

Hoops: Lecanto pulls away for home playoff victory /B1

WEDNESDAY

TODAY & next morning HIGH 55 LOW 30

Mostly sunny and cold. PAGE A4

CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE

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NEWS BRIEFS

Citrus County COVID-19 update

According to the Florida Department of Health, 17 positive cases were reported in Citrus County since the latest update. Nine new deaths were reported, for a total of 353.

To date in the county, 8,713 people have tested positive (including 62 non-residents).

Three new hospitalizations were reported, for a total of 593 hospitalized.

Totals reflect preliminary reports received by the state, and are subject to later revision.

Vaccine registration system open

DOH-Citrus' preregistration system to schedule COVID-19 vaccine appointments for individuals 65 and older and frontline health care workers is now available.

Individuals can now be added to a waiting list for vaccine appointments and be notified when appointments are available in Citrus County by visiting myvaccine.fl.gov or by calling 866-201-0442; TTY is 833-476-1036.

As part of the statewide preregistration system, each county has a designated number that individuals can call and pre-register with if they do not have internet access. Citrus County's designated number is 866-201-0442.

Vaccine supply remains limited and appointments may not be available for several weeks.

Going to the big game?

Are you one of the 7,000 health care workers who was given a ticket to attend the Super Bowl? Or are you a "super" fan who plans to attend to cheer on your favorite team at Raymond James Stadium? Maybe you attended Super Bowl 37, which Tampa won. If so, we'd like to know. Email Managing Editor Jeff Bryan at jeff.bryan@chronicleonline.com.

Elections supervisor to host outreach meetings

The Supervisor of Elections office, in partnership with the Citrus County Libraries, will host a series of community outreach meetings during the month of February in conjunction with "Love your Library" month.

From 9 to 11 a.m. Thursdays in February, the elections office staff will be available to assist voters with voter registration and making changes to their voter record.

February's schedule is: ■ Feb. 4 — Homosassa. ■ Feb. 11 — Central Ridge/Beverly Hills. ■ Feb. 18 — Coastal Region/ Crystal River. ■ Feb. 25 — Lakes Region/ Inverness.

If you are interested in having the elections office staff at your organization or business, contact us.

For questions or information, email vote@vote.citrus.gov, visit www.vote.citrus.gov or call 352-564-7120.

— From staff reports

CCSO deputies nab fugitive

Man caught following wild vehicle chase through streets of Beverly Hills

BUSTER THOMPSON
Staff writer

Citrus County Sheriff's Office deputies apprehended a 20-year fugitive following a dangerous vehicle chase through Beverly Hills involving caltrops.

Authorities booked 47-year-old Robert Joe Maracek, of Kissimmee, into the Citrus County Detention Facility after

arresting him at around 10:28 p.m. Monday, Feb. 1.

According to the sheriff's office, K9 Deputy Rudy Danner was enforcing traffic at around 10 p.m. along State Road 200 in Hernando, where he spotted a black Ford Expedition speeding.

Danner stopped the vehicle and asked its driver for his license and registration.

Instead, the man shifted

and drove the Ford in reverse, striking Danner with the vehicle's side-view mirror before ramming into deputy's patrol car.

While traveling south on County Road 491 toward Beverly Hills, with deputies of the East Side Patrol Unit behind him, the Ford's driver tossed tire spikes from his window to



Robert Maracek

disable his pursuers' cruisers, including that of K9 Deputy David Elias, according to the sheriff's office.

Using their own spike strips, deputies were able to deflate the Ford's tires, causing the vehicle to crash into a tree off of South Washington Street, prompting its driver to exit and run.

Danner unleashed his K9 partner, Riggs, to catch the fleeing man in a nearby yard.

While deputies tried to detain him, according to the sheriff's office, the driver continued to resist by striking and kicking Riggs and deputies. When deputies asked for his identity, the man gave several false names.

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Local favorite gets new owners



MATTHEW BECK/Chronicle

Husband and wife team German Perez and Deisy Rivas have recently taken over the reins at La Casa di Norma in Crystal River. The restaurant offers freshly prepared Italian fare.

Husband and wife plan to expand dining options at La Casa di Norma

MICHAEL D. BATES
Staff writer

The economic shutdown resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic has led to numerous store and restaurant closings across the country.

And it's taken its toll on Citrus County small-business owners, many of whom were forced to close in recent months for lack of business.

But that's not the story with La Casa di Norma in Crystal River. The former owners of the Italian restaurant had long sought to retire and sell the place. Not only did they find a willing buyer ready to take a chance on the current economic conditions, but the new owners have already started expansion plans.

Deisy Rivas and German Perez admit their friends

thought they were crazy to buy now. But they couldn't resist the opportunity.

"I love this restaurant," said Deisy Rivas.

Rivas said she and her husband were regulars as well at the restaurant and got to know the former owners, Licio and Norma Ortiz, well.

Rivas and Perez, both from Venezuela, said they want to build on the restaurant's

success and add a few extras.

And they've already done so.

They've tweaked the interior decor a bit and added some additional Italian entrees to the menu. On the wall are framed photos of some of the regular patrons. They've also expanded the hours of the place: 2 to 9 p.m. Monday to Saturday and closed Sunday.

See EATERY/Page A2

Man agrees to 15-year sentence for child porn

Other cases move forward

BUSTER THOMPSON
Staff writer

A Crystal River man decided to serve 15 years in state prison for having illicit images and videos at two different times.

Ending his pair of criminal cases at his court hearing Tuesday, Feb. 2, 41-year-old Anthony Monroe Green pleaded no contest to 14 third-degree felony charges of possessing child pornography, in exchange for Assistant State Attorney Debra Munchel's plea offer.

Citrus County Circuit Court Judge Richard "Ric" Howard accepted

Green's plea-change, adjudicated him guilty on his charges and ordered his sentence.

Howard also designated Green to be a sexual offender for the rest of his life.

Had Green decided to take his cases to trial and had he been convicted as charged, he could have faced a maximum punishment of up to 70 years behind bars.

"I wish there was some way I could fight this," Green told Howard via a video link from the county jail before corrections

officers escorted him away. "I'm not trying to go to prison for the rest of my life for something stupid."

Summarizing her case to Howard, Munchel said Green's collection of unlawful pornography contained "the worst thing you could imagine being done to a child."

Munchel said Green's oldest case and three charges stem from February 2017, when Green's coworker found child pornography on his cellphone depicting girls younger than 10 years old.



Anthony Green

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Two agents killed, three injured in FBI shootout

Officials were conducting raid; suspect also dead

TERRY SPENCER AND MICHAEL BALSAMO
Associated Press

SUNRISE — Two FBI agents were killed and three wounded in a shooting that erupted on Tuesday when they arrived to search an apartment in a child pornography case, a confrontation that marked one of the bloodiest days in FBI history. The suspect is believed to have

killed himself.

The violence forced residents in the Fort Lauderdale suburb of Sunrise to huddle inside their homes as a SWAT team stormed the apartment building and police helicopters circled overhead.

FBI Director Christopher A. Wray identified the two slain agents as Daniel Alfin and Laura Schwartzberger, both

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