

# Manatee River News

March 3, 2006

Serving Communities North and South of the Manatee River

FREE

## High School Students Prep for Real World

**Melissa Donley**  
Staff Writer

What do you want to be when you grow up? This is a question many face starting in high school and possibly continuing through adulthood. A new academies program at Braden River High School hopes to give students an edge to answering this question before entering the real world.

Braden River High School is the first Wall-to-Wall academy in the Manatee County School District. The school, which is wrapping up its first year, enrolls students in one of three academies.

"Every student in our campus is involved in one of the three academies," said Valerie Jones, assistant principal of curriculum and the career academy coordinator.

Students choose from three programs: fine arts and communication, business and science and engineering, technology and leadership. The students take core classes: math, science, social studies and English, and electives that are geared toward their academy.

"It's a vocational-themed career-based education," Jones said.

Students take classes that relate to their academy. Jones says there are several interesting courses such as one covering robotics and a lab for engineering students. The business program has strong involvement in business entrepreneurship. Next year the academy will add a course covering the legal aspects of business as well as a veterinarian assistant program.

The students choose their academy during registration before the school year begins. But the students are not signed in for all four years.

"They can switch every year," Jones said. "It's recommended that they stay in an academy for three years, but they can switch."

During their ninth-grade year, the students take a course that introduces them to all types of career paths. Choices, a software program from the Department of Education, allows students to review requirements, salaries and other information about many different careers.

"The ninth-grade year is an exploratory year," Jones said. "We want them to explore as many careers as they can. It really gives

**High School, Page 6**

## Proud Pair



Rob and Spumper, aka Agent R and Agent S, paid tribute to "Men in Black," a movie that helped bring pugs into popularity. They were just two of the participants in the Costume Contest on Saturday at the Lakewood Ranch Pug Parade. See more photos on page 12.

## Paddle Away for a Cleaner Manatee County

**Lisa Hoover**  
Staff Writer

Though Manatee County is already lovely, it will be even more visually appealing on Saturday thanks to the efforts of dozens of volunteers from the area. "Keep Manatee Beautiful," is part of the nationwide Keep America Beautiful Great American Cleanup campaign that runs through May and volunteers from all over Manatee County will be turning out this weekend to do their part.

The event is scheduled to take place at Ray's Canoe Hideaway, 1247 Hagle Park Road, 9 a.m. Mark and Laura Stuckey, owners of the canoe rental facility, will offer more than 40 canoes on a first-come, first-serve basis. Volunteers will use them to float up and down the banks of the Upper Manatee River collecting trash and debris. The Stuckeys plan on firing up their grill and serving lunch to hungry volunteers after the clean up.

Last year, more than 1,100 pounds of trash was collected in a single morning's work. Yvette Little, Operations Manager for Keep Manatee Beautiful, credits the event's yearly success to the Stuckeys generosity. "The Stuckeys are part of the Adopt-A-Shore program so they have a two-year agreement to do three cleanups a year. But they go way above that."

Last year's event drew over 50 volunteers, **Page 6**

## Manatee Heritage

### Ellenton: Not a One Horse Town Anymore

**Lisa Hoover**  
Staff Writer

Like every other area in Manatee County, Ellenton has seen its share of growth over the last several years. In one scant decade, Ellenton's tomato fields and farmlands have been replaced by sprawling subdivisions, fast food restaurants and the ever-present Wal-Mart.

Ellenton measures 4.8 square miles, yet only 3.7 miles of that is available land — the rest is water. According to the most recent census figures, over 950 families live in Ellenton, but that number is likely to have increased substantially since the data was originally collected in 2000. In the Ellenton-Parrish area, more than two dozen new developments have been built in the last few years with another 20,000 homes expected to be built within the next two to three years.

Single-family homes priced at \$140,000 two years ago can now fetch twice that amount. "I would say that if you had to find a mean average home price in the Ellenton area, it would be \$250,000 to \$300,000," said Harry Morris of Leslie Wells Realty. "Some mobile and manufactured homes can go for \$40,000 to \$50,000 while a home off of Ellenton-Gillette Road may go for as much as \$900,000."



Train Station

"It's a buyer's market right now but I think there will be an evening out by this fall," said Morris. "The lack of infrastructure has held up the construction of new homes." Infrastructure is a hot topic in the area as developers seek permits to build new homes and the county wrestles with traffic management issues.

The Sarasota-Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization has included many Ellenton roadways in its Long Range **Ellenton, Page 6**



Sheriff Clint "C.J." Hutches

## InsideLook



Rally for FCAT... Page 11