

DARRELL'S WINS RODEO PARADE "GRAND CHAMPION"



Winning the Arcadia Rodeo Parade's Grand Champion award was Darrell's Road and Wrecker hosting El Kala Entertainment.



CAROL MAHLER
Independent Contractor
carolmahler22acl@gmail.com
Photos provided

In the Arcadia Rodeo Parade last Sat., Darrell's Road and Wrecker won the "Grand Champion," and the DeSoto County Republican Party Executive Committee the "Best All-Around" prizes. Judge Don Hall, president of the Arcadia Rodeo Assoc., selected the Sahib Shriners to receive the President's Award.

Parade Organizer Jackie Tucker said, "I think the Shriners had 12 or 14 units. They really add to our parade. . . . and they come all the way from Sarasota."

The judges also awarded ten "Best-in-Class" awards: DeSoto County Historical Society, Nadia Daughtrey, DeSoto Party Rental, Florida Cracker Trail Association, Range Rover Brahma, All-Florida Saddle Club, Miss DeSoto Pageant, Judy Jones Ministry, Arcadia Rodeo Assoc., and DeSoto High School JROTC, who also served as the parade's "Grand



Troy Hughes, chairman of the Arcadia Rodeo Parade, and Kelly Mercer, member of the DeSoto County School District, served as announcers at the judges' stand.

SEE PARADE PAGE 10 >>



DESOTO COUNTY SPORTS
PAGE 4
STEVE KNAPP
sports@peacerrivershopper.com



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GOVERNMENT MEETING SCHEDULE

CITY

CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS OCCUR THE
1ST AND 3RD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH
UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED

Margaret Way Building
23 N. Polk Ave., Arcadia, FL 34266

MAR 25	DESOTO COUNTY SPECIAL MASTERS HEARING
TUE 11A	Administration Building 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103 Arcadia, FL 34266
MAR 25	DESOTO COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING
TUE 3P & 6:30P	Administration Building 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103 Arcadia, FL 34266
APR 8	DESOTO COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING
TUE 9A	Administration Building 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103 Arcadia, FL 34266

Active dates and times are subject to change.
County: <http://desotobocc.com/calendar>
City: <https://arcadia-fl.gov/events/>

Realtor Showcase
See page 11

DESOTO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
ARREST REPORT
See page 13

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EVANS HONORED FOR 30 YEARS OF SERVICE



CAROL MAHLER
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Photos provided*

At the March 4 meeting, Mayor Judy Wertz-Strickland presented the City’s certificate of appreciation and the Arcadia Police Dept. (APD) award for 30 years of service to Assistant City Marshal Gary Evans.

Evans said, “Thank you to the Council and the City staff . . . seems like just yesterday when I was hired . . . I showed up at the interview and was hired the same day by Bruce Collins . . . I really love my job. You won’t be able to last 30 years in my field without loving it.” He noted that he was in the “drop program” with three more years before he retires. “You won’t be seeing 35 years,” he said.

He recalled that when he first started in 1995, everything was hand-written and radios provided communication. “Now we have cell phones . . . everything is on the computer . . . without the City staff over the years and City Council supporting the police dept., I don’t think I would have lasted 30 years. . . . The City of Arcadia has been very, very, very good to me, and I don’t want to work for any place but the City of Arcadia.”

Later in the meeting, Evans reviewed the APD report for January 2025: five felony, 11 misdemeanor, six traffic, and three warrant arrests; 28 accident reports, 41 traffic and 17 warning citations; and responses to 658 complaints.

In addition, the Council approved Linda Williams to fill the vacant position of the City’s Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) after the resignation of Jackie Scogin in Dec. 2024. Three candidates responded to the City advertisements for the volunteer position: Dr. Linda Reesor, Greg Roughgarden, and Linda Williams. At the meeting, each gave a brief presentation of their qualifications for—and desire to—serve.

Council Member Keith Keene said, “I wish we had three positions open,” and he asked Reesor and Roughgarden to consider volunteering again when a position is available. A discussion of terms followed, with City Clerk Penny Delaney noting that the current position is a two-year term, ending in 2027.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR

City Administrator Beth Carsten thanked the Council for approving the City Administrator Employment Agreement negotiated by Mayor Judy Wertz-Strickland, City Administrator Beth Carsten, and City Attorney T. J. Wohl as presented by Wohl. Carsten said, “I love what I do very much.”

Later in the meeting, she reported that the design for the new wastewater treatment plant is complete and for the wetlands will be ready to submit in two weeks. The 12th Ave. project is



A Home Owners Association (HOA) manager for Lennar Homes, Greg Roughgarden said that he has the credentials to serve on the HPC and a desire to preserve history.

Mayor Judy Wertz-Strickland thanked Assistant City Marshal Gary Evans for his 30 years of service in the Arcadia Police Dept.



A retired nurse practitioner, Dr. Linda Reesor also spoke in favor of “common sense” for the HPC and how she and her husband have benefitted from the HPC’s guidance in restoring their home in the Arcadia Historic District.



As School District Community Outreach Coordinator, Ashley Brown thanked CocaCola for donating five new computers to the district, and the Suncoast Credit Union for awarding \$1,500.00 to the District as DeSoto had the most new checking accounts opened. As a member of the YMCA Arcadia Community Board, she asked for vendors for the Community Day—a free event—on Apr. 12 at the Speer Center.



To serve on the City’s Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), the Council selected Linda Williams, a retired warden of DeSoto Correctional Institution and former downtown merchant. She wants to bring some “common sense” to the HPC.

ready for paving. The solar lights were successfully tested downtown and more will be installed. The Florida Dept. of Transportation (FDOT) FDOT will open Oak St. soon, and signs prohibiting vehicles of more than 7,000 lbs. will be installed. The electrical panel for the Splash Pad was replaced.

IN OTHER BUSINESS

The Council approved Allen Reesor’s request to extend the sidewalk to his home at 313 W. Oak St. from the curb to the sidewalk and to add a two-foot hedge in the right of way.

As fees for City services have not been changed since 2018, staff recommended an update to the schedule of fees, and it was adopted by the Council.

The Council declared one generator, one file cabinet, three monitors, four scanners, nine battery backups, and two lawn mowers as surplus and approved the proposed disposal. The Onan generator, valued at \$4,500.00; 30” Snapper mower, at \$250.00; and Gravely Pro Zero-turn mower, at \$500.00, will be sent to online auction.

TEAM ARCADIA

The Council approved the second amendment to the McSwain Park Building lease with Team Arcadia clarifying the collection of third-party rental revenue and requiring the tenant to provide a profit and loss statement and balance sheet even though Team Arcadia’s Board of Directors requested a waiver of the requirement.

In his presentation, Team Arcadia’s Representative Allen Reesor thanked the City for the partnership that allows “the organization to do what it is doing.” He hopes that construction of the McSwain Center’s back porch stage will begin in April. Another dance instructor has been located, so dance classes will resume. Big Brothers/Big Sisters have their mentoring sessions on Mon. and Thurs. afternoons; the farmers market is on Fri.; and a yoga class meets on Thurs. evening and Sat. morning.

On Sun. afternoons, the Jump Start Monday program has begun with parents and children downloading learning applications and reading to each other. In partnership with United Way Suncoast, eight to 10 organizations are forming a volunteer collaboration to match volunteers with positions. Enrichment classes are now scheduled to start in the fall. Upcoming concerts include country and bluegrass music on Mar. 14 and a jazz trio on Mar. 21. The building will be rented in May for a baby shower.

CONSENT AGENDA

Under the Consent Agenda, the Council approved two addenda for Arcadia Main Street’s special event permit to hold their second Sat. “Discover Arcadia” market in downtown: time extended until 6:30 p.m. for a bluegrass festival on March 8 with DeSoto Ave. closed for vintage cars and food trucks between Oak and Magnolia streets; and until 5:30 p.m. on May 10 for a wine-tasting event.

COMMENTS FROM DEPARTMENTS

The Council agreed to consider another code lien amnesty program at an upcoming meeting. Wohl related how he found an attorney living in Naples as the owner of a home with substantial code liens who had not received the code violation notifications because they are being sent to someone who represented him at the sale. Wohl felt that such “deep dive” research might help resolve other cases.

Airport Director Shelley Peacock noted 90 aircraft operations during a very windy Taco Tuesday, and she appreciated the community support of the event. In addition, the airport now has Seafood Sat. with people eating lunch at picnic tables near the ramp. She reported that two aircraft rolled off the runway, but no one was hurt in either accident. She thanked the Council for approving the new fees. The Airport Obstruction Project will target the trees on the airport property first followed by those on private property in Airport Estates. She said that the project has been needed for more than 20 years.

Golf Course Director Jeff Gibson reported the the Junior golfers did very well, and the Ladies Golf group has 20-30 members playing nine holes. He noted that income is up from last year, and that the course is so busy that the golf-cart fleet is being used twice each day, meaning 140 carts per day.

ARCADIA-DESOTO COUNTY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY ANNOUNCES THE HOME DEDICATION FOR THE SANTOS FAMILY



Arcadia, FL - March 10, 2025: Arcadia-DeSoto County Habitat for Humanity is very pleased to announce the completion of the Santos’s new home located at 1952 SE Maple Drive. DeSoto Habitat will be celebrating with a Home Dedication on Monday, March 17th at 6:00 pm. It has been a long, rewarding process and the family is excited to receive the keys to a brighter future. The public is welcome to attend. There will be a short ceremony followed by light refreshments. This will be a joyous occasion and an opportunity to see the hope that can be built when our community works together. DeSoto Habitat would like to express their appreciation to all the donors and volunteers who have helped provide the Santos Family with a safe, affordable home:

- Agriscapes Arcadia
- Abstract & Title Co., Inc.
- Charly Spray Foam
- Citi Foundation
- DeSoto County BOCC
- Global Giving
- Habitat for Humanity International
- IKEA
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- Levolor
- Publix Super Market Charities
- Schneider Electric
- The Home Depot Foundation
- Timothy D. Backer, SRA
- Whirlpool
- Agriscape Volunteers
- Arcadia Police Department
- DeSoto County Fire Rescue
- DeSoto County Sheriff Office
- DeSoto High School JROTC
- DeSoto Sub Debs
- RV Care-A-Vanners
- Curtis Gordon
- Dan Quie
- Paul White
- The Dedicated Habitat Volunteers

Their generosity has enabled Ms. Santos to become a mortgage and property tax paying citizen. Arcadia-DeSoto County Habitat for Humanity is currently beginning their next home build project and will offer many volunteer opportunities. If you would like information please contact (863) 494-4118.

ABOUT ARCADIA-DESOTO COUNTY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY:

Arcadia-DeSoto County Habitat for Humanity (DeSoto Habitat) envisions a world where everyone has a decent, safe place to live. Dedicated to eliminating substandard housing, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to provide affordable homes for low-income families in DeSoto County. Established in 2000, they have helped 33 DeSoto County families achieve the dream of home ownership & completed over 100 home repairs. All of DeSoto Habitat’s fundraising efforts support their critical home repair and home building programs. While DeSoto Habitat is an affiliate within an international organization, 95% of their funding is received from local sources and charitable giving. Although often bound by funding limitations, DeSoto Habitat has many loyal volunteers and a community who supports the efforts to make DeSoto County neighborhoods an inclusive place to live. For more information visit www.habitatdesoto.org or call (863) 494-4118.

STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Comcast hosted the DeSoto County Chamber of Commerce’s Early Bird last Thursday, March 6th. Congrats to the students below for being chosen Student of the Month. (not all pictured)



DHS

ANDRY LOZANO VAZQUEZ
9TH GRADE

CHERISH WIGGINS
10TH GRADE

ELIZABETH MONROY-RAMIREZ
11TH GRADE

KIMORA BRADY
12TH GRADE



DMS

CARLOS BALTAZAR
6TH GRADE

DANIEL RUBIO
7TH GRADE

BROOKE SMITH
8TH GRADE



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PEACE RIVER SPORTS

DESOTO BOYS TENNIS SWEEPS PORT CHARLOTTE



STEVE KNAPP
Sports Writer
sports@peacriver shopper.com

The DeSoto tennis team hosted Port Charlotte in their final match before the break and came away with a win. The boys easily stopped the Pirates with a 7-0 shutout.

Ezra Moreno won 8-1 while number two Aaron Henning shutout his opponent 8-0. Hayden Williams won 8-3 and Rylan Unruh picked up an 8-1 win. The doubles teams won 8-0 and 8-3.



The number two doubles team of Louis Rueter and Hayden Williams won 8-3.



Ezra Moreno is the number 1 player on the DeSoto tennis team.

Aaron Henning easily defeated his opponent from Port Charlotte 8-0.



Hayden Williams has a nice backhand in his 8-3 win.



Rylan Unruh is all smiles as he picks up an 8-1 win.





Coach Mitchell Johnson talks with Ezra Moreno as Moreno cruises to an 8-1 win.



Rylan Unruh keeps his eye on the ball as he returns the serve.

DESOTO COUNTY

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

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MIDDLE SCHOOL VARSITY VOLLEYBALL



The 8th graders on the varsity volleyball team at the middle school have earned the distinction of being the first volleyball team in Desoto County to have back to back perfect seasons. They were 14-0 last season and continued that streak through their 8th grade season with a 9-0 mark. They only

lost one set in those two seasons and that was 26-24 last week in a game at Hill Gustat in which they just didn't play well. They went on to win the other two sets 25-15 and 25-4. The team had fewer games this season with Sebring only playing Desoto once and Lake Placid not on

the schedule. The Highlands County broke apart the Heartland conference so there was no district championship tournament this season. After the team waltzed through the season there is no doubt as to who the champions would have been if there was a district tournament.

Coach Danielle Taylor and her 8th graders completed their two year undefeated streak with 23 consecutive wins.

DESOTO COUNTY

GAME OF THE WEEK

Sponsored by: 

DESOTO MIDDLE SCHOOL VOLLEYBALL



THE GAME THAT NEVER HAPPENED



STEVE KNAPP
Sports Writer
sports@peacerrivershopper.com

Sometimes a coach and team has to just look at their game and say, “that game never happened.” Just forget about it, learn from it and move on. The Bulldogs’ 13-1 beating at the hands of LaBelle was one of those games. If a team losses a close game, players will think about the at bat when they didn’t get a key hit to knock in a run. Coaches will ponder, “Did I have the right guys in the right positions or in the right batting order.”

The rout by the Cowboys didn’t have those “What if” moments. DeSoto couldn’t do much of anything right. Starter Daylon White didn’t have a terrible outing, it wasn’t his best either but he could have sued his teammates for “non-support”. White went 2.2 innings and only gave up 1 earned run while giving up 5 hits.

A four run first inning set the tone for the game. The leadoff hitter blasted a ball off the wall in left that Revel Rodriguez made a good effort to catch up with. After that, the Cowboys scored 4 times on just 3 hits but four DeSoto errors put them in a big hole before they even came up to bat. Three throwing errors and a ball through the wickets was just the beginning of what was to be a night to forget.

LaBelle came into the game with the same number of wins as DeSoto and had been run ruled in their first two games of the season. They looked like the 1927 Yankees in DeSoto. They banged out 14 hits to just 2 for the Bulldogs. DeSoto had 10 strikeouts in the 5 inning game and committed 6 errors.

After the Cowboys picked up a run in the third, the Bulldogs answered with a run in their half of the frame. Braden Deluca was safe on an error after the first two batters had fanned. Abel Nedley drew a walk and White was hit by a pitch to juice the bases. Logan Adkins’ ground ball was booted by the shortstop for his second error of the inning that scored Deluca. A strikeout with the bags still full ended the inning.

An 8 run eruption topped off by a long moon shot in the 4th inning put the final nail in the Bulldog’s coffin.

After the entire side struck out in the first and third innings, Desoto had a base runner in every inning. White had a leadoff double in the second that bounced off the center field fence. He advanced to third on a ground ball and with Hagen Bryan drawing a walk put runners on the corners. Two straight strikeouts ended the scoring opportunity.

Owen Roe drew a two out walk in the fourth. White did the same in the fifth inning. After White’s walk, Adkins got the second Bulldog hit of the game. A strikeout ended the game and gave DeSoto their second loss of the week.

The positive take aways from the game were a pair of nice running catches by Rodriguez to prevent a bigger margin



A pickoff attempt from Daylon White to Carlos Morales was called safe as the umpire makes the call.



The DeSoto keystone combination of Logan Adkins and Abel Nedley wait for the game to begin.



Hagen Bryan takes the mound in relief as Daylon White and Carlos Morales look on.



First baseman Carlos Morales and starter Daylon White listen to the National Anthem before the loss to LaBelle.



Braden Deluca was safe on an error and later scored the only run in the 13-1 loss to LaBelle.

of loss. Nedley did a nice job on the hill fanning 2 in his one inning of work. White was the only player to get on base in all three at bats officially going 1-1 with a hit by pitch and walk. Adkins got the only other hit and the White - Adkins duo were the only players to not strikeout in the game. Other than that, it was “A game that never happened.”

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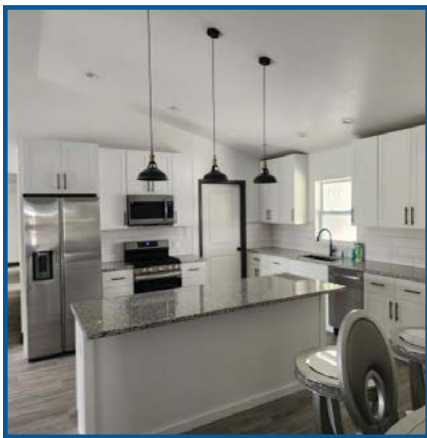
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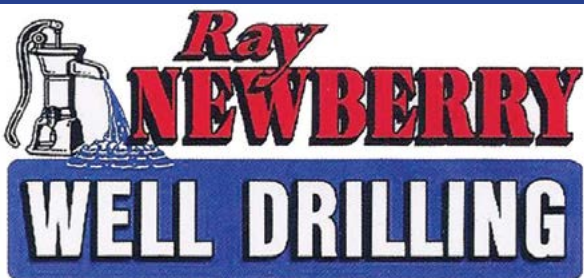
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FLORIDA FENCE POST TEAM WINS GOLF TOURNAMENT



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Photos provided*

The Florida Fence Post Team of Tony Salas, Jake Crews, Jessie Wood, and Jayren Wood won the 2nd Annual Arcadia Main Street (AMS) Golf Tournament on Mar. 1 at the municipal golf course. They donated their prize back to AMS as did Dennis Diamond, the winner of the 50/50 raffle. A silent auction also raised funds for AMS.

Winning second place was Bill Hackney, Rex Smith, Jim Selph, and Darryl Trawick, the Hackney, Ames & Reichel, CPAs Team. Matt Jones won the putting contest; Robert Pape, the longest drive; and Jessie Wood, closest to the pin on hole 4. The last place team was Joey Whitmarsh, Joel McGonigal, Matt Jones, and Jeff McGonigal.

“We are proud of this year’s tournament,” AMS Director Pam Ames said. “We came very close to doubling our team participation. We hope next year to grow even more.”

AMS is grateful for the following volunteers: Pam Ames, Andy Ames, Mindy Ryals, Jennifer Scharf, Mary Pete

SEE **GOLF PAGE 12** >>



Arcadia Main Street (AMS) Director Pam Ames presents first prize to the Florida Fence Post Team, and they donated their winnings back to AMS. Photograph provided.



Golf carts were lined up for the 18 teams competing in the 2nd Annual Arcadia Main Street Golf Tournament on Mar. 1 at the Municipal Golf Course. Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.



From left, Rob Causer, Ryan Causer, and Drew Bissett watched Paul Sustachek putting on hole 18. Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.

2025

DESOTO COUNTY
HIGH SCHOOL

Graduation
KEEPSAKE

Publishing May 30, 2025

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PARADE

FROM PAGE 1 »

Marshal.”
On Nov. 11, 1929, Mayor Paul Speer (1892-1972) rode in the first Arcadia Rodeo Parade, and the event has been a tradition ever since. Tucker has been arranging the parade for the past 20 years, and Troy Hughes, her son, serves as the event’s chairman.



Judge Don Hall waves as Tiffany Murphy guides the wagon for the Arcadia Rodeo Association’s entry in the Arcadia Rodeo Parade that won a “Best In Class” award.



The “Range Rover” Brahma bull won a “Best In Class” award in the Arcadia Rodeo Parade.



The DeSoto County Historical Society won one of the 10 “Best In Class” awards with their covered wagon float in the Arcadia Rodeo Parade. Photo provided.



The DeSoto High School JROTC cadets served as Grand Marshal of the Arcadia Rodeo Parade and also won a “Best In Class” award.



DeSoto County Clerk of Court Nadia Daughtrey’s float won an Arcadia Rodeo Parade “Best in Class” award.



Winning a “Best In Class” award, Florida Cracker Trail members cracked their cow whips as they rode in the Arcadia Rodeo Parade.



Miss DeSoto Pageant float and walkers won a “Best In Class” award in the Arcadia Rodeo Parade.



The All-Florida Saddle club won an Arcadia Rodeo Parade “Best In Class” award.



Decorated cars, trucks, and trailers won a “Best In Class” award for the Judy Jones’ Ministry, aka The Bread of Life Mission.

Judge Don Hall, president of the Arcadia Rodeo Assoc., gave the President’s Award to the Sahib Shriners: one of their many units was the Venice Shrine Club’s Keystone Kops.



Realtor Showcase





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CELEBRATING PIONEER DAY

Join us in honoring the rich history of this community at the DeSoto County Historical Society’s 21st Annual Pioneer Day!

March 29, 2025
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Turner Agri-Civic Center
2250 NE Roan Street
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Together, we are preserving the county’s rich heritage and building a future rooted in the strong values of our past.



GOLF
FROM PAGE 9 >>

Martin, Quinn Jones, James Lee, Judy Wertz-Strickland and Linda Williams. The Arcadia Golf Course appreciates volunteers Frank Menard, Fay Massey, and Klaus Riesnner.

AMS thanks the tournament’s sponsors Ecosouth and Mosaic, and the following “hole” sponsors: Arcadia Abstract & Title; Arcadia Computers; Arcadia Anytime Fitness; Arcadia Police Dept.; Arcadia Printing; Arcadia Radio Shack; Asena Mott, School Board Member; Aura Laser Lounge; Bearded Detail; Beth Carsten, City Administrator; Biggar and Biggar Antiques; Biggar and Biggar II; Robert Heine, City Council; Coldwell Banker - Akos Jankura; Cox Pest Control; Crews Bank & Trust, Member FDIC; Dee Washington, City Council; Fraternal Order Orioles; Hackney Ames & Reichel, CPAs; Harwood Vinyl and Aluminum; Judy Wertz-Strickland, Mayor; Keith Keene, City Council; Linda Williams & Family; Luis Velasco, Deputy Mayor; Mismo Visions; Oak Park Inn; Parker Hall; Persnickety; Quinn and Taylor Jones; Ryals’ Cattle Co.; Sanchez Machine Shop; Superior Powder Coating; Susan Pooley, Tax Collector; State Farm, Don Knoche; Straight Line Aluminum; The Valley Florist; and United Gulfland Real Estate.

The Hackney, Ames & Reichel CPAs Team accepts second prize from AMS Director Pam Ames. Photograph provided.



AMS Board Member and City Marshal Quinn Jones stands with Dennis Diamond, winner of the 50/50 raffle, who donated his winnings to AMS. Photograph provided.



From left, Assistant Golf Course Director Fabio Colon helped out by serving as the fourth member of the team featuring Marquez Angeles, Gracie Sager, and Emily Cline. Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.



From left, Parker Hall, Zack Head, Dylan Brewer and Levi Davis on the fairway for hole #2. Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.



Arcadia Golf Course Director Jeff Gibson and AMS Director Pam Ames share a hug before they announced the start of the 2nd Annual Arcadia Main Street Golf Tournament. Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.

With every generation, we get better at protecting our environment.

Reclamation ecologists like Ashlee work to return mined lands to productive use as wildlife habitats, public parks and more—so future generations can enjoy these lands for years to come.

DESOTO COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE



ARREST REPORT | 2/28/25 - 3/6/25

Abell, Michael Alisha:

Veh Theft - Grand Theft Of Motor Vehicle

Blanc, Stephanie:

Oving Traffic Viol - Driv While Lic Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

Bludsaw, Edward Jordan:

Aggrav Battery - Aggrav Battery Cause Bodily Harm Or Disability, Prob Violation - Prob Violation

Carmona, Johnnie Lee:

Writ Of Bodily Attachment - Non Criminal Arrest

Clark, Caron:

Criminal Registration - Criminal Regristration - Not Arrest

Combs, Samuel Leamon:

Battery - Touch Or Strike

Delacruz Jr, Gerard Alexander

Gomez:

Battery - Touch Or Strike, Ail To Reg As Crim Reg - Convicted Felon Fail To Register

Flores, Yeri Levi:

Veh Theft - Grand Theft Of Motor Vehicle (X2), Amage Prop-Crim Misch - 1000 Dols Or More

Garcia, Jolanda Maria:

Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use

Hall, Haley Marie:

Trespassing - Trespass Fail To Leave Prop On Order Of Owner, Drugs-Possess - Possess Controlled Substance W/O Prescription, Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use, Smuggle Contraband - Ctrl Sub S.893.02(4) County Detention Facility

Harvey, Roger Allen:

Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While Lic Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

Kingsley Jr, David Allen:

Flee/Elude Police - Flee Elude Leo With Lights Siren Active, Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While Lic Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

Lopez, Cirilo Molina:

Failure To Appear - Written Promise To Appear, Larc - Other Theft, Homicide - Murder Dangerous Depraved Wo Premeditation

Martin Jr, Ray Antonio:

Writ Of Bodily Attachment - Non Criminal Arrest

McPartland, Ryan James:

Trespassing - Trespass Fail To Leave Prop On Order Of Owner, Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence

Mendoza-Palacios, Antonio:

Oving Traffic Viol - Operate Motor Vehicle W/O Valid Lic 1St Conv

Nestor-Trejo, Alvaro:

Moving Traffic Viol - Operate Motor Vehicle W/O Valid Lic 1St Conv

Palafox Jr, Amado:

Battery - Prior Convic Battery Commit 2Nd Sub Battery, Damage Prop-Crim Misch - Over 200 Dols Under 1000 Dols

Pettyjohn, Haman Mathew:

Out-Of-County Warrant - Out-Of-County Warrant

Prince, Connie:

Public Order Crimes - Unauthorized Use Of 911 Services

Sorrells, Justin Bryant:

Prob Violation - Prob Violation

Torres-Rosado, Yalitzaly:

Moving Traffic Viol - Reckless Driving 1St Off

Williams, Joshua Darnell:

Aggrav Battery - On Person 65 Years Of Age Or Older, Aggrav Asslt - Weapon - W Deadly Weapon Without Intent To Kill

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NEWS FROM THE DESK OF SHERIFF POTTER

Travel Smart, Stay Safe:
SHERIFF POTTER'S SPRING BREAK TIPS



SHERIFF POTTER
DeSoto County Sheriff

As Spring Break approaches for DeSoto County students from March 8 to March 16, I want to take a moment to emphasize the importance of staying safe while enjoying time off. Whether you and your family plan to travel or stay close to home, taking a few precautions can help ensure a safe and enjoyable break.

If you're traveling to unfamiliar areas, always stay aware of your surroundings. Research your destination in advance, stick to well-lit and populated areas, and trust your instincts if something doesn't feel right. Securing your belongings is also essential. Keep valuables out of sight, lock your doors, and avoid carrying large amounts of cash.

Roadways will be more congested during Spring Break,

with many families hitting the road for vacations. Be patient, avoid distractions while driving, and always buckle up. If you plan to drive long distances, take breaks and remain alert behind the wheel.

For those staying in DeSoto County but leaving town for a trip, I encourage you to secure your home. Ask a trusted neighbor to watch over your property, collect your mail, and keep an eye out for suspicious activity. This simple step can help deter potential criminals.

Staying connected with family is another crucial safety measure. Share your travel plans with a close relative or friend, including your expected return date. Regular check-ins can provide peace of mind and ensure help is available if needed.

We encourage you to be mindful of what you share on social media. Avoid oversharing details about your trip, such as your exact location or how long you'll



be away. Criminals often monitor social media for opportunities, so wait until you return home to post vacation pictures and updates.

By following these simple precautions, we can all contribute to a safe and enjoyable Spring Break. The DeSoto County Sheriff's Office is here to serve and protect, and we encourage

everyone to make smart choices during this time.

Remember if you see something suspicious, report it to us by dialing 863-993-4700.

Be Safe, God Bless and have a great Spring Break!

Sheriff James Potter

87 ATTEND GOOD OL' BOYS AND GOOD OL' GIRLS ANNUAL BBQ



CAROL MAHLER
Independent Contractor
carolmahler22acl@gmail.com
Photos provided

Eight-seven people attended the “Good Ol’ Boys and Good Ol’ Girls” BBQ held annually on the first Sat. in March at the Turner Center Exhibition Hall, 2250 N.E. Roan St., in Arcadia. They enjoyed sharing memories and news as well as a delicious BBQ meal.

The idea of old friends gathering together—and the effort to organize such an event 18 years ago—belongs to Bloss Lanier as well as Weldon Williams (1931-2017) and Betty Keen (1932-2023). Unable to attend the event because of ill health, Bloss and his wife Beverly sent their best wishes.

Again this year, Dr. Jimmy Lanier and his wife Susan Lanier organized the event with the assistance of committee members Johnny Johnson, Pattiann Pattison, and Rose Polston. Susan Lanier asked everyone to invite natives of DeSoto County—age 60 and above—to attend next year’s event on March 7, 2026.

The DeSoto County Historical Society welcomed the group to attend their 21st Annual Pioneer Day & BBQ, on March 29, at the Turner Agri-Civic Center, commemorating the centennial anniversary of the West Elementary School building, now the Family Service Center, 310 W. Whidden St., and of Florida Power and Light, the event’s title sponsor. In 1925, FPL acquired the power and ice plant in Arcadia from Southern Utilities Company.

Direlle Baird donated to the Society a collection of historic postcards and other paper memorabilia. The items were on display during the event, and several people did not recognize a “penny postcard” of the first DeSoto County High School, built in 1906. After the second high school was built in 1914, the old building was used for elementary education until the new West Elementary School was built in 1925.

General Jay Garner and his wife Connie Garner attended the Annual BBQ, and she donated the \$25.00 she won in the drawing to the DeSoto County Historical Society.



The first DeSoto County High School was built in 1906 with City of Arcadia bonds. As a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project during the Great Depression, the tower and second floor were removed, and building was re-roofed as a one-story gymnasium/cafeteria. It now serves at the Family Services Center Annex.



Also busy presenting orchids and bromeliads, Pete Lanier gives \$25.00 in a gift box to Lou Ella Ralls Young, whose ticket was drawn by Jimmy Lanier, as Doyle Young watches.



Standing with his sister Betty Turner Lesane, Joe Turner remembered working as manager of the school store located in the DeSoto High School cafeteria, now the Family Service Center Annex. Lee Austin recalled that his mother Elsie Shelfer Austin (1905-1988), first worked at the Blue Bell Restaurant, and then was the cafeteria manager at the high school and eventually served as supervisor of all the lunch rooms.

From left, Rodger Fender recalled when “The Bulldog’s Bark,” the high school newspaper was a full page printed in the “Arcadian” newspaper in 1958. Sitting around the table was his wife Sue Fender, Debbie Gibbs, Irma Hay, Gordon Hay, and Linda Sue Marsh.



Bill Hackney and Mary Ann Martin Treadwell reminisced about his mother, Catherine Nicholls Hackney (1926-2011), also a widow, who was Treadwell’s friend for 25 years. “We had more fun,” Treadwell said. “We walked the track at West Elementary School and went to movies and plays.”



The Rev. Gordon Ralls shared that since his wife and Carolyn Shelfer’s husband has passed away, they were now enjoying each other’s company. Members of the class of 1959, they are “picking up an old friendship.”



At left, Tom Gaskins passes an orchid that she won to his friend Joan Daum. He and Jeff Mathewson both received \$25.00 in a gift box during a drawing for gifts at the event.

From left, Ed Ames, Marshall Whidden, and Dr. Hugh Martin tell some stories at the Good Ol’ Boys and Good Ol’ Girls Annual BBQ on Mar. 1 at the Turner Center Exhibition Hall.



BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES: DO YOU KNOW THE LOVE OF GOD? PART 4

VALERIE G.
Minister of the Gospel
DeSoto Ministerial Association

The second step to knowing the love of God is found in 2 Corinthians 5:17 and 21. Verse 17 states, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” I cannot listen to the music I used to listen to; I must listen to the music that will keep me Spirit-filled. My speech is totally different from what it used to be. God has totally changed me from the

inside out. My heart is changed, so everything around me has changed. Verse 21 states, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Jesus died for us once and for all. I am now righteous in the eyes of God, just as if Adam had never sinned. Shall I continue in sin so that grace may abide – God forbid. I am no longer practicing sin. I know that “there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:1). But I must

stay conscious of what I am walking in - whether I am in the Spirit or in the flesh as identified in Galatians 5:19-23. When we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. The third step to knowing how much God loves us is found in 1 John 1:8-10. It states, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” God wants us to come to him

in honesty and in truth. He already knows where we are at. He has given us a way out. He loves us so much that he gave us Jesus. We can now go boldly to the throne of grace and find grace and mercy for help in a time of need. We cannot deceive ourselves. All He desires from us is honesty and truth. I must know and recognize when I sin and fall short of his glory. Then all I have to do is run to the throne of grace, repent and turn, and ask for forgiveness from a pure heart.



CROSSWORD

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Americans’ Uncle
- 4. Chair
- 8. Ancient kingdom
- 10. Egyptian city
- 11. Alaskan glacier
- 12. One from Somalia
- 13. Ancient alphabets
- 15. Relating to vocabulary
- 16. Small mongrels
- 17. Natural settings
- 18. Weekend entertainments
- 21. Line from which light seemingly streams
- 22. Your own private code
- 23. Swiss river
- 24. Satisfaction
- 25. A persons brother or sister
- 26. Folk singer DiFranco
- 27. The Blonde Bombshell
- 34. Kids’ school project
- 35. Bluish greens
- 36. Classifying
- 37. Cube-shaped

- 38. Choo-choos
- 39. Indian religious god of dissolution
- 40. French department
- 41. Leak into gradually
- 42. Foundation
- 43. Midway between south and southeast

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Counterbalancing debt
- 2. In slow tempo
- 3. Glamorous city
- 4. Japanese lute
- 5. Makes law
- 6. Informative book
- 7. Animal’s body part
- 9. American playwright
- 10. Blood poisoning
- 12. Angels
- 14. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
- 15. Written account
- 17. Unwelcome pest
- 19. Saddle horses

1	2	3						4	5	6	7
8			9					10			
11								12			
13				14				15			
16							17				
18						19	20				
						21				22	
						23				24	
						25				26	
						27				28	
						29				30	31
						32				33	
						34				35	
						36				37	
						38				39	
						40				41	
						42				43	

- 20. Type of gibbon (abbr.)
- 23. Delta is one
- 24. NE Massachusetts cape
- 25. Soup cracker
- 26. Yes vote
- 27. Muddy ground
- 28. Physics apparatus
- 29. Type of drug
- 30. German city
- 31. Animal disease
- 32. Martini ingredients
- 33. Get away
- 34. Spanish municipality
- 36. Thrust a knife into

E	S	S						E	S	V	B
D	E	E	S					E	N	S	V
V	A	I	S					S	N	I	R
C	I	B	U	C				G	N	I	T
S	T	V	E	T				E	G	V	T
E	O	R	N	O	M	N	A	T	I	R	V
								I	N	V	S
								V	H	V	V
								N	I	P	
								S	E	M	V
								S	T	S	E
								T	V	C	I
								I	T	V	W
								V	T	N	V
								T	A	N	V
								E	S		

SUDOKU

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

			8					
	5		1					
9	1	8		5	6			
4							2	6
								4
		7		6	8			
	2							3
3		6		4		2		5
5	4						1	

Level: Intermediate

ANSWERS:

7	1	9	3	8	2	6	4	5
5	8	2	4	1	6	9	7	3
3	4	6	5	7	9	1	2	8
1	3	5	8	9	4	7	6	2
4	6	8	2	3	7	5	9	1
6	2	7	9	1	5	3	8	4
2	7	4	6	5	3	8	1	9
8	6	3	4	9	1	2	5	7
9	5	1	7	2	8	4	3	6

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ART COUNCIL RECOGNIZES STUDENT ARTISTS



CAROL MAHLER
*Independent Contractor
carolmahler22acl@gmail.com
Photos provided*

Student artists, their families, and the public enjoyed the Student Art Show at a special open house from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Mar. 1 at the DeSoto Campus of South Florida State College, 2251 NE Turner Ave., in Arcadia. The student art was part of the DeSoto Arts Council (DAC) Annual Art Show on display from Feb. 19 through Mar. 20 at the campus.

After teaching art in Talbot County, Maryland, for 38 years, Joan Cranor retired and has lived part-time in DeSoto County since 2010. She judged the student art contest. “I look for different ideas, neatness, color and painting according to ability by age, and an unique concept,” she said. In the works by the middle school students, she also considered the mood and details—such as highlights and shading.

West Elementary School (WES) Student Yojairi Roblero visited the art show with her family to see the art that she and other students had created. Her teacher, Hugo Patao, was also there. After earning his Bachelors of Fine Arts (BFA) at the New World School of the Arts of Miami-Dade College and his Masters of Fine Arts (MFA) at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, he taught at Spook Hill Elementary School in Lake Wales, Florida. Last year was his first year of teaching at WES.

DAC awarded \$150.00 each to the art teachers at Memorial, Nocatee, and West elementary schools plus DeSoto Middle School. “This is our way of encouraging and supporting the teachers in their art programs,” DAC President Jimmy Peters said. He noted that art teachers often are low in supplies as the school year will end in three months, so this boost will help students continue to express their creativity.



Artwork by the students in the Mustang Art Club at Nocatee Elementary School was on display in the Student Art Show as part of the DAC Annual Art Show. Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.

Judge of the DeSoto Arts Council (DAC) Student Art Contest, Joan Cranor stands with West Elementary School (WES) Student Yojairi Roblero who holds her palm tree sculpture. “I enjoyed making it,” she said, “and I liked adding the coconuts like I see on the beach.” Photograph provided.

Student Art Show Judge Joan Cranor presents a check for \$150.00 to WES Art Teacher Hugo Patao who attended the open house for the DAC Student Art Show. He intends to use the money to purchase clay for student art projects. Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.



Colorful pictures represented Memorial Elementary School in the Student Art Show as part of the DAC Annual Art Show on display through Mar. 20 at the SFSC DeSoto Campus. Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.



Student artists and their families enjoyed the student art on display as part of the DAC Annual Art Show at the DeSoto Campus of South Florida State College (SFSC), 2251 NE Turner Ave., in Arcadia. Photograph provided.



DAC sponsors a Children's Art Program at 3:30 p.m. every Wed. at the DeSoto County Library, 125 N. Hillsborough Ave., and some of pieces completed in that program were part of the Student Art Show at the SFSC DeSoto Campus. Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.



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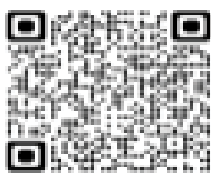
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MALCOLM FAMILY SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE TO SFSC STUDENTS IN TRADES PROGRAMS



AVON PARK, Fla. – March 7, 2025 – The Malcolm Family endowed scholarship has made it easier for DeSoto County residents to participate in trades programs at South Florida State College (SFSC). Some of the trades programs at SFSC are Welding; Automotive Service Technology; Automotive Collision Technology Technician; Phlebotomy; Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning/ Refrigeration (HVAC/R); Electrical Lineworker; and Construction Trades.

Criteria for a Malcolm Family Scholarship are that the applicant must be a resident of DeSoto County, Fla. and preference will be given to applicants who are 25 years old or younger. They must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment at SFSC on a minimum of a half-time basis and have completed their first year of a trades program course at SFSC. Preference is given to applicants who have completed their first year of study through the dual enrollment program at SFSC, have demonstrated financial need, and participate in the Boys and Girls Club of Arcadia. This is a full-tuition and fees scholarship that may be renewable for a second year.

“Through this endowed scholarship, SFSC students will have a financial resource for many years into the future,” said Marcia Conliffe, Financial Aid



director. “SFSC is grateful for donors, such as the Malcolm family. Their gifts allow our students to focus on their studies and, in time, make our communities economically stronger.”

An endowed scholarship enables donors to create a legacy, carrying funds toward student scholarships into perpetuity. Scholarships for students are awarded from the interest that the endowment earns. As the corpus grows, the SFSC Foundation can award scholarships to students for years to come.

To apply for scholarships made available through the SFSC Foundation,

visit AwardSpring at: southflorida.awardspring.com. For more information about the SFSC Foundation or to make a donation, call 863-453-3133 or email foundation@southflorida.edu.

SUDOKU

9		8	3	5				1
		1		4	6			
	3	6	9				7	
		3			4			8
	5	7	1	8		3	6	4
8				6	3		9	2
		9		2			8	
1		2		3		4		
7	8							

Level: Beginner

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

ANSWERS:

6	3	2	1	6	4	5	8	7
9	5	4	8	3	7	2	9	1
7	8	1	5	2	9	6	4	3
2	6	7	3	9	5	4	1	8
4	9	3	9	8	1	7	5	2
8	1	5	4	7	2	3	9	6
5	7	8	2	1	6	9	3	4
3	2	6	9	4	8	1	7	5
1	4	9	7	5	3	8	2	6

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