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PAGE B1

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HERE'S YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE
2021 CITRUS COUNTY FAIR
INSIDE TODAY



THE SUNDAY CHRONICLE

MARCH 21, 2021

70 50

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COVID:
ONE YEAR LATER
Lessons learned
 A year after COVID-19 shuttered Citrus County schools. /Page A3

Moving forward
 Mike's Musings: Local businesses emerging from dark days of coronavirus pandemic. /Page D1



Robert "Bo" Joseph Trascocoy died Dec. 5, 2020, at age 89; Angelina "Angie" Trascocoy, his wife, died Dec. 8, 2020, at age 87.



Gary Eccher died Jan. 26, 2021, at age 64.



Retired Col. John William "Pat" Mitchell Jr. died Aug. 22, 2020, at age 74.

CITRUS COUNTY VIRUS UPDATE

INSIDE

View the latest COVID-19 data about Citrus County today on **Page A11.**

DOH-Citrus vaccine registration

DOH-Citrus' preregistration system to schedule COVID-19 vaccine appointments for individuals 50 and older and other categories such as educators starts Monday. Individuals can be added to a waiting list for vaccine appointments and be notified when appointments are available in Citrus County by visiting myvaccine.fl.gov or by calling 866-201-0442; TTY is 833-476-1036.

As part of the statewide preregistration system, each county has a designated number that individuals can call and preregister with if they do not have internet access. Citrus County's designated number is 833-540-2058.

Vaccine supply remains limited and appointments may not be available for several weeks.

— From staff reports

Pandemic personalization

The faces of those taken by COVID-19

NANCY KENNEDY | STAFF WRITER

In the year since the coronavirus pandemic began, Citrus County lost more than 400 people to COVID-19. Most of them were 65 and older, two were under age 34 — all of them made a difference in the lives of those who loved them, who worked with them, who lived with them.

The Chronicle asked readers to tell us about the people they loved who died from this terrible disease. Here are the ones people told us about, including pictures from the families:

Donald J. Kelly Sr. died March 25, 2020, at age 80.

He loved crabbing and fishing and restoring antique cars. On any given day you could find him at an auction or flea market, searching for treasures — or a bargain.

In anything he did, this "Jack of all trades" was passionate about getting it right.

He was outgoing and personable and loved talking to people.

Barbara, his wife of 61 years, will always remember all the trips they took, including a drive to Canada to see Niagara Falls. Among other things, his family will miss his warm smile and his laughter.

Dave Pfannenstien died April 5, 2020, at age 60.

Born in St. Louis Park, Minnesota, Dave played semi-professional ice hockey until he discovered his real passion — golf. He went on to become a member of the PGA of America, a golf club head professional, director of the Vermont Golf Association and, locally, Head Professional at Skyview at Terra Vista.

"He was a real people-person, caring, giving, generous," said his wife, Shari. "He made me a kinder, gentler, more patient person."

Dave was one of the early victims of COVID-19, with every textbook symptom, including loss of taste and smell before that was even recognized as a symptom — even though he tested negative. Prior to that, he was healthy.

"His story is part of the history of the pandemic," Shari Pfannenstien said.

Retired Col. John William ("Pat") Mitchell Jr. died Aug. 22, 2020, at age 74.

A Vietnam War veteran, Pat served 30 years in the Army and Kansas National Guard and worked hard to combat the effects of PTSD, eventually being able to open up in his later years.

He was spontaneous, loved dancing with his wife Ruthie, loved driving around in his golf cart with Laddie, his beloved service dog.

Pat showed his love by cooking delicious Thai and Southern food for his family, coaching girls' softball, planning epic family vacations — from Dollywood to the Alamo.

Growing the juiciest tomatoes, cooking the world's best Thanksgiving turkey, putting on a Fourth of July fireworks extravaganza or getting the tinsel on the Christmas tree just right, Pat did everything in superlatives and inspired his family to laugh loudly and embrace life.

Grace M. Payne died Dec. 24, 2020, at age 97. After Grace married her husband,

Raymond, in 1940, the couple moved to Chicago where Grace went to school to be a TV technician for Quazar.

They moved to Homosassa in 1976 to be near their daughter to help when an 11-year-old granddaughter was diagnosed with cancer.

Grace had three children, nine grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren and lots and lots of great-great-grandchildren.

"Grandma was very active in her church, no matter where she lived," said granddaughter Alice Webber.

When Raymond died in 2004, Grace moved to Sugarmill Manor Assisted Living in Homosassa and lived there until 2019 when she moved to Cypress Cove Care Center in Crystal River.

"Grandma loved birds of all kinds," Webber said. "She loved her family and truly enjoyed time spent with us. She was truly our family matriarch and we love and miss her very much."

Ronald Ivison died Nov. 15, 2020, at age 78.

At 6 feet, 6 inches, Ronald was a big teddy bear.

He loved NASCAR and decided the Daytona 500 was the perfect honeymoon.

"One day he said, 'Do you want to go to the Daytona 500?'" said his wife, Vyvian.

See **FACES**/Page A7

COVID: ONE YEAR LATER

Hospital leaders reflect upon lessons learned

FRED HIERS
 | STAFF WRITER

For Citrus County, the coronavirus pandemic began modestly with a single case here and left many health care officials thinking it's spread would be over by summer and life would be back to normal.

But with more than 540,000 dead now in the United States, nearly 33,000 in Florida, and 420 in Citrus County, it left those same officials

admitting they didn't know what they were in for.

The number of new cases and deaths are down now, but in the pandemic's wake, the county's two local hospital CEOs are still aghast at how quickly the virus spread and left both hospitals fearing they would be overrun with the sick, infected and dying.

For the Citrus County Chronicle, they reflect about what they've learned and how to be prepared for the next time.

Citrus County's first victim — a 60-year-old woman — of the virus was reported March 15, 2020. It spread unabated. Eleven days later the county had its first death — an 80-year-old man. It was about three weeks after Florida had its first casualty.

Initially, the numbers were small. Florida typically sees about 3,000 deaths annually just from the flu. Citrus County sees about 25. During the first few days of the pandemic, historical

flu numbers dwarfed the early coronavirus deaths and infections. But not for long.

"(The virus) SARS came and went. Ebola came and went," said Citrus Memorial Hospital CEO Ginger Carroll, recalling how she originally thought COVID-19 would play out about the same.

She recalled how wrong she was.

See **HOSPITAL**/Page A10



Due to earlier production deadlines for the Sunday Chronicle, final lottery numbers are not printed. Visit www.flalottery.com for final numbers.



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WEEK

IN REVIEW

PHOTO OF THE WEEK

CRYSTAL RIVER BOAT BUILDERS



MATTHEW BECK/Chronicle

Members of the Crystal River Boat Builders, from left, Ed Pesula, Steve Kingery and Bill Connor slowly cruise along King's Bay Tuesday, March 9, on the maiden voyage of the Silver Tide. The wooden boat was hand-made by members of the boat club that craft boats commonly used more than 100 years ago. This vessel was commonly used for fishing, according to the group.

GOOD NEWS OF THE WEEK

Homosassa handyman Josh Hicks, the 31-year-old owner of Handy Hicks, has created Handy Hicks Skill Building Class, a free, not-for-profit 12-week course that gives Citrus County's youth between 10 and 18 more access to vocational classrooms. With the help of other local tradespeople and businesses such as Home Depot and Harbor Freight, kids are learning skills from welding to woodworking — and cultivating a work ethic. The weekly class, Wednesdays from 6 to 7 p.m., is at Hicks' Homosassa business. For information, call Hicks at 352-436-3105.

HOT TOPIC OF THE WEEK

The news that Citrus County's unemployment rate for January was 6.3%, up from 4.8% a month earlier, created a buzz on the Chronicle Facebook page. Here's what some said:

- Jennifer Nicole: "I think another problem is the jobs are there, but no one wants to work, nor will they show up for interviews."
- Karolina Smith: "They're waiting for the minimum wage to be raised to \$15."
- Timothy Gilbert: "Where are the real jobs and careers? I see medical non stop as the only decent paid jobs. Everything else wants to give only \$10/hour."
- Anna Sowell: "My husband is looking for employees all the time. None want to work the long hours."
- Courtney Moorman Tobin: "My hubby has placed hiring ads in papers lately and no one calls. It's not that there's no jobs. People are just living off unemployment and stimulus checks."
- Kenneth Mark Vampran: "Six to month waiting period to get a roof. Reason? Lack of workers."
- Robin Leigh: "The problem is \$8.46 minimum wage. Employers need to pay their help better. Employers are not being realistic about the salaries that they are offering entry-level candidates. Could you as an employer survive on the same salary that you are offering your new recruits?"

THE MOST POPULAR STORIES FROM THE WEEK THAT WAS

Crystal River Boat Builders float into history on replica

Crafting historic replica vessels by hand, using tools and materials available during the boat's time in history is what "floats their boats" for the Crystal River Boat Builders.

On March 9, they launched "The Silver Tide," a representation of the turning point in Crystal River's fishing industry from the late 1800s to the 1960s. It's a 2/3-scale model of the 36-foot-long craft, "The Sharkie."

On its maiden voyage, the 24-foot, 8-foot-wide wooden vessel, equipped with a 1920s motor, chugged through the high-tide current in King's Bay on its circuit along the coasts of the bay's Cedar Cove as a few scores of people watched from the shores of the Best Western Crystal River Resort.

"It went quite well; we need to work on some fine-tuning things, but other than that, it's amazing," said Steve Kingery, one of the boat builders. "You don't hear that motor very often."

See Photo of the Week, above.

Student dies in boating accident

A local teenager was killed Saturday, March 13, in a boating accident in the north body of water of the Tsala Apopka Lake chain. She was being pulled on an inner tube behind the boat when the boat driver, driving at an unknown speed, turned left through a curve and the tube swung right, hitting a cypress tree, knocking the teen into the water, according to Karen Parker, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission spokeswoman.

After a 30-minute search, the teen was found and paramedics performed life-saving efforts while they transported her to Ocala Regional Medical Center where she was later pronounced dead.

COVID delivers a crushing blow to Canyon

At one time Rock Crusher Canyon Amphitheater in Crystal River hosted some of the big names in music: Trace Adkins, Vince Gill, Faith Hill, Willie Nelson — even Herman's Hermits and the Kingston Trio.

But COVID-19 has taken its toll on the performance space, which includes not only the amphitheater, but the 20,000-square-foot, open-air pavilion, where many local nonprofits have hosted popular fundraising events and smaller concerts have been staged.

Since the pandemic began last year, the facility has been closed.

Joe Cappuccilli, manager of the Rock Crusher property and vice president of Gulf to Lake Associates, said Rock Crusher management is currently exploring their options, whether to sell the property, develop portions of it for different uses or just stay the course and wait until it can be reopened for concerts and events.

COVID "decimated what had worked for us for the last three or four years," Cappuccilli said. Rock Crusher had been doing a lot of music, car shows, and community events, among other things. Before COVID, "We had almost 25 events for a 26-week season," he said.

Golf course owner plans new homes, townhouses and recreation center

Golf isn't as popular as it once was, forcing golf course owners to think out of the box. Neil Surati, president/owner of Shanti Golf LLC and the new owner of the Pine Ridge Golf Club in Beverly Hills, believes he has a way not only to keep his course viable but also bring needed housing to the entire county.

Surati recently pitched a plan to Pine Ridge Property Owners Association members to close the 9-hole executive/par course and on the 40-plus acres build 25-30 upscale townhomes; a recreation center with an office, walking trails, fitness center, indoor pool, tennis and pickleball court and three- to four-story apartments for 55-and-older seniors who would pay rent from \$900 to \$1,200.

The ambitious plan still must clear the Pine Ridge Property Owners Association. Nothing has been submitted to the county.



Duke to build solar plant in Citrus

Duke Energy announced March 15 the plan to build two new solar energy plants in Florida, including one at the energy complex north of Crystal River.

The Citrus County facility will be a 74.9-megawatt solar power plant on 500 acres near the Crystal River Energy Complex (CREC).

The plant, which will be named the Bay Trail Solar Power Plant, is located on the Holcim property about two miles north of the Citrus Combined Cycle Station and northeast of the Holcim mine.

The \$113-million solar plant north of Crystal River will create 200 to 300 temporary jobs and potentially reduce customers' bills over time.

Work is expected to start in late March and be in service in early 2022.

"We have a long history in this community," said Duke spokeswoman Ana Gibbs. "This project demonstrates we're going to be here for many more years to come."



Martha Burns 1938-2021

"She was the 'Gorilla Glue' of Floral City — she kept us all together."

— MARCIA BEASLEY, FLORAL CITY RESIDENT AND HISTORIAN, ABOUT MARTHA BURNS, WHO DIED MARCH 7.

— compiled by Nancy Kennedy

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Around the
COUNTY

Lessons learned:



MATTHEW BECK/Chronicle file

Lecanto Primary support staff member Kellie Redner hands out two iPads to a parent of students outside of the school last school year. Citrus County School District officials and staff were tasked with continuing education amid a pandemic, launching new virtual classrooms, food distribution programs, sanitation protocols, mask mandates and policy playbooks for athletics.

Conservative Women's Political Network to meet

The Conservative Women's Political Network (CWPNC) will meet at 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 24, at the Los Magueyes Mexican Restaurant, 3887 N. Lecanto Highway (County Road 491) in Beverly Hills.

Bonnie Wilder, a member of the CWPNC, will be the speaker. The title of the program is "The Convention of the States Part 2." This is a subject that concerns article V of the U.S. constitution.

Attendees should arrive at noon to order lunch. Donations for Jesse's Place will be collected. For additional information, call Peggy Simon, President or Rosalie Matt, VP at 352-746-7143.

Citrus County announces virtual public meeting

Citrus County is inviting residents to participate in a virtual public meeting from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Thursday, March 25. The meeting will help guide a countywide study to find the most cost-effective options to improve groundwater quality.

This is the second meeting organized by the county to educate and collect input from the community on the Citrus County wastewater treatment feasibility analysis. Citrus County residents and property and business owners are encouraged to attend.

The purpose of the meeting is to provide general information and receive public comment regarding the Citrus County wastewater treatment feasibility analysis. Project team members will be available to answer project-related questions and concerns.

To register and access the virtual public meeting, visit tinyurl.com/yxbmfek.

To access the meeting via telephone, call 1-877-309-2074 and enter the access code 916-180-496.

To learn more about this project, visit citruscounty-wastewaterfa.com or email info@citruscountywastewaterfa.com.

Inverness Rotary to do scholarship 'FUNdraiser'

The Rotary Club of Inverness is hosting a "TAP INTO APRIL FUNdraiser," from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Thursday, April 1, at Copp Winery and Brewery.

The event will benefit the club's scholarship program for local students. Pre-register at tinyurl.com/5apjeacv.

Registration includes a flight sampler of beers and the chance to win several prizes.

— From staff reports

BUSTER THOMPSON
Staff writer

A Citrus County principal told Mike Mullen something the assistant school superintendent would not forget about when COVID-19 halted education systems a year ago in March.

"We shutdown last year just about the time our kindergartners were starting to read," Mullen said, reciting the words to a Chronicle reporter.

Citrus County School District staff then drafted and implemented a strategy in short order, known as Citrus CARES, to keep their almost 16,000 students learning and fed off campus during the home-stretch of the 2019-20 school year amid the novel coronavirus pandemic.

"We were building a plane while we were flying it," Mullen said, "and we learned a lot of lessons from that as well."

Mullen said school administrators and teachers were well versed in incorporating technology and tablet devices into their classrooms before COVID-19, but the school shutdowns "forced everybody to go from 40 to 60 mph."

"Our teachers had to do it faster than some were comfortable with," he said. "That's going to stay with them now, and I think that's going to be a positive for us."

However, the district's pupils had trouble adapting to the sudden pivot toward distanced schooling.

"When those kids went home, we didn't close out the school

year from March to June with a rigorous curriculum as we needed to," Mullen said, "but we did what we could do."

Those same students progressed into the fall lacking in the academic and social skills they were supposed to hone in on last spring — a critical time in classrooms.

"You're missing a lot of key elements going into that next school year," Mullen said.

Roughly 4,000 students began their 2020-21 school year enrolled with the district's online campus, Citrus Virtual, before half of them reenrolled in brick-and-mortar schools by their second semester.

More students, whether in general or from Citrus Virtual, are expected to return to physical campuses for the 2021-22 school year as COVID-19 restrictions and concerns loosen.

While more students benefit from face-to-face teachings, the school district expects to continue running Citrus Virtual.

"There are some kids doing a great job in virtual school," Mullen said.

Mullen said the school district will also keep using Canvas as its sole learning platform for remote teachings, providing students access to school work if they're out of class for some reason.

Dr. Scott Hebert, the school district's chief academic officer, added virtual options have been, and will continue to also be offered for parents who have trouble getting to important school functions.

"We found ways for parents to jump into meetings they weren't able to," he said. "Parents have told us they really appreciate the opportunity to meet virtually by choice because being able to do that, they can better navigate

their own lives."

Mullen said it's going to take the school district two years before it gets students on pace with their pre-COVID-19 curriculum.

"Some of this may impact kids even longer," he said, "but I think it'll take a couple of years before we get to the point where we're caught up to where kids were when they left."

To help narrow learning gaps, the school district has been planning to expand its summer school programs over the next two summers, Hebert said.

There were silver linings for some of the COVID-19 policies the school district enacted to keep its students and staff safe. School principals found having faster class transitions and fewer students in cafeterias has helped manage student conduct and behavior.

"It's worth the extra effort on the school's part to try and schedule things that way, if it's possible," Mullen said, "it just makes it a much more comfortable environment."

While the school district held the frontlines of the local public education system, the Citrus County Education Foundation made sure its teachers and student families were supported.

"The foundation hasn't stopped through the pandemic," said Shaunda Burdette, the nonprofit's executive director. "The need is great, and we're doing everything we can to meet those needs."

Like the school district, the education foundation (CCEF)—500 volunteers, 20 board members

and two paid staffers — had to shift its priorities last March by suspending its 34 programs to help supply and feed children who get most of their resources and meals from school.

"The most valuable lesson we learned is that it's OK to think differently; it's OK to adapt to new ways and learn from those new ways," Burdette said, "because, quite frankly, some of those new ways are better than we've ever done it before."

Sponsors of CCEF's programs allowed the organization to reallocate its fundings toward those new necessities, resulting in the foundation spending \$72,000 over the course of COVID-19.

"During that time ... we are able to really understand the purpose of having a community effort," Burdette said, thanking CCEF's donors. "We learned, what we already knew to be true, that Citrus County is an awesome place to live, and that support in this community is never-ending."

Burdette said the foundation's Supplies 4 Success free teacher store stocked county classrooms this school year with more than \$150,000 worth of donated classroom and basic-need items.

Around 90 student families also received free access to WiFi because the foundation, in its partnership with T-Mobile, provided them hotspots.

Burdette said the biggest aspect the education foundation took away from a year of COVID-19 was making sure it's ready for another round.

"We must work together, and we must get all of our agencies in Citrus County on board and prepared for if something like this were to happen again," she said. "We need to be proactive in our approach to meet the needs of our families."



Scott Hebert
 chief academic officer.



Mike Mullen
 assistant superintendent.

Send news releases to community@chronicleonline.com.

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Today's HOROSCOPES

Birthdays — Keep an open mind when faced with opposition. You'll gain wisdom if you say less and listen more. Let life unfold before you.
Aries (March 21-April 19) — Focus on expanding your knowledge and skills to encourage better opportunities in a field that excites you.
Taurus (April 20-May 20) — Reach out to people you trust to tell you the truth, and you'll find out what you have to do to improve a confusing situation.
Gemini (May 21-June 20) — Jump into action, get things done and plan for the future. How you use your time will affect the outcome of your day.
Cancer (June 21-July 22) — Emotions will be difficult to control. Think twice before you do or say something you'll regret. Choose to take the high road.
Leo (July 23-Aug. 22) — Offer to help a cause you believe in or someone you love. How you approach others will determine what you get in return.
Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) — Be original and do something that will broaden your outlook and encourage better health and relationships.
Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) — Activities that get you up and moving will be invigorating. Focus on health, fitness and challenging yourself, and you'll gain confidence as well as respect.
Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) — Don't limit yourself. Put together a plan that helps you forge ahead. Look for solutions that are doable.
Sagittarius (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) — Avoid problematic people. Focus on what you want to do and take pride in the way you handle your personal affairs. Don't take any health risks.
Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — Emotional spending or risky investments are discouraged. Put your time and effort into changes you can make at home that are cost-efficient and are sure to add to your comfort.
Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) — Spend more time searching for opportunities and less time worrying about things you cannot change. A positive attitude will get you where you want to go.
Pisces (Feb. 20-March 20) — Channel emotional energy into something creative. Fix up your living space, find an innovative way to bring joy to someone you love or strive for personal growth and less stress.

ENTERTAINMENT

A hopeful note: Tanglewood music festival to resume

If you're a fan of classical music, this is music to your ears: One of the nation's premier summer festivals is coming back after the coronavirus pandemic silenced it for the first time since World War II.
The Boston Symphony Orchestra announced Friday that its 2021 outdoor season at Tanglewood, the acclaimed symphony's summer home in the Berkshires of western Massachusetts, will feature a return to live, in-person concerts from July 9 to Aug. 16.
Concerts at Tanglewood, where fans spread blankets on the manicured lawns, sip wine and picnic beneath the stars, have been a rite of summer in New England since 1937.
But the pandemic forced organizers to scrap the 2020 festival, switching to online performances and muting a tradition that annually draws nearly 350,000 visitors from around the world and funnels \$100 million into the region's economy. Until last year, the live music had flowed virtually uninterrupted, canceled outright only in 1943 at the height of WWII.
"I am sure we will all experience music's incredible power on a whole new level," Andris Nelsons, the BSO's music director, said in a statement.
"My hope is that in this moment, we will discover together an even deeper purpose and meaning for music in our lives — as it is sure to fill our hearts and renew our spirits," he said.
This summer's festival will mark the orchestra's return to live performances for the first time since the pandemic forced what will be a 16-month hiatus.



Associated Press

In this Nov. 20, 2014, file photo, Boston Symphony Orchestra music director Andris Nelsons rehearses at Symphony Hall in Boston. The Boston Symphony Orchestra hasn't played live for fans since the coronavirus pandemic hit a year ago, but it's returning to the stage in July for the outdoor Tanglewood festival.

2 Royal Caribbean lines to resume Caribbean cruises

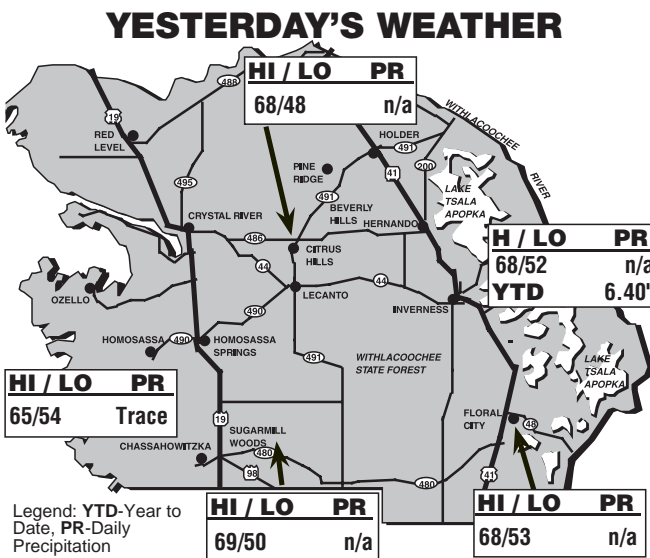
MIAMI — Two Royal Caribbean cruises will resume in June, ending a yearlong hiatus, but passengers 18 and older must test negative for COVID-19 before getting on a ship.
The company's Celebrity Cruises subsidiary said Friday that its Celebrity Millennium ship will re-launch on June 5 from St. Maarten. One itinerary will stop in Aruba, Curacao and Barbados, and another will stop in Tortola, St. Lucia and Barbados.
Celebrity Cruises CEO Lisa Lutloff-Perlo said returning to the Caribbean "marks the measured beginning of the end of what has

been a uniquely challenging time for everyone."
Royal Caribbean Group's namesake line will start a week later with a voyage leaving from Nassau, the Bahamas on the Adventure of the Seas.
In both cases, passengers 18 and older will be required to test negative for COVID-19 within 72 hours of boarding the ship.
With the Caribbean such a popular destination, "It's not entirely surprising to see both Celebrity and Royal Caribbean finding a way to return to the region," said Colleen McDaniel, editor or Cruise Critic, a website that reviews cruises. "But it is massive news for the cruise industry, and for the Caribbean itself."

— From wire reports

Today in HISTORY

Today is Sunday, March 21, the 80th day of 2021. There are 285 days left in the year.
Today's Highlight: On March 21, 2006, the social media website Twitter was established with the sending of the first "tweet" by co-founder Jack Dorsey, who wrote: "just setting up my twtr."
On this date: In 1935, Persia officially changed its name to Iran.
In 1963, the Alcatraz federal prison island in San Francisco Bay was emptied of its last inmates and closed at the order of Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy.
In 1965, civil rights demonstrators led by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. began their third, successful march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama.
In 1997, President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin wrapped up their summit in Helsinki, Finland, still deadlocked over NATO expansion, but able to agree on slashing nuclear weapons arsenals.
Ten years ago: Syrians chanting "No more fear!" held a defiant march after a deadly government crackdown failed to quash three days of mass protests in the southern city of Deraa.
Five years ago: Laying bare a half-century of tensions, President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro prodded each other over human rights and the longstanding U.S. economic embargo during an unprecedented joint news conference in Havana.
One year ago: Negotiators from Congress and the White House held talks on a \$1 trillion-plus economic rescue package.
Today's Birthdays: Actor Kathleen Widdoes is 82. Singer-musician Rose Stone (Sly and the Family Stone) is 76. Actor Timothy Dalton is 75. Actor Gary Oldman is 63. Actor Matthew Broderick is 59. Comedian-actor Rosie O'Donnell is 59. Rapper-TV personality Kevin Federline is 43.



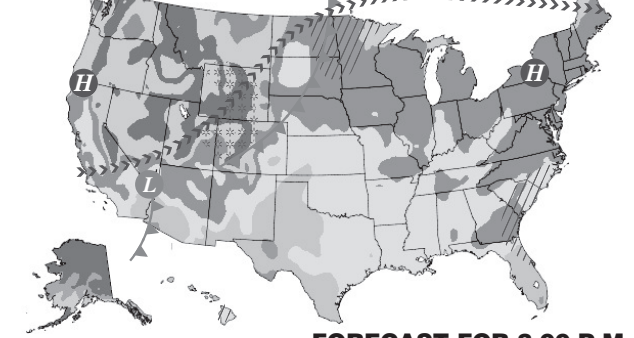
FLORIDA TEMPERATURES table with columns for City, H, L, F'cast, and another set of City, H, L, F'cast. Lists cities like Daytona Bch., Fort Lauderdale, Fort Myers, Gainesville, Homestead, Jacksonville, Key West, Lakeland, Melbourne, Miami, Ocala, Orlando, Pensacola, Sarasota, Tallahassee, Tampa, Vero Beach, and W. Palm Bch.

MARINE OUTLOOK section with text about wind speeds and sea conditions. Includes a large graphic for 'Gulf water temperature 69° Taken at Crystal River'.

LAKE LEVELS table with columns for Location, SAT, FRI, and Full. Lists locations like Withlacoochee at Holder, Tsala Apopka-Hernando, Tsala Apopka-Inverness, and Tsala Apopka-Floral City.

Levels reported in feet above sea level. Flood stage for lakes are based on 2.33-year flood, the mean-annual flood which has a 43-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any one year. This data is obtained from the Southwest Florida Water Management District and is subject to revision. In no event will the District or the United States Geological Survey be liable for any damages arising out of the use of this data. If you have any questions you should contact the Hydrological Data Section at (352) 796-7211.

THE NATION



FORECAST FOR 3:00 P.M. Sunday

Forecast table with columns for City, H, L, Pcp., H, L, Fcst, and another set of City, H, L, Pcp., H, L, Fcst. Lists cities from Albuquerque to Washington.

YESTERDAY'S NATIONAL HIGH & LOW: HIGH 86, Big River, Calif. LOW 4, Colebrook, N.H.

WORLD CITIES

World Cities table with columns for City, H/L/Sky, and another set of City, H/L/Sky. Lists cities like Lisbon, London, Madrid, Mexico City, Montreal, Moscow, Paris, Rio, Rome, Sydney, Tokyo, Toronto, and Warsaw.

THREE DAY OUTLOOK section with weather icons and text for 'TODAY & TOMORROW MORNING', 'MONDAY & TUESDAY MORNING', and 'TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY MORNING'.

ALMANAC section with sub-sections for TEMPERATURE, DEW POINT, HUMIDITY, POLLEN COUNT, AIR QUALITY, SOLAR TABLES, CELESTIAL OUTLOOK, BURN CONDITIONS, WATERING RULES, and TIDES.

TEMPERATURE table with columns for Yesterday, Record*, Normal, Mean temp., and Departure from mean.

DEW POINT, HUMIDITY, POLLEN COUNT, and AIR QUALITY data.

SOLAR TABLES table with columns for DATE, DAY, MINOR, MAJOR (MORNING), MINOR, MAJOR (AFTERNOON).

CELESTIAL OUTLOOK table with columns for SUNSET TONIGHT, MOONRISE TOMORROW, MOONRISE TODAY, and MOONSET TODAY.

BURN CONDITIONS: Today's Fire Danger Index is: MODERATE. There is no burn ban.

WATERING RULES: For established lawns and landscapes, irrigation may occur during only one (1) of the specified time periods, 12:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m., or 4:00 p.m. - 11:59 p.m., on the allowable watering days below:

Table showing watering days and times for different temperature ranges (0-1, 2-3, 4-5).

TIDES: *From mouths of rivers, **At King's Bay, ***At Mason's Creek.

Table with columns for City, High, and Low, listing tide times for various locations like Chassahowitzka, Crystal River, Withlacoochee, and Homosassa.

ALERT CITRUS SIGNUP section with bullet points about registering for the Citrus County Sheriff's Office's Alert Citrus weather program and creating a profile.

CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE

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VFW and Lecanto High School students team up to clean Crystal River



Special to the Chronicle
 On Sunday, Feb. 28, 14 members of the VFW Post 8189 Auxiliary and Post members, along with two Lecanto High School students met to pick up trash along Vennable Street in Crystal River. The members picked up 32 bags of trash and debris along the 2.5-mile route. The Auxiliary has been a part of the Adopt-a-Highway program for the past eight years and takes part in the cleanup four times a year. From left are: Roger Ingall, Auxiliary president; Jerry Webb, VFW member; Kathy Ingall, Auxiliary member; Gene Perrino, VFW department of Florida adjutant quartermaster; Kathy Perrino, Auxiliary member; Joel Steele, Auxiliary youth and scholarship chairman; Bill Peters, Auxiliary guard; Luke Malmberg, LHS student; Grace Moshier, Auxiliary trustee; Burke Malmberg, LHS student; Andrea Swiggum, Auxiliary member; Audrey Morris, Auxiliary member; Janet Webb, Auxiliary member; Jim Fuller, Post commander; Gail Youngs Auxiliary trustee; and Brenda Williams, Auxiliary member.

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On March 28, 2021, the Citrus County Community Charitable Foundation will open their 10th Grant Cycle in Citrus County. Grants are available for new or expanded (providing more services, expanding the number of clients, etc.) projects, programs or initiatives by 501(c)3 not-for-profit organizations with a physical address in Citrus County.

The Citrus County Community Charitable Foundation strives to improve the health and wellness of residents in Citrus County, Florida by awarding grants for new projects in the areas of Health Education, Community Health, Health/Medicine Programs/Projects, and Health/Medicine Research or Initiatives.

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CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE'S BEST OF THE BEST HONORABLE MENTION 2020

How sweet it is



In this file photo, half-gallon bottles of maple syrup sit on the shelves at Bragg Farm Sugar House & Gift Shop, Monday, May 1, 2017, in East Montpelier, Vt. With the U.S. maple syrup season wrapping up for this year, Vermont producers are expecting yields that approach last year's record even after they contended with fluctuating weather.

Maple celebrations return, with precautions

LISA RATHKE
Associated Press

Maple season is a time-honored tradition in the Northeast, when sap starts to flow in maple trees and is collected and boiled into syrup, with visitors coming to sugar houses to see the operations firsthand.

But the pandemic forced some states to cancel or postpone their annual sweet celebrations last year, and now some producers are welcoming back the public with safety precautions in place.

Maple weekends are happening Saturday and Sunday in Massachusetts and Connecticut, and Maine's annual celebration is being held March 27-28 with precautions recommended by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. But those statewide events are off for a second year in a row in Vermont, the country's top maple producer, and New York.

Maine Maple Sunday was postponed last spring, which was a disappointment for syrup producers, some of whom counted on it for 50% of their annual sales.

"It was a huge loss last year," said JoAnn Merrifield, who said the event normally accounts for 75% of sales at Merrifield Farm in Gorham, Maine. That included valued added products like nuts and candy, in addition to syrup.

Her farm normally would have about 4,000 to 5,000 visitors over the weekend. This year, the event is scaled back. Gone are the free samples of maple ice cream, the pancake breakfast, blacksmith demonstration and animals, she said.

But people can still purchase products as well as enjoy coffee and a pastry, she said.

Despite the loss of the maple open house weekends in Vermont, some producers say sales have been up with more people staying home and cooking for themselves.

"I just think people are staying home more and using more syrup," said Jim Wells, of Olde Carriage Sugarwoods in Charlotte, Vermont, who said his sales increased at a local market, online and to people stopping by the house. "I almost ran out of syrup, which is unusual."

Others reported a drop in sales after restaurants that they supply shut down.

Sales are down slightly for Turkey Street Maples, in Chocorua, New Hampshire, because restaurants weren't using as much syrup, but grocery stores are still taking their syrup, which they also sell online and curbside, said Kate Stanley.

New Hampshire is having a maple month, with some producers allowing limited visitors, with social distancing, face masks, and other requirements.

Normally, about 600 people visit Turkey Street Maples during their maple weekend.

They usually have two or three other businesses come and sell their products but this year, their event next weekend will be smaller, she said.

The sugarhouse is too small to have other people inside and maintain a safe distance but French doors built into it allow people to see the process from outside, Stanley said.

"We've pared it back to just us and another local farm," she said.

Famed Tiffany jewelry designer Elsa Peretti dies in Spain at 80

LEANNE ITALIE
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Elsa Peretti, who went from Halston model and Studio 54 regular in the 1960s and '70s to one of the world's most famous jewelry designers with timeless, fluid Tiffany & Co. collections often inspired by nature, has died. She was 80.

She died Thursday night in her sleep at home in a small village outside Barcelona, Spain, according to a statement from her family office in Zurich and the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation.

Peretti's sculptural cuff bracelets, bean designs and open-heart pendants are among her most recognizable work. She lent her classical aesthetic to functional goods, too, including bowls, magnifying glasses, razors and even a pizza cutter done in sterling silver, a metal she favored and helped popularize as a luxury choice.

"Elsa was not only a designer but a way of life," Tiffany said in a statement Friday. "Elsa explored nature with the acumen of a



In this file photo, Elsa Peretti, left, poses with designer Halston after a fashion show in New York on June 15, 1970. The former Halston model turned Tiffany & Co. legend, is dead at age 80.

scientist and the vision of a sculptor."

Born in Florence, Italy, to wealthy, conservative parents and educated in Rome and Switzerland, Peretti moved to Barcelona in her 20s and began working as a model, where she tapped into a community of artists that included Salvador Dali, according to an August profile in The Wall Street Journal's magazine. A short time later,

she decamped for New York and started modeling for Halston and other top designers, jumping into the art and fashion jet set. It's then she began to make jewelry, tapping the designers she worked for to incorporate her pieces.

It was Halston, a close friend, who introduced her to the highest echelons at Tiffany, an exclusive collaboration that lasted throughout her career.

Obituaries



Henry 'Red' Callahan, 91 INVERNESS

Henry S. "Red" Callahan, 91, of Inverness, FL passed away on March 14, 2021 peacefully at his home.

He was born to the late Claude and Beulah (Lawrence) Callahan on May 1, 1929 in Toledo, OH. He worked as an owner and operator of his own home



Henry 'Red' Callahan

improvement business for many years and will be remembered for there not being anything he

couldn't accomplish. He made Citrus County his home in 2011 after moving from Michigan. He bravely served his country as a member of the United States Navy. He was a hard worker, loved fishing, and was a member of The Eagles in Inverness, FL.

Those left to cherish his memory are his wife of 30 years, Nyoka Mason; his two daughters, Shirley and Vonda; his step-son, Blake (Tonya) Green; his sister, Dixie Armstrong; his three grandchildren, Diane, DJ, and Nicole; and his two grandsons, Andrew (Ashley) Green and Joshua (Ashley) Green.

Arrangements for Henry are private and cremation with care is under the direction of the Chas. E. Davis Funeral Home, Inverness, FL.

Sign the guest book at www.chronicleonline.com.

Joseph DeLuca, 80 PINE RIDGE

Joseph A. DeLuca, 80, passed away Feb. 10th, 2021, at CMH.

Born in NYC, where he met the love of his life, Dolores.

Survivors include his wife of 58 years, Dolores, 2 children: son Guy and daughter Dolores; sons-in-law John and Sean.

He was a NYC Police officer for 22 years. He worked at Tiffany Locksmith for 10 years. Moving to Florida in 1989, he worked at Crystal Chevrolet. After he retired, his fishing hobby became his love, with his dog Tyler.

He belonged to St. Scholastica Catholic Church, was a member of the Knights of Columbus, the Fishing Club and Citrus American and Italian Club.

Service will be held at 10 a.m. March 23rd at St. Scholastica Church, 4301 W. Homosassa Trail, Lecanto.

"He was 1 of a kind."

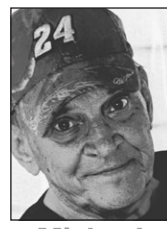
Sign the guest book at www.chronicleonline.com.



Michael Donovan, 79 INVERNESS

Michael R. Donovan, 79, of Inverness, FL passed away on March 13, 2021 surrounded by his loving family.

He was born to the late Daniel and Mary (Hartman) Donovan on September 14, 1941 in Wales, NY. He worked as a truck driver for many years and



Michael Donovan

bravely and honorably served our country as a member of the United States Marine

Corps. He recently married his beloved wife, Mary Ann, on December 5, 2020.

Michael will be remembered as being a very generous and giving man. He loved to ride around in the "Treat-Mobile" with his best companion and partner in crime, Little Buddy, and give out treats to the other dogs in the neighborhood. He was very witty and had a great sense of humor and was an all around very loving husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend.

Those who have preceded him in death are his late wife, Gail Willetts Donovan; his four brothers, Robert, John, Kenneth, and Daniel Donovan; and his three sisters, Lilian Ellessor, Gladys Campanella, and Kitty Eames.

Those left to cherish his memory are his wife, Mary Ann Arsenault; his three children, Jeffrey Donovan of Bear Creek, NC, R. Scott Donovan of Delevan, NY, and Wendy Morehead of Lumberton, NC; his three brothers, Gerald, Dennis, and Edward Donovan; his five sisters, Mary Donaldson, Pat McDonald, Jan Webster, Sandy Antoine, and Nancy Clark; his six cherished grandchildren; his five adored great-grandchildren; and his very loved dog, Little Buddy.

Arrangements for Michael are private. Michael will be laid to rest in North Carolina. Cremation with care is under the direction of the Chas. E. Davis Funeral Home, Inverness, FL.

Sign the guest book at www.chronicleonline.com.

Michelle Marques, 60 INVERNESS

Michelle A. Marques, 60, of Inverness, FL passed away on March 15, 2021 at her home surrounded by her loving family.

She was born to the late Robert and Rose Mary (Zieminski) Burns on June 1, 1960 in New York and she and her beloved husband enjoyed 15 beautiful years of marriage together before her passing.

She made Citrus County her home in 1990 after moving from the Wyoming Valley area in Pennsylvania. She was a nurse for over 40 years, and worked in various hospitals across the state including Citrus Memorial Hospital, The Villages Hospital, and others.

Michelle was a music and animal lover and a fantastic wife and mother. She had many talents, one of them being her ability to play Bass Guitar, in which

she learned to play to be in Tony's band.

Those left to cherish Michelle's memory are her beloved husband, Tony; her four children, Justin Saslo, Kyle Marques, Austin Marques, and Chelsey Marques; her three cherished grandchildren, Jessica, Jamie, and Raelynn; and her lifelong, close friend, Ed Krolewski.

A Celebration of Life is scheduled for Saturday, March 27th, 2021 at 3 PM at the Chas. E. Davis Funeral Home in Inverness, FL. A gathering of family and friends will begin at 2 PM and last until the hour of service.

A time of fellowship and food will be held at 9065 S. Brittany Path, Inverness, FL 34452 following the services. Cremation with Care is under the direction of the Chas. E. Davis Funeral Home, Inverness, FL.

Sign the guest book at www.chronicleonline.com.



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Sign the guest book at www.chronicleonline.com.

Kathleen Missett, 81

Kathleen (Walters) Missett, 81, passed peacefully with her family by her side on March 12, 2021.

She was born in Rimersburg, PA on August 10, 1939 to the late George and Mabel (Schoening) Walters. She moved to Warren, MI in 1945 and married her late spouse, William Stevens, in 1956 and they were married until 1980. He later passed in 2014. She then married Donald Missett in 1986.



Kathleen Missett

She is a loving mother of two daughters, Bonnie (Jeff) Schumaker and Michelle (Scott) Thams; stepmother to Michael (Lynette) Missett and Peggy Sue Missett; sister to Helen Kasky; grandmother to Heather (Glenn) Black, Jennifer (Lee) Cole, Chris Farguhar, and Melannie Schumaker; great-grandmother to Cameron, Robert, Hunter, Mitchell, Corey, Stone, and Chloe; step-grandmother to Nichole (Richard) McGrail and Chris Missett; and step-great-grandmother to Olivia, Gabriele, and Serenity.

Kathy was preceded in death by her parents, George and Mabel Walters and her brothers, Robert (Joann) Walters and John (Judy) Walters.

Kathy loved crafts and was a talented jewelry designer and crochet pattern designer.

Memorial donations can be made to Vitas Hospice, P.O. Box 1330 Lecanto, FL 34460. Arrangements for Kathy are private. Cremation with Care is under the direction of the Chas. E. Davis Funeral Home, Inverness, FL.

Sign the guest book at www.chronicleonline.com.

Rev. Dr. John Thompson

Funeral services for the Rev. Dr. John F. Thompson will be held Thursday, March 25, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church 114 N Osceola Ave, Inverness, FL.

Burial will follow at 1:00 p.m. at the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell.



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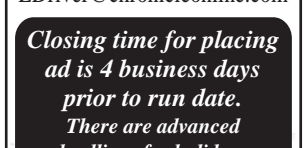
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FACES

Continued from Page A1

She said she didn't have any vacation time at her nursing job, plus they would have to find someone to replace her.

"He was so funny, he said, 'Well, that's the day I'm getting married.'"

So, they got married and set out to drive from Syracuse, New York, to Daytona — but first got stranded in a snowstorm in Virginia and ended up sleeping in cots at a local firehouse.

Ronald always kept a photo of the two of them in his pocket.

"One of the things he would say he was most proud of was, after his first wife died at age 34, he raised his kids by himself," Vyvian said.



John A. DeMerchant died Nov. 20, 2020, at age 95.

John could do it all — build houses, sail a boat, repair a car or his beloved 1986 Toyota pickup truck.

He loved nature and the outdoors, hiking, camping, bird watching and stargazing from his backyard in Pine Ridge.

"He inspired us with his care and devotion for my mother, Nancy, in the last years of her life, and his parents prior to that," said daughter Sue. "He loved his church, Shepherd of the Hills Episcopal Church, and spent countless hours supporting their mission. He surprised us all by learning to bake after my mother's death and was famous for his blueberry muffins."

The last year of his life was spent at the Grove Health & Rehabilitation Center in Hernando, where he was loved by the staff, but separated from those who loved him due to COVID-19.

"I am in awe of ... the brave way he faced life in the end," Sue said.



Robert ("Bo") Joseph Trascocoy died Dec. 5, 2020, at age 89; Angelina ("Angie") Trascocoy died Dec. 8, 2020, at age 87.

Angie and Bo — together for 67 years, dying days apart.

Both from Queens, New York, they came to Citrus County in 1988 and brought energy to everything they were involved with, especially the Italian American Club, said friend Sue Irish.

Angie was the club's "mover and shaker," the one to get the entertainment for the monthly dinner dances, set up the tables.

Even in her 80s, she was the club's vice president — and she loved her weekly bingo at church.

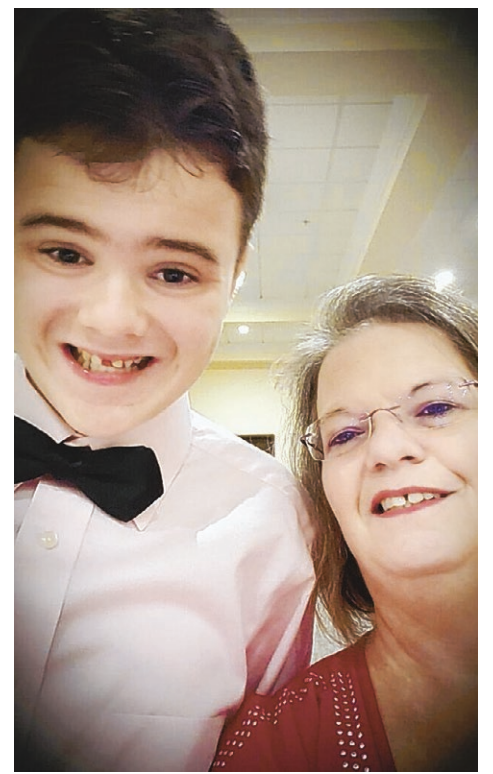
Bo loved grocery shopping and cooking for his family, loved sharing his life stories.

He volunteered many hours with the Citrus County Sheriff's Office doing neighborhood watch.

"Such a vibrant couple," Sue Irish said.



Dave Pfannenstien died April 5, 2020, at age 60.



Dawn Greer Williamson died March 5, 2021, at age 54. She is shown here with her 13-year-old son, Nicolas.



Howard Arnold died Jan. 21, 2021, at age 85.



Raymond Stocklin died Jan. 13, 2021, at age 51.

If you asked him, Raymond would say his greatest achievement was his sobriety.

"Ray was a strong man who pushed through so much pain, and each time became stronger," said his wife, Deanna.

A tattoo on his hand read: "Never let your fear decide your fate."

Instead, he put his fate and his faith in God, and thought of his church, Crystal River Church of God, as his family.

His interests included fishing, going to flea markets and working on cars, but his passion was for the people in his life.

"He impacted my life during the 30 years we were together — the good and the bad, growing together as a whole, and the children we created together,"

Deanna said. "The love he had for our children and grandchildren was undeniable. He wanted them to love life to the fullest, because he knew we are never guaranteed tomorrow."



Howard Arnold died Jan. 21, 2021, at age 85.

Howard's local claim to fame: He brought the original "Officer Friendly" program to the Citrus County Sheriff's Office when he moved to the area from Jacksonville in the 1980s.

Howard Arnold was a talker. He loved to tell stories and make people laugh.

He spent his law enforcement career focusing on community relations and being a positive role model for children.

Howard volunteered his time coaching youth football and basketball, taught self-defense classes to women and sur-



Donald J. Kelly Sr. died March 25, 2020, at age 80.

vived stage 4 lung cancer in 2005.

He even ran for Citrus County Sheriff against incumbent Charlie Dean in 1992 and came close to winning the election.

"He was always my hero," said daughter Marci Locklear. "He made me want to be a better person ... he was always there to help. I could call my dad and he would drop what he was doing to help me, or anyone else that needed help. He was just a good, kind man."

See **FACES** Page A8

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FACES

Continued from Page A7

Gary Eccher died Jan. 26, 2021, at age 64.

Gary always wanted to laugh and have a good time.

He loved to barbecue and was known as the "grill master."

The owner of Dream Kitchens and Baths in Crystal River, Gary built the business from the ground up and loved working in the community.

He was passionate about his work, but most passionate about his family: wife Jennie, daughter Heather, son-in-law Jon and three grandchildren — Sara, Emma and Max — who were the light of his life, also his sisters Pamela and Nancy.

This past Christmas, Gary wanted to give back to the community, so he and Jennie purchased 15 bikes from Walmart and donated them to local children, said his sister Nancy Lundy. "Anytime he heard of someone in our family or our community that needed help, he was there," she said. "He was the best brother when our parents passed away. He was always there for my sister and me."

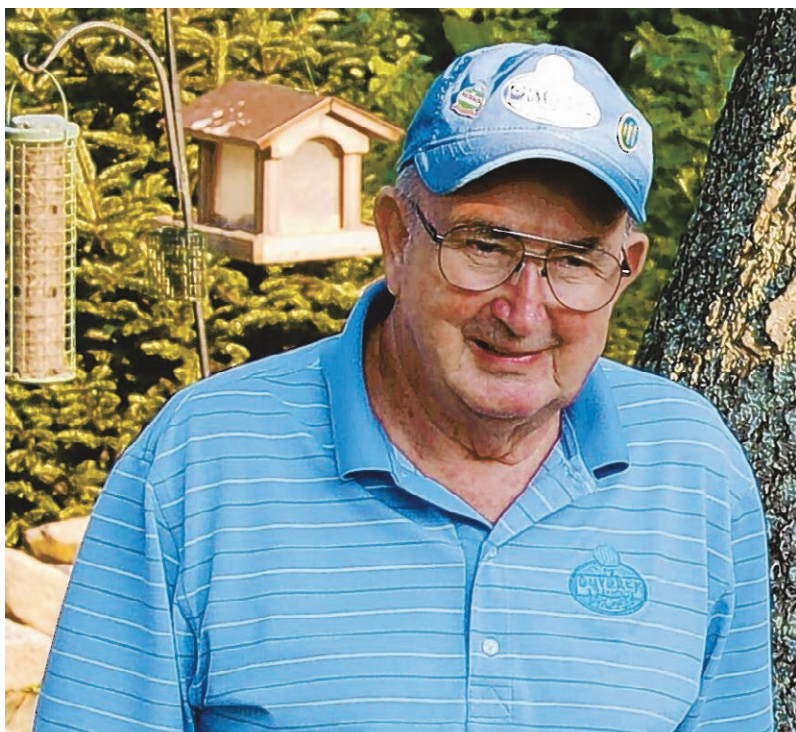
◆◆◆
Dawn Greer Williamson died March 5, 2021, at age 54.

She fought cancer, fought the grief of being widowed at a young age, and as the mother of a son with autism, she fought fiercely against the stigma and the challenges of getting services and resources to help him and others like him to thrive.

She ran the Citrus Autism Support Services (CASS) group, and was the go-to person when it came to information, resources or comfort and encouragement for other parents of special needs kids.

As the driving force of CASS, Dawn worked tirelessly on behalf of its members and their children, organizing events and outings and making sure people in the community understood that special needs children are different but not less.

"She was our fearless leader," said Renee Kman. "She didn't start the group, but she was the face of it and the heart and soul."



John A. DeMerchant died Nov. 20, 2020, at age 95.



Ronald Ivison died Nov. 15, 2020, at age 78. He is shown here with his wife, Vyvian.



Raymond Stocklin died Jan. 13, 2021, at age 51. He is shown here with granddaughter Karl.



Grace M. Payne died Dec. 24, 2020, at age 97.

Holy Week and Easter Services

Contact your parish to find out if the services will be held in person or virtually.

HE IS RISEN!

HOLY WEEK 2021

Palm Sunday Masses

Saturday Vigil: March 27 at 4:00 p.m.
Sunday, March 28 at 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Holy Thursday, April 1

Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7:00 p.m.
Adoration until 9:00 p.m.

Good Friday, April 2

Stations of the Cross at Noon
Veneration of the Cross at 3:00 p.m.

Holy Saturday, April 3

Easter Vigil at 8:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday, April 4

Masses at 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.
In the Church and Hall

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church

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FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Maundy Thursday (Communion) Service - April 1, 2021 - 6:00 PM

Good Friday Tenebrae Service - April 2, 2021 - 6:00 PM

Easter Sunrise Candlelight Garden Service

In the Garden - w/Holy Communion, April 4, 2021 - 7:30 AM

Easter Breakfast - 10:00 AM

Easter Celebration - w/Holy Communion, April 4, 2021 - 9:00 AM

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Wednesday, March 31

Worship in Upper Room: 7 pm

Good Friday, April 2, 7 pm

Worship and Dance: Service Inside

Easter Sunday, April 4, 10 am & 12 pm

Breakfast 9:00 am through 12:00 pm
Resurrection Celebration

He is Risen

Join us in Celebration

Easter Services:

Saturday, 4/3/21 • 10:00 am

Easter Eggstravaganza Easter Egg Hunt for children ages up to 11 years old

Easter Sunday:

Sunday, 4/4/21

3 Services at 8:00 am, 10:00 am & 12:00 pm

No PM Service - Communion will be observed at all 3 services.

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Traditional - 10 am
Drive by Communion 1 - 2 pm

795-5325

Good Shepherd

In Person Worship

8:30 am & 11 am
Also Facebook Live & YouTube

746-7161

Hope Citrus Springs

Easter Sunday

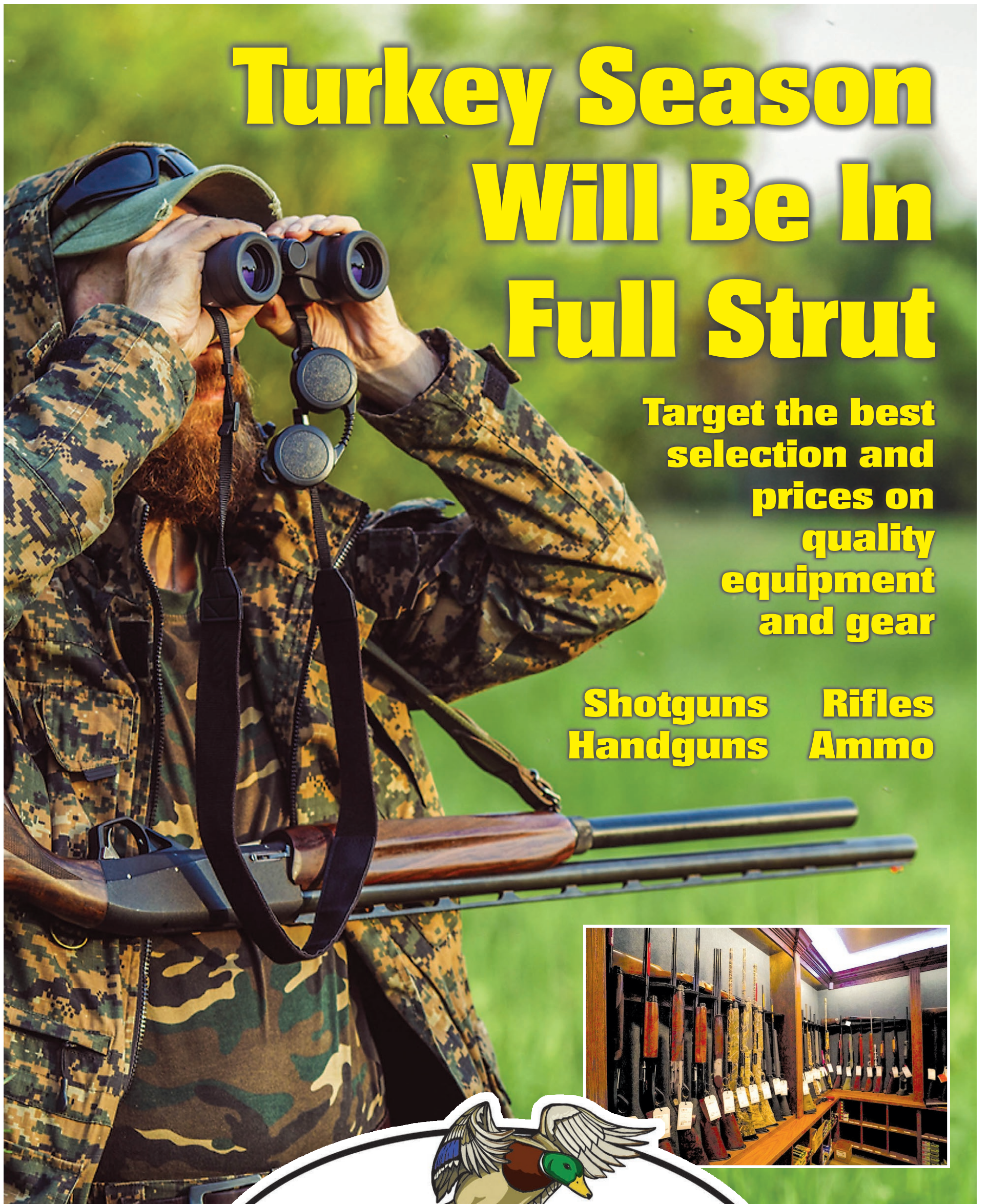
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COVID, A YEAR IN REVIEW

2020

APRIL

- 1 – DOH-Citrus begins offering curbside coronavirus testing.
- 18 – DeSantis announced K-12 students statewide will continue their education off campuses for the remainder of the school year.
- 24 – Citrus County's public high schools postponed graduations until later in the summer. Proms were also canceled.
- 27 – DeSantis formed a Re-Open Florida Task Force.
- 30 – DeSantis issued an order designed to restart Florida's economy.



MARCH

- 15 – County's first confirmed case of COVID-19.
- 16 – Local state of emergency declared. Gov. Ron DeSantis announced that all bars and nightclubs in the state must suspend service for 30 days.
- 17 – Citrus County Fair cancelled.
- 23 – All state and local parks closed.
- 24 – DeSantis has ordered travelers to Florida airports from COVID-19 hotspots to quarantine after arriving in the state.
- 25 – First death in Citrus County from COVID-19.
- 31 – DeSantis issues a stay-at-home for Florida.



JUNE

- 8 – Citrus County commissioners voted to continue the COVID-19 state of emergency.
- 12 – DeSantis released \$1.25 billion in CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act funds to small- and medium-sized counties, including Citrus.
- 18 – Crystal River City Council decided to postpone the city's July 4 fireworks show.
- 26 – A state directive to ban alcohol consumption at bars was issued.
- 30 – Citrus Memorial Hospital and Bayfront Health Seven Rivers implement stricter visitation rules.



MAY

- 5 – DOH-Citrus expanded its testing for COVID-19.
- 12 – Annual Key Training Center Run for the Money goes virtual.
- 15 – DeSantis announced gyms can reopen and restaurants' indoor seating can expand to 50 percent capacity beginning May 18.
- 26 – Crystal River City Council agreed to cancel the city's July 4 festivities but keeping the fireworks show.
- 27 – Citrus County Parks and Recreation announces the reopening of all county parks.



JULY

- 22 – announced public schools will be delayed opening by 10 days.
- 28 – Locally an emergency policy requiring face coverings to be worn on school property and buses for the next 90 days.

AUGUST

- 20 – First day of class for the 2020-21 school year.
- 25 – County Commissioners discuss the \$6.5 million the county received in federal funds.



SEPTEMBER

- 1 – Inverness' popular Veterans Day Parade is canceled.
- 14 – The first day bars could reopen. A previous executive order that kept them closed since June 26.
- 22 – Citrus Memorial Hospital's new visitor policy will allow one visitor per patient.
- 25 – DeSantis lifts all restaurant and business COVID-19 restrictions and moved the state into Phase 3 reopening.



OCTOBER

- 28 – First Baptist Church in Crystal River canceled its Thanksgiving Day dinner.



DECEMBER

- 1 – County Commissioners voted to allocate CARES funds to the Chamber of Commerce and to the United Way of Citrus County.
- 11 – With nearly 180,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses slated to head this way, DeSantis acknowledged that the amount coming to Florida is less than anticipated.
- 17 – Citrus Memorial Hospital is among 173 Florida hospitals slated to receive Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine.
- 24 – Citrus Memorial begins vaccinating staff.
- 28 – More than 200 locals have been inoculated against COVID-19.
- 29 – The first coronavirus vaccinations for senior citizens in Citrus County are slated.



NOVEMBER

- 2 – County Commissioners decide how best to distribute millions of dollars to local business owners and residents.
- 11 – Pfizer announced its COVID-19 vaccine will start being available before the end of the year.
- 17 – County has about \$4.7 million in CARES funds left over after spending what it could to assist local businesses and individuals.
- 24 – Chamber announces traditional Christmas parades will be replaced with "reverse" parades.



2021

JANUARY

- 5 – Four local Publix store pharmacies will administer the COVID-19 vaccine.
- 7 – DOH-Citrus begins administering Moderna vaccinations to area residents at a drive-thru clinic at Central Ridge Park.
- 19 – Citrus County closed in on 8,000 COVID-19 cases over the week as it surpassed 300 deaths.
- 25 – More than 10,000 Citrus County residents have been vaccinated against COVID-19.



FEBRUARY

- 3 – Local Walmart pharmacies get a limited supply of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- 5 – Winn-Dixie plans to offer coronavirus vaccines.
- 9 – Mentors return to Citrus campuses no decision on in person graduation.
- 23 – Citrus County School Board increase the occupancy of student-athletic events from 35% to 50%.



MARCH

- 2 – More than 15,000 Citrus County residents have been vaccinated.
- 4 – The Florida Division of Emergency Management, at Gov. Ron DeSantis' direction, brought its mobile vaccination clinic to Crystal River.
- 5 – City of Inverness officials ask Florida Division of Emergency Management to host a mobile vaccination clinic in their city.
- 15 – Citrus County's COVID-19 infections surpassed 10,000. More than 35,000 locals have been inoculated against the disease.



Citrus Memorial Hospital in Inverness is pictured at top. Bayfront Health Seven Rivers Regional Medical Center in Crystal River is above.

HOSPITALS

Continued from Page A1



Ginger Carroll
CEO, Citrus Memorial Hospital.



Linda Stockton
CEO, Bayfront Health Seven Rivers.

Eventually, county health officials, including Carroll, would hold morning telephone conferences with city and health care leaders throughout the county.

For Carroll, the calls started early. Florida's first COVID-19 patients was at a Sarasota hospital operated by Hospital Corporation of America, the same health care company that leases and operates Citrus Memorial Hospital.

"So you can imagine the calls on the division level," Carroll. "And we were beginning to get calls this could be real."

"When did I think this wasn't the flu? It was when I actually looked at ICU patients and saw how unbelievably sick they could get ... and this was absolutely not like the flu," she told the Chronicle.

It was the same for Linda Stockton, CEO of Bayfront Health Seven Rivers Hospital in Crystal River.

"When I saw how quickly our ICU beds were filling up," Stockton said.

Stockton said she quickly realized the new virus was "something we'd never been through in our lifetimes."

Acting quickly was important, she recalled.

"We knew we had to be prepared to take care of (the infected)," she said.

Stockton ordered temporary walls built to separate patients and took stock of personal protection equipment such as masks, gloves, and gowns, and studied carefully the staff's burn rate through the equipment.

For the first time, using Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance, the hospital disinfected personal protection equipment instead of throwing used masks and paper gowns away after using them once.

Bayfront Health Seven Rivers, with its 128 beds, is owned by Community Health Systems, which owns or operates 85 health care facilities.

In contrast, HCA owns or operates 180 hospitals and more than 2,000 health care sites in 21 states and the United Kingdom. Citrus Memorial Hospital has 204 beds.

Carroll said HCA used its buying muscle and warehouse logistics to make sure all of its hospitals had enough gloves, masks and gowns they needed and with no need to reuse them.

"It allowed us to sleep a little better at night," Carroll said.

Some things didn't go so smoothly and that was because little was known about the disease.

Carroll said the early weeks were frustrating because CDC guidelines kept changing.

That meant the kinds of masks that were effective, the kinds of eyewear, distancing recommendations, she said.

"The rules changed constantly, Carroll said.

And that didn't give hospital staff confidence.

But Carroll said the hospital leadership made the right call when it required staff to wear masks and to consider the virus more infectious than the common flu.

"It wasn't easy," she said, and many thought it was "overkill."

But the strict rules worked and transmissions of the virus from patient to caregivers were rare, she said.

What might Carroll have done better? "Trying to convince employees and staff that the rules were ever changing," she said.

In hospitals, policies and strategies change slowly and only after a lot of thought and discussion and that's what people who work in hospitals are used to, she said.

The pandemic didn't allow for that, she said.

"We didn't have a playbook that said we always do this and we always do that," she said.

If she had known then what she learned later, Carroll also would have emphasized that "guys, we're in this for the long haul."

Stockton said emphasizing masks and precautions worked at her hospital too and educating staff showed hospital

caregivers that they could treat patients without getting sick themselves.

Treatment also evolved over time.

Doctors from other hospitals shared what they thought worked best against the virus and that included when to use steroids, medications, and when to resort to ventilators.

Stockton said her hospital used anti-viral drugs and convalescent plasma early in the process in hopes of getting the best results.

Along with the unknown associated with the virus, staffing problems also emerged.

Many nurses and other health care providers such respiratory therapists were lured away by third party vendors paying several thousands of dollars a week. Hospitals couldn't compete and Citrus Memorial and Seven Rivers were no exception.

"We did have these struggles like everybody else," Stockton said.

So Bayfront Health Seven Rivers added extra shifts, increased the number of contract staff, moved managers to take over when there were open positions.

"I was really proud" of the staff who filled the breach, Stockton said.

Carroll said "It was a big problem," and moving staff around "was a shell game"

"The virus created an unbelievable, competitive environment," Carroll said.

Meanwhile, doctors were making progress in treatments.

Four to six weeks after the first case, Carroll said the hospital had a "pretty good protocol" in treating coronavirus patients.

Carroll and Stockton were also lucky.

Their hospitals were never overwhelmed with patients and the number of ICU beds each had was sufficient. But both admit that at times they thought they would need to create makeshift ICU rooms to accommodate the infected and sickest. Fortunately, it never came to that.

Both also said they had enough equipment, such as ventilators.

Carroll said that being part of HCA and among 14 hospitals in its west Florida division they could share resources and that "allowed us to sleep a little better at night."

Gov. Ron DeSantis also during the surge ordered Florida hospitals to cancel non-emergency, elective surgeries. It hurt revenues, but there was one bright side.

"I get the gloves. I get the masks. I get the gowns by closing the operating rooms," Carroll said.

In addition, some of the staff normally working in the operating room could be transferred to other areas of the hospital where they could be used, Carroll said.

Stockton said she was pleased with the way her hospital adapted to the virus.

"There's nothing I would have changed," Stockton said, reflecting back.

As for personal protection supplies, both Carroll and Stockton said neither have additional stocks in case of a next wave. Instead, they depend on their parent companies to supply them what they need.

But Carroll and Stockton said that their operations have changed and her hospital is better prepared for such a terrible event.

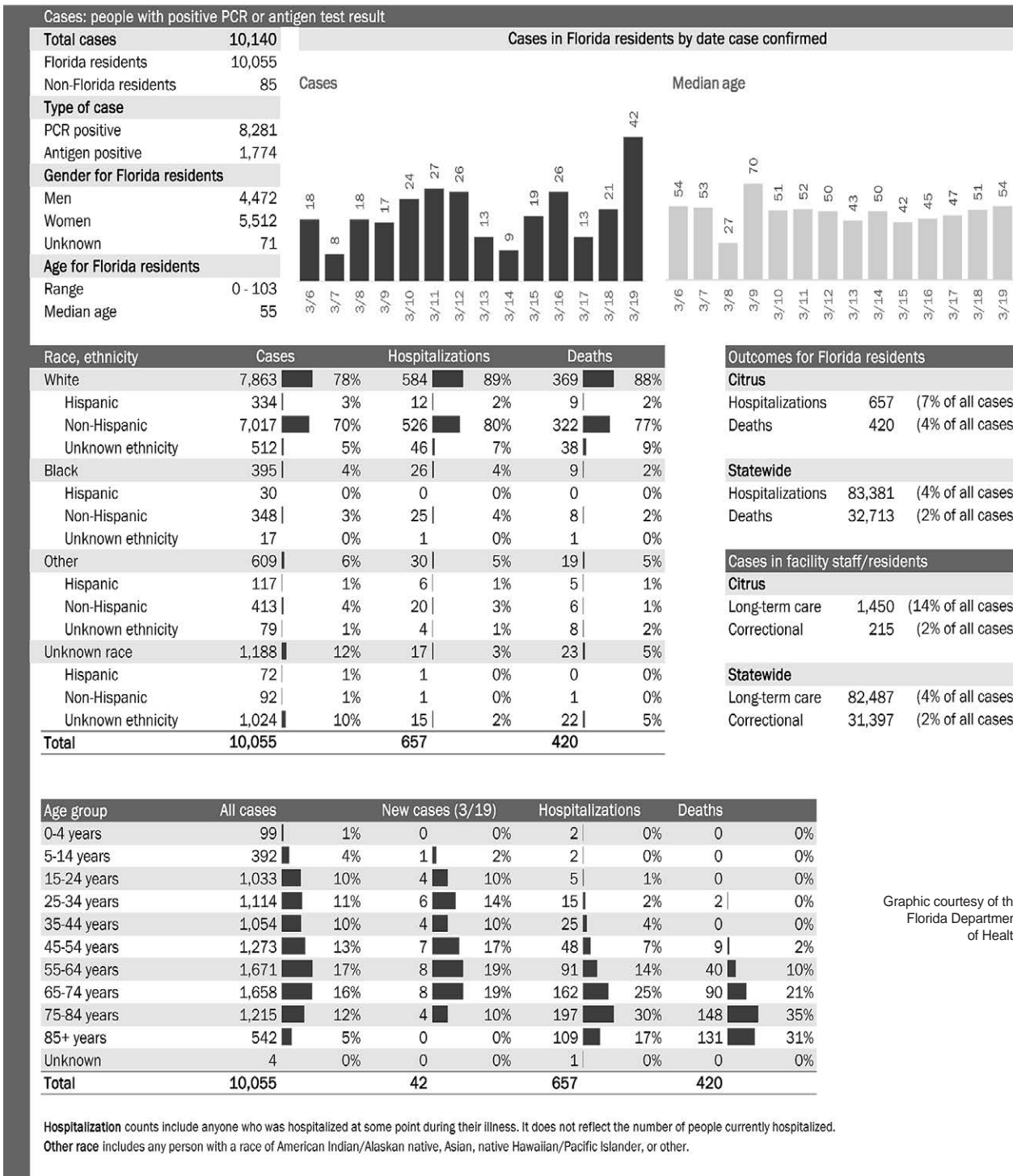
Hospital staff understand better that when someone comes in sick they could have something infectious, they said.

"We're better prepared now. We're screening everybody," Carroll said. "We've really become a more flexible, more nimble group than we were prior to this."

COVID-19: summary for Citrus County

Data through Mar 19, 2021 verified as of Mar 20, 2021 at 09:25 AM

Data in this report are provisional and subject to change.



D-I-Y ONLINE CALENDAR

- Local groups are welcome to add their upcoming events to the Chronicle's online community calendar. Here's how:
 - Go to www.chronicleonline.com. At the very top of the screen, click on "Submit your news."
 - Sign in or create an account.
 - Once signed in, click on "Calendar Events" in the left-hand column, then click on "Create an event."
 - Fill in all fields — those marked with a red asterisk (*) are required.
 - Add photos, if desired, and include all relevant information.
 - Click the "Create Event" button at the end.



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World BRIEFS

Strong quake shakes Japan

TOKYO — A strong earthquake struck Saturday off northern Japan, shaking buildings even in Tokyo and triggering a tsunami advisory for a part of the northern coast. No major damage was reported, but several people had minor injuries.

The U.S. Geological Survey put the strength of the quake at magnitude 7.0 and depth at 33.5 miles. The shaking started just before 6:10 p.m.

The quake was centered off the coast of Miyagi prefecture, in the country's rugged northeast, which was heavily damaged during the huge earthquake and tsunami of 2011 that left more than 18,000 people dead.

Japan's Meteorological Agency issued an advisory for a tsunami up to 1 yard in height for Miyagi prefecture immediately after the quake, but lifted it about 90 minutes later.

Officials there said there were no immediate reports of damage.

The Fire and Disaster Management Agency said seven people were injured in Miyagi prefecture, including two elderly women — one who was banged in the head by a door and the other who was hit in the shoulder by furniture. In neighboring Iwate prefecture, a woman in her 50s fell and cut her mouth.

The strong tremor caused a temporary blackout in some areas and suspended bullet train services in the area, according to the East Japan Railway Co.

The Nuclear Regulation Authority said no abnormalities have been detected at nuclear power plants in the region.

Eruption of Iceland volcano easing

REYKJAVIK, Iceland — The eruption of a long-dormant volcano that sent streams of lava flowing across a small valley in southwestern Iceland is easing and shouldn't interfere with air travel, the Icelandic Meteorological Office said Saturday.

The fissure eruption began at around 8:45 p.m. Friday in the Gelding Valley, about 20 miles southwest of the capital, Reykjavik, the Met Office said. The eruption is "minor" and there were no signs of ash or dust that could disrupt aviation, the agency said.

"The more we see, the smaller this eruption gets," geophysicist Pall Einarsson told The Associated Press on Saturday after monitoring the volcano throughout the night.

This southwestern corner of Iceland is the most heavily populated part of the country. The Department of Emergency Management said it doesn't anticipate evacuations, unless levels of volcanic gases rise significantly.

Keflavik Airport, Iceland's international air traffic hub, said flights have remained on schedule since the eruption began.

"There is no indication of production of ash and tephra, and there is no imminent hazard for aviation," the Met Office said on its website.

In 2010, an eruption of the Eyjafjallajokull volcano in Iceland sent clouds of ash and dust into the atmosphere, interrupting air travel between Europe and North America because of concerns the material could damage jet engines. More than 100,000 flights were grounded.

— From wire reports

Miami sets earlier curfew

Spring break starts getting too rowdy

The Associated Press

MIAMI — Officials are imposing an emergency 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew for Miami Beach, effective immediately after hard-partying spring breakers trashed restaurants, brawled in the streets and gathered by the thousands without masks or social distancing, according to authorities.

At a news conference, officials blamed overwhelming and out-of-control spring break crowds for the curfew, which was taking effect Saturday night in South Beach, one of the nation's top party spots. Tourists and hotel guests are being told to stay indoors during curfew hours.

It's unclear how long the curfew will remain in effect, but Interim City Manager Raul Aguila told the Miami Herald that he recommends keeping the rules in place through at least April 12. A countywide midnight curfew was already in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



PEDRO PORTAL/Miami Herald via AP

Beachgoers enjoy the beautiful weather at the beach, Wednesday, March 2, in Miami Beach. Miami Beach officials are imposing an emergency 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew effective immediately, saying large, out-of-control spring break crowds crammed the beaches, trashed some restaurant properties and brawled in the streets.

"These crowds are in the thousands," Aguila said. "We're at capacity."

No pedestrians or vehicles will be allowed to enter the restricted area after 8 p.m. and all businesses in the vicinity must close, Aguila said, reading from a statement released by the city.

The curfew comes as a

prominent bar, the Clevelander South Beach, announced it was temporarily suspending all food and beverage operations until at least March 24 after crowds crammed Ocean Drive, breaking out into street fights. At another restaurant next door, tables and chairs were smashed during a fight, news outlets reported.

Shootings first test of new hate crimes law

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — The murder case against a white man charged with shooting and killing six women of Asian descent and two other people at Atlanta-area massage businesses this week could become the first big test for Georgia's new hate crimes law.

Robert Aaron Long, 21, told police that the attacks Tuesday at two spas in Atlanta and another massage business near suburban Woodstock were not racially motivated and claimed to have a sex addiction. Authorities said he apparently lashed

out at what he saw as sources of temptation but were still investigating his motive.

Because most of the victims were women of Asian descent, there's skepticism of that explanation and public clamoring for hate crime charges, especially among the Asian American community, which has faced rising numbers of attacks since the coronavirus pandemic took hold.

But, like many states, the Georgia law enacted last summer does not provide for a standalone hate crime,



Robert Aaron Long

instead allowing an additional penalty when a person is convicted of another crime.

"It's not something you get arrested for. It's a sentence enhancer," said Pete Skandalakis, a former prosecutor and executive director of the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia.

The law says an additional penalty can be applied for certain crimes if they are motivated by a victim's race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender, or mental or physical disability.

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Riverhaven Village honors its veteran residents

HANNAH SACHEWICZ
Staff writer

Recently, the Riverhaven Village community in Homosassa has come together to make a small military memorial to honor their veteran residents.

Members of the garden club, Riverhaven Village HOA and community volunteers have joined together to make this project happen.

The memorial is being built at the end of West Halls River Road in Homosassa to the left of the Riverhaven Village clubhouse.

Clark Adams, resident and volunteer, stated that the project is “totally funded by individuals in Riverhaven.”

“About a year or so ago we started looking to get contributions for the community to put in a memorial,” said Jill Dodge, Riverhaven Village resident and member of the garden club.

After a year of collecting funds and planning, the project is in progress. “We’ve made it happen,” said Georgianna Bello, director of the Riverhaven Village social committee.

Dodge is also very much involved with the community. In addition to her work on this project, she puts together the monthly newsletter for Riverhaven Village.

Dodge also commended retired Navy Capt. Sue Sanders, a resident of Riverhaven Village, for coming up the idea for the project.

“What we were thinking of doing is having a little get together for the people of the community on May 15, Armed Forces Day,” said Dodge.

The community hopes to finish the project by then to celebrate the holiday and the newly finished memorial. Dodge stated that they also hope to get the Color Guard to come out and celebrate with them.

Georgianna Bello said that Lecanto High School JRTC, along with Citrus County Boy Scouts will be in attendance as well.

The garden club is heavily involved with the landscaping of the memorial. To help with the efforts, “someone’s donated a \$250 certificate to Color Country,” said Dodge.

Originally, the community installed the five flags of the military service. Dodge said “it developed into seven,” to include the Space Force and the American flag at the center.

New curbing for the memorial was installed on March 16 and the community plans to place down rocks, a bench and more foliage.

Riverhaven Village residents are no stranger to hard work. “The volunteerism is very strong here,” said Joe Bello, president of the Riverhaven Village community club.

Not only have they been funding the project, but they have been doing the physical labor of digging, building and planting to make it happen.

Adams emphasized the importance of the memorial to the community. “There’s a lot of veterans here,” he said. The memorial will serve as a permanent monument to the community’s appreciation for their veteran residents.

Adams added that Riverhaven is “just a very friendly little community.” The monument will surely add to their quaint little neighborhood.

In honor of Paul, David, John and Beau



MetroCreative

Health issues of military veterans from operations involving Agent Orange and burn pits are a reality.

A serious look at certain military veterans’ health issues

For the past 23 years, I have been writing about and fighting for better support of our military veterans and their families. In some instances, as many people probably know, I can get a wee bit strong on the subject and rarely except a “no” from someone who is not doing their utmost to support our heroes.

I’d like to select three veterans that required our support at one time or another for health issues, who failed in one fashion or another to get it when needed from America, as examples to explain why my contrariness is truly contrary.

First of all, there is Paul. He served in the Vietnam War as a young Army officer where he was highly decorated and severely wounded in combat. Returning to America to recover from his wounds, he found very little support for veterans while millions of citizens protested our country’s involvement in that war.

Additionally, despite Paul’s ongoing health issues, there was also little support for or known facts about the impact to the health of veterans from exposure to Agent Orange.

I am always surprised at

how little today’s citizens know about this poison, particularly schoolchildren. Agent Orange was a blend of tactical herbicides the U.S. military sprayed from 1962 to 1971 during the Vietnam War to remove the leaves of trees and other dense tropical foliage providing enemy cover. Food crops were also destroyed that were being provided to the enemy.



John Stewart
VETERANS VOICES

The U.S. Department of Defense developed tactical herbicides specifically to be used in “combat operations” and were not commercial grade herbicides purchased from chemical companies and sent to Vietnam, but were contents of death.

More than 19 million gallons of various “rainbow” herbicide combinations were sprayed with various names, but Agent Orange was the combination the U.S. military used most often. The name “Agent Orange” came from the orange identifying stripe used on the 55-gallon drums in which it was stored.

Much of it contained a dangerous chemical contaminant called dioxin, a highly toxic and persistent organic pollutant linked to cancers, diabetes, birth defects and other disabilities.

Agent Orange was sprayed

at up to 20 times the concentration of the manufacturers recommendations for killing plants. It has been reported the chemical companies that produced the Vietnam-era herbicides say they were not fully aware of how toxic the dioxin contaminant was while destroying 5 million acres of upland and mangrove forests and about 500,000 acres of crops, a total area nearly the size of Massachusetts.

After recovering from his wounds, Paul served for several more years, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel, before being medically retired after having a number of health issues that would today be attributed to his Agent Orange exposure. Unfortunately, one of his many health issues was heart related (a common Agent Orange-related disease) and Paul died suddenly of cardiac arrest at 50 years of age in 1985.

I believe that occurred because of our country’s delays and failures in recognizing the impact of this terrible poison. In fact, it was not until 1991 when the Agent Orange Act was implemented that the Veterans Administration basically said Vietnam War veterans could obtain benefits for their related illnesses and a list of them was finally provided.

A long list and one that continues to receive additionally discovered (or accepted) diseases. But it was

too late for Paul and I had to perform his military funeral service.

■■■

Let me tell you about David. He was a Marine for about 12 years before transferring to the Army and eventually completing military retirement with that branch after 20 years’ service. Despite those dozen years of Army service and with all due respect to Army personnel, David was through and through and through a Marine: hard-nosed, family committed, dedicated to friends, a staunch community leader and a total supporter of America’s military presence in the world.

If you wanted something done, he got it done.

Unfortunately, David had been stationed at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, while in the Marine Corps. From the 1950s through the 1980s, people living or working at that location were exposed to drinking water contaminated with industrial solvents, benzene and other chemicals. During this time, the people living on the base, military service members and civilians, ingested and bathed in water that had been contaminated with those chemicals from the base water treatment facilities and a dry-cleaning company in the local area.

Personnel were exposed to over 3,000 times the safe

See ISSUES/Page A16

VETERANS NOTES

Veterans Notes are only for special events that are open to the public. To find out about regularly scheduled post activities that welcome the public during the week, including entertainment and menus, call the post. For information about post members-only activities, call the individual posts for a schedule. Call the individual posts regarding meeting times and dates. Contributed notices must be submitted by Wednesday afternoon before publication the following Sunday.

COMING UP

VFW Post 4864 to serve spaghetti dinner

VFW Post 4864 of Citrus Springs announces a special spaghetti and meatball dinner meal from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 20, 10199 N. Citrus Springs Blvd.

The cost is \$7 per person.

Groups larger than four should call to reserve a table at 352-465-4864.

See NOTES/Page A14

Legion Riders donate to Daystar Life Center



Special to the Chronicle

The American Legion Riders of Post 166 in Homosassa were able to help Daystar Life Center keep our pantry full for those in need. Besides their own Post 166, the motorcyclists were joined by Crystal River Eagles Aerie 4272, IRRU Family Social Club, American Legion Post 237 and their riders and American Legion Auxiliary Unit 237. They united in raising \$2,100 and collecting turkeys, hams and other groceries. Local businesses also supported this event in December, an event that continued to provide for Daystar’s clients in January and February. Dan Rohring of American Legion Post 166, right, presents checks to Daystar Director Anthony Kopka, left.

■ Submit information for the Veterans page at least two weeks before the event.
 ■ Early submission of timely material is appreciated,

but multiple publications cannot be guaranteed.
 ■ Notes tend to run one week prior to the date of an event. Publication on a specific day is not guaranteed.

■ Submit material at Chronicle offices in Inverness or Crystal River or email to community@chronicleonline.com.

NOTES

Continued from Page A13

VFW post 10137 hosting Vietnam veterans BBQ

VFW post 10137 is having their Vietnam Veteran's Day BBQ at noon on Saturday, March 27, at 6036 County Road 618 in Bushnell.

Vietnam veterans eat free and all others for \$7. Veterans should bring proof of their Vietnam service.

This event welcomes all Vietnam veterans, not just those who are part of the VFW post 10137 community.

For questions, call 352-793-8511.

VFW Post 4252 flea market assists veterans in need

Members of VFW Post 4252 will host a flea market to benefit veterans in need and their families from 7:30 to 1:30 p.m. Sunday, March 21, at the post at 3190 N. Carl G. Rose Highway (U.S. 200), Hernando.

Breakfast food will be available for purchase. Call the VFW to reserve a space at 352-726-3339.

VFW Post 10087 plans Bunco Night at the post

VFW Post 10087 Harry F. Nesbitt of Beverly Hills will host a Bunco Night starting at 4 p.m. Thursday, March 25.

Call the post at 352-746-0440 for more information.

VFW Auxiliary to have Chinese auction

VFW Auxiliary 4337 will host a Chinese auction open to the public Saturday, March 27, starting at noon, with drawings beginning at 2 p.m. featuring a variety of items including donations from local businesses. The Eugene Quinn VFW Post 4337 is at 906 State Road 44 E., Inverness.

For information, call Gloria Lane at 786-283-1795.

Young artists wanted for patriotic contest

The VFW Post 4252 Auxiliary seeks entries for their sponsored Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest.

Young artists in ninth through 12th grade wanting to enter the contest should call 352-419-8981 and ask for Judy Prive. If no answer, leave your name, telephone number and a brief message to request an application to enter this contest. Deadline to enter is March 31.

CCVC cancels monthly yard sales for now

Citrus County Veterans Coalition (CCVC) has canceled monthly yard sales until further notice due to the pandemic.

We also are not accepting any donated items at this time. However, it is our intention to continue offering our food services to veteran clients.

For information, call 352-400-8952 or visit www.veterans-coalition.com.

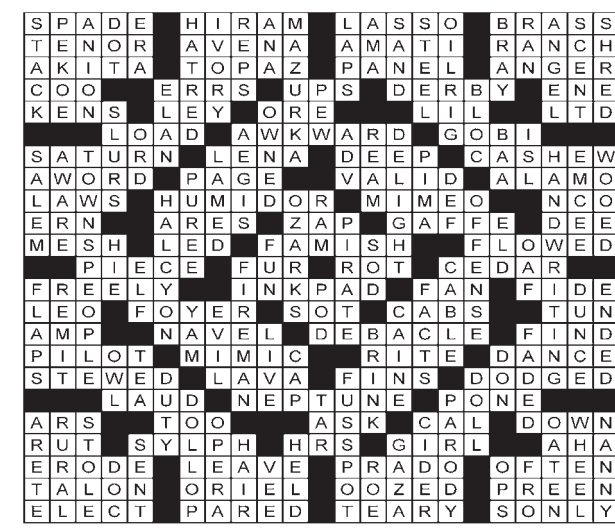
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Sunday PUZZLER ANSWERS

Sunday Puzzler is on Page A15



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Tune in to watch SECO Energy's **VIRTUAL ONLY** 2021 Annual Business Meeting streamed live on Thursday, March 25, at 4:30 p.m. Click on the virtual meeting homepage banner on SECOEnergy.com. Links to the webcast will also be published on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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TO VOTE ELECTRONICALLY, visit our homepage and click on the VOTE banner. You can also text "VOTE" to (352) 320-2200 and follow the link provided.

TO VOTE BY PHONE, reach out to Member Services at (352) 793-3801 during regular business hours and an agent will assist you in casting your vote.

TO VOTE IN PERSON, visit one of our five Member Service Centers to view a paper copy of the Bylaws Revision and last year's minutes. We'll help you cast your vote when you're ready.

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Prizes include a 2011 GMC Canyon 4x4 Extended Cab, a golf cart, four cash prizes of \$1,000, electric bill credits, VISA gift cards, WiFi thermostats, Instapots, air fryers, tool sets, Ring doorbells, Amazon Fire and Apple TVs, Fire HD tablets with Alexa, Fitbits and more. Visit SECOEnergy.com for a complete list of prizes.

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SUNDAY EVENING MARCH 21, 2021. Table listing TV channels, times, and program titles such as 'The Voice', 'American Idol', 'The Bachelor', etc.

SUNDAY EVENING MARCH 21, 2021. Table listing TV channels, times, and program titles such as 'The Bachelor', 'The Contender', 'The Masked Singer', etc.

Annie gives advice

Dear Annie: I am a 41-year-old single man who has pretty much given up on intimate relationships. I don't know what it is about me. If you would ask the average person who doesn't know me, I



DEAR ANNIE

I am a hard worker. I have always had a job, and I earn decent money. I own a car and all the things most 41-year-old single men should own by this point in their lives, but I just cannot seem to find a relationship to settle down into. It's not to say I haven't had any. I have had some long-term relationships, but truth be known, I stayed in them longer than I should have because I just don't like being single. I would venture as far as to say one of them that was over five years long was with someone I was no longer attracted to. And I wasn't very attracted to her to begin with. I just didn't want to be single.

It just seems that, no matter what I do, when I meet a woman who I do like, it goes nowhere. I am not a pushy person, but I am also not afraid to tell someone how I feel. I just always end up in the "friend zone" with women I actually have an interest in. Everyone

always tells me to be patient, and that my time will come. But I am 41 and the clock is ticking. I would like to have a small family someday, and I would also like to do it soon. I have tried all the typical dating sites and apps. My options, especially now with COVID-19, are sort of limited. I am just lost. Is everyone right? Do I need to just keep being patient? And if that doesn't work and I just never find my person, how do I deal with that? — Lost and Alone

Dear Lost and Alone: You sound like a great person who is dealing with some negative and excessive expectations. Before jumping into anything else, consider examining the five-year relationship you were in. Why did you stay so long when you were not attracted to her? Then, look at how the women you are attracted to always end up in the friend zone. It might be that you are only attracted to what you can't have. And if someone is attracted to you and wants to be in a relationship with you, you lose interest. This is not unusual.

Seek the help of a trained therapist who can help you figure out what you are looking for and who you'd like to be in a relationship. My guess is that she is just around the corner, and it is up to you to allow yourself to be vulnerable enough to let her in. Best of luck to you.

Today's MOVIES

LOCAL THEATER INFORMATION

Regal Cinema on State Road 44 in Inverness and Regal Cinema in Crystal River are closed until further notice.

VALERIE THEATRE CULTURAL CENTER

Note that COVID-19 safety protocols are in place. Masks are recommended, general admission with social distancing, capacity is 40 individuals for films.

- "Dirty Harry" (R) March 21, 3 p.m.
"The Pride of The Yankees" (NR) March 22, 1 p.m.
"Monty Python And The Holy Grail" (PG) March 26, 7 p.m.

Sunday PUZZLER

ACROSS

- 1 Symbol on a card
6 — Ulysses Grant
11 Lariat
16 Orchestra section
21 Male singer
22 Genus of oats
23 Violin maker
24 Dressing type
25 Japanese dog
26 Yellow gem
27 Auto body part
28 Wrath
29 Dove's cry
30 Goes wrong
31 — and downs
33 Hat
35 Dir. letters
36 Griffey and Russell
38 Pasture
39 Mine's output
40 — Abner
41 Abbr. in business
42 Burden
44 Ungainly
48 Desert in Asia
51 Ringed planet
54 River in Russia
55 Profound
57 Kidney-shaped nut
61 — to the wise
62 Leaf
63 Legally accepted
65 Texas landmark
66 Statutes
67 Case for cigars
70 Old office copy
72 Mil. rank
73 Eagle
74 War god
75 Reheat in a microwave
77 Faux pas
79 Poor grade
80 Interlock
82 Directed
83 Starve
85 Streamed
87 Fragment
89 Make the — fly
90 Decompose
91 Fragrant wood
92 Unrestrained
94 Rubber stamp accessory
96 Devotee
97 Bona —
100 Star sign
101 Entrance area
104 Drunkard
105 Cars for hire
106 Cask
107 Elec. unit
108 Hind of orange
110 Fiasco

- 112 Something discovered
113 Airman
116 Copycat
118 Ceremonial act
119 Ball
120 Cooked a certain way
122 Molten rock
123 Fish features
124 Avoided
125 Praise
127 God of the sea
129 Corn bread
130 — poetica
133 Overly
135 Inquire
136 Mr. Ripken
137 In low spirits
141 Furrow
142 Graceful woman
144 Time periods (Abbr.)
145 Colleen
146 Cry of discovery
147 Wear down
149 Permission
151 Museum in Madrid
153 Frequently
155 Claw
156 Bay window
157 Flowed slowly
158 Primp
159 Put into office
160 Reduced
161 Watery-eyed
162 Filial

- 46 Paper quantity
47 Pleasure
49 Sheep's cry
50 Ait (Abbr.)
51 Capital of Oregon
52 Cognizant
53 Inhabitants
54 Caused to limp
56 Kind of cotton
58 Penmanship
59 Host
60 Courted
62 Thick vegetable soup
64 Dictionary entry (Abbr.)
67 Golden
68 Arkansas mountains
69 Butt
71 Crime
76 Robber at sea
78 Antiquity
81 Hasten
83 Enjoyment
84 Ground surface
86 LummoX
88 Magical being
89 Fighter of flames
91 Wire rope
92 Moves up and down
93 Send payment
95 Pea container
96 Truths
98 Stupid one
99 Concluded

- 102 Edible tuber
103 Morally wrong
105 "The — Mutiny"
109 Dwell
111 Edge
112 Grew dim
114 Predatory bird
115 Light meal
117 Cover
119 Put on
121 Obligation
123 Worrying one
124 Plaything
126 Blob
128 Seaman
129 Satirical mimicry
130 Mountain ridge
131 Countrified
132 Pilfered
134 Musical drama
136 Fruity drink
138 Of a grain
139 Ferris or fifth
140 Female goat
142 Dispatched
143 Eyelash
144 Kept
145 — Strip
148 One of the Seven Dwarfs
150 A letter
152 Caviar
153 Harvest goddess
154 To and —

Sunday Puzzle answers are on Page A14.

20x20 grid for the Sunday puzzle with numbers indicating starting points for clues.

ISSUES

Continued from Page A13

exposure limits of toxic chemicals.

Fifteen health conditions have been identified by the VA related to that exposure, one being cancer of the kidneys, and about 7 or 8 years ago David was diagnosed with that particular cancer.

As had many, many others who worked as civilians, were veteran's family members, or military personnel stationed at Camp Lejeune. Falling ill, or dying, from their exposure. But it was not until the Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012 was passed could those exposed there obtain proper health care for their medical issues.

Over 30 years after the problem was identified and 60 years after exposure began.

David's cancer spread rapidly to many other areas of his body and he was informed that his stage 4 condition was so serious that he may only have six months to a year at most to live. As I said previously, he was a tough Marine and he took on the disease in normal Marine fashion.

That six- to 12-month assessment was nearly eight years ago. Since then, he fought valiantly against death and, though living in Kentucky, began treatment at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Tennessee. It was a five-hour round trip drive.

Year after year after year, David drove himself to treatment, in fact making hundreds and hundreds of trips for specialized and sometimes experimental treatment, including surgeries. But, as the cancer continued to spread throughout his body, David heroically fought his last battle and passed away Jan. 26, 2021. I also performed his military funeral service.

■■■

Finally, John. Another

Vietnam War veteran suffering from the health issues caused by exposure to Agent Orange.

Over time, suffering a double cardiac bypass at 49 years of age, multiple small strokes, memory impairment and numerous heart stent implants along with countless related health problems.

Again, just as David did, fighting to simply live one more day. Then came the most devastating news, he was diagnosed with cancer. Weeks of radiation treatment, numerous medications needed for survival along with devastating effects to the body.

Remember the timeframe I previously mentioned about how long after the Vietnam War before our government acknowledged that, indeed, Agent Orange exposure was a cause for numerous diseases such as heart disease and cancer? If not, let me remind you it was 16 years after end of the war when America did so. Or, in other descriptive terms, 21 years after John served in combat.

■■■

Today's veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation New Dawn, Operation Desert Storm, Operation Desert Shield and other military conflicts face similar lack of support by our government. It is from burn pits.

These were locations where our military personnel operate in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Djibouti, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, and Red Sea. Locations where materials were placed in huge areas and fire was used for destruction of a number of things sometimes found in war, sometimes found in everyday life.

What was burned? Chemicals, paint, medical and human waste (including body parts), batteries, metal and aluminum

cans, munitions and unexploded ordnance, petroleum and lubricant products, plastics, rubber, wood, and food waste.

How was it burned? Primarily using jet fuel, a poisonous accelerant that created clouds of black smoke that was being inhaled by our troops.

For example, Joint Base Balad, the largest U.S. base in Iraq had a burn pit operation as late as the summer of 2008, burning 147 tons of waste per day on 25 acres.

According to Leon Russell Keith, a military contractor stationed at Balad who testified at a Senate hearing in 2009, ash was everywhere, including on beds and clothes. He said the thick black smoke was even in the barracks and ash permanently stained sheets.

One soldier described the smoke as thick "like San Francisco fog." The color of the smoke could be blue and black, or yellow and orange. However, it was mostly black and everyone inhaled and ingested it. It was absorbed by their skin.

Despite this obvious exposure and health situation, as late as July 2019 there were still 9 sanctioned burn pits in operations in Syria, Afghanistan and Egypt. Millions of dollars were spent on incinerators to properly dispose of the waste products, but many sat idle next to the active burn pits.

I have 2006 and 2007 copies of letters by commanders in the field at Balad acknowledging the burn pits were hazardous to the health of our military personnel. Some diseases believed to be caused by this exposure include cancer, skin lesions, leukemia, chronic bronchitis, cardiovascular conditions, constrictive bronchiolitis, autoimmune disorders and Crohn's disease.

Based upon the information I've outlined above regarding health issues from burn pits, you would think some type of

legislative action would have been implemented to take care of the troops who are experiencing health issues from their exposure. Well, VA did start a website in 2014 "Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry" where those who believe they were exposed can register their names, dates of deployment, etc.

This is 13 years after our wars began in the Middle East. The VA's official position is that "research does not show evidence of long-term health problems from exposure," though advocates claim that is based more on a lack of tracking of what's being burned and the health outcomes of those who are around them.

There are veterans filing for burn pit-related disability benefits but over 75% have been denied. There are some actions in Washington to help our exposed military personnel. The Veterans Burn Pits Exposure Recognition Act, was recently reintroduced by Senators Dan Sullivan, D-Alaska, and Joe Manchin, D-W. VA., both members of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. The measure would concede that troops serving in locations recognized by the VA Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry were exposed to toxins and eliminate some of barriers to filing VA claims.

Unfortunately, if passed, it does not immediately grant disability claims and Veterans would still need to provide evidence that their illnesses are linked to toxic exposure. According to a 2015 VA report, it is estimated that 3.5 million veterans had been exposed to burn pits.

■■■

What must be done to avoid the lack of health support situations to current veterans that was faced by veterans of the past like Paul, David and John? It requires your support and that of our

government.

President Biden spoke at one time about how he believes exposure to burn pits contributed to the death of his eldest son, Beau Biden, who deployed with the Army National Guard to Balad Air Force Base in late 2008 and Camp Victory in Baghdad, both which made extensive use of burn pits to dispose of waste.

In 2013, Beau Biden was diagnosed with Stage 4 glioblastoma multiforme, the most common form of brain cancer. He died 18 months later.

Hopefully, the president will follow through with his belief about Beau's death and take action on the health impact of burn pits. You can encourage that effort by writing the president and demanding those exposed to burn pits receive deserved optimum health-care and other deserved benefits.

I am asking you to step

up and do your part by supporting our veterans with a letter-writing campaign to the President about burn pit health recognition. Or, send him a message on the White House website at www.whitehouse.gov/contact.

Being contrary once again, I won't accept a "no" from you. Perhaps, then, we will avoid situations like that of Paul, David, John and Beau.

By the way, Paul is Lt. Col. Paul D. King, my older brother.

David is Master Sgt. David D. Stewart, my younger brother.

I am John.
God Bless America and our troops in harm's way.

John Stewart is a retired Air Force chief master sergeant, disabled Vietnam War veteran and has been a veterans advocate for nearly three decades. In 2016 he was inducted into the Florida Veterans Hall of Fame for his volunteer service.

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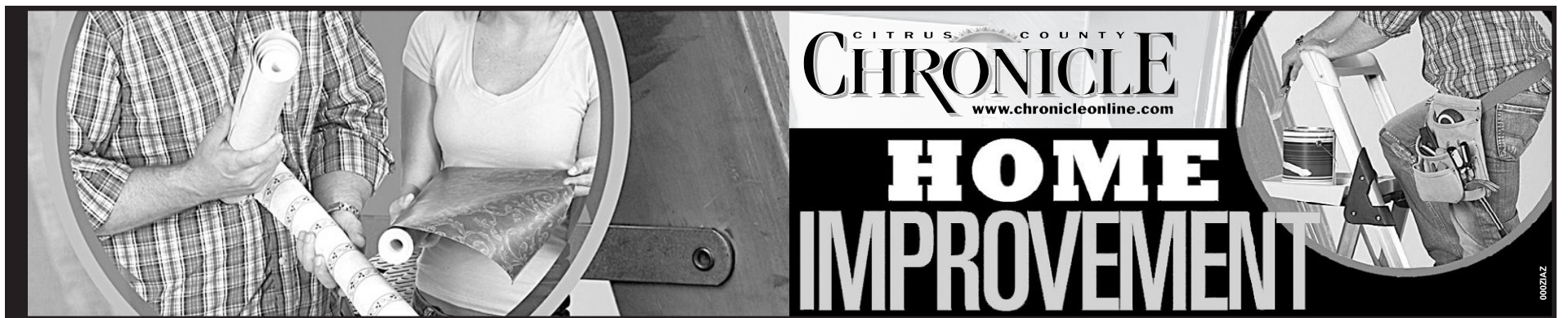


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- Most all these groups welcome donations — of food, supplies, or money — and volunteers. Look for the contact information with each animal to find out specific needs.

SO YOU KNOW

- Local groups are welcome to add their upcoming events to the Chronicle's online community calendar. Go to www.chronicleonline.com. At the very top of the screen, click on "Submit your news."
- Sign in or create an account. Click the "Create Event" button at the end.

TOGETHER PAGE SUBMISSIONS

- The Chronicle runs birth announcements, engagements, weddings and significant anniversaries at no charge inside the Sunday Veterans section.
- To submit information, attach photos and email the text to community@chronicleonline.com or fill out the forms online at www.chronicleonline.com, at the top of the homepage under "Announcements."
- The Chronicle reserves the right to edit submissions and determine their best placement. Publication on a specific Sunday cannot be guaranteed. Publication on a color page cannot be guaranteed.
- Don't have a photo scanner at home? Bring in photos to go with Together page submissions to be scanned and immediately returned to you at the Chronicle's main office, 1624 N. Meadowcrest Blvd., Crystal River.
- News of record is provided by the office of the Citrus County clerk of the circuit court.

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Sunshine Gardens 311 NE 4th Ave, Crystal River, FL 352-563-0235	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		
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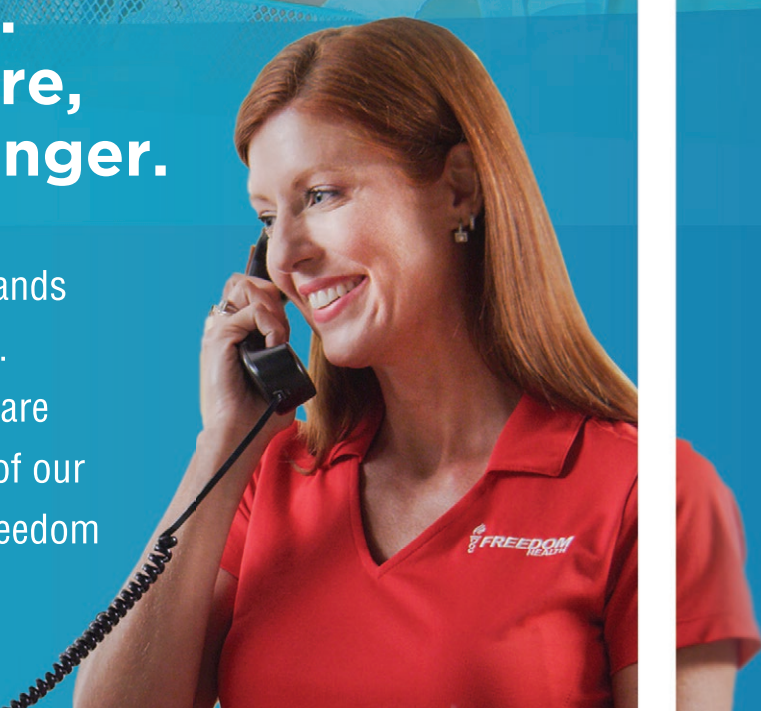
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Assists for Colorado's McKinley Wright IV on Saturday vs. Georgetown, second most in a NCAA Tourney game since 2014.



McKinley Wright IV

SPORTS

CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE

Section B - SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 2021



Virginia loses 62-58 to Preston, Ohio, ending title defense./B2

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Vasilevskiy wins his 11th straight

Lightning beat Blackhawks 4-1

ERIK ERLENDSSON
Associated Press

TAMPA — Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 30 shots for his franchise-record tying 11th consecutive victory. Victor Hedman had three assists and the Tampa Bay Lightning beat the Chicago Blackhawks 4-1 on Saturday.

Steven Stamkos had a goal and an assist, and Yanni Gourde, Anthony Cirelli and Brayden Point also scored for Tampa Bay. Alex Killorn had two assists, and the Lightning improved to 12-2-0 at home.

Vasilevskiy's winning streak is the ninth longest in league history and matches the team record set by Louis Domingue from Nov. 29, 2018 to Feb. 19, 2019. Vasilevskiy improved to 20-3-1 on the season, tied for the second fewest games required to reach the 20-win mark in NHL history behind only Tiny Thompson in 1929-30 for the Boston Bruins.

"Vasy was incredible back there tonight, pretty much like

he has been this entire year," Cirelli said. "Every game he's been there making those huge saves for us when we've needed them."

Alex DeBrincat scored for the Blackhawks, who have lost four straight and six of seven. Malcolm Subban finished with 25 saves.

"We're being tested, it's been a hard stretch," Chicago coach Jeremy Colliton said. "We haven't been perfect, there are areas we'd like to be better in and maybe you end up breaking through when you do that."

Point put Tampa Bay in front at 6:21 of the opening period, cutting across the crease for a pass from Killorn and stuffing the puck inside the far post for his 12th goal of the season.

Cirelli increased the lead to 2-0 during 4-on-4 play when he cut from just below the blue line away from Duncan Keith and took a feed from Mikhail Sergachev. Cirelli cut in alone and deked to his backhand before flipping a puck over Subban at 1:53 of the second period. Sergachev picked up his 100th career assist on the play.

Chicago controlled most of the second period despite being



Tampa Bay Lightning goaltender Andrei Vasilevskiy (88) makes a pad save on a deflection by Chicago Blackhawks center Pius Suter (24) during the first period of a game on Saturday, in Tampa. Defending for Tampa Bay is defenseman Erik Cernak (81).

kept off the board.

The Blackhawks had 1:22 of a 5-on-3 power play but were

unable to register a shot on goal and just four shot attempts.

"Five-on-three, have to

convert," DeBrincat said. "They

See **BOLTS/Page B3**

'Noles avoid upset



Florida State's Balsa Koprivica (5) puts back a rebound basket during the second half of a first-round game against UNC-Greensboro in the NCAA men's college basketball tournament on Saturday, at Banker's Life Fieldhouse, in Indianapolis. Florida State defeated UNC-Greensboro 64-54.

Florida State cold from deep, but outlasts UNCG in NCAA tourney

CLIFF BRUNT
AP sports writer

INDIANAPOLIS — RaiQuan Gray scored 17 points and No. 4 seed Florida State began what it hopes will be another deep NCAA Tournament run under coach Leonard Hamilton, holding off 13th-seeded UNC Greensboro 64-54 in the East Region on Saturday.

The Seminoles, who reached the Elite Eight and the Sweet 16 in the previous two tournaments, allowed the Spartans to hang around deep into the second half thanks to an uneven offensive performance. They will play Colorado in the second round on Monday.

Hamilton, who was rewarded earlier this month with a four-year contract extension, worked the sidelines with a ruptured Achilles tendon that he suffered before the tournament began.

"My guys depend on me," Hamilton said. "If I'm going to ask them to work hard and challenge themselves, I'm going to have to do the same thing to some degree. To be very honest with you, I didn't even know I had the boot on once the game started. It's a nuisance. It's a challenge, but there are more

Oral Roberts faces Florida in second round

No. 15 seed Oral Roberts (17-10) vs. No. 7 seed Florida (15-9)
NCAA Tournament Second Round, Lucas Oil Stadium, Indianapolis
Today, 7:45 p.m.

BOTTOM LINE: Oral Roberts and Florida will meet in a NCAA second round matchup. Florida earned a 75-70 overtime win over Virginia Tech in its most recent game, while Oral Roberts won 75-72 in overtime against Ohio State in its last outing.

SQUAD LEADERS: Florida's Tre Mann has averaged 15.3 points and 5.3 rebounds while Colin Castleton has put up 11.8 points, six rebounds and 2.1 blocks. For the Golden Eagles, Max Abmas has averaged 24.4 points while Kevin Obanor has put up 18.6 points and 9.5 rebounds.

FACILITATING THE OFFENSE: Abmas has accounted for 52 percent of all Oral Roberts field goals over the last three games. Abmas has 23 field goals and 20 assists in those games.

WINLESS WHEN: Florida is 0-5 this year when it scores 66 points or fewer and 15-4 when it scores at least 67.

PASSING FOR POINTS: The Golden Eagles have recently used assists to create baskets more often than the Gators. Florida has 31 assists on 71 field goals (43.7 percent) over its past three matchups while Oral Roberts has assists on 45 of 82 field goals (54.9 percent) during its past three games.

BALL SECURITY: The diligent Oral Roberts offense has turned the ball over on 15.5 percent of its possessions, the 15th-best mark in Division I. 21.2 percent of all Florida possessions have resulted in a turnover (the Gators are ranked 289th, nationally).

important things than worrying about me having a little pain."

The Seminoles were impressed with

the resilience of their 72-year-old coach. "He's a tough guy," Gray said. "He

See **FSU/Page B3**

NASCAR returns to roots

Makes 1st of two visits to Atlanta

PAUL NEWBERRY
AP sports writer

HAMPTON, Ga. — NASCAR is returning to its roots.

Even as the good ol' boys attempt to break with the uglier parts of their history — most notably, the Confederate flag — the sport has embraced a more traditional footprint with its 2021 schedule.

That includes Atlanta Motor Speedway, which on Sunday is hosting the first of two Cup races, Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500.

NASCAR will return to the track in July — the first time since 2010 that the 1.54-mile trioval has staged a pair of events.

The drivers are certainly pleased to be making a couple of visits to one of their favorite stops, a treacherous, high-speed layout that produces some of the best racing on the Cup circuit.

"Atlanta has always been a track I enjoyed," said Martin Truex, coming off a victory in last week's race in Phoenix. "It's a very fun racetrack, being able to run all over the track, just the tire wear and all those things, are things I enjoy behind the wheel."

Nearly two decades ago, NASCAR began an effort to expand its fan base by staging more races beyond the seven states — North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama and Florida — that had long dominated the schedule.

But with attendance dipping at many tracks and big TV ratings harder to come by from an increasingly fragmented audience, the governing body decided to shake things up by turning to its past.

The coronavirus pandemic muddled the effort in 2020, but this year's schedule includes 19 races in those seven traditional states — the most since 2003.

Atlanta has returned to having two Cup dates. So has South Carolina's Darlington Raceway, which was limited to one race from 2005-19. Nashville is back on the schedule for the first time since 1984.

To accommodate the changes, NASCAR dumped Chicago and Kentucky. Dover gave up one of its two races. The first race

See **ATLANTA/Page B3**

Virus bounces VCU Oregon advances

AARON BEARD
AP basketball writer

INDIANAPOLIS — VCU was kicked out of the NCAA Tournament hours before its first-round game Saturday because multiple players tested positive for COVID-19, an outbreak that imperiled the 68-team event and underscored, once again, the delicate nature of staging such a spectacle amid a pandemic a year after it was canceled entirely.

The NCAA announced the cancellation — officially declaring a “no contest” — about three hours before the No. 10 seed Rams were scheduled to tip off against No. 7 seed Oregon in the West Region.

VCU’s players got the news after they had finished their pregame meal.

“It was devastating. It was heartbreaking. No dry eyes. This is what you dream of as a college player and a coach. To get it taken away like this, it’s just a heart-breaking moment in their young lives,” VCU coach Mike Rhoades said. “It just stinks. There’s no way I can sugarcoat it.”

VCU athletic director Ed McLaughlin declined to say which players tested positive, citing privacy concerns. There were multiple positive tests over two days, which is why the Rams had to forfeit, while other schools were able to play first-round games after a single COVID-19 case.

Oklahoma, for example, was in action Saturday despite guard De’Vion Harmon’s positive test. Georgia Tech lost to Loyola Chicago on Friday after ACC player of the year Moses Wright tested positive.

“I just shake my head to think we did all the right things all the way through,” McLaughlin said. “I want to make clear that this is not something where our team broke protocol and did the wrong thing. We don’t know how this happened, but it certainly wasn’t because of bad behavior.”

Virginia Commonwealth University, based in Richmond, is a member of Atlantic 10 Conference and best known in men’s basketball for a surprising run to the 2011 Final Four as an 11th seed.

A year after the tournament was scrapped altogether in the early days of the pandemic, the NCAA was hoping to get cleanly through the 19-day basketball festival known as March Madness, reducing arena capacities to 22% or lower and basing the whole thing in Indiana instead of sprinkling games around the country.

The governing body of college sports made all players return seven negative COVID tests before arriving, then placed all of the teams in downtown hotels and restricted their movements.

It created what it called a “controlled environment,” essentially limiting teams to the hotel, the nearby convention center for practices and the minor league baseball stadium across the street for a chance to get some fresh air.

All teams were declared healthy at Tuesday night’s deadline for allowing schools to be replaced in the bracket.

Virginia falls, ending title run

Howard takes top-seeded Michigan to 2nd round

Associated Press

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. — Virginia’s unusual title defense ended with another upset loss in the NCAA Tournament, falling 62-58 to Jason Preston and Ohio on Saturday.

Some familiar problems showed up again for the fourth-seeded Cavaliers, who struggled to score during a key stretch in the second half and shot 35% from the field for the game. Virginia became the first No. 1 seed to drop its opening game in the NCAA Tournament when it lost to UMBC in 2018, but it used the setback as motivation in its run to the championship in 2019.

Last year’s NCAA Tournament was canceled because of the pandemic, delaying the Cavaliers’ title defense. They just arrived in Indiana on Friday because of COVID-19 issues, and now they are heading home again.

Preston and Ben Vander Plas delivered for Ohio after leading the Bobcats to the Mid-American Conference Tournament title. Next up is No. 5 seed Creighton on Monday.

Vander Plas scored eight of his game-high 17 points during an 18-4 second-half run that erased a 38-31 deficit and gave the Bobcats a 49-42 lead. Ohio (17-7) never trailed again.

Preston finished with 11 points, 13 rebounds and eight assists. Lunden McDay sealed the victory at the free-throw line in the closing seconds.

Sam Hauser had 15 points and nine rebounds for Virginia (18-7), which won the ACC regular-season title and then had to withdraw from the conference tournament after a positive COVID-19 test.

Michigan 82, Texas Southern 66

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Juwan Howard won his first NCAA



Associated Press

Ohio forward Dwight Wilson III (4) defends against Virginia forward Jay Huff (30) during the first half of a first-round game in the NCAA men’s college basketball tournament, on Saturday at Assembly Hall in Bloomington, Ind.

Tournament game since taking over at Michigan, guiding Mike Smith and the top-seeded Wolverines to an 82-66 victory over Texas Southern.

LSU 76, St. Bonaventure 61

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. — Freshman Cameron Thomas scored 27 points in another impressive performance and his LSU teammates provided the rebounding muscle, leading the eighth-seeded Tigers past ninth-seeded St. Bonaventure.

Colorado 96, Georgetown 73

INDIANAPOLIS — Colorado used an early 3-point barrage to parlay its highest seeding ever into a win over Georgetown and coach Patrick Ewing.

Alabama 68, Iona 55

INDIANAPOLIS — Herb Jones scored 20 points and second-seeded Alabama pried open a tight game to beat coach Rick Pitino’s underdogs

from Iona.

Creighton 63, UC Santa Barbara 62

INDIANAPOLIS — Christian Bishop made both ends of a one-and-one with 16 seconds left to give fifth-seeded Creighton the lead, and the Bluejays hung on to beat 12th-seeded UC Santa Barbara.

Southern California 72, Drake 56

INDIANAPOLIS — Evan Mobley had 17 points and 11 rebounds, and No. 6 seed Southern California used smothering defense to beat Drake.

Kansas 73, Eastern Washington 84

INDIANAPOLIS — David McCormack returned from his COVID-19-caused hiatus just in time to rescue No. 3 seed Kansas, piling up 22 points and nine rebounds as the slow-starting Jayhawks rallied from a 10-point second-half deficit to beat

No. 14 seed Eastern Washington.

Iowa 86, Grand Canyon 74

INDIANAPOLIS — Iowa got 24 points from Luka Garza and avoided the early NCAA Tournament exit that befell other high seeds with an 86-74 victory over Grand Canyon in the West Region.

Oklahoma 72, Missouri 68

INDIANAPOLIS — Austin Reaves scored 23 points, Brady Manek added 19 and Oklahoma slipped by ninth-seeded Missouri to win 72-68 in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

Maryland 63, UConn 54

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Eric Ayala scored 23 points and Maryland clamped down on defense down the stretch to snag a 63-54 victory over No. 7 UConn in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

It’s as ‘wide-open a year as any’

Women’s tourney starts up today

DOUG FEINBERG
AP basketball writer

SAN ANTONIO — This year’s women’s NCAA Tournament may be one of the most-wide open in years, with nearly a dozen teams having a good chance to win the championship.

The uncertainty seems apropos after a pandemic-stressed season of stops, pauses and cancellations.

The top seeds Stanford, South Carolina, N.C. State and UConn are definitely the favorites to win the title on April 4 at the Alamodome. The four No. 2s also are among the favorites to win it all with Louisville, Maryland, Baylor and Texas A&M all title contenders.

“This is as wide-open a year as any. Last year maybe it was Oregon or people might say South Carolina,” Stanford coach Tara VanDerveer said. “Past years there’s been Baylor with Brittney Griner or Connecticut with Maya Moore but I think this year is wide open. There are a lot of different teams that could win this tournament. I think it will be very exciting and great for TV.”

History is on the side of the top teams. A one or two seed has won every women’s tournament title since 1997, including the last eight by a No. 1.

Texas A&M coach Gary Blair, who led the Aggies to the 2011 national championship, said his advice is always to play the game with “no fear.”

“That’s how you advance in the NCAAs. If you come in thinking that this team is No. 1 or No. 2, you have no chance,” said Blair, whose Aggies are a two-seed. “But if you come in with a no-fear attitude,

Cinderellas happen all the time.

“I’ve been a lower-seeded team at Arkansas. I’m still the lowest-seeded team that ever made the Final Four when I was at Arkansas as a No 9 seed. We had the opportunity out at Stanford to see a No 16 beat a No 1 ... That’s always been a great teaching lesson to me.”

Even if that trend doesn’t change, there are more teams capable of pulling off upsets and at least reaching the Final Four especially since there were fewer regular season games and practices than there would be during a normal year.

The talent also seems to be more spread out now.

A look at the AP All-America team and for the first time ever there were 15 different schools represented on it. Throughout the season, the No. 1 team in the poll changed four times — the second most all-time. N.C. State and Stanford both lost games to unranked teams this season.

Also, with all the NCAA Tournament being played on neutral courts there’s a better chance that there will be more upsets as lower-seeded teams won’t have to win on a higher-seeded squad’s homecourt to advance to the Sweet 16.

Any team that will make a deep run will have to deal with the mental aspect as well. A school that wins the national championship will have spent nearly three weeks in San Antonio cooped up in their hotel.

Stanford, the overall No. 1 seed, might be in the best position to overcome that. The Cardinal spent nine weeks away from home because of the virus. If they can, VanDerveer could win her first national championship since 1992.

“I think it helps,” the Hall of Fame coach said.



Associated Press

Stanford coach Tara VanDerveer talks to players during the second half of a game against Southern California in the second round of the Pac-12 women’s tournament, March 4 in Las Vegas.

“We’re used to testing every day and used to eating in our rooms. It has prepared us for this. We’ve been her done this, we can handle it.”

VanDerveer tells her players their middle name has to be “flexible.”

Some other things to watch for in the tournament:

FRESH FACES

There are a lot of talented freshmen and sophomores who are making their debuts in the NCAAs. Iowa’s Caitlin Clark led the nation in scoring at 26.7 points per game and

Paige Bueckers of UConn became the third freshman to ever earn first-team All-America honors.

South Carolina sophomore Aliyah Boston, also an All-American, will be playing in her first NCAA Tournament after last season’s was wiped out by the pandemic.

FIRST TIMERS

Four teams will be making their NCAA Tournament debuts, although they will all have a tough task to make it a long stay: Bradley, High Point, Stony Brook and Utah Valley. As an 11-seed Bradley has the

best chance to make it out of the first round as the other three teams would need to pull off monumental upsets as 15 and 16 seeds.

MISSING THEIR LEADER

UConn, which has made the Final Four every tournament since 2008, will be missing coach Geno Auriemma for the first two games because he contracted the coronavirus last week. Auriemma should be back for the Sweet 16.

Driedger, Panthers bounce back to beat Predators

Associated Press

SUNRISE — Chris Driedger stopped 21 shots, Aleksander Barkov and Anthony Duclair scored, and Florida dominated Nashville.

Nashville's Juuse Saros stopped 47 of 48 shots, but the Predators couldn't solve Driedger, making his first start since March 7.

Barkov backhanded in a rebound 9:15 into the second period for his 13th goal, and Duclair added

an empty-netter with 15 seconds left. Nashville beat the Panthers 2-1 on Thursday, but Florida improved to 9-0-1 following a loss this season.

Avalanche 6, Wild 0

DENVER — Philipp Grubauer made 31 saves, Gabriel Landeskog had a goal and two assists, and Colorado Avalanche beat Minnesota.

Cale Makar had a goal and an assist, Nathan MacKinnon

had three assists and Mikko Rantanen scored his third goal in two games.

Penguins 3, Devils 1

NEWARK, N.J. — Bryan Rust and Jake Guentzel each had a goal and an assist, helping Pittsburgh end a two-game skid.

Zach Aston-Reese also scored, Casey DeSmith made 24 saves and Sidney Crosby had two assists for Pittsburgh,

which won for the seventh time in nine games.

Islanders 6, Flyers 1

UNIONDALE, N.Y. — Casey Cizikas scored twice in New York's four-goal first period and the Islanders beat the Philadelphia Flyers 6-1.

Stars 3, Red Wings 0

DETROIT — Tanner Kero broke a scoreless tie late in

the second period, Anton Khudobin stopped all 21 shots he faced and the Dallas Stars pulled away to beat the Detroit Red Wings 3-0.

Rangers 3, Capitals 1

WASHINGTON — Mika Zibanejad scored the go-ahead goal with 2:32 left, Keith Kinkaid made 28 saves and the New York Rangers beat the Washington Capitals 3-1 to snap the NHL's longest

winning streak at seven.

New York has won three of four against East Division-leading Washington this season. The Rangers led for much of the game Friday night before losing on two late goals by Alex Ovechkin.

Kinkaid, the Rangers' third goaltender, picked up his second victory of the season a week after shutting out the Boston Bruins. He and Alexander Georgiev remain the rotation with Igor Shesterkin still out with a groin strain.

Local tennis team wins district, makes sectionals



Special to the Chronicle
Marcia Thuermer's 65 and over, 7.0 USTA team, which has just won its fourth straight Marion district championship, qualified for the Florida sectionals in Lake Nona April 17-19. Seated from left: Nancy Ferguson, Marcia Thuermer, Linda Homa and Tana Hubbard. Standing from left: Gerianne Foster, Gail Cooper, Anne Finnin, Chris Jarzyna, Judy Weber, Lynne Finman, Doris Pritt and Michelle Tripp.



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Big news vs. sensational stuff



Gerry Mulligan
OUT THE WINDOW

Sometimes it is hard to decipher big news from sensational news, even on the local level.

When someone is arrested for doing something dumb, people sit up and take notice. But there are significant things that happen in a community and many people do not pay attention.

We had some of those "big news" events this week in Citrus County.

■ First, Duke Energy announced it is going to build a \$113 million

solar power plant north of Crystal River at its energy site. That means about 200 to 300 jobs during the construction stage and then a very substantial additional property tax bill in the future.

Duke's new investment in Citrus County is a big deal after it closed down the nuclear plant a few years back and eliminated 500 high paying jobs. The important part about industry paying more local property taxes is that they do not demand much in the way of services

compared to new households.

This is big news.

■ The federal government is sending \$33 million in federal aid to Citrus County as part of the coronavirus relief package. That is a huge deal.

The money is going to be used to stimulate the local economy, help individuals and build new infrastructure projects throughout the county. Both Inverness and Crystal River were given a small portion of the funding, but most goes to

county government.

The idea is to reinfuse \$33 million into our local economy and get people back to work. Nothing this big has ever happened in the county as it relates to help from the feds. It is a big deal.

■ We are all sick of reading and talking about COVID, but two significant things happen last week. First, we passed the 10,000 case mark of positive COVID tests out of 150,000 people in our little

See **WINDOW/Page C3**



An airboat prepares to depart the Hernando boat ramp in August 2018.

Chronicle file

A wake-up call for airboat owners

I know what you're thinking when you see the above headline ...

Airboat owners are thinking, "Here we go again! Another hater who doesn't understand our culture! You know, the equivalent of "You bought a home next to an airport and now you want to complain? Not fair!"

The rest of you are thinking, "Finally!"

Let me start by saying I get it. For over 10 years, I competed in sanctioned motorcycle hare scrambles and enduro races across the southern states. These events were held deep in the woods on miles of single track trails. In order to train and be competitive, my team cut nearly 100 miles of trails in multiple riding areas throughout northwest Florida to ride on.

In 2003 dirt bike manufacturers began replacing the quieter 2-stroke engines with more powerful 4-stroke engines which were louder with sound that carried a greater distance. Some of the new dirt bikes were so loud, neighbors near our riding areas complained to law enforcement. Many of us modified our bikes to keep

them quiet while a small minority did not see a problem making an unreasonable amount of noise that bothered everyone within earshot. Ultimately, those few people caused us to lose all of our riding areas and even some motocross tracks. Extinct!

I have lived on Lake Henderson long enough to experience the same mistakes being made by airboat owners.



R.M. Reynolds
GUEST COLUMN

Some have baffles and mufflers where the main sound heard is the whirling of the propeller with a noise level that is reasonable. Others seem to have a complete disregard for their sport, using pipes that are louder than a modified dragster that can be heard for several miles. This type of behavior will cause airboats to be sanctioned, hurting the majority of owners.

Usually, noncommercial airboats have one or two people on-board. The rest of us mortals scratch our heads in wonder how one or two people can make enough noise to frustrate and anger dozens? If you have to wear headphones to operate your boat so the sound level won't ruin your hearing, you might be too loud! When the sound of an airboat causes others to struggle to hear in their own living room, that is a problem.

I read a recent article where law enforcement says they can't catch the few with loud engines. More on that

in a moment.

It is ironic that as a professional musician, I've been well paid to perform over my career yet, if I plugged in my guitar and played at half the sound level of the louder airboats, I would be ticketed and fined ... and we're talking music, not a roaring V8!

Last week we were on Lake Davis moving along at 20 mph. Up ahead I could see a group of airboats navigating one of the channels nearly a half mile away. I could still hear their engines over the motor on my own boat!

Some may ask themselves, "Who cares?" The public cares. Groups have formed in different parts of the country to stop loud street bikes. They are angry and organized as well as effective at drumming loud motorcycles out of some communities completely. They see "needlessly loud" vehicles as negatively affecting their quality of life. Airboats are risking the same fate.

How to fix this and keep airboats from becoming extinct?

1. Airboat owners that have taken steps to make their vessel's noise level acceptable need to convince their louder counterparts to get quieter pipes, mufflers or baffles before they ruin it for all of them. In other words, promote that "it's not cool to be loud!"

2. Airboat dealers need to consider the cost of a shrinking market that will be caused by a continued loss of areas to run the boats they sell. Nowhere to run them less boat sales.

See **AIRBOAT/Page C3**



Courtney Stewart
SEEING BEYOND

Bill targets senior fraud attempts

I'm a fan of senior citizens. Actually, I think I always have been.

When I was a kid I used to make the rounds at church and try to visit with as many seniors as I could before the prelude melted into the beginning of the service. It was a race to see just how many necks I could hug before scrambling to my seat.

I remember back in the '90s, at the height of Beverly Hills' booming days, the community newspaper there, The Visitor, would hold festivals and parades pretty much year round. One of my favorite things was to visit with members of the various clubs; to hear their stories; to listen to them as they regaled me with visions of what America was like decades before I was born.

There is something magical about the way reminiscing can transport someone — even someone who is just a listener trying to imagine the places and events like one would when reading a novel.

In many cultures around the world, senior citizens are the most honored of all people in society. The older one is, the more respect he or she is given.

I think there was a time when that was the case in America. I'm not sure that time is now.

In fact, every year millions of elderly Americans are targeted for some kind of fraud. Reasons why criminals often target this group range from the preconception that they are more trusting and polite to the simple fact that many have good credit. Whatever the reason, according to the FBI, seniors are losing over \$3 billion every year due to scams and fraudulent behavior.

Scams against seniors are often wrapped up in technology, an area of new learning for many of the elderly population. Scammers often pose as a tech support worker and give enough so-called credentials to sound legitimate but end up gaining access to devices that carry sensitive information or are given

See **BEYOND/Page C3**



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Theodore Roosevelt, 1858-1919

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PRISTINE PROPERTY

Conversion to public use merits serious consideration

As essential contributors to the public, economic and environmental well-being of a community, parks are vitally important to the quality of life that residents of a community enjoy.

Situated on Florida's Nature Coast with the coastal waters of the Gulf of Mexico and the inland waters of the Tsala Apopka chain of lakes, Citrus County is a unique water recreational locale that attracts both residents and visitors.

While the cities of Crystal River and Inverness have added to the value of their waterfront parks with significant improvements that are paying dividends for residents and visitors alike, county government's investment in its waterfront parks has lagged behind, especially those located on the Gulf Coast.

With the need for more coastal waterfront access obvious, the conversion to public use of the Pirate's Cove property at the end of Ozello Trail near the St. Martin's Marsh Aquatic Preserve has been long supported by many in the Ozello community and recreational boaters.

Converting the property's pristine, natural beauty to public use would safeguard it from high density condo development, enhance tourism as a core component of our local economy, and further promote the county's Nature Coast marketing image as a premier destination site.

Since the Pirate's Cove property abuts an existing county waterfront park and boat ramp, converting it to

public use would also afford relief for the county's other Gulf Coast waterfront parks and boat ramps that are heavily visited and often overcrowded, especially during peak periods.

The appraisal of the Pirate's Cove property requested by the board of county commissioners is an opportunity that should not be missed. As such, the overall benefits of converting the property to public use should be seriously considered by county commissioners with an eye toward purchase, if the price is right.

Although it is encouraging that county commissioners are in general agreement that public use of the Pirate's Cove property would add value to the county's economic and recreational assets, Commissioner Ronald Kitchen's comments may have muddied the waters.

His comparison of the Homosassa waterfront park property with the Pirate's Cove property disregarded the unique differences of the two properties and both communities. Additionally, his one-sided view of the conversion impact on the county's tax rolls, discounted the increased tax and economic value that parks historically bring to a community.

Unfortunately, the county has missed opportunities like this in the past by viewing them as liabilities rather than as investments. Hopefully, county commissioners this time will look to the future by thinking big and acting boldly — not small and hesitantly.

THE ISSUE:

County's purchase of Pirate's Cove.

OUR OPINION:

An opportunity that should not be missed.

Changing driving habits can reduce traffic fatalities

The year 2020 was a year of great loss, not just because of the devastating pandemic but also due to increased traffic fatalities on our roadways. This increase is not only an issue within our Citrus County community but across the nation. Statistics published by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show that in the last quarter of 2020, the national average for traffic fatalities increased by over 13%.

Since the start of the pandemic, we have seen less cars on the roadway and, overall, less accidents. Why then, would there be this increase in fatalities? Those who were able to continue their daily travels during COVID-19 saw less traffic on the roadways, less vehicles turning, less vehicles stopping, allowing them to reach their destination quickly, and without the usual impediments associated with their daily commute. Driver's attention to detail gradually reduced, which resulted in riskier driving. Everyone's learned daily driving habits have changed, either because of months of less roadway traffic or from hitting the road after a lengthy hiatus. Unfortunately, some drivers are now thinking about everything except driving, and crash data indicates that drivers are engaging in far riskier behaviors than ever before.

What does this mean for our citizens here in Citrus County?

It means we already have the cure, we need to unite and make the behavioral shifts necessary to prevent traffic fatalities. Just like we come together



Sheriff Mike Prendergast
GUEST COLUMN

to mask up against the pandemic, we can come together to end these behaviors such as distracted driving, aggressive driving, and driving under the influence.

CCSO's Traffic Unit worked tirelessly throughout calendar year 2020, conducting high visibility targeted traffic enforcement across the county. During these traffic enforcement events, our Traffic Unit deputies conducted nearly 1,000 traffic stops in the areas of the county seeing the highest level of serious traffic accidents. These numbers do not include their daily traffic enforcement efforts or those carried out by all of our patrol deputies, which totaled 27,460 traffic stops in 2020.

To provide perspective, Citrus County has over 2,100 miles of public roadways. We also have over 145,000 registered vehicles in Citrus County, not to mention the hundreds of thousands of tourists, which visit Citrus County throughout the year. This expansive network of roadways coupled with the abundance of vehicles traversing the thoroughfares within our county simply means we cannot see everything or be everywhere all the time. We must use an evidence-based approach to traffic enforcement. We cannot predict when someone will fail to negotiate a

corner, or drop his or her phone and drift into oncoming traffic. What we can predict is, while all efforts will be made to enforce traffic laws, our deputies will still be needed elsewhere to answer calls for service, track down wanted subjects, investigate crimes and perform security checks on local homes and businesses. Of the nearly 200,000 calls for service CCSO answers every year, traffic enforcement is always our number one proactive call type.

While we cannot be everywhere all at once, our community can still make the changes necessary to keep each other safe. It all starts with you, the second you decide to utilize the privilege of getting behind the wheel, be alert, eliminate all distractions, and #JustDriveCitrus. The men and women of the Citrus County Sheriff's Office will continue their unwavering dedication to making our roadways safer for both residents and visitors but, to make the biggest impact, we need your help. Make 2021 the year you reduce all distractions while driving and follow the posted speed limit.

Remember, you are not just endangering yourself when you take part in unsafe driving behaviors. You are risking the life of someone's son or daughter, husband or wife, mother or father. The first step in increasing safety for all is practicing safe behaviors in every aspect of our lives, from masking up in the grocery store to keeping both hands on the wheel when driving.

So, let's keep each other safe, Citrus.

Mike Prendergast is the Citrus County Sheriff.

LETTERS to the Editor

Protecting businesses not people

As the leader of the Florida Senate, Sen. Wilton Simpson wants to raise your taxes, and it's due to Republicans' cavalier attitude about COVID. Open everything up, though we've had 31,619 deaths in the state. That's more than several countries. Thousands of lost businesses, unemployment at record highs. Tourism is practically nonexistent because people realize they can get COVID in Florida because of Simpson and others' negligence of virus protocol.

So now, after one disaster after another, he wants people trying to make a buck selling online to pay more taxes. A lot of businesses online have to pay shipping charges which local retailers don't. More people shop online because of COVID. So he's hurting those people and buyers who are trying to get a break during this crisis. Simpson doesn't care, he needs to balance a budget he helped deplete. He and the rest of the Republicans cause more damage than they fix. In a press briefing after Tuesday's ceremonies, Simpson said he expects there will be no reform of Florida's beleaguered unemployment system nor changes in the statewide approach to the pandemic, saying infection control requires Floridians to take greater personal responsibility. But he does expect

OPINIONS INVITED

- **Viewpoints** depicted in political cartoons, columns or letters do not necessarily represent the opinion of the editorial board.
- **Persons** wishing to address the editorial board, which meets weekly, should call Jeff Bryan at 352-563-5660.
- **Groups or individuals** are invited to express their opinions in a letter to the editor.
- **All letters** must be signed and include a phone number and hometown, including letters sent via email. Names and hometowns will be printed; phone numbers will not be published or given out.
- **We reserve** the right to edit letters for length, libel, fairness and good taste.
- **Letters** must be no longer than 400 words, and writers will be limited to four letters per month.
- **SEND LETTERS TO:** The Editor, 1624 N. Meadowcrest Blvd., Crystal River, FL 34429; or email to letters@chronicleonline.com.
- **Once approved** and published in the Chronicle, letters to the editor will also appear in the Opinion section of the website, www.chronicleonline.com.

legislators will pass a COVID liability shield for businesses. Protect the businesses, and tax working people.

James Covey
 Inverness

Dem politicians betraying US

One recent letter writer to the Chronicle bemoaned that politicians are betraying us.

Kim Rossman
 Hernando

A pilgrimage to Mar-a-Lago

Muslims can make their pilgrimage to worship in Mecca. Now Republicans can make their pilgrimage to worship in Mar-a-Lago.

Ronald Lewis
 Inverness

Dropoff too far away

I'm happy that Spectrum was able to build a new building in Inverness. I live in Crystal River. I'm 75 years old and I pay most of my bills by money order. I called to see if there was any drop-off place in Crystal River, but of course there's not. Instead of it being halfway located to go, now Crystal River people have to go all the way to Inverness to either pay a bill or whatever if you do not have a credit

card. Too bad. I wish they would think about adding a drop-off somewhere.



A lot of dogs at Hunter Springs

(Re the Monday, March 1, 2021, Page A6 Sound Off): I'm calling about the individual that wants a dog park in Crystal River or is looking for a dog park in Crystal River. All they need to do is go down to Hunter Springs. Most days, there's more dogs than people at the park.

SOUND OFF

■ Mr. Mulligan: Thank you very much for putting my question in Sunday, March 14's Commentary. As always, you write a beautiful, beautiful answer to my question. I'm the one that called in about being frightened with the way the country is turning. Again, I'm not a young woman anymore, but your answer really brought tears to me because you were trying to lift me up out of a frightening experience. Just seeing what's going on down at the border and everything else that they're doing, I am concerned. But after reading your beautiful answer, it gives me hope in spirit that there are a lot of good people and maybe it won't be as bad and I'm not as fearful as I was a few days ago.

Thank you again for your inspiring answer. My husband and I both read it and feel confident that things will improve. You are a very righteous man, a very good Christian and I thank you so much for all your commentaries. This one will be special and I will save the paper. My husband and I are subscribers and we love the Chronicle, but this one on March 14, the commentary from you, is outstanding. Thank you for giving me inspiration and a little less fear. God bless you. Thank you.



Carl Hiaasen:

With or without me, Florida will always be wonderfully weird

Let's get it over with. This is my last column. I didn't plan to write about that because there's actual news to be covered, but my dear friend Dave Barry told me I'd look like a jerk if I didn't say some sort of goodbye.

So here goes. I grew up reading the Miami Herald and what was then the Fort Lauderdale News, my parents holding this radical notion that being factually informed would help us develop into conscientious, fully functioning citizens.

I fell for newspapers and ended up at the University of Florida's journalism school, still one of the best. The Herald shelved my first job application, but in the summer of 1976 I got hired as a city desk reporter.

Reubin Askew was governor, and a harmless fellow named Gerald Ford was president only because the paranoid criminal who preceded him had been forced to resign, and the criminal president's criminal vice president had also quit after getting busted for taking bribes.

Those were the days when all of us wanted to be Woodward or Bernstein.

Meanwhile, South Florida was growing into an outrageously fertile news mecca weird, violent, drug-soaked, exuberantly corrupt and eventually I landed on the Herald's epic investigations team.

Years later, my oldest son, Scott, was doing that same job for the paper. I wasn't always good at telling him how proud I was, so I'm telling him again now.

I was equally proud of my only brother, Rob, a columnist and editor who was murdered with four co-workers when an

angry gunman charged into the Annapolis Capital Gazette newsroom on June 28, 2018. Rob's family and mine will be forever grateful to the hundreds of you who reached out to us after that heart-crushing day.

Most opinion columnists start out as street reporters, an experience vital to understanding how things really work as opposed to how they should. My own approach to the column drawn from the incomparable Pete Hamill, Mike Royko and others was simple: If what I wrote

wasn't pissing off somebody, I probably wasn't doing my job.

Take a sharp-edged stand on any issue, and the other side seethes. Show me a columnist who doesn't get hate mail, and I'll show you someone who's writing about the pesky worms on his tomato plants. The detestable first-person pronoun will likely appear in this column more times than in the archive of my last three decades combined.

Nobody becomes a journalist because they yearn for mass adoration. Donald Trump didn't turn the public against the mainstream media; the news business has never been popular. We're tasked with delivering information that some readers don't want to hear, and will claim not to believe.

Lyndon Johnson blamed the press for turning Americans against the Vietnam War. Richard Nixon blamed the press for overblowing Watergate. Trump blamed the press for everything except his bronzer.

The internet has made it easier to wage war on the truth.

Yet, as shown by the Capitol uprising of selfie-snapping Trump rioters, social media also serves to lure the dumb, deluded and

dangerous into the open. Seeing them all offers important, if unsettling, clarity.

I've done this column since 1985. No idea how many. No particular favorites, no regrets. Slash-and-burn was the only way I knew to do it.

Even the satirical pieces could be scalding, but that's what those who betray the public trust deserve. When somebody got caught selling their commission vote under the table, or stealing outright, I felt morally obliged to write something that would make them choke on their corn flakes the next morning.

Once I called Miami City Hall a "bribe factory," and another time described Tallahassee as a "festival of whores." Too subtle? Possibly.

One time, the Legislature authorized random drug tests for state employees. Lawmakers mysteriously exempted themselves, so I offered to personally pay a big lab so that every one of them, including the governor, could pee in a cup.

No volunteers. Wonder why.

Another time the then-publisher of the Herald, a very decent guy named Dave Lawrence, said he might run for governor. I wrote a piece suggesting he'd "lost his marbles," and nicknamed him Publisher Loco.

I didn't get fired, and Dave let the column run exactly as written. A different publisher once did try to kill one of my columns, failed, and soon departed for a new career in a new line of work.

That wouldn't happen at most papers, which is one reason I never wanted to go anywhere else. Another reason: It's hard to put your heart in this job if you don't have lifetime roots. My friend Hamill never gave up on New York, and that's how I feel about Florida.

Progress, if it happens, is slow. When I was a kid, hardly anyone running for office

talked about the Everglades. Meanwhile, the part that wasn't disappearing under pavement was being used as a free latrine by corporate agriculture and subdivisions.

These days, billions are being spent trying to save the besieged River of Grass, and every ambitious candidate Democrat or Republican waxes rapturously about it. A few of them might actually be sincere, but all of them know how to read the polls.

It would be lovely to report that other things have also changed for the better, but Florida's wild places and clearest waters are still under assault from overdevelopment, opioids are killing more people than coke or street heroin ever did, racism thrives like a fungal rash and corruption is more rampant than ever.

Millions of worried seniors are still awaiting COVID inoculations because they don't live in gated communities full of rich Republicans writing checks to the governor's re-election committee. Then again, who's really surprised that a resort like Ocean Reef gets special vaccine shipments while regular folks in nearby Florida City get to sit in their cars for hours, praying the supply doesn't run out?

As you read these words, some scrofulous tunnel rat in public office is busy selling your best interests down the road. It might be happening at your town council, zoning board, water district, or county commission but it is happening.

Certainly there are those with guts and unshakable integrity in both political parties, but theirs is an uphill slog and often they don't last long.

Retail corruption is now a breeze, since newspapers and other media can no longer afford enough reporters to cover all the key government meetings. You wake up one day, and they're bulldozing 20 acres of

pinetrees at the end of your block to put up a Costco. Your kids ask what's going on, and you can't tell them because you don't have a clue.

That's what happens when hometown journalism fades neighborhood stories don't get reported until it's too late, after the deal's gone down. Most local papers are gasping for life, and if they die it will be their readers who lose the most.

The decision to leave now is mine. It'll be strange not having my weekly deadline, but I'll never stop writing about this bent, beautiful, infuriating state. Fortunately, all the scammers and greedheads remain vastly outnumbered by caring, thoughtful people who fiercely love what's left of this place.

Thanks to all of you who buy enough of my gonzo novels that I don't have to depend on a pauperizing newspaper pension. Thanks also for the heaps of mail, including the letters with prison postmarks.

I owe a special debt to Bob Radziewicz, who retired from the Herald newsroom years ago but has continued editing my column out of friendship and perhaps sentimental curiosity. Same goes for my op-ed page editor, Nancy Ancrum, who's always been there to gently remind me this is a family newspaper please calm down and keep it clean.

Finally and most important, I've got to thank the Herald and its streaming cast of talented, tenacious editors and reporters. Their superb, solid work always made my job easier.

Now someone else can come along and do it better.

Carl Hiaasen is a columnist for the Miami Herald. Readers may write to him at: The Miami Herald, 3511 NW 91st Ave., Miami, FL 33172.

Sound OFF



CALL
563-0579

Doctors not equipped for vaccine

It's obvious that many people who have written in saying that doctors should be given a supply of the vaccine do not understand the doctors are not equipped to keep the vaccine at temperatures between 50 and 80

degrees below zero. Pfizer has now determined that their vaccine can be kept, I think, between -13 degrees and +5 degrees, but that only happened just this past week. So maybe people should stop suggesting that their doctors be given the vaccine in order to vaccinate the patients.

Boat ramp location ridiculous idea

I would like to let my thoughts be known regarding the city of Crystal River wanting to build a boat ramp at the Mullet Hole on State Park Road. That's an absolutely ridiculous idea. As the letter writer wrote

today, that's our own Walden Pond (re Thursday, Feb. 25's letter to the editor by Bonnie Fleck). That is beautiful. That is what the Nature Coast is all about. Absolutely no boat ramp at State Park Road Mullet Hole. That's insanity. In addition, that leads to just a small, little creek that goes

to the river. If you want to put a boat ramp somewhere, put it at the end of the road at the old Crystal River Yacht Club where there is an old boat ramp where the sheriff's department and the FWC put their boats in. That's a great spot for a boat ramp, but any other spot — no good.

WINDOW

Continued from Page C1

community. In addition, at least 420 have died.

The positive news is that at least 35,000 people have already gotten their vaccinations and we are well on the way of getting out of this mess.

Life can and will return to normal later this year.

In addition, when we are talking about significant accomplishments, I am going to ask you to remember the name of Tito Rubio. He is the head of the county health department and it has been his job to follow the vaccine

guidelines established by the state and carry them out in Citrus County.

While the state's guidelines are certainly open for criticism, Tito Rubio and his staff took those rules and worked diligently to get the vaccine distributed. The staff has operated around the clock for months in an effort to vaccinate as many county residents as possible. You have not heard a single criticism of the way the local team got the job done. They were pleasant, organized and efficient with the guidelines that were established. These people are some of the real heroes in our community.

This has been the

largest public health effort ever implemented in Citrus County and it is not over yet. Tito Rubio is the man who has directed this effort.

That is very big news.

And from around the state was a significant story involving manatee deaths. According to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, 637 manatee died in 2020. In 2021, we are only three months into the year and manatee deaths are already close to that mark. They are dying at a ratio more than twice the average.

The deaths have mostly been taking place on the east coast of Florida and the suspected cause is

starvation. Manatee eat seagrasses and Florida has spent decades creating all sorts of pollution that has killed off much of the seagrass.

I do not have to tell you that manatee are key to the coastal tourism business in Citrus County.

There are only about 7,500 manatee left and about 800 to 1,000 come each winter to the coastal waters of Citrus County. Crystal River, Homosassa, Ozello and Chassahowitzka attract tourists from around the world because this is the only place you can legally swim with the manatee.

In Citrus County, we are fortunate that the

Save Crystal River group worked with the Florida Legislature and the city of Crystal River to reverse the practices that killed off our seagrasses. New grasses were planted and now the manatee thrive when they come to visit our waters.

However, on the east coast the Indian River Lagoon has lost about 46,000 acres of seagrass over the past 10 years. Algae blooms and excess nutrients from storm water runoff and leaky septic tanks have killed off the natural manatee food leaving them weak when problems arise.

The big news here is that with citizen

leadership and legislative help from Sen. Wilton Simpson and Rep. Ralph Massullo, Citrus County has managed to protect the food source and clean up the Crystal River. Work is now starting on other rivers in our county.

The problem is that the folks on the Atlantic coast have not even created a game plan. Everyone is just pointing fingers instead of trying to copy the game plan created in Citrus County.

That is big news.

Gerry Mulligan is the publisher of the Chronicle. Email him at gmulligan@chronicleonline.com.

AIRBOAT

Continued from Page C1

3. Law enforcement has the tools to fix the problem immediately. In less than five minutes, they can print a list of all airboat owners in Citrus County. They could then require all airboats to pass a sound test, especially at the throttle level they require to go up on

land! In off-road motorcycle racing, the event organizers require each rider to have their motorcycle tested for sound using an inexpensive decibel meter. The bike's sound is checked at 1/2 throttle and 3/4 throttle. Law enforcement can do the same with airboats to flag the noise offenders.

4. Others on local waterways could report offenders to law enforcement by using the

registration numbers on the bow of the airboat.

A 1960s TV show called "Gentle Ben" took place in the Everglades. In nearly every episode, airboats were being used. Back then, in the middle of the Everglades, it made sense. Now that Citrus County is welcoming new homeowners daily, the sound level and noise (created a by a few) could ruin the sport for many.

If airboat enthusiasts don't think their sport could become so restricted as to become extinct on Citrus County waterways, remember what happened to the motorcycle trails I mentioned.

Being on the water is freedom. It represents everything we Floridians love about our state. Airboats are fun to ride in. They can access areas nobody else gets to see. I

imagine for airboat owners it is the same experience I had accessing areas deep in the woods where no one else has been. I just hope local enthusiasts organize and stop the noisy minority before they lose their rights like we did.

Some technologies become extinct when the cost of continuing is greater than moving on. CB radios, oil lamps, steam powered

locomotives and plain old telephone lines to name a few. If you are reading this on your phone remember, we used to make calls in phone booths using quarters ... not anymore.

R.M. Reynolds is the author of "Selling Public Health" and a resident of Inverness. He lives on Lake Henderson.

BEYOND

Continued from Page C1

the information by unknowing customers.

These scams aren't limited to just fake tech support people, though. Scammers pose as government employees, lottery or sweepstakes personnel, repairmen or even sometimes relatives in order to gain access to sensitive personal identification and financial

information.

There are tons of websites that address ways that senior citizens can protect themselves from scam attempts. Experts suggest that anytime we think something is a scam, the smartest thing to do is immediately search online for their contact information.

It's likely that if it's a scam, someone will have posted about it online.

Of course, never give out any kind of personally identifiable information

and try to keep software updated on phones and other electronic devices.

But that isn't foolproof. Even the most tech-savvy of us can fall prey to scams. That's why House of Representatives Bill 1215 is so important. The "Fraud and Scam Reduction Act" proposes to launch the Office for the Prevention of Fraud Targeting Seniors — an office inside the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) that is devoted to reducing fraud and scam

attempts that target senior citizens.

The bill also calls for the creation of the Senior Scams Prevention Advisory Group — an outside advisory group to work alongside the FTC office.

The bill is still in the beginning stages of making its way into law but the need for a watchdog to educate, provide oversight and give direct service to seniors who have been targeted by scammers is well overdue.

Our senior citizens

should be the most respected group of people within our community — not the group most easily preyed upon. A new government office may seem like more bureaucracy and red tape, but in this case, it's well worth whatever it costs to help shield our seniors from this kind of exploitation.

For decades, they've been the ones protecting us through everything the world has thrown our way. It's time we returned the favor.

Courtney Stewart is a 2003 graduate of Lecanto High School. She has bachelor's degrees in political science and international affairs, a master's degree in intercultural studies and is currently working on her Ph.D. in international conflict management. She most recently spent two years teaching and training students, teachers and government officials in Baghdad, Iraq. Email her at seeingbeyondccc@gmail.com.

Florida Prepaid College Plans: A gem for Sunshine State families

When people run down the list of what makes Florida such a great place to live, it usually includes treasures like our beaches, the warm weather, and the absence of a state income tax. But Floridians also can count Florida Prepaid College Plans among the “gems” that are unique to Florida — enjoyed exclusively by families who call the Sunshine State home.



John D. Rood
GUEST COLUMN

When the program was founded, early champions saw it as a vehicle to make college savings affordable for all Floridians. We now also know that it can encourage

young talent to stay in Florida for college and career. No one could have predicted 30 years ago what our world would look like today amid the continued uncertainties of the pandemic. But today more than ever, our Prepaid Plans offer the certainty that families seek.

Plan enrollments are telling. In 2020, as COVID-19 upended life for so many, we saw Florida families purchase more than 50,000 Prepaid Plans. Every single one of those plans represents a family’s message of certainty and hope to a child: No matter how things look now, the future is bright. We believe in it, and we believe in you.

With a Prepaid Plan,

families don’t have to worry about the ups and downs of the stock market or wonder if they’re saving enough for tuition. That’s on us to manage. As a parent, you get peace of mind — and the pride of knowing what an important investment you are making in your child’s future. By investing in children’s college education now, families are planting the seeds for tomorrow’s engineers, entrepreneurs, nurses and teachers and more.

Our 2021 Prepaid Plan Open Enrollment window continues through April 30 and is the only time this year that families can lock in prices for a Prepaid Plan. Prices start at \$45/month for a newborn, and the State of Florida guarantees all Prepaid Plans.

So plant the seed for their college education and all the doors it can open. Lock in your child’s Prepaid Plan today, and we will manage the rest.

John D. Rood is chairman of the Florida Prepaid College Board.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Submit a Letter to the Editor at letters@chronicleonline.com.

SOUND OFF

- Call the anonymous Sound Off line at 563-0579.
- Be prepared to leave a brief message — write it out before calling to make sure you remember everything you want to say.
- After the beep, speak loudly, slowly and clearly.
- The Chronicle reserves the right to edit Sound Off messages.

The Floral City Garden Club’s
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1st time Cleaning, X-ray & Exam

01110, 00210, 00150

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What is your HMO insurance plan doing for you?

enjoy 15% Off Treatment

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Excludes: Crown (D6058), custom abutment (D6057), Socket preservation, sinus lift, and extractions (D4265, D4263, D7951, D7952, D7210) For non-insured patients only. Must present coupon at time of service. Price subject to change. Coupon cannot be used with any other offer. All coupons must be presented at the time of service. No exceptions. Expires 3/15/21.

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D6740

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Frederick Herzog, Ph.D.
NONPROFIT BRIEFS

Nonprofit disclosure guidelines

The IRS requires charitable 501(c)(3) nonprofits to disclose certain information about the operation of a tax exemption organization to the public. Disclosure is usually limited to documents that exist in the public domain. IRS has established procedures for document disclosure so the process does not become uncomfortable for both sides.

Public inspection

Public charities must make certain documents available for public inspection. Much of the documentary information about nonprofits already exists in state and federal record and can be accessed via databases. If documents must be mailed to out of state locations, nonprofits may charge reasonable copying costs and postage. Technology options in today digital age easily allow email to do perform the disclosure option.

If onsite inspection is required, normal business hours be observed. Asking to view documents on a weekend day or after business hours is not considered reasonable. Nonprofits may also direct the inquiries to government websites were the majority of these basis documents are displayed.

Documents the public may inspect

The Exemption Applications and the Annual Information Returns are two of the main documents for public review. Nonprofits should keep a copy of the request for federal income exemption that is sent to IRS.

The Annual Information Return for small charities under \$50,000 annual income is a simple receipt. Very little information is present on this document.

For charities with larger annual income, the Annual Information Return includes sources of income and expenses in a consolidated format. Donations, event income and costs of operating expense are listed. There is never any personal information of officers and directors found in this document. Publicly available information may always be obtained directly from the IRS for a fee.

Penalties for non-disclosure

Penalties for withholding legitimate requests can be imposed on a responsible person denying the request. There is a penalty of \$20 per day for as long as the refusal continues. A \$10,000 maximum penalty applies for a failure to provide an Information Return. There is no maximum penalty applied to application requests.

Stating a nonprofit organization is complicated. Applications, narratives, documents and forms must be presented in a prescribed sequence for IRS to respond. Mistakes and the absence of complete information causes delays up to a year and more. The NonProfit Resource Center can help.

Dr. Frederick J. Herzog, is the founder/executive director of the NonProfit Resource Center in Citrus County. He can be reached at 847-899-9000 or fherzog@tampabay.rr.com. Visit online at TheNonProfitResourceCenter.com.

Moving forward



Khang Hoang, a tailor at Mertailor, inspects one of the masks he and others created at the Crystal River shop on April 6, 2020. The Mertailor handmade about 350 masks daily at the onset of the pandemic. Business owners across Citrus County found innovative ways to stay afloat this past year through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chronicle file

Local businesses emerging from dark days of coronavirus pandemic



Michael D. Bates
MIKE'S MUSINGS

Charles Darwin famously said, "Adapt or Die."

While "die" might be too strong a word, the sentiment applies to folks who owned businesses, restaurants or retail shops during this more than year-long COVID-19 pandemic.

In some instances, restaurants and other shops were forced to close. I'm thinking of such long-time landmarks as Little Italy Deli & Bakery in Inverness and Havana House in Lecanto.

Other businesses were forced to adapt quickly to the new reality.

Some business owners said it just made sense to close temporarily during the height of the pandemic and reopened when the state allowed them to increase capacities.

Other restaurants came up with innovative ideas to stay afloat.

Some closed for lunch and opened for dinner. Kane's Cattle Co., a Crystal River steakhouse, stopped serving prepared meals and started selling beef and chicken direct to consumers.

"We adapted and we did what we needed to do," said Morgan Sundberg, owner of Kane's Cattle Co., The Loft Bar & Grill and Lollygaggers Sports Pub & Grill.

The term "new normal" is now popular as the county starts emerging from

those dark early days of the pandemic. "Personally, I do not like the term 'new normal,' Sundberg said. "There's nothing normal about COVID and what we had to do and what everybody went through."

Sundberg said she has noticed a return to pre-pandemic conditions and has seen record sales the last couple months at her establishments.

"We're moving forward thanks to huge support from the community," she said. "Tourism is (brisk), lots of people are aware of their health conditions and surroundings and know it's their decision and their choice and they're deciding to live and enjoy themselves," she said.

A changing workplace

Still there is little doubt the face of business in Citrus County changed during the past year.

Publix and other stores put in directional markers so customers wouldn't be bunched together in aisles. They have since been removed.

Of course, mask-wearing has become standard operating procedure in most stores in Citrus County.

Local workers found out what it was like suddenly to set up work spaces at home. The blending of the workplace and family proved to be jarring for many, although others loved it.

Businesses quickly had to get up to speed with virtual communication via Zoom and other modes. The lack of office-place networking and the routine of a structured day was gone.

What's next?

As Citrus County marks one year from the start of the pandemic, what will it look like going forward?

"The vast majority of our businesses seem to have weathered the storm," said Josh Wooten, president/CEO of the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce.

Wooten said the chamber is seeing an increase in business and employers are scrambling to find good employees - a strong indication conditions are returning to normal.

"Not all businesses are still around to benefit from the strengthening economy," he said. "Some businesses we have patronized in the past are gone



M&B Products president and owner Dale McClellan disposes of 6,000 gallons of raw milk April 2, 2020, from his dairy farm in Lecanto. Due to a glut of milk statewide and nationwide, farmers like McClellan had to take drastic measures during COVID-19 shutdowns, like dumping thousands of gallons of raw product down the drain.

forever due to the pandemic."

The short-term outlook appears positive.

"More stimulus (money) is circulating," Wooten said. "The real estate and building market is booming. Interest rates are still historically low and businesses are hiring again."

Added Wooten: "I think the county leaders should really take advantage of the improving economy and millions pouring into us in direct stimulus to make investments that create a good return in boosting our economy for years to come."



Josh Wooten



Morgan Sundberg



Lakeside Ranch celebrates ribbon cutting

Officials with the city of Inverness recently conducted a ribbon cutting for Lakeside Ranch, 4554 E. Windmill Drive. From left are: Chris Plaisted; Victoria White, U.S. Congress legislative aide; Mayor Bob Plaisted; Eric Williams, city manager; councilmembers Dave Ryan and Linda Bega; Greg and Danette Williams, owners of Lakeside Ranch; Kevin Hepfer; Cheryl Trentacosta, Lakeside Ranch staff; Jacquie Hepfer, council president; Cabot McBride, councilmember; Susan Jackson, city clerk; and Sheila Densmore, city staff.

Special to the Chronicle



Chamber Connection

915 N. Suncoast Blvd., Crystal River, FL 34429 · 352-795-3149 · 106 W. Main St., Inverness, FL 34450 · 352-726-2801

Florida Manatee Festival to ROCK your weekend!

We are officially less than a week away from the 34th Annual Florida Manatee Festival, March 27th & 28th in downtown Crystal River! From a full line-up of entertainment, fun on the water, kids activities, food & vendors, and more, there is a reason to celebrate the season for everyone!

MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT

We are proud to boast multiple stages through the festival offering a variety of entertainment options to ignite everyone's eardrums! For a full list of festival entertainment, including the fun in store at the Kids Zone, visit www.GoManateeFest.com

King's Bay Park Mainstage

SATURDAY LINE UP

- DJ John DiOrio — 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.
- Bad Luck Penny — 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- Gypsy Sparrow — 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- Stonegrey — 3 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

SUNDAY LINE UP

- DJ John DiOrio — 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.
- Barefoot Bob & The Hope — 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- Moonflower: Spirit of Santana — 2 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.

Hippie Village Gazebo

SATURDAY LINE UP

- Rob Nichols — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

SUNDAY LINE UP

- Palomino Blonde — 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

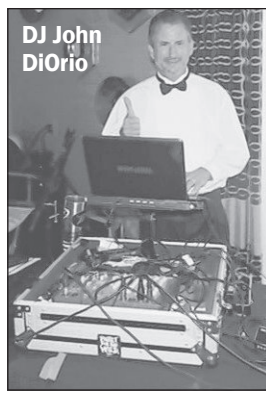
Little Springs Park Gazebo

SATURDAY LINE UP

- The JoJo & Jay Experience — 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

SUNDAY LINE UP

- Jeffrey Eckhoff Studios — 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- The Lecanto Jazz Band — 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.



FESTIVAL SAFETY

We are excited to move forward, safely and responsibly, as we celebrate our favorite floating friends, the manatees, and enjoy the endless and unique amenities that beautiful Crystal River has to offer.

We encourage festival-goers to stay home if they are vulnerable or feeling ill. We encourage all attendees to practice social distancing, wash hands regularly, utilize the on-site sanitation stations and wear a mask if social distancing is not possible.

The Florida Manatee Festival, and the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce, will be implementing and practicing safety precautions to ensure the health of our attendees, volunteers, vendors, and staff.

Additionally, in accordance with the state-mandated requirement of masks on public transportation, all attendees, volunteers, staff, and vendors will be required to wear a mask if they choose to utilize the free shuttles to and from the festival.

CONGRATS PAGEANT WINNERS!



Congratulations to our 2021 Floral City Strawberry Festival princesses & princes!

- Little Miss Strawberry Princess: Payton Witten, age 4
- Miss Strawberry Princess: Hadley Kreisle, age 8
- Little Strawberry Prince: Gabriel Boedecker, age 5
- Strawberry Prince: Gregory Hermann, age 10

RECENT RIBBON CUTTINGS

The Chamber is growing every week. We welcome our new members and thank all of them for joining the Chamber. We encourage the community to support their businesses.

Citrus Medical Associates

352-560-0333



Welcome to the Chamber, Citrus Medical Associates! Whether you are experiencing medical issues or seeking preventive care, their providers believe it is the greatest privilege to treat, guide and counsel you through your wellness journey. 216 S Seminole, Inverness.

West Coast Metal Fabricators

352-794-3804



Welcome to the Chamber, West Coast Metal Fabricators! 8325 W Crystal St, Crystal River.

Rehire Furloughed Employee Grant Program for businesses

The BOCC recently allocated \$300,000 to the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce for a grant program for businesses that furloughed employees due to COVID-19 and have since rehired them. To qualify, the business must have furloughed an employee for a minimum of two months before rehiring and steadily employing for a minimum of 90 days. The grant amount is \$2,000 per rehired full-time equivalent employee.

All local businesses are eligible.

Complete information on the grant program and documentation required is on the application form.

It is preferred that businesses use the online application. However, in the event that is not possible, the application form may be printed and mailed back along with the required documentation.

Application are open at www.CitrusCountyChamber.com/furlough-rehire-grant. For questions, please email CitrusFurloughRehire@gmail.com

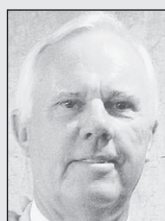


'Chamber Report' on WYKE

Watch the weekly Chamber Report show on WYKE-TV to stay informed on Chamber events, issues, and member spotlights. Chamber Report is broadcast on Tuesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 5:00 p.m. on Spectrum Channel 16 or through LiveStream (www.livestream.com/watch and search for "WYKE TV 47").

This week, host Jade White, Chamber Public Relations & Communication Coordinator, talks with Jim Green of SCORE Nature Coast about the availability of PPP Loans and EIDL loans for independent contractors, self-employed, and sole proprietors. Also, Harold Walker joins our host to talk about the Citrus Construction Academy and their mission to bring a passion of the trades to our students.

Chamber Report is your ticket to the many happenings in Citrus County!



Jim Green



Harold Walker

Chamber Legacy Partners

The Chamber recognizes our Legacy Partners that have made a special investment in the Chamber to support the programs and mission of the Chamber. For information on becoming a Legacy Partner, please contact the Chamber at 352-795-3149.



Biz DIGEST

CF to have business etiquette workshop

The College of Central Florida is extending their training opportunities to Citrus County in partnership with the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce on April 2 and 20. Workshops are offered at \$29 each and most sessions are scheduled twice each month. Friday workshops will be held via Zoom and the format for Tuesday workshops is to be determined.

The topic for the workshop is "Business Etiquette: How Not to Embarrass Yourself." The workshop will cover useful tools that will help individuals present the best version of themselves.

Register and pay online at tinyurl.com/m44d7r7s or call 352-854-2322 ext. 1496.

Community Charitable Foundation opens grants March 28

On March 28, the Citrus County Community Charitable Foundation will open their 10th grant cycle in Citrus County.

Grants are available for new or expanded (providing more services, expanding the number of clients, etc.) projects, programs or initiatives by 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organizations with a physical address in Citrus County, in the areas of health education, community health, and health/medicine programs/projects and health/medicine research or initiatives. The deadline for submissions is April 19.

To apply, go to ccccf.us and visit the "Grants" page for eligibility and forms. For assistance, contact Crystal at 352-419-4039 or ccccf2015@aol.com.

Webinar for small businesses offered by SCORE

Learn how Google and Facebook

advertising platforms work and how to use them to effectively attract customers.

Join SCORE of the Nature Coast for a free webinar for small business at 1 p.m. Tuesday, March 30.

We will walk through the set up of sample ad campaigns and discuss the various features of each platform. Get the most out of your online marketing.

Sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/4u476tnh>.

Rotary Club of Inverness opens community grant

The Rotary Club of Inverness and its 503(c)(3) charitable foundation support local initiatives to make our community a safer, healthier and happier place to live. This year it has three key strategic focus areas: empowering the success of youths; feeding the hungry; and housing the homeless.

The club sponsors a competitive community grant process. This cycle hopes to have \$10,000 available to award. Grant requests are based on fit with one of the three strategic focus areas, demonstrated need, expected outcome and adherence to required process.

The application form is located on the club's website: www.invernessflrotary.org. In the toolbar at the top, click on "News and Stories," then "Documents."

Print and complete the application, and mail it to the Rotary Club of Inverness along with any supporting information. Submittals must be postmarked no later than April 1.

The club expects to make the funding decision no later than May 1, and intends to present checks soon thereafter.

Mail two copies of the completed grant application to: Grants Administration, Rotary Club of Inverness, P.O. Box 1317, Inverness, FL 34451-1317.

Start early to get your house retirement-ready

LIZ WESTON
NerdWallet

Many people want to remain in their homes after they retire rather than move to a senior living facility or community. Unfortunately, most homes aren't set up to help us age safely and affordably.

If your goal is to "age in place," some advance preparation could help make that possible — or point to better alternatives.

"Somewhere in your 50s, hopefully, you're starting to think seriously about are you going to be able to stay in the house you're in? Or are you going to need to make changes?" says DeDe Jones, a certified financial planner in Denver.

CONSIDER WHAT YOU NEED TO CHANGE

Start by thinking about how you would live in your home if you had less mobility, less energy and potentially less money.

Unexpected expenses for major home repairs or upgrades were the most commonly reported financial shocks experienced by retirees, according to a 2015 study by the Society of Actuaries. Those big-ticket costs can be devastating on a fixed income. The society recommends a home inspection before retirement so you can identify and budget for those costs. But you also could schedule some of the expensive stuff — replacing a roof, for instance, or upgrading the heat and air conditioning system — while

you're still working. Likewise, investments in energy efficiency could help you avoid big bills when you're less able to afford them. Adding insulation, installing a smart thermostat and choosing energy-efficient appliances can help. In sunnier climates, solar panels can dramatically reduce your energy costs.

Consider upkeep, as well. You might want to replace a labor-intensive grass yard and planting beds with lower-maintenance landscaping. You could swap out siding that needs to be painted every few years with a more durable option, such as vinyl, fiber cement or modified wood. Decluttering can make your place easier to navigate and to clean.

BUILD YOUR EQUITY

You may still face big bills or have trouble making ends meet in retirement. In that case, your home's equity could be helpful. You could access your home's value by selling it, using a reverse mortgage or getting a home equity line of credit.

But you can't tap equity you don't have. In 2016, 46% of homeowners age 65 to 79 still had mortgage debt, according to Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies. The median balance owed was \$77,000.

A mortgage in retirement isn't ideal for many people, financial planners say. Few people get much if any tax benefit from their mortgages, and having to make the payments can cause people to deplete their retirement savings more rapidly.

Planners say you shouldn't

prioritize paying off your mortgage over saving for retirement and for emergencies. And you probably shouldn't take money from retirement funds to pay off a mortgage. But once you're on track with your savings goals, you could make extra principal payments to pay down the loan more rapidly.

ASSESS ACCESSIBILITY

Consider incorporating accessibility features into any planned renovations. Grab bars in bathrooms, lever-style handles on doors and faucets, and rocker-style light switches (preferably accessible from a wheelchair) are relatively low-cost upgrades, for example. Costlier changes include widening doorways and hallways, adding a curbless shower, installing non-slip flooring and creating a zero-step entry.

Ideally, your home would have just one level, but a home with stairs can work if it has a bedroom and full bath on the entry level. If that's your situation, you could focus your renovations on making those spaces accessible rather than trying to remake your whole house.

Sometimes there's simply too much that needs to be done or your home has features you can't affordably modify. Even if you think you can manage a bunch of stairs or a home that's far from your neighbors, your living situation could worry your loved ones, Jones notes.

"Moving might give you the chance to live closer to your support system," she says. "Makes it easier on them, makes it easier on you."

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Lost



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for return of LOST SUPPORT ANIMAL for Disabled Vet - He is a 42 lb. Male Tri-Color BEAGLE. He urgently NEEDS his Meds! He was Lost Thursday, March 4th, 2021 from vehicle at corner of Norvell Bryant and Lecanto Hwy- Wearing Large orange vest w/ black handle on top. *NO Questions Asked *Any Solid Tip Rewarded Right away
Please Call **(352) 270-2732 (352) 897-4967**
*****HUGE REWARD*****

LOST CAT
Black/White Tuxedo Cat, skittish w/ a crooked ear - lost from Pine Ridge - Missing 5 MONTHS - may be in old Beverly Hills or Crystal River (352) 464-1567

MISSING



Name: Bodie
Gender: Male Neutered
Weight: 69 pounds
Bodie ran from Countryside Animal Clinic on 3/16/2021. He headed through the Winn Dixie parking lot, down Truman. He is very shy and will not come to anyone but his family. If you spot him please call **352-212-4518/813-545-6841** and **352-746-7171**. **\$1,000 REWARD**

Found

****FOUND****
Dark Brown Brindle Dog
- found in the west area of Inverness- to claim you must be able to describe in detail- **(352) 586-9699**

KEY FOB
found in Beverly Hills on Forrest Ridge Blvd near High Valley Sub-division, has housekey & 2 colored tabs call **352-476-6781** to identify

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Trades/Skills

CHRONICLE

Photo Correspondent

The Citrus County Chronicle's editorial department is seeking a photo correspondent to assist with a variety of photographic duties. The successful candidate will possess a working knowledge of his or her own digital camera, (including flash-photography) computer equipment and software to edit and transmit images taken while shooting a wide-variety of photographs. Night and weekend work will be required. Basic word-processing skills will be required to submit photo captions that will be published with the photographs. All work will take place within Citrus County and reliable transportation is a must. This is a contract position.

Inquiries may be made by contacting Photo Editor Matthew Beck: mbeck@chronicleonline.com.

Trades/Skills

\$1000 SIGN ON BONUS

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Experienced Appliance & AC Technicians

to join our family. Established family owned & operated company offers great benefits after 90 days which include: Health insurance, (employer pays 50%) 401K, paid holidays, paid vacations (employer pays 50%) 401K, paid holidays, paid vacations. You must have a valid driver's license, clean back ground and verifiable experience.

Please submit resume to HR@desantisac.com or apply in person **814 N. Oldwire Rd Wildwood, FL**

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(352) 436-7664

Good Things to Eat

Local boat run Shrimp \$6.99/lb or 5 lbs/\$30 **Rio's Blue Crab Shack 352-651-8801**

Lost

*****LOST CAT*** SUPPORT ANIMAL**
Female Black Cat w/ white patch on chest & another on belly. She was wearing a Pink Sparkle Collar and a Sparke Flea Collar - last seen in area of Westwood Acres in Crystal River- Lost in December 2020- Please Call: **540-550-6309**

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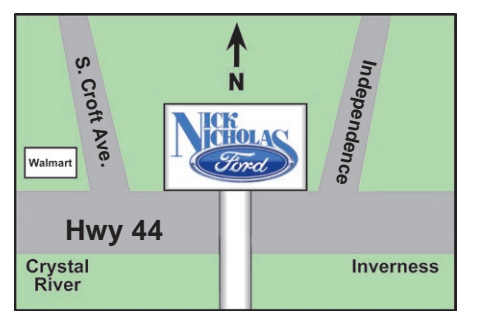
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HomeFront

SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 2021



The staff at Ag-Pro on U.S. 19 in Crystal River told Jane the landscaping fronting the building was three years old. This Walter's Viburnum is likely 'Mrs. Schiller's Delight.' It has a dense twiggly crown, tiny leaves and remains compact beside the handrail of the entry steps. It takes pruning well if desired, but has reached its mature size in full sun and with regular irrigation and fertilization.

JANE WEBER/Special to the Chronicle

Inside this week:

Jane's Garden

Jane looks at Walter's Viburnum./Page E6

US housing construction down 10.3% in February

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Severe winter weather in much of the country pushed home construction down a sharp 10.3% in February while applications for new construction fell by 10.8%.

The decline pushed home and apartment construction down to a seasonally adjusted annual

rate of 1.42 million units last month, compared to a rate of 1.58 million units in January when housing starts had fallen 5.1 percent, the Commerce Department reported Wednesday.

Even with the two months of declines, economists are optimistic that housing will bounce back in coming months, helped by ultra-low mortgage rates and

rising demand by American who have been cooped up for the past year as the coronavirus pandemic rages.

However, even with the expected rebound, the growth in housing will likely slow from last year's sizzling pace given a series of restraints from a lack of building lots to surging lumber prices.

Oxford Economics reports that random length lumber prices have more than tripled since last April. The National Association of Home Builders said the lumber price surge is adding \$24,000 to the average price of a newly built home.

That may be playing out in the plans this year for homebuilders.

On Wednesday, the U.S. reported the first drop in applications for new building permits, considered a good indication of future activity, since October, and left applications at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.68 million units.

See HOUSING/Page E11

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Things to consider before a DIY paint project

Living SPACE

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Digital Vision

Before you pick up a paintbrush, there are several factors to consider before you decide whether or not to call in the pros.

If you're planning to refresh the paint in your living room or swipe on a new hue in the kitchen, you may be thinking about tackling the project yourself. However, before you pull on overalls and pick up a paintbrush, consider the factors below to help you decide whether or not to call in the pros.

1. Consider the state of your walls.

If you live in a new home with perfectly smooth walls and few nicks, painting your master bath could be a relatively easy project. However, if you're in an older home that has crumbling plaster and layers of paint, paint-scraping and spackling could turn an otherwise-easy project into one better left to the pros.

Of course, this is a judgment call that should be based on your level of experience and the amount of time and work you're willing to put in. As a general rule, if you're not sure you'll

be able to achieve a smooth finish, it's time to call a professional painter.

2. Take your health (and your back health) into consideration.

You'll likely need to climb up and down a ladder, wield a roller for

several hours and crouch down or stretch up to paint every inch of the molding and trim. If you have back problems, it could be worth it to

See LIVING/Page E7

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REAL ESTATE DIGEST PHOTOS

- Headshots of real estate agents and associates submitted for the Real Estate Digest are kept on file in the Chronicle Editorial Department. It is the responsibility of the individuals submitting news notes to ensure headshots have been sent to the newsroom, and to advise staff of any name changes.
- Photos need to be in sharp focus.
- Photos submitted electronically should be in maximum-resolution JPEG (.jpg) format.

Red sorrel has pluses and minuses; tree burl is natural



LESLIE DERRENBACHER/Special to the Chronicle
A close-up of red sorrel.

Dear Gardener Gal: What can you tell me about the plant that looks red in many fields in the area? I see it along the side of the road as well, but just not as thick as in fields or pastures. Is it a crop? It looks nice from a distance.

—Mark

Dear Mark: I believe what you are seeing is red sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*). Like so many weeds, we don't notice them until they bloom or we have millions of them. When viewed from a distance in a rolling pasture, the reddish-tinted stems and blooms are kinda pretty.

Bucolic scenery aside, this is considered a non-native weed. Red sorrel does have some positive attributes, but let's trash talk it first.

Red sorrel is what is known as an indicator plant. This means it can be used to get information about the soil in which it is growing. The landowner with reddish pastures may want to do some research before doing any type of planting. The presence of this weed indicates an acid soil and low fertility.



Leslie Derrenbacher
GARDENER GAL

Blueberries might be happy there, but many crops might not. Getting rid of this weed is no easy feat due to the aggressive system of rhizomes.

Liming and nitrogen fertilization are recommended for control.

Now your average homeowner needn't worry about all this. This is not a yard weed per se. If you

See GAL/Page E5

Asian antiques expert would know more about necklace

Dear John: You were recommended to me by the Appleton Museum for possible assistance in identifying this jade necklace I have recently acquired. The 19 unique red jade stones, picture attached, were displayed in a framed shadow box in the home of a wealthy Asian family. It was acquired at an estate sale along with a number of other Asian antiques. I had a gemologist jeweler examine it and he advised me it was red jade, but could not tell me any more. He recommended the Appleton Museum in Ocala. Thus, bringing me to you for advice and counsel.



John Sikorski
SIKORSKI'S ATTIC

I am seeking identification as to age and origin and value of this necklace, so I can properly label and insure it. I appreciate your advice and counsel. — J.L.B., Homosassa

Dear J.L.B.: There is no specific collector interest in your necklace. I think it was made well into the 20th century. Since it was identified by a gemologist to be red jade and was likely made in Asia, it would be best to contact a specialist.

Lark Mason is the Antiques Roadshow Asian antiques specialist. I suggest you contact Lark Marson Associates at www.larkmasonassociates.com. Good luck and let us know how things work out.

Dear John: I have two "old" phonograph records. One is a "Marconi Velvet

See ATTIC/Page E8

This necklace is made of red jade, and was probably made in the 20th century. An Asian antiques expert would be able to say more about it.

Special to the Chronicle



GAL

Continued from Page E4

have it in your pasture, contact the IFAS Extension Office for details on control and affects on livestock.

Now the positive: This is considered an edible and even a desirable plant/herb by some folks. A member of the buckwheat family and closely related to rhubarb, its tart flavor is similar sour apples. As a kid — ok, I still do it — my brother and I couldn't walk past a red sorrel without plucking a piece and chewing down the length of the stem to extract the tart juice.

As always: Make darn sure you know what plant you are putting in your mouth before trying it yourself. Thanks for writing.

Dear Gardener Gal:

What is wrong with this poor tree? The tree isn't ours, but we saw it while driving and had to pull over and get a picture. Any ideas? — *Henry and Mary*

Dear Henry and Mary: That "poor tree" will probably be just fine. It has several burls, and I agree, it is quite a sight! A burl (callus tissue) is the tree's reaction to a stress of some kind. It is sort of like a non-malignant tumor. In general, it doesn't hurt the tree's longevity, though where they occur on the trunk, how large, etc., could be a factor.

Burls are highly sought after by woodworkers for their beautiful designs and patterns. Tree trimmers keep an eye out for them and usually have buyers ready and waiting.

While the burl itself might not harm the tree, trying to cut one out of a living tree is definitely

asking for trouble. Any pests and disease.

removal of bark and tissue is an invitation to Thanks for sharing this impressive sight.

"Gardener Gal" Leslie Floridian. Send your questions to askgardenergal@gmail.com.

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Walter's Viburnum in Florida

The northern hemisphere's spring equinox occurred on March 20 when the daylight hours and the darkness hours were equal, at 12 hours. As the spring days lengthen in March, shrubs flowering in the garden include azalea, blueberry, camellia, citrus, Coral- or Cherokee Bean, deciduous Japanese magnolia, Red Buckeye, spirea, and viburnum. Some have evergreen leaves, but others are deciduous or leafless in winter. These shrubs are low maintenance and drought tolerant once established.



Jane Weber
JANE'S GARDEN

Native wildflowers and introduced annual and perennial plants that brighten landscapes and attract butterflies in March include blanketflower, phlox, salvia, spiderwort, Zephyr Lily, oxalis, amaryllis and dozens more species. A well-planned garden can have some species in flower every day of the year.

Native, natural Walters Viburnum is a semi-deciduous shrub to small tree that grows to 30 feet tall in the wild. Its habitats include coastal hammocks, limestone outcrops, floodplains, woods and riverbanks. It ranges throughout Florida and may be evergreen in the south but is deciduous where winters have frosts and freezes. It ranges on the temperate Southeastern Coastal Plain from Alabama through Georgia and into South Carolina in U.S. cold hardiness zones 6 to 9. It is slow-growing, with a lifespan of about 50 years.

Showy, flat-topped clusters of small white flowers make conspicuous displays in March locally. Flower clusters are atop opposite twigs and at the terminal end of branches. The small leaves are opposite each other, up to 1.5 inches long, oval in shape without a pointed tip and may have tiny dull teeth along the leaf margins.

Flowers attract pollinators. The dense foliage offers cover from predators to songbirds, lizards, insects and wildlife. Fruit that develops after pollination provides flesh and seeds for wildlife food. The flattened berry-like drupe is red at first then turns black when ripe in summer.



JANE WEBER/Special to the Chronicle

This white flowering Walter's Viburnum grows on the west side of Citrus Avenue north of Crystal River. It flowers for about three weeks in early March. Native, natural Walter's Viburnum is a semi-deciduous shrub to small tree that grows to 30 feet tall in the wild. Its habitats include coastal hammocks, limestone outcrops, floodplains, woods and riverbanks. It ranges throughout Florida and may be evergreen in the south but is deciduous where winters have frosts and freezes.

There are several named cultivars that have dense small leaves and short internode distances (spaces between the leaves on the stems). Named varieties of Walter's Viburnum remain compact, dense and much shorter than the original species, so are popular in commercial landscapes and home gardens. Walter's Viburnum can grow in full sun to part shade and flowers best in moist to wet acidic soils rich in organic content. Homeowners should amend dry sandy soil and supply regular weekly irrigation to provide the best growing conditions for this desirable plant.

While the pure native Walter's Viburnum flowers prolifically in spring, the named cultivars bloom in spring and fall. Dwarf 'Mrs. Schiller's Delight' is a popular named variety used in Florida. It remains 3 to 5 feet tall without

pruning. Local wholesale grower Green Earth grows this variety by the thousands to supply landscapers and retail nurseries.

In my garden in the high pine sandhills, I planted several groups of 'Densa' Walters Viburnum propagated and grown by Cross-Bayou Farms in Holder. This variety can grow to 8 feet tall and 5 to 6 feet in diameter in time. One group of three viburnums was planted in full sun, 5 feet apart in amended soil and with minimal hand watering during the dry months of April and May. After eight years, they are about 4 to 5 feet tall and have merged together as a dense privacy screen, windbreak and buffer zone behind a bench. These three 'Densa' Walters' Viburnums have blocked the view of the home across the road as well as the dusty limestone road itself.

Elsewhere in three other corners of the garden, I made similar plantings of three Walter's Viburnum. While the individual planting holes were well amended with the finely milled mulch from Central Landfill on State Road 44 in Citrus County, the plants got no regular irrigation over the years. These little, slow and low-growing plants have developed deep, wide-ranging root systems but have not grown tall. They do flower in spring and fall but cannot get enough moisture to grow as tall as those with irrigation and more organic humus content in the amended soil.

Jane Weber is a professional gardener and consultant. Semi-retired, she grows thousands of native plants. Contact her at jweber12385@gmail.com or phone 352-249-6899.

LIVING

Continued from Page E3

outsource this project and save yourself the pain.

3. Be realistic about your skill level.

It may sound obvious, but your painting skills will ultimately determine whether you achieve the results you want. The hard part can be admitting to yourself that it might be worth paying a pro in order to be satisfied with your freshly painted room.

4. Think about the ceiling height.

Before you start painting, it's a good idea to measure your ceilings and take a look at the ladders you might need for the project. If you're tall and have 8-foot ceilings, a small step ladder might do the trick. If you have high ceilings, you may need to invest in a taller ladder.

Again, consider your own safety before deciding to paint your cathedral ceilings on your

own. Professional painters have years of experience and the right ladders and tools for the job. If you do decide to DIY the project, it's a smart idea to ask a family member or friend to help hold the ladder.

5. Value your time.

Painting the entire house yourself could save you \$1,500, but it could cost you several weekends. Be sure to factor in the value of the time you'd be spending on the project. Research has shown that outsourcing time-consuming chores can actually make people happier, so weigh whether the time investment is worth it to you or not.

Alternately, consider turning the painting project into a communal activity by recruiting family or friends to help out.

6. Look at your schedule.

Painting an entire room or house is a task that's best reserved for when you have large chunks of time to devote to it. For example, if you have only short windows of time available, it will be almost impossible to paint an entire

room with a seamless finish (and it may appear obvious where you started and stopped the project). If you can't dedicate a full day or at least several consecutive hours to the project, it may be better to hire a pro.

7. Don't forget the mess factor.

Whether you're painting the kitchen or your entire house, you're probably going to need more tarps, towels and floor covers than you think. Most pro painters are experienced in avoiding the spills, drips and splatters that can happen when painting a room. Plus, they'll move the furniture and supply all the necessary tarps and covers.

8. Remind yourself it's OK to outsource.

Remember, there's no shame in hiring a pro painter. Outsourcing this task may help you feel calmer as you cross one big chore off your to-do list.

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ATTIC

Continued from Page E4

Tone Record.” It is one side only, dated 12-1906 of Columbia Band Selections from “Il trovatore No. 54.” The other one is from The Aeolian Company, dated 1921, Irving Berlin, from the Music Box Review. Side one is “Everybody Step” and side two is “How Many Times.” I wondered if you could tell me how much they might be worth and who might be interested in them. I thoroughly enjoy your column in the Citrus County Chronicle! Thank you for your help. — *J.M., internet*

Dear J.M.: Vintage records are a large specific category of collecting. Within the category, the records you have are at the bottom of the totem pole of collector interest. Even at a few dollars apiece, they are difficult to sell. Consider a donation to a charity of your choice or your local library.

Dear John: I have the letters my grandmother received from my grandfather during World War II and some war bonds. I would like to know if there is a place that keeps this sort of thing or if a war memorabilia collector would be interested in them. — *B.C., internet*

Dear B.C.: There is specific collector interest in World War II memorabilia. War bonds are at the bottom of the totem pole of collecting interests. They are worth face value plus what interest may be applicable.

However, the letters are different situation. I suggest you contact the Center for American War Letters at Chapman University. The website is www.chapman.edu and do a search for war letters and the Legacy Project will come up.

John Sikorski has been a professional in the antiques business for 30 years. Send questions to Sikorski's Attic, P.O. Box 2513, Ocala, FL 34478 or asksikorski@aol.com.

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US long-term loan rate edges up; 30-year at 3.09%

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. long-term mortgage rates continued to edge higher this week as the benchmark 30-year loan stayed above the 3% mark. Rates remain near historic lows, however.

Mortgage buyer Freddie Mac reported Thursday that the average rate on the 30-year fixed-rate home loan rose to 3.09% from 3.05% last week. By contrast, the benchmark rate stood at 3.65% a year ago.

The average rate on 15-year fixed-rate loans, popular among those seeking

to refinance their mortgages, increased to 2.40% from 2.38% last week.

The prospect of massive pandemic aid, following Congress' recent enactment of the nearly \$2 trillion relief package, has helped lift uncertainty about the economic recovery and likely coaxed mortgage rates higher.

The government reported Thursday that the number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits rose last week to 770,000, a sign that layoffs remain high even as much of the economy is steadily recovering from the coronavirus recession.



A “sale pending” sign stands along side a housing lot in Madison County, Miss.

Associated Press

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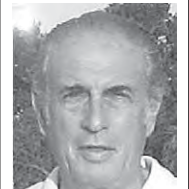
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A sign sits in front of a KB Home construction site in Simi Valley, Calif.

HOUSING

Continued from Page E2

The severe weather last month included a prolonged period when millions of Texans were without electricity because freezing temperatures over-burdened the Texas power grid.

Despite deadly weather patterns and sky high lumber prices, it's highly likely that housing construction will remain one of the stand-out performers for the economy again this year.

"We expect the pace of housing starts to moderate in 2021 as homebuilders confront constraints including high lumber

prices and shortages of lots and labor. However, we think the February data overstates any actual weakness in the housing market," Nancy Vanden Houten, lead economist for Oxford Economics, said in a research note.

Rubeela Farooqi, chief U.S. economist for High Frequency Economics, said there were many positive forces that will carry last year's momentum into 2021.

"Mortgage rates are historically low and combined with record low inventories are likely to support building activity, especially in the single-family sector," she said.

Housing construction rose 6.9% last year to 1.38 million units, the strongest

showing since the housing boom of 2006.

Construction starts for single-family homes dropped 8.5% in February to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.04 million units while the smaller apartment sector fell 14.5% to an annual rate of

372,000 units.

Construction activity fell in every part of the country except the West which saw a 17.6% increase. Construction starts fell 39.5% in the Northeast and were down 34.9% in the Midwest and 9.7% in the South.

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426 ELLA AVE, INVERNESS
Look at this 2/2-2 detached carport waterfront cozy home, is MOVE-IN-READY, with a large spacious 10x12 shed, is within minutes from historic downtown Inverness, and all the indoor/outdoor amenities it has to offer.
MLS #799489 \$215,000
Call Judy McCoy 355-601-1355 and schedule your showing today!



2030 NW 19TH ST. CRYSTAL RIVER
LOOK AT THIS 3/3/1, 2-story screen enclosed pool home on Crystal River's deepest canals, in one of the most prestigious waterfront communities, and in Woodland est. It has an 80 ft. long dock, boathouse with lift, concrete seawall, and 2nd story screen-enclosed deck overlooking the canal. THIS IS A MUST-SEE HOME!
MLS #799466 \$635,000
Call Skyler Hastings 352-422-6096.

THE SUNDAY CHRONICLE

March 21, 2021

WISH BLOW OUT THE CANDLES, HEHE HEHE HEHE

NOBODY HOME

PEANUTS

featuring "Good ol' Charlie Brown" by SCHULZ

PAWPET SHOW 1:00 P.M.

NOW PLAYING.. Action! Drama!!

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

WOODSTOCK ALWAYS LIKES THE PART WHERE RHETT BUTLER WALKS OUT ON SCARLETT...

HEE HEE HEE HEE

DILBERT

by SCOTT ADAMS dilbert.com

DO YOU HAVE A FEW MINUTES TO REVIEW MY FIRST DRAFT?

YES.

I ASK BECAUSE USUALLY YOU SAY YOU'RE TOO BUSY TO HELP.

WELL, I SAID YES THIS TIME.

THAT'S FUNNY, BECAUSE USUALLY YOU'RE ALL, "I'M SO BUSY." BUT TODAY YOU HAVE ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD.

TODAY I'M NOT BUSY.

I FIND THAT SUSPICIOUS.

TAKE YES FOR AN ANSWER!!!

THAT'S NOT HOW INNOCENT PEOPLE TALK.

MARVIN & Bitsy

by Tom Armstrong

I'M CREATING ANOTHER MASTERPIECE

YOU DO REALIZE NOBODY DOES HARD-COPY ART ANYMORE, MARVIN?

ARTWORK IS ALL DONE ON COMPUTERS NOW

THERE ARE A TON OF PROGRAMS THAT ALLOW ARTISTS TO PRODUCE AND PRINT OUT ART READY TO HANG ON THE WALL!

THAT'S JUST A PASSING FAD

COMPUTERS WILL NEVER REPLACE CRAYONS

Bob Weber Jr.'s SLYLOCK FOX and COMICS FOR KIDS

Slylock Fox and Max Mouse took a break from their current crime case to grab some lunch. Slylock saw a fly in his tea and told the waiter to bring a fresh cup of tea. When the waiter returned, Slylock insisted it was the same cup of tea. How did he know?

Solution - The waiter had added sugar before sending the cup back.

Bob Weber Jr. and SR 3-21

HOW TO DRAW a mouse

YOUR DRAWING

Today's terrific artist is Samantha, age 16

Submit your black-and-white drawing to www.slylockfox.com

A group of jellyfish is called a ...

- School
- Smack
- Mess
- Clump
- Sandwich

Answer - b

Spot six differences between these panels.

Answer - Branch, newspaper, shoes, frog, jacket and street sign.

For more Spot Six Differences, Slylock Fox and other puzzles and comics go to www.slylockfox.com

Sunday Puzzle Fun

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form six ordinary words.

IDQULI
◯◯◯◯◯◯

ZNLOZE
◯◯◯◯◯◯

SPHIAM
◯◯◯◯◯◯

NRBANE
◯◯◯◯◯◯

RTWEET
◯◯◯◯◯◯

TNYTIE
◯◯◯◯◯◯

Download the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

3/21

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

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PRINT YOUR ANSWER IN THE CIRCLES BELOW

◯◯ ◯◯ ◯◯◯◯ ◯◯ ◯◯◯◯

SUDOKU

THE SAMURAI OF PUZZLES By The Mepham Group

Level
1 **2**
3 **4**

5	8	6		7	2
2					
	4				6
		8	2		
4	2		3		9
		4	7		
	5		8	2	
					3
6	3		5		9

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, please visit sudoku.org.uk

Solution to Last Weeks puzzle

4	5	7	3	9	1	8	2	6
9	6	1	5	2	8	7	3	4
8	3	2	6	7	4	9	5	1
5	2	4	8	6	9	1	7	3
6	1	9	7	3	5	4	8	2
3	7	8	4	1	2	5	6	9
7	8	3	9	4	6	2	1	5
1	4	6	2	5	7	3	9	8
2	9	5	1	8	3	6	4	7

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GARFIELD

NOW IT'S TIME FOR "DADDY'S HOME!"

BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK!

ODIE! I'M RIGHT HERE!

AND NOW BACK TO "DADDY'S HOME!"

BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK!

JIM DAVIS 3-21

ANDY CAPP
by Smythe

THERE'S ANDY GETTING KICKED OUT OF THE PUB. NOW, THAT IS SURPRISING

WHAT IS?

ROSE & CROWN BEERS

I THOUGHT JACK WAS LEFT-FOOTED

BOOT!

EVERY NIGHT I STAND HERE WAITING FOR YOU TO STAGGER IN

HE!

HOW DO YOU PROPOSE WE CHANGE THINGS?

YOU COULD ALWAYS SIT DOWN AND WAIT

GOLDSMITH & GARNETT

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HAL FOSTER'S **Prince Valiant**
BY SCHULTZ AND YEATES

THE LORDS HALLAM, KENNARD AND RAVINGER SURPRISE THE LOCKBRAMBLE COUNCIL BY ANNOUNCING SIR PEREDUR THE ROVER AS THEIR CHAMPION.

A MERCENARY WITH NO PARTICULAR ALLEGIANCE TO THE THREE BROTHERS, PEREDUR'S REPUTATION AS A RUTHLESS AND EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL IS WELL-KNOWN. HE WAS HIRED TO GUARANTEE VICTORY.

ALL AGREE TO HOLD THE CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS THE FOLLOWING DAY. GAWAIN PREPARES IN LOCKBRAMBLE'S ARMORY, AND VAL OFFERS POINTED ADVICE: "DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE PEREDUR - HE IS A DESPERATE, EXPERIENCED ROGUE, AND NOT ABOVE BASE DECEPTION."

VAL CAN ONLY ROLL HIS EYES AT GAWAIN'S ETERNALLY CAREFREE ATTITUDE. RORY IS CONFLICTED - PROUD OF GAWAIN'S DEFENSE OF LOCKBRAMBLE, BUT BESET BY GUILT, KNOWING THAT HE DOES IT FOR HER. IF ONLY HE WEREN'T SO RECKLESS!

RORY ADDS: "HE WAS THE SOLE SURVIVOR OF THE SAXON SIEGE OF CASTLE BERINGAR, AND THOUGH NEVER PROVEN, NO ONE DOUBTS WHO BETRAYED BERINGAR." THE DASHING GAWAIN SMILES: "THEN IT SHOULD PROVE AN ENTERTAINING BOUT!"

4389 YEATES 3/21/21

THE NEXT MORNING, THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FOUR FIEFDOMS GATHER AT LOCKBRAMBLE'S GAMING FIELD... NEXT: **ulterior motives**

IN NO TIME AT ALL

—

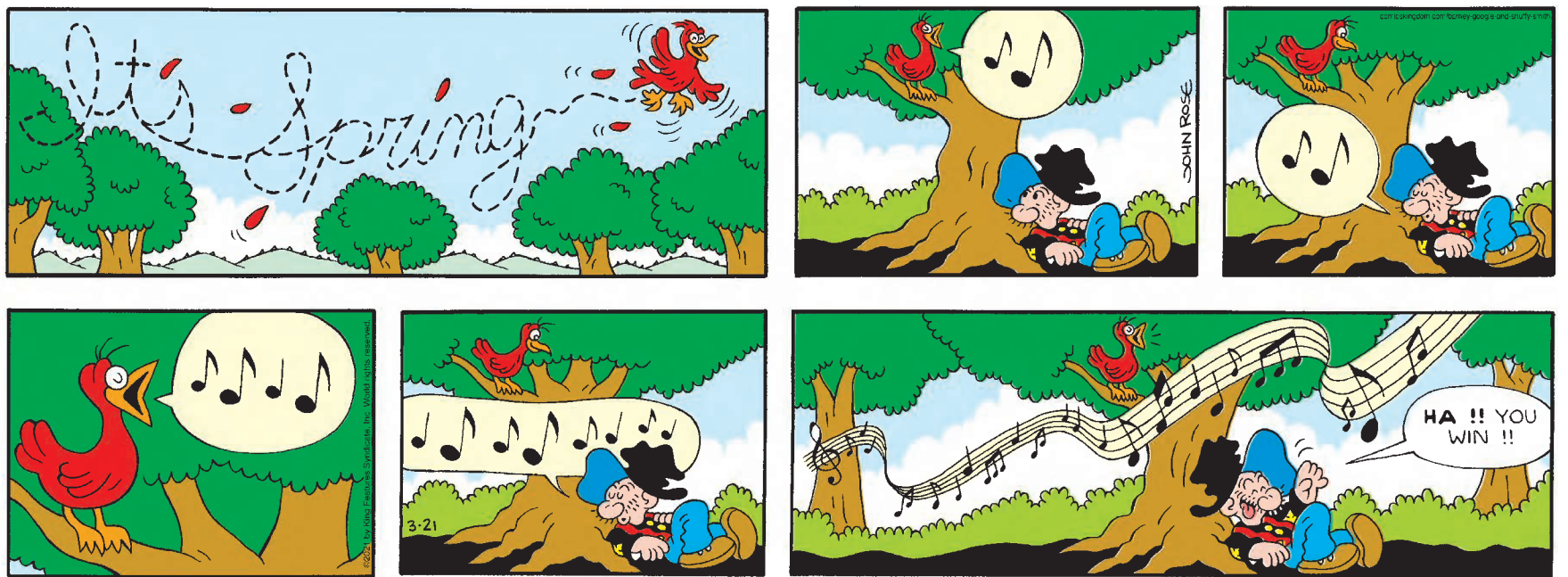
The new clock was obviously defective and broke

LIVID MISHAP WETTER
NOZZLE BANNER ENTRY

Answer:

JUMBLE

BARNEY GOOGLE and SNEZUMPT-H BY JOHN ROSE

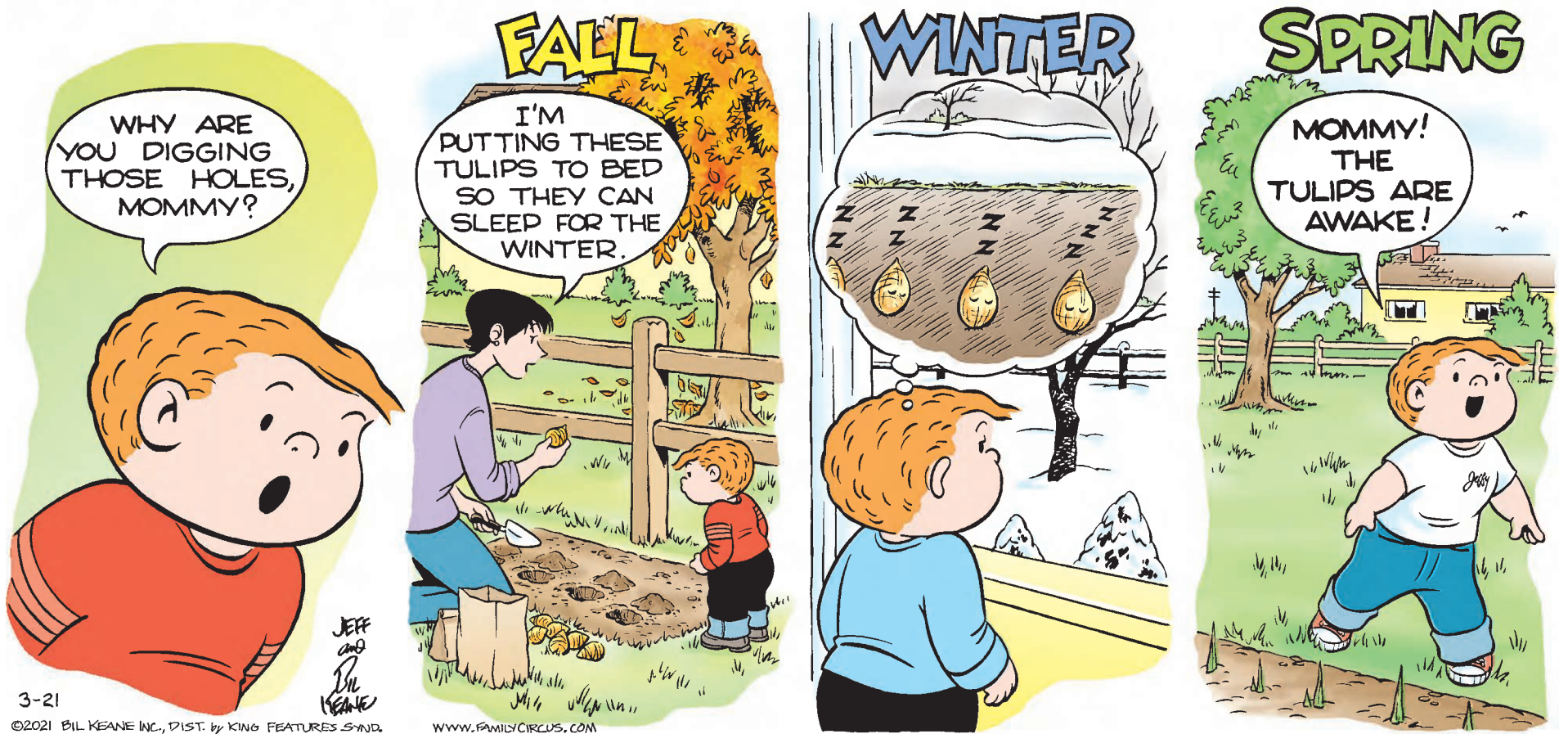


Mort Walker's beetle bailey

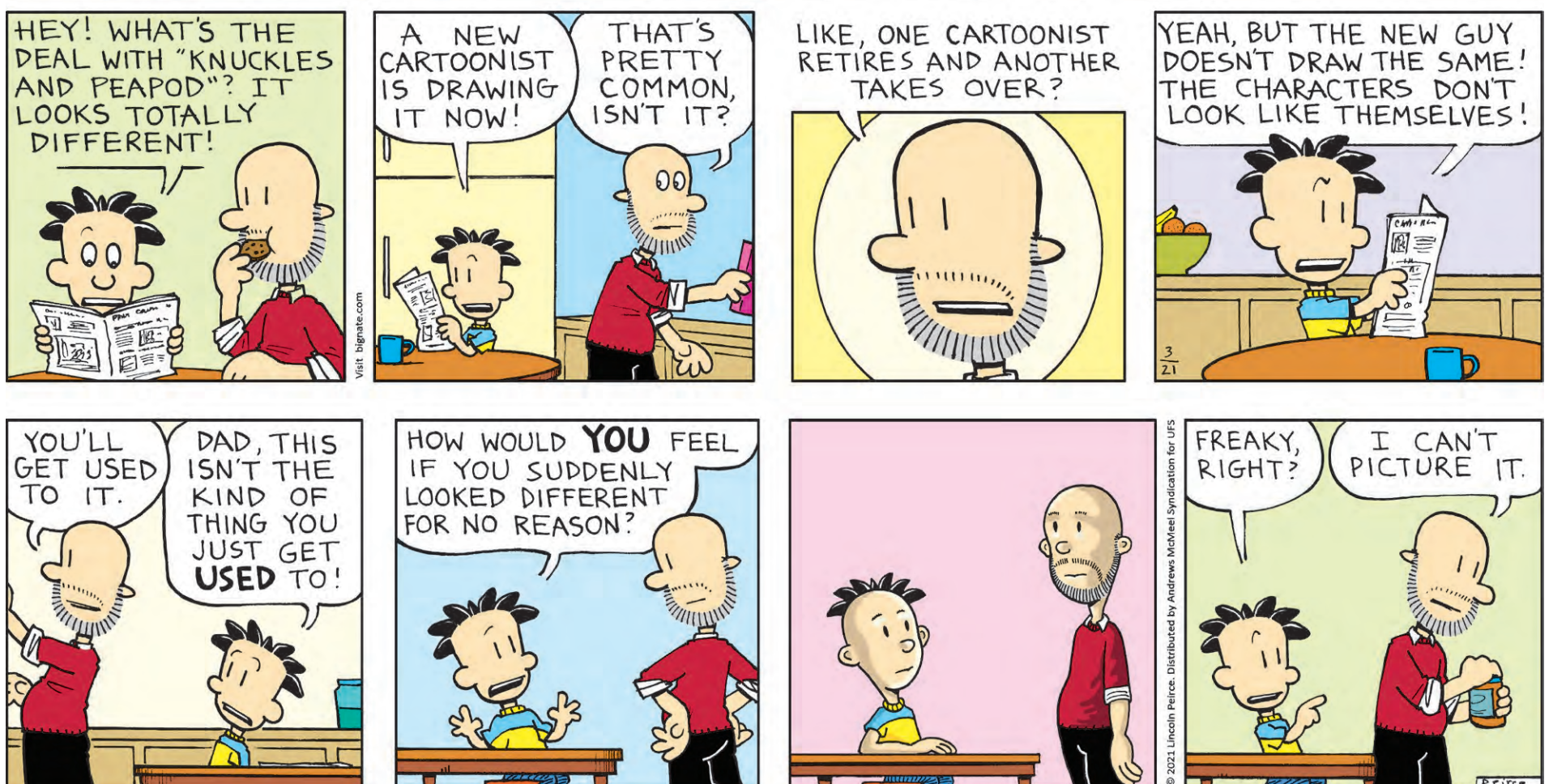
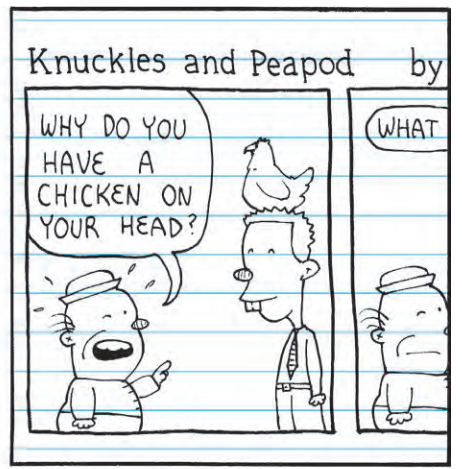


THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bill Keane

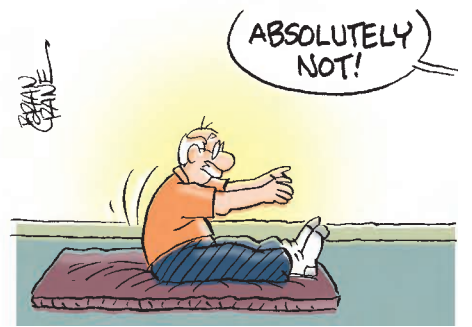
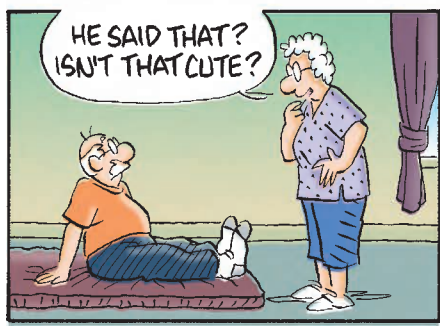


Knuckles and Peapod by Lincoln Peirce



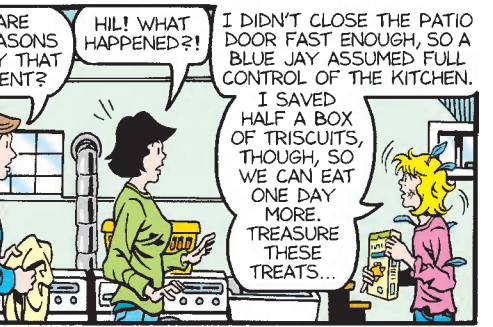
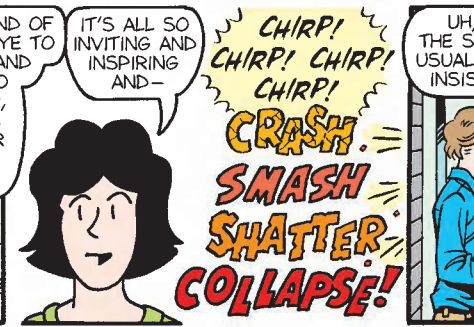
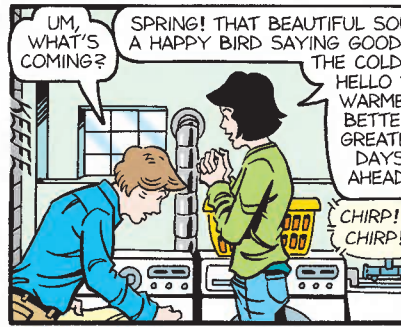
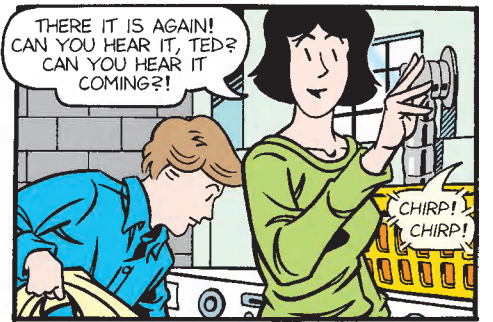
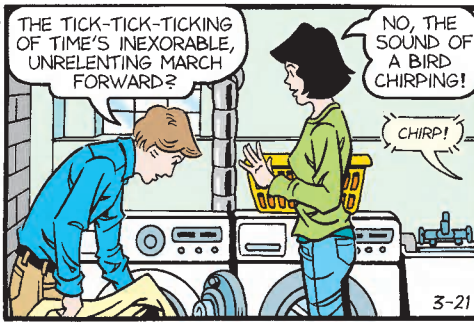
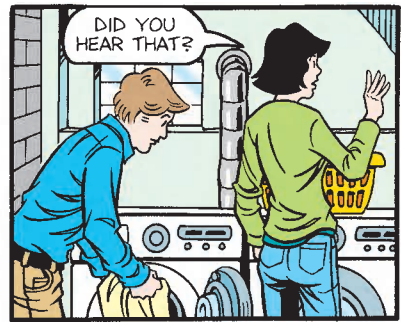
PICKLES

by BRIAN CRANE

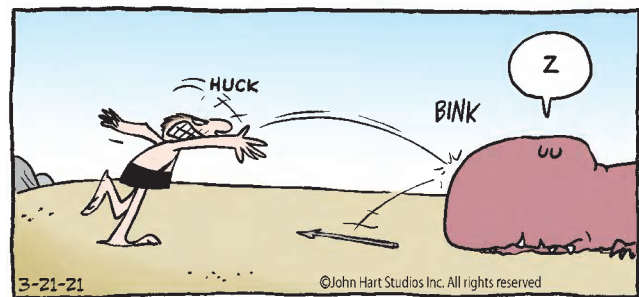
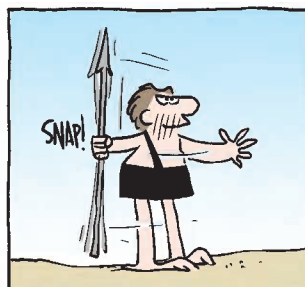


SALLY FORTH

by Francesco Marciuliano

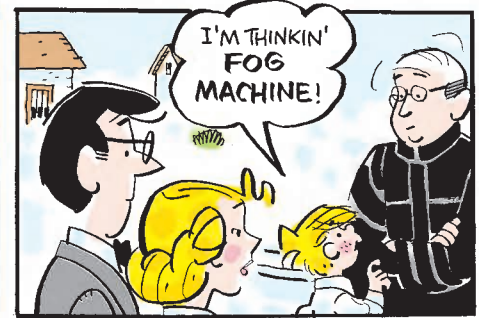
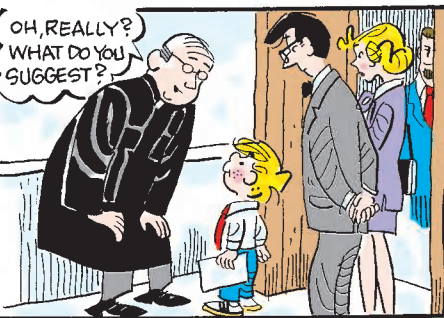
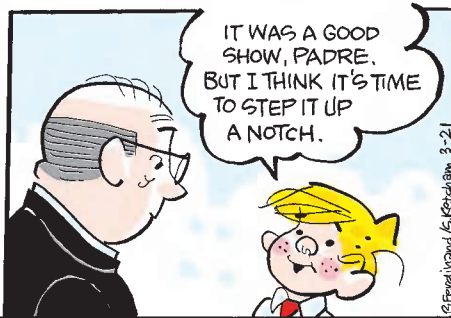
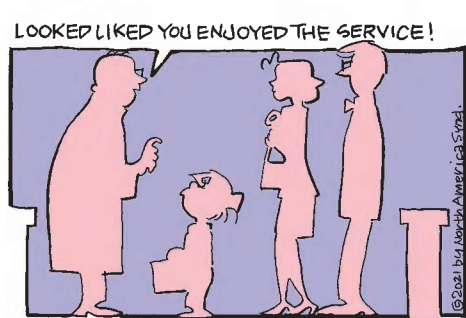
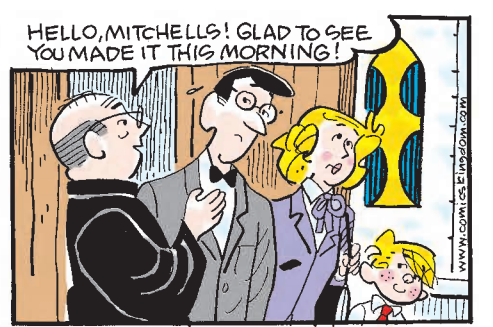
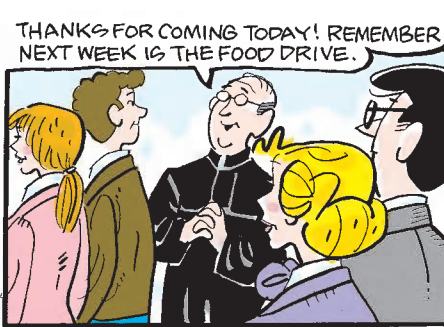


BY MASTROIANNI AND HART



Dennis the Menace MORE COWBELL

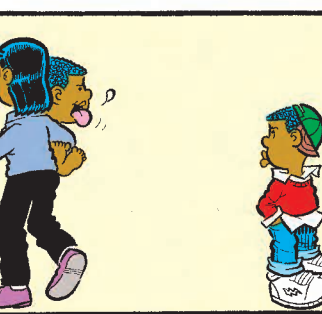
Thank Ketchum's



CURTIS

by RAY BILLINGSLEY

MMMM, THIS SWEET POTATO PIE IS PERFECT!



Luann
by greg evans

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ARE YOU JUST GOING TO LET SHANNON HAVE A TANTRUM?

TRUST ME. SHE'LL CALM DOWN WHEN SHE RUNS OUT OF TOYS TO THROW

SEE? I KNOW HOW HER LITTLE GIRL BRAIN W-

ZWANG

ZING

HAGGAR
the horrible
by DIK BROWNE

HAGGAR, WAKE UP! TODAY WE CLEAN UP AFTER A LONG WINTER'S MESS!

HMM? =SMACK= WHA?

IT TOOK ALL WINTER TO MAKE THE MESS...WHAT'S YOUR HURRY TO CLEAN IT UP?

IT'S *SPRING*, MOTHER!

IS HAGGAR GOING TO HELP WITH SPRING CLEANING?

OF COURSE!

I GAVE HIM TEN CHORES TO START ON THIS MORNING!

DID YOU TELL HIM TO CLEAN THE COBWEBS FROM THE CEILING?

NO, I FORGOT!

BUT I DON'T WANT TO OVERWORK HIM!

NON-SENSE!

HOW MUCH HARDER CAN IT BE FOR HIM TO IGNORE ONE MORE THING?

Z

Wizard of Id
by Hart, Mastroianni and Parker

ENEMY AT THE GATES!

THERE GOES MY SUNDAY

POW

OKAY, THAT WAS EPIC!

I NAIL IT NOW AND THEN!

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BLONDIE
BY DEAN KUNZE & JOHN MARSHALL

THERE YOU ARE, BUMSTEAD! I'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER FOR YOU!

I'VE BEEN AT MY DESK SINCE YOUR MEETING THIS MORNING, BOSS

BUMSTEAD, I WANT TO APOLOGIZE FOR MY LITTLE OUTBURST AT YOU IN FRONT OF EVERYONE THIS MORNING

I GUESS SOMETIMES MY TEMPER GETS THE BEST OF ME

I'M SORRY FOR CALLING YOU PROBABLY THE WORST OFFICE MANAGER IN THE WORLD

NO PROBLEM, BOSS...I DON'T TAKE IT SERIOUSLY

IN FACT, I SHOULD PROBABLY APOLOGIZE FOR WHAT I SAID AFTER YOU WALKED AWAY!

REALLY? WHAT DID YOU SAY, MY BOY?

I'M NOT REALLY SURE... A LITTLE JOKE ABOUT A NAPOLEON COMPLEX, I THINK...

I CAME THIS CLOSE TO KEEPING MY JOB TODAY

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Hi and Lois
by BRIAN and GREG WALKER

JUST IMAGINE...

WE'LL BE LIKE JACK KEROUAC AND NEAL CASSADY.

DRIVING THROUGH THE NIGHT...

CRISSCROSSING THE COUNTRY...

HAVING ADVENTURES IN FAR-FLUNG PLACES.

THE HIDEAWAY BIKER BAR

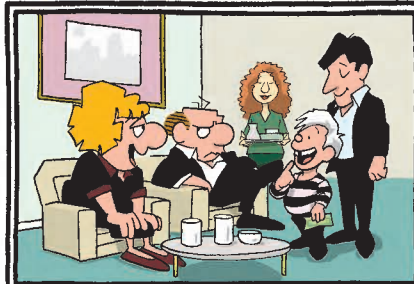
MORE LIKE "IN THE DRIVEWAY" THAN "ON THE ROAD."

JUST WAIT UNTIL I GET MY LICENSE.

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THE LOCKHORNS

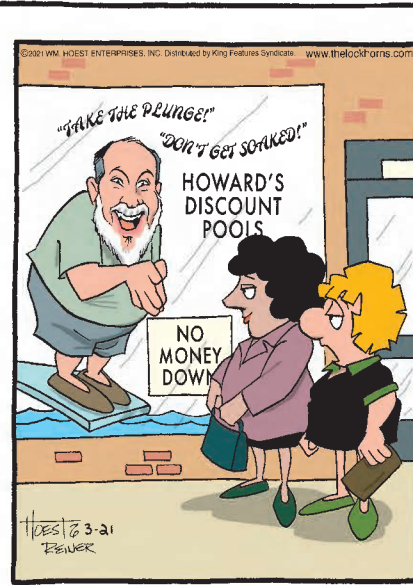
BY BUNNY HOEST AND JOHN REINER



"FIVE DOLLARS? WOW! I WONDER WHAT THE TOOTH FAIRY WOULD LEAVE FOR LEROY'S UPPER PLATE!"



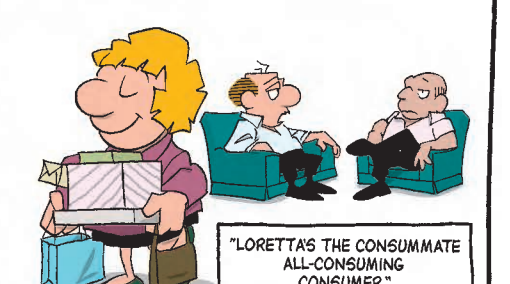
"HOW COME WHENEVER I CONFESS SOMETHING, YOU KEEP ASKING 'AND' ...?"



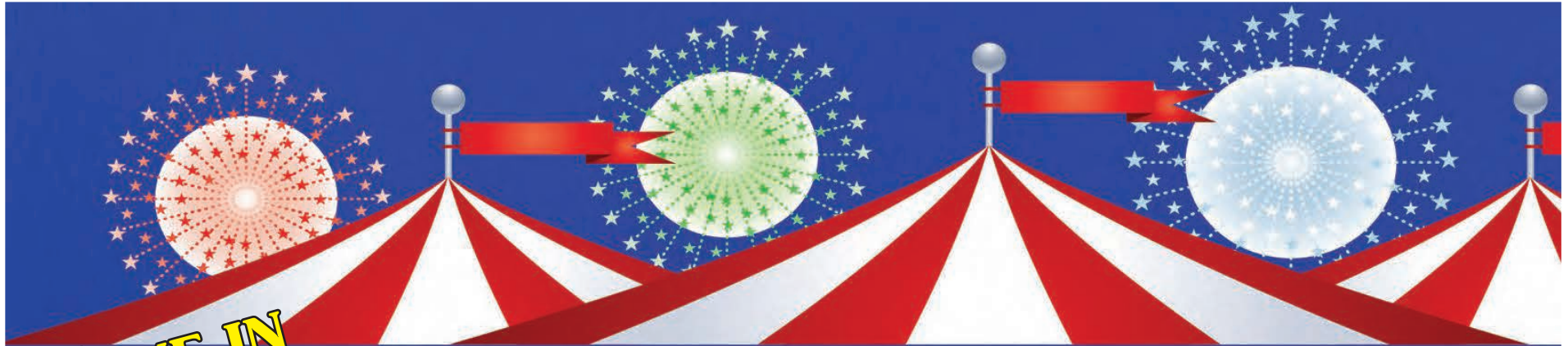
"WE SOLD OUR POOL ... I GOT TIRED OF HAVING TO BLOW IT UP."



"OH, WE'VE GONE PAPERLESS ... LEROY KEEPS HIS BOOZE IN THERE NOW."



"LORETTA'S THE CONSUMMATE ALL-CONSUMING CONSUMER."



LIVE IN CONCERT

The Dennis Lee Show

Monday, March 29, 2021 ▶ 7:00 p.m.

Citrus County Fair Auditorium

\$5.00

Advance Concert Ticket

Citrus County Fairgrounds Auditorium
3600 S. Florida Avenue, Inverness, FL

Tickets:

**Citrus County Fair
Call 352-726-2993**

Doors Open at 6:30 p.m.

Concert at 7:00 p.m.



CARNIVAL/MIDWAY SPECIALS

CITRUS COUNTY FAIR ASSOCIATION

3600 S. Florida Ave., Inverness, FL 34450

(352) 726-2993 | Fax (352) 726-3121

www.citruscountyfair.com

PRE-FAIR WEEK FESTIVITIES:

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 11 A.M.: • Horse Show

SATURDAY, MARCH 27:

Last chance to enter competitive exhibits

• Goat Show • Sheep Show

SUNDAY, MARCH 28: • Open Beef Show

TUES.,
MARCH 30
5:00-10:00 PM

WRISTBAND

\$15.00*

\$1.00 GATE
ADMISSION

WED.,
MARCH 31
1:00-10:00 PM

SENIOR & MILITARY DAY

Seniors 55 & Older \$5.00 Admission

5:00-10:00 PM

CHRONICLE NIGHT

\$2 discount on \$20 Midway
wristband w/coupon*

MIDWAY OPENS
AT 5PM

THURS.,
APRIL 1
7:00 PM-12:00 AM

MIDNIGHT

MAGIC

\$20 WRISTBAND
SPECIAL*

SATURDAY, APRIL 3

12:30 P.M.

PUBLIC

SPEAKING

CONTEST

Citrus County Fair

March 29
through
April 4, 2021

Honor the Past
Imagine the Future



FRI.,
APRIL 2

1:00-5:00 PM

SCHOOL DAY

STUDENTS FREE UNTIL 5:00 PM

\$20 WRISTBAND SPECIAL*

7:00-11:00 PM

FRIDAY NIGHT MAGIC

\$20 WRISTBAND
SPECIAL*

SAT.,
APRIL 3

11:00 AM-4:00 PM

DAYTIME MAGIC

\$20 WRISTBAND SPECIAL*

6:00-10:00 PM

SATURDAY NIGHT

MAGIC

\$20 WRISTBAND
SPECIAL*

SUN.,
APRIL 4

2:00-7:00 PM

NO GATE ADMISSION

BONUS MIDWAY

SPECIAL

\$22 WRISTBAND SPECIAL*

ENTER AT
MAIN GATE
ONLY

MIDWAY NOT OPEN MON., MARCH 29 | *RIDE SAFETY RESTRICTIONS APPLY