

BIG SUMMER DEALS WEEK

INSIDE: LIFESTYLES, D1
Today, Read about one area family who sees saving money as a personal challenge. We'll offer tips all week for stretching your dollar, covering topics that range from cheap eats to outdoor fun for free.

news-press.com/allarea:
Videos, photo galleries and more.



ALL-AREA SOFTBALL
• North Fort Myers junior pitcher Jackie Owen is The News-Press Softball Player of the Year. **Sports, C3**



THE NEWS-PRESS

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L.A. beats Magic, takes NBA title



The Lakers won the NBA title with a 99-86 win Sunday over Orlando. The win gives coach Phil Jackson his 10th title, a record.

SPORTS, C1

Tehran election turmoil goes on

The Associated Press

TEHRAN, IRAN — Protesters battled police over Iran's disputed election and shouted their opposition from the rooftops Sunday, but President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad dismissed the unrest as little more than "passions after a soccer match" and drew his own huge rally of support.

Just after sundown, cries of "death to the dictator" echoed through Tehran as thousands of backers for Ahmadinejad's rival, Mir Hossein Mousavi, heeded a call to bellow from the roofs and balconies. The act recalled the shouts of "Allahu Akbar," or God is Great, to show opposition to the monarchy before the 1979 revolution.

But the struggle Sunday was on the streets in the worst unrest in Tehran since student-led protests 10 years ago.

Demonstrators were back on the streets with the same tactics: torching bank facades and trash bins and hurling rocks at anti-riots squads in Tehran.

There was no official word on casualties.

In a news conference, Ahmadinejad called the level of violence "not important from my point of view" and likened it to the intensity after a soccer game.

"Some believed they would win, and then they got angry," he said. "It has no legal credibility. It is like the passions after a soccer match. ... The margin between my votes and the others is too much and no one can question it."

Also see **Obama A4**



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Supporters of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad react as he speaks at a rally Sunday in in Tehran, Iran.

ASSISTANCE IN DEMAND: SERVICES HELP CAPE, BONITA, LEHIGH



JACK HARDMAN/SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-PRESS

Pete Routson, a volunteer for the Cape Coral Caring Center, works to organize food donations. The center gave out 66 tons of food last fiscal year.

Lee aid agencies need a hand, too

SW Fla. nonprofits busier than ever

BY CHRISTINA CEPERO
ccepero@news-press.com

The number of needy people helped by three major Lee County assistance agencies is skyrocketing, but those who provide aid are hopeful new fundraisers and donations will keep up with the demand.

Lehigh Community Services, Cape Coral Caring Center and the Bonita Springs Assistance Office provide emergency food and pay bills for thousands of people who have lost jobs, houses and hope.

• From October to April, 5,694 people sought help at Lehigh Community Services, an increase of 56 percent over last year.

• The Cape Coral center helped 454 more families than it did last

year from October through April, and gave out 43 tons of food.

• The Bonita Springs Assistance Office reports a 25 percent increase in the number of people seeking help.

"We're scheduling people every 15 minutes," said Charlotte Rae Nicely, of the Lehigh agency. "It's unbelievable. And I think the summer is going to be even more so because, of course, the economy and so many people coming in for assistance now that weren't."

Camille White, 26, a single mother, first got help from the Lehigh office about a year ago when she started struggling to feed her two children and pay her mortgage and light bills.

See **ASSIST A3**

ASSISTANCE OFFICES

Lehigh Community Services
• **Location:** 9 Beth Stacey Blvd., Unit 206, Lehigh Acres, FL 33926
• **Hours:** 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday. Appointments are encouraged.
• **Phone:** 369-5818.
• **Web site:** lehighcommunityservices.com

Cape Coral Caring Center
• **Location:** 4645 S.E. 15th Ave., Cape Coral, FL 33904
• **Hours:** 9 a.m. to noon Monday-Friday (last client must be in by 11:30)
• **Phone:** 945-1927
• **Web site:** capecoralcaringcenter.org

Bonita Springs Assistance Office
• **Location:** 10346 Pennsylvania Ave., Bonita Springs, FL 34135
• **Hours:** 1 to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday by appointment.
• **Phone:** 992-3034
• **Web site:** bonitaassistance.org

"Now it seems with the slow season coming in it's rent (help) because basically hours at work have been cut drastically and just people getting laid off. ... We're getting a lot of land surveyors, Realtors, self-employed individuals."

— Maria Gonzalez, director for the Bonita Springs Assistance Office

Fla. colleges: Good grades, bad faith?

Higher GPAs make some suspicious

BY DAVE BREITENSTEIN
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Grade-point averages are rising at Florida's public universities, a sign that either schools are attracting brighter students or professors are grading easier.

The News-Press examined undergraduate grade-point averages at nine state universities, finding strong evidence of grade inflation at Florida and Florida State and moderate inflation at

news-press.com

Document: View list of GPAs for nine Florida public universities.

Central Florida, North Florida and Florida Atlantic.

Florida Gulf Coast University's average GPA fluctuates, but hovers near 3.0 each semester.

Stuart Rojstaczer, a former Duke University professor who analyzes college

See **GPA A2**

GPAs on the rise

Grade-point averages are rising at Florida's public universities. Undergraduate grade-point averages at nine state universities show strong evidence of grade inflation at Florida and Florida State and moderate inflation at Central Florida, North Florida and Florida Atlantic.

SCHOOL	FALL 1997	SPRING 2009	12-YEAR AVG.
FGCU	3.11	3.07	3.02
West Florida	2.96	3.06	3.04
Florida Atlantic	2.68	2.83	2.79
Florida State	2.78	N/A	2.92
Central Florida	2.86	2.98	2.94
South Florida	2.89	2.94	2.93
North Florida	2.48	2.83	2.81
Florida	3.00	3.30	3.16
Florida International	2.76	2.79	2.79

SOURCE: AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE

THE NEWS-PRESS

News Digest

Man slain in Fort Myers

A man who was apparently collecting fruit in a yard was gunned down Sunday, the seventh Lee homicide in 16 days.

Local, B1



Wed. will be busy at NASA

NASA hopes to launch Endeavour on Wednesday, possibly postponing two previously scheduled, moon-bound rocket launches.

NATION & WORLD, A4

IN BUSINESS TODAY



Our Road to Recovery series continues with help for small businesses. Look for it in the Business section through the end of June. **Today, B8**

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From the cover

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If you see an error in The News-Press contact Sheldon Zoldan, 335-0560 or szoldan@news-press.com. Corrections appear on the first page of the section in which the error was made.

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GPA

Continued from A1

GPA, believes more professors are rewarding mediocre work with As and Bs, and also reducing the workload for students. In turn, their classes fill up fast during registration and they collect better evaluations from students, two outcomes that better position faculty for promotion.

Rojstaczer cites the University of Florida, the state's flagship institution, as one of the nation's biggest offenders. Academic records show the average undergraduate GPA at Florida was 3.07 in spring 1999, skyrocketing to 3.30 in spring 2009. Rojstaczer says a 0.1 GPA rise over a decade raises a red flag; Florida more than doubled that amount.

"Suddenly, everyone is a genius with an A or A- average," he said.

College GPAs are calculated on a 4-point scale: an A is worth 4 points, B is 3, C is 2, D is 1 and F is 0.

Florida's 3.30 GPA this spring is, by far, highest among eight institutions that already calculated their spring GPAs. Florida State is finalizing its data. Florida A&M has not responded to a May 20 public records request from The News-Press, and New College of Florida in Sarasota, the state's 11th public university, only issues narrative evaluations — no letter grades.

"New College started as an idealistic place, where the importance of learning skills and demonstrating competence is valued more than the accrual of letter grades," said associate provost Maribeth Clark, adding that New College is one of a handful of institutions that have shunned the standard grading system. "We have never given grades, and will not give grades."

FGCU variations

The average semester GPA at FGCU has fluctuated since it opened 12 years ago, ranging from a high of 3.12

in spring 1998 to a low of 2.94 in fall 2005. Students tallied a 3.07 GPA this spring.

Each department establishes its own grading policies, but professors have the freedom to assign grades as they see fit. FGCU's average GPA has continued to hang around 3.0, despite doubling faculty and quadrupling enrollment since 1997.

"Our consistency reflects that faculty have established what those grades mean — what is an A, what is a B, what is a C," said FGCU Provost Ronald Toll. "Faculty have established standards that are appropriate and enduring."

"It's disconcerting to see averages going up and down, fluctuating wildly over a short period of time."

Although FGCU's average GPA remains stable, there is a statistical anomaly when comparing students' high school GPAs to their college GPAs. Rojstaczer said there usually is a sharp dropoff between high school and college GPAs, primarily because college courses are more difficult.

At FGCU, though, the dropoff is minimal. The incoming freshman class in fall 2008 had a 3.33 high school GPA, ranking it ninth among the 11 State University System institutions. Their SAT scores put them last. But undergraduates as a whole tallied a 3.07 this spring, putting FGCU second among the eight schools that submitted spring data.

Coretta Hendley, 22, graduated in May from FGCU with a 3.1 GPA in psychology, right at the college's average. The West Palm Beach native described her professors as fair.

"I would say it's not too hard, not too easy," said Hendley, speculating that FGCU's relatively high GPA reflects the fact that students receive more one-on-one attention than peers at large universities. "It probably has to do with the number of students in each classroom. We have small classes here."

FGCU's undergraduate

student-to-faculty ratio of 32-to-1 was fifth among nine institutions that reported fall 2008 numbers, according to data that will be presented Tuesday to the Board of Trustees.

Relative grades

The University of Florida is not dumbing down its curriculum or giving students a free pass, according to a school spokesman.

"If you look at the profile of our incoming students over the last 10, 15, 20 years, there certainly is an upward trend," said Steve Orlando, director of media relations. "The demand has increased so much that we've been forced to be more selective with our admissions."

The numbers show that. In 1998, freshman had an average SAT score of 1268 and 3.9 GPA. In 2008, those numbers rose to 1292 and 4.2, respectively. The SAT and its scoring system was revamped in 2006.

Rojstaczer estimates brighter students only can account for 20 to 30 percent of the rise in Florida's GPA. With the pressure to net superior course evaluations and keep spirits high, Rojstaczer said faculty are pressured into issuing good grades.

"A lot of problems we have with grade inflation at the college level relates to the high school level," he said. "If you have a high school student who has only received As and Bs, and you give them a C, they view that as a failure."

Rojstaczer created grade-inflation.com, a Web site that lists GPAs of 212 colleges. He would like to see a national database that equalizes the playing field between similar colleges, letting the public know which schools are easy graders and which are stringent in doling out As and Bs.

"If someone is getting a 3.0 at Florida International, they're a pretty good student," Rojstaczer said, referring to FIU's 2.79 GPA this spring. "If you get a 3.0 at Florida Gulf Coast, you're just an average student."

"The time to stop this was four years ago. But once we built that water plant, the die was cast. Absent the ability to turn back time, you have all these bills, you have to do something. We have to move forward."

— Tim Day, Cape Coral councilman

UTILITIES

Continued from A1

"People's impressions of government were already bad," said Councilman Tim Day, the longest-serving member on the Cape council. "They blame government for this banking crisis. They want to blame government because they lost their job. People are just not happy overall."

No easy choice

Utility expansions have polarized public opinion since they began two decades ago.

More than 60,000 residents this week will get letters in the mail explaining the expansions and the fees associated with them. Those living in the north Cape will have to pay an average \$6,000 in assessments and fees for city water. The 6,200 residents in the Southwest 6-7 Assessment Area will pay an average \$17,000 for water, sewer and irrigation lines.

The city has created financing options to ease the sting. People won't have to pay anything on the project, including the cost of hooking up their home's plumbing, for three years.

But the new financing options, which spread out payments or allow for deferment, may do little to dull the political impact.

"The entire makeup of the council will change in November and whoever is against restarting this project will be elected," Herman Fuchs wrote in an e-mail to the City Council. Fuchs lives in the southwest expansion area.

Five seats — including the mayor's — are up for election this November. The election could serve to gauge just where public opinion falls.

"I don't envy the difficult decisions that you were elected to make," Christopher O. Scott wrote in an e-mail to Mayor Jim Burch, "but (I

am confident that continuing with (utility expansion program) ensures that you are truly looking out for the health, safety and well being of your constituents and is the fiscally responsible course of action. I understand that the UEP appears to be an unpopular decision ... however, I am certain that there are many more who share my thoughts and sentiments."

Councilman Pete Brandt disagrees.

"Some on council are just not in tune with what the majority of the city is saying," Brandt said. "These five people (who voted for the utility expansions) just go right on ahead doing things and convince themselves what they're doing is the best for the city."

But Brandt has not yet put forward an alternative, aside from postponing the project two years and trying to find a less expensive approach to the expansions.

Mistakes of the past

The city, Day said, had no choice but to vote for the project last week.

Cape Coral is now finishing work on about \$460 million worth of facility expansions.

"The time to stop this was four years ago," Day said. "But once we built that water plant, the die was cast. Absent the ability to turn back time, you have all these bills, you have to do something. We have to move forward."

Cape Coral was born 40 years ago with no real consideration for public utilities, municipal buildings or non-residential property. Building the city on a checkerboard of pre-platted residential lots has proven difficult.

"How do you overcome the mistakes of the past?" Swanson said. "What you need is leadership that can explain the pros and cons. The leadership had to really explain why this thing is necessary."

CELEBRITY BIRTHDAYS

Former New York Gov. **Mario Cuomo** is 77. Actor **Aron Kincaid** is 69. Rock musician **Lee Dorman** (Iron Butterfly) is 67. Comedian-actor **Jim Belushi** is 55. Baseball Hall of Famer **Wade Boggs** is 51. Actress **Helen Hunt** is 46. Actress **Courtney Cox** is 45. Actress **Leah Remini** is 39. Actor **Neil Patrick Harris** is 36. Actor **Denzel Whitaker** is 19.

CELEBRITY BUZZ

Hundreds honor David Carradine

LOS ANGELES — Hundreds gathered to honor David Carradine at a sprawling hillside cemetery on Saturday during a funeral that was attended by family, former co-stars and other Hollywood friends.

The invitation-only services were held indoors at the Hall of Liberty at Forest Lawn-Hollywood Hills, a 400-acre cemetery laid out adjacent to Los Angeles' Griffith Park.

Guests gathered and hugged outside the hall, where security ensured only invited guests gained entry.

They gathered more than a week after Carradine, 72, was found hanging in a Bangkok hotel room on June 4. Thai authorities continue to investigate his death. A statement released Thursday by a private pathologist said suicide had been ruled out as a cause of death.

— The Associated Press

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