Plantation Palms Golf Club closes

By Michael Hinman

mhinman@lakerlutznews.com

It’s closed again. Plantation Palms Golf Club has shut down the course, and it’s not clear when it will reopen. Unless you’re a resident, a guest or a vendor, anyone thinking about trying to get into the Plantation Palms community off Collier Parkway should think again.

The community is on lockdown, even during the day. And it’s all because the golf course has shut down … again.

Nine months after closing for a week, Plantation Palms Golf Club has shuttered its links, and this time there’s no telling when it might reopen.

That’s forced the homeowners association at Plantation Palms to act swiftly to protect not only its residents, but the private golf course as well.

“While not our property and not our legal responsibility, the golf course is a critical component of our neighborhood,” said the board, led by president David Gunsteeens, in a written statement to The Laker/Lutz News. “Many of our residents purchase their homes based on the excellent golf course. Not only that, but one of the benefits all of us enjoy in living in a golf course community is whether golf enthusiasts want to live here.”

See GOLF, page 14

Pasco lacks incentives for local filmmakers

By Michael Hinman

mhinman@lakerlutznews.com

Years of filming low-budget shorts in and around Pasco County finally paid off for Christopher Leto when investors offered $250,000 to fund his biggest movie yet, a horror thriller called ‘The Ritual.’

Yet when filming starts later this month, it won’t happen anywhere near his Land O’ Lakes home. Instead, Leto and his crew are heading south to Sarasota County where he can take advantage of film incentives like a 20 percent rebate on certain purchases, and waived costs for government services.

“I met with the film commission there, and they were amazing,” Leto said. “Everything I asked them to do, they would bend over backward to help me get what I needed.”

He didn’t have a choice, Leto said, as he would’ve much preferred to stay right in Pasco County. “I didn’t want to go to Sarasota to shoot my movie,” he said. “But they have incentives that are really nice.”

Pasco has what officials here call a simple permitting process with no fees, and a requirement to carry an insurance rider that costs around $85. But don’t expect too much help beyond that. Pasco County not only lacks incentives for filmmakers, it lacks an actual film commission.

The work instead is handled through Pasco’s Office of Tourism Development, a department led by Ed Caum, who admits he is forced to wear so many hats, the film industry is almost an afterthought. Which is probably why the county’s website still links to a golf course community, whether golf enthusiasts want to live here.

See FILMMAKERS, page 14

Check out our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/LakerLutzNews

You’ll find stories, things to do, specials, community photos and more.

B.C. MANION/STAFF PHOTO

Barnes & Noble offers showcase for local authors

By B.C. Manion

bmanion@lakerlutznews.com

Seventeen local authors will gather at Barnes & Noble at The Shops at Wiregrass May 17 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., to sell their books and chat with patrons.

It’s a fun event for the authors, Brouillard said. Besides having a chance to sell their work, they get to talk to customers and to network with each other.

B.C. MANION/STAFF PHOTO

If you’re looking for a new recipe, want to make a quilt, are in the mood for a little dark humor or want to be inspired, a selection of books by local authors may appeal to you.

Seventeen local authors will gather at Barnes & Noble at The Shops at Wiregrass May 17 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., to offer their works for sale, chat with potential patrons, and sign books.

“It’s Barnes & Noble’s way to recognize the community,” said Paul Brouillard, assistant store manager at the bookstore, which is located at 28152 Paseo Drive in Wesley Chapel. “Our customers are readers. A lot of them aspire to be authors and have their books for sale in our store. So this is a great way to get the authors who are local to our store.

It’s a fun event for the authors, Brouillard added. Besides having a chance to sell their work, they get to talk to customers and to network with each other.

The store will set the writers up in clusters at different locations in the store, with a sprinkling of genres at each table, Brouillard said.

“I’ll have a teen book maybe next to maybe one of the cooking books and the quilting book, something like that,” he said.

Some authors have been there before, such as Leigh Kenyon, a teenager who wrote ‘The Zebra Riders,’ and Madonna Jervis Wise, a retired educator who has written several books, including ‘Wildcat Creek Kids,’ ‘Sam & Company,’ and ‘Juanita in Blue.’ She’s also co-author of ‘Kachina and the Bull.’

Evelyn Johnson-Taylor, a women’s ministry leader, will be there with her book ‘A Woman’s Call Living a Life of Purpose.’

Those interested in learning to quilt can pick up some pointers from Elizabeth Jackson, author of ‘Becoming a Confident Quilter.’

Guy Cote will offer his book ‘Look Long the King: Book One of the Charlemagne Saga.’ Milt Harris will have three titles available, a book for young readers called ‘Foxy Roxy,’ a self-help guide titled ‘Ceilings,’ and a quilting book, something like that, he said.

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Applicants sought for Community Water-Wise Awards

The Lakeland/Lutz News Staff Report

Tampa Bay Water is now accepting applications for the 2014 Community Water-Wise Awards program until June 30.

The program is designed for those whose yards incorporate Florida Friendly Landscaping principles with an attractive design. It’s open to residents, businesses, builders or other organizations in Pasco, Hillsborough and Pinellas counties, as well as the cities of Tampa, St. Petersburg and New Port Richey.

The online application is available at TampabayWaterWise.org, and should include a brief description and photos of an applicant’s water-efficient landscape. Each entry will be evaluated and scored on-site by a Florida Friendly Landscaping representative during regular business hours in July, but the applicant does not have to be present during the evaluation.

“It’s part of our station’s mission to try to minimize our impact on the environment,” said Paul Carrol of WMNF Radio, who won in 2012. “We separately meter the water for irrigation of the station, so we know exactly how much we use, and we try to take that down to zero.”

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FTRI is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. 888-554-1151

Lutz leader: ‘The system, this time, worked’

By B.C. Manion
bcmanion@lakerlutznews.com

Towering stands of pine trees and open fields characterize the plot of land at the northeast corner of Van Dyke Road and North Dale Mabry Highway but that property soon could have an entirely new look.

The parcel is part of a 251-acre plan that calls for upscale houses, multifamily units, offices, retail and a congregate care facility.

Lutz residents are notorious for battling proposals they believe will disrupt their way of life. But in this case, they turned out en masse to support the proposed project.

That’s because of all the work the applicants and community did before the public hearing took place.

“They negotiated with our community members in good faith,” said Mike White, the president of the Lutz Citizens Coalition. “The system, this time, worked. And, it worked well.”

Attorney Joel Tew and Richard Davis represent Geraci Land Acquisition LLC and Standard Pacific Homes of Florida, who presented their rezoning applications as companion requests. The companies are seeking to change the land from its current agricultural zoning to planned developments (PDs).

“With the community in good faith, our planning department has worked hard with them,” said Van Dyke Road, instead of the second hearing, as well, at the request of those testifying.

One request incorporates the Landings at Lake Pearl, a previously approved rezoning that includes 650 multifamily units and 70,000 square feet of office.

“We agreed, at the county’s request, to essentially roll that PD into the new PD,” Tew said. “The county preferred to have one consolidated PD that would give easier site plan control, easier enforcement of conditions, easier platting and easier development approval, so we were happy to do that.”

Besides the existing entitlements, the application calls for 240 single-family houses. Standard Pacific is planning a gated, high-end residential community. Another parcel is planned for 177 multifamily units.

The new requests total 417 dwelling units, about 25 percent of what would be allowed under the county’s long-range land-use plan, Tew noted. The retail uses requested in the companion proposal represents about one-third of what would be allowed under the long-range plan designation.

In essence, the requests are substantially less than the major community centers that were designated on the county’s long-range plan, Tew said.

The applicants also worked hard with the community and the county’s staff to work out conditions that addressed concerns and will create a quality project, Tew said.

“We have had a total of eight meetings with the major community associations that are directly affected by this project,” he said. “We’ve had a very valuable, constructive input from them. We’ve listened to their concerns and we’ve made significant changes to the plan.”

Both requests received favorable recommendations from the Planning Commission and the county’s land development staff.

Ethan Hammer, a professional planning expert working for the applicants, noted that the proposed developments include conditions that exceed the county’s land development code.

“There are project enhancements, such as increased setbacks from surrounding properties,” Hammer said. “There are conditions that deal with building orientation, which is somewhat unusual. There’s enhanced landscaping and there are requirements for signage that are above and beyond the normal requirements in the code.”

Conditions also call for a number of transportation improvements that residents want. The applications include a signaled intersection at Exciting Idlewild Boulevard and North Dale Mabry Highway.

They also agreed to a single access point off of Van Dyke Road, instead of the three they initially requested.

The limited access on Van Dyke Road was essential to gain the support of area residents and the Lutz Citizens Coalition, who were concerned about traffic impacts both on Van Dyke and nearby neighborhoods.

Pamela Joe Hamlin, an attorney representing the coalition as well as some individual Lutz residents, said “the broader community has expressed its support.”

“The applicants and their representatives met with my clients and with me, and they listened to my clients’ concerns and they were very responsive,” she said. “We appreciated that.”

About 40 people turned out to show their support.

Winners are awarded a custom-made, mosaic landscape stepping stone during a ceremony presented by county commissioners, city council members or even mayors within their local government.

Tampa Bay Water is the largest wholesale water supplier in Florida, providing high-quality drinking water to its members, who in turn supply water to more than 2.5 million residents in the Tampa Bay area.

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About 40 people turned out to show their support.
It’s said that J. Edgar Hoover himself traveled from Washington, D.C., to Dade City, to remember prohibition agent John Van Mecklenburg, who was killed during a high-speed chase on U.S. 41 in 2011 that crossed into Pasco County.

Pasco County Sheriff’s deputy John McCabe also died on U.S. 41, but in 1948, while responding to a call about stolen groove heaters.

“This day, let us remember these men not by how they died, but how they walked through the shadowy ways of their very existence,” said U.S. Circuit Court Judge William Burgess III after reading the roll of the fallen officers.

These officers honored also included Lt. Charles ‘Bo’ Harrison, who was killed June 1, 2003, while doing surveillance near a Dade City nightclub. A sniper, whose only goal reportedly was to shoot a police officer, hid in the nearby woods and shot Harrison in the back. Harrison, who was 56, was just 15 days away from retirement after 31 years of service.

Also remembered was a member of the Florida Highway Patrol, Trooper James Bradford-Jean Crooks, who was just 23 in May 1998 when he was slain by a man who had earlier killed two Tampa Police Department officers and a young boy Brad Crooks, as he was known by, never had a chance to get out of his car, was shot and killed on the off-ramp of Interstate 75 into Wesley Chapel.

And then there was the first officer ever killed in Pasco in the line of duty: Sheldon Nichols was working with his father, Fivay township marshal H. Robert Nicks, to serve a warrant. When the man they were serving realized he was being arrested, he pulled a gun. The younger Nichols jumped in front of the bullet, saving his father, but died on May 8, 1922.

‘None of whom we honor today can be defined by their deaths,’ Florida Highway Patrol Capt. Ken Ayers said U.S. Circuit Court judge William Burgess III after reading the roll of the fallen officers.

In a world where so many times we get wrapped up in the petty little things of life, this is a moment that we can reflect upon what is most important.

Last year the death toll for law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty dropped to its lowest numbers in more than 50 years. And while those are statistics that should be celebrated, Dade City Police Chief Ray Velbohm warned that work to protect officers is still needed.

It’s truly a special day for us,” Sheriff Chris Nocco told the crowd of spectators who stood in a steady downpour to honor the officers. “In a world where so many times we get wrapped up in the petty little things of life, this is a moment that we can reflect on what is most important.”

While this number is gratifying somewhat, one life is still too many.

“We as leaders continue to work hard to provide our officers with the awareness and training they need to confront the many dangers they are facing. We must strive to create a new culture of safety in law enforcement that addresses the elements of our job that we can control, such as driving habits.”

Two of Pasco’s deaths were automobile accidents, including the most recent, Hernando County Sheriff’s deputy John Mecklenburg, who was killed during a high-speed chase on U.S. 41 in 2011 that crossed into Pasco County.

Justice officer was killed alongside Pasco County constable Arthur Crenshaw on Oct. 4, 1922, in an ambush soon after investigating an illegal distillery near Dade City.

Rebecca Mecklenburg’s 35 years of service was just 15 days away from retirement after 31 years of service.

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Schools rack up awards for good performance

The Lakeland News Staff Report

Public schools in Hillsborough County earned nearly $8.5 million in Florida School Recognition Program awards, according to figures released by the Florida Department of Education.

Schools eligible to receive the recognition awards include those receiving an A school grade; those improving at least one letter grade from the previous year; those improving more than one school grade and sustaining the improvement the following year; or alternative schools meeting state improvement criteria.

Award distributions are based on $100 per full-time equivalent student for each eligible school.

Hillsborough schools receiving awards locally were:
- Benito Middle: $107,383
- Chiles Elementary: $78,259
- Clark Elementary: $82,957
- Hammond Middle: $69,710
- Liberty Middle: $104,342
- Lutz Elementary: $58,750
- Maniscalco Elementary: $54,156
- Martinez Middle: $108,800
- Schwarzkopf Elementary: $60,163
- Tampa Palms Elementary: $76,953
- Wharton High: $26,050
- Walker Middle Magnet: $80,066

Pasco schools receiving awards were:
- Pasco High: $138,375
- Oakstead Elementary: $107,492
- Double Branch Elementary: $83,647
- Long Middle: $160,838
- Wiregrass Ranch High: $193,549
- Sunlake High: $155,626
- Veterans Elementary: $80,196
- Connerton Elementary: $86,881
- Pine View Middle: $90,207
- Lake Myrtle Elementary: $66,713
- Sand Pine Elementary: $63,254
- Wesley Chapel Elementary: $62,054
- Seven Oaks Elementary: $94,166
- Academy at the Farm: $38,982
- Countryside Montessori: $23,200
- Imagine School at Land O’ Lakes, $65,560

The Florida Lottery provides the program’s funding, and the legislation that created it authorizes the school’s staff and school advisory council to decide how to use the funds.

The money can be used for bonuses for the faculty and staff, for educational equipment or materials, or for temporary personnel to help the school maintain or improve student performance.

If bonuses are awarded, the staff and advisory team decide who receives them and how much each person receives, according to the state Department of Education’s website.

Land O’ Lakes Branch Library

- Baby Storytime, 11:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., every Thursday
- Preschool Storytime, 11:30 a.m., every Friday
- Reading Buddies, 10 a.m., every Saturday
- Alzheimer’s Association/Confidant Support, 11 a.m., May 7
- LOL Social Seniors, 10 a.m., May 8
- Tween Gaming, 2 p.m., May 10
- Chess Club, 2 p.m., May 10 and May 24
- Japanese Class, 3 p.m., May 10 and May 24

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Forget finance, B.A. Arnot finds his sweet spot

Getting to know B.A. Arnot

What are you watching on TV?
There have been tons of shows on that everyone likes, but I tend to only watch TV on Wednesday nights when I'm off. So the shows I'm watching are "Burn Notice" and "Suits."

What music group makes you turn up the radio?
Nirvana. Or really anything on 102.5 The Bone.

If you could spend a week anywhere?
I would go to St. Andrews Links, the golf course in Scotland. It's the most famous course in the world.

Best golfing movie?
"The Legend of Bagger Vance."

B.A. Arnot doesn't mind the long commute from his home in Zephyrhills to LongHorn Steakhouse in Tampa's Westshore district. He's worked with the restaurant since the days when guests still threw discarded peanut shells on the floor.

Recent afternoon before the Saturday dinner rush. "I was on the USF golf team, too, and I never a shortage of meat.

Sirloin. Outlaw Ribeye. Flo's Filet. There's a place all of it with all the types of steak that exist.

B.A. Arnot has watched thousands of steaks cooked and served at his kitchen to customers at his LongHorn Steakhouse location on Tampa's Westshore Boulevard. Rancher's Sirloin. Outlaw Ribeye. Flo's Filet. There's never a shortage of meat.

And for the last 20 years, Arnot has dedicated his professional career to making sure hungry customers walk away satisfied from the restaurant chain. But his job as managing partner is not exactly the career Arnot expected to find himself in back in his college days at the University of South Florida.

"My degree is in finance," Arnot said one recent afternoon before the Saturday dinner rush. "I was on the USF golf team, too, and I was even thinking about maybe turning pro."

But Arnot doesn't like the word "customer," however. "Guest is a better word," he said. "It's all about the guest, and taking care of the guest."

In 1994, LongHorn was a young restaurant chain that was more "roadhouse" style. The complete menu was found on a chalkboard when customers arrived, and each table offered complimentary peanuts — the shells of which were welcomed on top of the wooden floors, crunching under the server's feet.

Arnot had worked at a Burger King when he was a teenager and Bennington's in college. But at LongHorn, he was still starting at entry level, first as a host, and then as a server.

Yet, the manager at his LongHorn saw something in Arnot. He saw a leader. "After a year and a half here, I got offered a chance to go into management, so I did," he said.

Arnot would continue to work at the LongHorn and walk at South Dale Mabry Highway until he became a kitchen manager at a new location in Citrus Park in 1999. Just two years later, he was back at the Dule Mabry location, now as its managing partner.

Arnot gives back the same way he received nearly two decades ago. He looks for manager material from the staff he hires, and promotes them whenever the opportunity arises. He's a big believer in hiring from within.

During almost all of that time, Arnot has commuted the nearly 40 miles from his home to the restaurant. Even when the Dule Mabry location closed down and moved to nearby Westshore Boulevard, it was still a haul.

But he doesn't let all that travel time and long hours at the restaurant interfere with making time for his wife — a manager at a Fifth Third Bank — and three daughters, ages 16, 14, and 8. He takes turns getting his family to and from his home in Zephyrhills to LongHorn.

"I don't think I would've ever been good behind a desk," Arnot said. "I'm used to being on my feet and walking around, because at the end of the day, it all comes down to customer service for me."

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Sirloin. Outlaw Ribeye. Flo's Filet. There's a place all of it with all the types of steak that exist.

And for the last 20 years, Arnot has dedicated his professional career to making sure hungry customers walk away satisfied from the restaurant chain. But his job as managing partner is not exactly the career Arnot expected to find himself in back in his college days at the University of South Florida.

"My degree is in finance," Arnot said one recent afternoon before the Saturday dinner rush. "I was on the USF golf team, too, and I was even thinking about maybe turning pro."

But Arnot doesn't like the word "customer," however. "Guest is a better word," he said. "It's all about the guest, and taking care of the guest."

In 1994, LongHorn was a young restaurant chain that was more "roadhouse" style. The complete menu was found on a chalkboard when customers arrived, and each table offered complimentary peanuts — the shells of which were welcomed on top of the wooden floors, crunching under the server's feet.

Arnot had worked at a Burger King when he was a teenager and Bennington's in college. But at LongHorn, he was still starting at entry level, first as a host, and then as a server.

Yet, the manager at his LongHorn saw something in Arnot. He saw a leader. "After a year and a half here, I got offered a chance to go into management, so I did," he said.

Arnot would continue to work at the LongHorn and walk at South Dale Mabry Highway until he became a kitchen manager at a new location in Citrus Park in 1999. Just two years later, he was back at the Dule Mabry location, now as its managing partner.

Arnot gives back the same way he received nearly two decades ago. He looks for manager material from the staff he hires, and promotes them whenever the opportunity arises. He's a big believer in hiring from within.

During almost all of that time, Arnot has commuted the nearly 40 miles from his home to the restaurant. Even when the Dule Mabry location closed down and moved to nearby Westshore Boulevard, it was still a haul.

But he doesn't let all that travel time and long hours at the restaurant interfere with making time for his wife — a manager at a Fifth Third Bank — and three daughters, ages 16, 14, and 8. He takes turns getting his family to and from his home in Zephyrhills to LongHorn.

"I don't think I would've ever been good behind a desk," Arnot said. "I'm used to being on my feet and walking around, because at the end of the day, it all comes down to customer service for me."

But Arnot doesn't like the word "customer," however. "Guest is a better word," he said. "It's all about the guest, and taking care of the guest."

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Arnot also carves out a little time for himself in the middle of the week, where he can enjoy a round of golf, or simply work on projects at home.

And as the LongHorn chain expands, Arnot hopes to expand with it. His ultimate goal is to become a regional director of operations, although such a job might mean moving. Moving up is a long-term plan, like waiting until his youngest daughter is on her way to college.

"Yeah, 10 years would be my goal to move ahead," Arnot said. "But who knows. It's hard to predict."

And Arnot should know. Just 20 years ago, LongHorn was supposed to be a quick stop on the road toward a banking job.

Instead, he's focused his career on the industry, and still has a lot more he wants to accomplish.
North East Tampa Women in Business will host a pancake breakfast fundraiser May 17 from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Lexington Oaks Golf Club, 26153 Lexington Oaks Blvd., in Wesley Chapel.

The cost is $10 per person, and includes raffles. Money raised will help fund two $500 scholarships the organization gives in December.

TO ZEPHYRHILLS

A developer that wanted to add another recreational vehicle park to State Road 54 just west of Zephyrhills, has been convinced to build a new apartment complex instead.

Terrace Investors LLC were scheduled to appear in front of the Pasco County Commission May 6 seeking a rezoning of a 14-acre piece of property on New River Road next to Terrace Park Mobile Home Park, so that it could build a 228-unit project.

Terrace Investors bought the vacant land in 1999 for $240,000, according to the Pasco County Property Appraiser. Steve McCombs owns the company, and in 2012 also proposed to replace a 138-unit RV park with a 230-unit apartment complex in Largo, according to published reports.

His new project there, called Boulevard Apartments, secured $30 million in financing just last month.

The commission’s decision on the rezoning request was not available by the time The Laker/Lutz News went to press.

LEVENT TO SPEAK AT WOMEN-IN-CHARGE

Women-in-Charge will have its next meeting June 6 at 11:30 a.m., at Pebble Creek Country Club, 10550 Regents Park Drive in Tampa.

Guest speaker is business strategist and author Tammy Levent, who will talk about how to create successful strategic partnerships in this economy.

Cost is $15 for members, and $18 for guests, if purchased by Tuesday before the meeting.

To register, visit Women-in-Charge.com.

For information, call (813) 600-9848.

GRANDSON TO INTERN WITH CESSNA

Joshua Cherok, the grandson of Leon and Shirley Cherok of Land O’ Lakes, has accepted a summer internship with Cessna Aircraft Co., in Wichita, Kansas.

He will work as a customer service representative with the engine events management team.

Cherok will graduate in December from Kent State University in Ohio with a bachelor’s degree in aeronautics.

PEDC NEEDS BANQUET SPONSORS

The Pasco Economic Development Council is seeking sponsors for its annual appreciation banquet.

The 28-year-old event allows the organization to recognize those who help keep the Pasco County economy strong and growing, and is typically attended by more than 600 business and community leaders each year, according to a release.

The banquet is set for Sept. 2 at Saddlebrook Resort in Wesley Chapel.

Sponsorships range from $500 to $7,500. For information, call (813) 926-0827, ext. 226, or email susanne@pascoedc.com by July 1.

MORE JOBS COMING TO REGION

The Tampa Bay market gained 30,000 new jobs in March, while the unemployment rate locally dropped by 1 percentage point to 7.5 percent.

The numbers were released by Gov. Rick Scott’s office, and included gains in areas like professional and business services with 9,000 new jobs, and trade and transportation with 6,400 new jobs. Manufacturing had 4,100 new jobs.

The region was first among the state metropolitan areas when it came to online job demand with 41,076 openings. That included nearly 10,500 openings in science, technology, engineering and mathematics — STEM jobs that are considered high wage and high skill.

The unemployment rate statewide in March was 6.3 percent.
AARP launches initiative to help defeat scammers

By B.C. Manion
bomanion@LakerLutzNews.com

When it comes to being scammed, virtually everyone is at risk, said Claudette Henry, the featured speaker at a recent Land O’ Lakes AARP chapter meeting.

Because identity theft and fraud are so pervasive, the AARP has launched the Fraud Watch Network to combat the problem. Last year, an estimated 12.6 million Americans were the victims of identity theft, Henry said, citing AARP materials.

AARP’s Fraud Watch Network aims to help people of all ages, not only members of the AARP, Henry said.

“We’re trying to protect you against phone, email and mail scams,” Henry said. “If you receive a phone call or email from anyone saying that your checking account or bank account or credit card or PayPal, or anything that you do have is compromised, and you need to respond, do not.”

Instead, contact the company that sent the communication to make sure it is legitimate, she said.

“If it is from the bank, they’ll address you by name, not just your email account, or say, ‘Dear Member,’ or anything like that,” Henry said. “If you receive a phone call and it says, ‘To verify your account, press 1.’ Do not do it.”

Another common scam involves messages that say someone won a lotto.

“Anytime you receive information that you’ve won a lottery, you’ve won a prize — if you have to pay taxes up front, or a qualification fee, or a document fee — it’s a scam. Don’t fall for it,” Henry said.

Con artists attempt to get people emotionally involved because that makes them more vulnerable, Henry said. One common ploy involves a call or a call centered on a relative needing help. It’s best to hang up the phone and verify that information from another source.

There are other scams that claim to offer investment opportunities, such as oil and gas stock options, she said. One victim lost $40,000.

“It can happen to anyone,” Henry said.

Some criminals use threats and intimidation to try to get what they want. “The latest scam involves calls or emails that claim they’re from the IRS,” she said. “They’re not going to call or email. They’re going to send you a letter. Don’t be fooled!”

A caller attempted the IRS scam on Steve Dierking of Lutz, who was at the AARP meeting.

“I had the IRS call me a month ago and they said they had audited me over the last seven years. I owed $3,400,” Dierking said. “I had one hour to give it to them. And, if I didn’t, they were sending the sheriff out to pick me up.

“So, I said, I have to get back to you, because I don’t have that cash. ‘I called the sheriff,’ Dierking told the crowd.

There are persistent scammers, who use harassment to try to get their way.

“The best thing you can do is get on the phone with the authorities,” Henry said. “An answering machine on your phone or block your phone number. If all else fails, change your phone number. Don’t let this happen to you. Keep your credit cards and Social Security number in a place where others can’t get to them, she added. Check your credit reports to be sure they are accurate.

“Be real careful about your mail and how you handle your mail. You don’t want to throw stuff out in the trash with information from credit card companies, offers or even your name and address,” Henry said. “Shred the information. Don’t put it out there. People go through your trash trying to get information.”

Also, be careful in returning calls when you don’t recognize the numbers, she said.

“If you don’t know who’s calling you, don’t call them,” Henry advised.

Ginny Sibley, a bank officer for American Momentum Bank, offered this advice: “When you’re traveling, please use a credit card, not your debit card.”

Scammers can do serious damage once they get someone’s checking account number, Sibley said.

“They do what they do, is they set up an exact time throughout the whole United States and they compromise your number,” she said. “At that moment, they use the cards, the plastic into the machine. You could have five, six transactions at the same time.”

When buying gas, be sure to click the clear button after your transaction, Sibley said.

Robert Brown took that advice a step farther.

“Any time I use my debit or credit card when I get gas, I go inside and swipe it,” said Brown, an independent associate of Legallshield. “I always go inside.”

The Land O’ Lakes chapter of the AARP welcomes new members. Annual dues are $10 per person. Anyone interested in learning more can email Phyllis E. Bross, chapter president, at pebross@verizon.net, or leave a voicemail at (813) 996-1361.

Claudette Henry

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Claudette Henry
May 7, 2014

Protect yourself with these tips from AARP

• Don’t carry your Social Security card
• Shred sensitive information
• Limit the number of credit cards you carry
• Keep copies of your credit cards, front and back, in case they are stolen
• Watch for missing bills
• Monitor your accounts carefully
• Do your homework before making investments
• Review your free credit report once a year
• Do not carry your check card codes or passwords
• Do not choose obvious passwords, such as a birthdate, phone number, consecutive numbers or the like
• If you receive a suspicious email, do not respond to it
• Avoid conducting personal or financial business on shared or public computers or over wireless hotspots
• Protect your mail
• Do not give out personal information to telemarketers
• Check out a charity before donating by going to CharityWatch.org or CharityNavigator.org

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34 - 66 lbs $60
67 - 88 lbs $75
89 - 132 lbs $90

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If you would like to invite Mazy into your family, email Cat Crusaders at adopt@tampacatcrusaders.org.
For more information about other adoptable cats, visit TampaCatCrusaders.org.
New tax office location under way
Progress is being made quickly of the new Pasco County Tax Collector’s Office location that is being constructed in Lutz. Studwork and plumbing are under way, and furniture is being put together for the office. It will be located at Compark 75 Center, 4610 Pet Lane, near the entrance to the Grand Oaks community on Wesley Chapel Boulevard. It is expected to open by summer.

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May 7, 2014
9
WINE FESTIVAL
Florida Estates Winery, 25241 State Road 52 near Land O’ Lakes, will host a wine festival May 10 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Participants can discover how to identify and control what’s bugging their lawn. For more information, call (813) 966-2411.

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POPS IN THE PARK
The Florida Orchestra will present its “Pops in the Park” picnic under the stars at Curtis Hixon Park, 600 N Ashley Drive in Tampa, May 11 at 7:30 p.m. Guests should bring their own supplies, lunch and snacks. Space is limited. For information, call Jo Anne Shaffer at (813) 996-1185, or Penny Benitez at (813) 323-1867.

SENIOR RESUME FAIR IN ZEPHYRHILLS
U.S. Rep Gus Bilirakis, R-Palm Harbor will host a free senior resource fair May 12 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be a variety of Mother’s Day luncheon May 14 at The Lakeside Club, 7663 Clubhouse Drive in Wesley Chapel, Florida. The event will feature a performance by the Wesley Chapel Wind Ensemble and a free dinner, cake, champagne, coffee, massages, music, and gift card giveaways. Participants can don their pajamas for a contest. For information, call (813) 458-9672 or email nita@lakesideclub.com.

Puppetts for Christ
The youth ministry Puppetts for Christ will perform a Mother’s Day show “Wildfire” May 11 at 6:30 p.m., at Van Dyke United Methodist, 17030 Lakeshore Rd in Lutz. This is a musical black light performance. Admission is free, however donations will be accepted. Dessert will follow the show. For information, call (813) 968-3983.

MOSEL’S Day conference
Mother’s Day conference Water’s Edge Community Church, 30200 Overpass Road in Wesley Chapel, will host “Mothers and Mentors for Christ” May 10 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. There will be guest speakers and a complimentary luncheon for reservations or directions, call Patty Fitzpatrick at (813) 528-8650.

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11:15 AM  THE TRUTH ABOUT LOW TESTOSTERONE
Jonathan Yousef, DO, Family Medicine

12:30 PM  ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION: CAUSES & TREATMENTS
Brent Sullivan, MD, Urologist

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$900 — with more than half of it going to March — well above his monthly average of spending a lot of it.

didn’t raise any money for his unopposed year, Corley said.

providing this location to serve Wesley Chapel. ” We are grateful to Genesis Real Estate for

that area in recent years, “ said Pasco elections supervisor Brian Corley, in a release.

elections, finding room at The Grove at Wesley Chapel.

and East Pasco Government Center in Dade City.

expansion of early voting sites was made possible by the passing of H.B. 7013 last year. Corley said.

RAULIERSON, CRUZ HAVE OPPOSITE- FEELING CAMPAIGN MONTHS

State Rep. Dan Rauner, R-Plant City, didn’t raise any money for his unopposed re-election campaign in March, but he did spend a lot of it.

Rauner paid out more than $12,500 in March — well above his monthly average of $900 — with more than half of it going to

Danish’s $66,750. But when it comes to who has the most money available right now, that would be Danish with $52,000 in the bank, compared to Harrison’s $8,750.

MOBILE HOURS FOR ROSS
U.S. Rep. Dennis Ross, R-Lakeland, will host mobile office hours May 15 from 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Lutz Library, 101 W. Lutz Lake Fern Road in Lutz.

other dates in Lutz include: June 10, July 8, Aug. 12, Sept. 9, Oct. 14 and Dec. 9.

For more information, call (863) 644-8215, or (813) 752-4790.

WILSON TAKING WELLS CHALLENGE SERIOUSLY

Pasco County Commissioner Henry Wilson is taking advantage of the fact that he announced his re-election plans early, especially now that he is a challenger with strong name recognition in Mike Wells Jr.

Wilson raised $1,910 in March, bringing his total campaign war chest to a little over $19,000. Wells, who announced his candidacy earlier this month, would not have any fundraising to report.

Wilson has spent just $550, leaving him a lot of room to mount a financial defense of his seat. But he will have only until the August primary to do it, since both he and Wells are Republicans.

BURGESS DOMINATES HOUSE FUNDRAISING
Former Zephyrhills mayor Danny Burgess is showing he can raise money for bigger campaigns as he continues to pound his opponents when it comes to fundraising.

Burgess, a Republican who wants to replace House Speaker Will Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel, in Tallahassee, raised $5,600 in March to bring his total to nearly $60,750. His primary challenger, Minnie Dzial, pulled in $650 in donations during the same time, bringing her campaign a total of $4,600, and only a few hundred dollars in the bank.

Burgess received checks from the likes of Oakley Transport executive vice president Ronald Oakley and Wesley Chapel Dentistry on State Road 54. However, most of the money Burgess raised in March — some $3,000 worth — came from political action committees, supported by companies and organizations like AT&T and T-Mobile Sugar Cane.

Beverly Ledbetter, the only Democrat in the race so far, raised $1,850 in March, bringing her total to just under $6,000. Barrington anyone entering the race, she’s facing the winner of the August primary between Burgess and Dzial in November.

RAULIERSON, CRUZ HAVE OPPOSITE-FEELING CAMPAIGN MONTHS

State Rep. Dan Rauner, R-Plant City, didn’t raise any money for his unopposed re-election campaign in March, but he did spend a lot of it.

Rauner paid out more than $12,500 in March — well above his monthly average of $900 — with more than half of it going to

Strategic Image Management in Jensen Beach for what was described as ‘design, print, mail pre-session survey.’

He spent another $2,300 on a telephone town hall, according to state election records, and $3,125 with Capitol Consulting out of Odessa.

Janet Cruz, D-Tampa, kept pace with her fundraising despite drawing an opponent, raising $6,750 in March. She now has accumulated $76,300, with $43,000 of it in the bank.

POLL WORKERS NEEDED FOR AUGUST, NOVEMBER ELECTIONS
Energetic? Service-oriented? Then the Pasco County supervisor of elections may be looking for you.

Poll workers are needed for both the primary election Aug. 26 and the general election Nov. 4. Positions are paid, but potential candidates will need to be able to stand, bend, stoop, lift approximately 30 pounds, and have normal vision and manual and physical dexterity.

Applicants also need to write and read English, have an email address, and be able to work the entire day from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

All positions receive mandatory paid training the month preceding both the primary and general elections.

For information, call (800) 851-8754, or visit PascoVotes.com.

DANISH GAINS FUNDRAISING GROUND ON HARRISON
Former state Rep. Shawn Harrison is doing what he can to regain a seat in Tallahassee, but it appears the man holding that seat right now — state Rep. Mark Danish, D-Tampa — is starting to gain some ground.

Harrison raised $5,950 in March, down slightly from his $6,500 average, according to state election records. Danish, however, pulled in $7,750 of his own, topping his $4,300 average.

Yet, Harrison still leads the fundraising battle with just under $78,000 compared to Danish’s $66,750. But when it comes to who has the most money available right now, that would be Danish with $52,000 in the bank, compared to Harrison’s $8,750.

WILSON TAKING WELLS CHALLENGE SERIOUSLY

Pasco County Commissioner Henry Wilson is taking advantage of the fact that he announced his re-election plans early, especially now that he is a challenger with strong name recognition in Mike Wells Jr.

Wilson raised $1,910 in March, bringing his total campaign war chest to a little over $19,000. Wells, who announced his candidacy earlier this month, would not have any fundraising to report.

Wilson has spent just $550, leaving him a lot of room to mount a financial defense of his seat. But he will have only until the August primary to do it, since both he and Wells are Republicans.

BURGESS DOMINATES HOUSE FUNDRAISING
Former Zephyrhills mayor Danny Burgess is showing he can raise money for bigger campaigns as he continues to pound his opponents when it comes to fundraising.

Burgess, a Republican who wants to replace House Speaker Will Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel, in Tallahassee, raised $5,600 in March to bring his total to nearly $60,750. His primary challenger, Minnie Dzial, pulled in $650 in donations during the same time, bringing her campaign a total of $4,600, and only a few hundred dollars in the bank.

Burgess received checks from the likes of Oakley Transport executive vice president Ronald Oakley and Wesley Chapel Dentistry on State Road 54. However, most of the money Burgess raised in March — some $3,000 worth — came from political action committees, supported by companies and organizations like AT&T and T-Mobile Sugar Cane.

Beverly Ledbetter, the only Democrat in the race so far, raised $1,850 in March, bringing her total to just under $6,000. Barrington anyone entering the race, she’s facing the winner of the August primary between Burgess and Dzial in November.

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The first step in many to call the nation’s first Constitutional convention in nearly 250 years is on its way to Washington D.C., after a proposal from state Sen. Wilton Simpson earned approval from both the Florida House and Florida Senate. S.M. 368 calls for a convention that would amend the U.S. Constitution, demanding a Constitutional convention, and does not require the signature of Gov. Rick Scott. However, that does not mean delegates should start making travel plans. At least 33 other states will have to pass similar or identical memorials before such a convention could be scheduled. A convention is just one way to propose amendments to the Constitution, but one that is typically not used. In fact, the last time a convention was called this way, it was 1787, and that was to write the U.S. Constitution itself in Philadelphia. Congress can propose Constitutional amendments, and then have them ratified by the states. However, if Congress doesn’t introduce such an amendment — which supporters of this movement believe Congress wouldn’t do — then the fallback position is to have states call for the convention directly.

The passage of the memorial was great news for W. Spider Webb Jr., a former Tallahassee lobbyist who founded the activist group Single Subject Amendment. “Both parties are guilty about the use of riders,” Webb said in January. “We are not trying to give Congress a black eye. We are trying to improve the way Americans view Congress.”

Webb now plans to take the newly approved memorial to the national stage as he tries to convince other states to do the same thing. “If Florida passes this, then other states will take a more serious look at this,” Simpson said earlier this year. “Doing a Constitutional amendment is such a large task, I think it will pick up momentum as more states pass it.”

Many state governments already prevent riders on bills, either by requiring bills to be single-subject, or by giving governors the power to veto specific portions of a bill, and avoiding the rest. President Bill Clinton tried to accomplish this at the federal level with a line-item veto act introduced by Republican U.S. Sen. Bob Dole in 1996. However, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that law unconstitutional in 1998.

COURTESY OF SINGLE SUBJECT AMENDMENT

could generate an economic boost of between $28,000 and $100,000. Incentive packages generate revenue for businesses like retail outlets and hotels. They provide paychecks for workers who make their homes here.

But that can’t help Pasco quite yet. Caum said. Implementing such a program, maintaining it, and getting the word out to filmmakers it exists, requires a full-time commissioner. And there’s no money for one of those.

That is a sophisticated level we need to get to,” Caum said.

He hopes he can start sharing some ideas with Pasco County commissioners about promoting film production around September. However, the tourism department will still have to find revenue sources to pay for it.

Still, even without statewide incentives, there’s no reason why Pasco couldn’t eventually find its legs in the film industry to keep up with Hillsborough County for now, and maybe even someday reach the levels of Pinellas County, which has churned out films like “Dolphin Tale” and “Magic Mike,” and of rekindled romance among former sweethearts who have found each other again.

Pasco County filed two liens of its own last month totaling $5,300 for solid waste violations. The agency, more reduced to $2,000. The agency, more issued against it by the Southwest Florida Water Management District last September was reduced to $2,000. The agency, more commonly known as Swiftmud, had originally claimed the company overpumped water in 2012. However, officials later determined that there was a leak in the reclaimed water system, and MJ’s simply failed to notify Swiftmud it had to switch to the potable water system.

Ray, Osceola and McDonald purchased the golf course at 23,555 Plantam Palmer Blvd. in May 2011 through a $2.18 million mortgage from Native American Bank of Denver. The three have Native American roots, according to a 2012 story published in Indian Country Today. The trio was one of the first non-media groups to get a guarantee loan from a company who specifically serves Native Americans. The 875-home community’s HOA is not only keeping outsiders away, but also is working to make sure its residents know they can’t use the golf course.

“Het is important that we continue to respect the golf course as a private property,” the board said in a statement. “None of us have the right to free golf or to use the course as additional to our backyards. We encourage all homeowners to pull together during this time, and do whatever we can to promote and protect the integrity of the golf course property.”

The Artist

It was just a culmination of a lot of reconnections enabled through social media and of rekindled romance among former sweethearts who have found each other again or the death of a spouse. If you enjoy dark humor, “The Funeral Portrait” by Vincent Vinas, may be right up your alley.

Those who are drawn to history and photography may want to check out the work of R. Wayne Ayres, author of Florida’s Grand Hotels from the Gilded Age” and “St. Petersburg: The Victorian City.” Other authors expected to be there are Jenice Armstead, Sarina Babb, Shelby Bender, Susan Noe Harmon, Paul Sunshine Murphy, Alison Oburia and Bria Presta.

SHOWCASE, from page 1

the cookbook “Just Friggin’ Cook.”

Gail Yip-Chuck’s book, “The New Life Deck,” with Wa and Wai shares her message for diet and health, with the aim of helping readers transform their lives. Jamie Elizabeth Tingen’s book, “Butterfly Messages,” is a story about second chances. It’s a particularly timely topic in this age of reconnections enabled through social media and of rekindled romance among former sweethearts who have found each other again or the death of a spouse.

In one of what he’d sketch or paint—

His assembly line labor supported us, and although I understood that need, I always said my father was an artist.

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Mike Shamata, the county’s animal services manager, in a release.

The dogs, he said, have been spayed or neutered, microchipped, and have all their vaccinations.

The shelter is looking both for adoptive parents and foster homes for dogs. Although not as widely known as adopting, fostering can help save the lives of two animals—

the one with the temporary home, and the new dog that would take his place at the shelter.

The county continues to work toward saving 90 percent of its population, a far cry from the 46 percent euthanizing rate in 2012 before the program was implemented. Since the program started, more than 2,500 animals have been saved from being put down, county officials said.

The adoption center is located at 19640 Dogpatch Lane in Land O’ Lakes. It is open from noon to 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, and on Thursday from noon until 6:30 p.m.

For information, visit online at PascoCountyFL.net/PAS, or call (813) 929-1212.

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I knew we were right in selecting Westbrooke when returning there one day; my Dad turned to me and remarked, “we made the right choice here.”

— Steve & Joe Spina

SHELTER DOGS ARE DESPERATELY SEEKING ADOPTIVE, FOSTER HOMES

The shelter is currently over capacity for dogs, and we need help right now,” said Mike Shamata, the county's animal services manager, in a release.

The dogs, he said, have been spayed or neutered, microchipped, and have all their vaccinations.

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I knew we were right in selecting Westbrooke when returning there one day; my Dad turned to me and remarked, “we made the right choice here.”

— Steve & Joe Spina


‘Oklahoma!’ at Straz features Lutz actor, dancer

By Michael Murillo

mmurillo@lakerlutznews.com

Straz Jr. Center for the Performing Arts (Teco Theater, 1010 N. McMullen Place in Tampa. The production features students in grades five through 12, as well as some professional actors.

“Oklahoma!” is the story of Curly McLain, his love interest Laurey Williams, and his rival, Jud Fry. Set in the territory of Oklahoma in 1906 and 1907, the musical explores themes of the time, such as immigration and land speculation.

The show features a cast of 60 actors, including Ryan Santello, who plays Curly McLain, and his sister, Victoria Santello, who plays Laurey Williams.

Victoria Santello takes on the lead role of Curly in 'Oklahoma!' which wraps up its run this week at the David A. Straz Jr. Center for the Performing Arts. His sister, Victoria, is a featured dancer in the play.

By Michael Murillo

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By Michael Murillo

mmurilo
Diane Ricca recipient of humanitarian award

Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point recently presented Diane Ricca with the 2013 FVLA Volunteer Humanitarian Award. Ricca has volunteered at Bayonet Point since July 2006, accumulating more than 20,000 merit hours. Her work includes the gift shop as well as the volunteer board of directors at large.

Ricca also volunteers with the Sun Coast Health and Education Foundation, All Around Kids Foundation, and various other charities.

CoDA meets in Trinity

The Medical Center of Trinity hosts the Co-Dependence Anonymous group every Thursday at 7 p.m. at 5637 Marine Parkway in New Port Richey. Upcoming meetings are May 8, May 15, May 22 and May 29.

This group focuses on the common pursuit of developing healthy relationships. The program is free, however registration is required.

For information, call (800) 486-8784.

Heart healthy nutrition

The Heart Institute at Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point will offer the class “Heart Healthy Nutrition: Eating for a Healthy Heart” May 13 at 1 p.m. at the Rao Musunuru Conference Center, 14000 Fivay Road in Hudson.

Participants can learn eating habits to help prevent and treat heart disease, food label reading, recipe modification and more.

Seating is limited, and reservations are required.

For information, call (727) 869-5498.

Breast cancer support

Florida Cancer Affiliates is offering a bi-weekly breast cancer support group every other Thursday at the New Port Richey center, 5500 Little Road. The next meeting is May 8 at 6 p.m. The group will offer open discussion on a variety of topics. Light refreshments will be served.

For information, call (727) 372-9159.

Health care professionals & Alzheimer’s

The University of South Florida Byrd Alzheimer’s Institute, 4001 E. Fletcher Ave., in Tampa, will host “Alzheimer’s Disease: What Health Care Professionals Need to Know” May 9 at 8 a.m.

The program will award three hours of credit for health care professionals. Topics include driving and dementia, creating a safe environment, and medication safety issues.

Cost is $40 per person. Space is limited, and registration is required.

For information, call Mady Ernst at (813) 974-4537.

Hospice’s Griev’s Journey

HHP Hospice will offer an eight-week Griev’s Journey group Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m., starting May 14 at the Marlieere Hospice Care Center, 6801 Rowan Road in New Port Richey.

The program is free, however registration is required.

For information, call (813) 846-8784.

Heart Institute at Regional Medical Center of Trinity

The Medical Center of Trinity, 9330 State Road 54, offers a monthly support group on the second Tuesday of each month at noon, for those affected by multiple sclerosis.

The next meeting is May 13. Caregivers and family members are invited.

For information, call (727) 372-1688.

Medical Center of Trinity one of best for ER care

The Medical Center of Trinity has received the Women’s Choice Award as one of America’s best hospitals in emergency care. The award identifies the nation’s best health care institutions and signifies the center’s commitment for creating an extraordinary health care experience for women and all patients, according to a release.

The award is based on patient satisfaction, clinical excellence, and women’s needs when it comes to treatment and quality hospital experience, said Delia Passi, chief executive and founder of WomenCertified, home of the Women’s Choice Award.

Childbirth course

The obstetrics program at Medical Center of Trinity, 9330 State Road 54, is offering a six-week prepared childbirth class beginning May 14.

The class will meet one night per week at 7 p.m. Cost is $70.

For information, call (727) 834-5630.

Peddling sweets for veterans

The GFWC Lutz-Land O’ Lakes Woman’s Club recently had a bake sale to benefit the Baldomero Lopez State Veterans Nursing Home residents’ petty cash fund. The proceeds will allow the veterans to take a shopping trip for personal items or visit a fast food restaurant. Taking part in the bake sale were, from left, Donna Losch, Sharon Bard and Lonna Vizzari.

MS support group

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When residents consider the future of Pasco County’s parks and recreation’s programs and facilities, they have plenty of suggestions for the council to consider.

Some want to see more opportunities — such as pathways — to enjoy the beauty of natural areas owned by the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Others want to create a “blue way” providing water access to coastal areas.

Some think more should be done to encourage gatherings on large green spaces, foster a greater sense of community. And, some want to do a better job of marketing the county’s gems, such as the rolling hills of Dade City.

These were just a few thoughts that popped up during a discussion last week at the Land O’ Lakes Community Center, where David Barth, of AECOM Technology Corp., asked those gathered to help define what steps could be taken to help Pasco County become a premier county where people want to live, work and locate their business.

The county hired AECOM, a professional consulting firm, for $125,000 to develop a 10-year comprehensive parks and recreation system master plan. The plan must be considered in a broad sense, Barth told the crowd of about two dozen.

“It’s important to understand lifestyle and demographics,” Barth said. For instance, park planning in urban areas is different than it is in suburban or rural places. Since Pasco is a mix, different considerations must be made for different areas.

The planning also must consider existing facilities and programs — not only those which belong to the county, but also those which are part of the public realm, including schools, museums and libraries, Barth said.

“We need to understand what’s happening today,” he said. “What are the priorities in 2014?”

But it’s also important to consider whether plans made before are still relevant, and whether there are emerging forms of recreation that the county may want to consider.

The May 1 workshop was one of three public sessions, but is just a small part of the planning effort. A steering committee made up of various stakeholders also weighed in and there will be a random survey conducted to collect more information.

Gathering input from people is just one part of the process. The work also involves evaluating current conditions, using demographic information, considering trends, and looking at current and desired levels of service. The work also will include a random survey to solicit public sentiment.

One issue that didn’t even come up at the public session is the shortage of athletic fields for youth sports, a complaint that has been raised repeatedly in recent years. As the county puts together a plan, it must consider the costs of implementation and various funding options for carrying out the plan, county parks and recreation director Rick Buckman said.

Essentially, there are two payment plans. One involves using existing revenues to “pay as you go.” The other involves coming up with additional revenues, which could include additional taxes, Barth said.

Planning efforts are expected to continue for several months. As the work goes on and the vision for the plan solidifies, debates are likely to intensify over program and facility priorities and how to pay for the plan.

The Pasco County Commission will have final say over the long-range plan and decisions regarding how to pay for it, including using existing revenues or seeking additional support through new taxes, more public-private partnerships or other means.

Pasco County has a broad array of parks and recreational facilities, including nature trails. The county is in the midst of creating a new master plan.

RAISE YOUR FAMILY & lower your mortgage!

Photos courtesy of Pasco County Parks and Recreation

The most important things in your life are your family, your health and your home. Isn’t it nice to know there’s a place where you can focus on raising your family in a healthy environment that’s an exceptional value too? That place is Connerton, a community in the heart of Pasco County. Our homes start at just under $200,000 from quality builders like MI Homes, Homes by WestBay, Ryland Homes and Taylor Morrison.

Connerton is more than a great value, it’s a world of amenities like a 3,000-acre nature preserve with wetlands, lakes and miles of boardwalks and nature trails. There’s also a fitness center, sporting fields, social gatherings, yoga classes and an aquatic center bubbling over with fun.

When it comes to the most important things in life, Connerton has everything you want at a price you can live with.
Saint Leo University softball coach John Conway was so focused on the score of a recent contest, he wasn’t paying full attention to the game’s stats.

It was only after the Lions had secured a tight 1-0 victory over Florida Southern College that he found out something interesting about the game. His pitcher, Ashley Ehlers, hadn’t given up many hits.

In fact, she didn’t give up any. “I didn’t know it was a no-hitter until the game was over,” Conway said. “My pitching coach had to tell me it was a no-hitter.”

Ehlers struck out two and walked three to give Saint Leo the first game of a doubleheader against the Mocs on April 19. It also boosted her record to 11-5 on the year.

Conway may not have realized what was happening at the time, but he’s not surprised Ehlers, a junior, came through for the Lions when the team needed strong pitching.

“She’s one of those pitchers who works very hard,” he said. “She has gotten better every year that she’s been here.”

The game’s score probably added some pressure for Ehlers because it was a close contest with little room for error. Conway said one mistake might not only have cost her the no-hitter, but cost Saint Leo the win makes the accomplishment even more impressive.

But there were more impressive accomplishments for the Lions and Ehlers that day. In the second game, pitcher Alana Tabel went above and beyond a game’s worth of regulation.

Tabel’s pitching in the second game impressed with Tabel’s pitching in the second game, which would have marked another no-hitter if the Lions had scored in the bottom of the 10th inning, Saint Leo went back to Ehlers for some extra work and she responded with another inning without giving up any hits. That proved to be enough, as the Lions broke through in the bottom of the 10th inning to claim a 1-0 victory and make Ehlers the winning pitcher of record in both games.

Ehlers also boosted her record to 11-5 on the year.

“When I was first notified it was a no-hitter, I was so happy, “ she said. “In high school there are only a couple of girls on every high school team who are going to college (and play softball),” and group tennis lessons for players of all ages and skill levels. For information, e-mail Samantha Weitort at sweitort@pasco.k12.fl.us.

Saint Leo baseball camp May 10

The Saint Leo baseball team will host a one-day camp May 10 for high school students.

Campers will receive one-on-one instruction and evaluation in areas such as hitting, fielding and base running. The cost is $100 per camper, and includes lunch.

For information, call Walt Bockmiller at (813) 527-8211.

Senior Slo Pitch registration

The Slo Pitch Softball League, geared toward players older than 60, will host its tournament May 16 at the Heritage Harbor Golf Course, 19502 Heritage Harbor Parkway in Lutz.

The event features 60 teams from 12 counties. It begins at 8:30 a.m., and includes greens fees, cart, range balls and a barbecue awards dinner.

Sponsorships are still available. For information, call (352) 999-2722, or e-mail office@centralpascochamber.com.

Steinbrenner basketball camps this summer

The Steinbrenner High School, 5,575 Lutz Lake Fern Road, will host two basketball camps this summer for boys and girls entering first through eighth grade. The first will be June 14-16, and the second will be July 1-7.

The camps will provide instruction in fundamentals such as dribbling, passing and defense, and will participate in skill-related games Awards will be given to group and gender winners during the camp. The cost is $80 per camper, with discounts given for multiple siblings. Same-day registration is $100.

For information, contact Steinbrenner coach J.R. Allen at (813) 792-5131, or e-mail warriorbasketballcamps@gmail.com.

Drive ‘Fore’ Technology golf tourney

Seven Oaks Elementary School will host its ‘Drive Fore Technology’ golf tourney on May 17 at Lexington Oaks Golf Club, 2615 Lexington Oaks Blvd., in Wesley Chapel.

For information, call the school at (813) 924-5600.

The clinic will be July 21-23 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. The cost is $35 per student and includes a T-shirt and an opportunity to cheer with the varsity team at a game.

For information, e-mail Samantha Weitort at sweitort@pasco.k12.fl.us.

Saint Leo University junior Ashley Ehlers threw a no-hitter in game one of a doubleheader against Florida Southern College last month. In the second game, she came on in relief to record another victory.

The game was over, “Conway said. “My pitching coach had to tell me it was a no-hitter. ”

Ehlers was so focused on the score of a regulation.

The event begins at 6 p.m., and includes greens fees, cart, range balls and a barbecue awards dinner.

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LOL’s Poore closes out track career with trip to state

By Michael Murillo
mmurillo@lakerlutznews.com

Land O’ Lakes High School senior Jake Poore added several titles to his track and field resume this past season: Conference champion, District champion, Regional champion. State qualifier and sixth place finisher for Class 3A for the two-mile run. But a late-season injury almost prevented it from happening.

“I hyper-extended my knee, and that was five days before the district meet I couldn’t even walk after the race,” Poore said. “The doctor was saying that I might not be able to run, and I was telling her, ‘I’m going up to the starting line no matter what because if I don’t, my season is over’.”

His knee improved, and he went on to win district and regional competitions and compete in his individual category as well as the 4x800 relay.

That Poore was able to recover so quickly is a testament to his work ethic and rigorous training regimen. This season he broke down his workouts into what he labeled “easy,” “medium” and “hard” days.

A day of gym workouts with cross-training and maybe a light run is what Poore considers “easy.” They only get more difficult from there, with a warm-up, off-track runs, interval workouts with short rests, and another run and cool-down making up a “hard” day.

The idea was to make practice so challenging that actual competition seemed easier by comparison, he said. Only once every couple of weeks did he allow himself a day with absolutely nothing on his schedule, and Poore admitted his dedication to track had consequences outside the sport.

“I was working so hard,” he said. “Even on my easy days I was so tired and had to get my sleep in, and made sure I did my schoolwork whenever I had a chance I lost some friends, I guess, because I couldn’t go hang out.”

But he said the results in competition made the sacrifice worth it.

Those results included a strong showing in state competition. Although he finished sixth, that ranking is deceiving due to the caliber of competition in Class 3A. If Poore had been in one of the other divisions, he would have been state champion.

And while the 4x800 team finished 15th, he was thrilled with his time of 1 minute, 57 seconds.

Another motivator for his successful year — and for the entire team, which enjoyed conference and district titles — was the memory of Bill Schmitz, a track coach at Land O’ Lakes High School, who died last year. Poore and his friends wore “We Run For Schmitz” T-shirts during the year, and followed through on team goals the coach set before he died.

As captain, Poore used the coach’s expectations to help motivate his teammates, and he would reference Schmitz during his regular prayers before meets.

He wasn’t the best track runner earlier in his track career, Poore admits. But his hard work and dedication paid off, and he’ll leave Land O’ Lakes a conference, district and regional champion. But that’s not the end of his running career. He’ll attend the University of Tampa in the fall with an athletic scholarship, a new challenge in collegiate-level track, and a desire to reach the Olympic Games in 2016, held in Rio de Janeiro.

Away from meets, he’ll take a pre-med course load with a goal of becoming an anesthesiologist when he graduates. And since college doesn’t start until later this year, he’s looking forward to a long break from his regular regimen before his summer training — long by his standards, anyway.

“I have two weeks off, and then I start working out for college,” he said. “I’m going to get right back in it. It’s just another day at work for me.”

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May is Skin Cancer Awareness Month

We often view the sun’s harmful rays as the primary cause of skin cancer, due to the fact that it is often found on parts of the body that receive the most sun exposure. While this may be true of some bodily skin cancers, this does not hold true for those that arise on the skin of the feet.

• Plantar Fasciitis • Bursitis • Tendonitis
• Diabetic Foot Ulcers • Foot, Ankle & Heel Pain

Unfortunately, the skin of the feet is often overlooked during routine medical examinations, and for this reason it important that the feet are checked regularly for abnormalities which might be indicative of evolving skin cancer: moles, lesions, or non-healing sores.

Make sure to schedule your appointment today to have your feet examined!

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Tips for celebrating Mother’s Day on a budget

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

With Mother’s Day around the corner, people are thinking of ways to show their appreciation for their mom. But those on a budget are in luck, because some “discount experts” at Dollar General are sharing helpful advice.

• Breakfast in bed: Every mom deserves some time to relax. Why not begin Mother’s Day by pampering her with breakfast in bed? Don’t forget to make the breakfast complete with a card, and a cup of coffee.
• Watch it grow: Spend Mother’s Day afternoon making memories with mom by picking out a new planter with gardening tools, soil and seeds. As the plants grow, it will help remind her of the children who gave it to her.
• Bake and make: Update and brighten mom’s kitchen with things like oven mitts, kitchen towels and such. Many can be bought inexpensively at places like Dollar General by including a cupcake or brownie mix with all the appropriate kitchen utensils. The gift could translate into some quality time with mom in the kitchen.
• Tell the birds: Get mom a themed birdhouse with birdseed, or consider making a birdhouse together as an afternoon arts and crafts project. Either way, help her find the best place in the yard to enjoy the colorful and beautiful birds that could soon be frequent visitors.

Making mom feel special on Mother’s Day doesn’t require a lot of money.

Pasco County’s annual survey now open

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

It’s survey time in Pasco County again, as government officials look to get feedback from residents and businesses about the future of the county.

The 2014 Citizen Survey includes questions about quality of life, speed of growth, crime and safety, public transit, recycling, and planning efforts and budget allocations. It also asks questions about property taxes, crime and safety, public transit, recycling, and quality of life.

Visitors to the site can provide feedback at any time as well through the customer comment card available on the site, or by sending an email to customerservice@pascofl.net. A direct link to the survey is available at tinyurl.com/PascoCountySurvey.

Sarah Haberl® receives Redken color certification

Sarah Haberl, a stylist at Cameo Salon & Spa in Lutz, recently became a Redken Certified Haircolorist. She joins an elite group of just 2,700 people in the world who have earned this prestigious certification.

“Sarah’s dedication to her craft is evident and she is an asset to the team at Cameo,” said Olav Malm, owner of Cameo Salon in Lutz. “We are so proud of her commitment to excellence.”

Data from the survey is combined from its random, scientific National Citizen Survey, and provides input for prioritizing planning efforts and budget allocations.

The survey is open online through May 31, and can be accessed online at PascoCountyFl.net.

The survey includes questions about the vitality of the county.

It’s quite an honor. Once you pass the tests, Redken essentially deems you an expert in color and backs up your heightened level of professional knowledge,” said Sarah.

Sarah, who has been a stylist at Cameo for five years, has been passionate about hair for most of her life. “When the opportunity to do something bigger arose, I knew I wanted to take the plunge,” she said. “Certification gives me the qualifications to educate my peers, and most importantly, to continue to do what I love in a better, more knowledgeable and unique way.”

“And to me, my color certification is worth its weight in gold because my guests are the ones who benefit the most and truly fuel my fire.”

Sarah Haberl, is one of just 2,700 hair stylists worldwide to be recognized as a certified color technician from Redken.
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