

South Bay

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Fugitive, children nabbed in New York

By FRANCIS GILPIN
Tribune Staff Writer

BRADENTON — A former Bradenton woman, who removed her four children from a shelter home and fled the state in June, was apprehended with three of the children in upstate New York, Manatee County sheriff's officials said Monday.

Norma Lynn Griever, 39, was arrested by Ithaca, N.Y., police on Friday near a post office where she went to pick up a parcel of money mailed from Florida, Manatee sheriff's Detective Jody Rey said.

Griever and her husband, Willard Dale

Griever, 29, have been on the run since June, when they were charged in felony arrest warrants with violating a court order by taking their two sons and two daughters from the state home, said sheriff's spokesman David Bristow.

The children were taken from the home in Bradenton on June 19, a few hours before their parents were to appear in court to answer civil charges by the state Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS) that they had neglected the youngsters.

The Grievers left a note at the state home asserting that their children had been

taken from them and they had taken the children back, Bristow said.

The parents had visitation rights at the state home, which was a private residence where the Griever children were placed pending the outcome of the hearing.

Dale Griever, who goes by his middle name, and his 13-year-old son eluded a police stakeout Friday in Ithaca that had lasted four days, Rey said. The father and son remained at large Monday, she said.

Lynn Griever, who also uses her middle name, was with her 11-year-old son in an automobile when police took her into custody, Bristow said.

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BAYVIEW
Tom Scherberger

Election may decide fate of administrator

Hillsborough County Administrator Larry Brown has not added a word or two to his job title. It just seems that way.

Lately it's been the beleaguered Larry Brown, or the embattled Larry Brown.

You know you're in trouble when reporters start putting those kinds of adjectives before your name. Unfortunately for Brown, they are apt descriptions.

These are not the best of times for Brown, who has not exactly sailed through the calmest of waters these past three years. As usual, the question of the hour is how much longer he'll be around.

The answer could depend on this year's election.

The latest eruption came last week as the County Commission struggled to come to grips with its latest political dilemma — a controversial drainage fee that has sparked death threats and overwhelming outrage among taxpayers.

By the end of Thursday's meeting, the commission had not only killed the fee but was talking about whether it should take another look at Brown's performance in office — a polite way of suggesting that his tenure is nearing an end.

Brown, being the veteran bureaucratic warrior that he is, is taking it all in stride.

Love me, hate me blues

"I'm just here trying to do a job and as long as I think I can stay and do a good job, I'll stay," Brown said the day after his latest descent into the maelstrom. "I really can't look at it any other way than that."

The commission seems to be suffering from the same symptoms that plague wife-beaters — first they beat you up, then they tell you how sorry they are and how much they love you and ask you to stay.

Very confusing. You'd think they could make up their minds about this guy.

Instead, Brown is left to twist slowly in the political winds.

Of course, Brown has not demonstrated the political skills to thrive in the shark-infested waters of the County Courthouse. And recommendations have come back to haunt him.

The most recent ghost of recommendations past involves the drainage fee. The commission took Brown up on his suggestion that it borrow money before any of the fees were collected so the ambitious program could get going.

Well, the program's under way, but the public's up in arms. So last week the commission voted 5-2 to kill the fee.

How will the commission repay the loan? That's Brown's problem.

The fee flap is a classic example of Hillsborough's problems. Brown came up with a proposed fee, but the commission decided to change the sliding scale. "When you go down on one end of the scale you have to go up on the other end," Brown says. And it's the folks on the other end who were complaining the loudest.

So who's to blame? Ultimately the commissioners, since they're the ones who are elected and approved his recommendations. But the laws of physics still apply in the world of politics: things roll down hill. Taxpayers blame the commission and the commission then blames its appointed administrator.

That's the way it's supposed to work.

So one week from today, voters go to the polls in an election that could decide Brown's future.

The bottom line



Teacher and Principal Ada Bilbrey tells a story to pupils at Duette School during the first day of school Monday. Duette is the state's only remaining one-teacher school.

Duette school steeped in tradition

By KATHY GOODWIN
Tribune Staff Writer

DUETTE — Third-grader Nicole Rush received a culture shock when she started back to school Monday — but she's not complaining.

"I like it here. There's a lot less kids in this classroom than the other school I went to, and it's more quiet here," said Rush, who last year attended a Pinellas County school with about 600 other pupils.

This year, a family move placed her at Duette Elementary, where she only has 15 fellow pupils — in kindergarten through third grade.

Rush started classes at the state's only remaining one-teacher school as thousands of other Manatee County

and Sarasota County students also left those carefree summer days behind Monday and returned to the regimen of learning.

For the most part, things went smoothly for all the schools in the neighboring counties.

Roberta Palmer, spokeswoman for the Sarasota County School Board, said there were only a few mishaps as more than 25,000 Sarasota students — about 1,000 more than last year — swarmed into the county's 36 schools.

"Because of the re-districting of elementary schools, many of the elementary students had been transferred to different schools than they went to last year, so we had a little problem with students getting to the right bus stops," Palmer said.

Besides one air conditioner not working, Manatee County had a good opening day, said Virgil Mills, assistant superintendent for instruction.

Some 23,255 students filled the county's 33 schools, said Ralph Hamilton, coordinator of student activities. "That's 922 more than last year," he said.

But for Duette — which serves children living in a 10-mile square chunk of eastern Manatee County between Parrish and Wauchula — the classroom attendance of 16 is a little down from last year's 19.

And that suits the school's teacher and principal for 33 years, Ada Bil-

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School year starts out slowly, colorfully

By PAM FENNER
Tribune Correspondent

RIVERVIEW — New tennis shoes, fresh haircuts and Day-Glo backpacks were the order of the day at Riverview Elementary School Monday, as 1,100 pupils made their way back from summer fun to the halls of learning.

"We're going to take it a little easy today," said kindergarten teacher Kathleen Bullard as she greeted her 22 4- and 5-year-old charges with a hug and a brightly colored name tag. A tour of the school and learning classroom rules would take up most of the day, she said; later they would start on colors and shapes.

First-day jitters were eased at Riverview by a smooth check-in system that seemed to work flawlessly, Principal Shelia Jarsonbeck said. Teachers and aides met pupils at the classroom doors while the school mascot, a large green and yellow alligator (teacher's aide Ruth Smith), stalked the halls in search of lost or misguided youngsters.

Pupils arrived sporting new Barbie Doll shoes and Ninja Turtle lunch boxes. Five-year-old Rachel Sampson arrived carrying a hot pink backpack that was nearly as big as she.

The day seemed to wear worse for some parents, however, than for the kids. Kathleen Benzel accompanied son Nicholas to his first day of kinder-

garten and turned away with a sob as he disappeared into the classroom.

"This is so stupid of me," she said, as she wiped a tear. Although Nicholas had attended a pre-school the year before, it was "at church, where everything is safe," she said.

"We had to sit him down this weekend and tell him about the bad things, the dangerous things out there," she said. "About not talking to strangers and things like that. It was very hard."

Dozens of new teachers, new elementary reading programs and new modular classrooms were in place Monday to greet the more than 7,000 students converging on the five south

See CHANGES, Page 2

Farm topic by m

By CAROLE TA
Tribune Staff W

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Crosst is delay

By JIM SLOAN
Tribune Staff W

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