

VALENCIA VOICE

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Search for missing Caylee Anthony continues

By **Trey McConnell**
Valencia Voice

After a short hiatus, volunteers resumed the search for the missing 3-year-old Caylee Anthony, who was reported missing July 15, this Saturday, attracting more than 1,200 people to search 25-square miles near the Orlando International Airport.

“Our objective today is to search over 25-square miles and cover each section slowly and securely in hopes of finding Caylee,” said EquuSearch volunteer, Louann Hodges.

The search team, which assembled as early as 6:00am, set up their command center on the corner of Judge Road and Lee Vista Boulevard. The event attracted many locals but also drew in participants from out of state as well.

“I felt I had an ability that most volunteers didn’t. I have previous Special-Op training and I am a part of the New York State search and rescue team,” said warrant officer, Michael Ray.

Caylee’s mother, Casey Anthony, was charged last month with first-degree murder of her daughter, who was reported missing on July 15.

The child is still missing, but Anthony’s family members believe that she could still be alive.

Texas organization EquuSearch, a non-profit group that specializes in locating missing persons, searched extensively but only came up with animal bones and random articles of clothing by nightfall.

The conditions favored volunteers this time but ultimately didn’t help them to uncover anything new.

“The thing that helped us this time is that the water went down and the vegetation went down so we can get to areas easier. Last time we searched the conditions were terrible,” said EquuSearch director, Tim Miller. Miller started the organization in 2000 after the kidnapping and ultimate murder of his daughter, Laura Miller.

Participants were divided into groups and transported by service vans, their personal vehicles, and one Greyhound bus.

Each group had a team leader assigned who would immediately report anything found.

Police pinpointed all the calls Anthony made the day her daughter disappeared and noticed a time frame of five hours where no calls appeared.

The last call she made was dialed right near the airport, giving EquuSearch the motive to investigate the area. Eyewitnesses reported seeing her car parked near Judge Road.

Although the search brought nothing new to the investigation, it drew more participants and helped urge further participation in the hunt for Caylee Anthony. There was a hint of optimism due to the favorable conditions and that was expressed by some of the key people involved with finding Caylee.

“The search is going great,” said bounty hunter, Leonard Padilla. “Everything is dry and there are a lot more people here this time.”



Trey McConnell, Valencia Voice

Volunteers were divided into groups and assigned certain areas. There was one Greyhound bus which transferred people to their destinations. Everyone else travelled by service vans or their own vehicles.

President-elect prepares to enter White House



Zbigniew Bzdak/Chicago Tribune/MCT

President-elect Barack Obama arrives at the White House for a visit with President George W. Bush.

By **Christi Parsons and Mike Dorning**
Chicago Tribune

WASHINGTON — They arrived early, greeted their hosts genially and took a polite tour of their soon-to-be home.

If only the hand-off of the U.S. presidency were as simple as Barack and Michelle Obama’s visit to the White House on Monday.

Behind the scenes, aides to President-elect Obama and President George W. Bush were tackling the mammoth task of changeover, including the daunting job of turning over the national security apparatus.

The time-honored political ritual took place as Obama’s transition team moved forward with the selection of its top economic officials, and as speculation heightened in Illinois over who will take the place of the only African-American senator when Obama is sworn in as president in January.

Two Democratic officials said Chicago businesswoman and Obama adviser Valerie Jarrett may lead the president-elect’s list of favorites to take his place, though neither Jarrett nor any other member of the Obama team would say whether she wants the job.

At the south portico of the executive mansion, it was all gentility and good humor, as Michelle Obama greeted Laura Bush with a hug, a familiar smile and what looked to be an air-kiss, and the current and future presidents met like old chums. Obama gave Bush a warm handshake while also clasping his right arm, then laid his hand on Bush’s shoulder

as the two turned to go into the White House together.

It was almost as if one hadn’t been criticizing the other all over America for the last year and a half.

Obama, a sharp critic of the Bush administration, sent word later that the two had had a “broad discussion about the importance of working together throughout the transition of government in light of the nation’s many critical economic and security challenges.”

Obama thanked Bush for his commitment to a smooth transition, and for his and his wife’s “gracious hospitality,” Obama transition spokeswoman Stephanie Cutter said in a written statement.

After the two-hour meeting, Obama returned to Chicago where he is likely to spend the rest of the week considering appointments and spending time with his family. He may shuttle back and forth to Washington in the near future for meetings — like the secretive one he had at the airport before departing Monday — but he’s trying to spend more time at his Kenwood home after a grueling campaign.

The day started with Obama dropping off his two daughters at school, where he helped them out of their black SUV and sent them each off with a kiss. He headed off for a workout before making his way through Chicago morning traffic and to O’Hare International Airport for the trip to Washington. His wife traveled separately, apparently so she could visit Washington area schools after the White House visit while her husband flew home.

Continued on Page 4

Opinion

What are you expecting from Obama?

By Jordan Keyes
Valencia Voice

Last week, Sen. Barack Obama became President-elect Barack Obama.

This week, Obama faces the daunting task of preparing to take over a nation that is in the middle of one of the worst financial crises since the Great Depression. Along with that, he will take the helm of a country that, unless something drastically changes, is in the middle of two separate wars overseas.

Needless to say, Obama will have a lot on his plate in the coming months and years.

This week he met with current President George W. Bush to discuss the transition of power.

All this comes in the midst of House and Senate Democrats proposing massive changes in regards to issues like gun control and gay marriage.

Obama will be entering the Oval Office with a lot of momentum from his historic run for president.

Expectations are running high as record numbers of young Americans were mobilized in the process of his campaign.

One of the major focuses will be on Obama's handling of the economy.

His fiscal policy will be under intense scrutiny in the coming months.

Another item of interest will be his time-table for troop withdrawal in Iraq.

He has proposed that all troops be pulled out of the war-torn country within 16 months of his assuming office.

With all of these expectations and promises, the Valencia Voice wanted to know what you expect to see from him during his term.



"I think he would send families back from Iraq."
— Jhinnia Fleuridor



"Obama will bring something new, I think the war will end with Obama."
—Volha Yermalayeva



"I believe he will make peace with other countries."
— Shanice Edeady



"I have family over in Iraq and I'm looking forward to his 14 month plan to bring the troops home."
—Jonathan Nelson



"I feel like he doesn't have any experience, it's going to get worse. I didn't expect him to win. He shouldn't pull the troops out."
—Jonathan Filomena



"His taxing of the rich will help people with no money, like me."
—Kenny Raley



"I don't know what's going to happen, I just hope it's for the better."
—Josh Salinas



"I hope he provides more funding for schools have teachers more involved with student learning."
—Kena Bracey

Photos by Sarah King / Ilona Horvath

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Opinion

Opinion:
Is Amendment 2 necessary?

By Emiliana White
Valencia Voice

As I polled students on Valencia's West Campus about their knowledge and understanding of the amendments on the 2008 Presidential General Election ballot, I couldn't help but to wonder if those who voted for the Florida Marriage Protection Amendment, also known as Amendment 2, truly understood what they were voting to end or allow.

For many of Florida's voters the details and circumstances that surround Amendment 2 have been explained either vaguely or not at all.

Many voters who support the amendment do so because of it being portrayed simply as a gay marriage ban while those who opposed the amendment have done so because they believed that they were helping to make gay marriage legal.

Either way, many of these individuals may not understand what is to come should the amendment be passed.

As of today, there are already four laws in place that ban gay marriage in the state of Florida.

Amendment 2 does not offer any changes to these current laws. Amendment 2 will simply make it so that no single person, be it judge, activist or politician, can change or abolish the ban after placing the terms of this amendment into the state Constitution.

Which makes many people wonder: if the amendment is not altering any of Florida's laws then why is it even being presented to voters?

One campaign opposing the amendment, St. Petersburg, Fla.-based Fairness for All Families, says the amendment is the product of several religious institutions who want to impose their views on the citizens of Florida as well as a campaign tactic by the Republican Party to encourage ultra-conservative voters to head to the polls on this election day.

The Florida Red and Blue Inc., Political Committee, which also opposes the passing of Amendment 2, explains further why the amendment is not needed.

They detail the four current bans against gay marriage, saying that there is more to this amendment than what meets the eye.

The primary opposing argument against this amendment does not completely focus on the rights of same-sex relationships.

Instead, some point out that all domestic unions are in danger of not being acknowledged as they have been in the past, an argument that the organization Florida4Marriage may have successfully overshadowed with voters.

The organization has firmly stated, through its Yes2Marriage campaign web site, that Amendment 2 in no way, shape or form hinders domestic partnerships and fills its commonly asked question section of their website with homophobic material as to why same-sex unions are harmful to society and why Amendment 2 does not follow in the bigoted nature of the interracial marriage bans of the past.

As I spoke to some of my acquaintances within the Valencia community as to why they voted to approve the Amendment 2, none of them stated that they did their research on the topic but simply voted for it because they either disagreed with homosexual relations or felt that it was appropriate because of their religious beliefs.

Many of them, as I recall, stated that they wouldn't vote on the amendment because they didn't feel that it was their place to impose judgment or restrictions on someone else's lives.

They reserved this as the job of our man/woman upstairs but upon placing their vote changed their minds.

In the end, only time tell whether or not the Florida Marriage Protection Amendment will be beneficial to our society or will move us one step back in our search for equal rights for all.

Let's hope that we the people made the right choice on this election day not only for ourselves but also for our children and the many future generations to come.



MCT Campus

A tale of triumph
Valencia student speaks on
overcoming life's obstacles

By Louie Rodriguez
Valencia Voice

Yasen Angelov's dream is to become a medical doctor, but he states with his European accent, "That simply will never happen, I need to be realistic."

Yasen Angelov was born with glaucoma, the leading cause of blindness.

In Angelov's country, Bulgaria, many people in his family are medical doctors; you could see why he would wish to aspire to be such a thing.

"There are no major differences between you and I, I am just like everyone else."

He really is, he is married and has kids.

Being blind and trying to live one's life would seem impossible for many but just know there are people out there becoming just as successful as anyone else.

"I don't think this will hold me back, I have all the same opportunities," said Angelov.

He is in the process of getting citizenship here in America, attending Valencia Community College, and to top it all off he is blind.

Yasen is attempting to achieve the Amer-

ican dream

Angelov said, "I just live my life with no obstacles," everyone should have this mind-set.

Angelov explained that when studying it is a lot more difficult for him and that it takes much longer.

"It is not about being smart, you just have to be a hard worker," said Angelov.

When asked about what he could see himself realistically doing in the future he responded with "I would like to possibly become a college professor."

Angelov jokingly told this reporter, "So you want to become a journalist? Journalists have to be aggressive in Bulgaria. They should learn to box, they might get hit."

Angelov also stated that in Bulgaria, journalist have to be very careful with who they question, it would not be surprising for one to end up dead.

Yasen Angelov has his head on his shoulders and is moving in the right direction.

The future looks bright for this determined man.

If there's anything that we can learn from Angelov it is to never give up, even when one thinks they have hit rock bottom.

Opinion:
Reflections from a first-time voter

By Shaneece Dixon
Valencia Voice

As a first time voter, I feel tremendously proud to say that I live in a country that strives for democracy.

Who could ever imagine that by filling in a bubble next to my favorite candidate that I would use my voice to help dictate who the next president will be?

No one told me how great it would be or how much renewed pride I would have in my country.

Being born a Jamaican citizen, it was somewhat difficult to truly consider myself an American.

No matter how long I've been in this country, or the amount of education that I can attribute to American public schools, never in my 19 years of living did I feel like a true American until November 1st, when I placed my ballot in the machine to tally up all my votes.

As exciting as the outcome of that Saturday was, waiting from 6:30 a.m. until 9:35 a.m. was not necessarily on my to-

do list.

Perhaps I shouldn't have been so naïve to not register the hundreds of anxious voters who wanted to do their last-minute early voting.

For some strange reason, I had the impractical impression that the usually quiet library in West Oaks wouldn't be so crowded.

Walking up to the library. Okay, the line's not so long.

Into the handicapped parking lot. Well, a half-hour isn't so bad. Past the nearby elementary school.

How early did these people get up? Up the hill, and through the dirt. Lord, help me.

Looking at my green sample ballot, I couldn't help but notice the number of amendments that we, the people of Florida, got to vote for.

And our founding fathers thought we were too unruly to vote.

Amendments concerning marriage, assessment of property, and sales tax for community college tuition—my personal

favorite.

I was surprised at the number of candidates that I didn't know.

Isn't it funny that for all these people that want to make change in our politics, that there are Americans such as myself who can't even put a face to their name?

These people could be sitting in office, looking over some bill concerning Valencia students and maybe a quarter of our school population wouldn't even know it.

Has this presidential election become so overblown that everyone else running for office has virtually disappeared from our minds?

But what really amazed me were the people surrounding me.

One woman that I spoke to while in line was probably in her mid-30's.

She was an American-born citizen, and that day was her first time voting.

She felt that for all the previous presidential elections that her vote wouldn't make a difference.

But for this election, where we will

have either our first African-American President or our first female Vice President, she decided to take her chances.

And then I remember those who made a choice not to vote.

Some people didn't support either candidate because none of them supported gay rights.

Some felt that while one didn't have the stamina to stay in office, the other would indirectly cause a race riot among the American people.

A bit extreme, yes, but this whole presidential election seems to be centered around change.

Perhaps these Americans feel that America isn't ready for this type of change.

Maybe to them, there would be no change in American politics at all. Just new faces placed upon jaded politics. They made their choice. And I made my mine. I chose to use my voice as a citizen living in a country that is broken but strong.

I chose to be an American.

Obama talks with Bush as transition team forges ahead

Continued from cover

The couple arrived together at the White House a couple of hours later in a black limousine, with hundreds of tourists lining the street to see them in. Nearby, construction equipment assembled in Lafayette Park, where workers began setting up the heated viewing stands where Obama will view the inaugural parade.

Michelle Obama and Laura Bush went on a tour of the East Wing of the executive mansion. The men, dressed almost exactly alike in dark suits and bright blue ties, smiled broadly as they spoke to each other and posed for a round of pictures before heading off to the West Wing.

Not pictured were the top aides who came to meet their counterparts, too. Robert Gibbs, who is in talks to be Obama's spokesman, was there to meet Bush spokeswoman Dana Perino.

Gibbs later said the two men "talked extensively" about the economic situation and foreign policy.

Topics included "the need to get the economy back on track," Gibbs said, and "what's going on in the auto industry."

As for Obama's first glimpse of the Oval Office: "He said it was a very, very nice office," Gibbs said.

And Bush chief of staff Josh Bolten was later seen escorting John Podesta, a director of Obama's transition team, to his spot in the motorcade.

The ceremony surrounding the meeting is part of a broader picture the two hope to present of the most orderly presidential transition in modern times.

Weighing heavily on Bush's mind dur-



Eric Draper, The White House / MCT Campus

ing the transition is a smooth hand-off on the economy and national security, Perino said.

"And we all know that as we've seen in other countries that that period of transition can be one where a country is vulnerable to attack," Perino said. "And we really want to make sure that we work with them through joint exercises, through providing briefings, so that when we hand the baton to them they're able to move forward and continue to protect

the country."

Despite the friendly visit, there is a certain tension underlying the Bush-Obama dealings.

Obama's advisers are talking about making an "across-the-board" review of all the important executive orders that Bush has made, with an eye toward reversing some.

That could include the presidential ban on federal funding for research using new lines of embryonic stem-cells, a prospect

that inspired a word of caution from the White House on Monday.

Every president has the "prerogative to change policies," Perino said, adding that "policies that this president made have been carefully considered."

After the two-hour meeting, Obama headed to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport and held a private meeting at the airport's fire station, quietly huddling with someone his aides declined to identify.

Aides to Obama declined to comment on the Jarrett rumor. One Democratic official said that if his longtime friend decides she wants the Senate seat, Obama will support her. Another Democratic source said Jarrett is definitely on the working list but that it's not clear whether she wants the appointment.

Though Monday's stage play mostly unfolded according to plan, there was one unscripted moment.

As he sat on his plane for a few minute before taking off for Chicago, Obama stood talking on a mobile phone, one leg up on a seat and facing the back of the plane where a pool reporter was sitting.

After a couple minutes, Gibbs noticed the eavesdropping and stood up to tell the president-elect, who then turned away from the press pool.

"I don't want us to go lurching so far in one direction," Obama said at one point and, at another, "If we come up with some good solid sensible options...."

And there was also this: "I am not going to be spending too much time in Washington over the next several weeks."

With that, he headed off for O'Hare.

Devastating hurricane rips through Cuba

By Ray Sanchez
Sun Sentinel

SANTA CRUZ DEL SUR, Cuba — Two miles of this town are gone.

Wooden houses lie in piles of splintered wood.

The concrete walls of a two-story factory have crumbled into rubble.

The streets are covered with six inches

of mud and strewn with clothing, broken furniture and soggy books.

They would have held a procession here Sunday, just like they do every year, marking the anniversary of the hurricane that roared ashore in 1932, killing 3,000 and wiping much of the town away.

Instead, the people of this coastal fishing town where Hurricane Paloma made landfall are trying to figure out how they'll

start over.

One of them is Fernando Zamora Reyes, 51.

A member of the local civil defense squad, Zamora spent two days helping evacuate others.

Sunday, he returned to find his wooden home torn apart.

The walls toppled like a house of cards.

The roof collapsed, crushing the furniture inside.

He had built the home himself.

"Today," he said, "I come back to this. There's nothing left."

Nearly all of the town's residents remain in shelters.

The government says the men will be allowed to go home Monday.

But not the women, children or elderly.

They'll be offered psychological counseling first, to prepare them for what they'll find.

Reynaldo Alfaro understands.

He went back Sunday to find his home nothing more than a pile of splintered debris.

The rest of his family remained in a government shelter in Camaguey.

He didn't know how he would tell them.

"I don't want them to see this," he said.

Paloma was the most powerful storm to hit the area in more than 70 years.

It crashed ashore with ferocious 145 mph winds Saturday evening, then dwindled into a soggy squall that lingered over Cuba's eastern end for more than a day.

It delivered a direct hit on a country still reeling from the devastating impact of back-to-back storms in late August and early September.

Roofs remain off houses. Food is in short supply. Electric power was restored just this week to parts of the province where Paloma came ashore.

Hurricanes Ike and Gustav together caused an estimated \$9.4 billion in damage.

As many as 140,000 homes were damaged or destroyed and nearly a third of Cuba's crops were destroyed.

This time, government officials said, Santa Cruz del Sur was hit the hardest.

More than 400 homes were partially or totally destroyed there. Another 110 were lost in Las Tunas.

Still, authorities said, not a single life was lost anywhere in Cuba.

They credited the government's well-coordinated emergency response.

Nearly half a million people evacuated in advance of the storm, including nearly 6,000 from Santa Cruz del Sur.

Sunday, authorities played video images of the destruction for a group of about 800 of them sheltered at the University of Camaguey.

Women wiped away tears. Some clapped their hands over their mouths in shock.

Some pointed in disbelief at the television screen, noting where their home had once been.

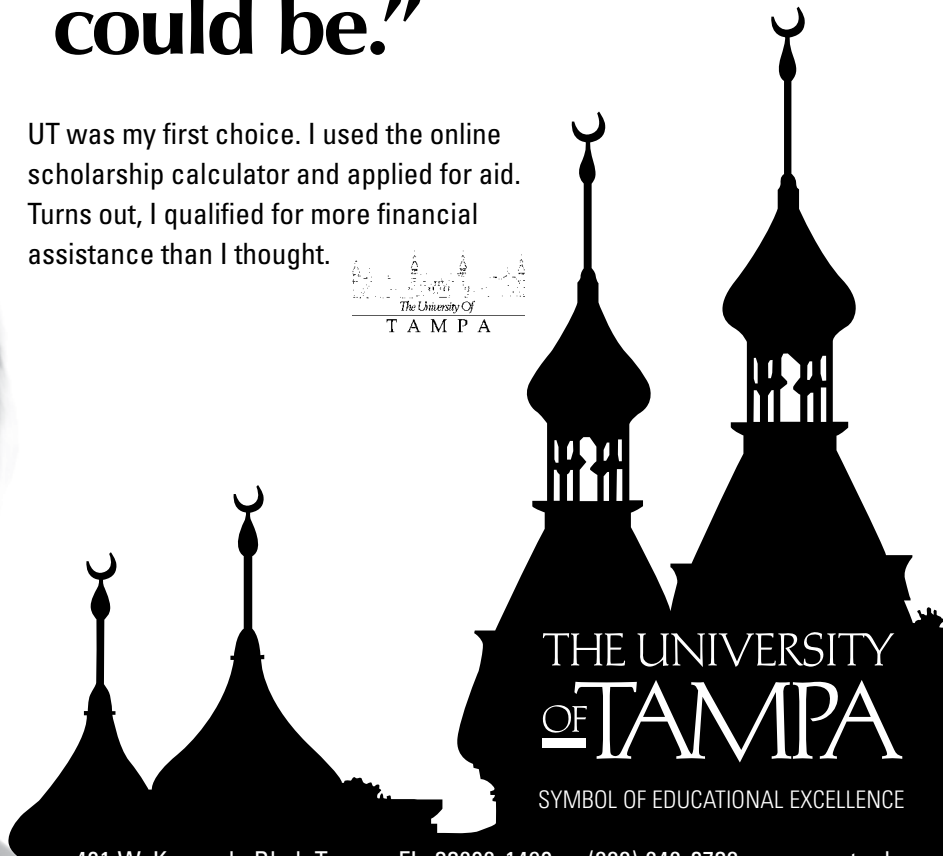
"I won't build a home on the beach again," said Milagros Vargas Perez, 46. "I don't want to see the beach."

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...TO BE A NURSE?

Knights fall to the Golden Eagles, 17-6, in Homecoming game

By Neil Tredray
Valencia Voice

The University of Central Florida Knights scored first on Saturday, but after a first quarter touchdown pass from freshman quarterback Rob Calabrese they would not score again in a Homecoming Day 17-6 loss to the University of Southern Miss.

That the Knights (2-7, 1-4 C-USA) struggle on offense is nothing new, but what is emerging is a troubling lack of defense, as the offense cannot keep them off the field.

“We have a bunch of kids on defense that are making some things happen, and way too many players on offense that aren’t making things happen,” Head Coach George O’Leary said. “We sure had our opportunities today in the passing game to move the ball down the field, and we just didn’t get it done. I feel bad for the senior class who have given everything for four years here and lose their bowl opportunity.”

Another problem facing the Knights is senior punt returner Joe Burnett being taken out of the game. Opposing teams realize his ability to make plays and now kick away from him.

“Everyone is doing it, and there is not much you can do to help him out,” O’Leary said. “They are basically squibbing it, or kicking it away from him every time. We continue working on stacking the returners and try to switch it up. That is a credit to him that they have that much respect for him and what he has done.”

Southern Miss (4-6, 2-4 C-USA) was able to score in each quarter after the first. The Golden Eagles racked up a total of 338 yards on offense, including 188 yards through the air on 21 completions in 34 attempts with no interceptions against an unusually subdued UCF secondary.

One possible silver lining for the Knights is that the score was not 23-6 at the whistle. UCF junior linebacker Chance Henderson blocked a second quarter Britt Barefoot field goal attempt, and Barefoot missed another one from 42 yards out in the third.

The Knights started the game much as they did last Sunday’s flop against East Carolina. The defense forced Southern Miss to punt on their first possession, the eighth time in nine games this season an opponent has failed to score on their opening drive.

The offense took over backed up to their own 9-yard-line. Freshman runningback



Stephen M. Dowell, Orlando Sentinel / MCT Campus
UCF quarterback Rob Calabrese gets sacked by Southern Mississippi’s Gerald McRath (24) and Tokumbo Abinokanda (41) in Saturday’s game at the Bright House Networks Stadium.

Brynn Harvey ripped off a 28-yard run on UCF’s first offensive play. Moving quickly down the field with Calabrese passes to red-shirt sophomore receiver Brian Watters and sophomore receiver Kamar Aiken for 15 and 19 yards respectively, and allowing Harvey to grind it out on the ground, the Knights were at the Southern Miss 3-yard-line in eight plays. On third down, sophomore receiver Khymest Williams caught a 3-yard Calabrese fade in the corner of the end zone.

“You’ve got to have something go wrong,” one fan noted after kicker Daren Daly banged the extra point off the upright, leaving the score 6-0.

And that was it for the Knights’ offense. Henderson’s field goal block in the second quarter kept the score 6-0 and gave the Knights a chance to widen the gap before the half. Instead, on 2nd-and-7, Calabrese threw an interception to Southern Miss’ Eddie Hicks who was the only player near the ball.

The Golden Eagles worked their way down to the UCF 5-yard-line and quarterback Austin Davis lofted a fade to receiver DeAndre Brown for six. Barefoot made

good on the point-after attempt and the score was 7-6.

The third quarter was the nail in the coffin for UCF. The Knights started the second half with possession and, following a false start penalty on redshirt freshman Adam Nissley, went three-and-out.

Southern Miss managed to get to the UCF 25 on their next possession, leading to Barefoot’s second missed field goal of the game.

UCF took over on downs, and after a 12-yard pass to Watters, again went three-and-out.

It was all Southern Miss for the rest of the third quarter.

Taking over on their own 15 with 9:02 left in the third, the Golden Eagles marched down the field on a 17-play, 85-yard scoring drive that ate 8:57 off the clock. The scoring play was an 8-yard run by quarterback Austin Davis, who stretched the ball into the endzone before being wrapped up, making it 14-6.

“I think we had third down opportunities that you have to make plays on,” O’Leary said about the drive. “We had to put a freshman in for Chance Henderson, and that is where they completed the [16-yard] pass. Again, it was a tough game and defense was

on the field a lot, but that is why they are on scholarship.”

The Knights started the fourth quarter with a 27-yard Calabrese pass to Aiken. Calabrese took a hard shot to the back on the play, and redshirt freshman Michael Greco came in. He threw three incomplete passes and sophomore punter Blake Clingan again came on the field, followed again by the Knights’ defense.

The defense held Southern Miss, and the Barefoot punt was downed at the UCF 45.

Calabrese was healthy again and it showed as he too threw three incomplete passes. The defense came back on after 24 seconds of rest on the sideline.

Southern Miss again showed their ability to manage a game as they went 71 yards in 11 plays, setting up a 29-yard Barefoot field goal to make it a two-possession game at 17-6.

Showing a drive and willingness to win on the next possession, Calabrese was stuffed on a 4th-and-1 quarterback keeper.

Calabrese threw his second and final interception of the game with 1:56 left in the game and Southern Miss kneeled to run out the clock.

O’Leary was asked about the possibility of starting third-string freshman quarterback Joe Weatherford.

“He is number three right now in the program,” he said. “I know [quarterbacks coach] George Godsey is getting him some reps in practice and trying to see where he is going. I think based on what happens in the next part of the season, then you will see his name pop up on the field. Again, as I have told the team, we are out to win football games. I think the guys who are playing, are the ones who are supposed to be on the field. We haven’t missed anyone.”

With this, the seventh loss of the season, the Knights are eliminated from bowl contention. Senior safety Jason Venson offered his thoughts on how UCF will stay motivated through the final three games.

“Pride, the game of football is a prideful game,” Venson said. “We are going to go out there and play each other, especially for the seniors and go out there and win our last three games in college football. We can’t get a winning season so all we can do is go out there and play for pride.”

UCF has a two-game away stretch at Marshall (Nov. 15) and Memphis (Nov. 22) before closing out the season against UAB at home.

Love earns lifetime exemption at Disney

By Olivia Pullinger
Valencia Voice

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla.— Long-time PGA Tour veteran Davis Love III finished his final round at the Children’s Miracle Network Classic at Disney World on Sunday with an 8-under par 64 to earn his 20th career victory, a rare honor that provides him with a lifetime exemption on the PGA tour.

Love is one of four active members of the tour to have that status, the other three being Vijay Singh, Tiger Woods, and Phil Mickelson.

“I’ve been saying all along I want to get to 20 because you can’t get to 21 or 22 or 23 until you get to 20, and 20’s been a long time coming,” said Love. “I’m just thrilled to come out on top and to accomplish really what I wanted to do this fall which was to get out and compete and play to win, and not try to make the 125 and not just try to make cuts and just show up, but to come to play to win.”

This was Love’s first win since 2006. After acquiring an ankle injury playing a round of golf “just for fun” in 2007, Love said he has spent the last year getting his body and game back in shape.

The tournament was a one-shot victory for Love over Tommy “Two-Gloves” Gainey, a 33 year old newcomer to the PGA tour. Gainey, an unexpected competitor in this week’s event, is well known to some for appearing on the Golf Channel reality show Big Break IV and winning Big Break VII.

Going into this tournament, Gainey was ranked No. 228 on the money list with an earnings total of \$65,405. Winning second place on Sunday brings his earnings to \$562,205. This will allow Gainey to avoid the second stage of Q school by raising him to the 148th spot on the money list.

Although he came in second, Gainey was happy with his playing. He described this week as “that one week” for him to have played well. “I had nothing to lose,” Gainey said. “Being 228, I think it was, on the Money List, I made five cuts this year, played horrible, terrible.”

Gainey was hitting balls on the driving range as Love headed up to the final green. “You could hear the crowd. I mean the crowd said it all, you know,” said Gainey. “When I found out that he hit it like two feet 11 inches or three feet on the number, something like that, I said, he’s Davis Love III. He’ll make that, no problem.”

Love held a two-shot lead going into 17, but his ball managed to find deep rough, causing him to take 3 more shots and ultimately get up and down.

On 18, Love was again buried in the rough, where he hit an 8-iron on his second shot. His ball flew the green and ended up in a back left bunker. Needing a par to match Gainey’s 64, Love knocked his bunker shot 3 feet from the hole, easily sinking the putt to win the final PGA tour event of the year.

“This week I had a really good consistent week,” said Love. “I was right there with my routine all the way through and was very patient, and I didn’t look at the leaderboard until the last tee, and I probably shouldn’t



Photo by Olivia Pullinger / Valencia Voice
Davis Love III lands his bunker shot three feet from the 18th pin before a close victory at the Children’s Miracle Network Classic at Walt Disney World.

have done that. But I did a real good job of staying in the present and just playing golf and enjoying these six weeks, and it paid off in the end.”

Although Love came out on top, securing a second puts Gainey in a comparatively favorable position going into next season, and Sunday was undoubtedly a meaningful day in the careers of both players.



George Bridges / MCT Campus

The Tennessee Titans have been steadily working their way to an impressive season

From worst to first, remember these Titans

By Alex Barrett
Valencia Voice

The 2008 Tennessee Titans aren’t a glamorous team; they don’t score a ton of points, don’t throw the ball 50 yards down the field, and haven’t had a win margin this season over 24 points. They do, however, have the league’s top three interceptors on defense, a defensive line that could send all 4 members to the pro bowl, a grizzly veteran quarterback, and a rookie running back that is in the tops of rushing in the NFL.

Let’s throw some names out there... Berman. Young. Aikman. Collinsworth. Madden. All analysts for the NFL and their perspective companies; all of them, and others as well, picked the Titans to finish dead last in the AFC South division race this year. Not many Titans fans chose their team to be atop one of the notoriously toughest divisions in football at the midway point of the season. Even the die-hard

fans that could have predicted this in a clear conscious would have retracted their thoughts after the Titans chose not to address their receiving corps in the draft, and felt even more worrisome after Vince Young, the future of the franchise, succumbed to injury in week 1. The only bright spot, it seemed, was the first-round pick they would receive at the beginning of next year. Nothing could be further from the truth.

They lead almost every statistical category defensively in the NFL, and the ones they’re not on the top of the list for, they are at a very close second. The Titans have defeated all members of their division already once this year, and because of the Titan’s dominance, the league is seeing something rather odd this year, the Colts, normally a powerhouse in the division, has lost it’s stranglehold. The Jaguars have been wallowing in mediocrity all season, and the Texans are again bringing up the rear.

To have the NFL’s top rushing

offense and stingiest defense are luxuries 14-year head coach Jeff Fisher has dreamt of ever since the 1999 Super Bowl loss to the Rams. Remind you of another team that won games with this same scheme? How about the 2000 Baltimore Ravens, with an emerging Jamal Lewis, a cruddy quarterback in Trent Dilfer, and a downright scary defense featuring MLB Ray Lewis. Replace cruddy quarterback with Kerry Collins, who’s consistency hasn’t put up fascinating numbers, but has delivered when necessary, and change Ray Lewis to Albert Haynesworth, whom is making his MVP of the league bid this season, and you have essentially the same championship makeup.

Tennessee hasn’t been winning huge, but they have been winning strong, forcing opponents to try whatever they can to shut down the “Smash and Dash” combo of LenDale White and Chris Johnson, and no one has been effective. The best statistic of them all? The Titans are a staggering 100%

in Red Zone offense. If they’ve made it to your 20 yard line, you might as well go ahead and put some digits on the scoreboard. After 8 weeks of the regular season, you can make comparisons to the last two teams to start 8-0 - the Patriots, and Colts. Both went on to win Super Bowls.

It is because of this tight-knit group of players, who were cast aside as cellar-dwellers, that the Titans have been able to dominate the league to this point.

If these figures continue, with the momentum the Titans have built, it’s now difficult to look at the second half of the season and imagine those prominent analysts from above, continuing to predict the Titans to finish last. Unless, of course, by last you mean the last team standing. Now when you get asked the question; “Do you remember the Titans?” It isn’t the feel-good movie with Denzel Washington, it’s the real-life story of the 2008 shouldn’t-have-been’s, the 2008 Tennessee Titans.

Neil’s NFL picks Week 10

Miami now has a winning record

By Neil Tredray
Valencia Voice

Thursday:
New York Jets @ New England - Brett Favre!

Sunday:
Philadelphia @ Cincinnati - I’d like to see an actual eagle pick up a Bengal tiger and fly off with it, devouring it in mid-air. Unless we get the best halftime show in the universe, that’s not gonna happen literally, but certainly it will metaphorically.

Denver @ Atlanta - Continuing that theme, it would be interesting to see a wild horse kick a falcon to death. Before you call PETA on me, keep in mind falcons are jerks. They zip around at 120 mph smashing into things to kill them. They’re the Nick Hogans of the animal kingdom.

Oakland @ Miami - Bill Parcells’ football necromancy has resurrected yet another team.

Houston @ Indianapolis - Remember last time when Sage Rosenfels made dumb plays that cost the Texans the game? If Rosenfels takes off running like he did last time, Indy’s Bob Sanders is going to straight-up murder him.

New Orleans @ Kansas City - Drew Brees will quietly pass for 746 yards.

Chicago @ Green Bay - The home team gets the nod.

Minnesota @ Tampa Bay - The Bucs’ D will stuff Adrian Peterson and destroy Gus Frerotte.

Detroit @ Carolina - The Lions are still terrible.

Baltimore @ New York Giants - I’ll admit I’ve become a semi-fan of the Giants since they beat the Patriots in the Super Bowl last year. I suppose that makes me a bandwagon fan, and thus no better than the same Pats fans I hated for the same reason. There’s a big difference, though: I’m not a Mass-hole.

St. Louis @ San Francisco - This will be one ugly game.

Arizona @ Seattle - This will be another ugly game.

Tennessee @ Jacksonville - I used to think AFC South parity would cause confusion this season, but the Houston Oilers are well on their way to 16-0.

San Diego @ Pittsburgh - It’s funny to me how every year is proclaimed the year the Chargers will win the Super Bowl and every year they collapse like a flan served on the Hindenberg.

Dallas @ Washington - I cannot wait to see T.O. flip out. Memo to Jerry Jones: Thugnificent flamboastin’ jerks like T.O. and Pacman Jones only keep themselves out of trouble when the team they’re on is winning. Well, maybe not so much Pacman. He’d try to make it rain during a Catholic Mass.

Monday:

Cleveland @ Buffalo - NFL.com has a banner ad for a 2-DVD set of “The Complete History of the Browns.” You can see a preview of the story at 2girls1cup.com.



C.W. Griffin, Miami Herald / MCT
Hell freezes over, Miami adds to their win column.

Coldplay keeps up the rush with ‘Vida la Vida’ tour



Coldplay is on a global tour supporting “Vida La Vida or Death and All His Friends,” the British band’s fourth album of moody, edge-of-artsy piano rock.

By **Brian McCollum**
Detroit Free Press

Performing in Coldplay — performing in the world’s biggest band — could get comfy. Too comfy, even.

For bassist Guy Berryman, though, the nightly thrill is intact. Even after all the massive stadium shows, all the mega festivals, stepping on stage still brings a tingle — that rush of blood, you might call it.

“I don’t get nervous anymore. But I still get that great sense of excitement,” he says. “I love that moment right before we go on, that anticipation of the lights coming down. It never tires for me.”

Coldplay is on a global tour supporting “Vida La Vida or Death and All His Friends,” the British band’s fourth album of moody, edge-of-artsy piano rock. In a year of music industry struggles, the album is a big-time standout, having enjoyed the biggest debut

yet for Berryman, vocalist-pianist Chris Martin, guitarist Jonny Buckman and drummer Will Champion: In the United States alone, the album sold 720,000 copies its first week.

With sales of the album continuing to pile up, the band has been on the road nearly nonstop since June, including a U.S. summer sprint.

“We’ve got four records now, so we have to get the balance right between the new album and the old songs people want to hear,” he says.

“We try to make it as dynamic as possible from beginning to end. It took us awhile — it took most of the first American tour to knock that into shape.

A revamped production team has brought a new visual look to Coldplay’s stage production, and even introduced what Berryman describes as “a few things people haven’t seen before at other concerts.”

For the decade-old band, life on the road

is low-key these days. Berryman says he has learned to pace himself to endure the rigors of touring, eschewing the high life in favor of stints in the gym and daily jogs. Hopping from hotel to hotel, spending long stretches in air-conditioned spaces, it’s too easy to get ill.

“We destroyed ourselves a few times by not looking after ourselves — partying every night, staying up late,” he says, recalling the band’s early days. “Certainly, for me in particular, we’re really just trying to keep healthy. It’s that age-old thing: healthy body, healthy mind. I’d have laughed at myself a few years ago if I could hear myself saying that. But it’s true.”

Coldplay will wrap up its year of touring with a series of U.K. dates in December. After a month break, the band will regroup in the studio to begin cutting material for a fifth album.

“The plan, in an ideal world, is to have

something finished by the end of 2009,” says Berryman.

That would mark a notably fast turnaround for a band that’s been known to take its time between records, including three-year gaps between each of the band’s past three albums. And fans even get a treat in the interim: the Nov. 25 release of “Prospekt’s March,” an eight-song EP featuring material left over from the “Vida” sessions and a new version of the single “Lost,” remixed by fellow A-lister Jay-Z.

“We didn’t want to make the album too long. We thought the third record was too long, and we didn’t want to make that mistake again. But these songs were too good just to be B-sides on singles,” he says. “It’s kind of meant to be an amendment to ‘Vida La Vida.’ We wanted people to hear that record as a standalone first, and not bombard them. We’re really proud of it.”

—*MCT Campus*

Beatles’ decision confirms shift in music industry

By **Eric Benderoff**
Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO — The Beatles have found a digital format they like for licensing songs: a videogame.

The legendary band that had rebuffed the modern era by not allowing its music to be sold as digital downloads at iTunes and other online music stores will feature its songs on a new game from the makers of “Rock Band.”

The Beatles join a host of other well-known names, including Aerosmith, Boston, David Bowie, the Grateful Dead and Kiss, that license songs to a booming category of videogames that allow players to mimic rock stars.

The deal comes at a time when recorded music sales continue to plummet — down 16 percent so far this year.

“Given the current music environment, with CDs under a lot of pressure and retail space for music sales shrinking, a lot of bands and labels are asking how they re-monetize their catalog,” said Russ Crupnick, an NPD Group analyst who tracks music sales. “You look around and see that videogames are a



After long refusing to allow their songs to be sold in online music stores, The Beatles are allowing thier songs to be featured in the new game from the creators of “Rockband.”

good way to keep the brand alive.”

Not long ago, the idea of musicians licensing songs for use in a videogame might have sounded crass, and generated cries of “sellout.” Now, artists and record labels are seeking new ways to replace the revenue lost from declining CD sales, which is changing the music industry as they turn to ring tones, digital downloads, social networking sites

and videogames.

For example, Chicago’s Smashing Pumpkins released a single, titled “G.L.O.W.,” on the new game “Guitar Hero: World Tour,” the latest incarnation in that popular series. And Oasis this month debuted its new album, “Dig Out Your Soul,” on MySpace.com.

“We are looking at an industry that used

to rely on one format to sell music, now it relies on dozens,” Crupnick said. “There will continue to be a huge fragmentation on how people consume music. But from a consumer standpoint, that can be good — I can get the songs I want on the devices I want at prices I can afford.”

The move by the Beatles could signal a broader shift in strategy by Apple Corps, which was founded in 1968 to manage the band’s catalog. Apple has declined to make the band’s music available through legal Internet downloads.

The untitled game, which will be available for the 2009 holiday shopping season, will feature an unknown number of Beatles songs and will be based on the Rock Band series published by MTV Games and created by Harmonix Music Systems. The surviving members of the Beatles, Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr, are helping to develop the game.

“The project is a fun idea which broadens the appeal of the Beatles and their music,” McCartney said in a statement. “I like people having the opportunity to get to know the music from the inside out.”

—*MCT Campus*

‘Role Models’ keeps the good times rolling

By **Trey McConnell**
Valencia Voice

Sometimes a shamelessly stupid, proudly profane R-rated movie is all you need out of life. Role Models more than fills the void.

It is deftly funny throughout the whole film.

Paul Rudd is phenomenal and certainly should be a Hollywood star by now.

He takes just the right wry, comic tone as Danny, a misanthrope who is throwing his life down the drain.

Wheeler (Sean William Scott), his partner in crime (or P.I.C. referenced in the film), is a sex-crazed slacker who dresses up as a Minotaur for a living.

They both work the same job; Wheeler loves it while Danny loathes it but they both ultimately lose their job when Danny refuses to have the truck towed and drives it straight off the lift up a school’s statue.

Coincidentally it’s a horse.

The result is a jail sentence that Danny’s lawyer/ex-girlfriend (Elizabeth Banks) gets reduced to 150 hours of community service; where Danny and Wheeler will participate in Sturdy Wings: a youth outreach program ran by a psychotic ex-junkie (Jane Lynch).

Wheeler is assigned to Ronnie (Bobb’e J. Thompson), a ten-year-old black kid who immediately accuses the big guy of fondling his balls.

Danny gets Augie (Christopher Mintz-Plasse), a nerd obsessed with medieval



Danny (Paul Rudd) and Augie (Christopher Mintz-Plasse) battle it out in a comically intense role-playing battle.

live action role-playing in the fictional realm of L.A.I.R.E.

Director/co-writer David Wain, infamous for Wet Hot American Summer and the Internet series Stella, hits the mainstream without too much damage to

his subversive instincts, until the uplifting climax causes audiences sugar-shock. It is a very small price to pay for such ripe comedy.

With the considerably low expectations that came with this film, Role Models

Coldplay lights up O-town at Amway

The chart-topping Brits pay a visit to the City Beautiful

By **Caleb Fooks**
Valenica Voice

Coldplay has been a figure of mixed opinion in the music industry, rising suspiciously from the ashes of the early 90s U.K musical phenomena including Radiohead and U2.

The general response ranges from screaming fans to nose lifting skeptics of the band but on Friday night there was no question of Orlando’s stance on the matter.

The band broke the ice with songs from their latest album chart-topping “Viva La Vida” with songs ‘Life in Technicolor’ and ‘Violet Hill’.

A giant image of Delacroix’s painting ‘Liberty Leading the People’ was projected on a backdrop behind the stage making the concert experience comparable to a giant mural, but with moving paint.

The lights, sounds and infinite expanse of space in the arena all blended into one main focus on the band when singer Chris

Martin keyed the first notes of ‘Clocks’.

The piano plunged the entire stadium into a landscape of time, as Chris Martin’s voice seemed to move the universal hands.

The crowd went wild with excitement; to the audience this screamed a true beginning, like the plunge into a deep conversation after finally putting the pleasantries of greetings and small talk aside.

The show was rich in aesthetics not only in music but also in décor.

Lasers beamed through the smoke of fog machines from the stage to the upper bowl dancing to the music in a multitude of color.

Giant spheres lowered halfway in the set displaying live video of the band on stage in distorted curves.

The band members were a ragged bunch, dressed in a distressed French military oriented uniform.

A French revolution theme was obvious, coinciding with the new album artwork.

With this huge concert taking place only 3 days removed from the announcement of a new president of the United States, ideas of freedom and democracy were at the front of everyone’s mind.

Martin cracked a joke later on before playing ‘The Scientist’, stating that the poster child of the recent Republican campaign, “Joe the Plumber” had written the song.

East Campus marketing students present ‘Mangopalooza’ concert

By **Jordan Keyes**
Valencia Voice

Mangopalooza is coming to Valencia.

Everyone is invited to come enjoy the music at Mangopalooza on Thursday, November 13th! The free concert will feature three popular local bands appearing on Valencia Community College’s East Campus. Festivities start at 12:45pm and end at 2:15pm in the Mall area.

The concert is a service-learning initiative

created by the Tuesday evening Introduction to Marketing class.

Featured bands include the recently signed rock act The Shoreline, fresh off of the Warped Tour and ready to rock out Mangopalooza and the UCF homecoming event. Also gracing the stage is local favorites The Seven Sisters, combining the best of Indie, Pop Rock, and Rock & Roll. Audience members may know them from multiple appearances at The Social, The Haven, and Central Station. The Axiom Effect will also take the

stage. Specializing in intense, melodic sounds guaranteed to “rock the faces off” concertgoers.

The band has played multiple venues in Orlando and the Tampa Bay area. Along with the indicated nd concert organizers promise additional surprises.

The concert will benefit the Orlando Marine Institute, an alternative education facility partially supported by Orange County Public Schools. The Institute provides students aged 13-19 with special services based on their in-

unexpectedly overcomes this generalization, often flying into propulsive bouts of comedic energy.

Scott, who has always been underrated and portrayed at all times as the Stifler character, shows good chemistry with both Rudd and Banks but seems to have found his perfect foil with Thompson.

How else could a pairing like this start but by Ronnie showing Wheeler a crayon drawing of Beyonce pouring sugar on his penis?

Watching Wheeler explain that Kiss’ “Love Gun” is really about Paul Stanley’s member is only topped by a stroll in the woods where Ronnie observes Wheeler’s Jedi-like ability to spot breasts.

The entire movie was a non-stop laugh but the rising action provided the most memorable topping of the film.

An epic role-playing war game takes place where Danny and Wheeler voluntarily help out after Augie gets kicked out of L.A.I.R.E.

The three of them and Ronnie join forces and start Kiss-my-anthia: a fictional country founded on the guiding principles of the legendary rockers.

There wasn’t much to change in this film as the tone, language, and content fits it perfectly.

The sarcastic humor and outlandish plots mold this into a movie Wain will be remembered for.

Since I continued laughing the entire time and walked out with a huge smile on my face, I would award this film four out of five stars.



Coldplay front man Chris Martin took advantage of the full size of the arena.

only for a short time before bringing concert goers back up to “look at earth from outer space” with a back-to-main-stage encore of ‘Politik’.

As the band came back for a second encore, almost a cliché for large arena shows, they refreshed the set with a blizzard of shiny butterfly shaped confetti bursting into the air from above the main court, decorating the audience below to the song ‘Yellow’.

The performance was brought to an end after Martin and the band walked off for a final time, leaving concertgoers in a state of stupor and awe after playing an appropriate song, “The Escapist”.

dividual learning needs.

Admission is free. Donations to the Orlando Marine Institute are requested, but not required. Food will be provided.

Valencia’s East Campus is located at 701 N. Econlockhatchee Trail, Orlando.

For additional information check out all our bands and Mangopalooza on Myspace: www.myspace.com/mangopalooza www.myspace.com/theshoreline www.myspace.com/thesevensisters www.myspace.com/theaxiomeffect



Marlee Wallingford of Walnut, Creek, Calif., holds a photo of her third-grade friend, Mark Jackson, who she reunited with on Facebook after 40 years.

Doug Duran/Contra Costa Times/MCT

Facebook rekindling long-lost friendships

By Jessica Yadegaran
Contra Costa Times

WALNUT CREEK, Calif. — It was the first message Marlee Wallingford ever received on Facebook. And it was a simple one: “Did you go to Salisbury Central School in 1968?”

She did, in fact, attend that elementary school in Lakeville, Conn. The message was from Mark Jackson, an admirer of Wallingford when she was in fifth grade. He was a third-grader who liked to imagine they “had a moment” when she ran into him playing tag 40 years ago.

“I never forgot her name,” Jackson says via e-mail from New York City. “She was one of those girls who the boys talk about as the prettiest. Every guy can name that girl in his life, and always wonders what she got up to. So I had to check.

“Facebook makes these kinds of curious inquiries possible in ways that couldn’t have previously happened without the technology.”

Wallingford, who now lives in Walnut Creek, was tickled to reconnect. Thanks to the Internet, reunions like this are almost easier than meeting local friends for coffee. From Facebook and MySpace to LinkedIn and good-old-fashioned Google searches, it seems everyone is reuniting with war buddies, old flames and childhood friends.

Experts say rekindled friendships are positive, powerful and remind us of our roots.

“These connections are important because many of us feel so disconnected to our past,” says San Francisco dating coach Annie Gleason of Get a Love Life. “It gives us the option of keeping up and reconnecting at a time when our lives converge again — for example, when we move, marry, retire, have kids or get divorced.

“We live in a fragmented world where friendships are often transient, and it gives us a sense of continuity.”

But when there’s a shot at romance, you have to be just as cautious as you would be with anyone you meet online, Gleason says. Wallingford’s cyberman is happily engaged. But, often, when people find old flames it’s not what it was or what they think it should be, Gleason says.

“You’ve got to approach it in a realistic kind of way so you’re not making up a story about them,” she adds. “Navigate it as if you’re meeting up with an old, dear friend.”

School rides

That’s how Gleason approached a reunion with a friend she’d lost touch with after high school. She always wondered what happened to Erik, the guy who gave her rides to and from school in Santa Barbara, Calif., on his motorcycle. A 15-minute Google search nearly 10 years ago revealed that Erik had settled in Oakland, Calif., and played fiddle in the local contra dance community. Before she knew it, they were meeting for dinner. He told her she was his first love.

“I had no clue,” she says.

Gleason and Erik have kept in touch casually since then. Other people’s reunions fuel closer friendships. Chloe Hedden of Oakland found and met up with her college friend, Joey, at the Burning Man art installation project this summer. They hadn’t spoken or seen each other in five years. In fact, in the past month, 15 people from elementary school have “friended” Hedden on Facebook, she says.

“If they live in the Bay Area I’ve definitely made a point to get together with them,” Hedden says.

Lia Fischer and Joyia Bryant have met up for lunch twice since Bryant found Fischer on Facebook a month ago. The women went to elementary school together in Redwood City, Calif. After eighth grade, Fischer switched schools and they lost touch.

The reunion has brought back positive memories: Family hikes. Slumber parties. Playing with Bryant’s pet mice and bunnies. Here’s a good one: Fischer and her dad used to say the word “beautiful” in an exaggerated, deep voice.

“To this day, my mom and I say it the same way,” says Bryant, who now lives in San Carlos, Calif. “It really stuck with us.”

Fischer’s family was an early proponent of e-mail and the Internet, and Bryant was there when they got Prodigy online service. As a 10-year-old, she thought Fischer was checking the mailbox in front of her house.

“When you find a childhood friend, it reminds you of home and youth and friendship,” says Fischer, who lives in San Francisco. “It’s fun.”

— MCT Campus



Joyia Bryant, left, and Lia Fischer hang out at the Palace of Fine Arts Park in San Francisco. Bryant and Fischer attended elementary school together in Redwood City, Calif., and lost touch around 8th grade until Bryant found Fischer on Facebook in September.

Ray Chavez, Oakland Tribune / MCT Campus

Facebook comments result in discipline

By Ann Doss Helms
The Charlotte Observer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — A Thomasboro Elementary teacher faces firing for posting derogatory comments about students on Facebook, while four other Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools teachers have been disciplined for posts involving “poor judgment and bad taste,” spokeswoman Nora Carr said Tuesday.

WCNC turned up questionable pages on the social networking site by searching for people who identified themselves as CMS employees.

The Thomasboro teacher listed “teaching chitlins in the ghetto of Charlotte” as one of her activities and drinking as one of her hobbies.

In her “About Me” section she wrote: “I am teaching in the most ghetto school in Charlotte.”

Most of Thomasboro’s students are minorities from low-income homes. The teacher has been suspended with pay and superintendent Peter Gorman has recommended firing her, Carr said. The dismissal is not final because teachers have a right to appeal.

Reporter Jeff Campbell of WCNC said he showed district officials pages involving seven CMS teachers. Carr said four faced unspecified discipline that is less than suspension or dismissal.

She would not provide details about the offensive material, but the pages Campbell submitted included photos of female teachers in sexually suggestive poses and a black male teacher who listed “Chillin wit my n — as!!!” as an activity and had a suggestive exchange with a female “Facebook friend” accompanying a shirtless photo of himself.

CMS is still reviewing the case of a high-school special-education teacher who used a Facebook “mood box” to post “I’m feeling p — ed because I hate my students!”

District officials are working on a memo reminding all 19,000 employees that information they post on the Web can be viewed by the public and should be appropriate.

“When you’re in a professional position, especially one where you’re interacting with children and parents, you need to be above reproach,” Carr said.

The teachers in question chose to identify their employer and skipped an option that blocks public viewing of their pages. “I think they just didn’t think these things through,” Carr said. “That’s kind of mind-boggling.”

CMS has an investigator who specializes in online issues, including reports of inappropriate material posted by students about teachers. Carr said “several” employees a year are disciplined for inappropriate posts. The district generally responds to tips and complaints, rather than randomly viewing pages.

CMS and other school districts also check Web sites, especially popular networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook, before hiring, Carr said.

Teachers across the country have faced similar situations — enough so that NEA Today, the journal of the National Education Association, earlier this year published a roundup.

“There’s an old lawyer’s saw that goes something like this: Never put in writing anything that you wouldn’t want read in open court or by your mother,” concludes the article, written by Michael Simpson of the NEA’s legal office.

“Maybe it’s time for an updated adage: Never put in electronic form anything that you wouldn’t want viewed by a million people, including your colleagues, students, and supervisors — and your mother.”

— MCT Campus