Rising stock market is a good economic sign of things to come

By Arthur I. Cyr
Scripps Howard Service

“The greatest financial crisis since the Great Depression," has become standard media shorthand for the recent global financial crash and resulting recession. This latest massive money meltdown continues to reverberate, even though stability apparently has been achieved.

We have just had reconfirmation that the two eras remain distinctively different. As 2012 unfolds, the Dow Jones industrial average surpassed 13,000 for the first time since 2008.

What goes up can and does go down, especially in financial markets. Yet this benchmark event is cause for considerable reassurance about economic trends, especially long-term.

By contrast, the 1929 stock market crash that ushered in the Great Depression was far more severe.

From a peak of 381.17 on Sept. 3, the stock market lost 25 percent in value over a tumultuous two days, and then drifted down to a low of 41.22 in July 1932. During the height of the selling frenzy, stocks were traded in volumes not reached again until the late 1960s.

Stocks did not return to the 1929 peak until 1954, in great contrast to our more recent rebound.

Walter Wriston of Citibank was one of the most innovative commercial bankers of the post–World War II era. He came from a prosperous family. Yet Wriston noted that for years after the Great Depression he refrained from mentioning his profession to some sectors of society.

Understandable public anxiety remains about banks and financial markets, yet there are reasons for optimism. The
Very Special Arts Florida–Brevard to host festival for area students

Very Special Arts Florida–Brevard will host its annual Hands–on Arts Festival for elementary and middle school exceptional students from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on March 7, 8 and 9 at the Brevard Zoo in Viera.

The festival is open to the public with zoo admission.

The festival, titled “Prehistoric Party” to coincide with the zoo’s special exhibit “Dinosaurs: Dead or Alive,” will give youngsters in Brevard’s Exceptional Student Education program the chance to participate in fun–filled make–and–take art activities, as well as specially designed physical and musical activities free of barriers.

Each of the 120 ESE classes registered also will receive a visiting artist during the school year as part of the overall festival program. More than 1,100 students from 51 Brevard County public schools and some private institutions will participate in the festival.

“The Hands–on Arts Festival has been an annual tradition in Brevard for 24 years,” said Lori Emly, VSA of Florida–Brevard’s executive director.

“Teachers not only look forward to it, but so do the over 420 volunteers that sign up each year. It’s heartwarming to know that so many people care about providing creative experiences for these exceptional students.”

The festival is funded by grants from Target, the Kristensen Foundation, Margaret Binz Foundation, Community Foundation for Brevard and private donations. The cost to run the program is $18,000.

VSA of Florida is one of 52 affiliates worldwide that forms VSA — The International Organization on Arts and Disability, now a partner of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

For more information about VSA of Florida–Brevard, contact Emly at 537–4561 or lemly@bacbrevard.com.

Scott named to Rescue Mission Board

Brevard Rescue Mission Inc., which seeks to break the cycle of homelessness in Brevard County, has introduced new board member Marilyn Scott. She is a computer–science instructor at Florida Tech in Melbourne, where she has taught for the past eight years. Scott is a member of St. Mark’s Episcopal Church and a member of the Brevard County Chapter of Links Inc. She is married to former astronaut Winston Scott and is an avid tennis player and active volunteer in the community. Brevard Rescue said Marilyn Scott’s “experiences and technology expertise will help support the continued growth and development” of the organization. Visit www.BrevardRescueMission.org to learn more about the 501(c)3 organization.

Ryals, Corcoran and King take part in sale

Jack Ryals, Mike Corcoran and Alan King of National Realty of Brevard’s commercial real–estate division recently cooperated in the sale of one of the few remaining commercial parcels on the beachside of Eau Gallie Boulevard. The 1.5–acre site was originally part of the Casalina Condominium development. Unresolved issues with the development delayed the closing for more than a year. The site has offsite retention as well as a private access road off Eau Gallie Boulevard. The site is expected to be improved with a 10,000–square–foot multi–tenant office building in the near future.
Junior League program for kids set March 10 at area church

Junior League of Central and North Brevard will host its annual “Kids-in-the-Kitchen” community-awareness program from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on March 10 at Grace United Methodist Church, 65 Needle Blvd., on Merritt Island.

The event is aimed at educating youth about childhood obesity.

At the event, children will be shown healthy food and snack choices and easy and fun recipes. The session will include fun activities, interactive demonstrations and games.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, obesity now affects 17 percent of all children and adolescents in America. The percentage of adolescents and children who are obese tripled from 1980 to 2008.

The CDC emphasizes that engaging students in healthy eating and regular physical activity can help lower their risk for obesity and related chronic diseases, including heart disease, cancer and stroke — the three leading causes of death among adults aged 18 years or older.

For more information about Junior League of Central and North Brevard’s Kids-in-the-Kitchen program, contact Stacy Slaughter at 474–8289 or visit www.BrevardJuniorLeague.org.

Osler Medical welcomes Dr. David Ross

Dr. David Ross has joined Osler Medical’s hematology and oncology practice. Board-certified in oncology and internal medicine, Dr. Ross has been caring for cancer patients since completing his medical-oncology fellowship in 2006. His practice will provide diagnosis and treatment of cancers of the breast, colon, lung, head and neck and other solid tumors. Dr. Ross earned his medical degree at the American University of the Caribbean. He performed his medical oncology fellowship at the University of Florida Health Science Center in Jacksonville, where he also served as chief resident in internal medicine. Dr. Ross has a special interest in clinical research and has conducted studies and clinical trials on breast, colon and lung cancer. He said he hopes to continue his research in Brevard County. Dr. Ross joins Dr. Gregory Hoang practicing at the Osler Medical office at 930 Harbor City Blvd., in Melbourne. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Dr. Ross is accepting new patients. Appointments can be made by calling 725–5050.

New courses at FIT open to public

Florida Tech recently approved the addition of five new humanities courses, open for enrollment in fall 2012. Members of the public may enroll in any of the courses at the audit rate. They are: HUM 3027, History and Culture of China; HUM 3154, American Popular Music and Culture; HUM 3276, Science Fiction Literature and Film; HUM 3333, American Military History; and HUM 3343, World War II in Film. “We are pleased to enrich our humanities offerings and to continually expand our liberal arts curriculum,” said Dr. Robert Taylor, head of the Department of Humanities. First-time students who want more information or to audit should contact Undergraduate Admission at 674–8030. Ask for Robin Run or Stacy Raypole.
Ethics and leadership lessons learned from soldiers in POW camps

By Lee Ellis

Are you alarmed by the frequency of ethical scandals in recent years?
No doubt, you have seen the headlines about Wall Street greed, but ethical problems are just as prevalent on Main Street where bookkeepers, purchasing agents, and business owners violate the trust that others have placed in them.

Think of the headlines in recent months: a highly respected coach resigned for covering up NCAA violations by his players; a congressman is convicted of accepting bribes; a religious leader cheated on his wife, another is accused of using his authority to fleece the flock; teachers changed students’ responses on standardized tests and administrators collaborated in cover-up; a college inflated the average SAT score of their students to improve its image.

What is happening to our society? Does anyone care about honorable leadership? What can you do about it?

What have others done that might guide those of us who seek to turn the tide in this onslaught against character-based leadership?

It seems ironic that some of the best examples of leading with honor come from the POW camps of North Vietnam, an environment so life-threatening that one might expect to see frequent examples of self-centered, self-serving leadership. But when life and limb were on the line, these brave leaders chose honor rather than comfort, humiliation rather than cooperation with the enemy. Their courageous service can inspire and show us what is required to lead with honor. Let’s look at some of the lessons they offer to us today.

Know yourself. The POW leaders were experienced and strong yet they had no choice but to be humble. The enemy used torture and isolation to try to break their will and force them to cooperate in making propaganda. They were vulnerable, stripped to their core; they could not pose or pretend they were something they were not. Fortunately, they were solid, healthy people with a strong character that enabled them to lead with honor through the most unimaginable humiliation.

If you don’t know yourself and have a peace about who you are, your fears and insecurities will take you out. Rather than pursuing your passion and purpose using your unique talents, style, and convictions, you will constantly be comparing yourself to others and trying to guide your life by someone else’s ways and standards. Alternatively, when you know and accept yourself, you can be authentic, leading from your own true north. Objectively knowing your strengths gives you confidence, while awareness of your weaknesses gives you humility.

Few will ever be POWs, but eventually we will all face situations that expose who we really are. Spend time with yourself and go deep. Accept who you are, but realize there is always room for growth; work every day to build yourself strong so you can lead authentically, from the inside out.

Clarify your values and standards and commit to them. The POWs had a uniform code of conduct that everyone knew and was charged with following. It acted like signs along the road giving direction and providing a framework for decisions, choices, and behaviors, helping them stay on the right path even in the most difficult situations.

Unfortunately, most people have only generic assumptions and a superficial understanding about their moral values and ethical commitments.

Jeb Magruder, White House adviser who went to jail, said that he had been taught right but somewhere along the way he “lost his ethical compass.” We are all cut from the same cloth as Magruder and without regularly clarifying our commitments, we will drift off course as well.

Confront your doubts and fears. Fears and insecurities take out more leaders than anything else and they generally can be traced back to the first point above—your identity—knowing who you are and being comfortable with yourself. Even the smartest, toughest, and best leaders face insecurities and fears.

The POW leaders were tough warriors but they all struggled with fear.

Commander Jim Stockdale endured frequent physical abuse and more than four years in solitary confinement, so naturally, there were fears, but he did his duty and suffered the consequences. Great leaders know that fear is the norm, and they know they must lean into the pain of their fears to do what they know is right. Courage does not mean that you are not afraid, but that you do what is right when it feels scary or unnatural.

Connect with your support team. In your struggle to lead with honor, you are like any other warrior — it’s not good to fight alone. That’s why the enemy tried so hard to isolate the POWs in North Vietnam and why the POWs risked everything to keep the communication lines open.

Even the toughest POWs relied on the counsel and encouragement of their teammates. Authentic leaders realize they cannot see every situation objectively. On the tough choices, you will usually need the perspective of someone who is outside the issue to help you evaluate the situation. Build a network of a few key advisers who can help you navigate the treacherous waters ahead.

Our culture desperately needs men and women who will lead with honor. Don’t take it for granted that you will lead honorably. Engage in the battle required to guard your character. To be prepared, know yourself, clarify your values, standards, and commitments, confront your doubts and fears, and connect with your support team. Then you are ready to face the giants and avoid the headlines of failure.

Foundation for Government Accountability website adds new features; ‘uplifting news’

Florida taxpayers calling for a smaller, more affordable state work force should visit FloridaOpenGov.org for some “uplifting news.” The latest state payroll data added to the Foundation for Government Accountability’s transparency website shows the state’s taxpayer—paid “$100,000 club” shrank by 716 in 2011, a 10 percent drop in six-figure state employees from 2010. This is the lowest number of six-figure salaries since the end of Gov. Jeb Bush’s second term. The new dataset represents nearly $7 billion in total compensation for state employees last year, with the average total compensation paid about $48,000. FloridaOpenGov.org details how these compensation dollars were distributed. Another new addition to FloridaOpenGov.org is a function allowing users to see the percentage increase of state, county or school employees’ total compensation over the years. “With fewer six-figure state employees and decreasing payroll costs, Florida government is becoming more efficient. That’s good news for taxpayers,” said FGA CEO Tarren Bragdon.
'Dark Side of Universe’ to come to light at FIT lecture set for March 23

Although the darkness that envelops most of the universe can’t be seen, it is not empty.

Scientists estimate that roughly 70 percent of the universe is made up of dark energy; dark matter makes up about 25 percent of the universe. The rest, called normal matter, everything that astronomical instruments have ever observed and everything on Earth, makes up less than 5 percent. So what is this dark stuff anyway?

Astronomy buffs get a chance to find out March 23 in the next installment of Florida Institute of Technology’s Astronomy Lecture Series, “The Dark Side of the Universe.”

To be presented by Sukanya Chakrabarti, Florida Atlantic University assistant professor, the free lecture on campus will be from 8 to 9 p.m. in the F.W. Olin Engineering Complex, Room EC118. There will be a rooftop public star viewing following the presentation if weather permits.

Chakrabarti will discuss the current understanding of the dark side of the universe. She will also present some of her recent work, which can render dark or nearly dark galaxies visible and characterize the density profile of dark matter in galaxies. This technique may help address some fundamental problems in cosmology.

“The basic idea of this method to search for dark matter-dominated galaxies is to analyze their gravitational effects on galactic disks. It’s kind of like dropping pebbles in a pond; if you understand the physics of this well enough, you could figure out how massive the pebble was even if you didn’t see it fall in,” said Chakrabarti.

In 2005, Chakrabarti earned her doctoral degree from the University of California, Berkeley. After graduating, she became a National Science Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard University.

The F.W. Olin Engineering Complex is located on West University Boulevard. For more information, call 674-7207 or visit www.FIT.edu/aapls.

League of Women Voters to meet

The League of Women Voters of the Space Coast will host its “Timely Topics Luncheon” at 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 21, at the Holiday Inn–Viera. The address is 8298 N. Wickham Road. A representative from the Brevard County Health Department will speak to the League and give an overview of the role of the health department and the programs and services it provides in the community. The lunch fee is $20. The reservation deadline is March 18. Contact Doreen Archer at 622-4071.

UCF Alumni Chapter offers scholarships

The University of Central Florida’s Space Coast Alumni Chapter is offering up to two $1,000 Debbie K. Phillis Scholarships to Brevard County permanent resident students attending UCF during the 2012–2013 academic year. The scholarships are open to high–school seniors and college students who plan to attend UCF during the 2012–2013 academic year. The scholarships are open for all fields of study, at all UCF campuses and to all colleges at the university. Scholarship applications and documentation, including official transcripts, are due to UCF by 5 p.m. on Friday, March 30. To download an application, visit www.UCFAlumni.com/SpaceCoast.

“Florida Tech/Harris” Ethics & Leadership Conference set for March 22 at Hilton Rialto

The Florida Institute of Technology and the Harris Corporation are again teaming to bring you “the most powerful business seminar on the Space Coast, featuring a presentation by the winning high school debate team on ethics, promising to be inspirational, educational, influential,” at $69 for one or a corporate table for 10 at $500.

The Florida Institute of Technology Nathan M. Bisk College of Business Center for Ethics and Leadership reflects that, “Given the recent corporate scandals in the USA and Europe, there can be little doubt that there exists today a need for strong ethical practices in business and that the consequences for unethical practices can be extreme.”

To that end the 12th Annual “Florida Tech/Harris” Ethics & Leadership Conference is scheduled for March 22, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., breakfast and lunch included, at the Hilton Melbourne Rialto Place. Dr. Anthony J. Catanese, Florida Institute of Technology president, is scheduled for opening comments at 8:30 a.m.

Many ethical publishers in the “relatively small and unsophisticated media market” of the Space Coast are hoping “the ethics of accepting awards,” will be discussed as one of the conference sponsors, Space Coast Business (SCB) Marketing, touts among their many company and individual awards:

- Recognized as one of the inaugural “Florida Companies to Watch” by GrowFL, the Florida Economic Gardening Institute at the University of Central Florida and ACG Florida, in association with the Edward Lowe Foundation (2011)
- Awarded six ADDYs from the American Advertising Federation Space Coast Chapter (2011)
- Named “Best Business of the Year” for Service Industries by the Melbourne Regional Chamber of East Central Florida (2010)
- Won the Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility (2009, 2010)
- Named “Business of the Year” by the Cocoa Beach Chamber of Commerce (2008, 2009)
- Named “Entrepreneur of the Year” by the Melbourne–Palm Bay Area Chamber of Commerce (2008)
- Co–founder Josh Field honored as a “Star of the Space Coast” by the American Red Cross for “Leadership in Community Outreach” (2010)
- Co–founders Josh Field and Jeff Piersall named “Business Leaders of the Year” by the Nathan M. Bisk College of Business at Florida Institute of Technology (2010)

But for years, Space Coast Business Marketing fabricated enhanced circulation numbers that they used to promote their products through the Internet and through the U.S. Postal Service.

And for years, Space Coast Business Marketing sold products at advertised circulations of 15,000 and delivered only 7,500.

Simply put, Space Coast Business Marketing “sold one thing and delivered another,” all the while, accepting award after award.

Brevard Business News is also hoping “the ethics of accepting awards” will be discussed at the March 22 “Florida Tech/Harris” Ethics & Leadership Conference.
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Florida Eye sponsors Eco-Safari Adventure benefit set March 17

The Eco–Safari Adventure 5k and 10k run or walk races will be start at 8:15 a.m. on Saturday, March 17, at Forever Florida, about 30 minutes from Melbourne.

The St. Patrick’s Day event is being sponsored by Florida Eye Associates of Melbourne.

The family friendly race benefits the nonprofit Brevard Neighborhood Development Coalition (BNDC), a United Way member agency that revitalizes impoverished neighborhoods and improves the lives of some of the Space Coast’s poorest communities. The agency was named “Florida Today’s” 2009 “Organization of the Year.”

“We had a tremendous turnout when we launched the race in 2011, and we expect that even more runners will want to join us in our second year,” said BNDC Executive Director Lynn Brockwell–Carey.

“We have added a 10k race plus some exciting and challenging obstacles and Forever Florida also has some new attractions for the entire family.”

The course weaves through nine distinct ecosystems, making for an unforgettable experience, whether running or walking. Forever Florida offers a unique opportunity to “run” into the past and experience Florida in all its pristine majesty.

The 4,700–acre eco–ranch and wildlife conservation area features natural streams, forests, wetlands and pastures brimming with native wildlife, from white–tailed deer to alligators.

The Eco–Safari Adventure has been designed as a full–day event. Participants, their families and their friends will receive discounts to enjoy Forever Florida’s attractions, including coach safaris, pony rides and horseback riding.

Forever Florida recently enhanced Zipline Safari and added the Cypress Canopy Cycle, which allows riders to “bike through the air.” The ride is the “only one of its kind in the United States.”

“It’s a race and a day of fun participants will remember forever,” said Brockwell–Carey.

The race will be coordinated by Running Zone. Registration for the 5k run/walk is $35 before the event and $40 on day race. The fee for the 10k run is $40 before March 16 and $45 on race day.

Families with children under age 12 can register for $70 before March 16. Corporate teams are also welcome. A minimum of four members with at least one of the opposite sex is required to register a team.

Elite runner Jessica Crate, a former Canadian national champion who finished third overall (women’s division) and 31st in the Disney Marathon last year, has been instrumental in planning the race.

“This is a unique experience,” said Crate. “I’m so excited to get out into the pristine setting of this natural area once more.”

The BNDC provides programs for children, affordable housing and economic–development opportunities in the county’s impoverished neighborhoods.

“This is a true adventure race that also raises awareness of BNDC’s work on the Space Coast,” said Brockwell–Carey. “It is a fantastic opportunity for runners and walkers to enjoy a truly out–of–the–box experience.”

To register, visit www.BNDCAdventureRace.com.
UCF presents ‘Order of Pegasus’ award to 25 student achievers

ORLANDO — Twenty-five students were named as the 2012 recipients of the “Order of Pegasus,” the highest student award that can be attained at the University of Central Florida.

Maribeth Ehasz, vice president of student development and enrollment services, named 19 undergraduate, four graduate and two doctoral/professional students.

The undergraduate students are selected for their exemplary performance in academic achievement, outstanding university involvement, leadership, and community service.

Graduate students are selected based on academic achievement, professional or community service, leadership, and publication or research experiences.

The recipients are:

- Undergraduate students — Jennifer Black, Rosen College of Hospitality Management; Adam Brock, College of Sciences; Kelly Cox, College of Engineering and Computer Science; Anna Eskamani, College of Sciences; Ida Eskamani, College of Sciences; Christopher Frye, College of Sciences; Jamie Gregor, College of Business Administration/College of Health and Public Affairs; Anya Kroytor, College of Sciences; Matthew McCann, College of Sciences; Andrea–Li Medina, College of Health and Public Affairs; and Lee Noto, College of Business Administration.

- The list continues: Alana Persaud, College of Medicine; Yisell Rodriguez, College of Health and Public Affairs; Amber Scheurer, College of Engineering and Computer Science; Leslie Shillington, College of Health and Public Affairs; Marla Spector, College of Arts and Humanities/Sciences; Adam Straka, College of Business Administration; Colton Tapoler, College of Education/Arts and Humanities; and Tatiana Viecco, College of Engineering and Computer Science.

- Graduate students — Kelvin Ang, College of Business Administration; Brandy Espinosa, College of Education; Amanda Lager, College of Arts and Humanities; and Zainab Nasser, College of Business Administration.

- Doctoral/professional — Sarina Amin, College of Medicine, M.D. program, and Kevin Stevenson, College of Sciences.

Committee seeks applicants for position

Members of the public are invited to volunteer on or before April 16, 2012, for a three-year term on the Florida Board of Bar Examiners. The Supreme Court of Florida will appoint one public member to serve on the Florida Board of Bar Examiners. A volunteer should possess education or work–related experience such as educational testing, accounting, statistical analysis, medicine, psychology, or related sciences. A bachelor’s degree is required. Lawyers are not eligible. Public board members should be willing and able to devote about three days’ work a month. Service requires travel to various Florida locations to attend board meetings and the examination, with travel and subsistence expenses reimbursed. To apply for the position, contact Michele A. Gavagni, Executive Director, Florida Board of Bar Examiners, either by fax at (850) 411–6822 or by mail at 1891 Eider Court, Tallahassee, Fla., 32399–1750, to obtain an application.
SCC powers through wind, waves at Sarasota Invitational Regatta

Space Coast Crew was among the high–school rowers from around Florida that competed in the third annual Sarasota Invitational Regatta Feb. 25 at Nathan Benderson Park in Sarasota.

Space Coast Crew faced stiff competition in 13 1500–meter events and braved 25 mph winds that swept across the 366–acre “world–class rowing facility.” Two of the novice events were scrubbed by the event officials, citing safety concerns for the rowers because of the high winds and rough seas.

Coxswains and their crews found it difficult to line up at the starting stake–boat positions and to maintain the set of the boats during the regatta flights while facing the quartering wind and waves.

“The conditions were a challenge for all of the crews,” said Heather Rogers, Space Coast Crew head coach. “We had an outstanding showing from our young team.”

The competition was “fierce” and many events were won within a seat of the competitors, and some by a bow–ball to the “shouts and cheers of parents and teammates.”

Space Coast Crew, which practices in the Banana River, includes rowers from the Bayside High School, Cocoa Beach High School, Eau Gallie High School, Florida Air Academy, Holy Trinity Academy, Melbourne Central Catholic, Satellite High School, Viera High School, and West Shore Junior–Senior High School.

Here are the regatta results for Space Coast Crew: Women’s Light Weight 4, first place; Men’s Novice 8, third place; Women’s Junior Varsity 4, third; Men’s Junior Varsity 4, third; Women’s Varsity 4, third; and Men’s Varsity 4, third. Space Coast Crew’s Men’s Novice 8 finished within two–hundredths of a second behind rival Melbourne High School.

Space Coast Crew returned to competition last week at the Stanton Riverbank Invitational (1500 meters) in Jacksonville. The event was held March 3.

Hoover Middle School to host Career Day

Hoover Middle School in Indialantic will host its eighth annual Career Day from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. on Friday, March 16. This has become an annual event to introduce seventh and eighth–grade students to a variety of career options. Participants bring displays, “dress the part,” and give away souvenirs. Area business that have already signed up to take part in the showcase include DRS, NASA, Florida Tech Aviation, Kiwi Tennis, Beachside Physical Therapy, Florida Air, Brevard County Sherriff’s K–9 Unit, Publix, and Holmes Regional emergency room nurses. The set up is similar to a job fair. Hoover is located at 2000 Hawk Haven Drive. For more information about the event, contact Shelley Johnson at 431–0445 or e–mail ShellsBells100@aol.com, or e–mail Kathleen Quinn at Quinn.Kathleen@BrevardSchool.org.

Commentator Bill Mahler at King Center

The King Center on the BCC campus in Melbourne will present television host and political commentator Bill Mahler in concert at 8 p.m. on Saturday, April 28. Tickets are on sale at $35 (plus applicable ticketing fees). Single Tickets may be purchased by visiting KingCenter.com or by calling the King Center ticket office at 242–2219.

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10th annual ‘Caring Hearts Benefit’ is set for the Andrés estate in Indialantic — money raised from the event supports Cancer Care Centers of Brevard Foundation’s effort to help cancer patients

By Ken Datzman

“The annual “Caring Hearts Benefit,” set to mark its 10th anniversary, has come a long way over the past decade, gaining the kind of support that has made it one of the best–attended charitable functions in the community.

The program is put on by the Cancer Care Centers of Brevard Foundation Inc.

“The first year, the event was held in the parking lot of the Cancer Care Center (in Melbourne) and we had the auction inside the building,” said committee volunteer Darcia Francey, who has been involved with the event since its beginning and sits on the Cancer Care Foundation board.

“About 100 people turned out for the first Caring Hearts Benefit,” added Karen Osmiak, a Realtor with RE/MAX Alternative Realty who also has been a committee volunteer for all 10 years and is president of the Cancer Care Foundation board.

“For the 10th Caring Hearts Benefit, we’re expecting 500 to 600 people, which is great because the demand has risen immensely for the foundation to assist uninsured and underinsured cancer patients in Brevard and Indian River counties,” said Osmiak.

The 10th edition of the Caring Hearts Benefit will get under way at 5 p.m. on Saturday, April 21, at the Indialantic home of Ed and Jeanne André, longtime supporters of the foundation. Jeanne André and their daughter Jessica André are co–chairsing this year’s benefit.

“This is the eighth year the Andrés have hosted the event,” said Mick Welch, Brevard County president for BankFirst. “They are very involved with the organization and have been instrumental in its success. This is a great community event. I am proud to be part of the foundation.”

Welch serves as vice president of the Cancer Care Foundation, now in its 18th year.

For the Caring Hearts Benefit, he’s in charge of transportation. The Andrés’ home is on North Riverside Drive and parking will be available in the lot of the Highland Mint, on the corner of North Riverside Drive. Mercedes–Benz, Porsche, Audi of Melbourne will provide the car service again this year, taking people to the gathering at the Andrés’ waterfront home.

Tickets to attend the benefit are $125. Visit www.CCFoundationInc.org to register and purchase tickets. Event sponsorships are also available, starting at $300.

“This is our biggest fund–raiser,” said foundation treasurer Karen Kirkland of Carr Riggs & Ingram. “It supports our mission in the community helping cancer patients in need. We have little overhead costs for Caring Hearts because it’s purely run on a volunteer basis. Since the organization was founded, we have raised and spent more than $1 million on patient care. That’s the kind of impact we’re having because of the success of this event.”

“I think the Caring Hearts event is starting to appeal to a lot of people who typically do not attend fund–raisers in the area,” said foundation board member Jeanne André. “There is a growing number of young people who are getting involved in the event.”

Jessica André said she has been working to get her friends involved in the Caring Hearts Benefit. “I’ve been reaching out to them and they are responding by donating items and gift certificates for the auction part of the program.”

Marta Fiol said the Cancer Care Foundation currently helps 50 or more cancer patients a month, in Brevard and Indian River counties, with their expenses. They must qualify to receive assistance from the foundation.

“We assist with their basic living expenses,” said Fiol, who is the secretary of the foundation.

“It could be their rent, mortgage, utilities, transportation, pain medication or cancer–related medicines. Our monthly budget is $20,000. Caring Hearts is the event we really look forward to because it brings in 90 percent of the money we need to fund the things we do to help cancer patients. People have been very generous in their support. And the Andrés have been wonderful all these years opening their home to us to have this event,” she added.

David Wilfong, a Cancer Care Foundation board member and a cancer survivor himself, said he has seen firsthand the good work the foundation is doing in the region because of events such as Caring Hearts.

“I was a patient at Cancer Care Centers 12 years ago. I was fortunate enough to have health insurance. During my treatment, I saw so much need for services for people who were uninsured or underinsured, including those who couldn’t work because they were undergoing treatment. I attended the first Caring Hearts Benefit and made a commitment to help in any way that I could because there is such a great need in the community,” he said.

Eileen Cooper is the newest board member, having joined six months ago. She said she has seen what it takes to put on an event that attracts more than 500 people. “I attend Caring Hearts every year but this is my first year as a committee volunteer,” said Cooper, a registered nurse and cancer survivor.

“It’s quite an undertaking.”

“It takes a village of people to pull this event together to make it a success,” added Christine Lighthill, a veteran board member of the foundation.

The centerpiece of the benefit is the auction. “We have a wonderful fund–raising group that is going to conduct our auction this year,” said Marcia Luhn, a foundation board member. “They will bring about 10 items, including various trips, to be auctioned, and we will supplement it with items from local artists.”

Barbara West of the American Fundraising Auction will oversee that part of the program. West is a former TV anchor in Orlando. Area residents Jesse and Darlene Geiger are in charge of the silent auction, Luhn said.

Valeri Quimette has been busy as a committee member helping gather items for the silent auction, both in the local community and online from national companies. “We have about $10,000 of kind donations. We’re trying to reach $25,000,” she said.

The foundation has contracted with Tim Webber Catering of Orlando to provide the food for the event. “He’s also giving a sizable inkind donation to the foundation,” said Francey.

Six–year board member Dawn Herring has one of the most important roles on the Caring Hearts committee. “I’m involved with the setup, tear–down, and cleanup,” said Herring.

The board is chaired by Evelyn Foster. In addition to the people mentioned in this story, board members include attorney Patrick Anderson of Frese Hansen, Mary Baldwin, Heidi Joyce, and Dr. David Parker.
Newton Commercial Group makes push into accounting and tax-planning services, new division targets medical practices and other businesses — teams with longtime area accountant Lois Fredricks

By Ken Datzman

John Newton is leveraging his financial credentials and experience to steer his company into a new business segment, one which is closely aligned with the customer base of his land development and real-estate agency.

Newton Commercial Group in Melbourne has expanded and now offers full-service accounting, bookkeeping, bill paying, tax planning, and tax-return preparation for medical practices, corporations, partnerships, limited-liability corporations, and individuals.

The services are available through a division of Newton Commercial Group.

“We see an opportunity, especially catering to physician practices in the county, to build this part of the business and provide a lot of value to the customer,” said Newton.

For the past eight years, Newton’s core customer has been the medical professional, namely area physicians who purchased office condominiums or invested in build-to-suit projects that his company developed in the region.

In many of the transactions, he said his business played a role stepping in to help the purchaser reshape and present his or her financial package for the loan request made to the financial institution.

“Often, we found that a lot of the doctors didn’t have an accounting system set up in such a way that it could generate the information quickly and easily to put together a loan package to secure the financing they needed, or even generate the year-to-date performance of the practice,” said Newton, company president.

He added, “So we began working on this real-time accounting-system concept several years ago, honed it, and brought in some professionals who are working with us as we roll it out in the community.”

The tax season is in full swing and businesses and individuals are scrambling to gather financial data in order to meet the fast-approaching IRS filing deadlines.

“In order to properly plan for your tax filing, you have to have proper information gathering. We have set up an accounting system to do that and we have the expertise to provide full services to clients,” he said.

Newton has an MBA degree from the University of Florida and holds the Certified Financial Planner designation, as well as other professional financial credentials. He is a former banker in Brevard County and Central Florida.

Newton earned his CFP certificate in 1995, through Florida Institute of Technology. After completing the 18-month program, he sat for the certification examination and passed. Only 56.7 percent of applicants pass the examination on their first sitting, according to the CFP Board of Standards Inc.

In the new venture, Newton Commercial Group partnered with longtime area businesswoman and accountant Lois Fredricks. She is president and founder of Lois A. Fredricks Inc., Accounting, Tax and Financial Services.

Fredricks is enrolled to practice before the Internal Revenue Service. Enrolled agents are tax professionals licensed by the U.S. Department of the Treasury to represent taxpayers before all administrative levels of the IRS.

While attorneys and certified public accountants are also licensed, only enrolled agents specialize exclusively in taxes.

She has a bachelor’s degree in business administration from the University of North Florida and is a Certified Business Analyst. The CBA credential is awarded by the International Institute of Business Analysis.

Fredricks’ professional experience includes serving as a certified QuickBooks instructor at Brevard Community College.

“Lois is one of the best-known accountants in the area,” said Newton, who has 18 years experience in the real-estate development business, working with investors and financial partners in local projects.

“With her involvement, we have set up cutting-edge accounting systems that will produce real-time data,” generating on a monthly basis income statements, balance sheets, and other key financial information.”

The system can track expenditures and turn out reports on a monthly, quarterly, semiannually, and yearly basis, and much more, he added.

“This quality information will help the owner compare the performance of their company and see what’s really happening within their business.”

By better spelling out revenues and expenses, the statements can be used to detect patterns and reveal how practice finances are changing, he said.

Most of the accounting is done off-site from the office of the medical professional, Newton said about his company’s services.

The physician practice in the county is one segment his company is targeting for this new service.

Medical practices, many of which are small businesses, are bracing for deep Medicare cuts. This is creating an uncertain health-care environment for individual practitioners as well as for sizable group practices.

Medical practices cut general operating expendi-
Embry–Riddle’s Space Coast campus to host open house

Embry–Riddle Aeronautical University’s Space Coast campus in Melbourne will host an open house from 4 to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 15. The classroom site is located in the Perimeter Center, 4450 W. Eau Gallie Blvd. Attendees can meet instructors and staff, discuss education and career opportunities, and experience Embry–Riddle’s newest mode of instruction, EagleVision, a web–based, interactive learning system that allows students to learn in a classroom setting or from the comfort of their home.

In addition to EagleVision, Embry–Riddle offers courses via distance learning and in traditional classroom formats.

The Space Coast campus is fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and offers academic programs in aviation–related business, logistics, management, and safety at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

For more information, contact Janice Snyder, director of academic support, at 783–5020 or send an e–mail message to spacecoast@erau.edu.

22nd ‘Walk for Life’ event March 17

Pregnancy Resources’ 22nd annual Walk for Life is set for Saturday, March 17, at Gleason Park in Indian Harbour Beach. More than 500 people are expected to participate in this family friendly two–mile walk fund–raising event. Walker forms, which provide details on how to participate and obtain pledge support, are available for pick–up at Pregnancy Resources, 165 N. Babcock St., in Melbourne. Proceeds from the Walk for Life event will directly benefit Pregnancy Resources, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing free programs and services to include medical–grade pregnancy tests, limited ultrasounds, pregnancy and parenting classes to assist women and families who are facing an unexpected pregnancy. Registration for Walk for Life begins at 8:30 a.m. For more information, contact Becky at Pregnancy Resources at 752–5540, extension 105, or at events@melbournepri.com.

Pilot Club to present fashion show

The Pilot Club of Titusville will host a fashion show on Saturday, March 17, from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at La Cita Country Club in Titusville. The theme is “Pretty Woman — Spingtime in Paris.” The program will feature fashions by Dillard’s at Merritt Square Mall and will be showcased by models from the community. “We are excited to have Candi Neuweiler, owner of Merle Norman & Boutique, as emcee,” said Evelyn Taylor, event co–chairwoman. Rachel Terry, fund–raising committee chairwoman, and Pilot Club members have begun raising money toward the $16,000 goal. Proceeds will benefit North Brevard Charities Sharing Center and the Brevard Alzheimer’s Foundation’s Joe’s Club in Titusville. Tickets to the event are $35 per person (includes lunch). Sponsorships begin at $100 and go up to $2,500, which is the “Walk the Runway” corporate sponsor. Current corporate sponsors include Parrish Medical Center and La Cita Country Club. For sponsorship, tickets and event information, call Taylor at 543–9637 or Katherine Musick at 480–8594.
Tickets available for Florida Tech’s annual ‘Chopper–Dropper’ event

Tickets are available for the Florida Institute of Technology annual Sporting Affair and “Chopper–Dropper” event, which will take place March 16 at Suntree Country Club in Melbourne.

Sporting Affair XX and Chopper–Dropper raise money for Florida Institute of Technology athlete scholars and the new football program.

Exactly 2,500 numbered golf balls will be loaded into a helicopter and dropped near the Suntree Country Club clubhouse. The ball that lands closest to the pin/flag wins $25,000. One individual per $50 ball sponsorship may attend the 5:30 p.m. cocktail reception, which includes a selection of food, beer and wine. Everyone may gather around to watch the action.

There are 12 additional cash prizes. The ball landing second closest to the pin wins $10,000; third closest wins $5,000. Also, 10 runner–up prizes of $1,000 each will be awarded, for a grand total of $50,000 to be given away.

Sporting Affair XX also includes a golf tournament. The shotgun start is at 1 p.m.

“Sporting Affair offers some exciting, fun events for the community and is our biggest fund–raiser for athletic scholarships. The money it raises makes a very big difference in our ability to provide these scholarships to deserving student athletes and for our new football program,” said Matt Kilcullen, Florida Tech assistant vice president of athletic fund–raising.

For more information, contact Ashley Gardner at 674–8429 or log on to www.ChopperDropper.com.

Art Gallery of Viera to hold grand opening

Art Gallery of Viera at The Avenue Viera invites the public to celebrate the grand opening of its new location. The gallery is now located at 2261 Town Center Ave., Suite 111, between Coldwater Creek and Yankee Candle, next to The Avenue management office. The new gallery is more spacious, with three showrooms rather than two. The “lighting is better and the artwork is hung by each artist to better represent their work,” said Bobbi Q. Brown, marketing director. The new gallery has a classroom and continues to hold classes and workshops. “We’re very proud to be part of the Viera community and to offer this large, beautiful gallery,” said Brown. The gallery is now open, and the celebration is planned for Saturday, March 10, from 6 to 9 p.m. The Pizza Gallery and Grill will provide light refreshments for the grand opening, which will feature live entertainment and a cash bar. For more information, visit www.ArtGalleryofViera.com.

Sunflower House to host presentations

The Sunflower House at Merritt Square Mall will host two presentations by David Jeczala, access community partner with the Department of Children and Families, on Tuesday, March 13, at 10:30 a.m. and on Tuesday, March 20, at 11:30 a.m. Jeczala will provide a general overview of DCF procedures and discuss the paperwork required to access services needed to assist grandparents in Brevard County who are raising their grandchildren. The presentations are free of charge and open to the public. Refreshments will be provided. To register for these classes or for more information, call 452–4341.
I am continuously amazed and inspired by the ingenuity and complexity of Brevard businesses. They have expanded not only their types of business activities, but have expanded geographically, to other states and even other countries. While moving into these areas brings additional challenges, it also brings new opportunities.

We were recently able to save a citrus grower client nearly $250,000 in taxes on their international sales activity through proper entity structuring.

Heather K. McDonough, CPA
Tax Partner
Berman Hopkins Wright & LaHam, CPAs and Associates, LLP

VERO BEACH — Because of high patient demand in the Treasure Coast medical market, Zipper Urogynecology Associates of Melbourne, a women-focused pelvic medical practice treating urinary incontinence and pelvic prolapse, is expanding and opening a facility here.


Zipper Urogynecology plans to see patients at its Vero Beach facility beginning March 12. The new office is located at 880 37th Place, Suite 104. “We have a large number of patients in Vero Beach and throughout Indian River County,” said Dr. Ralph Zipper, medical director at Zipper Urogynecology Associates. “This new facility is about being more convenient and accessible to the patients that need us.”

The urogynecology practice added fellowship-trained urogynecologist James Raders in 2011. Dr. Raders has more than 20 years experience treating conditions such as pelvic organ prolapse and urinary incontinence.

“It’s an exciting time for Zipper Urogynecology and for this field,” said Dr. Zipper. “Because of increased information and awareness, women are beginning to discuss their pelvic health openly and are actively seeking treatment. We are happy to support this increased demand for our services through expansion of staff and facilities.”

In addition to Dr. Raders and Jennifer Lang, a “highly experienced” urogynecology physician assistant, Dr. Zipper also recently brought on Sherri Lorraine to lead pelvic-floor physical therapy and postsurgical rehabilitation.

Zipper Urogynecology offers “one of the most comprehensive female” pelvic health-care programs in the U.S.

“Our goal is to provide an environment where we can holistically treat patients by guiding them every step of the way from their initial consultation to post-op therapy,” says Dr. Zipper. “We’ve achieved that with this team of professionals.”

Dr. Zipper attended the University of Connecticut, where he earned his undergraduate degree. He completed his graduate training at New York City’s Mount Sinai School of Medicine. His postdoctoral work and urogynecology training was completed at the renowned Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore.

He is credited as the inventor of “Incisionless Vaginal Rejuvenation” and was recognized by Medtronic as the “world’s top implanter of the Interstim device” to treat overactive bladder. He runs the Zipper Urogynecology fellowship program and heads the American Board of Aesthetic Gynecology.

Dr. Raders earned both his undergraduate degree and medical degree from the University of Iowa. His postdoctoral work and urogynecology training was completed at the University of Florida School of Medicine. He performed his fellowship training at the prestigious Cleveland Clinic and the Institute for Female Pelvic Medicine in Pennsylvania.

Dr. Raders was named “Best Doctor for Women” two years in a row by “Minnesota Monthly” magazine.

Lorraine attended the University of Central Florida, where she earned her undergraduate degree. She completed her graduate and doctorate work at the University of St. Augustine in Florida and is a board-certified women’s health specialist.

Lang attended the University of Maryland School of Medicine. She is board certified by the National Commission of Certification of Physician Assistants.

Richard Sabino to conduct a Ukrainian orchestra

Richard Sabino, a financial adviser with Edward Jones and the founder of Central Florida Winds, has been selected to conduct a Ukrainian orchestra in Dnepropetrovsk. This concert will be held on March 24 and the program will include Brahms’ “Tragic Overture,” Stravinsky’s “The Firebird” Suite (1919 version), and Brahms’ Symphony No. 2. The Dnepropetrovsk State Philharmonic Orchestra’s history spans more than 65 years. Many famous composers and maestros have conducted this orchestra, including Gliere, Khachaturyan, Khrennikov, Gauk and Kondrashin. In 1977, the Dnepropetrovsk State Philharmonic Orchestra was one of the winners of the All-Union Orchestra Competition. The orchestra is a regular participant in numerous international festivals. In addition, for the past several years, the orchestra has taken part in many European tours. For more information, call 223-6688 or send an e-mail message to CFWinds@gmail.com.
Melbourne Regional Chamber honors businesses with annual Impact Awards; installs its 2012 board

The Melbourne Regional Chamber of East Central Florida has announced the winners of its Impact Awards. They are: AAR Airlift Group, Embraer Executive Aircraft Inc., MidairUSA-Melbourne, and Rockwell Collins.

The Chamber, along with its presenting sponsor, GrayRobinson P.A., held the 2012 Impact Awards Banquet Feb. 24 at the Hilton Melbourne Rialto Place. The event also marked the installation of the 2012 Chamber Board of Directors, led by Franck Kaiser, 2012 chair.

Each year the Chamber recognizes the efforts of local businesses for the impact that they have made on the economic health of the community within the past 12 months.

AAR Airlift Group has been a community partner since before they arrived in Melbourne, contacting the Chamber for lists of businesses so they could start “buying local” immediately. Now that they are established, their employees are active in the community, supporting causes such as Junior Achievement of the Space Coast, Prevent of Brevard, the Junior Achievement Business Hall of Fame, and the Economic Development Commission of Florida’s Space Coast.

Embraer Executive Aircraft Inc.’s commitment to a U.S. presence is “evident not only in its economic impact, but also in its charitable support.” Embraer and its employees are involved with Habitat for Humanity, Racing for Kids and The Haven for Children. The assembly of the Phenom 100 jets in Melbourne will help re-invigorate aerospace activity in an area strongly impacted by the ending of the space–shuttle program.

Since beginning operations in March 2011, MidairUSA-Melbourne has employed 81 people, and projects a work force of 300 to 450 within three years. The company and its employees are “already active in the community, giving local charitable support to The Haven for children.”

As Brevard’s eighth-largest employer, Rockwell Collins has 1,500 employees, adding about a hundred jobs last year. Rockwell began operations locally in 1973, and the company estimates it has made more than $250,000 in recent charitable donations and community–involvement time to groups such as United Way, NAACP, Brevard Zoo, Candlelighters, Serene Harbor and Meals on Wheels, to name but a few.

Also presented were Champion Awards for the Chamber’s four Area Business Councils. The Palm Bay Area Business Council recognized Ichiban Cleaning, Inc.; the Beaches Area Business Council honored CC Video Productions in Indian Harbour Beach; Maronda Homes Inc. of Florida was awarded the West Melbourne Area Business Council Champion; and The Viera–Suntree Area Business Council recognized two area businesses: Duran Golf Club and Wesche Jewelers.

Berman Hopkins Wright & LaHam, CPA’s & Associates LLP, was presented with the Better Business of the Year Award, and the Chamber Visitor’s Bureau Award was presented to the Space Coast Office of Tourism.

The Chamber’s Ambassador of the Year, Sallyanne Cos, was also honored, along with the presentation of the Alfred P. Sloan Awards to Courtyard by Marriott, Melbourne; Early Learning Coalition of Brevard in Rockledge; Carr, Riggs & Ingram (formerly Hoyman Dobson CPA’s); Residence Inn by Marriott, Melbourne; RMS McGladrey Inc, in Melbourne; and SunGard Public Sector, headquartered in Lake Mary.

Event underwriters included presenting sponsor GrayRobinson and gold sponsors PNC Bank, Buena Vida Estates and Melbourne International Airport.

A host of other businesses supported the event through sponsorships.

They included: TD Bank, Berman Hopkins Wright & LaHam, Victory Casino Cruises, Wells Fargo, AAR Airlift Group, AT&T, Brevard Community College, Carr, Riggs & Ingram, City of Melbourne, Courtyard by Marriott, Craig Technologies, Crowne Plaza Melbourne Oceanfront, Florida Institute of Technology, Florida Power & Light Co., GB Shelter Mortgage, Health First, Ichiban Cleaning Inc., MidairUSA-Melbourne, Palm Bay Ford, Residence Inn Melbourne, Sorensen–Allied Moving & Storage, Zies Widerman & Malek, and Wesche Jewelers.

‘Army of Hope’ event at Elk’s Lodge

Elk’s Lodge 2113 on Columbia Boulevard in Titusville will host an “Army of Hope” fund-raiser from 12 to 4 p.m. on April 21. The public event will benefit the families of those serving overseas with unexpected home expenses and repairs. Cost is $20 per person and includes food and beverages, plus games and chances to participate in auctions. For more information, contact the Lodge at 268–2111 or 268–2113.

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### UNDERGRADUATE

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### Scott Center to present annual ‘Evening of Hope’ fund-raiser April 21; raffle tickets for Rolex on sale

Florida Institute of Technology’s The Scott Center for Autism Treatment will host “Evening of Hope IV” from 7 to 10 p.m. on April 21.

The center’s major fund-raiser, which includes a cocktail reception and live auction, will take place at the home of Florida Tech Board of Trustees member Joe Flamming.

A highlight of the 2012 event is a raffle for the chance to win a Rolex watch donated by Kempf’s Jewelers in Indialantic, a supporter of the center since its opening in 2009.

Valued at $6,600, the Rolex Oyster Perpetual Explorer II’s features include a stainless steel, 24-hour bezel and hand, independently adjustable 12-hour hand, 31–jewel chronometer movement, and synthetic sapphire crystal, with an Oysterlock bracelet.

Sponsors are invited to participate at various donation levels to be included in the official program book. Donations start at $500 for two reservations and go up to $10,000. Commitments are requested by March 30.

Raffle tickets are on sale until the day of the event for $25 each. They are available for purchase at Kempf’s Jewelers, The Scott Center and online at www.thescottcenter.org/raffle. The drawing will be held at 1 p.m. on April 28 at Kempf’s Jewelers.

The Scott Center provides research, training and service for persons with autism spectrum disorder and their families. The multidisciplinary treatment services offered focus on implementing research–based practice, partnering with schools and families, and collaborating with other professionals.

The Centers for Disease Control estimates that one in 110 children in the U.S. is affected by ASD.

For more information on Evening of Hope IV and sponsorships, visit www.thescottcenter.org or contact Colleen Middlebrooks, outreach coordinator, The Scott Center, at 674–8206, extension 1.

### Art Gallery of Viera showcases work of Stone

The Art Gallery of Viera is showcasing the work of award–winning artist J. Susan Cole Stone throughout March. The exhibit is titled “Exploring Palma De Mallorca.” To learn more about the gallery and the exhibit, go to www.artgalleryofviera.com.

### Rising Market

Continued from page 1

principal catalyst of the recent crash was the large amount of bad debt based on real estate, originating in the United States, but unfolding globally. Now, housing markets remain depressed, but relatively stable.

Large banks have failed, and others were saved from collapse only by enormous emergency federal fund infusions. Even in the wake of the global crisis, smaller commercial banks in the U.S. continue to fail, though not in large numbers. Federal Deposit Insurance, a New Deal reform, remains essential.

The G–20 major nations engage in continuing coordination of national policies, banks are more strictly regulated and their capital requirements have been raised simultaneously with their rescue. Congress passed comprehensive banking reform legislation, including the important initiative of Paul Volcker to separate commercial from investment banking.

During the Great Depression American humorist Will Rogers became enormously popular. His homespun rural style provided a contrast with the East Coast big–city financiers that were blamed for the nation’s economic problems.

Inspired by Will Rogers, here are three direct down–to–earth points.

- **First, as a worker, take pride.** The United States — you and me — has the most productive and largest economy in the world. Our estimated gross national product is more than $15 trillion.

- **Second, as a citizen, be active and alert.** Government reforms directly reflect public concerns and fears. There must be sustained public oversight of financial activities.

- **Third, as an investor, do your homework.** A good guide is “Security Analysis” by Benjamin Graham and David Dodd, first published in 1934 during the Great Depression, revised and republished regularly since.

You can even read the book while the TV is on.

Arthur L. Cyr is Clausen Distinguished Professor at Carthage College. E–mail him at ACyr@carthage.edu.
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Group can handle the build–out of space for clients and ongoing for months at the site, Wood said. Footage on the second floor as well. Construction has been at Imperial Plaza, space across the hall, and square.

“We're thrilled to have them as a new tenant.”

Colette Wood, a commercial sales and leasing associate with Brenner Real Estate Group's office at Imperial Plaza. The company is moving its operations to Imperial Plaza in Melbourne, is moving its operations to Imperial Plaza and signed a five–year lease for 10,203 square feet of customized space.

Atex will occupy the entire north wing on the first floor at Imperial Plaza, space across the hall, and square footage on the second floor as well. Construction has been ongoing for months at the site, Wood said.

“We spent about four months working with them,” said Colette Wood, a commercial sales and leasing associate with Brenner Real Estate Group’s office at Imperial Plaza. “We’re thrilled to have them as a new tenant.”

Atex will occupy the entire north wing on the first floor at Imperial Plaza, space across the hall, and square footage on the second floor as well. Construction has been ongoing for months at the site, Wood said.

“The way we are set up as a company, the Brenner Group can handle the build–out of space for clients and oversee project management, and that is huge for a business,” said Wood. “They have the comfort of knowing that, going into the deal.”

She added, “The continuity is very important because businessowners need to focus their energies on running their enterprise and not have to worry about these matters, which can be time consuming. Our office is on-site and clients really like that.”

Both Wood and Casey have multiple roles with the company in the various phases of the business, such as leasing, management, and sales.

Casey is the property manager for Imperial Plaza as well the regional manager. The Bowling Green State University graduate opened the Melbourne office for the Brenner Real Estate Group years ago.

“The goal is to have the Melbourne office as a stand-alone operation, fully staffed like our Fort Lauderdale office,” Casey said. “We hope the demand for our services continues.”

Demand for space on the full–service Executive Suite fourth floor is on an upward trend, too, at Imperial Plaza, said Wood.

“We had a lot of expansions in 2011, businesses moving into larger quarters. We make it as seamless as possible for them to move within the facility as they grow. It’s all about fostering a long–term relationship with the client.”

The floor, which contains about 9,000 square feet, houses mainly small firms. Tenants on the floor pay a base rent figure, or “gross lease,” and no common–area maintenance charges, Casey said. They pay a small fee for services, such as a phone line and a receptionist.

Real–estate professionals are managing their companies through these times and are adapting to transformative changes within the broader industry.

Casey said Brenner Real Estate Group works closely with businesses to meet their changing needs for office space. Imperial Plaza's Executive Suite, for example, offers short–term leases to accommodate small firms that are making adjustments to the market.

In addition to Imperial Plaza and Brenner's properties in the Suntree area, the firm also has forged leasing relationships with office–building owners in other parts of the county.

“One of the company’s key goals this year is to grow the business, in both management and leasing,” said Casey. “And one of the ways to do that is build more relationships in the region with property owners.”

The Brenner Real Estate Group does leasing for The 1900 Building in downtown Melbourne and the nearby Prospect Office Center, said Wood, adding that her company is “finalizing paperwork” to be the leasing agent for the 26,000–square–foot Conlon Professional Center in Palm Bay.

“We are actively seeking out property owners in the county who are interested in having a well–qualified team help them lease their building or manage their property,” Wood said.

Business is picking up for Brenner Real Estate Group’s Asset Solutions Team, too, said Casey, who worked in the Columbus, Ohio, real–estate market before moving to Florida.

“The receivership business is definitely a very strong component of our company right now. The Melbourne office is currently working in conjunction with our Asset Solutions Team on a hotel receivership project in Vero Beach,” she said.

Casey added, “We are also handling a receivership of a shopping center in Orlando. We are looking to grow that part of the business, but our main focus is on winning leasing contracts and property–management contracts.”

Casey said her company is looking to acquire properties as well. “It’s another way to help grow the business, and that’s what we want to do in 2012. The Melbourne office had a banner year in 2011 and we certainly want to follow up with another strong performance.”

The underlying economy is improving, says the National Association of Business Economists in its February 2012 outlook. While economists remain “measured” on expectations for overall economic growth, “uncertainty” is diminishing.

Finally, companies are ready to deploy their cash in 2012, according to a recent Deloitte LLP poll of business professionals from a cross section of industries. Nearly half of the 1,000 companies surveyed plan to “deploy” cash reserves this year. Respondents also suggest that their businesses are likely to increase capital budgets.
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