

NewsWorthy

Braden Principal Warns Parents

Braden River Middle School Principal **Randy Petrilla** sent letters to school parents after he got word that a 15-year-old girl from Creekwood was approached by a strange man 10 days ago. Altogether, seven East Manatee schools received information from the school district about the incident and were given the option to send a letter home Tuesday or Wednesday.

Other schools notified included Lakewood Ranch High, Nolan and Haile middle schools and Braden River, Freedom and McNeal elementaries.

The teen, who was unharmed, became alarmed by a man who watched her from the bushes while she was doing step-up exercises in Creekwood's community pool area. The Manatee County Sheriff's Office sent patrol cars out to search for the man every night since Sept. 5, to no avail, a Manatee County Sheriff's Office spokesman, said.

Students Hospitalized

Two **Manatee High School students** were taken to Blake Hospital on Wednesday during school hours. A spokesman for Emergency Medical Services said the students had injected themselves with an unknown substance. When emergency officials arrived at the school, the students were in the clinic. The injuries were not life-threatening.

Teacher Accused of Battery

A student accused his teacher of battery Tuesday after being told to pick a pencil up from the floor. According to a Manatee County Sheriff's Office report, the Johnson Middle School student told Deputy Gary Davis that his teacher grabbed his arm to make him pick up the pencil. The student then called the teacher a derogatory name and the teacher grabbed him by the shoulder, carried him to the classroom door and pushed him into the hall. The teacher told the student to report to the school office. The incident is still under investigation.

Super Students

Eight seniors in Manatee County's public high schools have been named semifinalists in the academically prestigious 2007 National Merit Scholarship Program. In addition to the eight public school students, three seniors at Saint Stephen's Episcopal School in Bradenton were also named National Merit semifinalists.

The 2007 National Merit Scholarship

Semifinalists from Manatee County are: Lakewood Ranch High: **Brian M. Frey** and **Benjamin M. Kriegel**; Southeast High: **Alison I. Bilderback**, **Adeline R. Dozois**, **Shana B. Fraser**, **Jessica J. Stubenberg**, **Daryl J. Wing** and **Mark K. Zeller**; St. Stephen's Episcopal School: **Kelly M. Connolly**, **Daniella Corcuera** and **Patrick J. Hillstrom**. The six semifinalists who attend Southeast are all enrolled in the school's International Baccalaureate program. Last year, Southeast's IB program produced three National Merit Scholarship semifinalists.

Tillman Honored

Tillman Elementary School was one of 15 schools in Manatee County to earn a Five-Star School honor. Schools recognized with the prize are honored for community involvement through fostering strong family participation, successful volunteer programs, and cooperation with business partnerships.

Tax Collectors Get Relief

The **Manatee County Tax collector** and **Pacific Blue Software, Inc.** have agreed to terms for the license of P-tax, a comprehensive property tax management system.

Pacific Blue Software will be converting Manatee County Tax collector's current and historical data and making the necessary customizations to meet their needs. According to Pacific Blue Software Inc., it is a consultant-owned software development company committed to helping Florida tax collectors manage property tax processing with p-tax, a state-of-the-art property tax system. P-tax is a true zero-footprint, thin-client, web application property tax management solution that allows tax collectors to significantly cut hardware and deployment costs.

Pacific Blue Software has been working on the design and development of the base system for the past four years. Pacific Blue Software is offering individual licenses for each product, and when complete, will offer a license for their full Tax Collector Suite. Pacific Blue Software is also offering ASP (application service provider) services for tax collectors who wish to outsource their IT needs.

Insurance Rates May Rise

Two more insurance carriers are scheduled to have requests for rate increases heard by the public. The Florida Office of Insurance Regulation announced Wednesday that public hearings will be

Rising Temps Discolor H₂O

Jeff Berlinicke
Staff Writer

The water might not look normal and might be a color a little too discomfoting for most people, but the water flowing through your faucets can't do any harm, according to county officials.

The yellow-brownish water that is pouring through as many as 30,000 Manatee County faucets is the result of the rise in water temperature this summer. The water, which flows from the Lake Manatee Reservoir, works its way through the system all the way to Sarasota and Longboat Key, so it affects the entire region, but Bruce MacLeod, superintendent for the Manatee County Water Treatment Plant said there is nothing to worry about.

"Water has been sitting there for almost a year and with the high temperatures, that makes it a perfect breeding ground for algae," MacLeod said.

MacLeod added that the problem was the combination of excessive algae and a failure to add the proper chemical to the water to stop it from corroding the pipes. Without the chemical, iron and aluminum

from the pipes is tainting the water.

County officials say that the discoloration of the water poses no problems, but that it is important to continue flushing faucets until the water runs clear. The problems with the algae content started in June, and Manatee County Water Division Manager John Zimmerman said that it was addressed almost immediately. He said the complaints started when his department realized it was flushing the system too much and that was the cause for the discolorment of the water.

"We did have some brown water that we addressed after it got into our systems," Zimmerman said. "It can occur when the water temperatures start to rise in the summer months. It is affecting us as far as Longboat Key."

MacLeod encouraged Manatee County residents to contact (941) 792-8811 if there were any further problems after letting the faucet run for a few minutes. The situation also affects Sarasota County, which purchases about 10 million gallons of water a day from Manatee County.

held for rate requests by Nationwide Insurance Co. and United Services Automobile Association and its affiliates, USAA Casualty Insurance Company and USAA General Indemnity Company.

Nationwide, which has more than 5,000 policies in force in Manatee County and roughly 14,000 in Sarasota, is requesting an average rate increase of 71.5%. USAA, which has about 2,800 policies in Manatee County and 4,400 in Sarasota County, seeks to increase its homeowners rates by an average of 40%. It's also seeking a 7.2% increase for Safeway Property Insurance Co., which specializes in insuring mobile homes. They asked for a 109.9% rate increase. The company has about 2,700 policies in Manatee County and 2,600 in Sarasota County. Cincinnati Insurance has roughly 6,200 policies in the Manatee-Sarasota area.

MCC Offers New Classes

Manatee Community College (MCC) Continuing and Community Education is offering popular noncredit classes at new locations and adding a number of classes this Fall.

A variety of classes teach basic and healthy cooking, baking from scratch and grilling techniques and classes focus on German, Italian, Japanese or Spanish cuisine at MCC Bradenton, 5840 26th St. W. Jazz or tap dancing classes are offered

at Marci's School of Dance, 2036 43rd Ave. W., Bradenton and Latin dancing is taught at MCC Lakewood Ranch, 7131 Professional Pkwy. E. In addition to basic and experienced motorcycle riding courses, a new one is designed to increase the comfort level for new riders.

Other new classes offer opportunities to learn how to make macramé jewelry, speak Japanese, relieve stress and get the most out of life and stage a home for quick and profitable sale. Parents may learn guidance techniques to help them teach their children to be responsible and cooperative in a new Redirecting Children's Behavior class. New courses for the professional are offered in food safety management and professional kitchen organization. Call 363-70000.

Welcome

Leslie Wells Realty, Inc. is proud to announce two new sales associates, **Abygael Carlin** and **Barbara Ragan**. Both agents will join the Lakewood Ranch Office, 1861 Lakewood Ranch Blvd.

Carlin has been a Florida resident for more than 27 years and has a vast knowledge of Manatee and Sarasota, specializing in rural and equestrian properties. Ragan has been a resident of Myakka City since 1986, but has had family on Anna Maria Island since 1963. She sells "from island to acerage."

Dance, Gymnastics Hits Stage Saturday



Jeff Berlinicke
Staff Writer

Steven and Betsy Gonzalez thought they were through with dance and gymnastics when they committed themselves to Christianity.

It was an easy choice for them, but they still wanted to see how they could put their talents of gymnastics and dance into their new way of life.

They'll be showing it off on Saturday



when their Way of Life Acrodramance Theatre Company performs at the Christian Retreat in Bradenton at 7 p.m.

Cirque du Soleil

Their ministry started in 1997, but Steve and Betsy have a long history in the field of dance. Betsy is a fourth-generation ballet dancer and her parents even met at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. Both have backgrounds in gym-



nastics training, coaching and judging, but what they bring to Bradenton this weekend is unique. Picture the Cirque du Soleil meets the Olympics.

"We look forward to coming to Bradenton," Betsy Gonzalez said. "We think people are going to really enjoy it and it should be a great time."

Way of Life tries to take worship and the arts to a new level. There is a blending of several separate art forms to fol-



low trends taking place in the art world today. It's a unique blend of gymnastics, dance, and acrobatics that Betsy and Steve Gonzalez have been showcasing all over Florida.

"It's definitely a different experience," Betsy Gonzalez said. "We are honored to be a forerunner in the growing Christian artistic field."

Call 746-2882 for details.