Naples-based pet advocacy organization Brooke’s Legacy Animal Rescue has won a $25,000 grant from the Petco Foundation in recognition of the rehabilitation and subsequent adoption of Hansa Rose, now named Deeogee (or “D.O.G.”), a former bait dog that had been used to train other canines for dog fighting.

Brooke’s Legacy volunteers are often alerted to animals that are close to being euthanized. In February 2012, group founder Tink Bechtol received a tip that immediately struck her as urgent. When members arrived at Miami-Dade Animal Services to retrieve Hansa Rose, she was hours away from being put down. Upon inspection, they discovered the dog had suffered incredible physical and emotional trauma as a result of being restrained from defending herself as other animals were trained to attack her for sport.

One of my favorite trees is the family Christmas tree that has the pictures of the kids growing up,” says the native North Carolinian who moved to North Naples years ago. Many of the Coffey family’s Christmas decorations galore proclaim the spirit of the season.

BY LINDSEY NESMITH
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STARTING THE DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING EVERY year, Lynette Coffey spends days decorating for Christmas. At last count, she had more than 50 trees, dozens of nativity scenes and nutcrackers, garland galore, miles of ribbon, a passel of wreaths and too many ornaments to inventory.

This tree of feathers is one of the Coffey family’s more than 50 Christmas trees. Lynette Coffey pauses after decorating her home for the holidays.
In the American cultural vernacular, which may prove as confusing to you as it frequently does to me, the first Christmas did not occur 2,014 years ago. Instead, the first Christmas took place exactly 237 years ago on a frigid night a few miles north of Philadelphia.

In this whimsical, transformative nation, holidays that began as one thing inevitably became another, and none more so than Christmas.

During the evening of Dec. 25, 1776, Christmas Love (defined as the love of Christ come, for Christians) must have become another, and none more so than holidays that began as one thing inevitably became another, and none more so than Christmas. None of it was pretty. In sloppy, struggling fashion, commanders and a regiment of experienced seamen from Marblehead, Mass., with others, finally landed the force mostly intact at Trenton, on the east bank of the river.

There, things changed forever. That fact remains the nation's most singular Christmas gift to itself.

The Americans caught the winter-encamped Hessian troops (competent professional soldiers in the pay of the British army) completely off guard and drunk. Thus they won the first real victory in our history, at the end of what had been a very bad year.

Had Washington been killed or captured — a distinct possibility since he was among the half-frozen, half-sick, woefully undernourished Americans.

But only six days before Christmas, Thomas Paine came out with a feisty pamphlet called "Common Sense," in Philadelphia. It included the most famous lines he ever wrote. The language was so compelling that against all reason it boosted morale among the hallowed halls, half-frightened, half-starving, half-starved Americans.

"These are the times that try men's souls," Mt. Paine wrote. "The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph."

No doubt many would have settled for an easier conflict and reduced rations of glory along with a hot meal, but they weren't given the choice. For all those Americans, including women, children and the old people left to manage farms and homes, Christmas Love required sacrifice and the recognition of imminent mortality.

To all of them, everything must have seemed tenous. I've always thought of Christmas that way, too — as a time when existence can become, paradoxically, both sumptuous and desperate.

Thus they won the first real victory in our history, at the end of what had been a very bad year. And now it's only Christmas Love I want for somebody I never knew, here's one version of this column originally ran on Dec. 21, 2011.
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The failed United States policy against Cuba, which has for more than half a century stifled relations between these neighbors and inflamed generations of harm upon the Cuban people, may finally be collapsing. On Wednesday, President Barack Obama reversed 50 years of American policy and adopted don’t, in isolation, shock everyone. They are the three remaining jailed of the Cuban Five, Rene Gonzalez, was one of the five Cuban spies who were us to assassinate Castro. While the U.S. him to the bombing of the airliner. The ernment of George W. Bush did not respond. The embargo has long been central to national electoral politics, as the Cuban community in Miami, many of whom have long been staunchly anti-Castro, has been considered crucial to winning Florida in a presidential election. Miami also has served as the haven for anti-Castro terrorist groups. One of the Cuban Five, Rene Gonzalez, was released in 2011 after 13 years in prison. I spoke to him from Cuba in 2013. He told me, “It was part of our development to the CIA. We had had the experience to see people coming from Miami raiding our shores, shooting at hotels, killing people here and there.”

In 1961, an Air Cuban flight was blown up by terrorists. It exploded in midair, killing all 73 people on board. In 1999, two US military aircrafts and their own open connection with neighbors, based on equality, grounded in peace.

— Denis Muyinah contributed research to this column.

— Amy Goodman is the host of “Democracy Now!,” a TV/radio news hour airing on more than 1,200 stations in North America. She is the co-author of “The Silenced Majority,” a New York Times best-seller.
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This will be my last column for Florida Weekly.

No, I haven’t been fired, nor have I lost interest in communicating with all of you on a regular basis.

It’s just that a column is hard work and very time consuming, and with the real estate market becoming crazy-busy (and we aren’t even in full season yet), I simply don’t have the time to devote to writing against deadline anymore.

I would have thought by now that I would have run out of ideas for my column, but the truth is, they just keep coming. Indeed, the column has made me look more closely at the here and now and how my life (and life itself) fits into it.

The column has caused me to reexamine who I am, the values in my life as instilled in me by my parents, my friends and mentors, but also those values I have come to embrace myself just by noticing LIFE — something, as John Lennon wrote, that happens to us while we are making other plans. I have tried to express these values in the columns I’ve written. Be it civility, mentorship, avocations, friendship, gardening, aging, health, dress — whatever the subject, I have seen the columns as a call to action as much for me as for my readers. And largely, it’s worked. Just the writing of it, the putting down on paper, has given my new insights and ways in which I can improve myself and how I relate to others.

I’m not trying to be lofty here. I’m simply saying that the forced discipline of putting thoughts on paper every other week has helped to clarify both why I’m in this life and how I can live it more happily, productively and kindly.

After all, we live in a difficult time, a time that challenges reflection and understanding. It is a time of transition, just as all passages are, but the changes are coming more quickly than ever, with world knowledge doubling every 13 months, at least according to what I’ve read.

Along with this, we are seeing the demise of legitimate sources of information (traditional newspapers, for example). What’s worse, these reliable sources are being replaced, not by facts, but by the opinions of bloggers, pundits and anyone and everyone who has a point of view, an ax to grind and access to the Internet.

That’s why I’ve tried in my columns to bring my observations back to the basics of life, to what we all know is important, and will continue to be important, even as we are being consumed by the new world order. I can’t predict, I can’t even imagine where we are all headed, but I do know that certain fundamentals will continue to apply: common sense, The Golden Rule, the virtues of integrity, honesty, and hard work.

I believe if we hold on to these, the maelstrom around us won’t matter in the final analysis. All that will matter is that we continued to persevere, especially when we were confused and in doubt.

One last thing: I think most of us are pretty good at being a friend to others, but so much of the time, we don’t take the time to be a friend to ourselves. To love ourselves, to be good to ourselves, to indulge in a little extravagance every now and then — that’s something worth doing, and I intend to make it one of my New Year’s resolutions. In a remarkable and ironic way, those little indulgences will actually make me a less selfish, better person to everyone I encounter.

I hope you’ve enjoyed my little musings over the past year and that I have struck a chord with an idea or experience that I shared.

To quote Bob Hope, thanks for the memories and for your support and compliments over the past year. Thanks also to Cindy Pierce, my editor, for giving me the gift of writing this column.

May the New Year bring joy and prosperity for all.

— While Cheryl Turner will no longer be writing this column, her presence on the local scene will continue as one of the area’s top real estate professionals.
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decorations honor Christian traditions of the season, while others invoke family milestones and treasured memories. A snow globe given to Mrs. Coffey by a beloved aunt 20 years ago still plays “Silent Night.” The nativity scenes “help me keep Christ in Christmas for my kids, Caroline and Charles,” Mrs. Coffey says. Advent candles and angels also help perpetuate the Christmas message.

On the family piano, she arranges dozens of nutcrackers and nutcracker-themed ornaments. That particular theme is also personal to Mrs. Coffey; she’s been in the dance industry for years and owns Naples Dance Supply across from Waterside Shops on Trail Boulevard. Like just about everyone associated with ballet, she loves “The Nutcracker” production.

Three Christmas trees in the Coffey home are adorned entirely with nutcracker ornaments. The theme is just one of several that dot the landscape of more than 50 trees that range in all shapes and sizes, from miniature to massive.

Mrs. Coffey has trees made of bows, three butterfly trees and several flower trees, trees made entirely of feathers, three trees decorated with birds and a tree fashioned from seashells gathered along Southwest Florida. There are trees decorated entirely in pastels and a massive snow-themed tree with peppermint accents. There are trees with icicles and a tree of Father Christmases. There are blue trees and pink trees, silver trees and golden trees, purple trees, red trees and poinsettia trees.

Standing 6 feet tall in the entryway, the largest tree is covered in apple blossoms.
and giant snowflakes and is referred to by the family as “The Pink Tree.” Each of the Coffey children has little trees in their rooms. “There is a Christmas tree in every room of the house,” Mrs. Coffey says. Although her collection of trees would seem complete after 15 years of amassing it, Mrs. Coffey continues to invent new ones to celebrate her happiest time of year. Six years ago, she and her three sisters decorated a tree in honor of their parents’ 50th wedding anniversary, filling it with ornaments made from five decades of family photographs.

“I have trees I’m still working on decorating,” she says, pointing to a snowman-themed work in progress. When they’re not putting smiles on the faces of family and friends people who visit her home during the holidays (the trimmings stay until the Little Epiphany, which is when the Three Wise Men finally make it to the manger), Mrs. Coffey’s Christmas decorations are tucked away in bins in the attic. And although she says it takes far less time to undo Christmas than to prepare for it, there is an art to putting everything away; each piece has a proper place in storage as well as in each year’s carefully thought out display.

As much as the spirit of Christmas shines throughout every square inch of the Coffey home throughout the holidays, passersby on the street don’t have a clue as to the magic that’s inside, as there are precious few signs of the season outside. And in case you’re wondering, Christmas is the only holiday on Mrs. Coffey’s decorating calendar. The rest of the year’s celebrations — Halloween, Easter, the Fourth of July, etc. — are no-frills occasions, observed strictly in spirit, literally.
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Teacher, mentor draws inspiration from his Immokalee students

The Immokalee Foundation was founded in 1991 to help improve the future of Immokalee’s children by increasing awareness of students’ needs and raising funds for grants awarded to Immokalee-based organizations. In 2001, TIF began to provide its own scholarships and mentoring through the Take Stock in Children program; today, the foundation is a fully operational, not-for-profit organization that provides direct services to the children of Immokalee.

Although TIF has evolved over the years, the commitment to strengthening the Immokalee community and fostering a brighter future for its youth has remained constant. By offering college scholarships, post-secondary training, intensive reading intervention and out-of-school programs and workshops, TIF is enhancing the lives of Immokalee’s children through education, empowerment and hope.

With a 100 percent graduation rate for students involved in its programs, TIF’s focused and disciplined approach to providing supplemental education produces results. It is important work — work that would not be possible without the generosity, compassion and dedication of individuals and businesses in the community who help students achieve their dreams. Their involvement is not only crucial to the continued success of the organization’s programs and events, but with their help, students are also able to achieve educational and professional heights they never dreamed possible.

Steven Becker, a teacher and director of the newly formed IT Academy at Immokalee High School, is one of those people.

After he began teaching at Immokalee High School six years ago, it didn’t take long for Mr. Becker to recognize that some students’ needs were unfulfilled. He began helping kids during lunch and after school to prepare for the ACT test, a national college admissions exam that tests students’ knowledge in English, math, reading and science. Around the same time, TIF was creating after-school programs and summer academies to build students’ confidence for college-level courses and future career opportunities.

Mr. Becker was approached by a TIF program manager and asked if he would be interested in joining forces. A natural alignment took place, and he became involved with TIF.

It’s an involvement that runs deep. He wakes up each morning at 4:30 a.m. and leaves his house by 5:30 a.m. to make the drive to Immokalee. After school three days a week, he conducts an ACT preparation session until 5 p.m. It makes for a long day, but Mr. Becker doesn’t complain. Why? “I’m committed because the students have self selected to be there,” he explains. “Their level of commitment is what will allow them to obtain college-ready ACT scores and achieve their dreams.”

Beyond after-school tutoring, Mr. Becker participates in TIF’s Summer Academy, a program designed to help improve students’ reading, writing and math skills to prepare them for graduation and college. For high school kids, the course specifically focuses on preparing them for the ACT. Mr. Becker is responsible for the math and science portion of the curriculum.

Students take the ACT at the beginning of the summer program and again at the end to measure their improvement.

“I draw my energy from the students,” Mr. Becker says. “Their success propels me to want to keep doing it.”

The teacher’s devotion to TIF extends beyond preparing students for a test. In June 2015, he will compete in a 12.5-mile, open-water swim race in the annual Florida Keys Community College Swim Around Key West in support of The Immokalee Foundation. It will be his fifth time as a participant and the second time swimming to raise funds for TIF.

“The first time I swam the race was 10 years ago,” he says. “I tried it just to see if I could. When I was swimming, I thought I never wanted to do it again, but now I enjoy it.”

“Ms. Valdez was a great mentee,” Mr. Becker said of his 2014 mentee Bernardino Valdez, who graduated from Immokalee High School last spring.

Teacher and Take Stock in Children mentor Steven Becker, right, with his 2014 mentee Bernardino Valdez, who graduated from Immokalee High School last spring.
22 nonprofits rewarded for ‘leaving a footprint’

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

The 2015 Allegra FootPRINT Fund award recipients were announced and honored Dec. 10 at a luncheon at Aldos Ristorante. Paul Kessen, owner of Allegra Naples, along with Bob Beauregard, client liaison for the FootPRINT Fund, welcomed the nonprofit organizations and congratulated them for ‘leaving a footprint’ in the community.

Due to overwhelming response this year, the 2015 Allegra FootPRINT Fund was increased from $12,000 to $14,500, enabling the award to be made to 22 recipients instead of the customary 18.

The 2015 winners are: Boys & Girls Club of Collier County, Children’s Advocacy Center, Collier Child Care Resources, the Freedom Waters Foundation, Friends of Foster Children of Southwest Florida, Gual- dalupe Center of Immokalee, Gulfshore Playhouse, Humane Society Naples, Juve- nile Diabetes Research Foundation-Sun- coast Chapter, Laces of Love, Literacy Vol- untores of Collier County, Make-A-Wish Southern Florida, Meals of Hope, Miracle Limbo-Courage in Motion, Miracles Among Us, NAMI of Collier County, NCH Safe & Healthy Children’s Coalition, New Hor- izon’s of Southwest Florida, PAWS Assis- tance Dogs, Saint Matthews House, The Shelter for Abused Women & Children and Youth Haven.

FootPRINT awards are made to nonprof- it organizations and associations seeking financial assistance for graphic design and printing of brochures, newsletters, forms, invitations, posters and other print com- munications.

Over the past five years, Allegra Naples has donated approximately $70,000 to local charitable organizations through the annual FootPRINT awards and the Posters with Purpose Program. The awards are based on how printing and graphic services will be used to further the organization's goals, including such things as expanding services to the community, enhancing programs or maximizing existing resources. Recipients are selected by a review panel comprised of local business owners and community leaders.

Two of the 2015 winners are first-time recipients.

Allegra launched the FootPRINT Fund as part of its Community Care Campaign, a nationwide effort supported by the compa- ny's franchise headquarters, Alliance Fran- chise Brands. The program was developed to help unite and strengthen local commu- nities by assisting eligible nonprofit orga- nizations and associations in building their awareness and increasing local support. The FootPRINT Fund program makes it a little easier for community organizations to make a difference, one step at a time.

Nonprofit groups, associations and char- itable organizations with a main office or branch in Collier County are invited to apply. The 2016 application will be avail- able June 15, 2015, at Allegra Naples, 3930 Domi- nican Ave., or online at AllegraNaples.com.

Bob Beauregard of the FootPRINT Fund and Paul Kessen of Allegra Naples at the FootPRINT awards luncheon. See more photos on page 88.

Avow seeks voices for Serenity singing group

Volunteer voices are being sought to join Serenity, a women's a cappella choral group whose mission is to bring comfort through song to Avow hospice patients. In groups of two to four, Serenity singers sing at the patient’s bedside.

Participants are not required to read music, but must be able to carry a tune and coordinate with other singers for a blended vocal sound. Serenity volunteers meet from 9:30-11 a.m. on the second and fourth Thursday of each month at Avow headquarters. Additional singing dates will be determined based upon the availability of members.

Any woman interested in learning more about the program is invited to attend an informational session at 10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 29, at Avow. RSVP is requested by Jan. 26; call Connie Shepherd at 261-4404.

Volunteers who join Serenity will be required to complete Avow's general vol- unteer application and training process. For more information, call the number above or visit avowcares.org.

TIF

From page 12

but after I finished, I realized I couldn’t wait until the next one.”

He’s done the race every other year since then. “A race of this magnitude demands a lot of time and commitment to training,” he explains. “And accom- plishing my goal, I thought it would be nice to give back and use the swim as a fundraiser.”

His commitment doesn’t stop there. As a mentor for TIF’s Take Stock in Children program, Mr. Becker is paired with a student who pledges to main- tain good grades, exhibit good behavior, attend required workshops and events, meet weekly with their TIF mentor and volunteer in the community. Students fulfilling the pledge are awarded a full scholarship to a Florida state college, university or vocational school upon high school graduation.

As a mentor, Mr. Becker enjoys the opportunity to empower students and help them find their own personal paths to success. His role is to motivate his mentee to reach their potential and help them navigate the challenges of educa- tion and life.

Mr. Becker says it’s hard to think of the words that describe the satis- faction he receives from helping stu- dents in Immokalee. After spending 25 years in corporate America, he made the decision to make a career change and become a teacher. That was six years ago. Today, he can’t imagine things any other way.

“Creating a connection with a stu- dent is better than any paycheck,” he says. “They carry a piece of you with them, and you just hope they, too, will pay it forward.”

To learn more about TIF, including how to become involved as a mentor, call 430-9122 or visit immokaleefounda- tion.org.
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**Language of love**

People advertising for love interests via online dating sites have apparently become picky about how they describe their sexuality. To the usuals (male, female, gay, heterosexual) have been added recently (as reported by NPR in December after surveying OkCupid.com) “asexual,” “androgynous,” “genderqueer” (evidently not the same as “gay”), “queer” (not quite “gay,” either), “questioning,” “trans man,” “transsexual,” “transmasculine,” “heteroflexible” and “apansexual” (turned on by “intelligence”). Still, some users of the site found the choices inadequate. One young woman described her sexual orientation as “squigly,” and the reporter cited others who thought highly of that term.

**Bright ideas**

- Britain’s Home Office revealed in November (by releasing archived documents from 1982) that among the contingency suggestions for worst-case nuclear attack on the country was commissioning “psychopaths” to help keep order. They are “very good in crises,” an advocate wrote, because “they have no feelings for others, nor moral code, and tend to be very intelligent and logical,” and thus could do quite well at contain- ing the vigilante survivalist enclaves that might develop in the event parts of the kingdom became lawless. (After an apparently thoughtful debate, the suggestion was not agreed to.)
- A theatrical producer in Madrid found a way around Spain’s recent steep sales tax increase on certain entertain- ment venues (sports, movies, live the- ater): It sold back issues of vintage por- nographic magazines for the equivalent of $20 — with a “free” ticket to its lat- est stage production by noted director Pedro Calderon de la Barca. (A show ticket would carry a 21 percent tax, but a pornographic magazine is still taxed at 4 percent.)

**Ironies**

- The new normal

An Oceanside, Calif., couple was sur- prised in November to discover that buying a purebred bichon frise on credit meant they were only leasing the dog for 27 months and would have to make a 28th payment to actually “own” Tresor. Furthermore, the lease, under a “repo” threat, required “daily exercise,” “regular bathing and grooming” and “imme- diate” disposal of Tresor’s “waste.” A spokesperson for the store, Oceanside Puppy (which works with four finance companies), told the San Diego Union- Tribune that the arrangement is fairly standard now for expensive pets.

- Compelling explanations

An Oceanside, Calif., couple was sur- prised in November to discover that buying a purebred bichon frise on credit meant they were only leasing the dog for 27 months and would have to make a 28th payment to actually “own” Tresor. Furthermore, the lease, under a “repo” threat, required “daily exercise,” “regular bathing and grooming” and “imme- diate” disposal of Tresor’s “waste.” A spokesperson for the store, Oceanside Puppy (which works with four finance companies), told the San Diego Union- Tribune that the arrangement is fairly standard now for expensive pets.

- **First-world problems**

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- **Language of love**

People advertising for love interests via online dating sites have apparently become picky about how they describe their sexuality. To the usuals (male, female, gay, heterosexual) have been added recently (as reported by NPR in December after surveying OkCupid.com) “asexual,” “androgynous,” “genderqueer” (evidently not the same as “gay”), “queer” (not quite “gay,” either), “questioning,” “trans man,” “transsexual,” “transmasculine,” “heteroflexible” and “apansexual” (turned on by “intelligence”). Still, some users of the site found the choices inadequate. One young woman described her sexual orientation as “squigly,” and the reporter cited others who thought highly of that term.

- **Bright ideas**

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- **Ironies**

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- **Compelling explanations**

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Please make your holiday gift today and help all local kids receive the care they need close to home – near their families, friends and loved ones – at our area’s only children’s hospital.

Brighten a Child’s Holiday. Make your gift today:

Call 239-343-6950 or visit ChildrensHospitalGoal.org

Start the New Year with lessons in Italian

Learn to speak Italian, or brush up on what you already know, in classes starting next month at the Naples Italian American Foundation. Classes are offered in six-week sessions beginning in January at foundation headquarters, 7035 Airport-Pulling Road (corner of Orange Blossom Drive).

Monday (starting Jan. 5): Beginning Italian, 10 a.m.; advanced beginners, 12:30 p.m.
Monday (starting Jan. 12): Advanced, 10 a.m.; conversational, 2 p.m.
Wednesday (starting Jan. 7): Italian for travelers, 9:30 a.m.
Thursday (starting Jan. 8): Intermediate conversation, 9:30 a.m.; advanced, noon; Italian opera, 1:30 p.m., with the first three sessions devoted to “Cavalleria Rusticana” and the next three to “I Pagliacci.” A DVD of “Cavalleria Rusticana” will be shown at 2:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 5.
Friday (starting Jan. 9): Italian detective Stories, 10 a.m.
Attendance is free for members of the Naples Italian American Foundation; others pay $60 for six sessions. To sign up or for more information, call 597-5210.

Wrecking Crew Gives, a local non-profit, is offering a $5,000 scholarship to the winner of its short film contest. The organization’s mission is to mitigate or remove the barriers that limit opportunities for children and their caregivers.

Participants are asked to submit a short digital film that artistically represents the contest’s theme “What Makes America America.” Films must be between one and two minutes and edited entirely on a smart phone.

“With the explosion of smart phone use, most everyone has one and no one will have an unfair advantage,” Darren Sherwood, a member of the Wrecking Crew Gives board of directors, says. “We want the contest to be about the art, not technology.”

Rules and an entry form can be downloaded at wreckingcrewgives.org or requested by sending an email to filmcontest@wreckingcrewgives.org or a letter addressed to WCG at P.O. Box 11086, Naples, FL 34108. Deadline for entries is Jan. 23.

Brighten the Holidays for Local Children

Chansen at age 11
Leukemia

Golisano Children’s Hospital of Southwest Florida

Imagine having to travel hours so your daughter, son or grandchild can receive lifesaving cancer care. Your donation helps local kids, just like Chansen, receive care – close to home – at Golisano Children’s Hospital of Southwest Florida.

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Brighten a Child’s Holiday. Make your gift today:

Call 239-343-6950 or visit ChildrensHospitalGoal.org
PAWS Assistance Dogs is booking speaking engagements and demonstrations for the 2015 season. The non-profit organization promotes independence and enhanced quality of life for veterans and children with special needs through life-changing partnerships with skilled assistance dogs.

Each PAWS service dog in training performs community service throughout its two-plus years of training and contributes to various therapy dog programs in children's education and literacy. Other programs provide compassionate canine care for children and women at risk. Local community partners include the David Lawrence Center, Collier County Library, Collier County Sheriff's Office, senior centers, childcare facilities and schools.

PAWS Assistance Dogs are always placed at no cost to those they serve. PAWS handlers contribute hundreds of hours and serve thousands of individuals each year. The program receives no government funding and is totally dependent on the support of organizations, companies and individuals to provide the financial means and public awareness needed to accomplish its mission.

Through the PAWS speakers bureau, staff and volunteers are available to educate the local community. Canine assisted therapy programs and speakers can be booked for schools, clubs, businesses and other organizations. Tours and demonstrations at the PAWS academy can also be arranged. For more information, call 775-1660 or email info@pawsassistancedogs.com.

Retired rabbi of Japan opens Saul I. Stern Cultural Series

The Jewish Congregation of Marco Island opens the 21st year of the Saul I. Stern Cultural Series with a presentation by Marvin Tokayer, retired rabbi of Japan, on Tuesday, Jan. 6. Rabbi Tokayer has spent a lifetime uncovering the roots of Jews in the Far East. His talk will focus on “Pepper, Silk and Ivory” (the title of his latest book, which was published in September).

After serving as a army chaplain in Japan, Rabbi Tokayer returned there with his Israeli-born wife. For more than a decade he served as rabbi of Japan and director of culture, religion and education for the Jewish Communities of the Far East. As the only rabbi in the Far East, his territory included India, Thailand, Hong Kong, Singapore and Korea.

His books include “The Fugu Plan: The Untold Story of the Japanese and the Jews during World War II,” which details the plan of the Japanese to create a haven for Jews in Japan.

Written in Japanese, his first book, “Wisdom of the Talmud,” sold more than 500,000 copies and has since been translated into Chinese and Korean.

The evening with Rabbi Tokayer begins at 7:30 p.m. A question-and-answer period, book signing and reception will follow the program.

The Saul I. Stern Cultural Series continues on Feb. 26 with the Naples Philharmonic Brass Quintet and on March 18 with Harry Ettlinger, one of the original Monuments Men, a small group of Allied heroes in World War II who assisted in rescuing works of art and other important cultural artifacts from Hitler’s regime and returning them to their rightful owners.

Series tickets are $75 for patrons, $50 for JCMI members and $60 for non-members. Single tickets are $20 for members and $25 for others. The JCMI is at 991 Winterberry Drive on Marco Island. For tickets or more information, call 642-0800.

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Girls-Collier at Immokalee and the Collier County Stamp Club meets at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month. The club has prerequisites for membership. — Email club news to Cindy Pierce at cpierce@floridaweekly.com.

The Naples chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society meets at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 13, in the Kapnick Center at Naples Botanical Garden. Guest speaker George Wilder, herbarium curator and botanist at the Garden, will discuss “The Biology of Roots.” Admission is free, and RSVPs are not required. For more information, visit naples.fnpschapters.org.

Those who write poetry or who simply enjoy listening to and reading poetry are invited to meet at The Norris Center from 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 13, and Mondays, Feb. 9 and March 9. After the formal meeting, those who are interested can continue the conversation in front of a Fifth Avenue restaurant. For more information, call (440) 354-1144 or email formulawriting@hotmail.com.

The Naples chapter of PFLAG, Parents Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, will meet for a casual games and occasional tournament. Saturdays, Feb. 9 and March 9. After the formal meeting, those who are interested can continue the conversation at a designated location. The local USSVI base commander is John Dykhuis of Naples. For more information, call (440) 554-1144 or email formulawriting@hotmail.com.

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teeth were filed down, her eyes were on the verge of being lost all together and she had extensive scarring all over her body and face. After undergoing medical and emotional rehabilitation for a variety of old injuries, she proved to her caregivers to be a very sweet animal with a gentle disposition.

Not that she was totally free of the emotional scars from her time as a bait dog, however.

“She was a great dog great with people, but very overwhelmed with other dogs,” says Brooke’s Legacy volunteer Karen Hill. “She couldn’t go to events. She would do this bark that was so terrifying no one would take her.”

When the rescue organization stepped up its efforts to find a home for Hansa Rose, local resident Cheryl Klein inquired about adopting her with the intention of using her as an emotional support dog. Ms Klein is recognized as disabled due to chronic migraines and the post-traumatic stress disorder she suffered after her child’s sudden and tragic death a few years ago. She couldn’t afford to purchase a fully trained support animal, however, so she waited three years — until she learned about Hansa Rose.

Ms. Klein took Deeogee home on Nov. 1, 2013 — the anniversary of her daughter’s death. “My ultimate goal for her was to be a service dog, so I had to put her in private training,” Ms. Klein says. “I worked very hard with her to overcome her fear of other animals. Her instinct was to defend herself.”

She believes she and Deeogee have bonded because they suffer similar emotional disorders. Now they comfort one another during episodes.

Ms. Klein’s friends at Brooke’s Legacy Animal Rescue barely recognize Deeogee today. The dog who would instinctively cry or attack when in the presence of another dog now has play dates with pups of all shapes and sizes.

“She is so happy,” she says. “Everybody brings their dogs to her and she smiles from ear to ear.”

Petco’s annual Holiday Wishes grant program awards exemplary animal welfare organizations money to continue their work and save more animals like Deeogee. This year’s first-place winner, Yavapai Humane Society in Arizona, received $100,000. Brooke’s Legacy Animal Rescue won one of five third place grants.

“We can’t take away the ills of our past, but we can forge through a future together,” Ms. Klein says about her incredible canine companion. “I don’t know what the future will bring for me, but that’s what we’re doing for each other.”

Brooke’s Legacy is an all-volunteer organization that fosters adoptable dogs and cats until permanent homes are found. For more information, including details about animals currently awaiting forever homes, call 434-7480, email Admin@brookeslegacyanimalrescue.org or visit brookeslegacyanimalrescue.com.

LUCKY DOG

From page 1

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NIH funds robots to assist people with disabilities

New research in robotics might help with stroke rehabilitation, guide wheelchairs and assist children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Projects investigating co-robotics are the focus of new funding from the National Institutes of Health.

This is the third year NIH has participated in the Interagency National Robotics Initiative to support research to develop innovative co-robots — robots that work cooperatively with people. Other participants are the National Science Foundation, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Funding for these projects totals approximately $2.3 million over the next five years, subject to the availability of funds.

“Technology is becoming more and more adaptable in all areas of our life, from GPS in cars to speech recognition technology on smart phones,” said Grace Peng, Ph.D., program director of Rehabilitation Engineering at the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering. “With these awards, we hope to encourage robotics researchers to think of new ways to apply their technology in the realm of health care.”

Wearable exoskeletons to induce recovery of function.

Recovering limb movement after a stroke can be difficult and frustrating for patients. Research suggests that repeatedly using the affected arm in goal-directed, purposeful movements after a stroke can help promote recovery. This project hopes to extend therapy into the home by providing patients with a lightweight robotic exoskeleton that can be placed on an affected arm and provide the kind of therapeutic guidance found at a rehabilitation center.

A computer vision-based active learning co-robot wheelchair

This project hopes to provide a solution for elderly and disabled patients who have limited hand functionality and who rely on wheelchairs for mobility. Researchers hope to create a system and chair that can be controlled by the user’s head movements and will adapt to the individual user. A camera placed on glasses worn by the user can capture head movements designed to control the chair as well as adapt to individual users by gaining information as the patient responds to various situations in natural ways (such as turning their head as their attention shifts). The hope is that the robotic wheelchair will be able to operate almost completely autonomously and only ask for human control on an as-needed basis — learning from the human controls so as to reduce the necessity for human participation in the future.

Music-based interactive robotic orchestra for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Many new technologies for children with autism spectrum disorder have been developed and demonstrated the possibilities of robotic applications in therapy, but most rely on speech interaction and task-based scenarios. To more effectively stimulate the various emotional and social interactivities of children with ASD, researchers need to take further steps to incorporate multiple types of stimuli.

Recent studies have shown improvements in social skills among children with autism who were encouraged to improvise with musical instruments or song. This project aims to develop a music-based system that will help children with ASD interact with a robotic companion in a safe and natural manner.

The funding opportunity announcement (FOA) for NRI funding in 2015 was announced in Oct. 16, 2014 and NIH is specifically promoting assistive robotic technology. NIH continues to accept applications for exoskeletons or surgical robotics funding opportunities. For more information, visit http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-EB-14-008.html.

Give the gift of blood this holiday season

The gift of life-saving blood is truly the perfect color, size and shape for a local patient in need. Community Blood Center encourages everyone age 16 and over to take time out to donate during the busy holiday season.

The Community Blood Center in Naples is at 939 Ninth St. N. Hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday. On Dec. 31, the center will be open from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. It will be closed Dec. 25 and Jan. 1. Call 624-4120 for more information.

Here are some places the CBC bloodmobile will be in the coming weeks. A complete schedule is at givebloodcbc.org. Successful donors will receive a free movie ticket.

Friday-Monday, Dec. 26-29: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Sembler Plaza at the southwest corner of Airport-Pulling Road and Naples Boulevard.

Friday, Jan. 2: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Coastland Center near the food court entrance.

Tuesday, Jan. 6: 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Waterside Shops.

Blood donors can get in on the “Ultimate Go For 3” frequent donor contest to qualify to win a $50 gas card or auto detail, an iPad or a weekend getaway package inclusive of a hotel stay, spa package, dinner and two-day use of a BMW convertible courtesy of Germain BMW. Visit the website for details.

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Stress may lead to a ‘broken’ heart

BY JL WATSON
Lee Memorial Health System

Chest pain often signals something serious and life-threatening, like a heart attack. But for some people, particularly elderly women, this type of pain can indicate a stress cardiomyopathy, known as “broken heart syndrome.”

The condition was first identified as a transient heart condition in Japan in the early 1990s. Patients experienced chest pain or shortness of breath after severe psychological or physical stress, such as an intense argument, news of the death of a loved one or a severe car accident.

“Interestingly, patients appear to have an acute heart attack, known as ‘ST elevation myocardial infarction,’ but are found to have no blockages in the coronary arteries after cardiac catheterization,” says Lee Physician Group cardiologist Bhavin Patel, D.O. “However, there is abnormal movement of the left ventricle, including ballooning of the apex, known as takotsubo cardiomyopathy.”

The bulging ventricle resembles a takotsubo, a pot used by Japanese fishermen to trap octopuses. It is often identified on left ventriculography and confirmed by echocardiography. Patients are found to have systolic heart failure, a weakening of the heart’s pump function.

“Although we do not know the exact cause behind stress cardiomyopathy, it is believed that the release of stress hormones, such as cortisol and adrenaline, results in weakness of the left ventricle,” Dr. Patel says. “It predominantly affects elderly women because of the reduced levels of estrogen after menopause. It most commonly afflicts Asians and Caucasian women.”

The best way to avoid the condition is to avoid any physical or emotional stress that may have played a role in triggering the disorder. Therefore, it is important to reduce and control stress levels by:

- Eating a heart healthy diet
- Maintaining an ideal body weight
- Engaging in regular aerobic exercise
- Avoiding excessive alcohol

“Treatment options include routine heart failure medications, such as beta blockers, ACE and aldosterone inhibitors along with diuretics,” Dr. Patel says. “We teach patients the importance of following a specific congestive heart failure diet, maintaining daily weights, and 1200 milligrams sodium and fluid restrictions.”

Someone who has experienced one episode may experience future occurrences, if the condition is not treated. It can also worsen over time.

“The good news is that if identified and treated early, the systolic dysfunction and ventricle wall abnormalities improve in approximately four weeks and most patients recover fully within three months,” Dr. Patel says. “However, it is important to remain on lifelong medical therapy to avoid a recurrence.”
PET TALES

Like cats and dogs

Use diplomacy and common sense to moderate pet disputes

The idea that pets fight like, well, cats and dogs, is a popular one, but it’s not always grounded in reality. We’ve known plenty of pets who had interspecies friendships, sharing a bed or sofa, grooming each other and playing together. Even when animals aren’t best buds, they often coexist comfortably, tolerating each other’s presence with little fuss.

But conflict can bubble up at any time people live with more than one animal of any species. Maybe one is old and grouchy, while the other is a young whippersnapper. Or, one is bossy and the other is too mild-mannered to stand up for herself. Whatever the case, the secret to helping them get along is to understand their behavioral differences and work to meet the needs of each of them. Here we take a look at four situations that can cause problems, with tips to help all of you live in harmony. In most cases, the secrets to conflict resolution call for good management of resources and space, training, behavior modification or separation.

Food fight! Your cat’s got no interest in your dog’s food, but the dog growsls every time the cat walks by his bowl. When it comes to meals, dogs don’t like to share, and your cat’s mere presence may be enough to set off his guarding reflex. Take the simple route to solve the problem: Feed them separately. That’s a good rule of paw any time you have multiple animals. It’s stressful for our domesticated predators to eat in the presence of another animal, even if normally they get along. Feed each animal in a separate room or in their crates, ideally placed so they can’t see each other eating.

A not-so-merry chase. Dogs like to chase moving objects. Cats run when they see danger (i.e., dogs). It’s tough to extinguish such an instinctive behavior in dogs, but a couple of techniques can help to minimize the problem. Work with a trainer to improve your dog’s recall (come when called), even in the face of a fun distraction, such as a running cat. Give him a great reward so he thinks coming to you is better than chasing the cat. Be sure your cat has a place he can escape to, such as under the sofa or up a cat tree. The easiest solution when you can do it, is to bring up a puppy with a cat so he learns respect from an early age.

Whose is it? Whether we’re talking beds, toys or other high-value objects, one pet may lay claim to an item the other wants. The easiest solution is to purchase duplicates, so there’s one for everybody. You should also teach the “give it” or “drop it” command so you can remove the bone of contention and put it away when pets fight over it. With resources such as your time and attention, try to do fun things at the same time with each pet. Take dogs on walks together, pet animals at the same time and give treats at the same time.

Battle of the bed. Who gets to share your sleeping quarters when a new pet moves in? An animal who is used to sharing your bed with you may not be willing to share space with a newcomer as well. And it can get crowded with more than one pet on the bed, even if they’re small. Your original pet should take precedence, but a better solution may be to give all the animals their own beds and reclalm yours for your sole use. You might even find that you sleep better.

To adopt or foster a pet

Dogs and cats adopted from Humane Society Naples come with vaccinations, sterilization surgery, ID microchip and 30 days of health insurance. Visit the animals ready for adoption at the main shelter at 370 Airport-Pulling Road, N. (11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday, and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday), or at the satellite adoption center at Coastland Center during mall hours. Call 643-1555 or visit HSANaples.org for more information.
I think maybe this last week of the year is known as the “home stretch” because no one leaves their homes unless they absolutely have to. The holiday rush is over, everyone is paired out and ready for Christmas, jammies win over Spanx and heels. Were done, we’re spent. It’s time to eat Christmas cookies, watch “Love Actually” and open some presents.

There was a time, though, when Christmas Eves, for me, was less predictable. Like 1977 — our first year in Southwest Florida.

My parents were recently divorced, and when my Mom and I moved to this land of heat and humidity and no trees or friends, she was thrilled to never have to scrape an icy windshiedl ever again. I, on the other hand, was a 12-year-old pining away for my Ohio hometown. And that’s how Christmas Eve started. You know how kids beg and whine to open “just one” present on Christmas Eve? Well, as I cried for Christmas Eve — because Nicholas was so he could open all his presents on Christmas Eve — because Nicholas was special.

By then, Mom had started the tradition of inviting Christmas “orphans” over — friends who had no family near-by to spend Christmas Eve with. She’d make lots hors d’oeuvres (most popular was her famous pecan-crusted cheese ball) and serve way too much pink wine in a box.

As the years went by, I started inviting my Christmas orphans — and the house was mostly filled with fun, festive, gay friends who by midnight were all danc-ing in the living room to Madonna. Those Christmas Eves truly sparkled. When Mom fell ill and moved back to Ohio, I kept the Christmas Eve party torch burning — in her honor and to continue tradition for Nicholas, who at that point was in his late teens. At one of the best ones, we had around 60 people in the house. There was music and cheese balls (of course), and one of the guests had just returned from Europe with a bottle of Absinthe. Our dear friends the Damianos — including legendary director Gerard Damiano Sr. (“Deep Throat”) — were there. A candle in the bathroom caught a wicker shelf on fire, and as a couple of party-goers nonchalantly carried it through the house and tossed it on the bonfire in the backyard, a friend’s 20-something-year-old nephew visiting from Indiana was heard saying, “There’s Absinthe, the bathroom’s on fire and the director of ‘Deep Throat’ is in the kitchen. This is the best Christmas Eve EVER.”

Now that Nicholas has grown up and moved away, Mom has died and Todd and I live in a condo, our Christmas Eves have become quieter, mellower. But that doesn’t stop me from being nostalgic for the past. Maybe we all feel like that on Christmas Eve.

Sometimes I think that maybe, for folks who are alone — and for Christmas orphans — Christmas Eve is even lone-lier than Christmas Day. So even if you’re spending Christmas Eve in your jammies, consider a friend or two who might be alone and feeling nostalgic. Invite them over to watch “Love Actu-ally.”

And make sure you have a box of wine and a cheese ball in the fridge.

Happy Holidays!

— Ciao for now, my lovelies! Stay tuned for another divalicious diary entry next week ...

THE DIVA DIARIES

What are you doing Christmas Eve?

NEW Fall Line up at Conservancy Nature Center!

Check out the new fall schedule at the Conservancy of Southwest Florida Nature Center! Transform into a Jr. Veterinarian, take a guided kayak tour or attend one of our daily programs featuring live animals.

10:15 AM Guided Trail Walk
11:15 AM “Wild Discoveries” Animal Presentation
1:15 PM “Secrets of Sea Turtles” Presentation
2:15 PM “What’s New at the Wildlife Hospital” Presentation

A new Spanish-language program, featuring live reptiles of Southwest Florida, will be hosted each Saturday at 1:30 PM. Electric boat tours are also available from 10 AM to 4PM. The 45-minute ride along the Gordon River, led by a Conservancy-trained volunteer, is free with admission.

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TAXI CABS CASH

BY ATHENA PONUSHIS
aponushis@floridaweekly.com

Naples

New Year’s Eve revelers hydrate and administer their personal hangover cures on New Year’s Day; taxicab drivers will lay their heads on their pillows smiling, having counted their money. The taxi business triples on the night of merrymaking and debauchery. Partygoers may stumble into cabs, get sick or not remember their home addresses — but drivers swear it’s worth it. It’s madness, but it’s money, they all agree.

Here, transportation voices from around the state give a look into the world of taxis on this most gluttonous of holidays.

“Trying to put enough taxis on the road for New Year’s Eve is like trying to build a church big enough for Easter Sunday,”

BY ATHENA PONUSHIS
aponushis@floridaweekly.com

Port Royal to Bonita Beach, The Bua Bell Group brings over 28 combined years of experience serving the luxury market of Naples.

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Charitable organizations are counting on holiday donations. Approximately 30 percent of annual charitable contributions are made in December and an astonishing 10 percent of annual contributions are made in the last 48 hours of the year, according to an article in the New York Post on Dec. 21, 2013. It might be that a sudden rush of generosity happens in the last 48 hours of the year, or it might be that taxpayers decide at the last minute how to give and receive a tax benefit/maximize their tax deductions in the year before a new taxable year begins.

Because much is last-minute giving, some suggest giving to a foundation that you know will cash your check before the year closes. According to the NY Post article, last-minute contributions might be more assuredly made by a credit card: “...certified financial planner Joel Isaacson suggests 'selecting two or three recognized 501(c)(3) charitable organizations that you have an intimate knowledge of and making the donation on your credit card so that you're able to show you were charged before the 31st.'

Last-minute giving generally involves last minute researching/consideration to the quality of the recipient of the donation.

Many donors think that the most important consideration is an organization’s finances. A study by the Better Business Bureau's Wise giving Alliance reveals that Americans consider financing to be the most important indicator of trust, which is a misguided review of a nonprofit organization according to the organization. Americans verify their trust in a charity by looking at: 46 percent said finances; 20 percent cite ethics; 14 percent use name recognition of the charity; and 11 percent said results.

Considerations that should be foremost include: cause, ethics, transparency, accountability, reporting and results. Last you think that you must do this all on your own, fear not. There are multiple organizations that provide online assistance for free. For example, BBB Wise Giving Alliance verifies the trustworthiness of nationally-soliciting charities by completing rigorous evaluations based on 20 holistic standards that address charity governance, effectiveness reporting, finances, fund raising, appeal accuracy and other issues. In support of this mission, local Better Business Bureaus report on regionally-soliciting charities. (See give.org.)

There are other organizations providing charity verifications including, but not limited to, Charity Navigator, Charity Watch, Guide Star, etc.

Most of those who give are very sensitive to the net dollars given to the charity, excluding third party solicitation expenses. If you receive a phone call asking to give to a charity, you might ask, “What percent of my donation will go to the charity?” You might be dumbstruck that the net amount going to the charity is less than 20 percent of your gift. And so it seems as if your gift is wasted. In reality, it might be the only venue for the organization soliciting gifts.

Comparing it to giving to a hospital (which is often a very good local recipient of funds also receiving high “verification” scores), such charitable gifts might seem to be largely a waste, since 100 percent of a hospital donation will go to the hospital. However, the reality is that hospitals have their internal costs for charitable giving solicitations including charitable departments and the unrecognized allocation of time by senior administrators to solicit and promote the hospital for such giving.

Besides a direct gift, you can set up a charitable donor advised fund, which you personally direct to charitable organizations. The benefit is that it is funded now and it can be distributed later when you have had time to reflect on causes and check organization’s backgrounds.

It’s best to remember that not all charitable giving needs to have a tax benefit, as we all know causes and individuals who are in need of a helping hand and for which there will be no tax incentive associated. This giving need not come in December and in the last 48 hours of the year. But it is worthy of consideration as there are needs of the middle class and lower economic groups who are not receiving federal or charitable support and are trying to go through difficult times on their own. They might well appreciate a little help as it might make a dollar difference and make a huge difference to their spirit someone cares, someone wants to help and knows.

Just some ideas to ponder, and best to ponder before the clock strikes a new year. It’s a good idea to consult your account or tax adviser to know your specific situation and what is legal and practical.

— Jeannette Showalter, CFA is a commodities broker with Worldwide Futures Systems. Find her on Facebook at Jeannette Showalter, CFA.

— Trading futures and options on futures and Forex transactions involve substantial risk of loss and may not be suitable for all investors. You should carefully consider whether trading is suitable for you in light of your circumstances, knowledge and financial resources. You may lose all or more of your initial investment. Opinions, market data and recommendations are subject to change at any time.
High school students can apply for summer leadership program

The Leadership Collier Foundation, an affiliate of The Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce, is accepting applications for the Class of 2015 Youth Leadership Collier program that empowers students to become effective leaders, showcases Collier County and encourages participants to consider coming back to their community to begin their careers and families.

From June 13-19, participants will interact in daily sessions designed to give them first-hand experience in local government, health care, business and the arts. Tuition is $500. The deadline for applications is Feb. 4. Applications can be found online at napleschamber.org.

For more information, contact Amanda Heights, vice president of Leadership Collier Foundation, by calling 403-2903 or emailing Amanda@napleschamber.org.

Leadership alumni invited to hear about ‘Turtles on the Town’

The Leadership Collier Foundation Alumni Association hosts a panel discussion about “Turtles on the Town,” a collaboration between the Community Foundation of Collier County, Conversancy of Southwest Florida and United Arts Council of Collier County, during a lunch meeting Thursday, Jan. 29. Leadership alumni will learn about the importance of community involvement in the areas of conservation and the arts, which are crucial to the region’s continuing development. The panelists are Anna Hughes, Community Foundation director of donor services; Nikkie Dvorchak, Conservancy director of development; Katie Schweikhardt, executive director of the United Arts Council; and Robin DeMattia, consultant for “Turtles on the Town.”

The lunch takes place at the Professional Development Center, 63 Third Ave. S. Cost is $15 for Leadership alumni, $20 for others. Registration and networking begin at 11:30 a.m. For tickets or more information, visit napleschamber.org/events.

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- 4 blocks from the beach with Western exposure
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My Dumbest Investment
Pumped and Dumped

About a year and a half ago, I was in a difficult situation and I needed to get out of two penny stocks hyped in an unsolicited email. I knew better, but was stressed out. I walked straight into a pump-and-dump scheme.

I still do not know how I managed to persuade myself to buy, and ever since have been avoiding thinking about it. I learned never to invest with distraction and stressed, and to remind myself before each trade that if it looks too good to be true, it probably is. I also learned never to trust email from people I do not know.

— LP, online

The Fool Responds:
Those lessons will serve you well. For those who do know, pump-and-dump is a scheme often carried out with risky penny stocks. A scammer buys a lot of a penny stock and then hypes it, perhaps online or via email. As naive investors pile in, the stock rises. Then the scammer sells it, and his selling triggers a big drop in the price. The scammer profits, and the unsuspecting are left with big losses.

Write to Us! Send questions on Ask the Fool, Dumped (or Smartest) Investments (up to 100 words), and your Trivia entries to fool@fool.com or via regular mail c/o this newspaper, attn: The Motley Fool. Sorry, we can't provide individual financial advice.

BUSINESS MEETINGS

The Marco Island Area Chamber of Commerce holds its next Business After Five networking event for members, guests and visitors from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 21, at the Marco Island Fish Co. Call 394-7549 or visit marcoislandchamber.org/events.

The Bonita Springs Area Chamber of Commerce will host a show at its next Business Before Business meeting from 8-9:15 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 22, at the Hilton Garden Inn Fort Myers Airport next to Gulf Coast Town Center. Thirty-five-ﬁve chamber members will showcase their products and services to fellow members and guests. Call Chelsea Sea Bicrzak at 992-2943 or email Chelsea@bonitaspringschamber.org.

Save the date for the Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce annual meeting set for Wednesday morning, April 15, at the Hilton Naples. Visit napleschamber.org/events for more information.

— Email business meeting announcements to cpierce@floridaweekly.com.

Ask the Fool
Good Deal, Bad Deal

What happens when one company buys another — does the acquired company’s stock price go up or down?

— R.C., Lexington, Kentucky

It depends on the purchase price. If the acquirer’s current market value is around $5 billion (let’s say that amounts to a $30 share price), and it’s bought for $7 billion (or $70 per share), you can expect the stock price to jump on the news. When a company is very desirable, perhaps due to its technology, patents, growth prospects, etc., a buyer may have to outbid other interested companies. Strategies that are too small, though, are sometimes snapped up for relatively little when they’re down.

Meanwhile, if investors think that the acquiring company has made a smart purchase, its own price might also rise. But if they think the company overpaid or that it won’t see a good return on its investment, its price can fall.

It all depends on investor expectations and reactions to the deal. Some acquisitions turn out to be smart moves, while others end up regrettable.

— What’s an “unrealized gain?”

G.R., Strasburg, Virginia

When you sell an investment, you usually realize a gain or loss. If, for example, you buy stock in Tattoo Advertising Co. (ticker: TATTOO) at $40 per share and then sell it a few years later at $48, you’ll have a realized gain of $8 per share (less commission costs).

Meanwhile, perhaps you bought shares of Farm Dogs Inc. (ticker: FARMDOGS) at $30 per share and then sold it at $20 per share at $10. If you haven’t sold any shares, you’ll still have an unrealized gain (or “profit”) of $10 per share. Since you haven’t actually sold the holding, it’s your profit in theory only, and an unrealized gain.

Got a question for the Fool? Send it in — see Write to Us.
ON THE MOVE

Accounting

Mary Hodgson has joined the administrative staff at Markham Norton Mosteller Wright & Company as executive assistant for the forensic accounting, litigation support and divorce mediation services team.

Banking

Todd Cunningham has joined the Naples office of BB&T as a mortgage loan officer. A graduate of Naples High School and the University of Florida, Mr. Cunningham has more than 17 years of experience originating mortgages in the Naples market.

Health Care

Nate Carrington has been promoted to clinical supervisor of the emergency services assessment center and Angela Lopez to clinical supervisor for outpatient services at the David Lawrence Center, Collier County’s nonprofit mental health and substance abuse treatment facility serving children, adults and families.

Mr. Carrington earned his associate of arts degree from Edison Community College and his bachelor of science degree in psychology from the University of Florida. He is working on his MBA in health care management at Capella University. He joined the David Lawrence Center in 2005 as a clinician in the children’s inpatient psychiatric program and most recently held the position of clinical coordinator in the emergency services assessment center. He earned the David Lawrence Center Outstanding Leadership Award in 2012.

Ms. Lopez earned her bachelor’s degree in psychology and her master’s in social work from Florida Gulf Coast University. She joined the David Lawrence Center in 2010 and previously worked at Eden Florida, Charlotte Behavioral Health Care and Collier County Counseling. She frequently volunteers to speak on a variety of clinical topics to the community through the David Lawrence Center speakers bureau.

Hospitality

Israel Martinez has been promoted to executive sous chef at Angelina’s Ristorante in Bonita Springs. He has been on staff at the restaurant since 2008, most recently as assistant chef and previously prep and line cook and dishwasher.

Carmen Mauceri has been promoted to general manager and COO for The Club at Mediterra. Mr. Mauceri joined the Mediterra team in 2011 as director of club operations and has nearly 20 years of experience in clubhouse and hospitality operations. In his new capacity, he reports to the board of directors and is responsible for executing all board policies and strategic direction. A graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, he previously served as director of club operations at the Chagrin Valley Country Club in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, and executive chef at The Country Club in Cleveland. For the past three years, he has been involved in all aspects of club operations at the Club at Mediterra.

Law

Joseph Lindsay and Todd Allen have formed Lindsay & Allen, PLLC, a full-service law firm with offices off Livingston Road in North Naples. The firm focuses on estate planning and probate, corporate, real estate, litigation and community association law.

Mr. Lindsay received his juris doctorate degree with honors in 1995 from Drake University Law School, where he served on the editorial board of the Drake Law Review. He then earned a master’s degree in securities law from Georgetown University Law School. After practicing corporate law for several years, he earned a master’s in estate planning in 2005 from the University of Miami School of Law. He practices in the areas of estate planning, probate and corporate law.

Mr. Allen received his juris doctorate law degree in 2010 from Ave Maria School of Law, where he served on the editorial board of the International Law Review. Early in his practice he represented a significant number of homeowners facing foreclosure and bankruptcy in Collier and Lee counties and was featured in the national media with articles in Fortune Magazine, USA Today, Housing Wire, Time Magazine and the Huffington Post, among others.

Nonprofit Organizations

Stephanie Munz-Campbell has announced her resignation as executive director of Grace Place for Children and Families, effective Jan. 2. Ms. Campbell has led the nonprofit organization for 10 years and is retiring to pursue a family-run sustainable organic farm in North Carolina. The Grace Place board of directors has undertaken the process to recruit a new executive director. CFO and COO Dave Tobisz will serve as interim executive director until a permanent replacement has been named.

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TAXI

From page 1

says Roger Chapin, vice president of Mears Transportation Group in Orlando.

Mr. Chapin sits on the board of the Florida Taxicab Association. A new group, he says the association has no statewide statistics yet — how many cabs will be on the roads, how many rides will be given. How much money will be made — but local businesses lend some insight.

Michael Griffin, manager at Southwest Florida Transportation Group, says all hands are at the wheel on New Year’s Eve. His business, which includes Bluebird Taxi and Yellow Cab services, averages 800 rides a day in Lee County. That doubles on New Year’s Eve. His cabs will give more than 1,500 rides that night.

“IT’S THE BUSIEST DAY OF THE YEAR,” Mr. Griffin says. “We do everything in our power to try and take care of the needs of the public that night, but it’s a tough one. If you were going to have enough cars on the road, you would probably need 200 to 300 cars on the road to take care of everybody in a three-hour span. New Year’s Eve, it’s everything all at once. We put 100 cars out there, that’s all we can do, that’s all we have.”

His Charlotte County fleet of 15 cabs averages 200 rides per day. Again, he anticipates numbers will double for New Year’s Eve, to 400 to 450 rides.

Mr. Griffin says his next busiest days after the New Year’s holiday would be St. Patrick’s Day and Fourth of July. He stresses that both of those are a distant second and third. He says all his drivers want to work New Year’s Eve, “because they make terrific money, two to three times what they make on a normal night, $300 to $400, easy.”

As he talks on the phone, one of his veteran cab drivers, a guy who’s been driving cabs for 20 years, speaks over his shoulder, saying it’s like to drive a cab on New Year’s Eve: “The early part of the evening, everybody’s in a hurry. ‘We want this, we want that. We want to get to the party.’ After midnight, after the celebration, you’re picking up very intoxicated people, who may or may not want to go. People get sick in your cab, that’s unfortunate. But come morning, you’re very happy.”

Mr. Griffin offers advice to revelers, “Call us well ahead of time, not for a reservation, but just for plenty of time to respond to your call.”

Mr. Griffin offers advice to revelers, “Call us well ahead of time, not for a reservation, but just for plenty of time to respond to your call.”

His driver chimes in again and says, “The way dispatch works, first come, first serve, every day of the year. New Year’s Eve, everybody’s calling in and getting in line.”

Kenny Mastrodomenico, owner of Taxi Time in Naples, says what tends to happen on New Year’s Eve, right around midnight, taxi drivers will turn their radios off and start picking up people who are flagging down taxis off the street.

Mr. Mastrodomenico says unmarked cars make up a third of his fleet, which consists of 15 cars. He says oftentimes drivers will respond to demand by asking partygoers if they’re going the same way. If so, drivers will cut them a deal, double up the load and get them home safe.

Mr. Mastrodomenico says mainly, it’s good times and good money, “Work is always better when you’re making money.”

He says when he was a driver, he used to love New Year’s Eve. Now that he’s an owner, he hates it. His profit is not proportionate to his drivers. He charges them a flat rate every week. Come New Year’s, they bank and he gets a headache.

Neal Direnzo, owner of A Better Taxi in Lee County, runs a commission-based business, so he does feel the harvest of the business, so he does feel the harvest of the business. He says his system balances itself out. “When my drivers have a bad day, I have a bad day, but when they have a good day, I have a good day.”

New Year’s Eve would be the day his drivers wait for all year. “It’s a way to recover after spending all that money on Christmas,” he says.

Mr. Direnzo says his drivers make $200 to $600 on New Year’s Eve, not counting tips. Mr. Direnzo says his seven cabs will probably give 30 to 40 rides each that night. He says bigger companies may have a three to five-hour wait, but his drivers will be there to pick up the people who feel like they’ve been left behind.

Over in West Palm Beach, a Yellow Cab manager may be more humble with his estimates, not wanting to jinx his New Year’s Eve business. He says sometimes his fleet of 15 drivers makes 75 trips, sometimes 120 trips, sometimes more. He says his drivers are busy on St. Patty’s Day, they are busy on Halloween, but New Year’s Eve would be the Black Friday of the taxicab world. On that night, drivers may work from 6 p.m. to 4 a.m. and make $400 to $500.

Uber’s impact

Most taxicab companies seem a wee bit wary of the emergence of Uber, an app-based transportation service started in San Francisco and spreading to cities around the world. With Uber, freelancers not associated with cab companies offer rides and are connected to customers via the app. Taxicab business owners in Florida see Uber as a transportation company trying to bill itself as a technology company, so it can walk into the transportation world without being subject to transportation regulations.

Most taxicab business owners interviewed for this article are hopeful that Uber will not affect their New Year’s Eve business, as the company has been publicly ridiculed for hiking prices when consumers need rides the most — during the holidays.

Chris Lustre, manager of A2B Taxi in West Palm Beach, does not seem to be worried. He says 98 percent of his business comes from repeat customers or people who take the time to read up on the business online.

“The volume definitely triples on New Year’s Eve,” Mr. Lustre says. “You have a lot of people going out, a lot of people coming in, out of town and nobody wants to drive home.”

Mr. Lustre will be driving a cab this New Year’s Eve, probably working until 5 o’clock in the morning. Asked to give a glimpse into that world, he chuckles, “To really see it, you’d have to take a tour.”

Michael Griffin manages Southwest Florida Transportation Group, which includes Yellow Cab and Bluebird Taxi.

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Allegra Naples honors 2015 FootPRINT Fund award winners

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Sellers in the luxury market can expect a very good buyer turnout in the coming months, according to a consensus among Naples' top brokers after they analyzed the November 2014 market report from the Naples Area Board of Realtors. NABOR tracks home listings and sales within Collier County (excluding Marco Island).

The brokers' prediction was based on several factors, including overall pending sales activity, which rose 11 percent for homes priced over $1 million; overall closed sales activity, which increased 17 percent for homes priced over $1 million; and the fact that the majority of homes sold in the $2 million and above category were cash sales.

Pending and closed sales activity in all price categories above $300,000 was up over the past 12-month period ending in November.

"Activity in the high-end market is remarkable coming into season," says Steve Barker, advising broker for Equity Realty, adding that 21 homes in the $2 million and above category were sold this November as compared to 14 in November 2013.

"This is a good sign for sellers in our market because people who have the resources to pay cash for million dollar homes are smart and careful investors," Mr. Barker adds. "They are not going to make a poor investment decision, which speaks volumes for the value of our market."

The November 2014 report showed heightened activity in several areas of the luxury market, including a 40 percent increase in overall closed sales for single-family homes priced $2 million and above, from 260 in the 12 months ending November 2013 to 282 in the 12 months ending November 2014; an 11 percent increase in closed sales for condominiums priced $1 million to $2 million, from 234 in the 12 months ending November 2013 to 260 in the 12 months ending November 2014; and a 35 percent increase in single-family median home prices in the Naples beach area, from $795,000 in the 12 months ending November 2013 to $1 million in the 12 months ending November 2014.

"Median price in the Naples beach area single-family home market cannot continue to increase at the current rate indefinitely," says Cindy Carroll of the real estate appraisal and consultancy firm Carroll & Carroll. She adds that, despite aggressive activity in new construction, the report indicated inventory in the resale market continued to decline.

The NABOR November 2014 market report provides comparisons of single-family home and condominium sales (via the Southwest Florida MLS), price ranges and geographic segmentation and includes an overall market summary. Among the overall findings:

- Overall pending sales decreased 2 percent, from 840 in November 2013 to 828 in November 2014.
- Pending sales for single-family homes were up 0.5 percent for the 12 months ending November 2014 compared to the same period in 2013.
- Closed sales for single-family homes were up 17 percent for the 12 months ending November 2014 compared to the same period in 2013.
- Closed sales for condominiums were up 11 percent for the 12 months ending November 2014 compared to the same period in 2013.
- Pending sales for condominiums were up 4 percent for the 12 months ending November 2014 compared to the same period in 2013.
- Closed sales for single-family homes priced $1 million and above were up 11 percent for the 12 months ending November 2014 compared to the same period in 2013.
- Closed sales for condominiums priced $1 million to $1.5 million were up 11 percent for the 12 months ending November 2014 compared to the same period in 2013.

Numbers indicate sellers can expect a good winter.
Season's Greetings!

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• First Floor Unit in Quiet Subdivision
• Furnished 1/645sf Under Air, 2 Bedrooms 2 Baths
• $224,900
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Frank Dektich 239.877.4193

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• 4 Bedrooms, 3 Bathrooms
• Built in 2013, 2 Car Garage
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Vahle Team 239.458.7805

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• Little Harbor’s Most Preferred Home
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• 4 Bedrooms + Den, 4 Full Bathrooms
• Gourmet Kitchen, Custom Cabinetry
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The Taranto Team 239.572.3078

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THE HARCLEY
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• One Year Home Warranty Included
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• 4th Floor Condo w/Preserve & Golf Views
• 2BR, 2BA w/Den and Huge Lanai
• $425,000
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BONITA BAY
IMPERIA POINTE
WISTERIA POINTE
• Totally Renovated
• Spectacular Kitchen
• $349,000
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BONITA SPRINGS
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• Exceptional Golf Course View Over Lake
• $239,000
MLS 214064898
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BONITA SPRINGS
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• First Floor Unit in Quiet Subdivision
• Furnished 1/645sf Under Air, 2 Bedrooms 2 Baths
• $224,900
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• Bridge Free Access to Gulf of Mexico
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MONTAÑERO
• Panoramic Gulf and Bay Views
• 2BR, 2BA w/ Open Floor Plan
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• 3BR, 2BA w/2 Car Garage
• $415,000
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The Beigl Team 239.287.6414

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BONITA BAY
LEHIGH ACRES
NAPLES
• 3BR, 2BA, Long Lake Views from Master Bedroom
• Great Location, 10 Min. to Beach, 20 Min. to Airport
• $199,000
MLS 214066239
Dod Haughey 239.961.1561

NEW LISTING

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STRATFORD PLACE
BONITA BAY
• 3BR, 2BA, 3rd Floor
• $300,000
MLS 214063660
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NEW PRICE
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• $199,000  MLS 214050200
• New Kitchen, 1 Car Garage
• 2BR+Den, 2BA, Cathedral Ceilings
GLEN EAGLE
• 3BR/2.5BA, Cathedral Ceilings
• New Kitchen, 1 Car Garage
• $399,000  MLS 214052200
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• Beautiful Home Designed for Family & Entertaining
• 5 Bedrooms/5 Baths, Media Room, Neutral Decor
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BONITA FAIRWAYS
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GLEN EAGLE
• 3BR+Den, 3BA, Cathedral Ceilings
• New Kitchen, 1 Car Garage
• $199,000  MLS 214052200
Ted Libby 239.572.5403

BERMUDA LINKS
• 2nd Floor End Unit, Vaulted Ceilings
• Condo on Executive 18 Hole Golf Course
• $191,900  MLS 214052305
Al Diago 239.333.2375

BONITA FAIRWAYS
• 1 Bed, 1 Bath, 1 Car Garage
• $175,000  MLS 214061295
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• Canal Front Building Lot with Dock
• $297,000  MLS 214069348
Barbara Irons 239.821.2510

JIM GRAFFITI
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• $175,000  MLS 214061295
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Barbara Irons 239.821.2510

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• New Kitchen, 1 Car Garage
• $199,000  MLS 214052200
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Borelli Homes breaks ground on private residence in Talis Park

Borelli Homes has broken ground on the first private residence in Firenze at Talis Park. Designed by Stofft Cooney Architects, the two-story, West Indies-style home will have almost 10,500 square feet of air-conditioned living space and 14,600 total square feet, with 7,246 square feet of air-conditioned living. The two-story, West Indies-style home will have almost 10,500 square feet of air-conditioned living space and 14,600 total square feet, with seven bedrooms, nine baths, a study and a spacious game room.

The ground-floor master suite will have oversized his-and-her walk-in closets and a sitting area. The kitchen with Sub-Zero and Wolf appliances will have an island bar, upgraded European-style cabinets, granite countertops and a walk-in pantry. The expansive outdoor living area will be protected from the elements by retractable screens and shutters and will have an outdoor kitchen and pool and spa. The five-car garage will have custom doors and extra space for storage.

Models by D.R. Horton open in Chiasso at Fiddler’s Creek

D.R. Horton has two new models open in Fiddler’s Creek. In addition, the builder is offering limited-time incentives to help qualified buyers save on closing costs. Five one- and two-story home plans are available in Fiddler’s Creek with prices starting in the high-$800,000s. Homes range in size from 2,500 to 3,500 square feet of living space. The two beautiful models represent a range of styles, features, options and finishes to suit the discerning homeowner.

The 2,788-square-foot Washington is a great room floor plan with three bedrooms, 2½ baths, a den, formal dining room and a two-car garage. An expansive outdoor living space provides views and space for entertaining and is accessible from the café area, great room and master suite. Homeowners can make the most of Southwest Florida’s tropical breezes by opening sliding glass doors that pocket into the walls.

A formal living room is at the heart of the 3,246-square-foot Madison, which treats the outdoor living space as an additional room in its own right by framing it with the den, family room, breakfast nook, living room and master suite. A spacious kitchen with an island bar opens to the family room, with a formal dining room providing an intimate space for entertaining guests, who will also enjoy the privacy of the en suite baths for the second and third bedrooms. Quick move-in opportunities include one Madison and one Washington plan, along with a 3,222-square-foot, two-story Emerson plan. These homes are in Chiasso within the Veneta section of Fiddler’s Creek. The Chiasso neighborhood is characterized by intertwining waterways and offers 59 private sites with views of pristine lakes and streams.

NABOR

From page 9

NABOR President Mike Hughes, vice president and general manager of Downing-Frye Realty, says, “But this year, the soft wasn’t soft; it was strong.” Despite a double-digit drop in overall inventory, the Naples area market continued to see positive growth in various price points, categories, home styles and neighborhoods for both pending and closed sales activity in November. With luxury homes at a premium, homeowners who decide to sell in Naples now might begin to encounter more cash offers. See the full NABOR report for November online at naplesarea.com.
It will be chic, uber chic.
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Another Naples community by the developers of Moraya Bay & The Dunes
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Located off Vanderbilt Drive just north of Wiggins Pass Road
Taylor Morrison has introduced the Lazio VII design that is available in two villages within Fiddler’s Creek. The one-story home has 2,275 air-conditioned square feet and 3,061 total square feet in an open floor plan with three bedrooms, three baths and a den. Just off the foyer the den is spacious enough to accommodate two desks for a his-and-her office. A wall-to-wall sliding door leading out to the lanai brings the outdoors and indoors together as one. The home also has a two-car garage with an optional tandem third-car garage. Interior design features of the Lazio VII include Colonial-style wood casing and baseboards; decorative lighting fixtures in the breakfast nook, dining room and foyer; and ceramic tile floors in the foyer, kitchen, baths and utility room. Other features include 42-inch maple or cherry cabinets with hidden hinges, and GE stainless steel appliances in the kitchen. The master suite has an oversized shower with clear glass enclosure and separate his-and-her vanities. Exterior details include barrel profile roof tiles; a steel-paneled garage door; paver driveway, walkway and entry; exterior garage coach lights and galvanized storm panels. The home also offers a number of high-efficiency, energy-saving features throughout. The Lazio VII is priced from $448,900, plus lot premium. Three move-in-ready Lazio VII homes are available, priced from $632,223. Taylor Morrison is offering the Lazio VII in the villages of Amador and Mussorie. Showcase model homes are open for touring daily. The entrance to Fiddler’s Creek is off Collier Boulevard on the way to Marco Island. For more information, call 732-9300, stop by the sales office at 8152 Fiddler’s Creek Parkway or visit fiddlerscreek.com.
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Jennifer Calenda, 941.916.0798 or 941.505.5555
**Sold! Matt Damon’s mansion on Miami Beach**

Having been “The Departed” from his Miami Beach compound for almost two years, Matt Damon has finally captured a buyer. He and his wife bought the La Gorce Island estate — a 1935 Mediterranean-style house on a double lot — in 2005 for $14.5 million and updated everything to reflect their own style.

The 12,705-square-foot main house has seven bedrooms, 10 bathrooms, a home theater and a custom office. The acre of premium waterfront land includes the main house with wood floors and extensive moldings, gourmet kitchen with professional appliances and prep areas, a pool house with roof terrace and outdoor kitchen; two pools and a hot tub; and a two bedroom guest house, all tucked behind lush palm trees and an 8-foot security wall.

With 170 feet of water frontage on Biscayne Bay, the estate also has a boat dock and views of downtown Miami. Neighbors include Jennifer Lopez, Ricky Martin, Calvin Klein and Alex Rodriguez.

The Damons and their four children are now at home in Pacific Palisades, Calif. They listed the Miami Beach mansion for $20 million in April 2013 and reduced the price late last year to $18.999 million. The property went under contract earlier this month for a price that has not yet been disclosed.

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**Park Shore - Park Plaza #600**

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Florida Weekly’s Open Houses

Open Houses are Sunday 1-4, unless otherwise marked

> $200,000
1. FIDDLER’S CREEK - BENT CREEK
   - Village • $399,000 • Premier Sotheby’s International Realty • ML Meade • 239.293.4851 • Bring ad to gate.

> $300,000
2. FIDDLER’S CREEK - LAGUNA • 9283 Museo Circle #316 • $349,000 • PSIR • ML Meade • 239.293.4851 • Bring ad to gate.
3. FIDDLER’S CREEK - CASCADA • 9086 Cascade Way #101 • $360,000 • PSIR • ML Meade • 239.293.4851 • Open Saturday & Sunday 1-4pm; Bring ad to gate.
4. FIDDLER’S CREEK - SERENA • 2998 Serenity Court #602 • $375,000 • PSIR • ML Meade • 239.293.4851 • Bring ad to gate.
5. FIDDLER’S CREEK - PEPPER TREE • 8525 Pepper Tree Way • $399,000 • PSIR • ML Meade • 239.293.4851 • Open Saturday & Sunday 1-4pm; Bring ad to gate.
6. FIDDLER’S CREEK - CASCADA • 9066 Cascade Way #101 • $395,000 • PSIR • ML Meade • 239.293.4851 • Open Saturday & Sunday 1-4pm; Bring ad to gate.

> $400,000
7. FIDDLER’S CREEK - CALLISTA • 2748 Callista Court #308 • $424,900 • PSIR • ML Meade • 239.293.4851 • Bring ad to gate.
8. FIDDLER’S CREEK - CASCADA • 9302 Cascade Way #202 • $450,000 • PSIR • ML Meade • 239.293.4851 • Bring ad to gate.
9. FIDDLER’S CREEK - MONTREUX • 5725 Montreux Lane #4104 • $449,000 • PSIR • ML Meade • 239.293.4851 • Bring ad to gate.
10. BAY FOREST - BELLE MER • 1503 Royal Fern Lane North • $475,000 • PSIR • Dominic Panozo • 239.822.9321

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11. FIDDLER’S CREEK - CRANBERRY CROSSING • 8948 Cherry Oaks Trail • $549,000 • PSIR • ML Meade • 239.293.4851 • Bring ad to gate.
12. BRENDISI AT MEDITERRA • 2940 Brendisi Way • $575,000 • John R Wood Properties • Emily K. Bua & Tade Bua-Bell • 239.261.3939
13. LONGSHORE LAKE • 68% Shearwater Lane • $585,000 • PSIR • Kathleen Forsman • 239.404.1620
14. FIDDLER’S CREEK - MALLARDS LANDING • 4249 Mallards Way • $599,000 • PSIR • ML Meade • 239.293.4851 • Open Saturday & Sunday 1-4pm; Bring ad to gate.

> $600,000
15. FIDDLER’S CREEK - SAUVIGNON • 2299 Hyacinth Drive • $617,000 • PSIR • Michelle Thomas • 239.860.7176
16. MARCO ISLAND • 1240 Stone Court • $675,000 • PSIR • Dave Flowers • 239.404.0493
17. FIDDLER’S CREEK - MULBERRY ROW • 3606 Mulberry Court • $895,000 • PSIR • Michelle Thomas • 239.860.7176
18. THE MOORINGS • 2000 Crayton Road • $895,000 • PSIR • Michael G. Lawler • 239.262.9399

> $1,000,000
19. FIDDLER’S CREEK - MAHOGANY BEND • 3848 Mahogany Bend Drive • $1,299,000 • PSIR • Michelle Thomas • 239.860.7176
20. FIDDLER’S CREEK - MULBERRY ROW • 7810 Mulberry Lane • $1,350,000 • PSIR • ML Meade • 239.293.4851 • Open Saturday & Sunday 1-4pm; Bring ad to gate.
21. THE MOORINGS • 3003 Crayton Road • $1,395,000 • PSIR • Joe Garabed • 239.571.5700
22. PARK SHORE • 726 Fountainhead Lane • $1,295,000 • PSIR • Michael G. Lawler • 239.262.9399

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23. CELLIENI AT MEDITERRA • 1621 Cellini Lane • $2,490,000 • John R Wood Properties • Emily K. Bua & Tade Bua-Bell • 239.595.0097
24. ISLA MAR IN OLDIE NAPLES • 1905 5th Street South • $1,250,000 • John R Wood Properties • Emily K. Bua & Tade Bua-Bell • 239.595.0097
25. MARCO ISLAND - DUNNOHOIRE • 530 Collier Boulevard South #102 • $1,668,000 • PSIR • Michelle Thomas • 239.860.7176
26. GREY OAKS - ESTUARY • 1220 Gordon River Trail • $1,875,000 • PSIR • Dana Mount • 239.261.3148
27. OLD NAPLES • 315 3rd Avenue South • $2,095,000 • PSIR • Vincent Bandelier • 239.450.5976
28. MARCELLO AT MEDITERRA • 6912 Marcello Way • $2,500,000 • John R Wood Properties • Emily K. Bua & Tade Bua-Bell • 239.595.0097
29. LIVINGSTON WOODS • 1301 13th Avenue South • $2,895,000 • PSIR • John R Wood • 239.595.8500
30. MARCO ISLAND - DUNNOHOIRE • 530 Collier Boulevard South #102 • $3,390,000 • PSIR • Dana Mount • 239.261.3148
31. PORT ROYAL • 3605 Fort Charles Drive • $4,950,000 • PSIR • Dana Mount • 239.404.2209
32. PORT ROYAL • 1900 Spyglass Lane • $5,100,000 • PSIR • Frank Sajtar • 239.595.8500

WEEK OF DECEMBER 25-31, 2014

$800,000
33. ISLA MAR IN OLDIE NAPLES • 1905 5th Street South • $1,250,000 • John R Wood Properties • Emily K. Bua & Tade Bua-Bell • 239.595.0097
34. MARCO ISLAND - DUNNOHOIRE • 530 Collier Boulevard South #102 • $1,668,000 • PSIR • Michelle Thomas • 239.860.7176
35. GREY OAKS - ESTUARY • 1220 Gordon River Trail • $1,875,000 • PSIR • Dana Mount • 239.261.3148
36. LIVINGSTON WOODS • 1301 13th Avenue South • $2,895,000 • PSIR • Vincent Bandelier • 239.450.5976
37. MARCELLO AT MEDITERRA • 6912 Marcello Way • $2,500,000 • John R Wood Properties • Emily K. Bua & Tade Bua-Bell • 239.595.0097
38. LIVINGSTON WOODS • 1301 13th Avenue South • $2,895,000 • PSIR • John R Wood • 239.595.8500
39. PORT ROYAL • 3605 Fort Charles Drive • $4,950,000 • PSIR • Dana Mount • 239.404.2209
40. PORT ROYAL • 1900 Spyglass Lane • $5,100,000 • PSIR • Frank Sajtar • 239.595.8500
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No! no! no!

For some little girls and boys, Santa doesn’t always bring joy

BY NANCY STETSON
nstetson@floridaweekly.com

Visiting Santa.

Have two words ever created such joy, such unbridled anticipation in the hearts of both parents and children?

Santa! That Jolly Old Soul whose very home contains a toy factory, who brings gifts to boys and girls around the world?

Parents envision adorable Disney-esque photographs they can use as Christmas cards to send and gifts to give the grandparents, milestone images to treasure year after year.

Like many things in life, though, the reality can be quite different from the fantasy.

Some children, upon seeing the roly-poly man in red suit and beard and being plopped in the lap of a stranger, are not so thrilled.

SEE SANTA, C4

Rising stars in opera headline Gulfshore gala

BY LINSEY NESMITH
lnesmith@floridaweekly.com

Gulfshore Opera and Artis—Naples have partnered to bring famed tenor Michael Fabiano to Naples on Sunday, Jan. 4. Mr. Fabiano will perform at the opera’s gala concert alongside soprano Joyce El-Khoury and pianist Laurent Phillipe.

“Michael is already a superstar at 30 years old,” says Bruno Guerrero, marketing and public relations manager for the opera company that is in its inaugural season. “Southwest Florida is fortunate to have a legend in the making come to perform here.”

Mr. Fabiano has received a number of prestigious awards reserved for singers on the brink of international stardom. Having obtained the Beverly Sills Artist Award for young singers who have already appeared in solo roles and the 2014 Richard Tucker Award, often referred to as the “Heisman Trophy of Opera,” he is currently performing the role of Rodolfo in the Metropolitan Opera’s production of “La Boheme.”

Canadian soprano Ms. El-Khoury is also quickly climbing up the ranks of opera heavyweights, having performed a variety of roles in the United States and Europe, including Musetta in the Dutch National Opera’s production of “La Boheme” and Rosalinde in Vancou-

SEE OPERA, C19
Women can’t get enough of men in their professional environments, doing what they do best, earning income, being skillful. Which is why I develop inappropriate crushes on every workingman I meet: my accountant, my attorney and — a bit of a surprise, perhaps — the man in the poncho waving a sign for the Mexican restaurant on Fort Myers Beach.

I saw him for the first time last spring, when traffic on the beach was still agonizingly slow; the cars more or less parked on Estero Boulevard, creeping ahead one foot at a time. He stood on a corner near the library, in front of a strip mall, wearing a sombrero and dancing to music only he could hear.

What was playing on his iPod? Salsa? Merengue?

Snoop Dogg, for all I knew. Whatever it was, it got him moving. He danced with the sign, smiled broadly and waved at the cars inching by. It was impossible not to wave back.

The next time I cruised past, he gave me a smile and a nod that seemed more familiar, as if he remembered me. I smiled back, blushing furiously as I drove on.

This became our usual routine. The days warmed and the traffic lightened, but my friend stayed. He danced and smiled and waved, even as the temperatures mounted and the sun burned down, indefatigable in his poncho.

Finally, I worked up the courage to eat in the establishment he was advertising. As I tucked into my plate of beans and rice, the man with the sign stepped into the restaurant. It was early in the afternoon but already hot, and his face was flushed red as he removed his sombrero.

Was it just my imagination, or did the chatter in the restaurant die down, the way it does when someone important comes into the room? I thought he might turn to me and nod, might make some acknowledgement of our daily smile-and-wave routine. Alas, he just stared somberly into the cold soda in front of him. When he finished, he settled the sombrero on his head, picked up his sign and walked out the door, headed back to work.

Soon after, I traveled abroad for a time and when I came back things had changed in small and nearly imperceptible ways, as they always do when we’re gone. With a shock, I realized that my friend in the poncho had disappeared. The traffic is starting to slow again on the beach as season creeps in, but his corner stands empty.

Last night, on a nostalgic impulse, I stopped into the Mexican restaurant. It was the same food, the same paintings on the wall, but according to the server, new owners.

“No new owners?” I asked. My heart broke a little to hear this news. They must not have seen the value in my friend’s sign-waving.

I ate the rest of my meal in a forlorn state, imagining him forced to take his sombrero and his poncho elsewhere, now waving at girls on some other street corner. I hope they appreciate a workingman as much as I do.

— Artis Henderson is the author of “Unremarried Widow” published by Simon and Schuster.
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beak ing stranger's lap, burst into tears. They scream. They howl. They wail. They wiggle and squirm in attempts to escape his clutches.

They lose control of their bladders.

Some attach themselves to a parent's leg, fear acting as an adhesive stronger than Krazy Glue.

Denise Joyce and Nancy Watkins know this scene well.


The pictures, which range from 1929 into the 21st century, demonstrate a universal paradox: Though kids love Santa, he can also strike fear in their little hearts at holiday time.

“Put yourself in the shoes of a little kid,” says Ms. Watkins. “You're marching up to this great big throne, and a huge man's on it, wearing a crazy outfit. He has a great big beard and you can't see his face, and he's wearing a creepy hat.

‘He's such an alien being! It’s a wonder more kids aren't scared by Santa.’

“You go in there,” says Ms. Joyce, “and there's a lot of activity — usually Santa's helpers, the elves — and lots of lights, and lots of other little kids.”

It's stimulation overload, and the experience simply overwhelms some children.

She recalls an October 2008 USA Today column by Craig Wilson, who wrote about their book. In it he mentions a Santa convention he'd once attended and his favorite remark, made by the president of Sepia Photo, which services shopping centers across the country: “We tell our kids to stay away from guys who look like you most of the year, then once a year we say, Hey, get up there on his lap and smile!”

“Santa is a stranger,” Ms. Joyce says. “For little kids, it's a lot of people, it's a lot of activity, it's a lot of other little kids.”

The fear does seem to go away by age 4 or 5, she adds.

When her own children were little, Ms. Joyce took them to see Santa. Her daughter wasn’t afraid at all, and snuggled right on his lap. But in the photos, her son is “about an arm’s length away from Santa.”

He eventually got over his fear, she says, but even as an adult, “He’s still creeped out by clowns.”

Ms. Watkins describes her son, who's now 17, as “one of those kids who would get in line, wait in line and wait in line until finally you get to Santa. He'd get to the end of the line, and then he'd freak out. It wasn't until he was 6 or 7 that he finally sat on Santa’s lap. I didn’t force him.”

Ms. Joyce and Ms. Watkins are both former editors at the Chicago Tribune. (Disclosure: I worked with both editors during my years as a regular freelancer for the newspaper.)

It was at an annual meeting of the American Association of Sunday and Feature Editors (now the Society for Features Journalism) — during a “Show and Steal” presentation of conference attendees' favorite works — that Ms. Joyce saw a series of photographs the Palm Beach Post had run of crying kids on Santa’s lap. She took the idea home and eventually tried it in Q, one of the Tribune’s Sunday lifestyle sections.

“The section was very, very eclectic, very much reader-engaged,” says Ms. Joyce, who was the section editor (Ms. Watkins was the assistant editor). “We did a lot of stuff that was just fun.”

When they asked readers to send in photos of their scared kids on Santa’s lap, she says, “I was expecting maybe 15, 20 pictures. How many can there be out there?”

But every day, more pictures would arrive. They kept coming.

“Nancy (Watkins) and I were thinking: This is fabulous! We were laughing every day. They just kept coming in. It crashed the email system.”

The paper put a photo gallery online.

“They kept putting it up, in 2004 and in 2005,” Ms. Joyce says. “The thing was a click magnet. We got over a million hits to the photo gallery.”

Because the site was getting such heavy traffic, their editor asked them to do the feature in the paper again.

Once again, it was wildly successful.

So successful that a literary agent called Ms. Joyce and said he thought it’d make a good book.

Ms. Joyce and Ms. Watkins sent photo release forms to those who'd sent in images, then set about organizing the pictures and writing clever captions.

“We started seeing themes,” Ms. Joyce says. “They're not all kids crying on Santa’s lap. They might be bored, or in some, the Santa might be the funny thing. There were other photos where Santa had a firm grip on the kids, or the kids were trying to wiggle out of their clothes. And that's how we came up with the chapters and categories.”

When “Scared of Santa: Scenes of Terror in Toyland” was published, the two editors appeared on Chicago affiliates for ABC, CBS and Fox, and on various radio stations. Ms. Joyce appeared on “Fox and Friends” in New York City. A French magazine wrote about the book, and British talk show host Graham Norton mentioned it on his show.

“It was a fun project,” says Ms. Joyce. “It took me out of my comfort zone and put me on the other side of publishing, which was interesting. I loved working with all those people, the readers who sent in their photos.”

Ms. Watkins and Ms. Joyce agree that the most remarkable thing about it was how willing people were to send in their pictures. “We were inundated. We had hundreds we couldn't even use,” Ms. Wat-

kins says.

“It's this universal thing, something we can all agree on. Christmas means taking the kids to see Santa, whether they want to or not.”
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THEATER

The Santaland Diaries – By Florida Repertory Theatre through Dec. 28 in the Artstage Studio Theatre, downtown Fort Myers. 332-3388 or floridarep.org. See story on page C10.

Scrooge TV: A Modern Christmas Carol – By Laboratory Theatre of Florida through Dec. 20 at 218 Woodford Ave., Fort Myers. 218-0481 or laboratorytheaterflorida.com.

The Great American Trail Park Christmas Celebration – Dress to the nines and sing Christmas carols at 25 at the Off-Broadway Palm Theatre, Fort Myers. 278-4422 or broadwaypalm.com.

A Christmas Carol – Through Dec. 21 at the Artstage Studio Theatre, downtown Fort Myers. 332-3388 or floridarep.org.

The Bibel: The Complete World of God (Abridged) – By Theatre Conspiracy on select dates Jan. 3-24 at the Alliance for the Arts, Fort Myers. 936-3219 or theatreconspiracy.org.

Becky’s New Car – By the Marco Island Players Jan. 7-25 at the Marco Island Theater. 642-2720 or themarco-players.org.

Mack & Mabel – By TheatreZone Jan. 8-18 in the G&L Theatre at Community School of Naples. (888) 966-3352 or theatrezone-florida.com.


Last of the Red Hot Lovers – By the Center for the Arts Bonita Springs Playhouse Jan. 13-24. 495-8989 or artcenterbonita.org.

THURSDAY 12.25

MONDAY 12.29

Paddle in the Mangroves – Friends of Collier-Seminole State Park lead guided canoe trips every day from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. No charge. (850) 495-8989 or floridastateparks.org.

Psychic Mondays – Medium Can- dyce Strafford offers readings at Dan- iela’s Restaurant. Reservations required. 13500 Tamiami Trail N. 341-4414 or danielas.restaurant.

Into the Wild – Famed animal expert and conservationist Jack Hanna visits Artis—Naples at 6 p.m. with some of his favorite wild animal friends. Enjoy his unscripted insights into the planet’s most endangered species. 937-9000 or naplesgov.com.

FILMS FOR FILM LOVERS – Centers for the Arts Bonita Springs presents a screening and discussion of “Bill Cunningham New York” (USA, 2010), a documentary profile of the noted and extraordinarily cheerful veteran New York Times street fashion photographer, at 7 p.m. $10. 10520 Bonita Beach Road. 495-8989 or artcenterbonita.org.

TUESDAY 12.30

Historic Palm Cottage – Docent tours lead through Palm Cottage from 1-4 p.m. today through Saturday. $10, free for members of the Naples Historical Society. 137 12th Ave. S. 261-8646 or napleshistoricalsociety.org.

SUNDAY 12.28

Yoga in the Garden – A Balaviny- yana instructor leads a yoga session starting at 10 a.m. on the lawn at Naples Botanical Garden. Bring a mat or a towel and plan to arrive 15 minutes early. $10 for Garden members, $15 for others. 643-7225 or npsgarden.org.

Big Band Sounds – The Southwest Florida Big Band presents a free concert from 2-4 p.m. in the band shell at Cam- bier Park. 213-1000 or naplesgov.com.

SATURDAY 12.27

Breeeeeaaaaahhh – Joyful Yoga leads a free yoga session from 10-11 a.m. at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort & Spa. 844-1234 or coconutpoint.hyatt.com.

Bocce Ball – Get in on a game of lawn bowling starting at 10 a.m. at the Naples Indian American Foundation. 7035 Airport Road N. Free. 597-5210 or niafoundation.org.

Dogs in the Garden – Naples Botanical Garden admits furry friends (on leases and with their owners) from 8-11 a.m. One dog per guest. Free for Garden members and their dogs; regular admission plus $9.50 for non-members and their dogs. 643-7225 or npsgarden.org.

KAYAK TOUR – Rookery Bay takes kayakers through the preserve on a two-hour tour. $55. 300 Tower Road. 594-0072 or rookerybay.org.

Marco Has Talent – Marco Island Center for the Arts stages a talent show for island kids ages 6-18 starting at 6 p.m. $5. 1010 Winterberry Drive. 394-4221 or marcoislandcenter.org.

WEDNESDAY 12.31

Downtown Stroll – Enjoy a guided walking tour of Old Naples led by a docent from the Naples Historical Society. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at Historic Palm Cottage. 137 12th Ave. S. Reservations required. 261- 8646 or napleshistoricalsociety.org.

Meh Jangg – Naples Elks Lodge hosts mah jongg starting at 11 a.m. All are welcome. $2. 1120 Tamiami Trail E. 594-0592.

New Year’s Fireworks – Head to the beach in downtown Naples to enjoy the light show on New Year’s Eve. The first fuse is lit at 7:30 p.m. Fee. 213-7202 or naplesgov.com.

Viennese New Year – The Naples Philharmonic rings in the New Year with selections by Viennese composers and a post-concert reception with dancing and champagne. 937-9000 or artisnaples.org.

COMING UP

Foot Race – Gulfcoast Runners host The Dave Cranor 5K at 7:30 a.m. Thurs- day, Jan. 5, at Lowdermilk Park. Check in at the finish line at 6:30 a.m. Free. 434-9786 or grunners.com.

Polar Plunge – No wetsuits allowed for those who dip into the Gulf of Mexico at 9 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 5, at Lowdermilk Park. $20 registration, with proceeds benefit Collier County Drug Court Trials, 495-8989 or grunners.com.

The Wonder of it All – Everglades Wonder Gardens welcomes visitors for discounted admission of $5 on New Year’s Day. The 14-acre botanical gar- den in Bonita Springs has a flamingo pond, orchid trail, garden center, art gal- lery and more. 2780 Old 41 Rd. 992- 2591 or evergladeswondergardens.com.

Go, Grab, Go – Rita’s English Pub hosts crab races at noon Thursday, Jan. 1, at 5047 Tamiami Trail E. 775-3727 or naplesenglishpub.com.

Tonight’s the Night – Celebrate the final night of 2015 by harking back to the ‘70s at the Rod Stewart Tribute Show at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 1, at Rita’s English Pub. 5047 Tamiami Trail E. 775-3727 or naplesenglishpub.com.

Here Comes the Circus – Ringling Bros. presents “Built to Amaze,” a show about what it takes to build The Greatest Show on Earth, in several per- formances Friday through Sunday, Jan. 2-4, at Germain Arena. Tickets start at $16. (800) 745-3000.

Art in the Park – The Naples Art Association presents a juried art show from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 3, in Cambier Park. 262-6575 or naplesart.org.

More Downtown Art – The Fifth Annual Naples Art Fair runs Dec. 5-5 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 3-4. 262-6575 or naples- art.org.

Bluegrass Show – The Bluegrass Parlor Band plays The Norris Center at 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 3. $20 in advance, $22 at door. 213-7202 or naplesgov.com.

Vanessa Williams – The Grammy Award-winner takes the stage at 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 3, at Artis—Naples. 597- 19000 or artisnaples.org.

Jazz Concert – The Stu Shulman Trio performs at the lawn at Mercato at 7 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 4. Free. 254-1080 or mercato- shops.com.

Band Concert – The Music Makers Show Band performs at 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 4, in the bandshell at Cambier Park Free. 348-3675 or musicmakerstown- showband.com.

Gala Concert – Gulfshore Opera presents tenor Michael Fabiano and soprano Joyce El-Khoury at 8 p.m. Sun- day, Jan. 4, at Artis—Naples. $25-$160. 597-9000 or naplesgov.com. See story on page C1.

Buongiorno, Naples – The Naples Italian American Foundation debuts its winter Italian language courses Mon- day, Jan. 5. $60 per six-week session for non-members. 7035 Airport Road N. Free for Garden members. See story on page A17.

Lecture – The Holocaust Museum & Education Center of Southwest Florida presents Elliott Katz with “American Jews and the Holocaust: Myths, Miscon- ceptions and Reality” at 11 a.m. Monday, Jan. 5. $15. 4760 Tamiami Trail N. 263- 9200 or holocausteducation.org.

Films for Film Lovers – Centers for the Arts Bonita Springs presents a screening and discussion of “A Separa- tion” (Iran, 2011) at 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 5. A married couple faces a difficult decision — to improve the life of their child by moving to another country or to stay in Iran and look after a dete- riorating parent who has Alzheimer’s disease. $10. 10520 Bonita Beach Road. 495-8989 or artcenterbonita.org.

Pasta and Film – The Naples Italian American Foundation screens “Vio- gio Sola” (2013) at 5 p.m. Monday, Jan. 5. A luxury critic considers the question: Does a dream job mean a dream life? $15 for dinner and movie, $5 for movie alone. 7035 Airport Road N. 597-5220 or niafoundation.org.
WHAT TO DO, WHERE TO GO

By the Light of the Moon – Naples Historical Society hosts a full moon tour of Palm Cottage and The Norris Gardens starting at 8 p.m. Monday, Jan. 5. $10. 137 12th Ave. S. 261-8164 or napleshistoricalsociety.org.

Lunch and Learn – Master storyteller Caren Neile brings history to life with dramatic interpretations of characters from Florida’s past starting at noon Tuesday, Jan. 6, at the Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center. $8. 300 Tower Road. 530-9480 or rookerybay.org.

Book Talk – Discuss “Gertruda’s Oath: A Child, A Promise and a Heroic Escape During WWII” by Ram Oren at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 6, at South Regional Library. 8065 Lely Cultural Parkway. 252-7542 or collierlibraries.org.

Welcome to the South – The Italian Cultural Society hosts a screening of “Benvenuti al Sud” (2010) at 6:45 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 6, at The Norris Center. $5. 434-3323 or italianculturalsociety.com.

Historical Lecture – Rabbi Marvin Tokayer, retired Rabbi of Japan, presents a lecture on the history of Jews in Asia at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 6, at Temple Shalom (4630 Pine Ridge Road; RSVP to 263-9200) and at 1 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 8, at South Regional Library (8065 Lely Cultural Parkway; RSVP to 252-7542).

Survivor’s Story – Michael Stolowitzky, the subject of the book “Gertruda’s Oath” (see Book Talk, above), comes to Southwest Florida as part of the inaugural One Book Southwest Florida reading program. The book is the story of the promise requested by Mr. Stolowitzky’s dying mother of his nanny, Gertruda, to get him out of war-torn Poland to Palestine and to raise him as her own. He will tell his story at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 7, at Temple Shalom (4630 Pine Ridge Road; RSVP to 263-9200) and at 1 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 8, at South Regional Library (8065 Lely Cultural Parkway; RSVP to 252-7542).

Italian Social – The Naples Italian American Foundation hosts an Italian dinner Wednesday, Jan. 7. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. and dinner is served at 6:30 p.m. Proper dress required. $25 for members, $30 for non-members. 7035 Airport Road N. 597-5210 or niafoundation.org.

Love Letters – Local columnist Kenneth Jones presents a thought-provoking presentation about Southwest Florida at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 8, at the Marco Island Center for the Arts, 1010 Winterberry Drive, Marco Island. 394-4221 or marcoislandart.org.

Art Reception – Trudy Labell Fine Art hosts a meet-the-artists reception at 5:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 9. Reservations required. 2425 Tamiami Trail N. 434-7778 or trudylabellfineart.com.

CAPA Concert – Bayshore Performing Arts Center presents the Chrysalis Chamber Players at 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 9, at Florida SouthWestern State College-Collier Campus. $25 for adults, $20 for students. 775-2800 or bayshorecapa.org.

Tied-Up in Knots – Karen Knots, daughter of Don Knots of “The Andy Griffith Show” fame, shares stories about growing up with Barney Fife as her dad at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 9, at The Norris Center. $22. 755 Eighth Ave. S. 213-3049 or naples.gov.

Florida’s Finest Tenors – The Centers for the Arts Bonita Springs hosts Florida’s Finest Tenors for a performance of Broadway, opera and standard favorites at 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 9.


Moscow Ballet presents the “Great Russian Nutcracker” at 3 and 7 p.m. Dec. 29 at the Barbara B. Mann Performing Arts Hall, 13350 Edison Pkwy. — bbbmannpah.com

Little Eddie and the Fat Fingers perform with other bluegrass musicians at 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 10, for the Neapolitan Opry’s sixth annual Cluster Pluckin’ evening at The Norris Center. $25 in advance, $30 at the door. — naples.gov

“Serial” a podcast that digs deep into a real life murder case. It’s generated buzz by being compelling, and taking journalism in a new direction. — serialpodcast.org

Merry Christmas to all! Here comes the new year! — bbbmannpah.com
03.16.15 GOD’S SLAVE

Based on actual events. Trained since childhood as an Islamic terrorist, Ahmed, now must suicide-bomb a Buenos Aires synagogue. The investigation by Da-

03.23.15 BELLE & SEBASTIAN

In the French Alps during WWII, lonely Sebastian befriends Belle, “the beast”

03.30.15 UNDER THE SAME SUN

In the near future, two businessmen—a Palestinian and an Israeli—are struggle to set up a solar energy company. Their attempts to overcome hostility from their families and the people around them ultimately change the political map.

What to Do

Famed naturalist Jack Hanna drops by Arts—Naples with some of his favorite wild animal friends on Monday, Dec. 29. 9:00-1:00 or artcenterbonita.org.

Bistro. $30. 831 Vanderbilt Beach Road. Purchase tickets at badprof.com.

Asleep at the Wheel – Grammy Award–winning Asleep at the Wheel performs Friday, Jan. 16, at Seminole Immokalee Casino. $25. (800) 218-0007.

Pets on Parade – Third Street South holds its sixth annual Pets on Parade and Perfest from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 18. This year’s costume theme is “Working Your Tail Off: Pets Dressed for Work.” Registration for the costume contest begins at 10 a.m. behind Tommy Bahama, and the parade begins at noon. 434-6533 or thirdstreetsouth.com.

Jewish Film – The Jewish Congrega-
tion of Marco Island screens “The Out-
rageous Sophie Tucker” (USA, 2014) at 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 18. The documentary focuses on the tumultuous early days of the woman who ruled the 1920s cap-
pper era and became the last of the “Red Hot Mammas” in her 60-year show biz career. 995 Winterberry Road, Marco Island. 642-0800 or marcojmi.com.

Music to Touch the Heart – Voices of Naples performs at 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 18, at St. Leo Catholic Church. Free, but donations appreciated. 28290 Beaumont Road. 455-2582 or voicesofnaples.org.

Stomp Meets “Glee” – Performance group Vocal Trash brings their innovative blend of vocals, dance and recycled instruments to the Centers for the Arts Bonita Springs at 7 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 18. $30 for non-members, $35 at the door. 20150 Bonita Beach Road. 495-8989 or artcenterbonita.org.

Concert – Pianist Michael Baron and clarinetist Julian Miliskis perform a combi-
ation of baroque and jazz at 3 p.m. Monday, Jan. 19, at FGCU’s Bower School of Music. $10. 390-7292 or fgcu.edu.

French Film – Centers for the Arts Bonita Spa presents a screening of “Chicken with Plums” (France, 2013) at 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 19. Since his beloved violin was broken, Nasser Ali Khan, one of the most renowned musicians of his day, has lost all taste for life. Finding no instrument worthy of replacing it, he decides to confine himself to bed to await death. $10. 10150 Bonita Beach Road. 495-8989 or artcenterbonita.org.
WHERE TO GO

MLK Parade – A parade honoring slain civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. steps out at 8 a.m. Monday, Jan. 19, from Broad Avenue in downtown Naples. The route proceeds north on Third Street South, turns right on Fifth Avenue and finishes at Cambier Park. 455-2886 or fifthavenuesouth.com.

Mind Candy – Seminole Casino Immokalee hosts famed mentalist and illusionist Wayne Hoffman at 8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 22. $20. (800) 238-0007 or seminoleimmokaleecasino.com.

Chickee Chat – The Naples Historical Society hosts former Naples Daily News Editor Jeff Lytle at 11 a.m. Friday, Jan. 23. Reservations required. $5 for non-members. 261-8164 or napleshistoricalsociety.org.

Fireworks – Watch Florida’s largest land-based fireworks show at Seminole Casino Immokalee at 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 24. (800) 238-0007 or seminoleimmokaleecasino.com.

Smashing Singer – TheatreZone brings Megan Hilty, who has performed on NBC’s “Smash” and on Broadway in “Wicked” and “Gentlemen Prefer Blondes,” to the GSN Theatre at Community School of Naples for performances at 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 23, and at 2 and 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 24. $50. 13275 Livingston Road. (888) 966-3352 or theatrezone-florida.com.

Art Fest – Art Fest Naples pitches its tents on Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 24-25, for a juried show at Fleischmann Park. 634-2337 or artfestnaples.com.

Down ‘n’ Dirty – The Swamp Buggy Winter Classic starts at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 24, at the Florida Sports Park and ends the next evening with a mud bath for the Swamp Buggy Queen. 8250 Collier Blvd. 774-2701 or thefloridaportspark.com.

Empty Bowls – Fight hunger and fill your belly at Cambier Park from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 24. In exchange for a $5 donation that benefits Harry Chapin Food Bank, you get a hand-crafted bowl to fill with the soup of your choice from dozens of area restaurants. 334-7007 or emptybowlsnaples.org.

Book Signing – Karen Harper discusses and signs copies of the latest installment in her “Cold Creek Trilogy” suspense series at 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 24, at Barnes & Noble in Waterside Shops. 598-5200 or bn.com.

Opera Concert – The Italian Cultural Society presents a concert of opera favorites at 3 p.m. Monday, Jan. 26, at First Congregational Church of Naples. $42. 6630 Immokalee Road. 434-3323 or italianculturalsociety.com.

Films for Film Lovers – The Centers for the Arts Bonita Springs screens “Lovers of the Arctic Circle” (Spain, 1998) at 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 26. Otto and Ana are kids when they meet each other by chance. A story of circular lives, circular names and a circular place where things never end, including love. $10. 10150 Bonita Beach Road. 495-8989 or artcenterbonita.org.

Writer Out Loud – Essayist Amy Bennett Williams reads her works on stage at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 28, in the Moe Auditorium at FGCU, $30-50. (888) 809-9809 or wgcu.org/events.

Second City – The legendary comedy troupe that boasts Stephen Colbert, Steve Carell, Jim Belushi and many other notable alumni performs at 6 and 8:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday, Jan. 29-30 at Artis—Naples. 597-1900 or artisnaples.org.

Duo Romantico – The Centers for the Arts Bonita Springs hosts classically trained singers Atilio and Christy Mari­nelli for a performance that blends pop, opera and Broadway at 8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29, $30 for non-members, $35 at the door. 10150 Bonita Beach Road. 495-8989 or artcenterbonita.org.

Email calendar listings and high-resolution photos to Lindsey Nesmith at lnesmith@floridaweekly.com. Please send Word or text documents and jpgs. No pdfs or photos of flyers. Deadline for calendar submissions is noon Monday.

Clarinetist Julian Milkis performs with pianist Michael Baron at 3 p.m. Monday, Jan. 19, at the FGCU Bower School of Music. 590-7292 or fgcu.edu.
It's been a great run, but Crumpet's time has come

Sad news: Crumpet is hanging up his turban.

After six seasons of playing the sarcastically droll Macy’s elf, actor Jason Parrish is leaving Santaland. Santaland, with its flirty elves, demanding parents, tantrum-throwing children and eccentric Santas.

At least for now.

And local audiences are bidding farewell to what has become a Christmas tradition, especially for those allergic to terminally cheerful holiday fare.

“The Santaland Diaries,” a comic one-man show based on writer David Sedaris’ experiences as an elf at Macy’s, has played Florida Repertory Theatre’s ArtStage Studio Theatre for the past five years.

This, its sixth year, will be its last. (The last shows play Dec. 28. Tickets are limited.)

“We’ve been very pleased with how well it’s been received,” Mr. Parrish says, noting that for the majority of the years tickets have sold at more than 90 percent capacity.

Some people make it a point to return year after year.

“There are definitely repeat offend- ers,” he says. “I recognize them. And every year there are new people who say, ‘I can’t believe I never came here before.’”

Saying goodbye to the role is bitter-sweet for the actor.

“I have to say, it’s always been a joy to do, but I’m looking forward to getting my Christmas back,” he says. “I love doing it, but now I miss going (home) for Christmas.”

Though he typically gets Christmas Eve and Christmas off, he performs two shows each on Dec. 23 and Dec. 26, which has made it impossible for him so get to Ohio to be with his family.

Mr. Parrish saw a production of the show in 1998 and brought it to the attention of Florida Rep Producing Artistic Director Robert Cacioppo, who read it and loved it.

The next thing Mr. Parrish knew, he had the part. And he’s had it ever since.

Some venues, Mr. Parrish says, have been presenting the show annually for more than 20 years.

“Bob is just excited about what other things we could do in that space specific to the holidays. With a wink, he’s saying it’s Crumpet’s last year!”

Which doesn’t rule out reprised pro- ductions in the future.

“It’s bringing in, proportionally speak- ing, more new people than any other show,” Mr. Parrish says. “It’s a niche-mar- ket sort of thing. There are more younger people (attending) and more gay people, than for other shows. If you’re a David Sedaris reader, you might not go to other shows, but you come to see this, because you like him and his writing and his withering look at the world.”

Initially memorizing the script for the 90-minute show was a challenge.

The first year, he says, it took him “a couple of months to get it all into my head,” and then three weeks of rehearsal before he didn’t have to refer to the script.

But knowing he was going to reprise the role every December, “I put it in a box somewhere in my brain and just filed it away. When I start saying it out loud, it all just comes.”

But now, he wonders, “If I close the show thinking it’s not going to be remount- ed next year, will my brain forget it?”

In some ways, he says, “Santaland” paved the way for the renovation of the small theater space now known as Art- Stage Studio Theatre. In 2009, 2010 and 2011, it was the only show staged there. Formerly used as a rehearsal space, it held 83 seats and possessed an awkwardly situated pillar that blocked sightlines. “It had only a little postage-sized stage, but it proved to us in 2009 we could do plays there,” Mr. Parrish says.

The show helped the venue realize that the space had a following, and if they staged more shows there, audiences would come.

“It’s been so lovely to do the show in this community where the audience seems to really embrace it,” Mr. Parrish says. “There are loyal people who have watched me grow with the play. It’s incredibly rewarding, and I feel like I’m in good company with the audience.”

Of course, in such an intimate perfor- mance space, he’s never quite sure what to expect.

“Last night,” he says, “we had a group of women who had a little too much to drink before the show and they were laughing at things that weren’t necessar- ily funny. You just have to roll with it.

“It’s a very informal setting, talking directly to audience members. Some people aren’t used to coming to theater in the first place and think: Oh, it’s stand- up, I get to heckle him. “Every once in a while they think they can answer my rhetorical questions. But it’s the exception to the rule.”

One year, he recalls, when he was handing out glasses of wine to some audience members, one woman was very upset he hadn’t given her any and grabbed the bottle out of his hand.

She was very surprised — and disap- pointed — to learn that it was, in fact, grape juice.

As with any live theater, mishaps hap- pen, yet the show goes on.

Twice he tripped and fallen, one time stumbling over his own feet and spilling wine all over the center of the stage.

“I had to mop it up while I was talk- ing,” he says.

And then there was the night two cou- ples decided to walk out when Crumpet began talking about flirting with another male elf. They stood up and walked out one by one, to show their displeasure, making as much noise as possible. Mr. Parrish just stopped the show and waited for them to leave before resuming. The audience applauded him.

The show is naughty, and definitely adult, with more than a touch of sar- casm. Yet, Mr. Parrish says, much like The Grinch, his character’s “heart grows three sizes by the end of the play.” It’s been a good run, and he’s sad to retire his elf shoes.

“People’s rehearsal spaces have two pairs; maybe one will go with me and I’ll get them bronzed,” he jokes.

In the know

“’The Santaland Diaries’

Where: ArtStage Studio Theatre of Florida Repertory Theatre, downtown Fort Myers

Cost: $35

Info: 523-4488 or floridarep.org

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22 Life story 6 by 6
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31 Tense
34 Taxes
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39 (As the sides are) 10 by 3
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21 Competence
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29 (By when) 6 by 6
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35 10 Bad girl 10 by 3
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40 Always
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72 Affirm, in 4 by 4
4 5 Zany comic
11 Rig = (for) 4 by 4
14 Palm tree
16 Riddle, part 3
18 Riddle, part 3
20 (As in) 10 by 3
21 10 (As in) 10 by 3
24 10 Middle man 10 by 3
26 (As in) 10 by 3
27 (As in) 10 by 3

DOWN
1 No (as in) 4 by 4
2 Dick (as in) 4 by 4
3 To the left (of the) 4 by 4
4 To the right (of the) 4 by 4
5 10 Middle man 10 by 3
6 Middle man (as in) 4 by 4
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Sagittarius (November 22 to December 21)
You'll have many fine opportunities in this New Year. But be warned: Reject offers of "help." You work best when you're free to be your own creative self.

Aquarius (January 20 to February 18)
Travel is a dominant aspect of the New Year. This could mean relocating to another city (or even another country) in connection with your education or your career.

Pisces (February 19 to March 20)
This New Year brings news about a change you've been anticipating. You might have a problem persuading a loved one about your new plans, but he or she will soon go along with them.

Aries (March 21 to April 19)
The New Year challenges you to change many things in your life. You need to be prepared not only to confront them, but also to deal with what happens afterward.

Taurus (April 20 to May 20)
You have what it takes to set your goals quite a bit higher this year. Learn what you need to know and put what you learn into your efforts. A partner offers loving support.

Gemini (May 21 to June 20)
In this New Year, you'll have many fine opportunities. But be warned: Reject offers of "help." You work best when you're free to be your own creative self.

Leo (July 23 to August 22)
You can make this New Year a roaring success. Start by readjusting your goals to reflect the changes in the economy. Your den- mate offers both wise and loving sup- port.

Virgo (August 23 to September 22)
The New Year brings new opportunities for change. But you need to be ready to move from the comfortable status quo to the challenging unknown. It's up to you.

Libra (September 23 to October 22)
Your most important New Year's reso- lution should be to work out problems with a family member in order to avoid continuing misunderstandings. Do it soon, both of your sakes.

Scorpio (October 23 to November 21)
The New Year has much to offer the intensely determined Scorpion, who isn't afraid to take on challenges and stay with them until they surrender their rewards.

BORN THIS WEEK: You have a gift for making people feel safe and protect- ed. You would make an excellent youth counselor.

By Linda Thistle

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HOROSCOPES
A disastrous play
BY STEVE BECKER

It is difficult to account for some of the strange things that happen at the bridge table. For example, take this deal from a team match.

Nothing much happened at the first table, where South got to four spades as shown. Aided by the bidding, he made five. He ruffed the second diamond, led a trump to the jack, finessed the queen of hearts, led a trump to the king, finessed the jack of hearts, drew trumps, cashed his hearts and so finished with 11 tricks.

At the second table, the outcome was very different. West wound up at three notrump doubled, and North found the devastating lead of the nine of hearts.

South took dummy’s ten with the jack but made a grievous error when he continued with the ace and another heart. He was hoping to regain the lead with the ace of spades and then cash his established hearts.

After taking the king of hearts, West happily cashed five diamonds and five clubs to make the contract with two doubled overtricks for a resounding score of 1,150 points. South’s good hearts and the ace of spades thus never saw the light of day.

It is hard to believe that one defensive slip could lose as much as 3,150 points, but that is exactly what South’s failure to shift to a low spade at trick two cost him.

With a low spade return, North-South could have taken six hearts and five spades for down seven and 2,000 points — instead of which declarer scored 11 tricks. Despite the misdefense, though, it does seem that the punishment more than fit the crime.
Best Films of 2014

BY DAN HUDAK
Florida Weekly Correspondent

It was a year of gimmicks and grandeur, subtlety and the sublime, led at the box office by guardians of the galaxy and in our hearts by unthinkable illness and inspiring love. Yes, the latest "Transformers" and "Hunger Games" movies felt empty, but their shortcomings were made up for by "The Lego Movie," "Chef," "Nightcrawler" and numerous other pleasant surprises this year.

Here are my picks for Top 10 films of 2014:

■ No. 10 (tie): "Guardians of the Galaxy," "Captain America: The Winter Soldier" - I know it's weak to include a tie on a Top 10 list, but these movies are connected and part of a greater political commentary on the military industrial complex. Both are available on home video.

■ No. 9: "The Fault in Our Stars" - I was dreading this one before I went. My mother had recently died of cancer, and there was a best-selling adaptation of a tearjerker about teenagers simultaneously finding love and dying of cancer. I didn't need this, I thought. But then Shailene Woodley's Hazel Grace won my heart and ours with her humor and sensitivity. This movie wasn't really about teenagers dying of cancer; it was about living life to the fullest and not fearing what may come tomorrow. Hazel Grace and Gus had cancer, but it didn't have them, and that made all the difference. Also available on home video.

■ No. 8: "Life Itself" - I know, I know. It's a documentary about a film critic being championed by a film critic, and how boring is that? Trust me, it's not. "Life Itself" tells the life-affirming story of the late Roger Ebert with grace and candor, and under the steady hand of director Steve James (whose film "Hoop Dreams" Mr. Ebert named Best Picture of 1994), it emerges as an unfailingly honest and inspiring story as well. Now available On Demand.

■ No. 7: "The Theory of Everything" - Declaration: Eddie Redmayne gives the performance of the year as renowned astrophysicist Dr. Stephen Hawking. In theaters now.

■ No. 6: "Interstellar" - Sometimes you watch in awe and appreciate the sheer scope and ambition of a movie. "Interstellar" is one of those times. Director Christopher Nolan doesn't just take us on an out-of-this-world adventure; he takes us to alternate galaxies, wormholes, distant planets and other dimensions. It's an absolutely spectacular experience at the movies. It's in theaters now (and should be seen on as big a screen as possible).

■ No. 5: "Wild" - Welcome back to awards season, Reese Witherspoon. The Oscar winner for "Walk the Line" will likely receive another nomination for "Wild," in which she plays a former heroin addict with a troubled family life who decides to hike the 1,100-mile Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada. In theaters now.

■ No. 4: Edge of Tomorrow" - The best action movie of 2014 stars Tom Cruise as Cage, an unlikely soldier thrust into an unwinnable war with aliens. But there's a "Groundhog Day" twist in that Cage begins the day anew every time he dies, leading to clever plot developments and exciting action sequences throughout. Available on home video.

■ No. 3: "Gone Girl" - This is silly, but it's true: When my wife and I walked out of "Gone Girl" I was genuinely frightened. Of as, "Don't even try to hold my hand" scared. I know that's irrational, but such was the impact of director David Fincher's story about a missing wife and the hapless husband trying to track her down. Rosamund Pike's performance is Oscar worthy, as is Gillian Flynn's adaptation of her own novel. Available Jan. 3 on home video.

■ No. 2: "Unbroken" - A period piece with deep soul, "Unbroken" was directed by Angelina Jolie, co-written by the Coen Bros. and shot by the great cinematographer Roger Deakins. It's about Olympian-turned-WWII-hero Louie Zamperini and his experiences before and during the war, which included surviving on a lifeboat in the Pacific for 47 days, only to be captured and tortured by the Japanese for two years. Jack O'Connell is superb as Zamperini, and the story is a testament to the power of perseverance and sheer will. In theaters Christmas Day.

■ No. 1: "Whiplash" - No movie this year caught fire with the same absolute force as "Whiplash." Led by Miles Teller as an aspiring drummer in a music conservatory jazz ensemble, and highlighted by a sure-to-be Oscar-winning performance from J.K. Simmons as a teacher who tortures his students, this one knocks your socks off with its intensity, its story, its great performances and its wonderful finale. 2014 was a good year for movies, but for pure entertainment value, this was the best of them all. "Whiplash" is in limited theaters now and will be available on home video Feb. 3.
LATEST FILMS

‘The Gambler’

Is it worth $10? Yes

Know this going into “The Gambler”: You will not feel sorry for Mark Wahlberg’s character, nor will you like him very much. He’s a suicidal gambling addict who does little to help himself as he willingly makes one bad decision after another. And yet we’re compelled by his tale of defiance and free will, and are eager to see how his story plays out even though we don’t much care if he lives or dies.

Mr. Wahlberg’s Jim Bennett is a literature professor, and a bad one at that. He’s a failed, bitter writer who eagerly tells his students they’re either a genius who will find success or they’re nothing — and if they’re nothing they should stop trying. The only person who holds promise in his eyes is his student Amy (Brie Larson), but that could also be because he’s attracted to her.

He’s also attracted to high-stakes blackjack and, on occasion, roulette. So much so that he’s $260,000 in debt to game runner Mr. Lee (Alvin Ing), loan shark Neville (Michael K. Williams), and the even more fearsome loan shark Frank (a great John Goodman, once again making everything he does better).

Jim has seven days to pay back the money, or else. He comes from a wealthy family, but even his distant mother (Jessica Lange) rebukes his initial request for help. He’s alone in this, which is fine with him.

Lange) rebukes his initial request for help. He figures if he dies no one will give much money, or else. He comes from a wealthy family, but even his distant mother (Jessica Lange) rebukes his initial request for help. He’s alone in this, which is fine with him.

“Desiring a thing cannot make you own it,” Jim cynically tells them, reflecting his own failures. Most importantly, his jaded (but are his messages actually true?) approach to teaching accentuates his gambling predicament in microcosm — and more teaching scenes could have brought the rest of the gambling narrative to life as well.

Director Rupert Wyatt (“Rise of the Planet of the Apes”) allows certain scenes to drag, but as a whole the film unfolds like the slow burn of a lit cigarette. Jim is his own worst enemy.

As his situation goes from bad to worse, we start to disregard him as a person and become captivated by the recklessness of it all. The script by William Monahan (“The Departed”) immediately engrosses us into Jim’s psyche but never feels rushed to move plot points along. Although the ending is a bit of a stretch, it’s fitting for someone with Jim’s intelligence and “winner-take-all” mentality.

“The Gambler” is an effectively tense drama with solid performances and an appropriately grumpy tone. If you feel dirty after seeing it, that’s because you’ve been immersed in sleaze for two hours. And you should take a chance on that sleaze. If nothing else, it’s worth it just to see Mr. Wahlberg discuss Shakespeare.

In the know

>> The story in “The Gambler” is loosely taken from a 1974 James Caan film of the same name with — get this — the exact same running time of 111 minutes. Who would have bet on that?

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Bringing your best self to the quest for your perfect mate


This highly readable, accessible and comprehensive guide to lifelong romantic friendships is going to bring many people surprising insights and powerful inspiration. Rooted in experience, research, common sense and compassion, “SoulMating” fights to counter the pitfalls of romantic illusion. For those with a spiritual orientation or longing, it offers steps to something even more profound than successful companionship; it mentors partnerships of the soul.

Basha and Jeffrey Kaplan, once again residents of Naples, are great boosters. Their enthusiasm for assuring their readers and clients that happier, more creative and more fulfilled lives are possible is contagious. However, they are not dreamers and do not encourage idle daydreaming.

Finding a life partner is difficult work. Distrusting the longevity of pairings based in erotic attraction, they preach that emotional intimacy must precede—and dominate over—physical intimacy. In fact, they insist that emotional intimacy, in a situation of emotional safety, is the factor that gives physical intimacy its meaning.

Much of the book’s early going introduces concepts and a carefully wrought vocabulary in which everyday words take on somewhat specialized meanings. Readers would be wise to review these terms and definitions frequently as they journey through the book. Most terms are presented as polar opposites: The “what” and the “who,” for example, and “doing” and “being”—most often distinguishing between surface attributes (career status, appearance, assets, acquired mannerisms) and essential inner components of selfhood.

The authors insist that one must prepare for a successful mating by per-

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*Through February 28, 2015, exclusive of 22% service charge.
forming a rigorous self-assessment and truly getting in touch with one's actual and potential self. That is, the seeker must bring a whole, completed self to the challenge of seeking and building a relationship. Without true self-knowledge and a willingness to befriend oneself, the likelihood of creating a viable, prolonged romantic friendship is practically nonexistent.

The strength of the couple's teaching lies, however, not so much in the generalizations and wisdom statements (though these are important), but rather in the specifics that are revealed in a logical, progressive order.

The techniques that the Kaplans offer are concrete, and readers can grasp the issues and the action steps because of the narrative illustrations (informal case studies) the authors provide throughout the book. Some of these stories are drawn from the couple's own lives as individuals, prospective mates and eventually soulmates. Their openness invites and justifies the openness that they demand from those who would seek blossoming relationships.

Lists are everywhere, often repeating components of self- and relationship-building for emphasis and because there is inevitable overlap within the stages of the overall process.

Dating is the prelude to mating, which is not necessarily defined as formal marriage. “Soul Dating” is the testing ground to see if inspired, uplifting mating is within reach. It also expands one’s self-awareness. The authors explain, in considerable detail, how to master the dating process to reach the long-range goal of long-term emotional, spiritual and physical togetherness. This section of the book includes a primer on the effective use of online dating services.

The authors remind their readers that while no one is perfect, all of us have attributes that can and will be cherished by the right partner. All of us have secrets that handicap us until they are shared. All of us need to learn how to withhold the kind of judgments that we would not wish to have applied to us.

And we must avoid the temptation to play-act — to falsely project the look, manner, values and interests that we think will win us that desired someone. To begin by projecting a false self is a sure way to have a failed relationship.

Though readers will find much in the Kaplans’ advice that they have heard before, they will also find many fresh ideas. And they’ll also encounter some concepts and suggestions that they question. The novelty of this book lies in its comprehensiveness, its logical integration of concepts and productive behaviors and an earnestness that does not take itself too seriously.

— Phil Jason, Ph.D., United States Naval Academy professor emeritus of English, is a poet, critic and freelance writer with 20 books to his credit, including several studies of war literature and a creative writing text.
The Naples Players present “God of Carnage” Jan. 14-Feb. 7 on the main stage at the Sugden Community Theatre. The drama by Yasmina Reza that follows two sets of parents in the aftermath of a playground scuffle between their two young sons.

What starts out as a concerted civilized conversation erupts into a primal war of words. Insults are thrown, alliances shift and soon the parents themselves are acting more like the children they are there to discuss.

Paul Grafy and Dede Bronlee star as Alan and Annette; Mike Santos and Jessica Walck play Michael and Veronica. Artistic Director Dallas Dunnagan directs. “God of Carnage” contains strong language and is not suitable for children. Performances are at 8 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are $35 for adults and $20 for students 21 and under. Stop by the box office at 705 Fifth Ave. S., call 263-7990 or visit naplesplayers.org.

KidzAct, the youth theater program of The Naples Players, will hold auditions for ages 12 and old to perform in “High School Musical Jr.” Saturday afternoon, Jan. 10, at the Sugden Community Theatre.

Students should prepare 16 bars of a song to sing and should bring the sheet music (an accompanist will be provided) or a recording without vocals. They will also learn and perform a short choreographed movement, and they might be asked to read from the script. Students unable to make the scheduled audition day and time should call to determine if additional audition times have been added.

“High School Musical Jr.” follows the students of East High as they learn to deal with issues of first love, friends and family while balancing classes and extracurricular activities. Performances will be Friday through Sunday, May 22-24. Audition appointments are required. Call 434-7340, ext. 39, or visit naplesplayers.org.

Two sets of parents battle it out in ‘God of Carnage’ at the Sugden

KidzAct auditions scheduled for ‘High School Musical Jr.’

Above: A war of words — and pillows — breaks out as Annette and Veronica express their differences of opinion regarding their sons’ incident on the playground.

Top Right: Veronica and Annette are pleased with themselves as they watch their distressed husbands debate which of their young sons is at fault in a playground tussle.

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Two sets of parents battle it out in ‘God of Carnage’ at the Sugden
OPERA

From page 1

ater, Cincinnati Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Opera Lyra, Opera San Jose and Seattle Opera.

The three special guests will perform arias and duets by Donizetti, Gounod, Massenet, Verdi and Puccini.

Gulfshore Opera was founded last summer by Steffanie Pearce, former artistic director of Opera Naples and long-time opera singer and vocal coach. She created Gulfshore Opera with the intention of increasing opera’s accessibility in Southwest Florida by playing a variety of small venues throughout Collier, Lee and Charlotte counties. The debut season features a variety of soloists and a full-scale production of Gilbert & Sullivan’s “The Mikado.” Maestro Paul Nadler serves as musical director.

“One thing I’m very confident in is that we will not be reliant on generosity of wealthy patrons in Collier County to fund this whole thing,” Ms. Pearce said in October. “Ticket prices are going to be lower, and we’ll be less reliant on patron donations.”

Mr. Fabiano, Ms. El-Khoury and Mr. Philippe are all donating their talents to Gulfshore Opera, as is Artis—Naples, so all proceeds from the upcoming gala will benefit the organization. Benefactor tickets are $650 and include premium seating, a champagne reception and a meet-and-greet with the artists after the performance. Other tickets range in price from $85 to $350.

For tickets or more information, call the box office at Artis—Naples at 954-2000 or visit gulfshoreopera.com.
WEDNESDAY, DEC. 24, 9 P.M. 
Nova: Building the Great Cathedrals
Carved from 100 million pounds of stone, soaring effortlessly atop a spire
ner web of masonry, Gothic cathedrals are marvels of human achievement
and artistry. But how did medieval builders reach such spectacular heights?

THURSDAY, DEC. 25, 8 P.M. 
Call the Midwife Holiday Special
Rehearsals for the Sunday School Christmas concert are under way, cre-
at ing inconvenience for the nuns and nurses of Nonnatus House. Two unmar-
rried patients are dispatched to York Lodge, a badly managed home for preg-
nant women. Chummy takes over run-
ing the facility after an outbreak of
chicken pox there. Dr. Turner treats a
destitute older couple who are former
residents of a mental hospital closed under the mental health reforms.

FRIDAY, DEC. 26, 10:30 P.M. 
Jimmy Van Heusen: Swingin’ with Frank and Bing
Celebrate Oscar-winning composer and
test pilot Jimmy Van Heusen, who
wrote high-flying songs for his legend-
ary pals. Your program includes inter-
views with Frank Sinatra Jr., Harry Cros-
bey, Tony Bennett, Woody Allen, Angie
Dickinson, Shirley MacLaine and John
Pizzarelli.

SATURDAY, DEC. 27, 10:30 P.M. 
Are You Being Served
The quintessentially British sitcom is
about Grace Brothers, a department
store in London that is owned and kept
traditional (e.g., precise dress code for
ladies’ frills and men’s hats according
to rank) by two brothers who look old
enough to have fought in the Boer war
but rarely appear.

SUNDAY, DEC. 28, 9 P.M. 
Masterpiece Classic: Downton Abbey
In the Season Four finale, Lady Rose washes away sins and breaks the endless
cycle of reincarnation.

Sacred Journeys, Kumbh Mela, Dec. 30
Join Hindus in a ritual they believe
would like to learn about competitive bidding.

Bridge Basics Saturdays 9-11 a.m. • Starts January 10 for 6 weeks or
Mondays • 4:30-6:30 p.m. • Starts January 5 for 6 weeks
For those who have played very little or not at all.

Bridge Basics II Thursdays • 9-11 a.m. • Starts January 8 for 6 weeks
For those who have taken a basic class and
would like to learn about competitive bidding.

Popular Conventions Wednesdays • 1:30-6:30 p.m. • Starts January 7 for 6 weeks
This class deals with the most popular conventions played today—Stayman,
Jacoby Transfer, negative doubles, etc. Practice hands every class.

Principles of Defensive Play Thursdays • 9-11 a.m. • Starts January 8 for 6 weeks
For those who have learned to play but need help on opening leads, third hand
play, second hand play, defensive signaling, developing defensive tricks, etc.
Practice hands each week.

Beyond the Basics: Declarer Play Saturdays • 9-11 a.m. • Starts January 10 for 6 weeks
For those players who want to learn more advanced play techniques—end plays,
counting, percentages, basic squeezes, etc. Practice hands every week.

All Classes: $17 per person per week ($15 for NBC members)

Naples Bridge Center

5865 Golden Gate Parkway, Naples
www.naplesbridge.com
Call 239-455-4445 or Email info@naplesbridge.com
for the complete schedule or more information.

The Naples Bridge Center is a non-profit club sanctioned by the American Contract Bridge League with games and lessons at all levels involved.
KOVEL: ANTIQUES

Grandfather clock’s chiming ring in the new year

BY TERRY KOVEL AND KIM KOVEL

The sound of chimes ringing 12 times at midnight with the “Ding, Dong, Mingle” chant that ushers in the new year on Jan. 1. Today we may watch the year change on a television screen, but in years past, the celebration was timed by a chiming grandfather clock. Even earlier, new years could be timed by a clock in the church steeple or the city hall tower. Before that, time was judged by daylight and darkness, and summer and winter climates.

Today the cell phone is always handy to let you know exactly what time it is. The grandfather clock was originally known as a tall case, longcase or floor clock. The 6- to 8-foot-tall clock has a weight-driven pendulum. It was invented in 1600 or so. In the early 20th century, it was the most accurate timepiece available. There are two types: the expensive eight-day clock that has to be wound once a week, and the less-expensive 30-hour clock that has to be wound once a day. An unusually large 1680 carved mahogany clock, 107 inches high and made by J.J. Elliott of London, sold in September 2014 at Neal Auction Co. in New Orleans. The clock has elaborate carving, fretwork, rosewood panels with inlay, chimes, and a brass-and-silvered dial. It brought $13,743. To tell the accurate time for New Year’s Eve, it must be placed in a room with a high ceiling (over 9 feet) and leveled.

Q: My four-piece bedroom suite includes a headboard, dresser, chest of drawers and nightstand. Each piece is marked with a triangle, a large letter “K” and “Korn Industries, Incorporated, Summer Cabinet Company.” Its solid oak and in excellent condition. What price could I ask for set?

A: Summer Cabinet Co. was a division of Korn Industries. Chester Korn started a timber company and sawmill in Cincinnati in 1889 to make buggy parts and other wood products. The company moved to Sumter, S.C., in 1921. Bedroom furniture was first made in the 1930s and dining room furniture in 1989. The company was sold in 2000 to Chromecraft Revington, which continued to use the Sumter brand name until late 2006. The price of used bedroom furniture depends on style, quality, condition and age. It probably can only be sold locally, because shipping is expensive. It should be priced as a bar-gain, about half the cost of a new set.

Q: How much is a bottle of Dom Perignon vintage champagne worth? I have a 1995 bottle, 750 ml, in its original box.

A: An unopened bottle of Dom Perignon vintage 1995 in its box is worth about $750 to $200. Empty, the bottle could sell for about $12 and the box for about $30. Remember that in some states, you need a special license to sell bottled alcohol.

Q: Every time I visited my uncle, he asked me to polish his fancy silver tea-and-coffee service. When she died, she left the set to me. It includes a teapot, coffeepot, creamer and sugar bowl and waste bowl. Each piece is elaborately decorated, and each lid is topped by a pheasant finial. My aunt said she bought the set, which she thought was sterling, from an antiques dealer. The hallmark on the bottom is a circle surrounding the words “Meriden B Company.” Also inside the circle is an image of a balance scale between two stars. Who is the maker, and what is the set worth?

A: Meriden Britannia Co. was organized in 1852 in Meriden, Connecticut, by brothers Horace (1824-1890) and Benson (1828-1886) Wilcox and several other partners. Although its first products were made of Britannia metal (pewter), the company was making silver-plated holloware by 1855. Your silver-plated (not sterling) set probably dates from the 1860s or 70s. In excellent condition, it could sell for over $1,000.

Q: I have a plastic clown bank in its original box. It must be at least 25 years old. The clown is 11 ½ inches tall and is wearing a red-and-white polka-dot shirt, yellow pants and orange shoes and hat. When you put a coin in his right hand and lift his left arm, the coin falls into his mouth. The box reads, “The more coins he eats, the bigger his belly gets.” Its marked “USN.” How much is it worth?

A: The initial stand for “Jeffrey Snyder New York,” a company that made and imported giftware, housewares and toys. It was founded in New York in 1975, but its products were made in several Asian countries. It was part of Elza Products Co., a New York firm founded in 1945. The clown bank shows up online for about $15 without the box and for $30 with the original box.

Q: I have two souvenir paper needle books in fairly decent shape with all the needles still inside. One is from the 1939 New York World’s Fair and pictures the Trylon and Perisphere. The other needle book reads “Ambassador of Good Will” on one side and pictures flags from several countries. It says “Lone Eagle” on the other side and pictures a plane flying over the globe, a ship and a train. Are they worth anything?

A: “The Lone Eagle” was a nickname for Charles Lindbergh, who flew a goodwill tour of Latin America in 1927 and 1928. Vintage needle books usually sell for $5 to $10. Needle cases that are Lindbergh souvenirs or mementos from a World’s Fair are collectible. Each one might sell for about $15.

Tip: Clocks should be cleaned and lubricated every five years.

— Terry Kovel and Kim Kovel answer questions sent to the column. By sending a letter with a question, you give full permission for use in the column or any other Kovel forum. Names, addresses or email addresses will not be published. We cannot guarantee the return of photographs, but if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is included, we will try. The amount of mail makes personal answers or appraisals impossible. Write to Kovels, (Florida Weekly), King Features Syndicate, 300 W. 57th St., New York, NY 10019.

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**Naples Botanical Garden** celebrates the opening of the Eleanor and Nicholas Chahraoui Visitor Center with cocktails, dinner and dancing under the stars Thursday, Jan. 8. Tickets start at $300. Call 643-7275 or visit naplesgardens.org.

**Harmon-Meeck Gallery** hosts the second annual **Visionaries of the Visual Arts** dinner and awards cer- emony Tuesday evening, Jan. 13, at the Naples Sailing and Yacht Club. Three individuals will be recognized for their contributions to the visual arts in South- west Florida. Andy Lowe of Safford Academy in Connecticut will be the keynote speaker. Honorary chair of the evening is Joel Loos; co-chairs are Kris- tine Meek and Juliana Meek.

Tickets are $75, with all proceeds benefitting art programs for children and at-risk youth through the Harmon-Meeck Gallery Fund at the Southwest Florida Community Foundation. Mail checks made payable to the Southwest Florida Community Foundation to Harmon-Meeck Gallery, 999 Ninth St. N., Suite 309, Naples, FL 34102. For more information, call 261-2637.

**The Fire & Ice gala to benefit the Guadalupe Center of Immokalee takes place Wednesday, Jan. 14, at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort. Tickets for the evening of dinner, dancing and a live auction are $500. Sponsorships are available. Call 657-771 or visit guadalupecenter.org.**

**The David Lawrence Center hosts “Signatures of Greece: An Elegant Evening at the Parthenon” Saturday, Jan. 17, at The Ritz-Carlton Beach Resort. Honorary co-chairs are Marissa, Burt and Jay Harrington. Co-chairs are Caryn Buechel, Renae Burgess and Jenny Haire. Tickets are $500 per person, $5,200 for VIP patrons, and $30,000 for a premier sponsor table of 10.** For sponsorship information or to reserve a ticket, call Paige Simpson at 304-3505.

A luncheon to benefit Youth Haven is set for Wednesday, Jan. 28, at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort. Judge Glenda Hatchett of TV’s “Judge Hatchett,” the national spokesperson for Court-Appointed Special Advocates, will be the guest speaker. CASA trains volunteers to represent abused and neglected children. Honorary lun- chon chairs are Jim and Liz Jesse; event chairs are Brenda O’Connor and Stacey Herring. Tickets are $300. Major spon- sors include Arthrex, Sharon and Dolph von Arx, Cruising with the Chefs/Lisa and Rodney George and Jenny and Kermit Sutton. Additional sponsorship opportunities are available. For more information, call Shelby Long at 687-0335 or email shelly.long@youighthaven.net.

**Champions For Learning** hosts its inaugural Night of Champions in celebration of its 25th year and to honor community leaders who are connecting Collier County students to their future from 6-9 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 28, at the Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club. For information about tickets and sponsor- ship tables, call Marylee Tirrell at 643- 4755 or email mtirrell@championsfor learning.org.

**Political analyst, journalist, actor, producer, writer and MSNBC news program commentator Lawrence O’Donnell will lend his voice in support of women’s rights on behalf of Planned Parenthood of Collier County at the organization’s 11th annual Choice Affair at the evening of Friday, Jan. 30, at the Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club. The event begins at 6 p.m. with cocktails and a silent auction, followed by dinner and the program at 7 p.m. Tickets range from $350 per person to $1,300 for a premium table for 12, including six seats at the Morning After Brunch, with two of those seats at Mr. O’Donnell’s brunch table. For tickets or more information, call Shannon Starr at 262-8923, ext. 300.**

**Fun Time Early Childhood Academy** hosts its annual gala Friday, Feb. 6, at the Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club. “Set Sail for Fun Time” is the even- ing’s theme, and honorary “captains” are Chris and Bill Barnett. For infor- mation about tickets and sponsorship opportunities, call 261-8284.

**The inaugural For the Love of Art gala to benefit the Naples Art Asso- ciation is set for Saturday, Feb. 7, at Gray Oaks Country Club. The evening will include presentation of three new awards: the Gulfshore Life Emerging Art Leader Award for a new and/or young artist or arts leader in the community; the Hirshhorn Award for an individual who has shown visionary leadership and a commitment to advancing and enriching the arts in the community, and the Impact Award for a business or business professional who has demon- strated significant leadership in the arts and culture of the community through involvement in, or support of, innova- tive programs and creative partnerships.** For more information, email Maureen.christensen@naplesart.org. For tickets, email chelsea@naplesart.org or visit naplesart.org.

**The Southwest Florida Wine & Food Fest** to benefit charities serving children takes place Friday and Satur- day, Feb. 27-28, in private homes and at Mimosa Lakes Beach & Golf Club. Tickets are $500 for the grand tasting and auction, $1,500 for a vintner dinner and grand tasting and auction. Visit swfwinefest.org.

**The annual Snooker Ball to benefit the Greater Naples YMCA** takes place from 6:30-11 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 28, at the Y. For tickets and sponsorship information, call 597-3348.

**Conservancy of Southwest Flor- ida** holds its annual Magic Under the Mangroves signature gala Thursday evening, March 5, on the grounds of the Nature Center at the Conservancy. Presented by Northern Trust and with Lynne Shotwell as chair, the evening starts with hors d’oeuvres and a silent auction and moves into a grand tent for a gourmet dinner, entertainment and a live auction. For information about tickets and sponsorship opportunities, call 403-4218 or email nikkied@conservancy.org.

**Drug Free Collier** holds its sev- enth annual fundraising brunch Thursday, March 5, at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort. Tickets are $200. Sponsor- ships are available. For more informa- tion, call 377-0535 or email info@drug freecollier.org.

**Hope for Haiti** holds its 25th anni- versary gala, “Passport to the Heart,” Saturday, March 7. Call the development office at 434-7183, ext. 4, for more infor- mation.

**The inaugural Kind Mariners Ball to benefit the Freedom Waters Foun- dation** takes place the evening of Saturday, March 7, at the Naples Sailing & Yacht Club. Tickets are $300. For more information, call Mike Donahue at 6030-532-3300, email info@kindmarinersball.com or visit kindmarinersball.com.

**Gulfshore Playhouse** holds its fifth annual Bubbles, Baubles and Broadway gala Monday, March 9, at The Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club. Event chairs are Naomi Buck, David Drobis and Adria Starkey; Scott Robertson will serve as auctioneer. Tickets are $100 for general admission and $500 for VIPs. For more information, visit gulfshoreplayhouse.org.

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Email Save the Date details to editor Cindy Pierce at cpierce@flori- daveweekly.com.
SOCIETY

The International Men’s Club of America welcomes Mexican dignitaries

Sam Semaan and Wolfgang Schulz

Deputy Consul General Francisco De La Lama and Assistant Director of Communications Andres Ruiz Perez

Lyle Bultman and Jack Nicholson

Jeff Finder with Maria Dines and Mark Dines

Karl Williams and Tina Nicholson

Tom Cooke and Larry McDonald

Morton Shane, Bill Hoffman, Steven Riemer, Mel Goldfine and Ronald Agronin

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SOCIETY

Mercato lights up for a Hanukkah celebration

Bayshore CAPS hosts opening reception for sculpture exhibit

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Traditional starter for a prosperous New Year
cooked pork salami with lentils

STARTER

1. THE TASTY TRIO OF GRILLED OYSTERS
Charbroiled Andouille sausage, barbecue sauce and cucumber relish, Rockefeller-style with spinach and bacon

2. TRIO OF APPLEWOOD BACON-WRAPPED
Oysters, shrimp and scallops with Asian slaw

3. LOBSTER BISQUE
Homemade bisque with lump crabmeat

ENTRÉE

1. DOVER SOLE
Whole Dover sole pan-seared Served with crab meat, shrimp, scallops, cornbread stuffing and asparagus

2. SWORDFISH MILANESE
Thinly pounded breaded swordfish with lemon caper butter sauce served with our German potato salad

3. WAGYU BEEF CHEEKS
Braised in red wine reduction, sweet peas, tendrils over polenta and shaved Parmesan cheese

DESSERT

1. ZUCCOTTO
Semi-frozen, chilled dessert Panettone cake and ice cream

New Year’s Eve

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Bayshore CAPA presents the Ave Maria University Choirs at Florida SouthWestern State College

James Patterson sings

Dani Graves, Tom Graves Frances Lussing and Leo Lussing

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Panettone cake and ice cream

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LUNCH SPECIALS AS LOW AS $5.99

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LUNCH SPECIALS AS LOW AS $5.99
If the idea of pairing the cuisines of three top Naples chefs with a sea voyage through Europe floats your boat, look no further than Oceania’s “Cruising with the Chefs” program. The cruise line is offering powerful incentives for people who want to sail Europe this summer with Chef Boat’s Lisa Boet, Mereaday’s Fine Dining’s Charles Mereday and Crave Culinaire’s Brian Roland. Guests who book before Dec. 31 will receive discounts between $1,000 and $1,500, plus a $200 ship credit and a complimentary class with the chef of your choice.

The program features hands-on instruction, chef-led shore excursions and classes and meals featuring fresh, local ingredients and indigenous culinary traditions aboard a luxury ship. Passengers also get to hang out with their chef during welcome and farewell instructions.

“Cruising foodsies seek enlightenment beyond a library or lecture,” says Oceania’s Rodney George. “Our cruises offer once-in-a-lifetime journeys with accomplished chefs aboard the most elegant and sophisticated ships at sea.”

Oceania uses its Marina and Riviera ships’ state-of-the-art Bon Appétit culinary centers to enhance guests’ learning. Jacque Pepin leads the cruise line’s culinary programs.

Chef Mereday’s cruise, “Explore the Pearls of the Mediterranean,” takes place June 16-23. The itinerary includes Rome, Positano/Amalfi, Cagliari (Sardinia), Palma de Mallorca, Barcelona, Marseille, Antibes and Monte Carlo.

Chef Mereday’s cruise, “Artistic Discoveries,” sails July 25-Aug. 5 and takes in Venice, Koper, Slovenia; Zadar, Croatia; Kotor, Montenegro; Palermo, Rome, Florence/Pisa, Monte Carlo, Provence and Barcelona.

Chef Roland’s trip, “Alluring Adriatic,” takes place Aug. 27-Sept. 7 and visits Venice; Koper, Slovenia; Dubrovnik, Croatia; Kotor, Montenegro; Piran, Slovenia; Corfu, Glythion and Santorini, Greece; and Ephesus and Istanbul, Turkey.

For more information about Cruising with the Chefs, call (866) 776-4300 or visit cruisingwiththechef.com.

Expert predictions

To know what you’ll be doing with your food in 2015! The University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences is on it. With their forces combined, the department’s faculty has predicted the food-related trends that could find their way onto your dinner plate or into your pantry in the New Year. Next year. Here are their predictions:

Kombucha: Americans are warming up to the pungent flavors that result from fermentation and are likely to be buying more products such as kimchi, sauerkraut, beer, wine and yogurt. Sadly, this means it’s unlikely the kombucha craze will pass.

Healthier school snacks: Anyone else want to Hulk Smash the vending machines full of products in their kids’ schools? The UF experts predict the junk will be replaced with healthier options thanks to Smart Snacks in Schools standards the USDA has put in place for public schools. We are grateful, yes, but they’re about 15 years late.

Smoke and spice: Smoky elements are going to increase in popularity and will be infused into alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. A smoky pile of hickory seems like a complicated set-up for a bar, but surely there are people who could appreciate it.

Take note

Mereday’s Fine Dining, Fuse Global Culinary and Avenue 5 were recently honored with Florida Trend magazine’s 2014 Golden Spoon Awards for Best New Restaurant. The three Naples establishments were joined by 18 other new restaurants throughout the state.

Café Lurcat, M Waterfront Grill, Sea Salt and The Turtle Club also earned Golden Spoons, and The Grill at The Ritz-Carlton Beach Resort took home the Hall of Fame Award. The publication has served as a guide to the state’s finest restaurants for more than 45 years.

Discerning diners with a taste for savings can head to any of Charles Mereday’s restaurants and participate in the 50 percent off menu, cocktails, wines and beer at the bar from 4-6 p.m. daily. The restaurants are: Mereaday’s Fine Dining, 1500 Fifth Ave. S.; Alto Live Jazz Kitchen, 492 Bayfront Place; and Mereaday’s Brasserie, Coconut Point in Estero.

The Brass Tap has opened at Coconut Point. Touted as an upscale beer bar, the restaurant boasts more than 200 beers, a full menu and live music. (813) 220-2333 or brassstatapbeers.com.

DeRomo’s Gift Baskets & Catering has opened under the auspices of DeRomo’s Gourmet Market & Retailer at the Promenade in Bonita Springs. Owner Francia Cuono says gift baskets can be assembled with a wide array of items hand-selected from the market, including fresh ingredients and imported goods. Off-site catering services feature the restaurant’s Italian and European cuisine. 325-3583 or deromos.com.

Want to work on your skills in the kitchen? Here are some cooking classes on the front burner:

The Local, 5323 Airport Pulling Road; 596-3276 or thelocalnaples.com — Healthy Cooking Ideas to Stick with Resolutions: Saturday, Jan. 3 ($30).

The Good Life of Naples, 2355 Vanderbilt Beach Road; 544-4663 or goodlifeofnaples.com — Vietnamese Cook: Featuring Pho, Pho, Jan. 2 ($60); French Country Cooking: Wednesday, Jan. 7 ($60); Southern Cooking: Friday, Jan. 9 ($60).

Sur la Table, Mercato: 598-3586 or surlastable.com — Bread Baking 101, Friday, Dec. 26 ($69); Date Night, New Year’s Eve Celebration, Saturday, Dec. 27 ($79); Classic Croissants from Scratch, Sunday, Dec. 28 ($69).

— Email cuisine news to Lindsey Nesmith at lnesmith@floridaweekly.com.
The dish: Chicken burritos
The price: $11.95
The place: Pelican Larry’s Raw Bar & Grill, 1046 Pine Ridge Road
The full menu: pelicanlarrys.com
The hours: 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. daily

The details: We sidled into Pelican Larry’s on a quiet weeknight with one goal in mind: raw oysters. Once they arrived, we proceeded to peruse the restaurant’s new menu and decided to share the chicken burritos. Both of us have eaten at Pelican Larry’s with varying degrees of frequency since we were old enough to drive ourselves there, so it was refreshing to try something a little different from our usual order once we saw the shiny new menus.

The burritos arrived smothered in black beans, shredded cheese and scallions, so we quickly concluded it was meant to be knife-and-forked. Filled with slowly cooked, seasoned chicken, these burritos were the perfect dish to fill out a meal we had planned to consist of only beer and bivalves.

One more thing: Let us not forget that even with its revamped menu, Pelican Larry’s still fills a highly important function in our area with style and grace: that of a casual raw bar. Artfully displayed stone crab claws and champagne certainly have their place, but at Larry’s the oysters are always and without fail, large, cold, expertly shucked and served with a tall glass of beer. Never forget.

— Lindsey Nesmith
lnesmith@floridaweekly.com
PAST REPASTS

Here are some capsule summaries of previous restaurant reviews:

- **The Counter Custom Built Burgers**, 9110 Strada Place, Mercato, Naples; 566-0614
  If it’s burgers, fries and sodas the kids want, here’s a place where everyone will feel happy about their meal. The Counter serves Angus beef from humanely raised cows free of hormones and antibiotics. (Or select vegan, bison, turkey or chicken burgers.) Then choose from a dozen cheeses, 32 toppings, 23 sauces, six buns (one is gluten free) or a salad. Milkshakes in regular or adult versions (with a shot of your favorite alcoholic beverage) I enjoyed a turkey burger with Gruyere, cole slaw, grilled pineapple, roasted corn and black bean salsa, sautéed onions and ginger soy glaze on a wheat bun. To my surprise, the whole thing even held together. My companion liked the Old School burger: beef with Tillamook cheddar, Texas-style onion, jalapeño-citrus glaze on a wheat bun. To my surprise, the whole thing even held together. Full bar.

Food: ★★★★☆/2  Service: ★★★★☆/2  Atmosphere: ★★★★☆/2  Reviewed December 2013

- **Koomon**, 3300 Bonita Beach Road, Bonita Springs; 948-4663
  Continuing the trend of restaurants offering multiple cuisines, Koomon serves the unusual combination of Japanese, Thai and ... The menu goes on. fried onion and sliced Thai basil. The dishes are compelling and accommodating. Local items are boldly faced on the menu, which changes as availability does. Clam flatbread, featuring Pine Island clams, local tomatoes and herbs on a thin, yeasty crust, was a great starter. So was the snapper ceviche, with locally grown serrano peppers, avocado, red onion, cilantro, golden grape tomatoes and citrus. Grilled gulf-caught cobia with tomato confit and grilled broccoli went on for days. This can be a good thing for parties with a diverse range of tastes and preferences. But aside from all this, Koomon will not disappoint. The Fuku will not disappoint. The sushi was a tangle of tender squid, shrimp and fish laced with lemon and lime juice and zest, red onion slivers and cilantro plated with traditional accompaniments of sweet potato slices and fresh and toasted Peruvian corn. For entrees, you can’t go wrong with a sumptuous Panang curry as spicy as you want it, or a comforting bowl of smoky soba noodles laden with chicken and crisp vegetables. Full bar.

Food: ★★★★☆/2  Service: ★★★★☆/2  Atmosphere: ★★★★☆/2  Reviewed September 2013

- **The Local**, 3123 Airport-Pulling Road, Naples; 596-2276
  This is a restaurant whose name aptly describes its mission: serving as much farm- and sea-to-table food as can be procured from area farms and local waters. It’s run by Jeff Mitchell, an alum of the Culinary Institute of America. The menu is creative, the setting unfussy and the staff friendly and accommodating. Local items are boldly faced on the menu, which changes as availability does. Clam flatbread, featuring Pine Island clams, local tomatoes and herbs on a thin, yeasty crust, was a great starter. So was the snapper ceviche, with locally grown serrano peppers, avocado, red onion, cilantro, golden grape tomatoes and citrus. Grilled gulf-caught cobia with tomato confit and grilled broccoli went on for days. This can be a good thing for parties with a diverse range of tastes and preferences. But aside from all this, Koomon will not disappoint. The Fuku will not disappoint. The sushi was a tangle of tender squid, shrimp and fish laced with lemon and lime juice and zest, red onion slivers and cilantro plated with traditional accompaniments of sweet potato slices and fresh and toasted Peruvian corn. For entrees, you can’t go wrong with a sumptuous Panang curry as spicy as you want it, or a comforting bowl of smoky soba noodles laden with chicken and crisp vegetables. Full bar.

Food: ★★★★☆/2  Service: ★★★★☆/2  Atmosphere: ★★★★☆/2  Reviewed September 2013
DeRomo's delights with dining/shopping combination

After more than a year of renovations and delays, DeRomo's Gourmet Market & Restaurant opened in mid-Octo-
ber in the Promenade at Bonita Bay. The 18,000-square-foot business took over space once occupied by Silver Spoon Café and several other tenants in the upscale Bonita Springs shopping center, which had been battered by the expansion of U.S. 41 in the early 2000s, the opening of Coconut Point in 2002, and the economic downturn.

Many hopes are pinned on DeRomo's sparking a comeback for the Promenade, and its combination of fresh food market and 250-seat restaurant certainly makes it an attractive destination for foodies and Italophiles. If you dine early, you'll have time to stroll through the shop's aisles of deli products, produce, baked confections, imported cheeses and wine offerings before it closes at 8 p.m. If you decide to forgo dinner, you can order a post-shopping pizza from DeRomo's wood-fired brick oven and enjoy it at one of the patio tables.

As for the restaurant, reservations are recommended if you hope to get one of the better tables or booths. We walked in on a Tuesday night and were offered a tiny two-top squeezed against a communal ban-
quette that would have been very uncom-
fortable for a long, three-course meal. Then they tried to seat us at a table in the path of the entrance, so we finally asked our server to get us a table for two. I saw several other parties negotiating over seating, so it wasn't just me testing the patience of the staff.

Finally, we could relax with a pair of classic Italian cocktails: the Americano ($8) with espresso and soda (made on the premises) added milky freshness. The “fritti” basket was not as successful. Some of the squid rings came out rubbery, fresh. The best feature of the dish was the spicy marinara sauce pro-
vided for dipping. Dollops of remarkably creamy ricot-
ta (made on the premises) added milky freshness.

For starters, we chose his Nonna's Meat-
balls ($9) and a combo basket of fried cala-
nari and zucchini sticks ($8). The former were tennis-ball-sized orbs of ground beef that struck a delicate balance between dense and light. They were tucked into luscious pool of “Sunday gravy,” the tradi-
tional red sauce simmered all day long with various meats that eventually melt into the gravy. Dollops of remarkably creamy ricot-
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A basket of fried calamaris and zucchini sticks served with marinara sauce.

An appetizer portion of meatballs with “Sun-
day gravy.”

The vitello Schantinella ($33) took a similar approach, combining three pro-
tiens where any single one would usu-
ally serve as the main attraction. The menu says this dish created by Mr. Cuomo in 1998 was singled out as a noteworthy one by The New York Times. I haven't been able to verify that claim online, but the dish certainly merits praise. Let's start with ob-
sotender veal medallions — sliced thickly, browned lightly, yet still pink and juicy within. Add jumbo shrimp and plump sea scallops so perfectly done they're barely cooked-through. Tie it all together with a basil-scented golden sherry cream sauce and serve with a mound of creamy, cheesy risotto. It might be a bit of a gilded lily, but you won't balk once you've tasted it.

After a short breather, we were ready to consider dessert. From the nine offerings, we chose the Torta della Nonna, only to learn they were out (surprising consid-
ing there's a bakery on the premises). We ended up with just the profiteroles ($10), stuffed pastry puffs rolled in melted choco-
late. The filling was supposed to be chantil-
ly cream, but it tasted more like sweetened ricotta — not that we minded.

We managed a quick trip through the market before it closed. Whatever for shop-
ing or dining, it's likely we'll be back at DeRomo's soon.

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