

Wrapping Up Another Season At Gem Estates

Submitted by *Mabel Budzinski*
Gem Estates

A couple weeks ago, Monday night Euchre saw some tight games with Mae Slipp and Dorothy Massoll tying as top players for the ladies. Paul Griffin and Daryl Hyder tied for champs for the men. Then, Thursday morning coffee hour hosts were Ernest and Beverly Martin, Keith and Carolyn Babbitt and Russ and Lee Heffelfinger. Alan Bennett gave the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Linda Files - who also moderated the conversation.

In sick bay at that time were Dick Burgess, Carol Farnsworth and Norma Munsulick's daughter, Bonnie.

Then, on Easter Sunday, our marvelous kitchen prepared a delicious Easter dinner for 147 residents and guests. Our new president, Linda Files, greeted



A delicious Easter dinner was prepared for Gem Estates residents and guests.

Gem • Continued on Page 3B

Food, Food, Food And Scoot



Hailey Mae and her grandpa John Dobbs at the going away picnic.

Submitted by *Steve Decker*
Many Mansions

Yep, it's time. We snowbirds are loading up our vehicles and hitting the "Bunny Trail" to the north country. This writer just got word the Glens Falls (N.Y.) Country Club, a Donald Ross course, rated 114th in the nation, is already open for play. How about that?

Here at Many Mansions we can see it all happening as folks from the other RV parks come to our rental storage lots to take their rigs out of their winter sleep and return them north on Route 35-A. However, before we residents of Many Mansions follow them, it is our custom to load up on some goodies and some entertainment. All to make the trip more endurable and the memories of this past season that much more enjoyable.

In keeping with this custom, several of us made a trip to Lakeland and dined at Ling's Buffet. Ling's is no ordinary Oriental buffet. In the opinion of many, it is simply the best. You have to go almost completely through Lakeland on U.S. 98 before you see the huge building on your left.

As you enter, the walkway passes over a railroad bridge beneath which large goldfish swim in a pond-like environment.

Once seated, you can avail yourself of an almost overwhelming variety of delicious Oriental and American dishes to your heart's content. Those of you

Food • Continued on Page 5B

Majestic Oaks Has Enjoyed Another Successful Season



Santa and his elves, ready for the Golf Cart Parade in December.

Submitted by *Wendy Parsels*
Majestic Oaks Carefree RV Resort

It cannot be April, it was just October ... we all just got here ... it cannot be time to go! During October, we enjoyed our annual Halloween Party with many residents who arrived early. November saw old friends, which we consider family, and new friends arrive; along with coffee, doughnuts and park news, morning walking aerobics, burgers and dogs, Bingo,

Majestic • Continued on Page xx

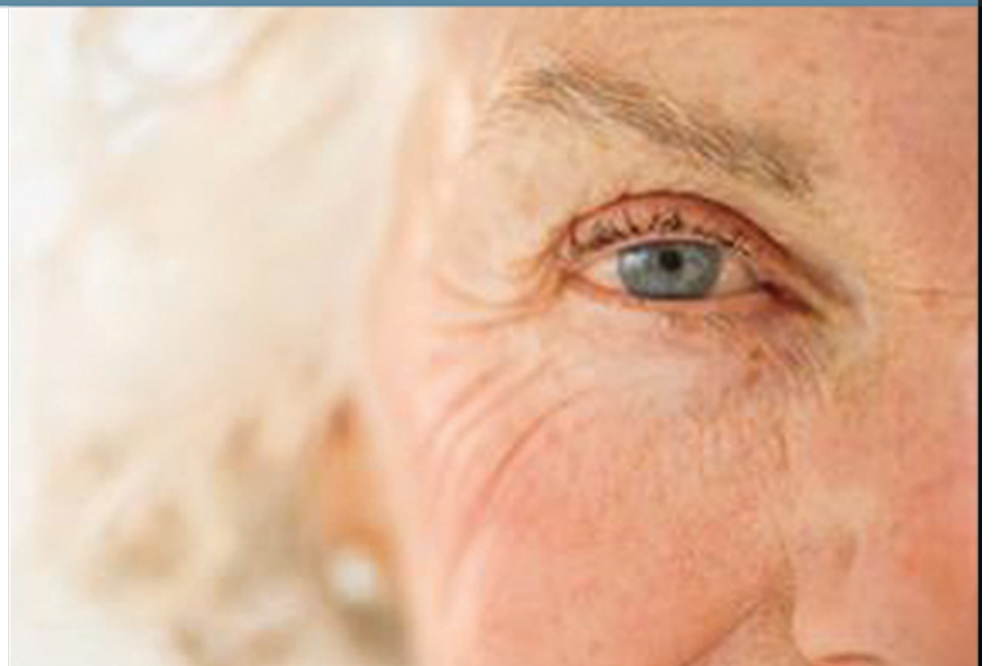
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At Home Among Books

New Library Director Plans New Programs

Story and photo by Joe Potter

“Library” and “excitement” are not typically words you see in the same sentence.

That is unless you are talking to Andrea “Andi” Figart.

She has been revved up about what the library can offer readers ever since she was hired Jan. 19 as the new director of library and museum services for the Zephyrhills Public Library.

Figart gets as much pleasure from reading a classic as some people get from savoring a highly caffeinated energy drink.

She was born and raised in Midland,

Ohio, and went to Guilford College in Greensboro, N.C., where she earned degrees in English and Art Concentration: Photography.

Figart was a schoolteacher for about five years before deciding to become a librarian. He mother was an English teacher, which helped Figart gain her interest in book.

“I was always a reader; always at the library,” Figart gushed enthusiastically. “That must have been a sign from early on. I am curious by nature so being a librarian fit the bill.”

She began working as a children’s librarian up north in 2001 with the understanding that she needed to earn a Master of Library and Information Science degree.

After earning her MLIS degree from Kent State University in 2006, Figart moved to

Kissimmee to work for the Osceola County Library.

“I was born in the wrong state. I think I was a Floridian all along,” Figart said with a chuckle.

She held several positions with the Osceola library, including being a division manager and a branch manager.

“All were great learning opportunities for me,” Figart said. She relocated to Lakeland and began a job search after growing weary of the long commute on Interstate 4 to Kissimmee. She put in her bid for the job in Zephyrhills when she found out that longtime library director Vickie Elkins was retiring.

“I was just very lucky to be in the right place at the right time” to get the job in Zephyrhills, Figart said with a smile.

“I really do love the community. You have this brand new facility and a community that is very welcoming and engaged.”

She noted that Elkins had done a great job while running the library and that she felt honored to take over where Elkins left off.

“I am incredibly excited about the partnerships we have been able to build over the past few months,” Figart said. Those partnerships with area businesses and other organizations are making it possible for the library to offer some unique programs that are free to the public.

Some of those include:

- iPhone & iPad Basics (April 14 from 3-4:30 p.m.) Kristin Pelletier of Access Computer training offers tips on using an iPhone or iPad.

- Career Source JobSeeker HELP (April 14 from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.) which allows people to visit the Mobile OneStop Bus for help in looking for work, printing resumes and accessing local and state employment databases.



Andrea “Andi” Figart, right, director of Library and Museum Services for the Zephyrhills Public Library, with Peggy Panak, assistant library director.

- TAIL WAGON with Pasco Animal Services (April 16 from 9:30 a.m.-noon) which offers people of all ages the opportunity to “adopt or give some ear rubs to a tail waggin’ cutie.”

Also, Figart noted that financial planner Raymond Arias will provide a three-day Money Smart Week series at 4 p.m. on April 26, 27 and 28 offering insight into estate planning, long term care and understanding annuities and pensions.

The technology has changed tremendously during the 15 years in which she has been working as a librarian, Figart said.

A good example of this is the amount of resources that are available to patrons of the Zephyrhills Public Library.

“A lot of really wonderful information is available to people with a library card that can access the Internet from their home or at the library,” she said.

This is in addition to the thousands of print copies of books and numerous magazines and newspapers that are available at the library at 5347 Eighth St.

“We want to be a library for all our patrons - the young and the young at heart,” Figart said.

The library is fulfilling that mission in two ways, she explained, by providing real books for those who actually want to hold it in their hands and read it, and providing vast amounts of digital information online.



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GEM ESTATES



Linda Files, Gem Estates' new president, greeted everyone as they entered the clubhouse for Easter dinner.

Gem • Continued from Page 1B

everyone as they entered the clubhouse. Last week the Monday night Euchre top scorers were Cesema Wiggins and Roger Ward. And, on Wednesday morning, shuffleboarder Bruce Hudson won three games. The Thursday morning coffee hour hosts were Howard and Paula Beck, George and Mary Kay Lynch and Linda Mapes. Marlin Thomas gave a stirring invocation. Linda Files led the Pledge of Allegiance and moderated the conversation for the 103 in attendance. Those in sick bay or

recovery included Richard and Dea-ann Burgess, Vicki Bluhm and Mary Pardee. Last Thursday afternoon the maintenance committee held a picnic for their volunteers and spouses. Many thanks for all the work they put in to make our community so special! Our last potluck this season was April 12. There will be a pancake supper April 16 at 5 p.m. In preparation for the summer months, remember to arrange for lawn care if you will be traveling.



The Gem Estates maintenance committee held a picnic for their volunteers and spouses. Many thanks for all the work they put in to make our community so special.



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MANY MANSIONS



The entrance railing around the "pond" at Lings.



The goldfish residents at Lings.



An alcove off the main dining room at Lings.



Some of the food trays at Lings.



More food at Lings.



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MANY MANSIONS



Mike Burns at his birthday party picnic.



The hot dogs were delicious at Mike's party.



An overview of the picnic area and guests at Mike's party.

Food • Continued from Page 1B

who like King Crab legs will think you have died and went to Heaven. The same goes for the frog legs and a whole host of other dishes.

This is a large venue and you never

feel crowded or hurried.

A few days later, many of our park residents were invited to attend a belated birthday picnic for Mike Burns, who is a long time and very popular resident. Ron and Fran Bartig did the cooking and every family that attended brought a

dish to pass. It was one of those almost spontaneous events that are so jovial and joyful to attend.

Then, the Park Association put on its annual "Going Away" picnic for all residents under the pavilion roof on April 3. In addition, the Association

retained the services of singer and songwriter Kris Pierce to entertain the group for three hours. The main course was from the local Publix that is famous for rotisserie chicken that is oh-so-good.

Food • Continued on Page 11B



A view of the food area at Mike's party.



"Lining up" at the going away picnic.

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Larry and Susan Hartman pose in front of the Christmas tree.

Majestic • Continued from Page 1B

jam sessions, community gardening and a traditional Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings.

In December, a few more friends arrived and we enjoyed decorating for Christmas, a dance with Dinky Cameron and New Year's Eve with David Teague. Residents had pancake breakfasts, the Golf Cart Parade, bowling, Poker, a cookie baking contest, scrapbooking, Bridge, crafts, Stitch & Chat, ice cream socials, Christmas Eve gift exchange and Christmas dinner.

During January, many of our friends from north of the border arrived and many events were in full swing. Tennis and walking aerobics are now daily events, residents enjoy Majestic McMuffin breakfasts, Nickel Bingo, yet more dances with T-n-T, a pajama party, Chili Cook-off, the Majestic Concert Series Shows began, and birthday celebrations with cake and ice cream of course.

February might have been a bit cooler, but it could not stop our residents from enjoying ROMEO breakfasts, organized bike rides, Card Bingo, pot luck dinners, horseshoes, spaghetti dinner, Texas Hold



The '50s costume contest winner, Donna Weekly.

'Em, line dancing and Cribbage.

March came in like a lion, with all events running at full force, including Euchre, CLEO (Classy Ladies Eating Out), a St Patrick's Day dance with Ricky & Franky. The outside activities hosted a shuffleboard and tennis tournaments. Residents enjoyed their "Last Hoorah" party and a few old and new friends departing early.

March and April have seen many "lasts" ... the last this, the last that ... but April does not bring the "last" of our enjoyable times with our friends! There are many friends that stay through most of April and a few into May - and some even longer. We will continue to enjoy coffee, doughnuts and park news, shuffleboard, community gardens and planned themed dinners, just to name a few.


Next season we will enjoy our friends in the fall as they all return. We also look forward to adding a few new activities for our residents to enjoy ... maybe a float in the Founders Day Parade? Naturally we will continue pot lucks, breakfasts, and dinners - since we all love food so much ... yuuuuuummm! I can almost taste the delicious cooking of our friends and neighbors already.

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The shuffleboard tournament in full swing.




Doug Lee and Diane Scott enjoying a break at the tennis tournament

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COMMUNITY & CLUB NEWS

East Pasco Democratic Club

The next meeting will be on April 18 at 7 p.m. in the meeting room at the American House at the Commons, 38130 Pretty Pond Road in Zephyrhills. The topic will be Precinct Development and how to 'get out the vote.' Light refreshments will be served at 6:45 p.m. For information, please call Dottie Brisley at (317) 402-8211.

Garden Gate Garden Club of Zephyrhills

The next meeting will be on April 21 at 10 a.m. at the Magnuson Hotel, located at 5734 Gall Blvd. in Zephyrhills. Our hostesses will be Emilie Mastin and Bobbie Swetland and Patty Sturdevant. We will be having a plant exchange followed by a brief meeting. The public is invited. Call (813) 782-8004 for information.

The Zephyrhills Art Club

The next meeting will be April 19 at 7 p.m. in Zephyr Park at Alice Hall, 38116 Fifth Ave. in Zephyrhills. The club is open to anyone interested in art, come and join us. This evening will be a night of celebration to all the winners of our annual art show that was held on March 12 and 13. To the winners, please bring your award winning paintings to our meeting along with your ribbons to share with the group. Our members are welcome to bring a painting for April's mini-show theme 'Flowers,' after a vote of attendees; ribbons will be awarded. Also during this month: on April 16, members will be painting inside at the Depot Museum, at 39110 South Avenue. Please attend and find out what workshops are available. Call (813) 780-8562 for information.

Tools to Quit Tobacco Cessation Program

This program gives people support as they seek to break their tobacco addiction. It is a two hour session to guide the group members toward a successful quit attempt. Learn about Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) and receive free NRT. Call (813) 929-1000 for information on free tobacco cessation classes.

AMVETS Post #550

AMVETS Post #550 has lots of great things happening. Monday is BINGO day, come and try your luck. Tuesday is Karl Sapp day from 4-7 p.m. Wednesday is Queen of

Hearts Day. On Fridays we have the best fish fry in town from 4-7 p.m. Haddock with fries or baked potato along with Cole slaw or apple sauce. You can also get a combo with shrimp or chicken fingers. Fridays and Saturdays we have live entertainment from 7-10 p.m. with an awesome dance floor. We have four TVs so come out on Sunday and watch your favorite sporting event. Members and guests are welcome. AMVETS is located at 4645 Airport Road in Zephyrhills. Come and check us out and join in the fun.

Zephyrhills Eagles #3752

The Zephyrhills Fraternal Order of Eagles #3752, 4149 New River Road, announces the following schedule of activities: Steel Darts on Tuesdays at 2 p.m. Bar Bingo on Wednesdays at 1 p.m. Wing Night on Wednesday at 6 p.m. Always Making Music is also on Wednesdays from 6-10 p.m. Thursday is Ladies Night, with drink specials from 6 p.m. to close. Euchre is on Fridays at 1 p.m.

Join us for Friday Fish Fry from 5-7 p.m., and stay for Karaoke with Billy Cole from 7-11 p.m. A coin show is held the first Saturday of every month. Sunday breakfast is from 8-11 a.m. A pool tournament is on Sunday at 2 p.m., and Always Making Music is from 6-10 p.m.

Keep up with all of our events. Like us on Facebook at Zephyrhills Eagles #3752. The Aerie is actively seeking new members. Call (813) 780-1558 for information.

Military Order of the Purple Heart

Chapter 705 of the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) is calling all combat wounded veterans to join us promoting patriotism, history, fraternalism and assistance. We meet the first Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. at AMVETS Post #550, 4645 Airport Road, Zephyrhills. Life membership is available for all combat wounded veterans, their dependents and survivors, for \$50, payable in two convenient payments of \$25 each. Call Earl McMillan at (813) 782-3425 or email emcmillan1@verizon.net, or contact Guy Patterson at (864) 561-6644 for information.

American Legion Post #118

American Legion Zephyr Post #118 meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month at 5340 Eighth St., Zephyrhills, at 7 p.m. Auxiliary meets at 1 p.m. the

third Wednesday. The club is open for Legion members, veterans and guests at 3 p.m. Monday-Saturday and Sunday at 1 p.m. Canadian veterans are welcome. Membership is open to all eligible veterans. Call (813) 782-0481 for information.

Zephyrhills Elks Lodge #2731

Meals are available on Tuesdays and Fridays at 6851 Wire Road. Friday evening meals are fried or baked fish, shrimp or baked chicken with french fries or baked potato and Cole slaw for \$9. On Tuesdays meals are a chef's special between \$7-\$8.50. All meals are open to Elk members and their guests. There is line dancing every Thursday morning at 10 a.m. and Bingo every Thursday evening at 6 p.m. Both are open to the public. Call (813) 782-4604 for information.


VFW Post #8154

The Post and Auxiliary meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. The Men's Auxiliary meets the last Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. Friday Night Fish Fry is held from 4:30-7 p.m. with live bands starting at 7 p.m. Sundays - Wings & Things from 1-6 p.m. with dance bands from 4-7 p.m. Mondays - Meat Drawings beginning at 4:30 p.m. with music by Billy Cole from 4-7 p.m. Wednesdays - Bar Poker at 7 p.m. The Post is located at 3954 Paul Buchman Hwy. (State Road 39) in Zephyrhills. Pizza and other bar snacks are available. The Post is open to VFW members and their guests. Call (813) 782-7194 for information.

Disabled American Veterans Chapter 65

The Zephyrhills Disabled American Veterans Chapter 65 meets on the second Thursday of each month at 5325 Eighth St. The next meeting will be a very important one as we have turned a corner and are headed in a new direction. This will be discussed as it concerns everyone. The offices have been cleaned up, odors have been eliminated and more space is now available. We expect a large turnout for the April 14 meeting at the American Legion, across the street from the DAV office. The office is open for claims on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. The office may be reached by calling (813) 355-4889.

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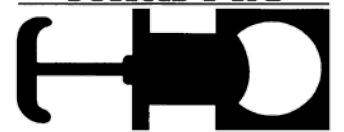
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COMMUNITY & CLUB NEWS

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If you have or even think you may have a problem with alcohol, call (813) 933-9123.

Zephyrhills Toastmasters Club

Meetings are held at Microtel Inn & Suites, 7839 Gall Blvd., Zephyrhills, every Thursday at 6:45 p.m. The Toastmasters Club helps individuals overcome fear of public speaking and to deliver more dynamic presentations through weekly practice and participation. Contact Sam Abrahani at (813) 863-4608 or toastmastersam@yahoo.com or Roxxy Bricker at (813) 701-5505 or bricker@aizo.com for information. Club meetings are open to all interested parties.

Zephyrhills Historical Association

The Zephyrhills Historical Association meets every first Tuesday at the Zephyrhills Public Library, 5347 Eighth Street. The business meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. followed by the program at 6 p.m. All are welcome to attend and refreshments will be served. Contact Clereen Brunty at (813) 782-8763 or clereen@tampabay.rr.com for information.

Support Group for Grieving Adults

Adults who are grieving the death of a loved one are welcome to participate in an ongoing grief support group, offered at no charge by HPH Hospice. The group meets the second and fourth Monday of each month, from 2-3 p.m. at St. Joseph Catholic Church, located at 38710 Fifth Ave. Meetings are held in the library of the religious education building. No registration is required. An HPH bereavement counselor facilitates

the group and one can attend as often as they'd like. Call HPH at (800) 486-8784 for information.

Narcotics Anonymous Hotline

Information about various Narcotics Anonymous meetings that are held several days a week in East Pasco may be obtained by calling (813) 527-3853. Narcotics Anonymous can help those who have drug problems and who are willing to participate in the program. Narcotics Anonymous is not affiliated with any of the places at which its meetings are held.

Marine Corps League

The Sgt. Maj. Michael S. Curtin Detachment 1124 of the Marine Corps League (MCL) are looking for a few good Marines and Fleet Marine Force (FMF) Navy Corpsmen to join their ranks. The MCL meets on the last Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post #8154 located at the southeast corner of State Road 39 and Tucker Road at 3954 Paul Buchman Highway in Zephyrhills. Call (813) 788-5676 for information.

Marine Corps League Auxiliary

The Marine Corps League Auxiliary meets the first Saturday of each month at 11 a.m. at the Zephyrhills V.F.W. Post #8154 located at 3954 State Road 39. Call Vanice Holland at (772) 480-0658 for information.

ACES for MS Support Group

You are invited to join us on the first Thursday of each month from 1-3 p.m. at the First Christian Church fellowship hall, 6040 Eighth St. in Zephyrhills. Enjoy refreshments while sharing your

multiple sclerosis experiences. We also host a social event on the third Thursday of each month. Contact Cecile at (813) 782-9306 or Vicki at (813) 788-9931 for details, to RSVP and to confirm date, time or location.

Pet Loss Support Group

Gulfside Hospice's pet loss support group meets the last Thursday of the month at the Gulfside Center for Hospice Care in Zephyrhills, located at 5760 Dean Dairy Road, from 3-4:30 p.m.

The group is being offered in conjunction with Gulfside's Pet Peace of Mind Program, which keeps pets and people together during hospice care. Call (727) 484-7995 for information.

East Pasco Democratic Club

The next meeting will be on April 18 at 7 p.m. in the meeting room at the American House at the Commons, 38130 Pretty Pond Road in Zephyrhills. The topic will be Precinct Development and how to 'get out the vote.' Light refreshments will be served at 6:45 p.m. For information, please call Dottie Brisley at (317) 402-8211.

Centennial Eagles #4399

Monday nights – steel tipped darts tournament at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Nickel Bingo is from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Wednesday Night King of Hearts Drawing is at 7:30 p.m. Purchase your ticket by 7 p.m. Thursday night, Bar Bingo is at 7 p.m.

Friday Night Fish Fry is from 4-6:30 p.m. Fried fish is \$7, fried shrimp is \$8, grilled steak is \$8, or fried chicken strips are \$5. All dinners include Cole slaw, roll or hush puppies, a side and

dessert. Open to the public.

Friday Night's Pool Tournament begins at 7 p.m. The Aerie meets the first and third Tuesdays at 7 p.m. The Auxiliary meets the first and third Wednesdays at 7 p.m.

The Aerie is located at 15924 U.S. 301 in Dade City. Call (352) 567-9755 for information.

American Legion Post #15

Music Jam Session every Wednesday night 7-9 p.m. Bring an instrument and join in this family-friendly fun or just sit back and listen. It's free. Refreshments will be available for purchase

American Legion Post #15 meets the second Monday of every month at 7 p.m. at 37745 Church Ave. in Dade City. The post is open daily for members and their guests from 2-10 p.m. A full service bar is available. Hall rental is available and card clubs are welcome.

Join us in supporting all veterans and hometown heroes. Call (352) 518-0021 for information.

Community Cycling Ride

Ride leaves from the parking lot next to 14112 Eighth St. in Dade City at 8 a.m. every Saturday and is approximately two hours long with a varying pace depending on skill levels. All skill levels are welcome! Contact Josh or Kaleigh Thornton at wickedawesomeracing@gmail.com for information.

Zumba for College Scholarships

Every Monday and Wednesday from 6-7 p.m. Come dance for \$3 per class at La Onda Dance Club, 37518 Lock St. in Dade City. All proceeds go to graduating seniors college scholarships. Email griveras@mail.usf.edu for information.

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Should You Change Your Investment Mix Over Time?

To be successful at investing, some people think they need to "get in on the ground floor" of the next "big thing." However, instead of waiting for that one "hot" stock that may never come along, consider creating an asset allocation - a mix of investments - that's appropriate for your needs, goals and risk tolerance.

But once you have such a mix, should you keep it intact forever, or will you need to make some changes? And if so, when?

To begin with, why is asset allocation important? Different types of investments - growth stocks, income-producing stocks, international stocks, bonds, government securities, real estate investment trusts, and so on - have unique characteristics, so they rarely rise or fall at the same time. Thus, owning a mix of investments can help reduce the forces of market volatility. (Keep in mind, though, that allocation does not ensure a profit or protect against loss.) Your particular mix will depend on your investment time horizon, comfort with risk, and financial goals.

When you are young, and starting out in your career, you may want your asset allocation to be more heavily weighted toward stocks and stock-based investments. Stock investments historically have provided the greatest returns over the long term - although, as you've probably heard, past performance can't guarantee future results - and you will need this growth potential to help achieve your long-term goals, such as a comfortable retirement. Stocks also carry a greater degree of investment risk, including the risk of losing principal, but when you have many years to invest, you have time to potentially overcome the inevitable short-term declines.

Once you reach the middle-to-later stages of your career, you may have achieved some of your goals that required wealth accumulation, such as sending your children to college. However, what is likely your biggest long-term goal - retirement - still awaits you, so you may not want to scale back too much on your stocks and other growth-oriented investments. Nonetheless, including an allocation to bonds can help to reduce some of the volatility of the stock portion of your portfolio.

Now, fast forward to just a few years before you retire. At this point, you may want to lower your overall risk level, because, with retirement looming, you don't have much time to bounce back from downturns - and you don't want to start withdrawing from your retirement accounts when your portfolio is already going down. So, now may be the time to add bonds and other fixed-income investments. Again, though, you still need some growth opportunities from your investments - after all, you could be retired for two, or even three decades.

Finally, you're retired. At this point, you should adjust your asset allocation to include enough income-producing investments - bonds, certificates of deposit, perhaps dividend-paying stocks - to help you enjoy the retirement lifestyle you've envisioned. Yet, you can't forget that the cost of living will likely rise throughout your retirement. In fact, at a modest 3% inflation rate, the price of goods will more than double after 25 years. So even during retirement, you need your portfolio to provide some growth potential to help you avoid losing purchasing power.

By being aware of your asset allocation, and by making timely adjustments as necessary, you can provide yourself with the opportunities for growth and income that you will need throughout your life.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.



Jim Pittman, AAMS
Financial Advisor

6949 Gall Blvd.
Zephyrhills, FL 33542

813-788-1083

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The Price Of Pet Ownership May Increase In Pasco County

by Keri McAlpine

The Department for Animal Services of Pasco County has recently proposed an idea to initiate an ordinance change and raise the price of cat and dog licensing fees in order to fund local spay and neutering programs.

The cost and demand for the programs is going up but the income to fund them is steadily decreasing.

"If we want to keep these programs, which everyone seems to want to keep the programs, we have to find a way to fund them," said Mike Shumate, director of Animal Services.

Money gathered from the un-altered dog licensing sales is used to pay for the programs, and at their inception the fund had about \$600,000 to contribute to the cause. The programs have led to the successful sterilization of more than 10,000 animals since they were introduced.

However, Shumate has estimated that the funds for these programs will be used up by 2019.

The spay and neutering programs in Pasco County were introduced in 1983 as well as in 2012 and 2013, along with different education programs on the benefits of sterilizing the animals. The programs have been wildly successful, according to Shumate, causing the money to disappear faster than expected.

The proposal to solve the problem is to raise the cost of cat registration to a \$5 mandatory fee, from its current voluntary license policy, and to raise the un-altered dog licensing fee from \$35 to \$40. Pasco County is currently the only one in its surrounding area that doesn't charge for cat licensing. Shumate said that in a survey of 25 surrounding counties, only four, including Pasco, did not have a mandatory licensing fee for cats.

The proposal has been discussed at a workshop, according to County Commissioner Mike Moore, and it will have to pass through several forums and discussions before becoming a reality.

Moore said the proposal will be revisited after other alternatives are considered. Raising the fees, he said, is always the last resort option, and something he would rather avoid.

"We want to think outside the box as well," Moore said. "We need to continue to look at all possible options from the program."

Options other than raising the licensing fees may include a small tax or fee for the municipalities taking advantage of the programs, according to Shumate. Increasing animal control contracts with the municipalities that continually participate may help cover the cost of the thousands of surgeries performed through the programs. Shumate said Animal Services will also be applying for several grants this year to try and get some extra money.

"We're trying to get [money] anywhere we can," he said.

Moore said he is not sure which way he will go on the ruling, but that he is in favor of raising the price for the un-altered dog licenses. He said un-altered dogs are typically used for breeding purposes, which is "more of a business type situation," and it makes sense to him to raise the licensing fee.

"I'd like to hear a little bit more from the public... and from some of the veterinarians who do the procedures ... before I make any kind of decision," Moore explained. "We want to keep the spay and neuter program. It's very, very important to keep the dog and cat population down at our shelters for obvious reasons."

"It's something we need to do in order to continue to support the spayed programs we have in place for the county right now," Shumate said.

Before the spay and neuter programs were put in place, the animal shelter of Pasco County was a high-kill shelter, Shumate said, with 75 percent of the animals coming into the shelter being euthanized. Today, it is a "save 90 percent" shelter, meaning the goal of the shelter is for 90 percent of the adoptable animals to be saved, and not euthanized.

Animal Services has not decided when they will bring back a revised proposal for the County Commissioners to consider but the plan is to have it in before the county completes its 2016-17 fiscal year budget in September, according to both Moore and Shumate.

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“Chowing down” at the going away picnic.



Hailey Mae dances to one of Kris’ songs while “Mom” Sara is the “safety net.”



“Farmer” George relaxes to the music while Mike and Cheryl “enjoy.”

Food • Continued from Page 5B

It was delicious.

Members signed up in advance for their favorite portion and everyone brought a covered main dish or a dessert.

Kris and his lady friend, Sandy, arrived just in time to set up after the meal was over. This was his second appearance at Many Mansions and he was very well received and appreciated. He has a well-rounded repertoire of songs that range from country to popular and western to gospel and theater. His deep voice does all of them justice and he keeps his audience well-entertained.

He hails from Tampa but has traveled extensively. He also has many selections of music available on CDs during his show and from his laregerthanlifemusic.com website.

And now, it is time to join the herd on northbound Interstate 75.

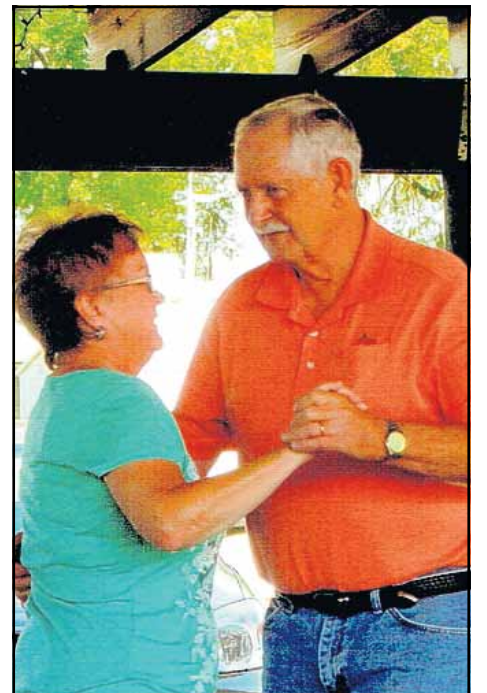
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