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Judy Johnson, Ph.D., left, Jana Thompson, center, and Donna English are officers of Excelerate, a local nonprofit organization providing students with educational and life skills benefits.

It Isn't Just
Book Learning

Education Program
Includes Life Skills

Story and photo by **Joe Potter**

An innovative educational program that is starting its third year is still relatively unknown, but the officers of the nonprofit business hope that will change.

Judy Johnson, Donna English and Jana Thompson started Excelerate in March of 2015. Johnson is regional director of Sylvan Learning, with offices in Zephyrhills, Westchase, Carrollwood

Education • Continued on Page 3A



Zephyrhills Police Department Capt. Derek Brewer presents the results of the annual crime report that showed crime in the city dropped by 4.7 percent.

Crime Decline
Thrills Council

*Policing Credited For Drop
In Burglaries, Car Thefts*

Story and photos by **Dave Walters**

The declining crime rate in Zephyrhills had city officials handing out kudos to the Zephyrhills Police Department during Monday's City Council meeting.

Zephyrhills Police Department Capt. Derek Brewer officially presented the annual Florida Department of Law Enforcement crime report that showed the local crime rate dropped 4.7 percent in 2016.

Crime • Continued on Page 6A

Third Year, Fewer Pies, Just As Sweet

*Saturday's Celebration
Comes Up Thinner*

Story and photos by **Keri McAlpine**

The third annual sugar rush known as the Zephyrhills Pie Festival featured seven hours of 185 pies of various styles, flavors and fillings.

Held last Saturday in Zephyr Park on Fifth Avenue, this year's fest celebrating the pastry that can be both sweet, and salty, had corresponding results: although attendance was not as promising as years past, the quality of fun stayed consistent.

Pie • Continued on Page 7A



A total of 13 pies were submitted for this year's bake-off with a variety of ingredients from blueberries to bacon.



Janel Jandren, left, and Sen. Wilton Simpson of the Florida Farm Bureau Foundation present a certificate of appreciation for U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis for his outstanding service and support of bringing the USMC band to Pasco County. Receiving the award was Bob Hatfield, center, Bilirakis' local representative.

Photo by **Richard K. Riley**

Marine Band
Strikes A Chord

*Thousands Enjoy Patriotic Music
On The Courthouse Lawn*

by **Joe Potter**

Murdoch Ford, 83, stood ramrod straight as the U.S. Marine Corps Parris Island Band played the Armed Forces Medley to close out an hour-long program on Sunday.

"Oh, I love the band. I'd travel 100 miles just to see them," said Ford, of Zephyrhills, who had been a tank commander during the Korean War.

He enlisted in the Marine Corps when he was 15 years old to help provide money for his mother and four siblings. He made

Band • Continued on Page 5A

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Zephyrhills Arrests

Traffic Stop Nets Narcotics Trafficker

Cynthia Rosales, 19, of 37410 Acorn Loop, Dade City, was arrested by Zephyrhills police on March 11 on charges of two counts of possession of controlled substance without a prescription with intent to sell and one count each of possession of methamphetamine with intent to sell and possession of marijuana with intent to sell. Police stopped a black 2010 Ford for driving the wrong way on Seventh Street. A strong odor of marijuana could be detected emanating from the vehicle. Rosales was seated in the front passenger seat. A search of the interior of the vehicle revealed a black satchel in the passenger seat. It contained 4.6 grams of methamphetamine individually packed in five separated baggies consistent with that of narcotic sales. Also, six grams of marijuana were found in the satchel. They were individually packed in six separate baggies, consistent with that of narcotic sales. One 30 mg oxycodone HCL tablet and 14 0.5 mg Alprazolam tablets were also found inside the satchel. All recovered narcotics were positively identified through various methods. Post Miranda, Rosales admitted the narcotics in the satchel belonged to her and that she had been selling narcotics for approximately two months. She was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

David Lee Mobley, 31, of 4758 Lakeside Drive, was arrested by Zephyrhills police on March 12 on charges of possession of marijuana and possession of a controlled substance without a prescription. Police stopped Mobley for allegedly not riding his bicycle in a designated bicycle lane on Gall Boulevard. Mobley spontaneously stated, "I have a little marijuana in my left pocket" when police asked if they could search him. He removed a clear plastic baggie from his left pocket and the contents tested positive for 1.5 grams of marijuana. Mobley also allegedly had four methadone hydrochloride 10 mg pills inside his wallet. Post Miranda, Mobley said, "I don't have a prescription for them. I forgot the pills were in my wallet." He was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

Derrick Randall Powell, 24, of 5529 11th St., was arrested by Zephyrhills police on March 11 on a charge of domestic battery. Police responded to the location regarding a disturbance. The victim told police that Powell, who is her husband, shoved a door into her chest while they were involved in an altercation. This reportedly caused her to fall onto the couch. He then allegedly entered a bedroom and grabbed her and threw her onto a bed. Powell denied the incident had occurred and refused to make any statements after having

been advised of his Miranda rights. He was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

Samual Lee Benfiel, 53, of 5909 11th St., was arrested by Zephyrhills police on March 11 on charges of domestic battery and tampering with a witness. The victim told police she and Benfiel live together as a family unit and had been involved in a verbal altercation after a night out drinking alcohol. Benfiel reportedly became angry because the victim wanted to leave and go to her mother's house. He allegedly pushed her, causing her to fall to the ground. She got up and dialed 911 but Benfiel allegedly snatched the telephone from her grasp and told the 911 operator, "You don't need the police to come." Post Miranda, Benfiel denied any of the allegations. He was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

Jonathan Travis Chambers, 25, of 38923 Miller Ave., was arrested by Zephyrhills police on March 7 on a charge of possession of marijuana. He was stopped for allegedly driving 40 mph in a 30 mph zone. An odor of marijuana was reportedly detected emanating from the vehicle. When asked if there was any contraband inside the car, Chambers spontaneously said, "I have marijuana in the center console." Two grams of what field tested positive as marijuana were found in a clear baggie inside the car. Chambers was released on his own recognizance.

William Johnson Jameson, 49, of 5127 Hill Drive, was arrested by Zephyrhills police on March 7 on charges of driving while license suspended or revoked – habitual and violation of probation – DWLSR/habitual. Jameson was stopped for improper display of a tag. He spontaneously said he did not have a valid driver's license and that he was on probation for habitual DWLSR. A records check disclosed he had a Florida inmate status of violent offender for fleeing to elude law enforcement on Dec. 29, 2014. His license had been suspended eight times, with the most previous suspension having been on June 1, 2015. He was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

Sean Michael Deangelo, 30, transient, was apprehended by Zephyrhills police on March 7 on two Hillsborough County warrants charging him with failure to appear – possession of cocaine with intent to sell or deliver and FTA – using or possession of drug paraphernalia. Deangelo was apprehended in the 38000 block of 13th Avenue and was booked into the Pasco County Jail upon confirmation of the warrants.

Breanna Lynn Hardwick, 26, of 37152 Pepper Lane, was arrested by Zephyrhills police on March 18 at Five Guys Restaurant on charges of possession of a controlled substance, possession of narcotic equipment, resisting law enforcement without violence and three counts of violation of probation or community control. The Hillsborough County warrants were for violation of probation – heroin sale/manufacture/delivery, VOP – heroin possession and VOP – felony battery.

Police responded to a suspicious person complaint at the eatery located at 7954 Gall Blvd. and made contact with Hardwick in the parking lot. She initially provided a false name after retrieving a small black bag from a slightly larger black pouch. An officer observed what appeared to be drug paraphernalia protruding from the top of the smaller pouch. She allegedly resisted by attempting to flee on foot but was apprehended. She was allegedly found to be in possession of a spoon and a small clear baggie which contained .9 grams of a brown powder which field tested positive for heroin. Hardwick told police post Miranda that she had used heroin approximately 30 minutes prior to her encounter with law enforcement. She also said the spoon would test positive for heroin. She was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

Christopher Charles Alexander, 27, of 39601 Kennedy Ave., was arrested by Zephyrhills police on March 14 on charges of aggravated battery on a pregnant victim, tampering with a witness, throwing a deadly missile into an occupied vehicle and on a Tallahassee warrant charging him with violation of felony parole. On March 11, Alexander allegedly poked a female victim several times on her face while she was driving on U.S. 301. She reportedly told Alexander she would call the police if he did it again. Alexander then allegedly threw the victim's telephone out of the car and said, "Who you gonna call now?" She stopped her vehicle and Alexander allegedly got out and threw a piece of wood through the rear window of the victim's car causing the window to shatter. The victim is eight weeks pregnant with Alexander's child. Post Miranda, Alexander said he had no knowledge of the incident. He was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

Daniel Manuel Crowder, 32, of Miramar, was arrested by Zephyrhills police on March 16 on a charge of domestic battery on a person age 65 or older. Police were dispatched to the 37000 block of Aaralyn Road regarding a disturbance. The victim advised he had been in a verbal altercation with his son that turned physical when his son "chest bumped" him while becoming aggressive. The victim said his son resides with him. The victim is currently 66 years of age. Crowder reportedly became unruly and would not make a statement. He was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

Debora Lisa Gebhardt, 45, of 38943 North Ave., was arrested by Zephyrhills police on March 19 on a charge of domestic battery. Police responded to the address regarding a battery that had just occurred. The victim said Gebhardt, who is his girlfriend, became upset and started arguing with him. They have resided together as a couple. When he tried to leave to avoid a conflict, Gebhardt allegedly jumped on his back, wrapped her arms around his neck and kicked his leg. The victim did have slight redness to his neck and a fresh abrasion to his right leg. Gebhardt told police, "I may have put my hands on him but I blacked out and don't remember what happened." She could not provide details of the incident. Gebhardt was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

The information provided in the Zephyrhills Police report is taken from public record. All parties are considered innocent until proven guilty.



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County Chooses New Administrator

Michele Baker's Replacement To Start Work May 1

Staff Report

Dan Biles was “far and away” the best of the five candidates that were interviewed for county administrator, District 1 County Commissioner Ron Oakley said on March 14.

He and the other commissioners couldn’t discuss their rankings of the candidates until they voted on them and he “was surprised” that all five had Biles as their first choice.

“He will be a good fit for Pasco County because he comes from the southeastern United States and he has worked with developers and has several years of experience in infrastructure, which is one of the big issues we are now facing,” Oakley, who represents east Pasco, said.

Biles is a professional engineer, most

recently serving as Deputy County Manager of Infrastructure for Jefferson County, Ala. He also held several leadership positions in his four years with the City of Corpus Christi before venturing to Alabama in 2014.

Biles earned his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Civil Engineering at Texas A&M University. The U.S. Air Force commissioned him from his time in A&M’s Corps of Cadets, sending him to Luke Air Force Base in Phoenix, Ariz., then on to Andersen Air Base in Guam, and finally to Malmstrom AFB in Great Falls, Mont.

Following his separation from active duty, he spent the next decade working as a consulting civil engineer and land developer in the south Puget Sound region of Washington State.

“Pasco County is extremely

fortunate to have such a strong county administrator candidate as Dan Biles,” said commission chairman Mike Moore.

Commissioners approved Biles’ three-year contract two weeks ago by a vote of 4-0. Jack Mariano wasn’t able to attend the regular meeting.

Biles will take over from retiring Pasco County Administrator Michele Baker who has served as county administrator for the past four years. Her contract expires July 9, and she is in the process of negotiating an exit agreement with the board.

Biles will start May 1 and will be paid \$220,000 per year.

“I was impressed with what I saw when I toured Pasco County,” he said. “My wife and I look forward to making Pasco County our new home. I also look forward to hearing from county staff and



Dan Biles

community leaders about the unlimited potential Pasco County offers.”

Biles also recently retired from the Washington Air National Guard after commanding three different units and reaching the rank of Colonel.

Education • Continued from Page 1A

and Temple Terrace. English and Thompson are directors at Sylvan Learning Center at 38420 Fifth Ave.

“We’re all involved in Sylvan but we have extended reduced cost or no cost programs to many students over the years. We started this 501c3 to provide more support to Zephyrhills students who have academic and financial need,” said Johnson, who earned her doctorate in neuropsychology from the University of South Florida. She also has masters’ degrees in counseling and biology.

Excelerate’s mission is to serve as a multifaceted resource for promoting social and educational success for families in the Zephyrhills area, according to a company brochure. Sponsored recipients receive services aimed at helping them develop skills and attain basic necessities needed to further their education, enter the job market and become successful participants in our community, the brochure said. Some of the students participating in the program pay a small amount while others don’t pay anything at all, Johnson said. Students must provide proof of financial eligibility through their 1040 forms or

other means before being accepted into the program.

Excelerate’s two youngest students are currently 18 years old and both are working on their GEDs. Excelerate offers courses in fine arts, science and technology, entrepreneurship, financial planning English language acquisition, and basic academic and life skills. There are currently six students in the program who didn’t make it through high school and who are pursuing their GEDs.

One student in his second year with Excelerate is finishing his GED and now has a job, Johnson said.

“None of the other Sylvan Learning Centers have a program like Excelerate,” she said. “Excelerate is not a part of Sylvan and Excelerate does things that Sylvan can’t do.” Students can go from one program to another but Excelerate isn’t necessarily a feeder program to Sylvan.

“Our students need help in other areas in addition to academics,” Johnson said. They are taught how to improve their attitude, behavior and appearance. Also, they learn how to prepare resumes and present

themselves in the proper way during job interviews. “We do whatever it takes to help them become functioning members of society,” she said.

Money raised from several small fundraisers to support Excelerate programs stays within the community.

“I think we have accomplished a lot during the two years,” Donna English said. She joked that many students coming into the program think she teaches English and she has to explain that is her name. She earned a bachelor’s degree in education from Columbia Southern and a masters degree in social work from the University of Phoenix.

Thompson earned a bachelor’s degree in mathematics and computer science. She began her studies at Texas Tech and finished at Texas Lutheran University.

“We provide a place for people who want to donate to know where their money is going and to support students,” Johnson said. “We will provide people with information about how students are benefitted by their donation, with the students’ permission,” she said.



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East Pasco Events

March 31 – Relay for Life of Zephyrhills – This year’s Relay for Life festival will be held from 6 p.m. to midnight at Main Street Zephyrhills, 38454 Fifth Ave. downtown. Relay for Life is the signature fundraising event for the American Cancer Society’s programs of research, education, advocacy and service programs that can reduce cancer deaths and cancer incidence, and improve the quality of life for those touched by cancer. Visit www.relayforlife.org/zephyrhillsfl for information or to register. Call (404) 329-5113 with questions or to get involved.

April 1 – Pasco Master Gardener Plant Sale – The Pasco Master Gardeners will hold a plant show from 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m. in front of the Extension Office at 36702 S.R. 52 in Dade City. A greenhouse inventory clearance will be held with cultural information included with each plant. Educational material and Master Gardeners will be available to answer your gardening and lawn care questions. A free seminar on “Butterflies and their Blooms” will be held at 9 a.m. in Clayton Hall

April 1 – Prelude to Easter Concert – The Florida Hospital Zephyrhills Chorale will present “A Prelude to Easter” starting at 5 p.m. at the East Pasco Seventh-day Adventist Church, 7333 Dairy Road. This free, community concert is an annual spring event led by conductor Marvin Robertson, PhD. FHZ Chorale members volunteer their time and are comprised of hospital employees and non-employees who have a gift for and love of music. The concert features Teresa Ancaya on piano and Keith Rasmussen on organ and as part of the brass ensemble. Reservations are not taken.

April 4 – Movie Screening and Community Seminar – Gulfside Regional Hospice & Pasco Palliative Care will be hosting a screening of the movie “Still Alice” and a discussion on Alzheimer’s Disease at 2 p.m. at the New River Branch Library, 34043 S.R. 54. The event is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served. Call Anna Davis at (727) 992-8042 for information and to RSVP.

April 5 – PHSC Open House – Pasco-Hernando State College’s Dade City campus, located at 36727 Blanton Road, will host an open house from 5-7 p.m. in conference center A240. The open house is designed for 2017 and 2018 high school graduates who are undecided on college plans and any potential students seeking higher education opportunities. Attendees will learn about certificate, associate, and bachelor degree programs as well as financial aid, scholarships and opportunities for involvement in more than 50 student clubs and organizations. Campus tours will be conducted. Visit phsc.edu/openhouse or call 1 (855) NOW-PHSC for information.

April 5 – Presentation on Tampa History – American House Zephyrhills, 38130 Pretty Pond Road, will be hosting a fun and informative presentation by author Joshua McMorrow-Hernandez, a Tampa native and historian who grew up in Busch Gardens Tampa Bay. Come hear the presentation and get your name in a raffle for a prize. Tours of American House will be available after. Call (813) 400-2263 for information and RSVP by April 3.

April 5 – Pinterest Party – Come learn about this fun yet informative website at your neighborhood Humana. Ever wondered how to “upcycle” newspaper into a picture frame or turn old wine bottles into wind chimes? Well come out and join us at 1 p.m. All are welcome. We will also make a craft for you to take home after class. Humana is located in the Zephyr Commons Shopping Center at 7920 Gall Blvd. Call (813) 780-7300 for information or visit us in person to get a copy of our full calendar of events for this month.

April 7 – BonWorth Grand Re-Opening – A grand re-opening will be held all day from 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. with a ribbon cutting from the Greater Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce at noon. Located at Merchant Square Mall, 7409 Gall Blvd. Come for 10-year anniversary celebration fun for all, red hot deals and prizes. Call (813) 715-0057 for information.

April 7 – Build Your Family Tree – Need help building your family tree? Join us at the local Zephyrhills Humana for a class to learn how to build your family tree online for free. Held from 12-1 p.m. at the Neighborhood Humana, located in the Zephyr Commons Shopping Center at 7920 Gall Blvd. Free for all to join. Call (813) 780-7300 for information or visit us in person to get a copy of our full calendar of events for this month.

April 8 – Birdies and Blackjack – The Zephyrhills Bulldog Booster Club presents a golf tournament and casino night event, Mardi Gras style. Held at Silverado Golf & Country Club, 36841 Clubhouse Drive, with a 9 a.m. shotgun golf tournament. A trick shot artist will be on hand for entertainment. Park three poker challenges with payouts for top three finishers. Casino Night starts at 6 p.m. with a slew of classic casino games, music, food and raffles. Don’t forget to dress up for the masquerade contest with prizes for winners. Contact Randy at (216) 780-4485 or zhsathleticboosterclub@gmail.com for tickets or information. Must be 21 to participate at Casino Night.

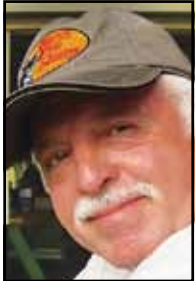
April 8 – Hittin’ the Road for Hospice – This year’s annual motorcycle poker run is set. Riders will be cruising across Pasco County. The run starts at Harley-Davidson of New Port Richey, 5817 S.R. 54. Check-in, registration, and breakfast at 8 a.m. and last bike out at 10 a.m. Post-run celebration starts at 1 p.m. at the Fraternal Order of the Eagles Zephyrhills #3752, at 4149 New River Road. Visit www.HittinTheRoadForHospice.org to register.

April 8 – Spring Arts and Craft Fair – The Lighthouse Crafters of Southport Springs will be holding their annual arts and crafts fair from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. at the clubhouse located just off Chancey Road. Vendors will be displaying beautiful handmade items and a bake sale and Chinese auction will also be featured. Call Linda at (813) 778-1359 for information.

April 10 – Posture Presentation – As you age, your body changes and so does your posture. Gregory William DC will share helpful information on this topic from 4-5 p.m. at the Creation Health Wellness Center, located at 38233 Daughtery Road. Visit FHZeph.org for information or call (813) 779-6476 for required reservation.

For more events visit www.pasconewspubs.com

Commentary



First Things First

Greg First

A World Of Difference

I have heard it time and again from our winter visitors that they have the best of both worlds coming to Florida during the winter months and then heading back north when it starts to warm up again. I have lived in Florida just about my whole life. I married a girl that was born in Dade City. She never saw snow until she was in her 40s.

One year we decided to try and find her some snow. We flew to Seattle, rented a car and started heading north toward Whistler, Canada. We were passing through Vancouver and Jenny says, “I sure hope I see some snow.”

Well, somewhere between Vancouver and Whistler the snow started to appear, beautiful white snow. We pulled off in a rest area and Jenny proceeded to do the whole snow angel routine. Someone even built a snowman next to a picnic table. It was a great experience. We didn’t really have any winter ski type clothes but Judy Hill, a longtime family friend since I was a kid, hooked us up with plenty of warm clothes. Neither one of us snow ski but Jenny did sign up for a full day ski class. She got an instructor that looked like he came out of a fashion magazine and she couldn’t wait to get started. I told her I would meet her during our lunch break. I did a half-day class and my instructor was

not a dude.

That’s all I am saying about that. I guess the way it turned out Jenny decided to bail for the remainder of the class after lunch. She said her legs were killing her. So off came the ski boots and we enjoyed lunch with her instructor. He told us that Jenny was one of the worst students that he ever had. I figured that would have put a damper on her vacation but it didn’t. We decided to go tubing down the mountain and that really got both of us hooked.

After listening to the instructions of what to do I realized I wasn’t really paying attention; you know, the part about turning and what to do if you need to stop. Thank God they had spotters to intercept those that might go off course. They also had some kind of webbing that if the spotter missed you the webbing would hopefully bring you and your tube to a complete stop. It was fun.

Anyway, we loved going to the ski resorts and not skiing. We loved the life at the resorts. There’s nothing more fun than to go out to dinner at one of those beautiful cabins out in the middle of nowhere with the fire blazing and arrive in a sleigh pulled by some of the most beautiful horses I have ever seen. We also had fun snowmobiling and riding the lift up to the top of the mountain and then back down again. After several years of checking out ski resorts all across the country and in Canada we decided we had seen enough snow.

Now when we go on vacation we head south to the Caribbean. There is nothing more laid back or beautiful then those amazing islands south of Florida.

When visitors tell us that they have the best of both worlds I think many would agree. When Jenny and I decide to venture off for a week or two to check out these other worlds we do have a blast. When it is all said and done we can’t wait to get back to our world right here in east Pasco County. Between here and there, I would much rather be here anytime.

Crash Kills Zephyrhills Motorcyclist

Staff Report

Donald L. Ross, 77, of Zephyrhills, died March 28 when his motorcycle was involved in a multivehicle crash on Chancey Road, the Florida Highway Patrol said.

The accident occurred at 10:30 a.m. near Yonkers Boulevard and the roadway was closed for several hours.

Ross and two other motorcyclists were travelling eastbound on Chancey Road.

A 2004 Jeep Liberty, driven by a Brooksville woman, was travelling westbound on Chancey Road. A 2016 Nissan, driven by a Dade City man, and a 2013 Chrysler, driven by a Mount Pleasant,

Wisc., man, were ahead of the Jeep and they slowed for other westbound traffic.

The Jeep Liberty failed to stop and was involved in a chain reaction collision with the Nissan and the Chrysler.

The Jeep Liberty then entered the eastbound lane and Ross’ motorcycle and another motorcycle collided with the left side of the Jeep Liberty.

Ross died at the scene from injuries sustained in the crash.

The other motorcyclist departed the roadway to avoid a collision and hit a fence.

The accident remains under investigation and charges are pending, the FHP said.

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Paulie Palooza Raises More Than \$10,000

Organizer Plans For Another Event In May

by Joe Potter

Gulfside Regional Hospice & Pasco Palliative Care will receive more than \$10,000 from the 2017 Paulie Palooza music festival that was held March 18.

More than 220 people attended the event, which was held at the recently opened Zephyrhills community events venue on Airport Road. Several bands performed during fifth annual event organized by Paul Correia, vice president of Sun State Aluminum. Correia said he is committed to holding future Paulie Paloozas at the as-yet-unnamed events venue.

Correia’s father passed away a few years ago while under the care of the Gulfside Hospice Center on Dean Dairy Road. Correia has been holding the event each year around the time of his father’s birthday. The previous Paloozas were held at Skydive City. Carla Armstrong, Gulfside’s director of philanthropy, provided information about the amount raised during this

year’s event. All funds raised at Paulie Palooza are used to help provide hospice care for patients in Pasco County. “Correia is also planning a second event for later in May,” Churchill said, adding, “We are hopeful that will raise just as much.” Plans call for that event to be held at Rhythm & Brews at 4711 Gall Blvd.

Band • Continued from Page 1A

\$84 a month. The Korean War started the day Ford finished boot camp – June 5, 1950. “We had never heard of Korea,” he said. He was joined by about 2,500 other people to enjoy the band’s music outside the Historic Courthouse in Dade City. The Marine musicians were greeted with a standing ovation and a resounding round of applause as they took their places on the north side of the courthouse square at 3 p.m. “It’s great to be here on such a nice day,” said the band’s commander, MSgt. Daniel J. Sullivan. Small American flags lined Seventh Street for a couple of miles in each direction and surrounded the old courthouse to add patriotic emphasis for the band’s visit. “It made my day to hear ‘Stars and Stripes Forever,’” said Brian Uppercue of the Dade City Police Department. The crowd was seated several rows deep in a semicircle from the east side of the lawn all the way around to the west side. It was the first time county commissioners ever allowed seating on the courthouse lawn, which is a restricted area; throngs of people were also sitting or standing along Seventh and Sixth streets and Meridian Avenue.

Several folks said they were enthusiastic about the band’s performance. “It’s magnificent,” said Steve Brown of the Rotary Club of Dade City. Allen Altman said numerous people were to thank for organizing the band’s Dade City appearance. They included Greg and Cynthia Armstrong from the Chasco Festival, the Pasco County Commissioners,



The Parris Island Marine Band’s Sunday afternoon performance in front of the Historic Pasco County Courthouse as seen from Ladder 32 of the Fire and Rescue station on Centennial Road. Photo by Kevin Litalc

the Greater Dade City Chamber of Commerce, Dade City Public Works, Dade City Police Department, Pasco County Fire Rescue and Beef O’Brady’s. Beef’s owner Todd Bachelor made sure the band had a meal before setting up the 12,000 pounds of equipment that is used at each performance. “I think this is wonderful. We need to do all that we can to support our people who are in uniform,” said Linae Paulson, a volunteer with Habitat for Humanity of East & Central Pasco. It was announced following the event that the U.S. Marine Corps Parris Island Band would definitely be

visiting Dade City again next year. Prior to the performance, Bob Hatfield, an aide to U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis, R-FL (12), was presented with a Friend of Farm Bureau award from state Sen. Wilton Simpson, president of Pasco County Farm Bureau. The congressman was unable to attend because of an illness in his family. One of the people watching the band play was quickly, quietly and professionally cared for by Pasco County Fire Rescue CFR with the assistance of DCPD, after the gentleman became short of breath while standing during the national anthem.

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Crime • Continued from Page 1A

Brewer pointed out several statistical highlights, including burglary down a whopping 19.6 percent, motor vehicle thefts down 16 percent, and a 5.2 percent drop in total property crimes. “That is very good news,” said a pleased council president Kent Compton.

With Zephyrhills Police Chief Dave Shears in the back of the room and Brewer at the podium, councilman Charlie Proctor praised the work of the city’s police department.

“I think the numbers are just proving what a great job our Zephyrhills PD is doing,” Proctor said. “They are always trying to improve. We see nothing but improvements.

I’m excited about the fact that we are getting into a more active gathering of intelligence about drugs. We are making great strides in that area.”

Proctor said continued efforts to crack down on drugs in the city would result in further lowering the crime rate.

Brewer reported that the department continues to attack the problem and the addition of the department’s newly established Special Response Team is a giant step in the right direction.

Proctor offered the support of the council in the event the department has unmet needs to continue to reduce the crime rate.

As reported in the *Zephyrhills Free Press* earlier this month, not all of the 2016 report was positive.

Domestic violence cases in Zephyrhills



Zephyrhills Fire Chief Brian Swartout and Mayor Gene Whitfield check out the department’s new command and support vehicle prior to Monday’s city council meeting. The purchase of the new command vehicle and the refurbishing of two support units came with a price tag of nearly \$53,000, which was well below the \$62,000 budgeted for the project.



A proclamation recognizing April 6 as National Tartan Day is presented by Mayor Gene Whitfield to former mayor and proud Scotsman Cliff McDuffie. Also taking part in the ceremony were Alfred McDonald and Roldand Campbell.

rose a disturbing 27.6 percent. In 2016, there were 125 cases reported compared to 98 in 2015. Five cases involved aggravated assault compared to one case the previous year. Simple assault domestic violence also spiked by 22.7 percent with 119 cases reported.

In other council business, Pasco-Hernando State College nursing program students Cheryl Gemmill, Kimberly Barbieri and Corey Hillman presented information on the perils of polypharmacy and its effect on the local community.

They explained that polypharmacy

occurs when someone takes more medications than they need, or takes multiple medications for the same condition.

They added that Zephyrhills’ elderly population is highly susceptible to polypharmacy since they are seeing more than one physician and have increased emergency room visits where medications are being prescribed.

It was noted in the presentation that the problem could be reduced with better instructions from pharmacies, timers and alerts, pill boxes and large-print labels.

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Pie • Continued from Page 1A

“This year it really took steps in the right direction. It was more organized ... the DJ did a good job getting people to participate in things,” Simply Events organizer Sonya Bradley said. “There are a couple of things we want to tweak, like where to place pie vendors [and] more food for people to choose from. Other than that, it was a great day in the park.”

This year’s pie bake-off yielded only 13 entries compared to 33 in its first year and just more than 20 in its second. Bradley said the bake-off was not as big of a focus while planning and promoting this year as it has been in the past; and the festival’s move to a later date as opposed to earlier in the year when more snowbirds are around may have affected the numbers, she said.

Even so, the later date allowed for a younger crowd to attend, and more family groups who participated in a range of activities.



Feline friends Trent and Sarah take full advantage of the berry shoot at the March 25 Pie Festival, aiming for several targets set up in front of them.



Volunteers from Opal Apple enjoying the pie smash set up next to their booth, which handed out their bright yellow apples for free.

Megan Caldwell took home first place for the pie bake-off with her entry of a peach blackberry crumb pie. Ashley Regan took both second and third place with blueberry lemon thyme and a bacon bourbon pecan pie, respectively.

J.B. Rollo took home first place in the apron-decorating contest.

The festival raised \$500 for the Samaritan Project of Zephyrhills and the Zephyrhills High School cheerleaders, who are looking to get new uniforms. Cheerleaders volunteered at the \$10 all-you-can-eat pie buffet, which offered purchased and donated pies. Pies from the bake-off made their way to the buffet after the judges enjoyed a slice, allowing everyone to rank their favorites themselves.

In one corner of the sea of vendors, a ‘berry shoot’ was set up for kids, who shot berries through the air with a slingshot at designated targets.

“It was really cute ... it was perfect for kids,” Bradley said.

The pie smash was another popular



Pies were available for purchase by the slice or by the box at Saturday’s Pie Festival held in Zephyr Park. It was the third year for the event.



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Numerous Winners At Art Show

More Than 120 Items In Annual Event

Submitted by **Dan Gust**

Fine art was in abundance at the Elks Lodge #2731 in Zephyrhills on March 18-19 as they hosted the annual Fine Arts Show and Sale held by the Zephyrhills Art Club.

Members of the club displayed more than 120 individual works of art, many of which were available for sale. Subjects ranged from landscapes, seascapes, portraits, flowers, animals, smalls and others. The styles were as numerous as there are colors in nature.

Judges Meletha Everet and Judy Johnson selected winners from the array of beautiful works in each category, but in the end, several pieces stood out from the rest.

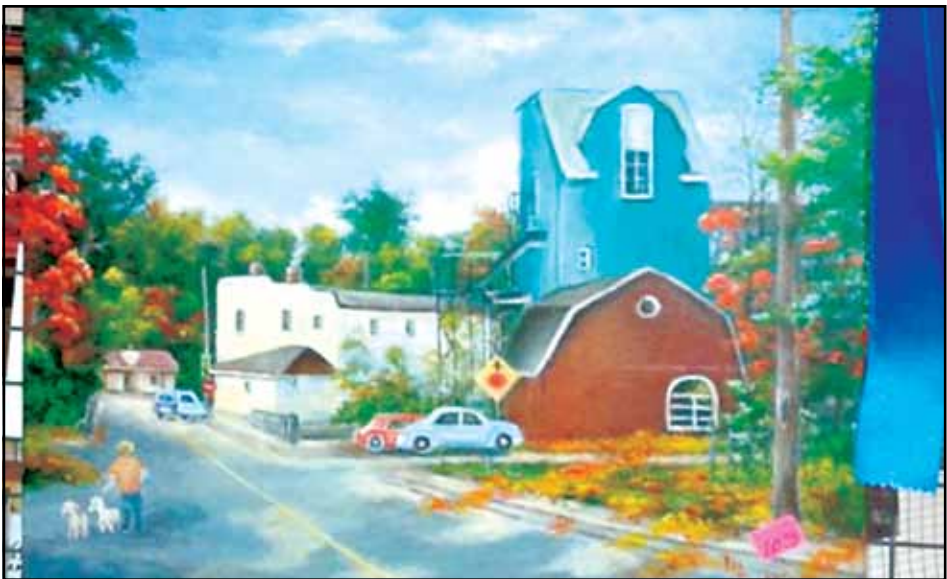
Audry Steenburn won first place in Landscapes, with Sandra Lallemand,

Saralee Thompson and Margaret Emmetts winning second, third and honorable mention respectively.

Margaret Battig won first place in Floral/ Still Life with Pat Troia winning second, Nelida DiLorenzo winning third, and Sandra Lallemand taking Honorable mention.

In Portrait/ Figures, Sandra Lallemand took home first place, Bill Bellgraph won second, Betty Merchant won third, and Joyce Owens took home honorable mention. The winner for animals was Bobbi Bender, with Sandra Lallemand, taking second, Saralee Thompson winning third, and Nelida DiLorenzo taking home honorable mention.

Bill Bellgraph won the Seascapes category, while Sally Yoder brought home second; Diane Drummond took third and honorable mention in the category. The smalls category was won by Kathy Kushman and Dr. Crickette Todd took home second, third, and honorable mention. The final category of "others" was won by Margaret Battig as Sally Burnett took second, Cindy Bobek won third, and Sheron Koski took home honorable mention. An additional



Margaret Battig won a blue ribbon for her painting submitted in the 'others' category.

award in this category was made for the club's youngest member, nine-year old, Anna Gust.

Besides the category awards, there also is a single Best of Show and a Single People's Choice awarded. This year, Nelida DiLorenzo won Best of Show and Saralee Thompson won the People's Choice.

In addition to the competition, the Zephyrhills Art Club also raffled off art pieces to anyone who bought a ticket. It

was a great opportunity to get a beautiful work at a bargain price of a dollar.

The Zephyrhills Art Club is an organization of artists working together to enhance the appreciation of fine art in our communities and to provide for the promotional and educational needs of artists. The ZAC meets monthly on the second Tuesday at the Alice Hall Community Center at Zephyr Park on State Road 54.



Nelida DiLorenzo's Best of Show winning entry.



Shoppers and art lovers peruse the various works set up at the Elks Lodge #2731 on March 18 and 19.

Photos Provided

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