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ART AFTER DARK

PAGE 16

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**NONA
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> **READ** PAGE 9



**ICONIC
PERFORMANCE
RESORT
PLANNED FOR
LAKE NONA**

> **READ** PAGE 14



**A MINDFUL
HOLIDAY**

> **READ** PAGE E7

IN THIS ISSUE

Local Leaders.....4
Business & Real Estate 7

Features 11
Health, Fitness & Sports .. 18

Education.....26
Entertainment..... E1

Nonahood CalendarE15

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Publisher's Desk

BY RHYS AND JENNY LYNN

We Love Lake Nona

We didn't know what to expect when we moved here. We were attracted to the different styles and colors of the homes in Laureate Park, and we loved the floor plan of the model home we chose. There were rumors about many exciting things coming to the area and we liked the schools that our daughter would be assigned to. What we didn't expect about Lake Nona was how many amazing people we'd meet and how much it would change our lives. During this 2017 holiday season, we find ourselves often reflecting on the connections made in the 5 short years we've lived here.

Friends: This is a big one. We've made so many friendships that will last a lifetime, it's a little hard to believe. In the early days, we'd plan neighborhood parties on Facebook because there was nothing around for miles. It was a great way to connect with people in the neighborhood and help pave the way to deeper and more meaningful friendships. The many outdoor neighborhood events (Live & Local, Food Trucks at the YMCA, 4th of July Block Party, etc.) are a great way to get out and bump into people you'd never meet but might have many things in common with. In an age where everyone is hyperconnected via social media to the point that it almost causes us to be disconnected, there's a lot to be said for meeting friends face to face in the real world.

Family: While none of our immediate family live in Lake Nona, they visit all the time! We love taking them out to see what new things have popped up since they last visited. Lake Nona is shaping up to be a beautiful place, and we love getting the chance to show it off! We're also working on convincing some of our family to take the plunge and move to Lake Nona permanently; fingers crossed that they'll come to their senses and make the move!

Business: We never expected to drastically change the trajectory of my business life. Since moving here, nearly all things that we were working on that weren't based locally have been put on hold or scrapped. With so much growth, there's a tremendous amount of potential and excitement right here in our back yard.

Connecting with other business people at various events put on by the Lake Nona Chamber of Commerce and East Orlando Chamber of Commerce has been incredibly rewarding. We suppose that working here is just as exciting as living here.

The Future: The past two months we have seen some big announcements about things coming to Lake Nona (in particular the Nona Adventure Park and the Lake Nona Resort). We expect that things will only heat up from here - we love living in a place that has so many exciting stories to tell. Who can say what tomorrow will bring?

From our family to yours, Happy Holidays and have a safe and Happy New Years. We'll see you in 2018!

Love, Rhys & Jenny Lynn



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Kevin & Yvette Kendrick

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Local Leaders

Watch College Football, Support Breast Cancer

BY DR. DEBORAH C. GERMAN



Deborah German, M.D.
Vice President for Medical Affairs, Founding Dean
UCF College of Medicine

If you love college football, Dec. 16's AutoNation Cure Bowl in Orlando gives you a chance to enjoy your favorite sport – and help beat breast cancer at the same time.

The Cure Bowl is the only NCAA football bowl game with a charity in its name, and proceeds support the Breast Cancer Research Foundation (BCRF), the largest private funder of breast cancer research worldwide. Some of that funded research is happening in our own Lake Nona community at the UCF College of Medicine.

Dr. Annette Khaled leads our Cancer Research Division and has received about \$900,000 from the Cure

Bowl to support her research. Nicknamed the “Cancer Assassin,” Dr. Khaled has discovered a way to kill spreading breast cancer cells while leaving normal cells intact.

Cancer kills more than 1,500 people a day in this country, and metastatic or spreading cancer cells are the leading cause of death for most cancer patients. That's because the cancer spreads from the original tumor to the brain, lungs and bones.

In 2012, Dr. Khaled discovered the peptide CT20, which kills fleeing cells by disrupting the folding mechanism inside cancer cells mediated by a chaperonin. If the inner workings of the cell can't fold into 3D units, the cell dies. She then teamed up with Dr. J. Manuel Perez, a former UCF researcher who specializes in chemistry and nanotechnology, who developed nanoparticles to transport the peptide specifically to metastatic cancer cells. Dr. Khaled's new technology has generated a licensing agreement that will accelerate the therapy's path to clinical trials, perhaps as early as two or three years.

“We have never been closer to curing cancer than we are now,” Dr. Khaled said. “It's a team effort, and my lab is thrilled to contribute to the new discoveries that will make it possible.”

The College of Medicine's cancer researchers are dedicated to finding better treatments for this disease. Their approaches are as diverse as their backgrounds. Some are researching the environment that makes cancer cells grow and thrive. One has actually created

a cancer tumor's environment in a test tube. Others are looking at the makeup of cancer cells to understand why some are so resistant to chemotherapy. Others are investigating new molecular treatments, including viruses, that can kill cancer but keep other cells healthy. Such treatments will help patients escape the brutal side effects of current treatments.

These scientists are only limited by funding. So, I hope you'll consider going to the Cure Bowl. It's a great two-for-one deal. You get to cheer on college football and support cancer research in your own backyard.

For more information on the AutoNation Cure Bowl, please visit <https://curebowl.com/>.



Dr. Annette Khaled

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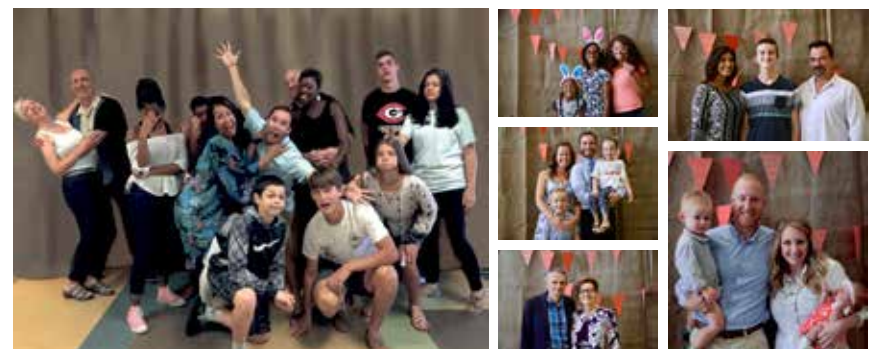
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Keep Your Family and Property Safe This Holiday Season

BY LINDA THIERRY

The holiday season is in full swing. Unfortunately, this is a time of year the bad guys also increase their illegal activities. We all need to look for ways to minimize the likelihood that we will become a victim. We reached out to Officer Edgar Malave, the OPD liaison for District 1. Following are some of the key things recommended to keep yourself, your family and your property safe this holiday season.

Shopping:

- Shop with a friend – the buddy system remains a good way to deter crime.
- Do not talk on your cell phone while walking in a parking lot. Criminals will view you as distracted and take advantage of it.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. Use credit/debit cards when possible.
- Keep a record of your credit/debit card numbers in a safe place. Notify the credit card company or bank immediately if your credit/debit card is stolen or lost.
- Check your credit card and bank records frequently. Call the credit card company or bank if you see any questionable transactions.
- If you put packages in the trunk of your car and plan to continue shopping, move your vehicle to another location. Thieves are watching.
- Always be aware of your surroundings when exiting your vehicle and returning to it. Do NOT go to your vehicle if there are suspicious people/person in the area. Request mall security to escort you to your vehicle. It is their job, and they are happy to assist you safely to your vehicle.

Automated Teller Machine (ATM):

- If you need to use an ATM machine, choose one



located in a building or in the daytime.

- Protect your PIN number by covering the keypad so those around cannot see.
- Keep your ATM receipt. Do not throw it away in a nearby trash can; take it home and shred it.

At Home:

- Lock all doors and windows even when you are home.
- Use your alarm system – not only at night but during the day.
- If you will be away for more than a day or two, ask a neighbor to check your home and pick up any newspapers, door hangers, etc.
- Never post on social media your plans to be gone for any period of time. Post pictures of your trip after you return. Do not post your location in your status. Don't state you "are going" to an event – instead, state you are "interested" in an event (you will still receive all the same notifications).

- Some interior and exterior lights should be on timers so lights go on and off every night. There are some inexpensive "dusk-to-dawn" exterior lights that automatically go on when the sun goes down and turn off when the sun comes up. Most hardware/home stores carry them.
- If you purchase or receive a "big ticket" item (TV, computer, cell phones), make sure you cut up the boxes they come in. Put the pieces of boxes at the bottom of your recycle container. Thieves will drive around looking to see who just got a new big screen TV.

Vehicles:

- Keep your car doors locked at all times, including when you are in the vehicle.
- When exiting a store, have your keys out and ready – avoid fumbling for them in the parking lot. Lock your car doors immediately upon entering your vehicle.
- Never leave your car running while unoccupied – even for a minute.
- Never leave children in your vehicle unattended by an adult.
- Park as close as possible to your destination. Make note of where you parked.

While we cannot fully prevent crime, we can certainly make it more difficult and deter the bad guys from negatively affecting our holidays and our daily lives throughout the year. Stay safe and have a wonderful holiday season.

Laureate Park Neighborhood Watch
Area Coordinators



Larry Albert, Mary Fenton-Lee,
Gene Thatcher, Linda Thierry



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Rotary Interact Club of Lake Nona

BY LESLIE TUBBS

How would you like to work together not only to benefit yourself but to benefit your neighborhood as well? When you volunteer as a group, more can get done, more issues can be resolved, and visibility can be brought to challenges that face our world today. Here in Lake Nona, there is a group that works together to make this community stronger and a better place to live.

The Rotary Interact Club of Lake Nona is focused on service above self. Interact stands for International Action, and it focuses on shaping the leaders of tomorrow to better our community today. Interact is a club for high school students who want to join together to tackle the issues in our community that need the most attention. Through Interact, you can carry out hands-on service projects, develop leadership skills, and make international connections through the student exchange program.

You might ask yourself, "How does an Interact Club create positive change?" Every Interact Club carries out two service projects a year. One of the projects involves helping out your school or community, while the other promotes international understanding. You might also ask yourself, "Why is the club called Rotary Interact?" Our Interact club is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Lake Nona. That means whatever help we need to make our club thrive, the Rotary Club will be right beside us to support us along the way.

Throughout the year, Interact Club members come together to participate in mentorship activities, fundraisers and leadership conferences. On Nov. 4, at Lake Nona High School, we invited other Interact Clubs from different schools to participate in our District Interact Conference. One-hundred nineteen Interact members came together to engage in leadership activities and guided discussions. The total amount of



pays for all expenses. The camp covers leadership fundamentals and ethics, communications skills, problem solving, and conflict management.

The Lake Nona Interact Club officers are: President Leah Laskowski, Past President and Founder Giulia Galbiatti, Vice President Ashley Andraski, Historian Layla Machado, Secretary Leslie Tubbs, and Head of Committee Cole Jones. The meetings are held the first and last Thursday of every month at Lake Nona High School. If any students are interested in joining, you can contact any of the club officers.

money raised during the conference totaled close to \$700.

Another leadership program that the Interact Club participates in is the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA), which is a four-night camp that awards the leaders in their Interact clubs. The leadership camp is a program run by Rotary. To attend the camp, you must be an ongoing Interact member and be interviewed by officers and your Rotary sponsor. The Rotary Club of Lake Nona



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Business & Real Estate

The Collaborative Culture Of the USTA National Campus

BY TRAVIS JACOB



Building an atmosphere of collaboration is a key component to building a culture where people can thrive. Organizations with a strong culture of collaboration continually work on effective communication throughout the entire organization. They equip every employee with the necessary information for them to succeed and likely have an office layout that promotes a sense of community and interaction. This is exactly what I found when I visited the United States Tennis Association's (USTA) National Campus in Lake Nona.

The Human Resources director, Marybeth Interdonato, and Corporate Communications leader Trina Singian both enthusiastically met me in the lobby to take me up to the corporate offices for a tour. This office is nothing short of amazing! It is an open floor plan set up in what they call "neighborhoods." Each of these neighborhoods represents a different department, but they are all open to everyone to promote collaboration where people can easily work in a cross-functional capacity. Within the space, there are built-in designated areas with comfortable seating where people can gather to meet, brainstorm, plan, etc. Healthy snacks also are provided free for all employees as an extra, added benefit.

The great culture that exists at the campus does not stop with the office space. Marybeth and her team work very hard to make sure the working environment is exciting and everyone is well informed. This starts with their stated Service Standards & Behavioral Guidelines – four key standards that guide everything they do, every day. These standards are visible throughout the building and also are on a card that every employee has with them at all times. These standards and behavioral guidelines are: (1) **Safety**: We consider the welfare of our employees and guests first; (2) **Friendliness**: We provide a caring and inclusive atmosphere where everyone is treated as an individual; (3) **Experience**: We promote an engaging and memorable environment for guests and employ-

ees; and (4) **Efficiency**: We strive for our efforts to be simple, easy and hassle-free. To them, it's not only about the employee experience but the guest experience as well. Along with keeping the four standards front and center, they also make sure everyone has the tools necessary to answer any question that a guest might have.

Employee support also is valued at the USTA National Campus. Peer-to-peer recognition cards are used for employees to recognize their colleagues for going above and beyond in their work. Employees are not only recognized through these cards, but their names go into a drawing to receive a reward of value each month. Business Resource Groups, or BRGs, support various affinities. These groups include: African/Caribbean-American Employee (ACE) Network, Asian-American, Latino/Hispanic, Millennials, Partners-LGBT, Women, and Working Parents. Everyone is welcome to join one or more of these groups where they will find others for the purpose of camaraderie and support.

A great culture also includes having some fun, and the USTA National Campus is certainly good at it! One of the most exciting things they do is their own employee tennis tournament. They call it the GOAT at HOAT (Greatest of All Time at the Home of American Tennis). The tournament is open to every employee at every playing level. They have a lot of fun with this tournament and celebrate the victories (and I'm sure, give each other a hard time for the defeats!).

My short visit to the USTA National Campus proved to be valuable time spent as I witnessed first hand what a truly collaborative culture looks and feels like. I saw people working together (some at their standing desks) in their neighborhoods. I saw people meeting together in various groups in different seating areas. I saw people working independently but right next to each other. I saw smiles – lots of them, because these employees truly enjoy what they do and who they do it with!

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Business Spotlight: Jeannette Bajalia

BY BETH COCCHIARELLA



Beth Cocchiarella

Jeannette Bajalia is a recent Lake Nona resident and founder and president of Woman's Worth, a financial services firm specializing in the unique life and financial needs of women as they navigate through their lives, up to and through retirement. She expanded her flourishing business in North Florida into the Lake Nona-Orlando-Winter Park region and specializes in ensuring individuals have a retirement plan that

allows them to be more emotionally, medically and financially secure.

Jeannette has not always been a business owner. In an attempt to retire after decades in the financial services and insurance industries, Bajalia met with five separate financial advisors to plan for her own financial future. Those advisors did not ask about or listen to Jeannette's needs but simply sold her on products they had available at the time.

Based on a lack of willingness to formulate a personalized plan, and frankly the manner in which advisors spoke to and dealt with Jeannette, she realized women were underserved in the financial planning industry. Her passion for understanding the issues facing women and the aging population led her to start Woman's Worth.

Jeannette brings more than 40 years of experience to her work. Her intimate understanding of women's finances, and their related emotional and physical health effects, gives her a unique perspective on help-

ing women plan their financial futures. Due to unique challenges women might have that are attributable to their longevity and other life issues, Bajalia's company focuses on providing life and income planning services to women.

"We have an entire financial services industry that is not responsive to the needs of women and are not considering all the components of life and income planning such as healthcare and the impact of being a caregiver," Bajalia explained. "When I saw what happened to their assets and the lack of lifetime income plans, even though they are living significantly longer than men, I realized the need for Woman's Worth."

Bajalia says she is often asked about the retirement threats specific to women. "You would think women have the typical retirement risks we find with all baby boomers regardless of gender: taxes, market volatility, and inflation," she said. "In reality, the greatest retirement risk to women is our longevity!"

That's the good news and the bad news. Living longer means longer periods funding an active lifestyle, but coupled with that, longevity means that women have a higher risk of suffering debilitating illnesses and spending more on healthcare costs. Living longer means that you need to make sure your money lasts as long as you do.

Jeannette ensures those she serves are treated with respect and dignity by creating integrated retirement lifestyle plans that enable them to achieve their retirement goals and dreams. She is an Ed Slott Master Elite Advisor and the author of three books, including the newly released *Planning a Purposeful Life - Secrets of Lon-*

gevity. She was also recognized as one of 20 Women of Influence by the Jacksonville Business Journal in 2012 and is a new member of the Lake Nona Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Jeannette has appeared on WESH 2 News Sunrise, FOX 35's Good Day Orlando and on First Coast Living on WTLV. She has a weekly radio show and can be heard nationally through the Woman's Worth website. She is the co-founder of the Growing Bolder Life Institute Powered by Woman's Worth and is featured in the Growing Bolder magazine on regular basis. She has been featured in the Wall Street Journal, Forbes, Jacksonville and Orlando Business Journal, USA Today, Newsmax, Investor's Business Daily, and several other local publications.

For more information, visit www.womans-worth.com or call 407-326-6344.



Jeannette Bajalia

Fifteen-Point, Year-End Financial Checklist

BY ELIZABETH MANCE, CPA ACCOUNTABILITY SERVICES

Individuals

- 1. Retirement Contributions:** The 2017 maximum 401(k)/403(b) contributions are \$18,000 and \$24,000 if you're over 50. Pre-taxed contributions will lower your 2017 taxable income. In contrast, Roth contributions won't lower your taxable income but will grow tax free!
- 2. Flexible Spending Account:** Keep in mind that these are "use it or lose it" benefits. If you put funds aside tax-free, be sure to submit your paperwork by year-end.
- 3. Health Savings Account:** Self-only HSA accounts can be funded up to \$3,400 and \$4,400 if you're over 50. Family plans can put aside \$6,750/\$7,750 for 2017.
- 4. Estate Planning:** If your estate is projected to be at risk of paying estate taxes, consider gifting by year-end. Be sure to discuss this with your attorney and/or CPA.
- 5. Charitable Donations:** Tax free transfers for IRA owners over 70: While IRA distributions are generally taxable, you can authorize a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) up to \$100,000 be paid from your IRA tax free!
- 6. Charitable Donations - Stock:** The stock market has soared this year. If your stock has appreciated, and you've owned it for longer than 12 months, you will get a bigger itemized deduction by donating the stock than by selling it and giving the cash. Another benefit: You will avoid paying capital gains tax on the sale.
- 7. Pay Estimated Tax:** The U.S. tax system is a "pay-as-you-go" system. This means you are required to pay income tax as you receive the money. If you had a taxable windfall this year, to minimize interest and penalties, pay the tax in now. If you're not

sure how much to pay, engage your accountant to perform a tax analysis.

- 8. Rebalance:** The stock market has gone gangbusters. This is a good time to rebalance your investments. Consider increasing future foreign investments and reducing U.S. investments or vice versa. Stocks vs. bonds or CDs is another consideration. Whatever your risk tolerance, now is a good time to adjust for 2018.



Corporations

- 1. Reimbursements:** If you still have unreimbursed business expenses, submit an expense report so your company can get the tax deduction in 2017 (and you will get credited in 2017) for the expenses!
- 2. Healthcare Coverage:** If your company pays shareholder and/or employee healthcare premiums, be sure it's recorded properly on your W-2. If in doubt, address this matter with your payroll company before Dec. 22.
- 3. Independent Contractors:** Your company is responsible for sending 1099s to certain vendors for whom your business paid \$600+ (this guidance

applies to owners of rental real estate). Form 1099 must be sent in January. Now is a great time to check your file folder of vendor W-9s to ensure you have required information.

- 4. Equipment Purchases:** If your company needs a new server, truck, freezer, etc., consider buying the equipment before yearend. These purchases could reduce your company's taxable income!
- 5. Take Inventory:** If you sell products, conduct an inventory assessment and compare the results to your last inventory report. Make any necessary adjustments to ensure you have an accurate account of how much capital you have wrapped up in your current inventory.
- 6. Review Financial Statements:** Review your Profit & Loss Statement for accuracy. Make sure Gross Revenue equals the same number(s) you reported to your state(s). Review your 2016-2017 Balance Sheet accounts and question all negative numbers. Question any numbers that did not change from 2016. Invoice all customers for work performed and products shipped. Review your AR and AP Aging and make efforts to collect what's due and to pay what's owed.
- 7. Build/Finalize 2018 Budget:** Now that you've reviewed your 2017 financial statements, finalize your 2018 budget.

If you need assistance with your year-end activities, contact us! Our TaxTeam provides federal, state and international tax advice from start-ups to multinational corporations at all stages of their life cycle. We carefully guide clients through complex tax rules and regulations and provide thoughtful and comprehensive solutions that help clients achieve their objectives.

Nona Growth: Nona Adventure Park Set to Open for Fun in Summer

BY SOPHIA ROGERS



Nona Adventure Park, scheduled to open in the summer of 2018, will offer an outdoor recreational experience we can enjoy any time. It will be located adjacent to Laureate City Park and will offer discounts to guests who walk, run or bike to the park instead of driving. With wet areas and dry areas to relax, the park will be more than just inflatables and towers. It offers an all-day adventure. And teenagers will finally have a place to get together and have fun in Lake Nona.

Water sports entrepreneur Kai Fusser and his business partner, Real Bergevin, are the owner/operators of Nona Adventure Park. Kai, a Lake Nona-area resident, offers a unique perspective to our new attraction. Kai's strength-training program has helped professional golfers such as Annika Sorenstam to add power, distance and control to their games.

I had the pleasure of meeting Kai Fusser at the 2017 IAAPA Convention here in Orlando. IAAPA (International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions) is the largest international trade association for the amusement and attractions industry.

We met at the entrance, and right behind Kai was the KristallTurm, the 60-foot high ropes course part of Nona Adventure Park – only this one was one-third the size of what the completed tower will be. As we looked up, we saw what appeared to be a 10-year-old girl swinging from monkey bars at the top. Kai could probably see the look of motherly fear in my face, so he addressed my biggest concern. Safety.

He explained that climbers are harnessed in with the finest of climbing elements rooted in traditional craftsmanship. He pointed to a safety harness that uses two communicating connectors. When one connector is open, the other one is automatically locked, preventing the risk of accidentally detaching. Since I was wearing high heels, my husband, Jeff, took Kai up on his offer to try out the tower.



Before climbing, Jeff had a brief one-on-one training session to go over how to use the cables and safely navigate the course. With choices of zip lines, quick jump, giant swing, climbing walls and more, you choose your own path to create your own adventure. Jeff's words, "It was a mix of nerv-

ous energy and fun with a dash of real fear. Being at the top, you're one with the wind and sun. It's kind of peaceful and quiet up there."

KristallTurm has park locations worldwide, including China, Australia, Israel, Dubai, Canada, Austria, Japan and more. Nona Adventure Park will be the first location in Florida.

Kai took us inside the convention center to see the WitBit display. Robert Cirjak and Romann Rademacher, founders of WitBit, took a moment to say hello and share with us how much anticipation is building with the Adventure Park. Robert said, "There was a newscaster here, one of many, but she wanted to know when it opens and how much. She loves this concept."

That was before Robert was pulled away to do a presentation for Steve Wynn...yes, Steve Wynn, the hotelier, was there to learn about WitBit. Romann explained to us the elements of fine German engineering dating back to the company's inception in 1996. Charismatic and personal, you can see the passion and excitement they have being part of Nona Adventure Park.

Kai added, "WitBit is like a Lego set, you can put it together and make an obstacle course out of it, make it easier for small kids, make it harder for athletes, and make races on it. So there are lots of opportunities to change it up." (Imagine if we had our own version of American Ninja Warrior here in Lake Nona!)

The park also will feature the world's first solar-powered water ski and wakeboard cable system. Cables suspended from towers will pull riders around the lake at speeds of up to 36 miles per hour. There will be two courses, a 2,500-foot, six-tower main track and a 320-foot, two-tower beginner/intermediate track. For advanced wakeboarders and skiers, there will be sliders and ramps.

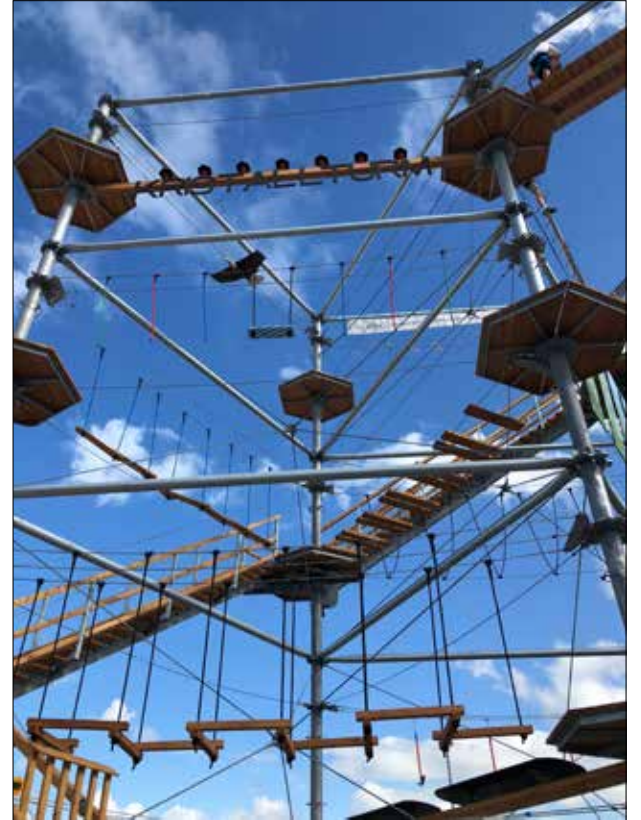
Now that we had talked about safety on KristallTurm, it was time to talk safety with the aqua park. Kai also was the owner of Orlando Watersports Complex many years ago and has years of experience on the water. There are those who have little fear of swimming in Florida freshwater lakes. However, for those who have not, their experience is limited to newscasts on amoebas and gators. So, I asked Kai for a response to this.

Without getting into a scientific discussion, his response was one of concern but not worry. "The lake will be tested regularly. This infection is rare and is a risk in warm shallow water sediment. The park is above 45' deep – nowhere near shallow sediment."

Gators, Kai. What about gators? "Gators stay away from high activity areas, where the water is clear. There is no shoreline vegetation, and we will take daily preventative measures." It's tough not to trust someone with years of watersports experience who has all extremities intact.

I also reached out to a friend, Sonja Scheffler Weinacker, for her input. Sonja is a Florida resident who was recently inducted into the 2017 Wakeboarding Hall of Fame. "Years and years on the water, and I never had a run-in with a gator. I think in Florida there is a higher chance of being struck by lightning than a gator attack in deep water." So there we have it. The owner/operator and a pro wakeboarder have spoken. It's up to you whether to try it out or not. The great part is that you can still enjoy KristallTurm on dry land to feed your adventurous side.

Last but not least, we learned more about the café plans. Details are



still top secret, but what we do know is the focus will be on convenient and healthy offerings. Kai envisions a place with wifi, good food, a pleasant atmosphere and a place to go whether enjoying the park or not.



"We want a place that is cool enough for people to go for breakfast, lunch hour or after work."

To summarize: Nona Adventure Park will be a mix of exercise and adventure as well as an excuse to spend more time outdoors. If you want an adventure, this is a place to do it without traveling too far. These are activities that will appeal to everyone: kids, adults, teenagers and families. There may be dedicated times for professional wakeboarders and waterskiers, but for now, the focus is on fun.

Nona Adventure Park offers the opportunity to finish your day with a sense of achievement because you tried something new – to feed your spirit of adventure, reduce stress and improve your individual well being.

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Business Spotlight: Drive Shack's Jeremy Jones

BY BRITTANY BHULAI

Jeremy Jones describes himself as a man who loves food, hospitality, people and the outdoors. Originally from Louisiana, Jones started in the food and beverage business waiting tables and learned how to bartend throughout his years in college. He found the hospitality industry was definitely his calling.

After some time, Jeremy grew wings and left his home state to go to Colorado. Snow boarding, skiing and mountain biking were hobbies of his. His original intention was to go only for the duration of one winter to take advantage of the mountains for skiing, but before he knew it, he was making a living for himself there. He found work at a hotel called Sonnenalp Resort of Vail, where he worked as a daytime bartender and a part-time supervisor. The owner of Sonnenalp was on site almost every day, and it created a rather humble learning atmosphere for Jones. The general manager of the restaurant also became a great mentor to him. After some time, Jeremy moved up as the assistant director of food and beverage for Sonnenalp. Later, he shifted to working at the resort's golf course as the food and beverage manager. It was a three-meal-a-day restaurant that hosted functions such as tournaments for golf members, weddings and other dining needs. It was definitely more responsibility than his previous position with the company.

After 10 years in Colorado, Jones decided to switch gears and moved to Texas. You might think it was for another opportunity in hospitality, but Jeremy figured he still had wiggle room in his life to try new things. He just ended his 20's and had no family of his own yet. "You get into your 30's, and you're like, well, I've been in the restaurant business my entire life, do I wanna try something else?" said Jones.

He ended up getting a license in real estate and became a realtor. It wasn't as random as it sounds. He had always had an interest in it, and one of his good friends from college was making a lot of success in the field. Jones figured he'd give it a go. Although he liked the investment aspect of housing, the pace of the job was an acquired taste. Driving people to houses and giving tours just wasn't his cup of tea. It didn't

compare to the rhythm of working in food.

The hospitality business gained him back after he made a connection with a general manager for Dave & Buster's. By this time, he had a daughter with his wife, whom he'd met back in Colorado, and he needed a career path where he knew he could strike gold.

Now living in Arkansas, he ended up becoming an assistant general manager for a D&B. Jones was sitting pretty, and life was good. He was in a stable position and was even slated to take over as the general manager once the current GM left to help open another location elsewhere. That's when the one and only Drive Shack stuck their fishing net in the water and caught Jeremy by the lip. They reeled him in from start to finish.

Jones was in a solid position, and he genuinely wasn't looking for another job. However, Drive Shack stumbled upon his profile on LinkedIn. The company liked his career experience, so they contacted him. A single phone call from them turned into many more, and the connection between the two started to pick up momentum. Potentially working for Drive Shack became more of a reality for Jeremy, and he started to consider it seriously. He says they pitched quite the convincing arguments to him, so he eventually decided to take the leap and join the team. To him, rejecting an opportunity was somewhat hasty; no one ever knows what another open door leads to. So, in August of 2017, he packed up his bags along with his wife and daughter and moved to Florida.

The new gold and entertainment structure known as Drive Shack is currently being built in Lake Nona and is Jeremy Jones' latest project. As the assistant

general manager for the company, his duty is to oversee their team, guests, sales and profits. Jones will ultimately aid in maintaining a smooth run for the facility. For him, this will be slightly different from his past jobs since the company is the first of its kind. He describes the handling of Drive Shack as "taking this thing from infancy into a full-fledged operation and making it work." He had never gotten the opportunity to help build a company from scratch, so this chance thrills him.

When asking Jeremy what makes traveling to different places and working in different environments worth it, he'll say it is the people part of it. It gives him the chance to make lifelong friends. Whether it's he who helped the person or they who have helped him, it's a connection and a special relationship to gain with someone. Being a part of the Drive Shack team is another professional bond he will warmly nurture.

The residents of Lake Nona can anticipate the opening of Drive Shack in Q1 2018. It will be a three-story golf complex on a 14-acre plot of land. It will have a lounge area, restaurant and, of course, driving ranges. Jeremy expresses that it will be the new hot spot to visit in Lake Nona. Whether you're a golfer or not, you'll enjoy the complex. The new company hopes to be a contributing member to the area as they positively influence it with great service and entertainment.

Note: Speaking of impacting the community, Drive Shack is currently hiring! Go to driveshack.com/careers to check out job opportunities.



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Features

Maintaining a Fall Vegetable Garden in Central Florida

BY AMBER HARMON



We are truly blessed to be one of the only regions in the United States that can actually continuously grow vegetables all year round. Fall is a long, beautiful season that begins in September and continues clear thorough February. We don't get the long, hard freezes experienced by many regions where the nighttime temperature slips below the 30's for days or weeks in a row. We get our cold snap, and if the temperature is in the

30's for more than two nights, it's a shock.

Be sure to plant only seasonal vegetables to be prepared for the cold snaps. Fall vegetable plants include; broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, kale and spinach. Then there are some exceptions because we live in Florida, and our winter season is so mild. Tomatoes, eggplants and bell peppers can grow practically all year round here due to the mild winter. Because these are not typically cool weather crops, they need to be covered up when the temperature dips down into the 30's. Just moisten the soil, then cover these vegetable plants with a fitted sheet. No need to cover your broccoli; it actually tastes better when it's harvested after a frost.

It also means we get to harvest many of these plants for a good solid four to five months. So we need to ensure we prune the plants properly. Remove the extra suckers as they grow on the tomato plants and the

cucumbers. Those are two examples of plants whose vegetables can take over a region of your garden. As you're thinning your fall garden, just remember the beet tops and tiny little lettuce heads make a beautiful, tasty and nutrient-packed addition of "micro greens" for any salad!



Harvest vegetables when they are young for the maximum nutrient density as well as flavor. Those two always go hand in hand. Don't wait for your vegetables to get too big. It might be funny to have the biggest cucumber in town, but when the vegetables get too big, they just don't taste as good. For tomatoes and peppers, allowing them to ripen on the vine is always preferable.

Make sure to finish your fall plant at least 30 days before the first fall frost. That typically occurs for us in late December or January. This will ensure that plants are large and hardy enough to endure the cold snaps that will come this winter.

Don't forget to fertilize every four to six weeks to

ensure optimum vegetable production. Always read and abide by the instructions on the fertilizer package. Also, ensure that the vegetable plants get a minimum of six hours of direct sunlight each day. Mature plants need about 1/4 inch of water each day. Larger plants prefer to be watered more heavily and less frequently. New starter plants need frequent watering but in smaller amounts. Drip irrigation systems are a great way to conserve water in the garden since you're watering only the garden and not the surrounding yard, like many sprinklers.

Our fall planting and harvesting season is literally the best kept secret around. We have the opportunity to grow an abundance of fall vegetables to nourish our families and share with our neighbors. Not even Hurricane Irma can mess that up due to our extended growing season. I hope everyone's Thanksgiving table was one filled with wonderful vegetable recipes for things like mashed potatoes and green bean casserole straight from the garden. Be sure to support your local farmers markets and community gardens this fall season and always.

It might be funny to have the biggest cucumber in town, but when the vegetables get too big, they just don't taste as good.

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Pulte Homes' Golf Tournament Raises \$70,000 For Ronald McDonald House Charities

BY VANESSA POULSON

Pulte Homes, local builder in a variety of different Lake Nona communities, was recently able to raise \$70,000 to benefit Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Florida (RMHCCF) at the homebuilder's fourth annual Building to Make Lives Better Golf Tournament at Lake Nona Golf & Country Club.

"So many children and their families will be helped by this fundraising effort," says Clint Ball, division president for PulteGroup's North Florida division. "We are proud to be part of this worthwhile effort of helping to maintain places where parents can be close to their children to help them heal," he said.

When PulteGroup initiated the tournament, they first began to look for a family-oriented charity that was lo-

cal. "A place where children, while receiving treatment at the hospital, could be with their families was an easy choice," says Claire Baldocchi, a marketing coordinator for PulteGroup. "The families in our communities are an extension of our own, and we know that 'home' is wherever your family is. Raising money for the Ronald McDonald House allows us to help make it possible for the whole family to be there to love and support a child who is sick."

Pulte's efforts in the local community extend far beyond RMHCCF. They also have worked with The Second Harvest Food Bank on numerous occasions and have participated in a backpack drive for back to school. PulteGroup is also very proud of their Built to Honor homes, which are constructed in a partnership with Operation Finally Home, an organization that identifies soldiers who would be candidates for receiving a mortgage-free home.

"To be able to raise \$70,000 for the Ronald McDonald House is such an honor, knowing that we're helping keep them together during a time when they need it most. The power of family is like nothing else!" says Baldocchi.



Pulte homes are Life Tested™ – which means they are designed and built for the way you live. It's pretty simple. We blend functional design with innovation in beautiful, liveable communities near the most desirable cities throughout the U.S. We think it's the perfect place to call home. Pulte Homes is a subsidiary of PulteGroup Inc., a leader in energy-efficient homebuilding that has won more awards for customer satisfaction than any other homebuilder. Each new home is built with an unwavering commitment to quality and a disciplined approach to construction.

The Magnificent 8 Overcome All Odds

BY NICOLE LABOSCO

Sometimes we are faced with circumstances and trials that can test us and push us beyond where we thought we were capable of going. Each time we are tested, in each moment when we believe we have reached the end of our endurance, we find ourselves at a crossroads – we can either revert into our shells or go forward and become stronger as an individual or as a group. The Magnificent 8 women's golf team is a shining example of what it means to face the impossible head on, find spirit in the face of adversity, and come back even stronger than before.

During the Oct. 27-28 weekend, at Daytona Beach at LPGA International, these magnificent ladies competed for the Executive Women's Golf Association Cup (EWGA).

Over the course of two grueling days, with two women on the team staying on the course on Friday night until 8 p.m. (an hour after sundown!), the team managed to win 11 of their 12 matches.

The road to the EWGA Cup has not been an easy one for this team of incredible women, which includes captain Susan Macina, Heidi Bedell, Diane Harris, Lori Lepow, Gilda Perez, Victoria Goitz, Linda Burns and Tamara Boardwine. The women on this team have faced incredible trials and difficulties.

In September 2016, Perez was about three weeks into her cancer treatments and was really starting to feel the effects of chemotherapy and radiation. During the tournament last year, she ended up in the hospital. "All she could talk about was how terrible she felt and how she just 'wanted to play golf,'" Macina said. "One of the things I said to her to encourage her to keep going through the treatments was to tell her that in 2017 we would once again have a team and would play in the EWGA Cup again." By December 2016, Perez was back on her feet again and swinging the club once more, regaining her strength, even though she needed more radiation on her brain because of her incredibly aggressive cancer.

In January, the team participated in a tournament in Tampa the same week that Perez began the radiation treatment on her brain. Macina went to Perez and told her that she was going to begin formulating a team for the the EWGA Cup and started gathering members from the old group and a couple of new women for the team, and from there the Magnificent 8 was born.

Just a month later, a team member broke her wrist, making it impossible for her to swing a golf club again until mid-May, and in August, another team

"Five days before our tournament, one of my player's mothers had a heart attack and was diagnosed with cancer. Due to her mother's illness, she was not able to compete in the regional tournament with us. Since it was only five days before the tournament, we were unable to get a sub to play for her, so we had to play as a team of seven," said Macina.

Even after everything the team had been through, they ended up coming in fifth place out of 24 teams competing in the region and were able to advance to finals. Eventually, they defeated 50 other teams at the finals to bring home the championship and the EWGA Cup. "We were able to survive cancer, bone breaks, family emergencies and even Hurricane Irma to win this tournament. Our eight ladies beat 50 other teams at finals and brought home the trophy," Macina said. Magnificent 8 is the current national champion of the EWGA Cup.

The team has earned the honors of advancing to next year's EWGA Cup Finals as a result of winning this year. Next year's tournament will be played at Horseshoe Bay Resort outside Austin, Texas, from Nov. 2-3.

"We are excited beyond words and can't wait to play again. We won't compete as a team again until then, but we play together almost every weekend, either with an EWGA event or just as friends playing



member suffered an injury to her knee. This was just six weeks before the regional tournament in Port St. Lucie, yet the rest of the team continued to practice and make trips down to PSL to learn the courses and get ready for the tournament.

After this, Hurricane Irma struck Florida, postponing the tournament further, only adding to the ordeals the team had already been through.

golf," Macina cited.

"I truly believed in my friends. I know we are fighters and nobody would give up – no matter what we faced on the course."

This team of women is truly inspirational and inspiring, showing us all that with the right amount of dedication, compassion and strength, you can come back from any obstacle or difficulty that life "drives" your way.

Author Barbara Hayes: Quincy Quahog of Chappaquiddick

BY VANESSA POULSON

Author Barbara Hayes of Lake Nona recently published her first children's book, *Meet Quincy Quahog of Chappaquiddick*, inspired by her love of and time spent in Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts for more than 50 years. The story follows Quincy Quahog, a large clam, through his adventures in self discovery and adventure as he realizes his individual place among his friends and in Martha's Vineyard.

Barbara is no stranger to the publishing and print world. She was born in Brooklyn, New York, and grew up in Queens, New York, moved to New Jersey, and then to Florida in 1999. While in New York, she worked for a publishing company in one of the biggest metropolitan hubs for writing, New York City, and has spent most of her life in the fast-paced world of print and marketing. Barbara is an award-winning marketing communications executive who has worked in television, consumer electronics and the publishing industry. "When you want to work in marketing, you'd better know how to write," says Barbara about the early days of her career in the industry.

She moved to Florida with her late husband and fell in love with the Lake Nona area because of its diversity, growing industry and the balance it maintains between a fully metropolitan city and a rural area.

Though Barbara has always been creative, the idea to write a children's book was not something she'd imagined herself doing. After 50 years of enjoying the summer in Martha's Vineyard, the idea came to her to write a children's book that incorporated the ideas of adventure and fun that had epitomized her time spent on that island. That same afternoon, she wrote the entirety of the book on her porch and soon after hired an ex-Disney animator to help bring her words to life.

The most challenging part of the process, according to Barbara, was learning when to "let the book go" and cease in the editing process. As a perfectionist, she was determined that when the book was sent off to the printer, she had made sure it was all it could be - and it's hard to know when enough is enough.



Yet, it was all worth it the moment the first shipment of books arrived on her doorstep and she was finally able to see her work in its entirety, illustrations and all. "It's a total sense of accomplishment."

Barbara credits the process of the book coming together to both her passion for encouraging young people to read and develop a love for reading as well as her passion for libraries and the "thrill of going to a library and finding a book on the shelf to open."

"There's something so special about that," says Barbara. "Reading is a dying art."

Barbara hopes children and families who read *Meet Quincy Quahog of Chappaquiddick* and its future sequels will develop a love for reading and create special memories while reading the book. "I want them to finish the book and ask their parents to read it to them again," says Barbara. "I

just want them to love reading."

Barbara is planning on continuing to tell Quincy's story in future installments of the book and with the use of digital content to help create lesson plans and kids' activities related to Martha's Vineyard and the state of Massachusetts.

You can find more information on Barbara, the *Quincy Quahog* series, lessons plans for teachers, news and updates for the future of the *Quincy Quahog* series and other fun links for kids at www.barbarahayesbooks.com.
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As we enter the season of giving Thanks, and looking ahead to a year of new Adventures, I wish my friends, neighbors and colleagues a Joyful remainder of 2017 and an Awe-inspiring 2018!

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Tavistock Announces Iconic Performance Resort Planned For Lake Nona Featuring Crystal Lagoon

BY VANESSA POULSON



Lake Nona's own Tavistock Development Company announced long-anticipated details today surrounding the development and opening of their new iconic performance resort and spa, the Lake Nona Resort. It will be located within close proximity to the United States Tennis Association (USTA) National Campus, which remains the world's largest tennis campus with more than 100 courts.

The Lake Nona Resort will feature top-notch amenities and benefits such as 20,000 square feet of meeting space, a major fitness and spa campus, a 120,000-square-foot beach volleyball venue, one of the nation's largest man-made crystal clear lagoons (bringing the beach to Central Florida), along with 250 custom-designed guestrooms and 80 condominium units to optimize both performance and comfort. The resort also will feature a rooftop lounge, and several restaurant options will be available to guests, including both sit-down and on-the-go options, making it perfect for the needs of any situation.

This resort will set a new standard for fitness innovation, with a variety of additions being implemented in the facility to assure peak athletic performance. The standard rooms of the resort are planned to be oversized by approximately 450 square feet to allow extra space for stretching and fitness equipment. Television content and onsite programming and classes will be designed around performance and wellbeing. Quick-turn laundry will be available for those athletes who demand immediate service, and there will be a kids' area designed with healthy activities.

In addition to the fitness and spa campus, the resort will feature a 24-hour, Technogym-equipped fitness facility, and trails throughout the community will be outfitted with Technogym training stations. Guests will have access to nutritionists, customized menus, juice bars, and sports drink stations to help them get the most out of their workouts, with each of the rooms at the resort being specially designed to help in recovery after a workout.



The resort joins recent community anchors, including the USTA National Campus, KPMG's \$400-million training and innovation center, and Johnson & Johnson's Human Performance Institute and longitudinal community health and wellbeing study, the Lake Nona Life Project.

"With the Lake Nona Resort, our players and visitors will have unparalleled amenities tailored to amplify their performance and overall experience at the USTA National Campus, from onsite nutritional support and equipment storage to watching streamed matches on their in-room TV," said Gordon Smith, USTA executive director and chief operating officer.

The lagoon that is being added to Lake Nona Resort is set to be its own kind of unique and beautiful feature to the Central Florida and Lake Nona area. It will be designed by Miami-based Crystal Lagoons, U.S. Corp. and will encompass more than 15 acres (with the potential to expand to more than 20 acres) and will be lined with sandy beaches. The lagoon will be accessible to resort guests as well as members from within the Lake Nona Golf & Country Club. Nearly sold out, the top-ranked club will expand the private residential golf club community along the southern shore of Lake Nona and the new lagoon. Expansion plans include luxurious condominiums, single-family residences and a beach club with access to the lagoon.

The Lake Nona Resort is set to welcome 100,000+ visitors annually. "Our partnership with Tavistock Development Company is based on a collective vision to create an environment fostering innovation, sustainability, wellbeing and an active lifestyle that our crystal clear lagoon will provide, further enhancing Lake Nona's reputation as a world-class development," said Kevin P. Morgan, executive vice president of Crystal Lagoons, US Corp.

The project is estimated to be completed in 2020. In the meantime, residents of Lake Nona can expect groundbreaking for the project in 2018.



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ReThink Life: A Conversation About Life, Leadership and Relationships

BY RODNEY GAGE, LEAD PASTOR

ReThink... Generosity

A number of years ago, I decided to do something to teach the importance of stepping out of our comfort zone in showing generosity toward others. Prior to one of our church services, we secretly placed a plastic bag under each chair. After my talk, I challenged everyone in the audience to take off their shoes and place them in the plastic bag – if they wanted to donate them to the Orlando Union Rescue Mission. Within seconds, the atmosphere of the service radically changed. People looked at me like I had suddenly lost my mind!

As I watched from the front, people all across the auditorium were taking off their shoes. Some were really excited; some looked more than a little confused. They'd never experienced anything like this before – especially in church! I told them, "Some of you will have to walk barefooted out on the parking lot. Some of you had lunch plans, and you're thinking to yourself, 'I can't go to the restaurant without shoes!' " Walking into a restaurant and letting people stare at them, I explained, might be the most powerful story they could ever share with someone else.

It was a moving experience to see hundreds of people leaving church and walking out to the parking lot toward their cars in bare feet, hose and socks. Some of these people had come to church that morning with brand new shoes, and they were walking out without them. One lady donated a brand new pair of Prada shoes that cost several hundred dollars. To this day, our people still talk about this amazing, spontaneous act of generosity. It was a lesson of giving beyond our comfort zone, even when it doesn't make sense. I heard someone once say, "You can give without loving, but you can't love without giving." We should all live to give. This is what rethinking generosity is all about.

Christmas is a season of generosity. In the coming weeks as we prepare for Christmas, most of us will be focusing on finding that perfect gift to give to

our children, spouse, co-worker or friend. At some point during the Christmas holidays, we will give and receive all kinds of gifts. Some of those gifts will be impersonal, some will be impractical – you can't



really use them. Some of the gifts, to put it bluntly, will be flat-out cheap! They're not worth much. And, of course, some will be temporary; they're going to wear out and break before Christmas day is even over.

What if we focused more this Christmas on giving gifts that never wear out. What if we did something for someone that was not only personal but priceless. Legendary basketball coach John Wooden once said, "You can't live a perfect day without doing something for someone who will never be able to repay you." Albert Pike once said, "What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for oth-

ers and the world remains and is immortal."

What if we gave someone the gift of **time**? Spending quality time with the elderly, or a homeless child, or a loved one might mean more to that person than any physical gift. Without question, time is our most precious and elusive commodity. That is why love is spelled T-I-M-E.

What if we gave the gift of **kindness**? Going out of our way to meet a need, give a helping hand, show random acts of kindness such as buying the person's groceries behind you at the grocery store or purchasing the person's order behind you at the drive through. What if we encouraged others to pay it forward?

What if we gave the gift of **forgiveness**? What if we made the first move to pick up the phone, write a note or simply show up unannounced to tell someone "all is forgiven."

What if we gave the gift of **love**? Remember, love is a verb. More than words, loving actions show someone we care, that they matter. It's unconditional and sacrificial.

These are just a few examples of the kind of gifts that are not only personal but priceless. The only requirement to give these types of gifts is our willingness to step out of our comfort zone. Let's make this Christmas season personal and priceless. That's what rethinking generosity is all about.

Rodney Gage is an author, speaker and the founding pastor of ReThink Life Church. His passion is to help people live life on purpose. To learn more, check out rethinklife.com.



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Art After Dark

BY NICOLE LABOSCO

For those of you interested in the arts, you now have a local event to attend every Friday night from 7-10 p.m., rain or shine. Located in the Lake Nona Town Center between Chroma Modern Bar + Kitchen and Bosphorous Turkish Cuisine, the Art After Dark event showcases local artists and their art displays, live demonstrations, special exhibitions and music. Those who attend the stroll can enjoy their favorite wine or beer as well.

"We are hoping it will bring in some residents from outside Lake Nona and give us the opportunity to showcase our beautiful Town Center, as well as grow with us as we move into Phase II. We also hope to give local artists the chance to showcase their talents and our residents the opportunity to help support them," said Lake Nona community events manager Shannon Corrigan.

The Art After Dark event began on Nov. 3 and will continue throughout, so if you can't make it one weekend, don't fret, there are many opportunities to attend. Corrigan would love to grow the event like some of the other large markets in Orlando. "When I started as community events manager for Lake Nona, I was determined to bring in some type of weekly or monthly art event. We recently connected with RTP Productions, which also manages the Winter Garden and Lake Eola Farmer's Markets - they have several vendors and artists who want to participate in these events. It seemed like a perfect fit and partnership."

This event resembles the Lake Eola Farmer's Market, just on a smaller scale. There were artists who handcrafted wood carvings such as ice cream scoops, pens, pizza cutters and pepper grinders. Lots of beautiful paintings and jewelry were displayed as well as live caricatures. There was a large turnout because it was also a Light Up Lake Nona event, which occurred only on Nov. 17. This event was a way to kick off the holidays and bring some cheer before everything became hectic and stressful as the holidays neared. It was a great family-friendly event with Christmas decorations like a 14-foot tall Christmas tree, Santa's sleigh, a choir, and a snowy winter wonderland projected onto The Beacon. "We wanted to kick off the season and get everyone excited for the upcoming month," said Corrigan.

Local artists who are interested in becoming a vendor at the event can email the event managers at artafterdarklakenona@gmail.com.





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Health, Fitness & Sports

Saddle Up With Nona Cycle's Different Teams

BY MARY J. ABBOTT

"When you start looking for people who cast the same reflection as you, then there is no growth; you just love your own reflection even more, and that's just not the point." I thought about this quote, pondered, actually, how have I applied this to various aspects in my life, albeit positive or negative. Then my husband walked in, "Hey, I just talked to So-and-So at the Y, and she says you need to come ride with them." So, I looked in the mirror and said to myself, "You can't do this," this after a dozen thoughts of "why I'm not ready to ride again" crossed my mind. I don't want to love this reflection; there is no growth here. "I'm going," I said, and accepted Paul's "(re) Intro to Group Cycling" invitation on Facebook.

That morning, I rode my bike six miles to the start point; they wore jerseys, helmets, cycling tights, aww...nice bikes, I thought. "Hmmm, they look pretty professional. As a community of intro bikers go, I don't stand out too badly, let's do this thing!" I was pumped. This was a month ago, and I'm still at it!

Nona Cycle has two teams: Group A, "the A-Team." Who doesn't love the A-Team? These guys and gals fly right past me and often. And then there is Group B: Here's the skinny with Group B - they are often ahead of me, too, a few lengths, a few football field lengths - they are an "A-Team," too, but you know what? I'm still biking with a smile because I am lovin' it! I'm building endurance, strength, stamina, confidence, but most importantly, I'm building friendships, and this is growth, and that is the point!

Nona Cycles "(re) Intro to Group Cycling" meets at 8:30 on the first Saturday morning of each month. Meet Paul and the gang at the Canvas Restaurant & Market in Laureate Park. The (re) Intro is perfect

whether you are a novice to group cycling, you just haven't cycled in a while, or you are a newbie to the whole cycling scene - this ride is for you! And in under two hours, you will have gotten your feet wet and/or have broken a sweat. And Nona Cycle has this "really care" philosophy - "no Rider left behind"... as I gesture and say, "Go, go, I'm fine, I'll catch up!" The Nona Cycle Weekly Signature Ride meets at 7:30 on Sunday mornings for those who are fused to their bikes.

Keep smiling! You know what I'm talking about when you and your bike become one lean, mean machine, and if you can keep up, there is still time enough for you to make your 11 a.m. church services! So, if you are ready to cast a new reflection and are looking for growth, then I sure hope to see you at the Canvas Restaurant & Market in Laureate Park this weekend!

"Who's new?" As hands are raised, "Welcome everybody!" ... "Saddle up!"



Small Business Saturday photos



Tips for Eating Healthy During the Holidays

BY JOYCE PAULSON, M.D. - UCF HEALTH



The holidays offer an opportunity to spend time with family and friends. Usually, food is at the center of these gatherings. Unfortunately, many of our favorite holiday foods are not the healthiest options, and with so many social gatherings, it is easy to overindulge from Halloween to New Year's. According to the National Institutes of Health, people gain about one to two pounds due to holiday eating.

Enjoying the foods you eat during the holidays does not necessarily have to come with added weight. You can eat healthy during the holidays through a combination of being mindful of what you eat and a couple of strategies.

Create Healthier Versions of Your Favorites

If you are cooking or taking food to your family holiday meals, you can do some slight modifications to make your favorite foods a little healthier. Many traditional holiday recipes can be made healthier by adjusting the ingredients. For example, by refrigerating gravy, you can harden and skim the fat right off.

Another holiday favorite, turkey, can be made very healthy and lean by just not eating the skin. Your mashed potatoes can be made healthier by using skim milk and chicken broth instead of whole milk and butter. There are many substitutions out there to cut down on fat and calories in your favorite holiday dishes. And with many of them, you can't even taste a difference!

Schedule Time to Exercise

The holidays really throw off our regular schedules. Make sure to plan time for exercise. Exercising can help prevent weight gain and offset excess eating. Try taking brisk walks a couple of times a day - or make walking a family activity after a meal.

Weigh Yourself

Periodically weigh yourself - at least once or twice a week. I know this is not that popular, especially during the holidays, but self-monitoring is an important tool to make sure you don't just blindly add on the pounds. People gain weight and then spend half or most of the next year trying to lose that extra weight. Over the years, when the pounds accumulate, people go from one BMI category to the next.

Don't Skip Meals

When you know a big meal is coming, do not skip a meal to try to "make room." It is very important to not skip meals because it can lead to overeating. Try eating a light protein snack such as veggies and hummus or light dressing, or maybe fruit and cheese before your meal. This will make you less tempted to overindulge.

Plan Your Meal

It is not unusual to go for seconds or even thirds during a big holiday meal. However, overeating leads

to weight gain and that awful "too-full" feeling afterward. A great strategy is starting your meal off with vegetables and salad. This can help you eat fewer calories overall and even make you fuller faster. Also, make sure to eat slowly. By savoring and enjoying each bite, it gives your body enough time to tell your brain that you are satisfied. If you accidentally overeat during one meal, make sure to eat lighter at the next meal.



Limit Alcoholic and Sugary Drinks

The social environments that make the holiday season so special also make it easy to overdo it on drinks. Keep in mind the calories you are drinking. When you add your beverage calories to your food calories, it might surprise you how large that number can grow! Limiting your alcohol and sugary drink consumption is a good strategy when watching your weight.

The holidays are a special time with friends and family. By giving just a little attention to your eating habits over the holidays, you can help ensure your weight goals don't get off track.

Joyce Paulson is an internal medicine physician at UCF Health focused on helping patients live healthier lives through lifestyle changes combined with the most advanced healthcare. Find out more at ucfhealth.com.

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Give Your Legs the Gift of Good Health

BY KAREY FREEMAN

Patients affected by symptomatic venous insufficiency (a disruption in the proper flow of blood in the veins of your legs) might first become aware of this condition by the appearance of varicose veins, leg ulcers and, in some cases, moderate to severe pain. This condition and its treatment options are not always well understood by patients and physicians. It is almost as if our culture has dismissed a disease process for lack of understanding and appropriateness of care.

Patients with even mild to moderate vein abnormalities can see a significant impairment to their quality of life. While this important health condition might not be life or limb threatening, it is nonetheless a medical condition that patients need to have treated by a qualified vascular physician in order to treat the source of the problem. Successful treatment can have those afflicted with various forms of symptomatic venous insufficiency enjoying a much higher level of comfort that supports a more active lifestyle. It also provides patients with an improved self image as a result of eliminating the unsightly appearance of leg vein disorders, including varicose veins.

Proper treatment of varicose veins begins with a thorough medical assessment by a vascular surgeon.

This will allow the source of the problem to be treated, providing patients with better, more sustainable long-term results.

Symptoms of venous insufficiency include:

- Swelling of the legs or ankles (edema)
- Pain that gets worse when you stand and gets better when you raise your legs
- Leg cramps
- Aching, throbbing, or a feeling of heaviness in your legs
- Itchy legs
- Weak legs
- Thickening of the skin on your legs or ankles
- Skin that is changing color, especially around the ankles
- Leg ulcers
- Varicose veins
- A feeling of tightness in your calves

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Homes Inspired by You

USTA Marks Twelve Months Of Operation

BY DANIEL PYSER

December marks the 12th month of operation for the USTA National Campus, which opened its doors in Lake Nona in the very first days of 2017. In what has been a remarkable beginning for the first-year facility, the USTA looks to continue its formula of success in December and into the new year, notably with local programming and major events.

The first wave of spring programming will begin on Jan. 3, with the session running through March 17. These programs will be available for registration starting in December. All of the programs that have become staples on the courts in Lake Nona will once again be available, with options for players at all levels and for all ages. All available programs can be found at www.ustanationalcampus.com.

The Nemours Family Zone, which features 36- and 60-foot courts designed for beginners, has programs for children as young as 3, during which parents are encouraged to participate, all the way up to intermediate programs designed for kids between the ages of 7 and 10.

Programming for middle school- and high school-age children is available on full-sized courts for players ranging from beginners to those competing on their school teams and USTA-level tournaments. And as is the case with all programming, both after-school and weekend sessions are available.

On the adult side, the popular Tennis 101, Live-Ball and Cardio Tennis programs all return, also with both weekday and weekend options available. Other options include singles and doubles training as well as open social play, which mimics a "pick-up" league and is available at various levels.

Finally, adult camps are back this spring, with three-day options available: Dec. 14-17 (4.0 and above), Jan. 4-7 (3.5 and below) and Jan. 25-28 (4.0 and above), Feb. 1-4 (3.5 and below), and March 22-25 (4.0 and above).

In the events realm, one of the most significant tournaments of 2017 will be hosted in the last week of the year, wrapping up what has been an impressive slate of events featuring juniors, collegians, professionals, and even international senior and wheelchair athletes, among many others. The USTA Winter National Championships begin on Dec. 27 and will feature some of the top junior players from across the country. The event is a Level 1 event. That makes it one of the five prestigious National Championship-level events hosted throughout the year, providing players the opportunity to win a coveted Gold Ball. The USTA National Campus will host both the boys' and girls' 16s and 18s divisions, including singles and doubles competition. In total, 512 of the most talented young players in the country will descend on the National Campus for the event. The doubles finals are scheduled for Dec. 31, with singles champions set to be crowned on Jan. 2.

As Central Floridians celebrate the holiday season, the USTA National Campus remains a possible destination for players, family and friends. In fact, Christmas Day will be the only day the campus will be closed in the month of December. In keeping with the spirit of the holiday season, the USTA National Campus Pro Shop will be offering a special promotion throughout December on USTA National Campus gear that can only be found at the Pro Shop. The promotion, which will include a 10% discount on all USTA National Campus merchandise, will begin Dec. 1 and run through the end of the month.

For those who cannot stop by the National Campus in person, the Pro Shop recently launched its website: www.ustaproshop.com. The site features all of the latest National Campus apparel and gifts. These products are available exclusively on this website and in the Pro Shop. Customers also are able to shop for and purchase gear from the top brands in tennis, including Adidas, Babolat, HEAD, Wilson, and more.





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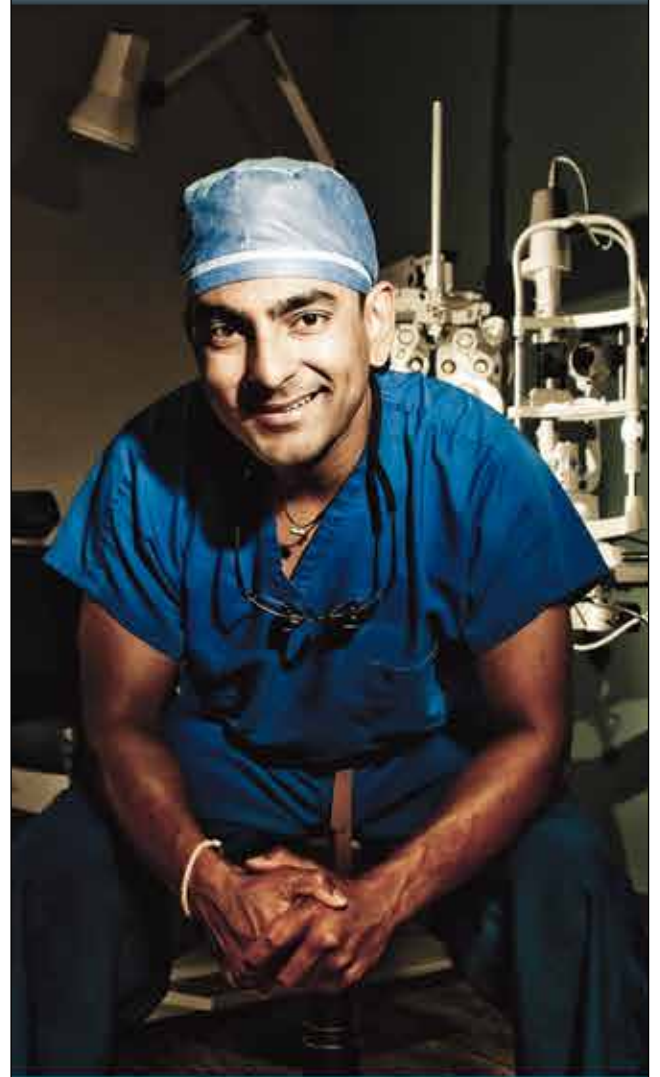
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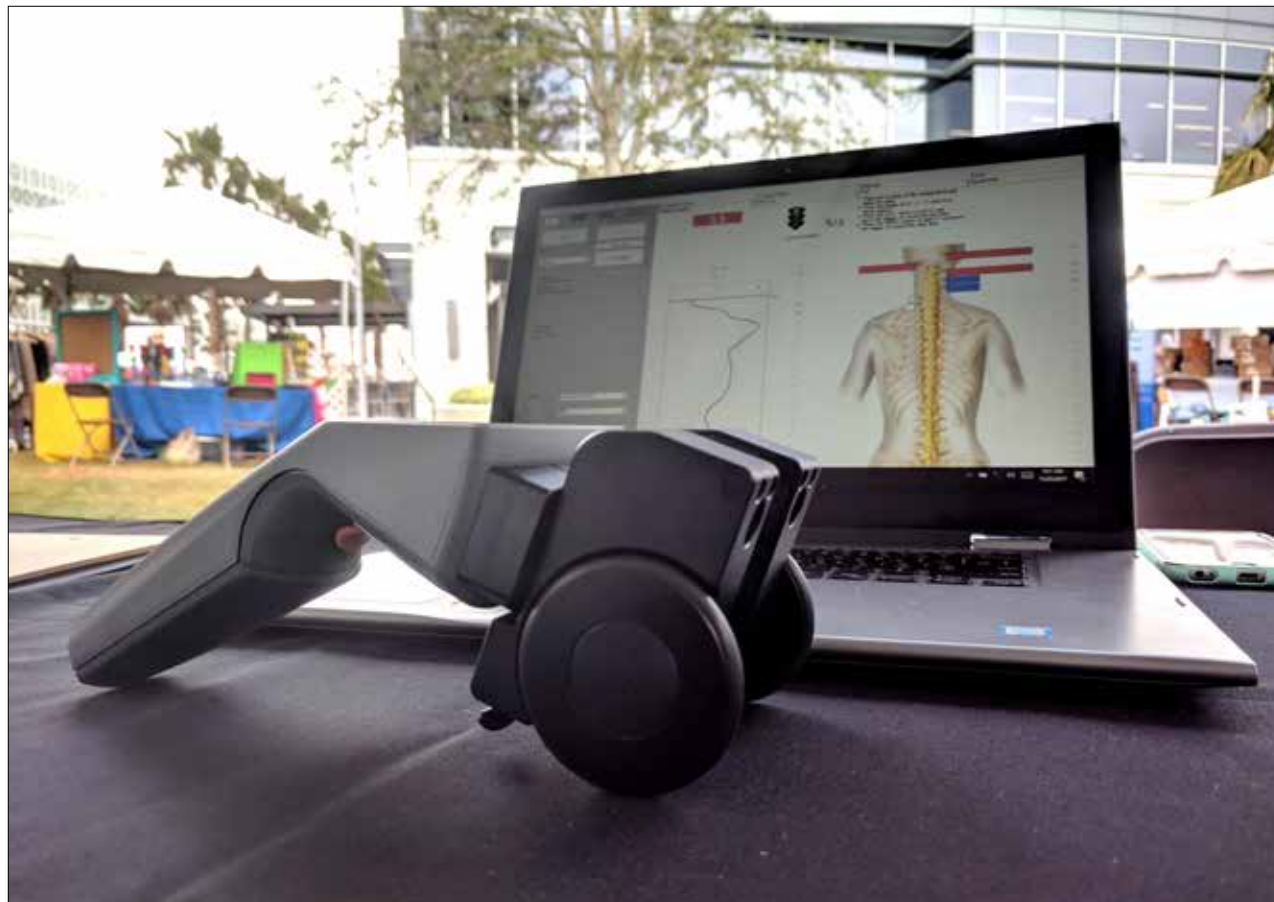
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Education

Players Production, Lego League, & Campus Beautification at Moss Park Elementary

STEPHANIE OSMOND ED.D. - PRINCIPAL

We have a lot of exciting things going on at Moss Park Elementary! Most recently, we announced and

cast our annual Moss Park Players production. This year, our students will perform Mulan Jr. We can't wait to see the talent Ms. Jacobacci will bring out in our young performers. We also won a grant for Lego League Jr. This grant will allow us to create a competitive team of students who will create Lego robots and compete with them twice a year under the guidance of Mrs. McCloe and Mr. Lohman. In addition, we have a variety of other afterschool activities that have kicked off. We are so excited to be able to offer our students activities that will instill a love of learning beyond the classroom, and we cannot do it without the dedication of our wonderful teachers!



During last year's AdvancEd surveys, I noticed that several parents and staff members felt that the school needed to have a neater appearance. My staff and I spent a lot of time going through the building and making re-

pairs on items and facilities to refresh and rejuvenate the campus appearance. I would like to take the time to say a huge thank you to our PTA who spent time beautifying the school on the first Saturday of November. They repainted, re-mulched, picked up trash, and more. This year, we also added multiplication facts to our staircase! We are so excited about this addition and will continue to work toward making our campus a beautiful place to learn.

Please follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MossParkElementary>.

We have a new Twitter page; follow us at [MossParkES_OCPS](#).

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NorthLake Park Elementary School

BY SALLY SHUMAN

It's a 'Small World' at NorthLake Park Elementary

On Friday, Nov. 3, NorthLake Park Elementary held the 2nd Annual Heritage Night. This event was for all NorthLake Park families and the community to enjoy an evening of food and culture. As each family arrived, they received a "passport," and as they visited each country's display, they were given a sticker for their passport. There were about 30 cultures that set up a display depicting their heritage. There were dances, raffles, music and more. Everyone had a great time exploring the different cultures that were represented.



NorthLake Park Elementary hosts 'Float the Principal'

Students from multiple Lake Nona area schools each created a boat out of aluminum foil and then tested the boat to see how much weight in pennies their boat could float. Once each school had declared a winner, the students from each school then built a replica of the boat and tested it by floating their principal. NorthLake Park hosted the event using the YMCA pool. Many of the boats did float the principal, but some did not! It was a great STEM activity.



Lake Nona High School Boys' Golf Recap

BY JUSTIN JOHNSON, HEAD BOYS GOLF COACH



On Nov. 3-4, the Lake Nona High School Boys' Golf Team represented Lake Nona at the 2017 Class 3A State Golf Championship for the first time in school history. As their coach, I could not be any more proud of their accomplishments this season with winning their third consecutive district title, first-ever regional title, and their first team appearance at the state finals.

The boys' golf team weathered a tough El Campeon golf course at Mission Inn Resort to finish in 10th place. Individually, sophomore Joseph Pagdin medaled by placing in a tie for sixth place overall.

The guys took away valuable experience to use as motivation for their run at next year's state title. During the first round, Lake Nona was paired with Gulf Coast High School, which happened to be the eventual team champion this year. On Saturday, the guys were paired up with Plant High School, which happened to be the team champion from 2016. Playing alongside these great programs gave them insight and confidence for the approach to their 2018 golf season. I strongly believe 2018 will be the year of the Lions.

On behalf of the boys' golf team, they would like to send their appreciation for your support during this past season. Without each of you, they could not have represented Lake Nona as well as they did. Thank you!

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Lake Nona High School Theatre Department Updates

BY DANY OLIVERIA, JUNIOR AT LNHS

International Thespian Society Troupe 7434 is an honor society comprised of high school students who have earned admission through participation in the theatre department at Lake Nona High School. Daniel Tracht, one of troupe 7434's amazing presidents, was nominated as Best Supporting Actor in a Professional Musical for the Broadway World Orlando Awards for his incredible work as Davey at the Orlando Repertory Theater's production of Newsies. Daniel worked on this show for about three months, which included the rehearsal process and 50 performances. If you would like to see him win, click the link below to vote! <https://www.broadwayworld.com/orlando/vote2017region.cfm>.

On Nov. 16-18, we participated in our District V Thespian Festival, where we performed many individual events as well as our one-act play *When the Hurley Burley's Done*.

Speaking of the one act, our Evening of One Acts has been re-scheduled for Dec. 4 at 7 p.m. There is a suggested donation of \$5, and all proceeds are going to Hurricane

Maria relief. At this event, we will feature our competition one act, **When The Hurley Burley's Done**, as well as some special performances from some of the theater classes here at Lake Nona. We hope to see you all there!



Sun Blaze Elementary School

BY TAMI TURNER, PRINCIPAL

With the holiday season upon us, I want to take time to reflect on the moments that make Sun Blaze Elementary such a wonderful place to work, learn and grow. It would take too much time to mention each event and interaction that has made the first five months of the school year memorable. I like to consistently highlight areas of our school that have been impacted as a result of investment, from people in our community who invest in this school and those who invest in our community through teaching, training and caring for our Sun Blaze Stingrays.

Our recent school beautification project, Caring for Our Campus, was a huge success with so many wonderful people participating leading up to the Saturday project, and those who came out and volunteered their time making sure our school remains a beautiful sight for our community. I want to thank our Partners in Education, John Madison Landscape and Mr. Foster Mathes, for their time and contributions. I also would like to thank our families for their Saturday morning investment.



The Boosterthon Fun Run was a HUGE success. Our financial goal was reached with the money going toward enrichment programs at Sun Blaze. Reaching our goal through the generosity of individuals is some-



thing to celebrate and share with our families and community. In addition to the financial support raised during the Boosterthon, I also had the privilege to witness family and community support for our students during the Fun Run. Hundreds of supporters gathered to watch students run laps three different times throughout the day. I watched parents, grandparents and family members cheer on their children. Community neighbors lined up during the high-five lap to make sure each student was shown appreciation and encouragement. An event like this brings out the best in people, and we are so proud to be a part of it.

I am proud to share that Ms. Bendell, a fifth-grade teacher, received the License4Learning Non-Fiction Classroom Libraries Impact Grant presented by The Foundation for OPCS in the amount of \$480. The grant is awarded to purchase non-fiction books to provide Pre-K through 8th grade school students additional non-fiction reading resources to enhance classroom learning and literacy. Community and education leaders judge grant applications in a competitive process, with preference given to creative proposals that clearly and comprehensively describe the classroom and the need for non-fiction reading materials. I want to thank the OPCS Foundation for the grant and congratulate Ms. Bendell, a worthy recipient.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not take time to thank those who invest in our community and future each day by teaching and caring for our



students. Our teachers here at Sun Blaze Elementary are talented, gifted and fun to be around. Their level of commitment and determination is contagious. From the moment they arrive on campus, their focus is helping students understand and grasp new information.

As I give thanks this season, I give thanks for my Sun Blaze family and our wonderful community.

Go, Stingrays!



Eagle Creek Elementary School

BY ROB MCCLOE, PRINCIPAL

Girls on the Run International is a program for girls in grades 3-5 available at Eagle Creek Elementary. Girls learn about life skills through lessons that involve games and running. The girls prepare for a 5k both physically and mentally by practicing two times each week through the season. The goal is for girls to learn confidence and a lifelong commitment toward a healthy lifestyle. Girls who complete in the program are able to celebrate themselves for their voice, body, mind and unique talents. Girls on the Run at Eagle Creek completed their practice 5k on Nov. 28 and will also complete the Girls on the Run 5k race at UCF on Dec. 9. This will be the culminating event of the season. Big thanks to Coach Boger, Lewitt, Newcomb & White. Make sure to cheer us on if you see us running by!



Eagle Creek Elementary Helps the Homeless



Eagle Creek Elementary recently completed a very successful service project to benefit the Orlando Coalition for the Homeless. We collected toothpaste, toothbrushes, and bar soap, as well as gently used towels, washcloths and blankets. This was a

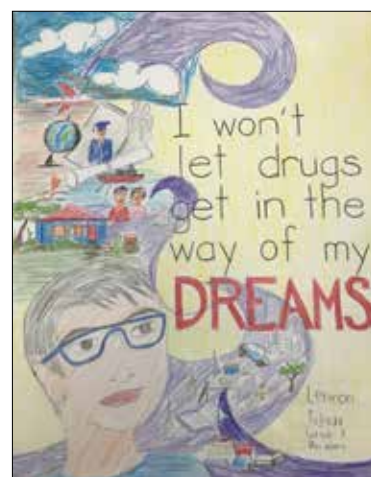
joint project sponsored by Eagle Creek's K-Kids, Student Government, and Recycling Club. Our Eagle Creek families donated plenty of supplies to help the homeless in our community.

The National Red Ribbon Campaign is the oldest and largest

drug prevention program in the nation, reaching millions of young people during Red Ribbon Week, Oct. 23-31 each year. Here at ECE, we enjoyed participating in Red Ribbon Week during the week of Oct. 23-27. It was a week to focus on the power of choice! Students learned about how they have the power to make positive choices toward a healthy and happy lifestyle. Our students at ECE were encouraged to design a poster showing their keys to staying drug free! Many students participated, and our posters were displayed throughout the school. These are our grade-level poster winners.

Veterans Day

On Friday, Nov. 10, Eagle Creek Elementary School honored our local veterans for Veterans Day with an invitation to veterans who are family members or friends of our students. We began our celebration by having some of our chorus students lead us



in song with The Star-Spangled Banner and Everyday Heroes. Our Student Government Association students also prepared special words to share, and our veterans were invited to join us for this very special presentation and a breakfast. We feel that this was a wonderful opportunity

for all of us to show our appreciation for what they have sacrificed in order for all of us to enjoy our freedom. All of us at ECE would like to say to our men and women in uniform, past, present, and future, THANK YOU!!



STEM Focus: The Path Required for a STEM Career

BY ANDRE GARCIA

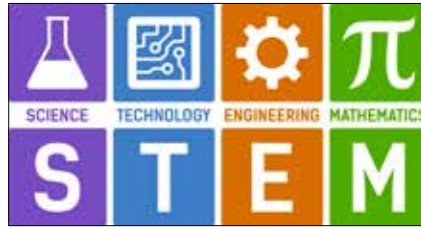
The purpose of this column is to discuss STEM careers; specifically, the academic path required to obtain a STEM career and motivating our youth to pursue these lucrative and wildly in-demand careers. But for this month's column, I'd like to take the opportunity to highlight some big news that has significant impact on STEM in the Central Florida area, and that is the announcement of the retirement of UCF's President John Hitt. The growth UCF has experienced and its impact to STEM industries in Central Florida is no coincidence. In this case, correlation is causation. In President Hitt's 25 years as UCF's commander-in-chief, Central Florida has transformed from an afterthought, where employees of the tourism industry reside, to a vibrant technology hub. What follows are a few examples of these industries.

There's no question about the importance of the aerospace industry in Central Florida, specifically the close ties with NASA, Kennedy Space Center and the surrounding support industry. In addition to the space industry that I discussed in a prior column, the modeling and simulation industry in Central Florida also has thrived under President Hitt's watch. The amount of investment the university has made in Research Parkway and close collaborations with the defense industry, specifically the Army's Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training, and Instrumentation (PEO STRI) and the Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division (NAWCTSD), are the foundation for the vibrant simulation and training industry. UCF's graduate program in Modeling and Simulation

is one of the few – and by far the best – programs in the country. This is a great example of how the synergies between local industries and academia can intertwine to support the local industries working well.

The video game industry also is a close cousin of the modeling and simulation industry. EA Sports has a significant presence in the area with offices in Maitland. The golf simulation industry in the region also is second to none, and many of the skill sets needed in the modeling and simulation industry as well as the video game development industry have a lot in common. This is in addition to the needs of the tourism and hospitality industry's needs for game designers. UCF's Florida Interactive Entertainment Academy is consistently ranked among the top graduate game design programs in the country. This is another good example of the synergies and direct ties between academia and industry.

Two other similar examples of strategic partnerships between UCF and burgeoning industries are the advanced sensor manufacturing effort known as BRIDG and the booming medical industry here in Lake Nona. These two initiatives might be younger in age than the aerospace industry and modeling, simulation, and game design industries in Central Florida,



but in due time there is no question they will have a similar impact on the region as the established industries. President Hitt deserves significant kudos for putting UCF's muscle behind these efforts. The region will have significant demand for skilled STEM workers to feed the growth of these up-and-coming industries in Central Florida.

So what kind of career paths should one take to ride the growth wave of these industries? For the medical industry, there are a number of STEM paths to keep in mind beyond your traditional health care practitioner careers. Hardware and software expertise will continue to grow. Automation and machine learning will continue to have an increased impact on the healthcare industry. For example, IBM's Watson and other similar technology will be used to predict and hopefully prevent illnesses. Intuitive Surgical's DaVinci machine and other autonomous and remotely-operated machinery will only continue to rise in importance. Regarding the advanced sensor manufacturing BRIDG initiative, this topic is so new that it is more difficult to understand the potential opportunities that this will bring to the region. Over the next few years, I predict the related industries that grow around the BRIDG initiative will be just as important as the manufacturing facility itself. This includes consumer electronics, wearable technology, raw material suppliers, and other similar technology companies that will benefit from being collocated with the manufacturing facility.

A great deal of gratitude is owed to UCF President John Hitt for his vision and strategy in investing in the STEM initiatives mentioned above. The Central Florida region is more than just tourism and aerospace. Other thriving industries exist and will continue to grow, including modeling and simulation, game design, health care, advanced sensor manufacturing, and many, many more. Dr. Hitt saw the potential in these industries and chose to position UCF to be able to capitalize on these industries and to be at the forefront of feeding graduates from UCF to these industries. The concept of being the leading partnership university was the brainchild of President Hitt, and, for that, the Central Florida region thanks him.

Dr. Andre Garcia is a scientist/engineer at a large defense contractor and owner and founder of EduCoachOrlando.com. He has previously worked as a scientist for the Army, Navy and Air Force, was named one of "UCF's 30 Under 30" in 2015, and has significant experience in academia, industry and government STEM careers. He can be reached at EduCoachOrlando@gmail.com.



Lake Nona High School – Boys' Cross Country

BY RYAN LOWE, MBA, HEAD COACH

When the final bell rings to end the school year, high school students have visions of fun things like sleeping in, going to the beach, or binge-watching



their favorite TV show. Those visions are completely different for a high school cross country runner. A serious runner will spend their summer getting up early before the sun rises to get a long run of 8-12 miles done. The serious runner will meet with their teammates to work out six days a week while averaging 50 miles of running per week – all in the hopes of making it to the State Championship, helping their team win, and possibly continuing their running in college. The Lake Nona High School boys' team decided they wanted to be champions this season, and they began running as soon as the 2016-2017 school year ended. After countless miles over the summer and fall, the boys lived up to their motto of "Run Nona," and they ran their way to the Metro Conference Championship, the District Championship, and a State Championship berth.

On top of the team success, senior Roberto Castro was named to the Florida Athletic Coaches Associa-

tion (FACA) All-State All-Star team, where he was one of 32 athletes competing for the honor of top runner in the state on Nov. 18. Out of 576 high school teams in the state of Florida, Lake Nona's Castro was chosen to represent the East Florida team, where he raced against other boys from the north, south, and west of Florida. Roberto was a state medalist his junior year and ran a school record of 16:01 for a 5K during his senior year. Head Coach Ryan Lowe was selected as one of the four head coaches for the All-Star meet and joined Roberto at the race.



State Championship Girls' Golf Results

BY JANINE MOJICA, LADIES GOLF COACH



On Nov. 3-4, the Lake Nona High School Girls' Golf Team represented Lake Nona HS in the state championship in which they qualified for by winning the regional championship.

After a very tough 1st round, the team was tied for 8th place with a score of 330, while Erika Smith led the entire field with 2 under par in 1st place. The team rebounded and came out to show everyone what they were really made up of in round 2 on Saturday. They came in 3rd for the day with a score of 305 - a well-played solid round for the ladies with all four top scores 80 or less, surpassing six schools during this round.

Final scoring at the end of two days for the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) 3A State Championship for Lake Nona HS Girls' Golf was 4th Place. Individual: Erika Smith medaled for 2nd place overall with a two-day score of 4 under par.

The team finished their season as Metro East

Champions, District Runner-up, Regional Champions, and 4th in the State for 3A FHSAA Girls Golf. We are very proud of their accomplishments and look forward to having them all return next year, as we do not have to say goodbye to any seniors.

On day 1 - During the practice round (11/2), we ran into the Lake Nona High School Boys' Golf Team just before tee time and were able to grab a quick picture with them and wish them good luck.



Two-hour study hall at hotel in lobby.

After the first round, both teams met up to enjoy their success at dinner.

These students were well behaved and showed class; when you get a chance please congratulate these 9th, 10th and 11th grade students for their success.

Erika Smith - 11th

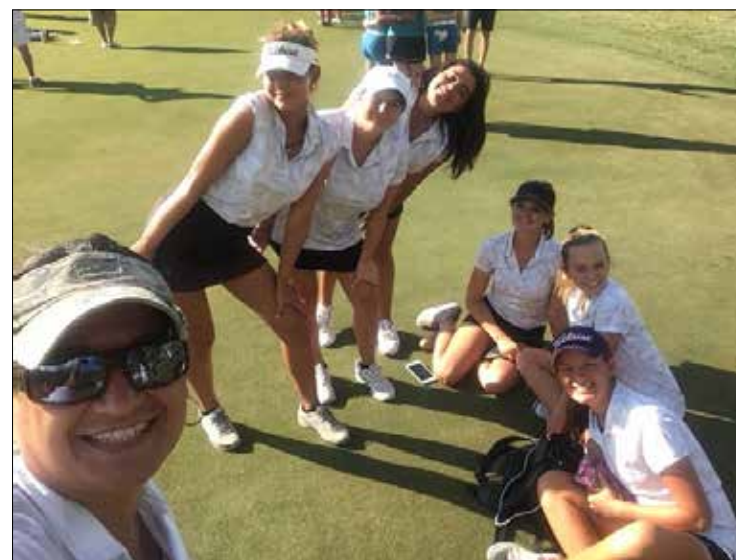
Shannon Rhoden - 11th

Emily Gordon - 11th

Stephanie Towle - 10th

Lisbeth Espinal - 10th

Caroline Nemes - 9th



Future Leaders Molded at Local Elementary School

BY NICOLE LABOSCO



Leaders of tomorrow. That's how most adults describe the younger generations to follow. Narcoossee Elementary School is working to help mold our future leaders, one child at a time. Narcoossee Elementary is one of only two schools in Osceola County that implements a process called *The Leader in Me*. The journey began just over a year ago. Principal Scott Knoebel took notice that something was missing with the school's students and staff in his second year at the school.

"At one point," Principal Knoebel said, "I asked everyone if they knew our mission statement. No one could answer. I knew it was time for us to redefine our school by writing a new mission statement and moving in a new direction. I was aware of *The Leader*

in Me through a fellow principal at the time, Jonathan Davis, who brought it to his school. I had taken several staff members with me to *The Leader in Me* symposium that year to learn more about it and right away knew this was what our school was missing. We, as a team, decided that *The Leader in Me* was the answer.

"Once we knew our initial direction," he continued, "I created a team of staff members to begin the first steps in the process - rewriting our mission statement. We met multiple times with representatives from all areas of the school who provided input, took that information back to their teams, and then we would reconvene until the mission statement was complete. From that point forward, we began all of the work behind

the scenes to get the process up and running."

The Leader in Me is a whole-school transformation model and process, developed in partnership with educators, that empowers students with the leadership and life skills they need to thrive in the 21st century. "The great thing about *The Leader in Me* is that it isn't a program. It's not one more thing. It's a process and a change in mindset. The process is not just for students but adults as well,"

said Principal Knoebel.

The staff actually went through a handful of days of training to learn *The Leader in Me* process, most of it consisting of the staff volunteering their time. "Much of what I heard from staff was that it was because the training wasn't about learning a new curriculum, a new teaching strategy, disaggregating data, but about each staff member as an individual person. It was learning about *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* and learning how to be better and more effective as an educator and as a person. I had some staff say that the 7 Habits have significantly changed their lives for the better both inside and out of work."

The initial costs of the process are high without special funding, but Principal Knoebel ensured his staff he would find a way to fund it and did just that. The school received two grants to cover start-up funds



Future Leaders Molded at Local Elementary School (cont.)

BY NICOLE LABOSCO



from Osceola County Commissioner Fred Hawkins through the Community Betterment Grant. The other grant was through the school's business partner, Nonahood's local Sam's Club #4828. Knoebel worked directly with Sam's Club General Manager David Speer. "Mr. Speer saw the potential in our school

and developing student leadership within it. We are forever grateful for their generosity."

The students are taught secular principles through *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, developed by Stephen R. Covey and introduced in his best-selling book originally published in 1989. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* is a key component of the overall Leader in Me process and is a synthesis of universal, timeless principles of personal, interpersonal and organizational effectiveness such as responsibility, vision, integrity, teamwork, collaboration and renewal, which are secular in nature and common to all people and cultures. The process includes student participation in goal setting, data tracking, leadership roles, student-led conferences, leadership environments and leadership events. Students and staff refer to the 7 Habits on a daily basis, and Principal Knoebel uses it at home as well as at school. "Our hope is that what is taught and learned at school transfers to the daily lives of our students, staff and families."

The Leader in Me program is distinct in several ways:

- Starts from a powerful premise – that every child possesses unique strengths and has the ability to be a leader. This premise shapes the views of staff to value and develop the whole child.
- Integrates leadership development into existing school programs, curricula and traditions. More than a program, *The Leader in Me* serves as a foundational operating system for the school, helping to improve relationships, transform culture, and highly motivate staff members and students.
- Helps students learn how to become self-reliant, take initiative, plan ahead, set and track goals, do their homework, prioritize their time, manage their emotions, be considerate of others, express their viewpoint persuasively, resolve conflicts, find

creative solutions, value differences and live a balanced life. In short, *The Leader in Me* helps students develop the skills and self-confidence they need to lead their lives and succeed in school and beyond.

- Impacts all stakeholders, starting first with the staff of a school, then expanding to students, their families, and the community at large. This inside-out approach is a key ingredient to successfully creating positive change in the school.

The school already has seen a positive change in its physical environment and how both staff and students are taking leadership within the institute. There are leader specific murals, Wildly Important Goals scoreboards, and most everything Narcoossee Elementary does revolves around leadership.

"We have noticed a dramatic decrease in discipline referrals with students. We also have noticed an increase in the number of students demonstrating leadership and in a variety of ways," said Principal Knoebel. "It has given our students and staff members more of a chance to show their voice. We have a Lighthouse Team consisting of a cross section of staff members from across the school who meet monthly to help run the process. The rest of the staff is broken into Action Teams who help lead specific ventures around the school throughout the year. This way, 100% of the staff is involved in doing 100% of the work. We have eight Action Teams focusing on curriculum, family learning, professional learning, the leadership environment, leadership events, positive and safe environment, students and teachers using data, and student leadership roles. We also have a Student Lighthouse Team, consisting of fourth and fifth graders, who meet monthly to allow the students to have a voice on what they want to implement or to see happen in the school."

An example of success from the Student Lighthouse Team was when they developed the idea to create welcome bags for new students to the school and had a member of the team take those new students on tours of the school when they first arrived.

The process is not teacher driven but student driven. Principal Knoebel mentioned that students also are involved in the morning news show, not just behind the scenes but on camera and around the campus doing interviews or making videos about learning the 7 Habits and more. Every student has a leadership role within their classroom. They will be assisting with development of the yearbook this year and are developing and participating in community service learning projects.

The Leader in Me process lasts the entire time a student is enrolled at Narcoossee Elementary, and all students participate as it's the overarching process at the school and all other programs



and processes fit within it. The school's mission statement is "Learning and Leading. Every one. Every day." *The Leader in Me* process aligns with that statement perfectly. Staff maintain students' interest in the process because it's constantly at the forefront of what they do. The principal mentioned that the process becomes seamlessly integrated in the language they use and the instruction of the lessons.

"If a school is looking to positively impact its climate and culture, this is the process to implement. As educators, we are teaching the Florida Standards at each grade on a daily basis, but we also have the duty to impact our students and staff by giving them the tools to grow socially and emotionally and use that information to make an impact in their lives and the lives of others. We are not just teaching the 'How,' we are [also] teaching the 'Why.' Learning the 7 Habits allows everyone, including staff and families, to benefit through the process," said Principal Knoebel when asked why he'd recommend the process to other schools.

It's always an achievement to see a positive change in schools, but a process that also optimistically impacts the overall life of a student is one to really acknowledge.



Habit 1 — Be Proactive (You're in Charge)
I am a responsible person. I take initiative. I choose my actions, attitudes, and moods. I do not blame others for my wrong actions. I do the right thing without being asked, even when no one is looking.

Habit 2 — Begin with the End in Mind (Have a Plan)
I plan ahead and set goals. I do things that have meaning and make a difference. I am an important part of my classroom and contribute to my school's mission and vision. I look for ways to be a good citizen.

Habit 3 — Put First Things First (Work First, Then Play)
I spend my time on things that are most important. This means I say no to things I know I should not do. I set priorities, make a schedule, and follow my plan. I am disciplined and organized.

Habit 4 — Think Win-Win (Everyone Can Win)
I balance courage for getting what I want with consideration for what others want. I make deposits in others' Emotional Bank Accounts. When conflicts arise, I look for third alternatives.

Habit 5 — Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood (Listen Before You Talk)
I listen to other people's ideas and feelings. I try to see things from their viewpoints. I listen to others without interrupting. I am confident in voicing my ideas. I look people in the eyes when talking.

Habit 6 — Synergize (Together Is Better)
I value other people's strengths and learn from them. I get along well with others, even people who are different than me. I work well in groups. I seek out other people's ideas to solve problems because I know that by teaming with others we can create better solutions than anyone of us can alone. I am humble.

Habit 7 — Sharpen The Saw (Balance Feels Best)
I take care of my body by eating right, exercising and getting sleep. I spend time with family and friends. I learn in lots of ways and lots of places, not just at school. I find meaningful ways to help others.



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ENTERTAINMENT

DECEMBER 2017



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learn more on page E-3



Back to Basics: Food and Wine Holiday Special

BY NICOLE LABOSCO AND VANESSA POULSON

Welcome to Back to Basics, where we classy ladies try to establish just how basic one can be in the Orlando area. Each month, we'll be taking on a new theme, and we'll be searching for the best in basic trends. We've all heard some of the most recent popular foodie trends: charcoal, galaxy and unicorn as well as familiar classics such as pumpkin spice and peppermint. We hope we can inspire the rest of the Nonahood to embrace their inner basic.

This month, with Epcot's Food and Wine festival in full swing, we decided to tackle one of the biggest basic events in Orlando. Food and Wine offers a ton of variety in options from many different countries with a variety of flavors. Though the festival might be over for the year, we had a lot of fun ringing in the start of the holiday season at Disney!

Happy Holidays from the Back to Basics crew, and check out some of our favorite stops below!

Order: Harvest Latte and Shakin' Jamaican

Place: Joffery's Coffee

Final Review Nicole: It's 5 o'clock somewhere, right? The Shakin' Jamaican is offered with or without alcohol. It's Joffery's signature cappuccino, topped with Bailey's or Kahlua and whipped cream and is available iced or frozen. I went with the latter. Upon ordering this drink, I was torn about which alcohol I'd go with, and the employee could sense that, so he offered me both - I gladly accepted. Wow, was this drink delicious! It was so creamy and a nice pick me up to start the day.



Final Review Vanessa: I didn't try Nicole's alcoholic morning coffee, but my Harvest Latte was a great way to kick off our Food and Wine adventure. The latte was sweet and incredibly light and gentle, with autumn flavors that worked perfectly with the fresh fall weather. Apple and pumpkin are two classic holiday flavors, and it's certainly a match made in heaven as far as fall drinks go.

Taste: 8/10	Aesthetic: 7/10	Price: 5/10
Environment: 7/10	Proximity to Nonahood: 5/10	

Order: Spanakopita & Bougatsa

Place: Greek Booth

Final Review Nicole: Having experienced authentic Greek food from both Athens and Santorini before, I had super high expectations. I'm a huge fanatic of spanakopita, which is the flaky pastry filled with warm spinach and feta cheese. This booth was legitimate and didn't disappoint! It was just scrumptious. Each bite was met with a light crunch of the pastry, and the savory spinach and feta are a perfect pair. The bougatsa was pretty yummy, too! It's a warm phyllo dough strudel with sweet vanilla custard, lemon-honey syrup and cinnamon. This was a sweet treat to end our Grecian adventure, and it transported me right back to the Aegean Sea, which ultimately left me with no complaints whatsoever!



Final Review Vanessa: Both these dishes were delightful in different ways. The spanakopita was light and warm, with plenty of spinach in the filling. I loved how light the dish was as a whole, and because of Food and Wine's miniature portions, you don't feel overwhelmed with the amount of food in front of you. I enjoyed the appeal of the Greek booth decorated to make you feel as if you'd been transported out of Florida and into the Mediterranean.

Taste: 10/10	Aesthetic: 10/10	Price: 5/10
Environment: 10/10	Proximity to Nonahood: 5/10	

Order: Madras Red Curry

Place: Indian Booth

Final Review Nicole: Ah, curry! Not sure I've ever tried red curry (pretty sure I've always ordered yellow or green), but this meal was so fresh! I was led to pick this dish because the veggies called out to me and sounded so appealing. I wasn't wrong. The dish included roasted cauliflower, baby carrots, chickpeas and basmati rice. It would've been nice to have some sort of protein included, but ultimately, Van and I agreed that we wished it was a little bit spicier.



Final Review Vanessa: I love curry; I always have, and I always will. I really enjoyed getting to taste something very flavorful and vibrant in color and texture, which this

dish had a lot of. Because of the combination of the carrots, chickpeas and white rice, there was plenty of interesting texture and flavorful matches. Each of the components in the dish complemented the others so nicely. I just wish the curry had been a bit spicier, as that is one of my favorite parts about eating Indian cuisine.

Taste: 7/10	Aesthetic: 7/10	Price: 5/10
Environment: 7/10	Proximity to Nonahood: 5/10	

Order: Spinach Paneer Cheese Pocket with Mint Raita Sauce

Place: Africa Booth

Final Review Nicole: We decided to snag a similar dish to our Greek spanakopita to compare the two, and we were not disappointed. Van preferred this one over the Greek dish, and I felt the opposite, but it was pretty much perfection in a pocket. I think the mint raita sauce is what elevated the dish and brought a nice separation of flavors.



Final Review Vanessa: This was perhaps one of my favorite dishes, as it was not only something entirely new to me but also was jam packed with incredible amounts of flavor and texture that kept me coming back for more. The flavors were a perfect harmony of spicy and savory, with the mint raita sauce nicely balancing the richness of the other flavors. I'm in love. Would totally have this again.

Taste: 8/10	Aesthetic: 7/10	Price: 5/10
Environment: 7/10	Proximity to Nonahood: 5/10	

Order: Charcuterie in a Cone

Place: Spanish Booth

Final Review Nicole: Okay, guys, this is not a drill! I've literally grown up eating meats, cheese and olives as snacks, and they've always been a go-to of mine. The moment I saw this option on the menu, I took off. (Sorry, Van.) She literally had no say. It was the best thing I had throughout the entire Food and Wine Festival journey! Something so simple as chorizo, prosciutto, olives and parmesan cheese with an herb vinaigrette, and I'm in heaven. I loved the fact that they had it in a cone, so it was easily portable. I was also super happy that Van wasn't a huge meat fan. More for me!



Final Review Vanessa: This was a lot of meat for me. I'm already not a huge meat fan, and this was a lot to handle in one sitting. I let Nicole take most of it, even though I stole the only olive in the whole cone. I believe I took only one or two bites. It's not that the flavors of the food weren't good, it was more that I'm just not a meat fan. However, if you are a meat lover (like Nicole), you'd likely love this dish.

Taste: 9/10*	Aesthetic: 8/10*	Price: 5/10
Environment: 8/10	Proximity to Nonahood: 5/10	

*Taste: Nicole says it's a 12/10, but Van disagrees
*Aesthetic: Nicole says 10/10 for the portable cone

Order: Sparkling Rose Wine

Place: Italian Booth

Final Review Nicole: I stepped a bit out of my comfort zone for this one and strayed away from the classic Prosecco and my usual go-to of Moscato. I opted for the Corbinello sweet sparkling wine and was so happy with my decision! Not only was it bubbly and presented in a tall wine flute, but I might have discovered a new favorite Italian beverage! It wasn't super sweet, but it wasn't dry, either. It had notes of berry and is said to be best paired with chocolate-based desserts. My fellow Italians never let me down! Grazie! Grazie! Grazie!

Final Review Vanessa: N/A (Alcoholic! Underaged!)

Taste: 9/10	Aesthetic: 7/10	Price: 5/10
Environment: 7/10	Proximity to Nonahood: 5/10	

Order: Spicy Hummus Fries

Place: Moroccan Booth

Final Review Nicole: At first bite, I said this dish was my favorite of the day, but I quickly revoked that statement as my mind went



back to the Charcuterie in a Cone dish from Spain. This dish was super flavorful, but I found the fries to be a little heavy for the event. Saying that, we were more than halfway through the countries, so Van and I struggled to finish, but I took one for the team. **Final Review Vanessa:** I love hummus! It's one of my favorite dips, so I was pleased to have it with some tasty french fries. The texture of the fries was very interesting, and it came off a little bit more like a falafel than a typical "fry" that most Americans would think of when they hear the word. It was a good pit stop in the middle of the day for both of us since we had run around through most of the countries thus far. The flavors were enriching, and it was a combination that I wouldn't have normally considered but I loved.

Taste: 8/10	Aesthetic: 7/10	Price: 5/10
Environment: 7/10	Proximity to Nonahood: 5/10	

Order: Croissant with Escargot and St-Germain Sparkling Kir

Place: French Booth

Final Review Nicole: Well, we promised this event would be an adventure, so why not step out of our food "norms" and get real native and embrace the true French culture? I've had the pleasure of visiting France twice, and neither time did anyone else want to try escargot with me. Today was the day. We ordered the croissant aux escargots, which was essentially a croissant filled with snails, garlic and parsley. The moment I took a bite, my mind started panicking slightly, telling me to abort, but I had to convince myself to stop chickening out when it was actually tasty. It tasted like and had a similar texture/consistency to a mushroom cooked in garlic. I'm glad I tried a classic French delicacy, and although I'd have it again, I wouldn't necessarily go out of my way to order it. However, the St-Germain Sparkling Kir was hands down my favorite beverage of the day! It was a sparkling wine with elderflower liqueur, and I was a total fan! The wine was a bit on the drier side, but the best part was the elderflower.



Final Review Vanessa: Once again, I didn't try the alcohol portion of this stop, but I did enjoy some of the croissant and escargot combination. Escargot is a very interesting flavor and can seem very intimidating to try at first (you are eating glorified snail after all), but it is very salty and buttery. Paired with a light croissant, it's a French classic. I love the environment in the French section of Epcot; it has always been a favorite of mine. It totally transports you to Paris, and I love it.

Taste: 9/10	Aesthetic: 10/10	Price: 5/10
Environment: 10/10	Proximity to Nonahood: 5/10	

Order: Florida Orange Groves Sparkling Pineapple Wine

Place: Hawai'i Booth

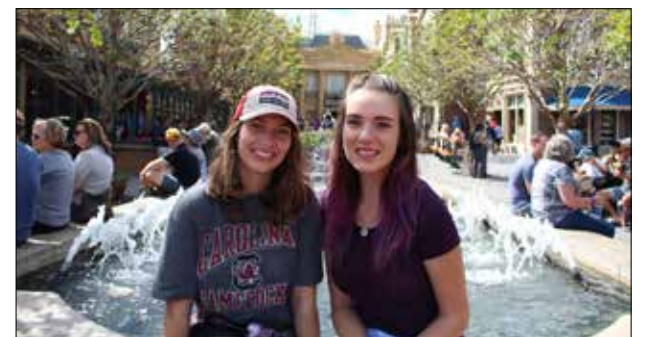
Final Review Nicole: This was a nice and refreshing way to close out our adventure. The drink made me feel classy as it was fragrant and aromatic of sweet pineapple. The sparkling wine, although true to the pineapple flavor, wasn't as sweet as you'd expect it to be, which was perfectly fine. I would definitely try this again, and it's even cooler that it's made in St. Petersburg.

Final Review Vanessa: N/A (Alcoholic! Underaged!)

Taste: 9/10	Aesthetic: 7/10	Price: 5/10
Environment: 7/10	Proximity to Nonahood: 5/10	

This was such a fun experience to have, and if you haven't yet checked out the Food and Wine Festival at Epcot, it should most definitely be on your list of things to do next fall.

Stay tuned for the January edition of Back to Basics as we kick off the New Year with some fresh finds and local healthy eats to get you started on the right foot for 2018! Yaaaassss!



Behind the Scene: Christmas Lights for Charity

BY SOPHIA ROGERS

One of St Cloud's most brightly lit houses for the holidays is back for the 2017 holiday season!

The home of Marty and Richelle Johnson has been decorated for charity since 2013. Each year, the display gets larger and larger with an additional 20,000 lights added to complete 100,000 lights this year.

But this isn't "just another display." This is more like a Florida Winter Wonderland! Marty wants families and visitors to park their cars and enjoy the walking trail with synchronized lights. Visit on the weekends for s'mores nights, movie nights and toy drive nights.

This charity began when Marty and Richelle's children, Emily and Ryan, expressed concern for other children spending the holidays in the hospital. Finding a way to make the holidays special, Emily taped a letter to their mailbox "asking for donations" to raise money for a video gaming system. They raised \$600 that year. "We strive to make the children understand that they can make a difference at their age," says Marty.

This year's goal will challenge the Johnson family and the community to raise \$10,000. All proceeds benefit Nemours Children's Hospital. The Johnson family funds the lights, electricity, events, and set up.

The opening night for the display will be on Saturday, Dec. 1. So come on out, bring a donation, and be dazzled by the lights.

Follow *Johnson Family Holiday Light Extravaganza* on Facebook for more information.

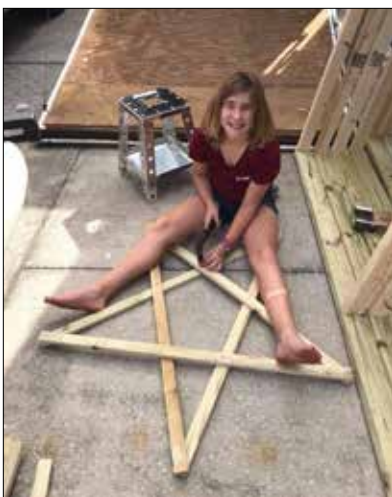
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WHERE: 5119 Moore St., Saint Cloud, FL 34771
WHEN: Dec. 1-Jan. 1
 Monday-Friday until 10 p.m.,
 Saturday and Sunday until 11 p.m.
COST: Free. Optional cash, credit, or debit donations accepted on site.

The first Movie Night will be on Friday Dec. 1. Help kick off the holiday season with *Home Alone*, popcorn, drinks and the first light up for 2017. Cost is \$10 per person for Movie Night with all proceeds benefiting Nemours Children's Hospital.

Local businesses are invited to participate as co-sponsors. Advertising opportunities include ad signs, VIP tent access and movie tickets. Contact Marty Johnson at 407-928-6501.



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Family Fridays

BY VANESSA POULSON

The winter holidays are just around the corner! With so many exciting festivities happening here in Central Florida, it's hard to know which ones to pick. Here is a short list of some of my personal favorite upcoming winter and holiday events around Central Florida that are good fun for the whole family!

Nov. 9-Dec. 22

Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party

The Magic Kingdom plays host to this series of nighttime holiday fun events for the entire family, including holiday shows, fireworks and magic treats with Minnie and Mickey.

Nov. 18-Dec. 17

Universal's Holiday Parade Featuring Macy's

Join Santa Claus, the Minions and characters from Madagascar and Shrek for Universal Studios' long-running holiday parade. It runs from Nov. 18 through

Jan. 6 and is included with regular park admission. Also included are live performances by Mannheim Steamroller, who will perform their best-selling holiday hits on select days.

Nov. 19-Dec. 30

Epcot International Festival of the Holidays

Epcot will feature 15 holiday kitchens serving seasonal sweets as part of regular park admission. The festivities also include the "Candlelight Processional" that has been a holiday staple at Epcot for quite sometime now and often features our own LNHS Chorus.

Nov. 24-Dec. 31

Dinner With Rudolph

Also running from Nov. 24 to Dec. 31, but requiring a paid entry ticket in addition to regular park admission, the character dinner gives you and your family the chance to eat with Santa's favorite reindeer.

Dec. 2

City of Orlando Annual Tree Lighting Celebration Held at the Walt Disney Amphitheater at Lake Eola Park, the City of Orlando's annual tree lighting celebration will feature the official lighting of the city's 72-foot Christmas tree. This free event will include live music by Trinity Lutheran School students and Encore! Cast Performing Arts, a holiday gift shopping vendor village and food from TheDailyCity.com Food Truck Bazaar.

Dec. 2-18

Santa Claus at the Eola House, Lake Eola Park

At Lake Eola Park, 512 East Washington St., Santa Claus is coming to visit, and he's not camera shy. Parents have festive picture-taking opportunities with Santa at the Eola House during the weekends before Christmas, on Dec. 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17 and 18. Santa sticks around from 4-10 p.m. on each of those dates!

Dec. 17

The Nutcracker Performance by the Russian Ballet of Orlando

Once again, the Russian Ballet of Orlando will present a gift to the Orlando Community with a free performance of the traditional ballet **The Nutcracker** at the Walt Disney Amphitheater at Lake Eola Park at 7:30 p.m.





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Pet of the Month



PET NAME: OREO

PET AGE: 10 months

TYPE: Cat

PET QUIRK Oreo was adopted over the holidays (at three months) from the Orange County animal shelter. We swear she is part dog because she loves to play fetch with her toys, greets us at the door, begs for food, is obsessed with water, and licks our faces to show her love. She is the perfect combination of cuddly and playful. She has brought immense joy to our lives.

Submit your pet for pet of the month at <http://nonahood.to/pet>

Fashion: Stylishly Sliding Into the Holidays

BY KATRICE TAYLOR

December is always such a busy, fun and stylish month. It's the best time of year to pull out all the stops and experiment with the looks you've been putting off. December is also a wonderful opportunity to spend a little extra time getting ready for the special events that are booking up your social calendar. Here are some ideas to inspire for the upcoming parties, galas and soirees.

Vivacious in Velvet

Velvet has come back on the scene with a vengeance as of late, and it doesn't look like it's going anywhere anytime soon. Velvet is perfect for Central Florida because while it can keep you warm, it also can be found in various lengths, styles and colors, which all provide different style options. Velvet jumpsuits, which can be found on websites such as fashionnova.com or target.com, are stylish and comfortable. Keep the rest of your look simple with a nude lip and a sleek high ponytail to finish off this look. If jumpsuits are not your forté, keep it simple with a velvet blazer, which can be found at zara.com, and pair it with a plain blouse and leggings. Throw on your favorite pair of pumps and an embellished clutch to be out the door looking chic. Finally, a dress will always steal the show when it comes to velvet. Velvet dresses were meant for black tights, and vice versa, so there's no need to worry if the temperature happens to drop - you and your legs are covered!

Chip Off the Shoulder

Cold shoulder tops and sweaters had a huge moment this past year. They are still on trend, but off-the-shoulder tops are subtly sexy and can still work for us Floridians due to our climate. The key to shopping for an off-the-shoulder top, especially around the holidays, is to go up a size. Yes, it's true. Going up a size in an off-the-shoulder top gives you wiggle room for styling. This way, doing everyday things such as typing, picking up your coffee, or opening a door doesn't become extra difficult.

Oversized Sweaters

Oversized sweaters could quite possibly be one of the coziest style options out there. Think about it: They come in all colors and materials, and there's no need to worry if you ate a little too much at your last holiday party - because they are not restricting in the least bit. They also are versatile, as oversized sweatshirts look great paired with jeans, leggings, sneakers, boots or pumps. The possibilities are endless!

Red Lip or Bust

Heading into the holiday season brings a few more occasions than normal to rock a red lip. A few new ones have hit the market, so allow me to share. If you prefer a matte lip (not shiny), then the NARS Velvet Matte Lipstick Pencil in Dragon Girl is perfect, www.nars.com, \$27. This product glides on smoothly and is long wearing. Looking to give gloss a shot? The Fenty Beauty by Rihanna Liquid Lipstick in Stunna is hot off the press and selling off the shelves. This red lip is guaranteed to stay on while you eat, drink and dance the night away. It can be found at www.fentybeauty.com or www.sephora.com.



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Nona Travel: London Calling

BY DEBORAH BULLEN



A few summers ago, we took a trip to London, Paris and Amsterdam. It's ambitious to do three major cities in two weeks, but we had been to two out of three of them before, so we decided to see what we could in that amount of time and go back whenever we could.

We arrived at Heathrow Airport at 7:30 a.m. and took a cab (oops, 70 pounds British sterling, don't make that mistake!) to the Marylebone Hotel, where they so nicely accommodated our early arrival with a room where we could grab a few hours of sleep. We took the Tube over to Southwark, on the south bank of the Thames River, and walked across the bridge to the Globe Theater and vicinity, where we just walked and enjoyed the ambiance on a lovely summer day. We wandered over to the Tate Modern gallery and stayed over an hour, but really, we were just feeling the jet lag, punchy exhaustion at that point, so we headed back via St. Paul's Cathedral to our hotel to rest up before the night's adventure.

Around 7:30 p.m., we made our way to Hakkasan in Mayfair, a Michelin-rated Chinese restaurant. Our former foreign exchange student, Maikel (aka guy who looks like a Hugo Boss model), had made reservations for us to meet there. Both he and his girlfriend, Stefanie, being European and young, had no qualms about keeping us, jet-lagged and let's just say not-so-young Americans, waiting until 9 p.m. for their arrival. While we waited, consoling ourselves with wine and appetizers, we had ample time to observe our surroundings. London cuisine, as people who have traveled for years will tell you, has undergone a huge transformation since I used to travel there regularly in the early 1980s. Gastronomically, it's now equated with the major cities of the world, as is fitting for one of the globe's top cities. Maikel and Stefanie arrived, and we had a truly luxurious, wonderful meal that lasted until midnight when I noticed the waiters subtly putting up chairs around us.

The next morning had us up for a leisurely breakfast until we met up with Maikel and Stefanie for a drive out to an afternoon's visit to Hever Castle in Kent. I'm well-read on all things Anne Boleyn, so for me, this was something I've wanted to do for at least a few decades. Anne's childhood home, Hever Castle was built in the 1400s. While much has been restored, some of the original structure remains, including the gate and interior, half-timbered walls. I was in 15th century heaven exploring the mazes, gardens, lake and, of course, the building itself. After driving back to the city, we had a wonderful al fresco dinner on the rooftop of a local restaurant.

Sunday morning, we met our young friends again at the Wolsey Hotel for a full English breakfast. I was

about to burst into song: "Food, glorious food, hot sausage and mustard, while we're in the mood, cold jelly and custard..." but I stopped myself in time, thereby preventing heaps of scorn, not to mention puzzlement from friends and patrons alike. It was glorious though – the sterling silver service, the grand art deco atmosphere and the food itself. Make this a must-do when you go. Afterward, we strolled over to Fortnam and Mason's store for a bit of gawking before renting bikes in one of the many outside stalls. We rode through London to Regent's Park, where we headed to the high-

est point in London for a short rest. I wouldn't have attempted this, nor would we have known where we were, had it not been for Maikel, who led the way.

Unlikely as this would seem, late in the day we took a train out to Hampton Court Palace, where we had a bit over two hours before closing. The palace was built by Cardinal Wolsey for himself but taken over by Henry VIII when Henry deemed it grander than any of his existing residences. It really didn't do to anger Henry, as anyone, particularly his wives, knew. There's a lot more to its history that you can discover for yourself.

We returned to the Marylebone, found a restaurant in the district, and had a nice dinner for two. Wandering around that evening, we struck up a conversation with a Turkish fellow who owned a small establishment and offered us Ouzo and a cigar (well, he didn't offer me a cigar, just Bill). Another full day and another adventure lay ahead. Stay tuned.



A Mindful Holiday

BY ODETTE VACCARO

My favorite holiday memories are not about specific gifts I got. Rather, they are about special moments shared with loved ones. I can almost guarantee your favorite holiday memories are also of things you did with family and friends, special happenings, or reactions that came with that one gift you do remember. You see, our holidays are built from relationships, from feelings and connection. Yet, as time has passed, I feel that more and more time during and leading up to the holidays is spent planning and shopping for the “perfect” gifts. With the holidays upon us, we might find ourselves preoccupied with trying to get our families and homes ready for the season and celebrations.

Somehow, in the busyness that surrounds the season, we can forget that what makes it so special and magical are the memories we create. Those memories are not possible if we are not fully present and available to what is happening right here in this moment.

So, I propose this holiday season we make our PRESENCE the most important present we give the ones we love. In reality, it is not that difficult. We just need the willingness and intention to make ourselves completely available to what we are living. Simple traditions will become so much more meaningful if we can be fully there. We can choose to put aside all distractions or thoughts of what didn't get done or what we still have to do and instead resolve to completely enjoy the moment.



Simply put, mindfulness is being present and aware of whatever is happening right this moment, right this second, whatever it is. Being fully present and aware allows us to take the moment and experience it completely, as well as make ourselves available to those sharing that moment with us. Each moment is fleeting, and removing our attention from it cheats us from experiencing it completely. As renowned professor and writer Jon Kabat-Zinn said, “If you miss the look in your child's eye one day, you've missed it. If you miss the look in your lover's eyes the next day, you've missed that. If you miss the beauty of sitting under trees, you've missed that. If you sum that over many moments, many years, you may wind up missing the most beautiful aspects of your own life.”

With the holidays here, what if we make a conscious effort to turn down the volume of noise and chatter and give each other the gift of presence? Instead of running around trying to find the perfect gifts

to buy, I propose we take the time to create moments and opportunities to just “be” with each other. Not sit in the same room with everyone's attention focused elsewhere, but mindfully choosing to purposely pay attention to each other.

What would mindfulness look like this holiday season? And how can carving out these moments of presence with our families and loved ones enrich our relationships and our hearts? I guarantee simple holiday traditions can be fun and foster our mindfulness. While preparing a list of new mindful traditions to enjoy this year, I realized immediately that it's not about the event itself but rather the way you show up for it that will make all the difference.

Here are a few simple suggestions that our family enjoys that you may try with your favorite people this holiday season:

- Holiday baking
- Tree trimming
- Game night
- Gratitude jar/book
- Holiday dinner
- Random Acts of Kindness

The only trick to make this a mindful holiday for you and your family is to switch your perspective from getting things done to actually taking in every second of the activity, savoring each moment, and connecting with each other. No cell phones allowed, except to sneak in a photo or two, no more!

“The most precious gift we can offer others is our presence. When mindfulness embraces those we love, they will bloom like flowers” – Thich Nhat Hanh.



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Marlow's Tavern Debuts Fall/Winter Menu

BY NICOLE LABOSCO

The change in season is finally upon us, and because the weather doesn't change much here in Central Florida, that means new food and drinks! On Nov. 15, Marlow's Tavern released its seasonal menu featuring sensational new dishes and beverages to keep guests captivated. The American-tavern-style restaurant presented a new "For the Table" section of small plates and appetizers, as well as tasty new cocktails to update some of the classics.

"We are extremely excited about our new additions," said Marlow's executive chef, CEO and co-founder John C. Metz. "We're always striving to push the envelope with unique, creative items. We believe we've done just that with a great selection of fun dishes and drinks our guests will enjoy, filled with the terrific flavor and quality ingredients they've come to associate with Marlow's."

To kick off the evening, I was introduced to two new snacks on the menu.

Snacks:

Oh Nuts! (\$3.50) - Cashew, Pecan, Almond, Filbert (Hazelnut), Peanut, Candied, Rosemary & Caribbean Spice

These nuts have a caramelized and candied coating, which is great! The notes of rosemary nicely break up the standard taste of the blend of nuts. It's the perfect combination of sweet and salty and raises the standards of a simple snack.

Marinated Olives (\$3) - Cold Pressed Olive Oil, Lemon, Rosemary

As a huge olive fan, I might be biased, but they are always so tasty! This snack is essentially classic Greek olives with pits, so don't bite down too hard! I really enjoyed how light they were and could've eaten so many more. I had to restrain myself.

As a last-minute addition to my tasting, I was introduced to a new menu item that Metz is most excited about. Meet three new starters/shareables that provide an upscale take on a classic flatbread.

Toasts:



Fig and Bacon (\$6) - Toasty Rosemary Ciabatta, Whipped Ricotta, Black Mission Figs, Caramelized Onion, Applewood Smoked Bacon, Balsamic Glaze

A nice option for those bacon lovers, but the fig threw me off a bit. I'm not a huge fig fan, but it's still quite tasty. The balsamic glaze added a delicate touch, too.

Artichoke and Arugula (\$5) - Toasty Rosemary Ciabatta, Whipped Ricotta, Artichoke, Baby Arugula, Balsamic, Lemonette

Unfortunately, I didn't get to try this flavor, but it seemed to be a crowd favorite. One of the two meatless options for those of you who prefer that.

Roast Tomato (\$4) - Toasty Rosemary Ciabatta, Whipped Ricotta, Pomodoro Sauce, Parmesan, Parslied Olive Oil

This is a fancy take on a cheese flatbread. I actually enjoyed this one the most as it escalated the flavor of a classic cheese pizza. It was drizzled in a flavorful olive oil, which was a nice addition to the plate.

Now on to the drinks! I started off with a glass of Riesling as it was recommended by my server, and it was delicious! I prefer my wines to be a bit sweeter and not dry. Dr. L's Riesling fit the criteria perfectly! This isn't a new addition to the menu, but it's definitely worth trying for those who have a similar wine preference as mine. The new adult beverages include:

The Vesper Classique - American Harvest Vodka, St. George Botanical Gin, Cocchi Americano and Fee Brothers Peach Bitters

This drink was inspired by the James Bond character. It's a tad strong with a slight bitterness. Wish the peach flavor was more noticeable. Overall, the martini wasn't bad, but I wouldn't order a full drink.

Prickly Pear Margarita - Herradura Reposado Tequila, Western Son's Prickly Pear Liqueur, Patron Citronge, House Made Sour, Sriracha Salt on Rim

This was a great treat! A semi-sweet drink with a nice kick of heat to balance it out along the rim. The sriracha salt was the highlight, and I wish I had a lot more along the rim of my glass. Out of the new drinks added to the menu, this margarita was my favorite option.

The Daiquiri - Bacardi Light, Fresh Squeeze of Lime

"Put the Lime in the Coconut"

A refreshingly light drink with a very faint hint of coconut (bummer for my coconut-obsessed self). This would be nice on a hot summer day for those who don't enjoy the sweeter pinã coladas.

To wrap up the new menu tasting, I sampled some of the new entrees that are tavern favorites.

Seared Diver Scallops (\$23) - Simply Seasoned and Perfectly Seared, Carrot Purée, Roasted Parsnip, Bacon and Sweet Pea Hash, Roasted Tomato Fondue, Parslied Olive Oil

Wow, now this was extremely delicious! All of the



tastes paired so perfectly and just melted in my mouth. This is something I'm ready to eat a whole dish of. I'd definitely recommend it! The olive oil added a nice break up to the slightly sweet carrot purée, and the bacon paired perfectly with the delicate sweet pea hash. Let's just say I've been dreaming about this dish since I've tried it, and I can't wait to enjoy it again...hopefully very soon! Hands down, the best dish that was offered in the new menu tasting.



Steak Frites (\$24) - Bavette Steak (The Butcher's Favorite), Tiny Green Beans, Steak House Fries, Roasted Mushroom and Caramelized Onion Peppered Gravy.

This dish was very tasty. The onion pepper gravy is the most flavorful component, and I wish there was more. The meat was tender and juicy and seasoned nicely, not too overpowering. I'm usually not a huge steak house fry fan as they are typically not well seasoned and dry. These fries are lightly salted and taste great paired with the gravy.

Grilled Chicken Stack (\$15.50) - Prestige Farms Chicken, Roasted Mushrooms, Fingerling Potatoes, Blistered Grape Tomatoes, Green Beans, Roasted Chicken Glacé, Fine Herbs, Parslied Olive Oil

This is the dish for those who are looking for a healthier option. The mushrooms and tomatoes had a nice flavor to them, but I wasn't a huge fan of the lightly seasoned grilled chicken, which seemed a little dry. The chicken glacé, fine herbs and parslied olive oil had the most flavor out of the entirety of the dish, but I wouldn't consider ordering this out of all of the other delicious and mouthwatering options Marlow's offers.

Ready to delve into the new flavors of Marlow's Tavern? Visit the closest location to the Nonahood in the new Lee Vista Promenade.



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Mama's Turn

Mama's Letter To SANTA

BY SHARON FUENTES



Dear Santa,

I think I have been a pretty good mom this year. I have driven my children to every social outing, back and forth to school, to debate tournaments and practice. I have written countless checks to cover club fees, field trips and impromptu outings to Wendy's before rehearsal started. I

have made late-night excursions to Walmart to buy a tri-fold board for the presentation that was due the next day, guilted family and friends into buying cookie dough or popcorn, have come up with mnemonic devices for remembering periodic table of elements, and - the thing that makes me almost a saint - I am in the process of teaching my son how to drive. Sure, I have lost it a couple of times, but isn't parenthood all about wanting to be with your kids forever one minute and trying to sell them the next?

Anyway, I know you are very busy this time of year, so I will get on with it. To start, Santa, I would love a few things for the house that would really make my life easier. For example, is there some way that you can make my Roomba vacuum work without me having to follow behind it repeatedly sticking my foot out to make it go in the direction I want? Or what about a

toilet paper roll that never ends because gosh knows no one here seems to know how to change it when it does. If it isn't too much trouble, what I would really like to have is a whole week free of arguments about who gets to ride shotgun, who ate the last donut, or whose turn it is to set and clear the table.

Santa, you would make my Christmas if you could somehow persuade my children to help around the house without demanding payment as if they were members of the mafia. But if that is not possible, I would be more than happy with a button that says, "YES, MOM," or "YOU ARE RIGHT, MOM" or "MOM, YOU ARE THE BEST" when you push it. That would really boost my parental confidence.

Lastly, Santa, if you are in the mood to dish out a real Christmas miracle, how about doing something about the traffic on Narcoossee? I don't know, add some lanes, open an alternative road, or you could let me borrow Dancer or Prancer so I

could just fly over it. That would work, too.

Well, Santa, the buzzer on the dryer is ringing, and it's almost time to pick up my son from chess club. Have a safe trip and please, if you don't mind, can you leave your boots at the door so you don't track in the construction dust? Instead of cookies and milk, I thought I would leave you Butterbeer, a Mickey-shaped ice cream bar and some PDQ tenders for the reindeer.

Love,
Mama



Nona Your Neighbor: Tom Bisignano

BY VANESSA POULSON

Isle of Pines resident Tom Bisignano is not only someone who has lived in the Lake Nona area long enough to watch it become the master-planned community we know and love today, he also is someone who maintains a fascinating professional life, making him December's Nona Your Neighbor feature.

1. What brought you to Lake Nona?

My wife and I were invited to a house party in the Isle of Pines about 30 years ago. At that time, it was still very rural and only accessible via dirt roads. Driving in, we thought, "Who would live this far into the middle of nowhere?" By sunset, we fell in love with the setting, surrounded by nature, wildlife and Lake Mary Jane, and decided to make it our home.

2. How long have you lived here?

29 years.

3. Where are you from originally?

Bristol, Conn.

4. What do you do for work?

I'm a show producer and work predominantly on live stage shows, ceremonies and special events. My work involves the creative development, management and delivery of entertainment productions.

5. What is one of the most exciting things about your job?

One of the things I find most exciting

is working with talented and diverse teams from around the world.

6. What is one of the most challenging things about your job?

Delivering exceptional creative show elements while maintaining tight schedules on a limited budget is always challenging.

7. Tell me about one of your most memorable experiences on the job or in your life.

Producing the Opening Ceremony of the Olympics Winter Games in Sochi, Russia, was, by far, one of my most memorable experiences.

8. What are you most excited to have in the Lake Nona area?

No question - I'm always excited about adding new and excellent dining options.

9. What do you think the future is for Lake Nona?

I would hope the area will continue to thrive with thoughtfully-planned growth.

10. If you could tell one thing to someone considering moving here, what would that be?

The Lake Nona area is unique. There are plenty of conveniences mixed with natural settlements and great neighbors.



Car of the Month : Chris Bhulai's 2013 Subaru STI

BY BRITTANY BHULAI

Model: 2013 Subaru Impreza WRX STI Limited Sedan White

Current Mileage: 57,500

Cost: \$29,000

Horsepower: 350

Backstory: "My first car was a 1992 Honda Accord, automatic, handed to me from my aunt. It wasn't everything, but it got me from point A to point B," says Chris Bhulai. He didn't always have his fancy Subaru STI. He was about 17 years old when he got the Accord. It had about 100,000 miles on it, and he kept it all through high school. It also took him through his years attending UCF. After nearly six years, the car began to give him some trouble. It would randomly jerk when driving it. He tried fixing the problem, but fixing the car became expensive and it was time to give it up.

Chris ended up taking the car to a Honda dealer, got about \$1,000 for it and leased a 2013 Civic SI. The SI was quite the upgrade from the Civic. Not only was it a sports car, but he made sure it had a manual transmission. Having the automatic for so many years was too boring, and he grew hungry for standard. Since it was his first manual, he had his share of growing pains and learning curves with car jerking and stalling the engine, but over time he got the hang of it.

The Honda Civic was great, but it wasn't quite his dream car. Bhulai wanted something with a little more muscle. At first, he played with the idea of a Mustang, but it wasn't anything to pursue. He knew he always liked Asian culture, especially Japanese. He was a huge *Gran Turismo* fan in high school – a car racing video game he played on his PlayStation

24/7. He also downloaded many episodes of a Japanese show called *JDM Option*, where they took cars to race and drift. Initial D also was a favorite show of his that was based off a Japanese manga series. One could think of it as the Asian version of *Speed Racer*.

With all of this, it was no surprise when he turned his eyes to Subaru, a Japanese-based car manufacturer. The BRZ and the WRX were the running candidates for this new car. How did he stumble upon his STI? He described a casual scene where he got out of work after a normal day at the office. He did a Google search on Subaru STI's in Orlando, and there that's when he found it. It was a white Subaru STI at Greenway Ford on East Colonial Drive. The car only had one owner, 20,000 miles on it with no accidents. He knew he had to strike while the iron was hot. If he didn't jump on the car, someone else would. So, the next day, he drove to the dealer and snatched it up. He traded the Honda Civic, and it all worked out because the three-year lease was over on the Civic and it was time to either keep the car or give it up for a new one. The STI was \$29,000, and he paid off the difference of the trade since the STI was worth more than the Honda.

The STI wasn't too small, but it wasn't overkill, either. It had more horsepower than the BRZ stock, and it was definitely a beast compared to the normal WRX. It came turboed, and it was also a rally car. This satisfied the "muscle car" taste he needed, yet it still had a foreign feel to it – it wasn't an American car. The all-wheel drive came with 305 horsepower from the engine and STI suspension and performance brakes.

Mods: Air oil separator – for reliability since the car is turbo. It helps catch excess oil and returns it back into the engine.

Cobb access port – a device that goes inside the car and connects to the computer of the car. It comes with preloaded settings, you can override controls in the car such as increasing horsepower. The different settings for the engine even have a "valet mode." If you get your car valet parked, it restricts the RPM to a certain limit so the valet won't be tempted to rev or speed in the car. It also can show engine temperature and air-to-fuel ratio. Chris says it's a good tool to help keep track of everything on the car. He can even download the car's logs of daily activity from the access port and send them over to Cobb on an Excel spreadsheet.

As a free service, they will check the logs to make sure the car is performing well. You can even do "launch control" on the car for something like drag racing. The port will keep the car at certain RPM until your foot comes off the clutch all the way.

Cobb SF intake – In Chris' words, "It gives the car a nice 'woosh' sound. You can hear the bypass valve a little louder."

Catless downpipe/catback exhaust – He bought it from a Japanese company called Invidia. It is the N1 model, dual tip exhaust. Circuit MotorSports installed it. It opens the car up for more power with the catback, fuel pump and electronic boost controller.

All in all, Chris currently has a "stage 2 plus" car with the modifications he's made on it so far. A few thousand was spent on it. He did a custom tune at a car shop in Winter Springs called Rev Works, where they put the car on a dyno, and the custom tuner wrote the map of a tune on laptop to send to the car's computer. The process took about 20 minutes. It was tuned to match the new mods placed on the vehicle for reliability. The tune also ensured power, and the fun factor was there. He's put about 45 to 50 extra horses on the car since he bought it.

As for his exterior, there are a few decals. One that sticks out is the Japanese Hanya mask that symbolizes a demon in the culture's folklore. He first saw the mask in an anime called *Rurouni Kenshin*. "I just thought it was pretty cool," says Chris. Other decals are from shops he's been to such as Rev Works and Kami Speed. He also has an Orlando Subaru group sticker. He added red mud flaps to contrast against the white paint. The tail lights are blacked out, and there is now a carbon fiber overlay for the Subaru decal.

Future mods: He wants to bump the car up to "stage 3," which would be a new turbo to get more boost, a custom motor to increase the reliability, and a new clutch. He also wants to add coilovers to stiffen up the car and replace the stock sway bars to increase handling. A short shifter with new shift knob is also on the list along with bucket seats. As for the body, wider tires plus new rims and a body kit will do the trick.

Where to catch Chris's Subie:

Bhulai attends Orlando Cars & Coffee, Sebring – The Face Off at Sebring Raceway, and he will be going to Subaru Mega Meets. He also has an Instagram page @cbhulaiphotography that showcases his car along with other cars. You also can spot his car on his Facebook page Chris Bhulai Photography or go to his website at www.cbhulai.com.



Movie Reviews: Justice League & Thor: Ragnarok

BY JORDAN APPEL EICHENBLATT

In 2017, there are not many things you can look at and have a full hour of positivity. That's why in this column I will not be writing anything negative about any movie.

Justice League. The Flash and Wonder Woman stole the show. 3 out of 10 stars.

Thor: Ragnarok. FINALLY we get to find out where Bruce Banner went. Comedy director and comedic actor Taika Waititi felt like the Thor brand needed a change, and oh boy did it get one. One of the funniest Marvel movies to date, plus with SOME action, it had me wanting the next Avengers movie more and more. But it wasn't just the comedy that took *Thor: Ragnarok* and went nowhere a Marvel movie has gone before, it was watching Thor and his brother Loki finally agree that while they do still love one another, sometimes it is best to let something go if you love it. The brothers need to face reality and have a brother divorce, a broken heart not seen in any of the Marvel Cinematic Universe yet.

I did miss the other Thor characters, either dying really quickly or only being on screen for a quick moment. But what you do get is more Jeff Goldblum, who



Thor – Photo courtesy of Marvel Studios

acted just as Jeff Goldblum, it seems. The best part of this feature film was, in fact, Jeff Goldblum, as it is with any movie that features him. I'm trying to avoid spoilers as much as I can here, so with that, go get some popcorn, a giant, small-sized fountain drink and enjoy.

Thor: Ragnarok and its two post-credit scenes: 8 out of 10 stars.



You know what, no. *Justice League* needs to be brought to justice. The most predictable movie I have ever witnessed. Superman looked CGI the entire time because the actor, Henry Cavill, had a mustache, and his other movie would not allow him to shave it off. So the CGI was terrible for him. Toward the end of filming, director Zack Snyder had to leave due to a loss of his child, and Marvel director Joss Whedon took over.



Justice League – Photo courtesy DC Comics

A comedic action director vs. a terrible action director, and it's noticeable in the movie.

What I do not understand is after the failure that *Man of Steel* was, the failure *Suicide Squad* was and the failure *Batman vs Superman* was, why bring Zack back? Wonder Woman was so much better – bring that director in. Bring Wonder Woman director Patty Jenkins in. BRING IN ANYONE ELSE. Currently, online, there is a petition to cut Zack Snyder from the DC Comics movie universe that has reached 10,000 signatures in 24 hours. You will never be able to match how epic *The Dark Knight* Trilogy was, so stop trying. Yes there is some humor scattered within the movie, but that only comes from *The Flash*. Wait until this movie is on TBS during a rainy Saturday afternoon. Trust me.



Meet the Press: Rhys Lynn

BY VANESSA POULSON



Rhys Lynn is the publisher of Nonahood News but has been writing for the paper since issue 1. His list of accomplishments and experiences are both exceptional and insightful, and that is why he is our Meet the Press subject for the month.

Extrovert or Introvert? Ambivert.

Before, total introvert. Became a lot more extroverted over time.

Indoors or Outdoors? Outdoors.

Sun or Snow? SNOWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW.

Dogs or Cats? Cats (apology to Zar).

Vans or Converse? Converse.

Coffee or Tea? Coffee. Black or with heavy cream.

Adventurous or Laid Back? Adventurous.

Canon, Nikon or Sony? Sony.



Nicknames:
Rhys' Pieces

What brought you to the Nonahood?

Rhys was brought to the Nonahood by the desire to get out of Tampa, where he was living previously, and was drawn to Lake Nona with its variety of opportunities and growth.

Where are you from originally?

He was born in Northern California but has lived in Florida for most of his life.

What's your favorite hobby?

Rhys' favorite hobby would have to be scuba diving. He's enjoyed his experiences diving in the Florida Keys and a variety of other locations.

What's your biggest dream?

To make the best and do the most good in the world that he can.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

In 10 years, Rhys will be 48 years old, and he hopes to still be working with Nonahood and in Nona. At some point later, he hopes to be retired and traveling around to destinations such as Italy, Japan, and throughout Europe.

What are you most excited about in Lake Nona?

The coming Mega Lagoon and all the other stuff that hasn't even been



announced yet.

Who's your biggest inspiration?

Elon Musk. He's the real-world Tony Stark inventing cool stuff like Hyperloops, which Rhys finds pretty incredible.

What's your favorite book?

Shantaram because it was really good and epitomized going to another place, feeling foreign. The characters were relatable, exciting and funny.

What's something you've done that scared you the most or brought you out of your comfort zone?

Rhys cited the situation as asking

Jenny, his now wife, out 16 years ago. He wrote her a note that said, "do you like me? check the box, yes or no" and before this he hadn't ever made a first move. The rest is history.

Describe one of your most memorable experiences.

The birth of his daughter was a total gamechanger - she recently turned 15. He didn't cry, but he was mind-blown, and his world was changed forever.

Check back next month to get to know another Nonahood News staff member!

Nona Alumni: Aixa Bayala

BY NICOLE LABOSCO

In this recurring monthly special, Nonahood News will be featuring those who've graduated from Lake Nona High School and will recognize the achievements they've made since. Some will have been a part of the first graduating class. Others might have graduated a few years later. Few have stayed in the Lake Nona area, and many have explored the world or are still doing so. Let's see where life's journey has taken them so far!

Name: Aixa Bayala
Age: 22
Year Graduated: 2013
Occupation: Hairstylist & Instructor
Current Location: Oviedo, Fla.

This month, I sat down with Aixa Bayala, not only for the story but also because I was in dire need of a haircut. Guys, I'm serious...it had been over a year since my last cut. What a great way to catch up!

Aixa and her family moved to the Lake Nona area in early 2009 as they were looking for a great place for her father to retire and enjoy his free time. Many of us residents know that the Nonahood is a great fit for that, especially with all that is developing nowadays.

Aixa has always had a passion for the beauty industry, but she wasn't quite sure which aspect of it. "There is so much you can do! So, right after high school, I went to Valencia College to pursue my Associate's degree but later decided that wasn't what I needed to be doing at the moment. I enrolled at Paul Mitchell The School Orlando in January of 2014, in a class with 13 other individuals that had similar stories. It was nice to be creative and see your work come to life. [In] December 2014, I finished at Paul Mitchell and landed a job at The Red Scarlet Salon in Thornton Park."

She began working as a receptionist/assistant for about eight months before she was entirely behind the chair styling her own clients and growing her clientele. "Although working behind the chair as a full-time hairstylist was awesome, I felt like something was missing. Coincidentally, I got offered to come back and work at Paul Mitchell The School Orlando in December 2016. So, it's been a year teaching at Paul Mitchell, and I love every minute. I've met so many incredibly talented students!"

In five years, Aixa hopes to own a salon in the Lake Nona area since most of her clients



make the drive to Thornton Park to get their hair done, and now I'm one of them. However, I was so happy with the outcome and transformation of my hair that the trip was totally worth it!

"I'm so passionate about the industry that I am in and ready for any new opportunities that may come my way! I am so grateful to have such a supportive fiancé by my side who is also my high school sweetheart to go on this journey called life with!"

Written for current and future Lake Nona alumni by a Lake Nona alumna. Check back in to our next issue to learn about our next Nona graduate(s)!



Nona Heroes: Lt. Col. Tom Ausherman

BY NICOLE LABOSCO

In this recurring special feature, Nonahood News recognizes and honors those everyday heroes who have served or are currently serving our country and making a difference in our community. Those who reside in the Lake Nona and surrounding area are our Nona Heroes.

This month, Nonahood News features Eagle Creek resident and Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Tom Ausherman. This hero has served for 32 years and counting! He entered the Air Force right out of high school at the young age of 18.

"In high school, when people heard I was considering the military, I got a lot of unsolicited advice that the Air Force was the best branch. Over time, that's proven true for me. I think the structure suits my personality, and I enjoy the opportunity to work with great people both military and civilian."

Throughout those three decades of service, Ausherman achieved many different ranks before reaching Lieutenant Colonel. "How long it took to get there is a little complicated. I enlisted in the Air Force out of high school and started out in the Air Force's lowest rank of Airman Basic. After six months, I was promoted to Airman, and 10 months after that, Senior Airman. After four years of service, I was promoted to Sergeant, which is no longer a rank in the Air Force. Two years later, I was promoted to Staff Sergeant through a combination of promotion testing and points for time in service, time in grade and performance. Four years later, I was promoted to Technical Sergeant through the same method. Three years after that, I was promoted to Master Sergeant, again through the same process. At the time I was pinning on Master Sergeant, I had recently completed my Master's Degree, which caught the attention of my commander, who persuaded me to apply for Officer Training School. I was fortunate to be selected to attend Officer Training School and, upon gradua-



tion in August of 1998, was commissioned a Second Lieutenant."

The Lt. Col. explained that the Air Force promotes Second Lieutenants to First Lieutenant after two years and First Lieutenants to Captain after another two years. "I was selected for promotion to Major through a promotion board in 2009 and to Lieutenant Colonel by another promotion board in 2013. So, had I entered the Air Force as an officer out of college, it would have taken a bit more than 15 years to make Lieutenant Colonel, but my 13½ years of enlisted time make my longevity a bit of an anomaly."

Ausherman has served all over the world from Patrick Air Force Base here in Florida to Naples, Italy, Ramstein Air Base in Germany and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. With such a varied list of bases, one wonders which location was his favorite.

"Looking at my list of assignments, it would appear to be the least desirable, but I have great memories of F. E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming. We lived in a historic brick home on base, and in the afternoon when I'd walk home from work, my wife, Beth, and our then 3-year-old son Andrew would often be on the front porch swing. Beth would say, 'There he is,' and Andrew would come running down the sidewalk yelling, 'Daddy!' and jump into my arms and give me a big hug. Can't beat that for a welcome home greeting. Our son Logan was born there nine days after September 11th at a time entering and leaving the base was strictly controlled, so that was memorable for sad and joyous reasons. Aside from the family memories, the group of people who were assigned there made those three years great. Many long-lasting friendships and mentorship relationships were developed, and it was a great foundation for my career as an officer."

Serving our country for such a long period of time creates many memories, but some of the best for Ausherman were created by helping those who needed it most. "Helping people in need, such as receiving U.S. citizens from the ordered departure of Lebanon, military family members from the ordered departure of Turkey, and sheltering people who had to evacuate due to hurricanes. Seeing people you've mentored succeed is a very close second."

If you would like to nominate someone for our next Nona Heroes feature, please complete the form here: <http://nonahood.to/nonaheroes>.

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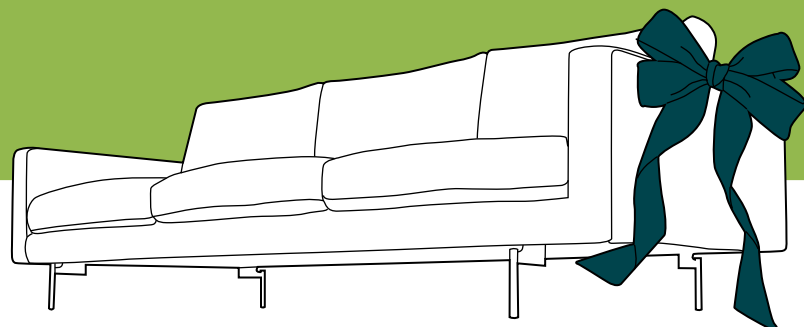
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Katie's Cucina

BY KATIE JASIEWICZ, KATIESCUCINA.COM

The holidays are here, whether we are ready or not. I'm sharing my super easy recipe for Dark Chocolate Macadamia Nut Bark. It's easy to make and the perfect quick gift to give as long as you keep all the ingredients on hand. Prior to having kids, I would spend a full weekend in December baking a wide variety of sweet treats. Then I had children, and my free time went out the window. Now, my goal is to spend an afternoon making a few sweet treats for my neighbors. I love to make chocolate barks – the sky is the limit, and you can whip up a batch relatively quickly before a party or give them as a last-minute gift to a neighbor.

If you plan to make a few trays of this bark, I suggest heading to Sam's Club to grab macadamia nuts and dried apricots in bulk. It will be more cost effective. I like to use a good premium dark chocolate for melting. After all, you will be eating this, so you want the best. I love no-mess, so I use a silicone baking sheet liner or, if you don't have one, you can use parchment paper (I found parchment paper at Publix near the aluminum foil and plastic wrap).

The key to making bark is having all the ingredients prepped ahead of time. Once the chocolate is melted, you need to work fast. Spread evenly on the baking sheet and then sprinkle on the toppings. If you have kids, this is the part where you can get them involved. Obviously, make sure hands are washed very well or give them gloves to wear, then let them help "decorate" the bark.

For this recipe, I use macadamia nuts, dried apricots, and dried pomegranates. They all complement each other perfectly. Once your bark is done, you'll need to place the tray in the refrigerator for 30 minutes to set. Once the chocolate has set and is hard, you can break up the bark. Multiple methods here: my method of choice is breaking it with my hands. However, you need to work very quickly so it doesn't melt. You don't realize it, but your hands hold heat, which will melt the chocolate. You also can take a knife and carefully stab at the tray, breaking up the bark. You can package it in cellophane bags, in a tin,

or place it on a plate.

The next time you go to Publix, Walmart or Sam's Club, make sure you grab the ingredients to have on hand. Nothing comes from the heart more than baked goods. Even for the non-baker, you, too, can make this super simple dark chocolate macadamia nut bark to be shared with all.

Dark Chocolate Macadamia Nut Bark

Yield: 8

Prep Time: 10 minutes + 30 minutes resting

Total Time: 40 minutes



Ingredients

- 9.7 oz bittersweet dark chocolate, chopped
- 1 6 oz package of semi-sweet chocolate
- 1 cup macadamia nuts, chopped
- 1/2 cup dried pomegranates, chopped
- 1/2 cup dried apricots, chopped

Directions

- In a frying pan, toast macadamia nuts until golden brown 3-5 minutes on medium-high (tossing frequently). Remove from the pan and rough chop.
- While the nuts are roasting, begin to melt the bittersweet dark chocolate. I use a microwave on the "melt" setting in 30-second intervals. Mix every 30 seconds, then add in the semi-sweet chocolate. Mix until just melted.
- Pour on a lined cookie sheet, top with chopped macadamia nuts, dried pomegranates, and dried apricots.
- Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or until hard. Break apart and package. Store in sealed container for 3-5 days.

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Nonaventure: ICE! at Gaylord Palms

BY NICOLE LABOSCO

We all have that one friend who is a diehard adrenaline junkie who loves to discover their next greatest adventure. That friend is me! This feature is all about uncovering Lake Nona and Orlando's greatest activities, especially if you enjoy living life on the edge!

How much does a polar bear weigh? Enough to break the ice! This month might not be the most extreme adventure, but the temperature and the cost might up the ante a bit.



This month, I grabbed a small group of friends and attended the annual ICE! event at Gaylord Palms. Its Christmas Around the World theme had us entering the magical and freezing ice celebration kept at only nine degrees. Nine degrees!! That's pretty much unbearable for us Floridians, but you're provided with a cool blue parka to keep you nice and toasty. If you're anything like me, you have plenty of winter clothing like your favorite sweaters and hats tucked far away in the back of your closet because Florida doesn't have much, if any, winter weather. Now is the time to break out those clothes! All was good until my hands started to go numb as the parkas don't have pockets. Definitely grab your gloves and mittens if you have them! And I'd advise against wearing your flip flops.



This family-friendly spectacle will take you through holiday scenes, including traveling to the North Pole to see Santa and his elves in the toy factory. This event might not be for you if you really can't stand the cold or don't have younger family members to take along. The highlight of the night was sliding down the ice slides, and you can hit them as many times as you'd like. Seeing how other countries celebrate Christmas depicted in ice was pretty cool, pun intended.

The celebration goes on from Nov. 21-Jan. 7. Overall, the event is definitely tailored toward the little ones, so if you go, you might want to gather up the kiddos and make it a family event. But beware, the ICE! event is costly. There are only five rooms with ice sculptures, and it took maybe 30 minutes to observe everything, mostly because we were taking photos for the article. But even so, as intriguing as it might be to see all the different colored ice sculptures, to complete the walk-through that quickly was disappointing. We actually circled back thinking we had taken a wrong turn at some point just to find out that no, we were indeed done with the event.

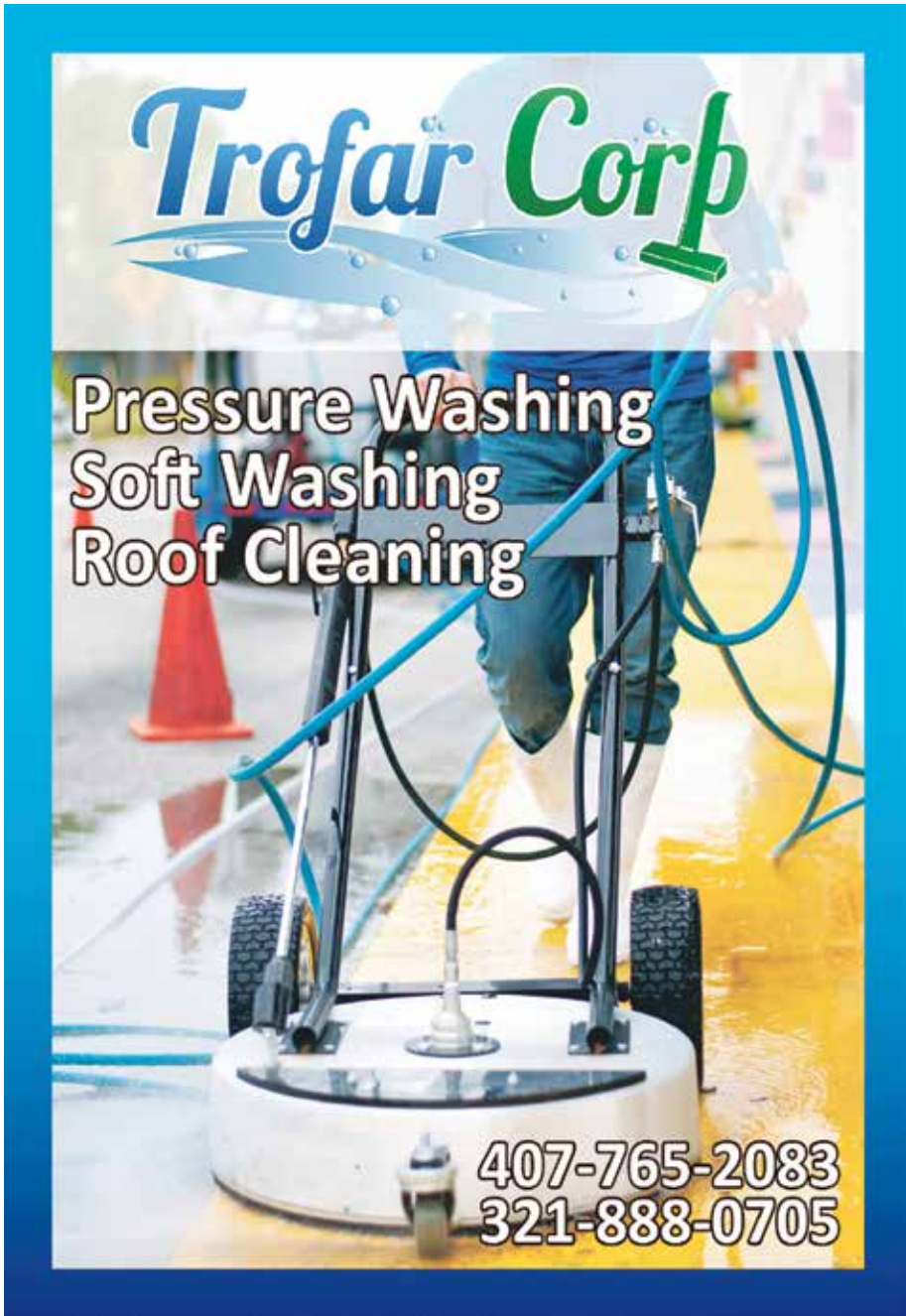
There are several different activities to enjoy outside the actual ICE! show like Build-A-Bear, photos with Santa, snow tubing and gingerbread decorating, and those all cost extra and are not cheap. The snow tubing looked like a blast, and it was pretty apparent that's where all of the kids, and adults, too, were having the most fun.

Parking costs a whopping \$22, and for it to cost more than parking at Disney for an entire day, for an event that may take an hour of your time, there's just no way to justify that extremely high parking fee. Then there are the ticket prices – they're advertised as roughly \$30 for an adult, \$15-\$17 for a child and \$27-\$29 for a senior. I realize now why I've been to this event only once before about a decade ago.

So there you have it, Nonaventure braves through the winter and exorbitant pricing to celebrate the Christmas spirit in one of the most popular tourism locations of the world: Orlando, FL.

Have a suggestion? Fill out our Adventure column form at <http://nonahood.to/nonaventure>. What do you want to see me review next?





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Nonahood Calendar

Visit www.nonahoodnews.com/events for updated events and detailed information.

December Events:

- 1-31** Holiday Light Extravaganza St Cloud (7 pm)
- 2** Wild Winter Wonderland at Back To Nature Wildlife Refuge (2-7pm)
- 2** St. Cloud Chamber of Commerce's Annual Christmas Parade (10am-2pm)
- 2** Lake Nona Cars & Coffee (8-11am)
- 7** EOCC Coffee Club East (8:30-9:30 am)
- 13** LNRCC Breakfast Connections (8-9:30 am)
- 14** EOCC Coffee Club Nona (8:30-9:30 am)
- 21** EOCC Coffee Club East (8:30-9:30 am)

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8374 Upper Perse Circle

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Valencia College
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