

## NewsWorthy

## Seminar to Inspire Today's Woman

## Arrest Made in Police Car Theft

Jonathan Colon-Garcia, 18, of Bradenton was arrested in connection with the theft of two police cars on Jan. 28 and 29. Police became interested in Colon-Garcia after he was pulled over by Bradenton Police for driving with a stolen tag Monday evening. The Manatee County Sheriff's Office had recently received information about someone driving a car with a stolen tag bragging about the theft of a Tampa and a Sarasota police car.

Colon-Garcia admitted to police that he was involved in the theft of the police cars and that he attempted to sell the stolen police equipment. The stolen equipment included a computer, Taser, radar gun, a handgun and loaded assault rifle. He told police he was unable to sell the items and ended up throwing the stolen computer in a ditch. The computer was recovered but the two firearms, radar gun and Taser have not been recovered.

Colon-Garcia was charged with principle to grand theft auto, principle to armed burglary and principle to grand theft. Police are continuing the investigation. Colon-Garcia told police he was the lookout person during the thefts and that he only knows the first name of the person who stole the cars.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the Sheriff's office at 747-3011 or Crimestoppers at 866-634-TIPS.

## City Pays Tribute to Resident

Residents of Palmetto and others came together last Thursday to pay tribute to a well-known and liked Palmetto business man, community activist and longtime youth football coach.

Seymore Sailes, 61, died Feb. 2. The cause of death was undetermined. Family members said Sailes was a diabetic who had been on dialysis.

Sailes was well known for his work with the Palmetto Youth Center and the annual Martin Luther King birthday celebration and parade in Palmetto. He also played a major part in securing scholarships and funding from Bealls for the center's youth.

Sailes was a high deacon at St. John's First Baptist Institutional Church and worked at his family's insurance business on Eighth and 17th Street in Palmetto.

## Inline Skating May be Bowled Over

The Ellenton Ice and Sports Complex may soon add "bowling alley" to its name. As part of an \$8 million makeover at the complex, the developers are planning to replace the center's inline skating rink with a 40-lane bowling alley. The two Olympic-sized ice-skating rinks will remain unchanged.

The center's new owners, MJ Squared, said sales from inline skating were not as high as hoped and thought bowling may appeal more to the growing number of families in northern Manatee County.

The new owners are also considering adding a second level above the inline skating area to create a state-of-the-art video game arcade.

## Commission Reviews Pet Laws

The Manatee County Commission has sent changes in pet regulations back to the drawing board Tuesday after dismissing several proposed changes. Commissioners disagreed with the proposal to fine pet owners of dogs and cat that make noise "constantly and consistently." Commissioners also felt the proposed steep increases in fines for not picking up animal feces, letting pets roam free or other violations was not fair without first issuing a warning to pet owners.

The county attorney's office will rewrite

Melissa Donley  
Staff Writer

For one Lakewood Ranch organization, a woman's place is in the business world.

The 25 professional women in the Lakewood Ranch Professional Women's Network want to meet more of today's successful women. On Saturday, the network will hold its Women's POWER seminar and expo to address the issues women face in the workplace and inspire them to be successful in their everyday lives.

"It's an opportunity for women to meet each other," said Nancy Spooner, a freelance graphic artist and member.

The event will focus on many topics pertaining to today's woman like careers, fashion and charity. The program includes a fashion show luncheon with clothing provided by Armoire fashion boutique. There will also be presentations by two guest speakers.

"Everything is geared toward women and how we can be successful," event planner and member Jane Jule said. "It's a women's day out."

The group has taken 47 reservations for the seminar, including a Women's Day Out group of five women. Spooner said the women are retired professionals who want to meet with other women at the event.

Sondra Guffey, director of media and communications for Lakewood Ranch Communities LLC., has been with Lakewood Ranch since 2004. Prior to

joining Lakewood Ranch, Guffey was a business and technology reporter for Bay News 9 and an investigative producer at Tampa Bay's 10.

This is the fourth seminar put on for women of the community by the network. The proceeds raised from each event have gone to different charities, including the Manatee County Women's Resource Center.

The money raised from the \$25 fee for this event will go to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation's Florida Suncoast Affiliate.

Fran Lambert, a spokesman with the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation's Florida Suncoast Affiliate will speak at the luncheon. Spooner says Lambert will talk about the foundation and what women can do to protect themselves and help the cause.

A trade expo will feature informational displays for women, covering health and fitness, travel and interior design. Spooner said there will be information about many of the members' businesses and services as well as information about the group.

"It's a place where people can learn more about what we do and who we are," Spooner said. "They can learn about us as a group and our businesses."

The Lakewood Ranch Professional Women's Network began in 2002 as a



The Lakewood Ranch Professional Women's Network are hosting a Today's Successful Woman seminar and expo Feb. 11.

non-compete women's group for local business women to meet other women and network.

"It's another way of expanding your business and making connections," Spooner said.

The 25 members come from a range of careers. There is a real estate agent, insurance agent, travel agent, financial advisor, business promoter and many others.

The group meets once a week at the River Club. During three of the meetings each month, two members give short presentations about their business, what they can do and what the group can do for them. The last Wednesday of each month is the business meeting when the group votes new members in and addresses other club issues. Spooner says recent meetings have been focusing on the Women's POWER seminar and expo.

## Canine Castaways Look for Parents

Melissa Donley  
Staff Writer

For Southeast High School teacher Mary Thompson, the need to nurture others has guided her throughout her life.

At work, Thompson spends her time heading the dropout prevention program to help teenagers get an education and a start on life. At home, Thompson is a foster mother to several Chihuahuas and other small dogs in her home.

"(Being a dog foster) is not unlike being a teacher," Thompson said. "It helps to feed that nurturing need."

As a member of Canine Castaways, Thompson has taken in several small dogs over the past three years. With five Chihuahuas herself, Thompson is a dog lover who wants to help abandoned and rescued dogs from area shelters.

Thompson's first foster dog was Barney, a red terrier mix. After a month of fostering him, her neighbor adopted him.

Canine Castaways began three years ago as a small dog rescue program based in Arcadia. Now the Castaways and their foster parents come from Wachula, Bradenton, Sarasota and Arcadia. Though the number of small dogs never seems to go down, the group is always in need of families and individuals to foster the dogs until good, permanent homes can be found.

"All the foster needs to do is love them and care for them until we find them a permanent home," said Nancy Armstrong,

who heads the Castaways. "The number of dogs we can help is directly connected to the number of fosters. If we have more fosters, we can rescue more."

There are currently a little over 20 dogs in the foster program. The majority of the dogs range from four to 20 pounds. There are some purebreds, but they have no papers since the dogs come from shelters and other animal rescue organizations. The breeds are all small dogs, like terriers, poodles and Chihuahuas. Thompson currently fosters three Chihuahuas.

"There are a variety of breeds," Armstrong said. "You name it. It really varies."

To become a foster or an owner of



Minnie, an 18-month old Chinese Crested dog, is a new castaway looking for a home. Minnie was rescued after her owner was unable to care for her.

one of the dogs, there is an application process that includes a home visit. For potential fosters, the other animals in the home are required to have a veterinarian check to insure there are not potential health issues.

Before the dogs enter the Castaways program, they are treated by a veterinarian and given all required medicine and vaccinations. They are spayed or neutered and are all heartworm negative.

Armstrong says the program is looking for dog lovers who want to help out many homeless dogs in their area.

"We want anybody who has the interest and will open their homes," Armstrong said. "We don't expect you to train them. We just want you to give them a home situation instead of the kennel they currently live in."

Fostering a dog typically lasts between two weeks and two months. However, often the fosters can be "Foster Failures," according to Thompson, though it's not as bad as it sounds.

"It's not such a bad thing," Thompson said. "I'm just about ready to (keep one). I've had one since Easter, and I have just about made a decision."

## Get Involved

For more information about Canine Castaways, visit [www.caninecastaways.org](http://www.caninecastaways.org) or email Nancy at [caninecastaways@yahoo.com](mailto:caninecastaways@yahoo.com).

the proposal and present the new version to commissioners March 14.

## Foster Mother Charged with Abuse

A teacher's aide at Harlee Middle School has been charged with aggravated child abuse of her 9-year-old foster child. Connie Hunt, 44, was arrested by Manatee County Sheriff's deputies Friday. Earlier that day, a school resource officer at the school noticed multiple marks and welts on the victim. When questioned about

the marks, the victim told police her foster mother beat her with an extension cord and a belt.

## Mobile Home Residents Team Up

For mobile home park residents, there is a constant fear of developers buying up the land they live on. Now a group of more than 100 mobile home park residents from around the county have announced the creation of a new organization to protect their rights.

The majority of the residents in the new organization are supporting a bill by Rep. Nancy Detert (R-Venice). The bill would enable mobilehome park residents to have the first right of refusal if a park owner solicits an outside offer to buy and when a potential buyer makes an offer unsolicited. If the bill passes, local governments would be required to use available funds to help displaced mobile home residents relocate when their park is rezoned and developed.