

# LOCAL & STATE

Susan Smiley-Height, editor  
susan.smiley-height@ocala.com

## COMMUNITY

### Co-ed softball

Marion County Parks and Recreation is accepting registration through Monday from players needing a team and teams needing opponents for adult co-ed softball at Wrigley Fields, 405 E. County Road 316, Citra. The league meets at 6:30 p.m. on Mondays at Wrigley Fields beginning Monday. Registration is open to anyone age 17 and older, and will comprise eight teams of up to 15 players each. Registration can be done in person or online. \$25 per player. Call 671-8560 or visit marion-parksrec.org.

### Development Program

An FPRA Professional Development Program and luncheon will be held from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Friday at the Ewers Center Teleconference Room of the College of Central Florida, 3001 SW College Road, Ocala. Ginger Broslat, APR, CPFR, communications consultant and vice president of accreditation and certification for the Florida Public Relations Association, will present on "Fall Therapy: Learning to Walk With Ethical Integrity When You Are Destined to Fall Along the Way." \$20-\$25 and RSVP required by 5 p.m. Monday. Call 861-0252 or email christy.jergens@fhealth.gov or visit fpraocala.org/event-registration.

### Information meeting

Marion Technical College will hold an information session for career certificate programs at 6 p.m. Monday at 1014 SW Seventh Road, Ocala. The session will focus on the 23 career certificate programs that prepare students to enter the workforce including the new Business Management and Analysis Program. Potential students will have the opportunity to meet staff, pick up applications and return applications. Call 671-4134.

### Circus performance

Cirque Eloize will perform its show "Saloon" at 7:30 p.m. Monday at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center, 1051 Main St., The Villages. Cirque Eloize has been creating award-winning performances for nearly 25 years and is one of the world's leading contemporary circus acts. \$20-\$65. Call 753-3229 or visit thesharon.com.

### Tuesday talks

The Ocala/Marion County Chamber & Economic Partnership will host Tuesday Talks starting with 8 a.m. networking and 8:30 presentation on Tuesday at 310 SE Third St., Ocala. The topic will be "Understanding the First Tee of Greater Ocala." RSVP is required. Email danielle@ocalacep.com.

### Equestrian competition

The Ocala Championship will be held from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday through March 25 at HIT's Post Time Farm, 13710 U.S. 27, Ocala. The Winter Classic is an equestrian show and competition. Free for spectators Wednesdays through Saturdays and \$5 for adults and free for ages 12 and younger on Sundays. Call 620-2275 or visit hitshows.com/ocala/hits-ocala-winter-circuit.

## Meet Ocala's math 'Big Shot'

**Miguel Secillano, 7, will appear Sunday on NBC's 'Little Big Shots'**

By Dave Schlenker  
Entertainment editor

On Sunday night, comedian Steve Harvey will declare Ocala's Miguel Secillano "the greatest math mind of all time."

No joke. Miguel is a 7-year-old

third-grader at Dr. N.H. Jones Elementary School.

Also no joke. But there will be plenty of jokes and giggles when Harvey squares off with Miguel for an unfair battle of wits on NBC's "Little Big Shots." The TV show starts its third season Sunday night with Miguel as one of the featured children whose talents, Harvey proclaims, are "off the hook." "Math has always been a

### 'Little Big Shots'

The two-episode season premiere starts at 7 p.m. Sunday on NBC.

mystery to me," Harvey says on the show. "But for this Little Big Shot, it's as easy as 1, 2, 3 ... From Ocala, Florida, here's 7-year-old Miguel." The episode featuring Ocala's mind-boggling math whiz was filmed in October in Los

Angeles. The family found out he had been selected a month earlier — "hurricane time," Miguel's father, Philip, recalled Friday, referring to Hurricane Irma's September rumble through the state.

It was a great time for good news, and Miguel clearly remembers his reaction: "Really? REALLY? Let's go to California this instant," he

See MATH, B5

## Raising walls



Phoenix Rising Youthbuild student Austin Edwards nails a support in place as the community and area organizations joined the students for a wall raising of the Phillips Habitat for Humanities home on Juniper Road on Friday. The Phoenix Rising Youthbuild project members are young adults 18-24 earning their high school diplomas and learning job skills. (ALAN YOUNGBLOOD/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

The Phoenix Rising Youthbuild students put a wall in place at the job site.



Notes were left for the family after walls were put in place at the Phillips Habitat for Humanities home on Juniper Road on Friday.

## Senior Learners going strong

**More than 900 people, most in their 70s, have taken non-college credit courses since the fall**

By Joe Callahan  
Staff writer

More than three years ago, the College of Central Florida announced it could no longer use staff to support the popular Senior Learning Institute. The college promised to provide classrooms for courses if volunteers were willing to oversee the program.

That's how the non-profit Senior Learners Inc. was born. Since then, volunteers have responded and helped organize and schedule several hundred courses, from history and science to travel and computers. Volunteers collect nominal fees, averaging about \$30 for multi-day classes, to pay lecturers.

Today, the popular education program, aimed at residents age 50 or older, is booming. Some 949 people, most in their 70s, have taken non-college credit courses since last fall. Those students are expected to surpass 5,900 class hours during the 2017-18 college term that began in August.

Though these seniors have a thirst for new knowledge, a major draw for the Greatest Generation is socialization, according to Gwyn Peeler, 72, the vice chairwoman of the group and one of dozens of lecturers. Students often arrive in the classroom 45 minutes early to chat with friends.

Peeler, a retired biology teacher, has a dedicated following

See LEARNERS, B5

## BITS & PIECES

### Don't forget to wear your green today



Emory Schley

Happy St. Patrick's Day to all those with either Irish blood or an Irish spirit in their hearts! My mother's father, who

died when she was just 10 years old, was born in Ireland and earned a college degree before seeking his fortune in the United States. He tried Kansas for a while, then Georgia, but that fortune he sought always eluded him. He at least established a long-standing family tradition — unfortunately, I can sympathize with his plight.

However, St. Patrick's Day is for celebrating the Emerald Isle and all it has brought to our culture. So, raise a brew and may your toast always be "Erin Go Bragh." ABOUT TIME: Reader Judith Cannon wrote: "Hi Sly Guy. Alas we had to turn those clocks back again and lose a precious hour of sleep. I only mention this in hopes you

See SCHLEY, B5