises that they reach out for

## Grief Café

Grief Café is a relaxed small group conversation about loss and grief facilitated by a professional that meets the third Thursday of the month from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m., in the board room of Cooper Financial Services, 5420 Land O'Lakes Blvd., in Land O'Lakes.

Upcoming sessions are set for Dec. 19 and Jan. 16.

The groups generally are kept to 10 people or fewer. There is no charge, but donations are accepted. If you'd like to attend, please reserve a spot by 5 p.m., the day before the session, by calling (727) 487-3207.

support, and never feel embarrassed by it.

"Everybody needs support all of the time," she said. "When we're grieving, we need extra."

Terry organizes sessions called Grief Café where people who are struggling with grief can share in an informal setting. When people don't work through their grief, it can manifest itself in substance abuse, broken relationships and spiritual despair, Terry said.

She also had another bit of advice for those who want to help the bereaved during the holidays: "Practice kindness and tolerance in the spirit of the season."

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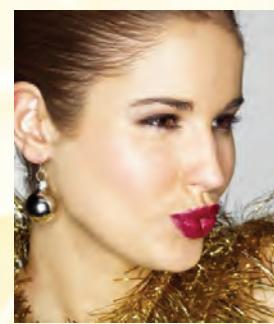
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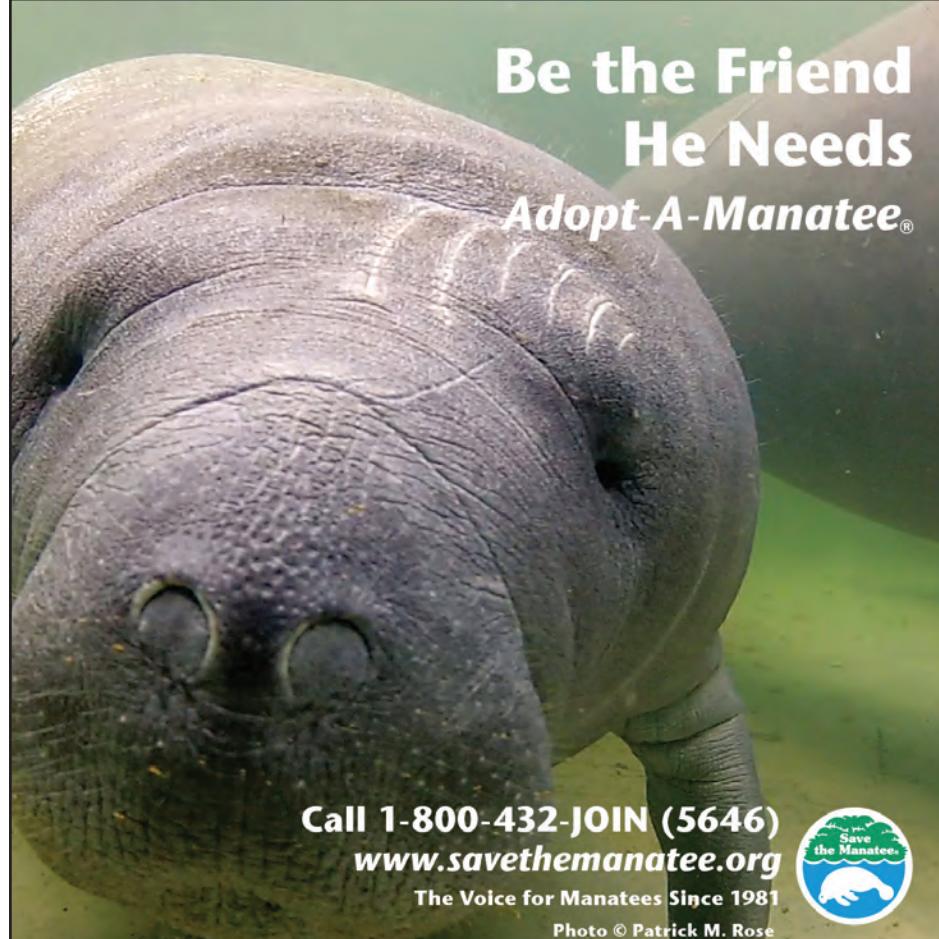
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# Staying safe on the roads this holiday season

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

With the holidays approaching, and plans for visiting family and friends in full swing, the Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles department is reminding travelers of the importance of using seatbelts and making sure children are properly secured in a car or booster seat.

A recent seatbelt survey showed that nearly 90 percent of Florida drivers are using seatbelts. While the statistics are encouraging, officials said that still leaves 10 percent of Floridians not buckling up.

"This time of year can be hectic, and in our rush to get everything done, it can be easy to overlook some necessary safeguards," said Julie Jones, executive director



of the highway safety and motor vehicles department, in a release. "Whether it's a trip across town to go shopping, or a trip across the state to see relatives, it's important to take that extra minute before driving off to ensure that everyone in the vehicle is buck-

led up and secure for the journey."

Ananth Prasad, secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation, said seatbelt enforcement has helped drive down fatalities and injuries on the state's roadways.

"More lives can be saved, and we will continue to educate about the importance of buckling up every trip, every time," he said, in a release.

- **Florida law requires** the use of seatbelts by all drivers, and all children under the age of 18.

- **Car seats should be used** for children younger than 3 for every trip, even if the trip is just going down the street.

- **Make sure all car and booster seats**

are crash-tested and federally approved.

- **Select a car seat based** on a child's age and size, and always follow the manufacturer's directions.

- **Keep children in the back seat,** at least through age 12. When used with seatbelts, airbags work well to protect teenagers and adults. However, they can be very dangerous to children.

- **Soon-to-be parents should buy** their infant car seat before having the baby so they can be ready to bring home their newest family addition safely.

- **Replace a car seat** if the vehicle has been in a moderate to severe crash to ensure a continued high level of protection.

For more information and additional safety tips, visit [www.flhsmv.gov/fhp/CPS](http://www.flhsmv.gov/fhp/CPS).

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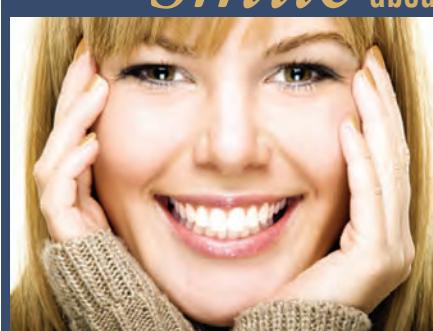


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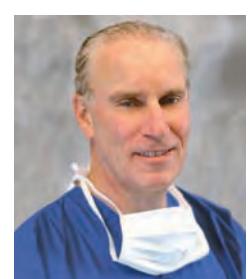
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# Community Sports

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## Bonk finds peace in busy career as tennis official

By Michael Murillo

The Laker/Lutz News Correspondent

You always know when a professional tennis player is performing well. They're defeating opponents, earning trophies and hearing cheers from the crowd.

The best players become popular and wealthy, and tennis enthusiasts know their name.

But what about tennis officials? They don't hear any supporters cheer their success. They aren't popular. They don't endorse athletic shoes or equipment. And fans don't know their name.

Usually when they're recognized it's because of an unpopular call or a verbal dispute with a player, like the famous court conflicts with player John McEnroe back in the 1980s.

Officials don't get the accolades, the glory or the money that some players earn, but their job is just as difficult. A player makes several mistakes each game, but can forget about them and bounce back for a victory. But an official is expected to be perfect all the time, stay focused for every point of every game in every set of a match, and stay composed no matter what challenges they have to face.

And they do it sitting by themselves in a large chair overseeing the match, both an integral part of the contest and an invisible spectator.

But occasionally, the best officials will get some recognition for their hard work. On Dec. 7, the U.S. Tennis Association's Florida section awarded Lutz resident Kim Bonk the Official of the Year award at its annual meeting in Orlando.

"It's an honor and it's very humbling," said Bonk, who also was elected president of the Bay Area Tennis Officials Association in 2013. "After 10 years of hard work, it's an honor to be recognized."

Bonk's desire to become an official stemmed partially from her late entry into the world of tennis. She didn't start playing until her mid-30s — when many singles players would be retiring — so a lucrative professional career wasn't in the cards. But after her husband (and avid player) Pete



Kim Bonk enjoys her love of tennis as an official, working at all levels of the game — from amateur to professional. She was recently recognized by the U.S. Tennis Association for her work behind the scenes of tennis. (Photo courtesy of Kim Bonk)

drew her into the game, she wanted to be part of the action.

When the opportunity came up to learn officiating, Bonk took advantage and excelled in the role. Now she works matches at the junior, collegiate and professional level, even serving as line judge at U.S. Open matches.

But regardless of the level of play, Bonk maintains the same attitude heading into the match: She wants to know everything about

the rules, and almost nothing about the players.

"Unless I'm in the chair, a lot of times I don't know who the players are," she said. "I'll recognize the face, but I don't like to know their name, I don't like to know their seeding, I don't like to know their ranking. To me they're just another player on the court. I try not to know anything about them or their playing history so that (the officiating) stays as a non-biased opinion."

While Bonk remains non-biased, she realizes that those playing the game are naturally biased and emotional, and sometimes that emotion turns into anger and conflict with officials. But when coaches or players get upset, she responds calmly.

When they react unprofessionally, she doles out the appropriate punishment (such as warnings or point or game penalties). And when they later come back and apologize for their behavior — which they often do — she accepts and doesn't take offense at the outburst.

"People can be upset at you, but it's not necessarily that they're upset with you," Bonk said. "As an official, you have to be there and willing to listen to them, not take it personally and make a decision based on the rules."

If it sounds like Bonk has an almost superhuman ability to stay calm, her background contributed to her officiating skills. As a former pharmaceutical sales representative, she learned how to interact with a wide variety of customers, read body language, and hone people and listening skills. Now, those same traits have helped her deal with players of different ages, abilities and personalities in her job as an official.

And while it's a full-time job, being an official is not a traditional 40-hour a week position. She'll spend many days on the road, then have some time off, then gear up for the start of different seasons. Currently she's on break, but will have a full schedule from January until May, which will mean officiating junior, college and professional matches all in the span of just a few months.

When Bonk does get some free time, she doesn't stray far from the court. She's happy to grab a racket and play recreationally or in a league, and said that playing the game is an important activity for a good official because it allows them to better understand the players and their motivations. But when asked whether she would prefer a great day on the court as a player or as an official, she made a tough-but-decisive call befitting an award-winning official:

"That's a draw," she said with a laugh. "They're both good."

## CHECK THIS OUT

### New Tampa YMCA pool closing for renovations

Renovation work is expected to begin by mid-January at the New Tampa Family YMCA swimming pool, which means it will be closed until early February.

The 50-meter pool is looking at being expanded as well through a work schedule that runs from Jan. 13 until Feb. 3.

"Our goal at the New Tampa Family YMCA has always been to create the best environment for our swim team program," said Stu Wilson, director of competitive swimming for the YMCA, in a release. "We are very excited to modernize and expand our pool facility to better serve our swimmers. We appreciate the community's patience during the temporary closure."

Practice for the Tampa YMCA Stingrays, the competitive year-round swim team, will take place in the following locations:

• **East Pasco Family YMCA**, 37301 Chapel Hill Loop in Zephyrhills, on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the senior group, and again from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays. The advanced age group runs from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays.

• **Bob Sierra's Youth and Family Center**, 4015 Ragg Road in Tampa, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for the ad-

vanced age group from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., and again Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., and Sundays from noon to 2 p.m. The green/black age group will meet Tuesdays from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Sundays from noon to 2 p.m. The senior group meets Sundays from noon to 2 p.m.

Practice for the synchronized swim team will take place at these locations:

• **Plant City Family YMCA**, 1507 YMCA Place in Plant City, on Tuesdays for the 13 to 15 age group from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., and the advanced age group on Tuesdays from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday will run the normal schedule at the pool.

• **Bob Sierra's Youth and Family Center**, all on Saturday, with the 11 to 12 age group meeting from 10:15 a.m. to 11:45 a.m., the 13 to 15 age group from 11:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., and the advanced age group from 11:45 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.

The New Tampa YMCA pool was built in 2001, and is heated in the winter and chilled in the summer.

For more information about the closure and the adjusted schedules, email alexis.mendenhall@tampaymca.org, or stuart.wilson@tampaymca.org.

### Adult soccer league wants players

With the fall season ready to commence, adult soccer players are being sought to participate in a league that plays men's, women's and coed games Sunday afternoons at CrossRoads Community Methodist Church on County Line Road in Wesley Chapel.

Players must be 18 or older.

For more information, call Colin at (747) 999-5425, or visit NewAPSL.com.

### Sign up for lacrosse tournament

Registrations are now being accepted for the 2014 Lax Max Florida Lacrosse Tournament taking place at Lakewood Ranch on the weekend of April 6.

Lax Max is designed for recreational travel and town team programs within Florida. The event offers a choice of either one-day three-game jamboree, or a two-day tournament. It features boys and girls round-robin competitions at various levels for ages under-10 through under-18. For more information, visit USAAmateurSports.com, or email usamateursports@aol.com.

### Senior Slo Pitch registration

The Slo Pitch Softball League, geared toward players older than 60, will host registration every Friday beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the Land O' Lakes Recreation Complex, 3932 Collier Parkway in Land O' Lakes.

Teams will be balanced, and will play Friday mornings. For more information, call Walt Bockmiller at (813) 527-8211.

### Baseball clinic in Land O' Lakes

Rockstar Performance Baseball will conduct a four-week winter instructional training camp in December and January for players between the ages of 6 and 18 at the Land O' Lakes Little League sports complex.

Training will focus on hitting, fielding, base running, pitchers and catchers instruction. It will review key mechanics, common mistakes and how to fix those mistakes through proper drill sequence and identification. For more information, visit www.Rockstar-Baseball.com.

### Everyone Can Play

The fourth annual Everyone Can Play special needs baseball clinic will be Jan. 11 beginning at 9 a.m. at Mary Help of Christian Center, 6400 E. Chelsea St., in Tampa.

The group is looking for volunteers, sponsors and players, and all clinics are taught by local athletes for participants age 4 and older. For more information, visit EveryoneCanPlay.org.

### Contest has high schools cheering

The Florida High School Athletics Association has launched the Sunshine State Spirit Showdown, a video contest in which students are encouraged to submit videos showing their classmates and community exhibiting positive sportsmanship while rooting for their favorite school. For more information, visit tinyurl.com/SpiritShowdown.

—Submit your sports updates to mhinman@cnewspubs.com.

# Study: Americans more cautious about holiday spending this year

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

Some Americans are planning to hold onto their wallets this holiday season.

At least that's according to a new survey from Edward Jones, which found that 37 percent surveyed said they plan to spend less on holiday shopping in 2013 than they spent the year before.

Yet, retail analysts with Edward Jones are anticipating holiday sales to increase about 2.8 percent.

"While we expect some sales growth in the retail market this holiday season, those polled expressed a conservative view on holiday spending," said Brian Yarbrough, consumer discretionary analyst for Edward Jones, in a release. "This differs from our retail forecasts for the remainder of the year. We anticipate solid numbers from most retailers, with luxury players leading the charge."

The survey was conducted during the government shutdown earlier this year, providing a unique perspective into how the political landscape and other short-term events may impact consumer spending behaviors. Another 39 percent said their shopping budget would remain the same as previous years, while 18 percent plan to spend more.

Americans have been inundated by negative headlines regarding changes in economic policy, the impact of rising interest rates, and disparate political views coming out of Washington," Yarbrough said. "It's clear that these issues have heightened uncertainty, and caused individuals to second-guess their saving and spending behaviors. However, it's important to stay the course and take a long-term approach to spending, saving and investing, especially with all of the short-term uncertainty."

Other highlights from the survey include:

- **Shopping early to take advantage of promotional deals.** Of Americans planning to buy holiday gifts this year, 24 percent have already started to tackle their lists. Less than half planned to conduct their shopping before Thanksgiving, and just 26 percent plan to take advantage of "Black Friday" or "Cyber Monday" sales. One-third say they will wait until December before they get started.

- **Younger shoppers most likely to spend.** Respondents between the ages of 18 and 34 are the most likely to spend more in 2013 than in 2012, while only 12 percent of respondents between 35 and 44 plan to spend more. Nearly half of respondents 55 and older plan to spend the same as they did in 2012.

- **Youngest Americans likely to spend on marquee shopping days.** The survey's youngest respondents, those between 18 and 34, are far more likely to shop on Black Friday or Cyber Monday, with one-quarter indicating they plan to do so, compared to just 13 percent of Americans 55 and older.

- **Larger households more likely to conduct holiday shopping.** When taking household size into consideration, 91 percent of Americans with three or more individuals in their household plan to shop for the holidays this year, compared with 59 percent of single-person households. Additionally, 29 percent of single-person households and 6 percent of households with three or more people do not plan to buy holiday gifts this year, but have in the past.

Edward Jones has several offices locally, including Jimmy C. Tovar at 1532 Land O' Lakes Blvd., in Lutz, and William Morales Jr., at 2748 Windguard Circle in Wesley Chapel.

For more information, visit [EdwardJones.com](http://EdwardJones.com).

# First batch of Wild Wonderland winners

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

Early entries into The Laker/Lutz News Winter Wonderland Coloring Contest has earned four local artists two tickets each to Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo.

It's all part of Wild Wonderland, the holiday celebration during select nights in December at the zoo, located at 1101 W. Sligh Ave., in Tampa.

It's presented by Publix Super Markets Charities.

This week's winners can be found on the newspaper's Facebook page by visiting [Facebook.com/TheLakerLutzNews](http://Facebook.com/TheLakerLutzNews). They include:

- **Malina Young, 7,** a second-grader at Double Branch Elementary School. She enjoys drawing, and is the daughter of Rebecca Perez of Dade City.

- **Olivia Hopkins, 8,** a third-grader at Wesley Chapel Elementary School. She enjoys art and piano, and is the daughter of Becki Hopkins of Wesley Chapel.

- **Brooke Thomson, 11,** a sixth-grader at Rushe Middle School. She enjoys art, softball and movies, and is the daughter of Tonya Thomson of Lutz.

- **Hannah Goserud, 10,** a fourth-grader at Lake Myrtle Elementary School. She loves to sing, and is the daughter of Doug and Connie Goserud of Land O' Lakes.

## Avoiding scams over the holiday season

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

The perfect puppy for a spouse. A car priced just right for a teenager.

Sales and special offers typically increase during the holidays, and scammers also are poised to try and steal people's hard-earned cash.

The Better Business Bureau and Western Union are partnering to help consumers with tips to avoid falling for a scammer's tricks when shopping for holiday gifts.

"Scam artists prey on consumers' desire to make loved ones happy with special gifts during the holidays," said Carrie Hurt, president and chief executive of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, in a release. "They use this impulse to overcome the victim's reasoning, telling the victim that he or she must act quickly."

Scam artists, Hurt said, often sound so convincing that victims don't feel the need to check out their real qualifications.

Because of that, she suggests people deal with established organizations like rescuing a puppy from a local shelter, or buying a car from a local, legitimate dealer.

Western Union and BBB have set up a website, [BBB.org/scam](http://BBB.org/scam), to help consumers reduce their chances of becoming a scam victim. The two also remind consumers to never send a money transfer to someone they have not met in person.

It is even more important to use caution when bidding on items using an online auction. Buyers are told the seller only accepts money transfers for payment. The seller then tells the buyer to put the transaction in a fictitious name, falsely convincing the victim this protects their money until the goods or services are received.

The seller retrieves the funds, and the merchandise never arrives.

For more information on these types of scams, visit [WesternUnion.com/stopfraud](http://WesternUnion.com/stopfraud).

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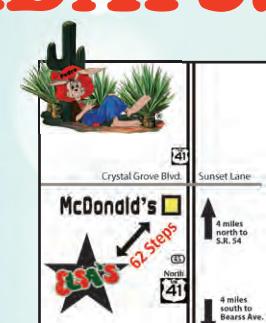
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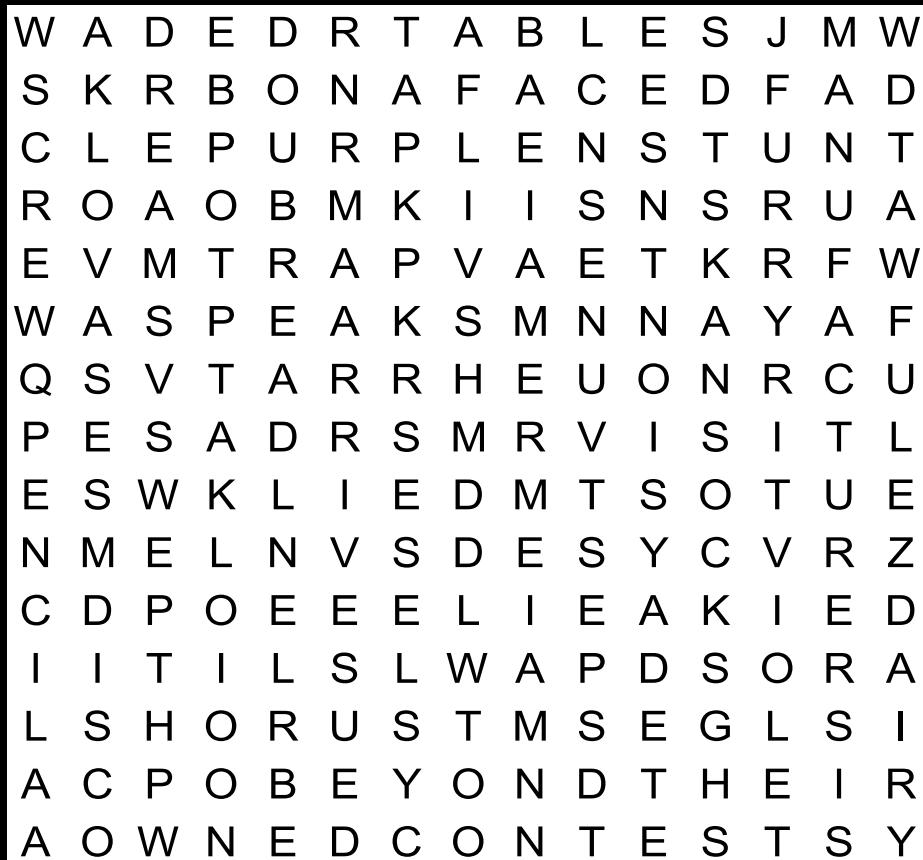
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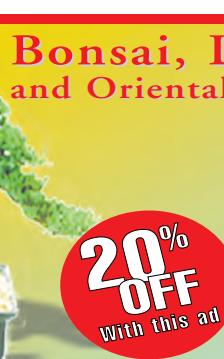
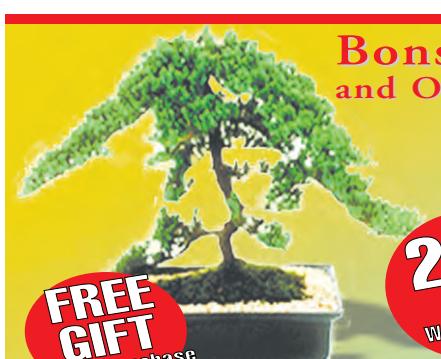
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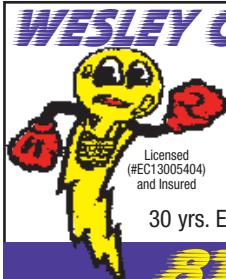
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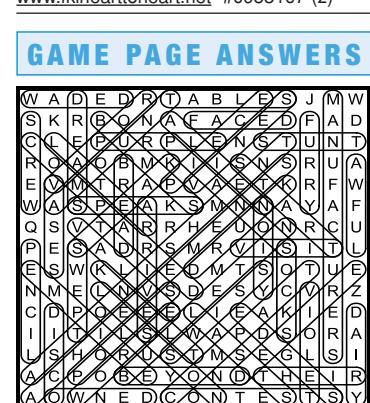
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