

[officer killed]

Mayor Pam Iorio, in announcing that Roberts had died, said: "He was loved by his fellow police officers. Their hearts are broken."



Tribune photo by SCOTT ISKOWITZ

MIKE ROBERTS

Continued From Page 1

his family."

The neighborhood is dogged by its reputation as being crime-ridden.

"We feel like he was part of our family," Thomas said. "We all appreciated him being here and making a difference."

Lisa Timmer oversees 72 neighborhood watch programs as a liaison for Tampa police District 2, which includes Sulphur Springs.

"I'm receiving e-mails from the community and calls," she said Thursday. "There's a huge outpouring from the public already."

"Some were calling me last night crying," Timmer said. "It's going to be a dark day."

Tampa police Officer Frank Kelley met Roberts 12 years ago when both men served in the military. He remembers his friend's "sense of humor, his wide smile, his laugh and his ability to make the darkest day a little brighter."

Roberts' recent promotion meant a transfer from the department's K-9 Unit — and that was difficult for him.

"He loved that job," said Kelley, godfather to Roberts' 3-year-old son, Adam. "He lived and breathed it. I asked him how he was going to leave the dogs. He said it was going to be hard."

Roberts received glowing evaluations and was commended on his diligence. Supervisors said he was the type of officer to see something and act, rather than wait until a call from dispatch.

It was what he did about 10 p.m. Wednesday when he saw a man pushing a full shopping cart at Nebraska Avenue and Arctic Street, an area beset by a recent rash of burglaries.

Roberts stopped to investigate. He was shot within minutes.

"Their hearts are broken"

Roberts leaves behind his son and his wife, Cynthia, as well as a stunned department.

"This is just a horrible, tragic crime that has been committed against this

young, dedicated officer," said police Maj. George McNamara.

Roberts, a veteran of the U.S. Air Force and Army, won a lifesaving award with the department in 2005 for his handling of a man threatening suicide.

Police Chief Stephen Hogue said Roberts arrived at the Howard Frankland Bridge and found the man with a rope around his neck and one leg over the railing. He talked the man out of jumping and pulled him back to safety.

"He was able to save that man's life," Hogue said.

In March, Roberts was called to help find a missing toddler. As officers waited for tracking dogs to arrive at the apartment complex, Roberts looked inside the vehicles in the parking lot. He found the child inside a hot vehicle; she had climbed inside but couldn't get out.

In addition to dozens of letters of appreciation from residents, Roberts' personnel file includes a long letter commending him for the compassion he showed the family of a homicide victim.

He also received a "Catch of the Month" award for intervening between two groups at an apartment complex, thwarting a possible shootout.

"He was a very good, hard-working police corporal," Hogue said. "We promoted him and we only promote a very few and only the best, and he was one of those."

Mayor Pam Iorio called Roberts' death "a terrible tragedy," offering condolences to his family and the department. She has declared that all city of Tampa flags should be lowered to half-staff in memory of Roberts.

"He was loved by his fellow police officers," she said outside Tampa General Hospital an hour after Roberts was pronounced dead. "Their hearts are broken. He loved his wife and son. That was all he talked about."

In a statement Thursday, Iorio said: "Gunned down while working to make Tampa a safer place to live, Cpl. Roberts served as an example of the outstanding commitment and dedication of our police force. May his son grow up knowing that his father was our hero."

News Channel 8 reporter Jennifer Leigh contributed to this report.

"We feel like he was part of our family. We all appreciated him being here and making a difference."

TONYA THOMAS, community coordinator for the Sulphur Springs Neighborhood Watch Association.

MEMORIAL FUND

A fund has been established for the family of Tampa police Cpl. Mike Roberts. Donations can be made to the Tampa Police Memorial Fund by sending checks to 48 N. Franklin St., Tampa FL 33602. In the memo section, write: Cpl. Mike Roberts Memorial Fund.

Donations also can be made through the Tampa Bay Federal Credit Union; the account number is 538412. Checks should be payable to Cynthia Roberts or the Tampa Police Memorial Fund.



News Channel 8 photo by DAVID KRAFFT

Cpl. Mike Roberts had the "ability to make the darkest day a little brighter," said Tampa Officer Frank Kelley, who served with Roberts in the military.



Tribune photo by SCOTT ISKOWITZ

Tampa police Chief Stephen Hogue described Roberts as among "the best" in the department and recalled how he talked a man out of hanging himself.



FALLEN OFFICERS

Cpl. Mike Roberts is the 27th Tampa police officer killed in the line of duty since 1895 and the seventh in the past two decades. The other six are:

- Officer Porfirio Soto Jr., a rookie who was shot and killed while arresting a shooting suspect Dec. 30, 1988.
- Officer Norris Epps Jr., a 36-year patrol veteran who died when he was in the cockpit of a helicopter that crashed near the Howard Frankland Bridge on Jan. 16, 1995, during a search for a missing firefighter.
- Detectives Randy Bell and Ricky Childers, who were fatally shot May 19, 1998, while transporting a shooting suspect. Hank Earl Carr used a hidden key to unlock his handcuffs, wrestled away Childers' gun and turned the weapon on the detectives. Carr also shot and killed a state trooper before killing himself.
- Officer Lois Marrero, a 19-year veteran who was gunned down July 6, 2001, while chasing a bank robbery suspect. She was the department's first female officer killed in the line of duty.
- Detective Juan Serrano, who died Feb. 25, 2006, when a drunken driver ran a red light and smashed into his unmarked vehicle. Serrano, who joined the department in 1989, served as Mayor Pam Iorio's bodyguard. He was on his way home after dropping off Iorio when he was killed.

For a complete list of Tampa officers killed in the line of duty, go to www.tampapov.net/dept_police.

Source: Tampa Police Department; Tribune archives

POLICE SHOOTING

Continued From Page 1

said. Delgado was arrested late Wednesday and charged with murder of a law enforcement officer.

Delgado is confined in Orient Road jail on suicide watch, with a deputy keeping an eye on him 24 hours a day. He is being held in the highest security level, meaning any time he leaves his cell, he will be in handcuffs and box chains, Hillsborough County sheriff's Col. Jim Previtera said. Delgado only will be allowed to leave the cell one hour a day, and during that time he can shower or walk around inside his jail pod.

Evans said Delgado, who served as a police officer in the Virgin Islands from April 1996 to October 2000, had been staying with family in Oldsmar since April but had become "basically homeless." He declined to get real help for his health issues, she said.

Family at the Oldsmar home declined to comment. Evans said he had been clinically diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

"I knew something was wrong, because I hadn't heard from him," she said.

Reasons for discharge uncertain

She said he has a temper and sometimes doesn't know what he's doing, and that he had been medically discharged from the Army because of an injured back and the mental health issue.

According to Army spokesman Lt. Col. Richard McNorton, Delgado was a former private first class for the Army, joining in August 2004 and serving until December 2005. McNorton said that because of privacy reasons he could not say why Delgado left, but that his service was "honorable."

Delgado was a petroleum supply specialist, fueling vehicles or aircraft. He earned the National Defense Service Med-



Tribune photo by JASON REINKEN

Humberto Delgado Jr. was arrested in a yard off Yukon Street not far from where Cpl. Mike Roberts was shot on Nebraska Avenue.

al, given to soldiers who serve honorably during a time of national emergency. McNorton said, Delgado did not serve in Iraq or Afghanistan.

He worked at Fort Lee in Virginia and had his last duty station with the 82nd Airborne at Fort Bragg in North Carolina, according to his separation records from the Army. Before his discharge, he was sent to Company C, Womack Army Medical Center at Fort Bragg, a base hospital. Separation papers don't indicate whether he worked at the hospital or received treatment there.

In March 2007, while living in Fayetteville, Delgado and Evans had a son — Gadieloh Delgado.

Delgado also has two children who live in the Virgin Islands, Evans said.

Glenda Cruz, who has known Delgado since she was 15 and they were living in St. Croix, said his life has been filled with trials and tribulation but that she always considered him a sweet person and a good father.

In their last conversations, which occurred via e-mail months ago, Cruz said Delgado told her he felt lonely. She said he told her a lot of bad things happen to him but he stays hopeful in God's name.

"I did not invent a lot of stuff to happen, but I'm still trying to overcome all the evil and trying to keep it real," she said he wrote.

She said she always knew he had a mental health condition, but that when she spent time

with him years ago, he didn't display violent tendencies.

"He's a very, very smart, very bright kid, very artistic, I'm just surprised, I'm surprised."

Asked whether there was anything else to say about what happened, she said, "There's nothing really right to say at this moment. The only thing is that we'll pray for him. Pray for him and pray for the family that lost their dad or their husband."

Health had deteriorated

Tampa police Chief Steve Hogue said the fact that Delgado himself had been a police officer "makes it even more difficult to understand how somebody with a law enforcement background could do something like this."

But in the years after leaving the police force, Delgado's mental health deteriorated, said Gabriel Reyes, who attended St. Croix Central High School with Delgado. Still, Reyes said he had never known Delgado to be violent. In fact, in school, Delgado protected Reyes from bullying.

Wednesday's arrest wasn't Delgado's first encounter with law enforcement this week.

About 1 a.m. Monday, Pinellas County Deputy Russell Klar saw Delgado, who "appeared to be living at the Veterans Memorial Park in the city of Oldsmar," a report states. Delgado was sleeping near a restroom in the picnic pavilion at the park's northeast corner and had been seen walking east on Lafayette Boulevard with a large tan des-

ert camouflage backpack.

"Delgado stated that he is a disabled veteran who is trying to gain additional financial assistance from the government in order to obtain or arrange some housing," the report states. "Delgado does have family in Oldsmar to whom he is currently not talking."

Delgado told the deputy he had a nearby storage locker. The deputy warned Delgado about the park's hours and said that Monday would be his last morning to spend there. He told Delgado to make other arrangements. Delgado said he understood he could be issued a trespass warning or be cited for violating an ordinance if he continued living in the park, the report states.

Nearly three days later, he was arrested for Roberts' death. He is scheduled to have an initial court appearance today before Hillsborough County Circuit Judge Walter Heinrich.

Assistant State Attorney Pam Bondi said her office will oppose any bail for Delgado.

Prosecutors have 45 days from the time a suspect is arraigned to decide whether to seek the death penalty.

Legal experts said that decision is based on the nature of the crime and the personal and criminal history of the accused.

On Facebook, Delgado said he believes in a higher power and loves his children. Describing himself on MySpace, he wrote: "Hi people of the world I am here just chilling in my own meditation. Enjoying life without any judgment because we all got the same blessings, we just have to wait patiently and we receive. One Love. In this world of transgression we go through our differences and disagreements, a whole lot more than we really notice but that's why we survive. We survive through realism."

Tribune reporter Tom Breunan and News Channel 8 reporter Natalie Shepherd contributed to this report. Reporter Josh Politow can be reached at (813) 259-7691.

WEATHER HIGH 79, LOW 66 There's a 30 percent chance of rain.

TBO.COM Keyword: Pet Names, to see if your pet has a name twin.

Popcorn for Thanksgiving

Holiday moviegoers have a diverse mix of films they can check out. **DETAILS, Page 8**



THE TAMPBA TRIBUNE

TUESDAY 11.24.2009

and The Tampa Times

+10% Existing home sales rise

The unexpectedly high volume for October is attributed to the approach of a tax credit deadline that ultimately was extended. **DETAILS, Business, back of Sports**

A West Tampa club with a big-league history has major safety and sanitation issues and a funding problem.

Little League park faces lousy odds



Staff photos by JASON BEHNKEN

Olivia Valdes, 11, swings at a pitch from coach Todd Casal on Nov. 17 at the West Tampa Little League complex.

By KATHY STEELE
ksteel@tampatrib.com

WEST TAMPA - It's midmorning at the West Tampa Little League complex. A former ladies' restroom and a concession stand on Jamaica Street are closed, unused for some time. The stench of urine is unmistakable. A sidewalk outside the adjacent men's restroom has telltale stains and droppings. Earlier in the morning, volunteers found two blankets in a dugout at one of the

four ball fields. A sweep of the fields and facilities to clean up what homeless people have left behind is the first thing parents do on game days. "All the fields are open to them to do what they want," said Maggie Puentes, the league's vice president. Parents say homeless people are not the only problem they confront at one of the city's most storied ballparks. Founded in the early 1990s at MacFarlane Park, it fostered a roster of future major league baseball

See **LITTLE LEAGUE, Page 6**

WISH LIST

- A chain-link fence around the perimeter of the ball fields
- Additional lighting for batting cages and dark street corners
- More restrooms

One concession stand is operational at the complex, which is off Jamaica Street. It has one set of working bathrooms for the hundreds who show up on game days.



Alice, through a new looking glass

A Miami actress is re-energizing the classic tale in "Wonderland."

By WALT BELCHER
wbelcher@tampatrib.com
and MYRIAM SILVA-WARREN
mwarren@centrotampa.com



Dacal

TAMPA - After more than a month of rehearsals, often putting in 12-hour

days, singer/dancer/actor Janet Dacal moves one step closer tonight to bringing a new dimension to author Lewis Carroll's "Alice" legacy. The young Latina actress from Miami is about to take audiences through a new looking glass into a new Wonderland in a modern-day spin on a classic story. "I love this Alice because she is a real woman with real flaws and real issues," says Dacal, who has the lead role in "Wonderland: Alice's New Musical Adventure," a \$3.5 million musical based on the 19th-century novels "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" See **WONDERLAND MUSICAL, Page 6**



"You know, I keep a can of salmon or tuna at my desk. That's what we do."

MARK SHARPE
Hillsborough County commissioner



"Just order a sandwich ring from Publix, that's what people do and that's responsible."

RONDA STORMS
State senator

Agency spends \$20,000 on food

Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance paid for lunch deliveries and restaurant meals.

By STEVE ANDREWS
sandrews@wfla.com

At a time when Florida's unemployment rate continues to rise, a Tampa Bay area agency that finds work for the unemployed has spent thousands of dollars to have food delivered to its headquarters and pay for meals at local restaurants. An examination of credit card statements and other records shows that the Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance spent more than \$20,000 on food in the past 15 months. A News Channel 8 investigation found: • In December 2008, the agency spent more than \$600 at the Spaghetti Warehouse. • In June, it paid Wright's Gourmet House

See **WORKFORCE ALLIANCE, Page 6**

HCC at risk for fraud, audit says

College's finances have discrepancies.

By LINDSAY PETERSON
lpeterson@tampatrib.com

TAMPA - A state audit of Hillsborough Community College reveals month after month of "unreconciled differences" and raises questions about how well the college keeps track of revenue. The auditors didn't uncover any fraud but said discrepancies in the college's general account and bookstore account increase the risk that fraud could go undetected. The audit found differences between the amount of money deposited each month into the bank and the amount recorded on the college's general ledger. See **COLLEGE AUDIT, Page 6**

Vigil memorializes UT hit-run victim

DETAILS, Page 5

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WONDERLAND MUSICAL

Continued From Page 1

and "Through the Looking Glass."

Preview performances begin tonight at the recently renamed David A. Straz Jr. Center for the Performing Arts, which is producing the musical with the goal of getting it to Broadway.

Audiences who attend the previews will see a work in progress that will be tweaked for the world premiere on Dec. 5. The show will run through Jan. 3 before going on tour.

"It's wonderful to be a part of something that is being created from the ground up for the first time," says Dacal, who has been working in New York stage productions since 2005. "I love it that this Alice is on a journey to find herself," she says.

Dacal notes that her Alice also has curly red hair and is of Cuban descent, just like herself. She will have a different look and attitude from the traditional Alice, she says.

"I believe that if it were not for my hair, I would not have work," Dacal says. "It's an extension of my personality. I am a very happy person. I like to laugh and be positive."

"My parents are Cuban and I have spent the last 10 years in Miami," says Dacal, who was born in Los Angeles and moved to Miami when she was 17. "My mother is so proud, she calls my character Alicia."

The original Alice of the books was a young British girl who went on magical adventures in children's stories written by middle-aged bachelor mathematician C.L. Dodgson under the pen name of Lewis Carroll.

Dacal says she has never read the original stories but has seen movie versions. The "Alice" stories have been turned into numerous stage plays and films, including Walt Disney's well-known 1951 animated "Alice in Wonderland."

"I was always fascinated with Alice because the world she delves into seems so far-fetched and so wacky and so much fun," she says.

"Wonderland" begins in pre-

sent-day Manhattan where author Alice Cornwinkle (Dacal) is struggling with her career, her marriage and relating to her daughter Chloe (Julie Brooks).

"She is having a breakdown at a party in her honor and she goes through a looking glass to Wonderland where she meets all these fantastic characters who relate to real people in her life," Dacal says.

"Wonderland," the first initiative of the Broadway Genesis Project at the Performing Arts Center, features a score by Frank Wildhorn ("Jekyll & Hyde," "The Scarlet Pimpernel," "The Civil War"), lyrics by Jack Murphy ("The Civil War") and a story by Murphy and Gregory Boyd. Boyd, the artistic director of the Alley Theatre in Houston, is the director.

Wildhorn says Dacal is on the verge of stardom. "Given the right role, she will be a star — and this is the role," he says.

He says she is a wonderful musician and a great comedian. "She's like a Cuban Bernadette Peters," he says. "And she sings beautiful, with soul and a great pop quality."

ON STAGE

"Wonderland: Alice's New Musical Adventure"

WHERE: Today through Jan. 3

WHERE: David A. Straz Jr. Center for the Performing Arts (previously Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center), 1010 MacDuff Ave., Tampa

HOW MUCH: \$38.50-\$72.50 (ticket prices vary depending on night of performance)

INFORMATION: (813) 229-7827 or www.ttpac.org

Dacal says she has been drawn to the arts since she was a small child.

"I would try other things but I kept coming back to music and theater," says Dacal, who studied mass communications and journalism at the University of Miami.

She also worked as a backup singer at Miami's Crescent Moon Studios, where she recorded chorus work for artists such as Gloria Estefan, Jon Secada and Luis Enrique.

She appeared in the off-Broadway production of "Good

Vibrations" and in 2008 she created the role of Carla, the ditsy beauty salon assistant in "In the Heights," the Tony Award-winning musical set in the Manhattan barrio.

Dacal says she was offered a role in the national tour of "In the Heights" but the role of Alice came along and she couldn't pass it up.

She and the cast have been living out of a hotel while the play is taking shape.

Dacal says she loves the music in "Wonderland" because it covers a wide range of styles. She opens the show with a spirited number, "Worst Day of My Life," and sings the play's signature ballad, "Finding Wonderland."

She has duets with Sarasota actor Darren Ritchie, who plays Alice's husband, Jack, and the White Knight.

A cast CD of "Wonderland: Alice's New Musical Adventure" is available at the Straz Center gift shop and at www.wonderlandthemusical.org.

Reporter Walt Belcher can be reached at (813) 259-7654.

LITTLE LEAGUE

Continued From Page 1

players and coaches, including Lou Piniella, Tony La Russa, Fred McGriff, Luis Gonzalez and Tino Martinez.

Today, West Tampa parents worry about children playing on jungle gyms next to Pine Street, about girls walking along dark paths from one side of the ball fields to the other to buy sodas and snacks or to use the only operable restroom. It is a restroom — one toilet for women and one for men — that has to serve 500 or more players and family members on game days.

Two weeks ago the league's president, Randy Mongado, spotted a man who was not a parent videotaping a T-ball game. Tampa police said they could not make an arrest for videotaping in a public area. But the man's mug shot, from old arrests including driving under the influence and battery on a law enforcement officer, is posted at the league's concession stand.

League officials also cite the stabbing in 2007 of a teenager near a concession stand.

The moms and dads' antennas are way up at West Tampa Little League.

On a recent practice night they watched as a young boy ran into Pine Street to retrieve a foul ball. Moments earlier a car had zipped along the road toward MacDuff Avenue, heading the wrong way on the one-way street.

What could ease their minds, they say, is a chain-link fence around the perimeter of the ball fields, additional lighting for batting cages and dark street corners and more restrooms. The fence has been on a wish list for at least seven years.

"We're telling them it's dangerous," Puentes said.

Parks and recreation officials told league treasurer Katie Hernandez that the money, as much as \$100,000 for the fence and \$200,000 for a prefabricated restroom, is not in the city's budget. The city has offered to put West Tampa on a list of parks projects targeted for completion within five years.

Tampa has agreements with youth sports leagues that make those organizations responsible for at least some maintenance, often including upkeep of restrooms and concession stands.

"We'll have to see the magnitude of the issue," said Santiago Corrada, the city's neighborhood services administrator.

Two letters that Hernandez sent to Mayor Pam Iorio landed on Corrada's desk. He has scheduled a meeting for Dec. 3 with league representatives, police and parks and recreation officials.

"Maybe we can afford something," he



Staff photo by JASON BREINKEN
Kids queue up at home plate at the West Tampa Little League complex on Nov. 17.

said. "Money is tight all around."

Hernandez said West Tampa appreciates the help it already has received. It simply doesn't have the kind of money that city officials are talking about, she said.

About \$100,000 in donations and in-kind services from the Tampa Bay Rays and area businesses paid for the Pine Street concession stand and restrooms in 2007. The league put in donated kitchen equipment and air conditioners.

Scoreboards on the ball fields were donated by another Little League group, Puentes said.

"Everything we get is donated and used," coach Todd Cenal said. "We don't get brand-new stuff."

Hernandez said West Tampa charges \$50 for a child to play baseball, softball or T-ball. Regardless, she said, no child in the low-income neighborhood is turned away.

The entry fees pay for uniforms, trophies, umpires, maintenance and other expenses.

On average, about 300 children participate. The league estimates it contributes about \$3,000 in scholarships and forgives about \$1,800 in fees from families that sign up but don't pay.

"We don't have very many sponsors or private residents who say, 'Here's a couple thousand dollars for your park,'" Hernandez said.

Parks and recreation officials have sent employees to assess the needs and work up estimates. Some oak trees have been trimmed. Hernandez said the league might be able to fund minor repairs, but she is hopeful the city will follow through with the fencing.

Reporter Kathy Steele can be reached at (813) 259-7852.

WORKFORCE ALLIANCE

Continued From Page 1

more than \$750.

In August, it paid the Columbia Restaurant \$1,600.

In June, the work force alliance paid the Cheesecake Factory for one of the many working lunches delivered to its headquarters at Net Park, 5701 E. Hillsborough Ave.

The agency had 22 lunches delivered in the past year from various restaurants. Work force alliance records also show 127 separate credit card charges at area restaurants, grocery stores, food delivery and catering services.

The Cheesecake Factory meal consisted of appetizers including edamame for \$6.68 and crab cakes for \$16.13. The main course consisted of an order of Jamaican Black Pepper Shrimp and Chicken for \$24 and two orders of Crispy Chicken Costoletta for \$43.06. Dessert included an original cheesecake slice for \$8.78, a slice of white chocolate raspberry truffle cheesecake for \$9.11 and a slice of dulce de leche caramel cheesecake, also for \$9.11.

The agency also paid premium prices for the lunch by ordering it through a pickup and delivery service.

With the delivery fee and tip, the total for the meal came to \$155.94.

News Channel 8 found it was \$50 cheaper to order directly from the restaurant.

"I don't think that's an unusual expense at all to have a working lunch for an organization," said Ron Smith, chairman of the work force alliance's finance committee.

Smith says the agency receives grants from different sources so he is not sure that taxpayers' dollars were spent. When asked where the grant money came from, Smith said he did not know.

The agency is heavily funded by the federal government and the state.

"I think you're nitpicking, end of subject," Smith said.

Agency records show employees also seemed to enjoy food with an international flair. Several meals were ordered from Angithi Indian Cuisine, Sawatdee Thai Restaurant, the Acropolis Bar and Grill and Lehiban Japanese Cuisine.

Hillsborough County Commissioner Mark Sharpe, who sits on the agency's board of directors, said he wasn't aware of how much money was being spent on food.

"It's not their money; it's not the money of this agency to spend in that

fashion," Sharpe said. "You know, I keep a can of salmon or tuna at my desk. That's what we do."

Sharpe plans to ask the chairman of Florida's Workforce Board in Tallahassee to investigate.

"To be spending this much money at a time government is really struggling to pay the bills and citizens are struggling to pay the bills of government is irresponsible and there ought to be a thorough investigation," Sharpe said.

The workforce alliance has not provided an explanation of its spending. At a meeting in early November, the agency provided a printout of charges, but an employee said she could only show reporters the charges and was not allowed to explain them.

Agency president and CEO Renee Gilmore was asked about the charges at last week's finance committee meeting.

"I'm going to get with my chairman, thank you, and coordinate a couple of things," Gilmore said and walked out of the meeting room.

State Sen. Ronda Storms said based on the charges she reviewed the agency should be ashamed of itself. She said she plans to ask for an investigation of the work force board and similar boards across the state.

"I just am outraged," Storms said after reviewing the food bills provided by News Channel 8.

Storms said she works through lunch all the time. At an upcoming Hillsborough County legislative delegation meeting, lawmakers are paying \$10 apiece for a box lunch, she said.

"These people could get very well off to pitch in 10 bucks and say, 'Hey, listen, we're going to have a working meeting,'" she said. "Or better yet, just order a sandwich ring from Publix, that's what people do and that's responsible."

Storms said she is frequently stopped in public by people who are out of work, struggling to pay their bills and put food on the table. She said every dime of the money going to the Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance should be going to help people get jobs.

"When I think of people who are getting laid off, who are about to lose their house, who cannot put food on their table for their kids, who are having to go down and get groceries from nonprofits and to know that these people are buying Indian cuisine and cheesecake for 9 bucks a slice," Storms said. "That's outrageous and people should be rightly infuriated."

News Channel 8 reporter Steve Andrews' report airs at 11 tonight. He can be reached at (813) 221-5778.

COLLEGE AUDIT

Continued From Page 1

In the case of the bookstore, several days' worth of electronic receipt records had been erased, preventing auditors from knowing how much money the bookstore took in on those days.

HCC officials say the problems arose from staff training and the way transactions are electronically recorded. They insist the problems have been largely corrected.

The audit, a regularly scheduled review of HCC operations, auditors looked at two years of general account statements, from July 2007 to June 2009, and found month after month of discrepancies.

The discrepancies fluctuated from a high of \$68,906 in April 2008 to a low of \$16,527 in

March 2009. The most recent statements reviewed by the auditors, from June 2009, showed an unreconciled difference of \$29,244.

"When unidentified differences are not resolved," the audit said, "there is an increased risk that errors or fraud may occur and may not be promptly detected or corrected. Additionally the College would have limited assurance as to the accuracy of the amount of cash available for its operations."

HCC has an annual operating budget of about \$100 million.

HCC officials became aware of the discrepancy in July 2007. HCC controller Bonnie Carr said it took months, but administrators believe they've narrowed the problem to the software HCC students used to make payments online, she said.

Initial payments were processed correctly, but problems occurred when students

dropped and added classes, particularly when they hit the "enter" button multiple times.

"It seems simple, but it's a complex and complicated system," Carr said. "Our system was just not in a position to deal with adjustments of that nature or that magnitude."

The college has used a software analysis tool to track the online payments incorrectly recorded and identify the discrepancies. "We have it down in the thousands," she said.

For the bookstore review, the auditors looked at operations at stores on the Dale Mabry, Ybor City, Brandon and Plant City campuses, which recorded combined sales of about \$7.5 million for 2008-09.

The auditors requested a sample of 30 days' worth of sales, from August 2008, but records were missing for five of those 30 days.

Sales details are recorded

electronically every day, but "five of the electronic journal files requested had been erased from its computer files in error and were not available," the audit said.

Bank statements showed that about \$138,000 was deposited from the stores during those five days. But without the electronic files, the auditors couldn't tell how much the stores actually took in then.

"It could have been double or it could have been half that much. Without the records you don't know," state audit manager James Stultz said.

The auditors also said that cashiers voided transactions without seeking a supervisor's approval. And in several cases, receipts didn't match what cashiers had collected.

"Although requested, explanations for the reasons for the cash shortages or overages or evidence of supervisory review

were not provided," the audit said. In one case a cashier was short \$80. Another was over by about \$45.

Carr blamed the problems on the introduction of a new payment system and inadequate staff training.

On days the electronic journal files were erased, she said, cashiers were learning a new system and erased the files by mistake.

"We have revamped how we back up records so that can't happen now," Carr said.

In its response to the auditors, HCC said cashiers had been retrained on how to void transactions and report overages and shortages.

That's important, auditor Stultz said.

"When you don't know," he said, "it leads to a vulnerability to fraud."

Reporter Lindsay Peterson can be reached at (813) 259-7834.

WEATHER HIGH 75, LOW 60 40% chance of thunderstorms

TBO.COM Keyword: Fallen Soldiers, for those who sacrificed all for America.

THE THURSDAY 1.21.2010 TAMPA TRIBUNE and The Tampa Times



Sinkhole costs adding up

A cavity forces Trapnell Elementary students to go to nearby schools. **DETAILS, Metro, Page 5**

Up-and-down Lightning looking for leadership

DETAILS, Sports, Page 1



Sweethearts go high-tech

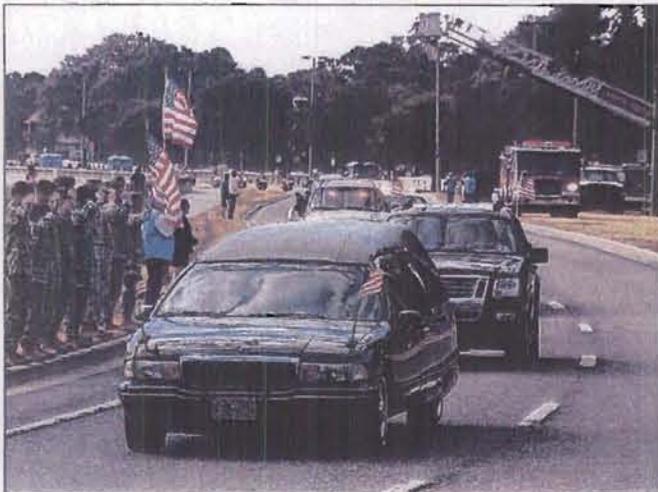
Not only is the message more modern, the recipe has been updated. **DETAILS, Business, Back of Sports**



Staff photo by SCOTT ISKOWITZ

Family members meet the body of Army Sgt. David A. Croft Jr. as it arrives at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa on Wednesday.

'Such love and sacrifice'



Staff photo by JIM REED

Troops and others line Bayshore Boulevard in Tampa on Wednesday for the procession carrying Croft from MacDill to Plant City. Croft was killed in Baghdad on Jan. 5, two weeks before he was supposed to leave Iraq.

It was a time for family, friends and total strangers to remember a hero coming home for the last time. The body of Army Sgt. David A. Croft Jr. arrived at MacDill Air Force Base on Wednesday, then was taken via motorcade to his hometown of Plant City. Along the route, many people paid their respects. A funeral for Croft, who was killed Jan. 5 in Iraq, is scheduled for Saturday.

Story, Page 10



Family photo

Croft and his fiancée, Susie Clark, were planning a summer wedding, she says.

Jobs agency hired comic

Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance paid \$3,500 for act at quarterly meeting.

BY STEVE ANDREWS sandrews@wfa.com

There's nothing funny about being unemployed, but the Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance spent thousands getting a good chuckle, using taxpayer dollars meant to help people find work.

With the state's unemployment rate exceeding 10 percent in May, the jobs agency spent \$3,500 to hire a comedian to perform for its employees at a quarterly corporate meeting.

A year earlier, the agency spent thousands to hold a corporate meeting at the Tampa Improv comedy club.

"We have found, like other businesses have found, is that sometimes the inflection of humor adds to listening to the message," said Renee Gilmore, president of Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance.

See **WORKFORCE ALLIANCE**, Page 8



"It would be a comedy if it weren't true." **BY RYAN STORMS**

Plans raise grad requirements

Florida's standards for high-schoolers are too low and vague, legislators say.

By CATHERINE WHITTENBURG cwhittenburg@tampatrib.com

TALLAHASSEE - Florida is "not truthful" with parents about the fact that earning a high school diploma does not prepare students for college, said a top state education official who called for reform.

Satisfying, but not exceeding, Florida's graduation requirements prepares high school students for one thing: remedial coursework at a community college. Frances Hattcock, state chancellor of K-12 public schools, told a panel of state lawmakers Wednesday.

"We are not transparent to our parents about what a diploma in Florida means," she said. "We need to take action."

Lawmakers in both chambers and both parties say they intend to do just that by adding new

See **SCHOOL PROPOSALS**, Page 6

Health overhaul in jeopardy

Democrats consider options after GOP Senate victory.

By SHERYL GAY STOLBERG and DAVID M. HERSHENHORN The New York Times

WASHINGTON - President Barack Obama signaled Wednesday that he might be willing to scale back his proposed health care overhaul to a version that could attract bipartisan support, as the White House and congressional Democrats grappled with a political landscape transformed by the Republican victory in the Massachusetts

Senate race. "I would advise that we try to move quickly to coalesce around those elements of the package that people agree on," Obama said in an interview on ABC News, notably leaving near-universal insurance coverage off his list of core goals.

It was not clear that even a stripped-down bill could get through Congress anytime soon.

Throughout the day, White House officials and Democratic congressional leaders struggled to find a viable way forward for the health care bill and to digest the

See **HEALTH OVERHAUL**, Page 12

Survivor trapped for 5 days emerges with spirit of hope

By ALFRED de MONTESQUIOU The Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti - Trapped for five days in the rubble of a hospital, nailed to the floor by the leg of a bunk bed, the 23-year-old carpenter played his life over in his mind and dreamed how he would live it differently if a miracle set him free.

"I kept thinking, what a pity to leave so early, with so little accomplished," Benito Revulus said.

Despite a severely infected leg, a punctured lung and numerous gashes

See **MIRACLE RESCUE**, Page 10



In his five days under the rubble, Benito Revulus says, he decided not to waste life if he was saved.

INSIDE

Haitians here illegally are granted temporary amnesty to remain in the United States.

A 5.9-magnitude aftershock rattles Port-au-Prince. **Page 11**



WORKFORCE ALLIANCE

Continued From Page 1

A News Channel 8 investigation found that from February 2008 through June, the Workforce Alliance spent \$36,364 on catered meetings, entertainment and hotel conference centers.

It's not a laughing matter to local lawmakers.

"It would be a comedy if it weren't true," said state Sen. Florida Storms, R-Valrico.

In May 2009, the Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance rented space for a corporate meeting at the Quorum Hotel in Tampa. The \$5,073 tab included a brunch buffet and audiovisual equipment.

Job agency records show it paid "customized corporate comedian" David Glickman \$3,500 to perform.

"We weren't looking for a comedian. We were looking for someone to facilitate the meeting, which we found, a professional speaker to facilitate the meeting and, again, to do it in a way that is engaging," Gilmore said.

The agency also paid \$75 to bring in Tampa's King High School NROTC color guard to perform.

The agency hired a speaker to address employees at a meeting in January 2009. The cost: \$3,200.

The agency paid \$2,200 for fleece blankets to give employees. It spent \$5,000 for a breakfast and lunch buffet.

The Workforce Alliance held a corporate meeting at Tampa Improv in March 2008. Gilmore said corporate meetings are meant to bring agency employees together for cross-training. Records show it paid for meeting space, an open buffet and a show.

The jobs agency also purchased 15 gift certificates for \$20 apiece to hand out to employees. That meeting cost taxpayers more than \$5,800.

"The theme for that particular cross-training event was about improvisation and taking the things that you have. You don't always have the resources you'd like to have to provide service," Gilmore said.

News Channel 8 asked to review records of all corporate meeting expenses. One form



They don't understand what their mission is; they've forgotten what their focus is."

REP. RICH GLORIOSO, on Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance spending

the agency omitted, involving the meeting at the Improv, shows that taxpayers bought Senior Vice President Julie Sannon a \$43 prop from Ebony Beauty Supply.

"I believe that may have been a wig that was worn as part of her delivery of her information," Gilmore said.

That infuriated State Sen. Mike Fasano, R-New Port Richey.

"It's unacceptable. That person [Sannon] should be relieved of her position," he said. Fasano is chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, which has a role in funding Workforce boards.

Is anybody watching?

He wonders whether the Workforce Alliance board of directors is watching.

"If they knew that these dollars were being spent this way, Well, shame on them. And if they didn't know — shame on them," Fasano said.

Storms said, "We don't need them to go to a comedy club. They're performing their own comedy act with taxpayers' money, only nobody's laughing."

Storms has been upset with spending by the Workforce Alliance since a news story revealed the agency spent nearly \$100,000 on food in one year. Now she thinks it's time for a change in the agency's leadership.

State Rep. Rich Glorioso, R-Plant City, is chairman of the Florida House Appropriations Committee, which has a role in funding the state's Workforce agencies.

"A comedy club, that's entertainment," Glorioso said. "How do you hold a meeting at a comedy club? You can't."

"Spending that kind of money to hold a meeting when you have your own facilities — to spend money at a comedy club to hold a meeting is criminal. They don't understand what their mission is; they've forgotten what their focus is."

In December 2008, the

Workforce Alliance held an end-of-year party at Sheraton Tampa Riverwalk Hotel.

It spent \$8,318 for a dinner at the hotel and \$725 for a disc jockey.

"We are a not-for-profit using tax dollars. We have to strike that balance between delivering and maximizing the service and still making sure that the people who are responsible for delivering those services have the information and the skills necessary to do the very best that they can in terms of customer service," Gilmore said.

That's entertainment

The agency receives money from federal and state governments. According to the federal Office of Management and Budget, costs of meetings and conferences held to conduct the general administration of the organization are allowable; costs for entertainment are not.

"They're spending our money that's supposed to be used to train our people to go to work and help get jobs," Glorioso said. "They're spending money to entertain themselves."

In December, the agency budgeted \$7,400 for another corporate meeting at the Quorum Hotel.

Workforce employees say the agency asked employees to dress up as their favorite Hollywood movie star or as paparazzi. The agency postponed the meeting on Nov. 19 after News Channel 8 questioned the agency about its spending.

An e-mail to employees issued that day states: "Because the high volume of customers is expected to continue through the remainder of the year, it is essential that we continue to have all hands on deck, and readily accessible to customers. Consequently, the corporate meeting scheduled for December 4, 2009 is being postponed."

Reporter Steve Andrews can be reached at (813) 221-5779.

LAW & ORDER

Man enters plea on tainted medals

TAMPA — A Lutz man pleaded not guilty Wednesday to charges he faked military commendations.

Angel Ocasio-Reyes, 48, faces federal misdemeanor charges of wearing or displaying the medals, lying about how he received them and using a counterfeit certificate of discharge from the Navy, records show.

He is accused of wearing the Navy Cross, Bronze Star and Purple Heart, which he didn't earn, as well as military decorations denoting service in the war on terrorism, tours of duty in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the liberation of Kuwait, as well as commendation medals from the Marine Corps, records show.

The charges carry up to a year in prison and a \$100,000 fine on each count.

The U.S. Attorney's Office has not released details on how it says Ocasio-Reyes obtained the medals.

Doctor admits guilt on drug charges

TAMPA — A Pinellas County physician has agreed to plead guilty to federal charges that he dealt drugs on the street and defrauded Medicare.

Michael Peter Spuzza, 51, of Seminole, will admit to possession of a controlled, danger-

ous substance with the intent to distribute and making a false claim, according to his plea agreement. The charges carry a combined maximum of 25 years in prison, but Spuzza is likely to receive much less as part of his plea deal.

He has relinquished his medical license after being disciplined, state records show.

2 women charged with robbing man

TAMPA — After kissing a man and stealing his wallet, a 24-year-old Tampa woman tried pushing him out of a car traveling 80 mph, police say.

The attack occurred Jan. 12 in a 2002 Oldsmobile on Interstate 275 near Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

Jessica Gordon, 24, and Jennifer Warren, 22, who are sisters, met the man at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, an arrest report states.

He agreed to ride in Warren's car to the women's home. Inside the car, Gordon started kissing the man and went through his pockets, taking his wallet, before trying to push him from the vehicle, according to the report. He grabbed the steering wheel, threatened to crash the car and they let him out on the interstate.

The women were charged with robbery and were released from jail on \$7,500 bail each.

A staff report

Don't raise taxes or fees, Senate budget panel told

TALLAHASSEE — Florida Senate President Jeff Atwater told the budget writers in his chamber Wednesday not to raise taxes or fees during this election year to close a projected spending gap of up to \$3.2 billion.

The potential deficit is the difference between anticipated revenue and the growing cost of meeting high-priority demands such as education and Medicaid, the state-federal program that provides health care to low-income citizens.

Lawmakers relied last year on \$2.2 billion in fee and tax increases as well as spending cuts

and federal stimulus dollars to balance a \$66.5 billion budget, but Atwater told the Senate Ways and Means Committee that Floridians "do not have one more dime to send us."

Ways and Means Chairman JD Alexander, R-Lake Wales, said the Legislature would have to cut or reorder spending by 3 percent or 4 percent to close the budget gap.

Atwater invited all 40 senators to the meeting that included reports on the status of Florida's economy.

The Associated Press

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TIMES & LOCATIONS

Sat., Jan. 23: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Sun., Jan. 24: Noon - 5 p.m.
Sat., Jan. 30: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Sun., Jan. 31: Noon - 5 p.m.

Tampa 910 East 7th Ave. 4772 1st Worldway Blvd.	Brandon 1175 W. Brandon Blvd. 2700 E. Brandon Blvd.	Citrus Park 2700 E. Brandon Blvd.
Clearwater 2372 U.S. 19 North	St. Petersburg 3100 Tampa Blvd. (at 19th Ave. N.W.)	

Sat., Jan. 23: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Sun., Jan. 24: Noon - 5 p.m.
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Lakeland 3523 Highway 91 North	Sarasota 6700 Lakewood Drive 4700 Lakewood Drive	Port Richey 1100 W. 11th St.
Bradenton 1000 Bradenton Blvd.	Palmdale, FL 1100 W. 11th St.	

SPORTS AUTHORITY

WEATHER HIGH 55, LOW 43 There's a 10 percent chance of rain.

TBO.COM

Keyword: Memorial, for database of Floridians killed in action.

INSIDE

Senator won't seek re-election

Evan Bayh, a Democrat from Indiana, is considered a moderate. DETAILS, Page 10



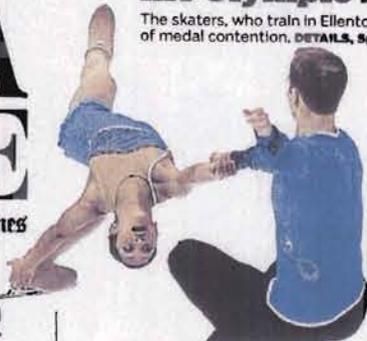
Sen. Evan Bayh

THE TUESDAY 2.16.2010 TAMPA TRIBUNE and The Tampa Times

VANCOUVER 2010

Local pairs hit Olympic ice

The skaters, who train in Ellenton, were out of medal contention. DETAILS, Sports, Page 6



Amenda Evora and Mark Ludwig of the United States finished 10th after the pair's free skate.

'He was truly one of the good guys'

Former Hillsborough County Sheriff Walter Heinrich, who was known for his integrity and innovation, dies at age 83.



Tribune file photo (1983)

Hillsborough County Sheriff Walter C. Heinrich led the sheriff's office through a time of vast changes. The population of the county was growing rapidly, and he foresaw the need to modernize the agency.

By RAY BEYES rbeyes@tampatrib.com

TAMPA - His way of fighting crime still ripples through the county. In his 14 years as sheriff of Hillsborough County, Walter C. Heinrich was known as an innovator who shaped much of the agency's policies and programs for the modern era.

His mark is everywhere: from how deputies are hired and evaluated to how they're trained at the sprawling 270-acre site in Lithia that bears his name. Regarded by many as a towering figure in local law enforcement, Heinrich died Monday morning. He was 83.

Heinrich led the sheriff's office during a time of massive population growth in the county; when he retired in 1992, the agency had doubled in size. "He was a visionary," Hillsborough Sheriff David Gos said. "He saw those changes coming. He knew we couldn't remain a rural sheriff's office. We had to become a metropolitan agency."

Those who knew Heinrich, the father of Hillsborough Circuit Judge Walter R. Heinrich, said the lawman was devoted to his family and never recovered from the death of his wife of 61 years, Phyllis, in 2008. "I suspect that his wife's death caused him a lot of hurt and contributed to his own death," defense lawyer...

See HEINRICH DIES, Page 8

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- 1940s: Moved to Tampa. He served 21 years with the Tampa Police Department and at 27 became the youngest officer in department history to be promoted to captain.
1953: Attended the prestigious FBI National Academy, an intense four-month program.
1964: Awarded the police department's first Award of Valor.
1970: Joins Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office.
1978: Elected sheriff in a landslide. He is re-elected three times.
1992: Retired as sheriff.



Heinrich is sworn in as sheriff as his wife, Phyllis, holds the Bible in 1978.

Workforce president resigns

Gilmore has been criticized for agency's spending of more than \$133,000 on food in a 13-month period.

By STEVE ANDREWS sandrews@wfla.com

TAMPA - Criticized for spending thousands in taxpayer money on lavish meals, Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance president Renee Gilmore has resigned.

Her resignation, effective on Sunday, was announced at the Workforce Alliance board of directors meeting Monday night. Gilmore, who was paid about \$170,000 a year, did not attend the meeting.

The board named James Blount, vice president for service support, to run the agency during the search for an interim president. "Renee Gilmore submitted



Gilmore She handed in her resignation Monday.

her resignation to me earlier this afternoon," board chairman Dale Schumacher announced at the meeting began. "I believe Renee did what she thought was in the best interest of the Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance."

The agency came under criticism after a News Channel 8 investigation revealed that agency officials spent thousands on fancy meals, bands...

See JOBS AGENCY, Page 6

Slaying suspect's brother is a killer

Friend calls man accused in Friday's killing spree a "ticking time bomb."

By JOSH POLTILOVE jpoltilove@tampatrib.com

One is behind bars in a North Carolina prison, a hit man hired to kill a pregnant woman whose boyfriend was a professional football player.

The other sits in a Hillsborough County jail cell, accused in a shooting rampage late last week that left one dead and two others wounded.

Van Brett Watkins. Andre Watkins. Two brothers now both linked to deadly violent crimes.

At 49, Van Watkins is the younger. He pleaded guilty to second-degree murder after the November 1999 shooting of Cherica Adams, girlfriend of then-Carolina Panthers receiver Rae Carruth.

Andre Watkins, 53, has been described as a...

See SHOOTING SPREE, Page 7



Andre Watkins Had previous run-ins with two victims



Van Watkins Guilty of killing NFL player's girlfriend

Crist takes aim at Rubio's bona fides as conservative

By WILLIAM MARCH wmmarch@tampatrib.com



Gov. Charlie Crist is trying to turn the tide of momentum his GOP Senate primary foe is riding.

TAMPA - Facing Marco Rubio's avalanche of momentum in the Republican Senate primary, Gov. Charlie Crist's best shot at winning — and salvaging his political career — is to redefine Rubio's image.

Rubio, Crist will contend, isn't the conservative purist that the

Miami Republican and adoring conservative pundits have claimed.

Crist has the money for ads to repaint Rubio, but will he have the ammunition?

Few politicians could spend a career like Rubio's — 2000-08 in the Florida House, the past two years as speaker with the power

See SENATE RACE, Page 6

Poison gas suicide method endangers first-responders

DETAILS, Page 4

INSIDE ... LOTTERY, 2 | METRO, 5 | OBITUARIES, 17 | NATION+WORLD, 10 | EDITORIAL, 15 | BUSINESS, Back of Sports | MOVIE TIMES, In Classifieds



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SENATE RACE

Continued From Page 1

to control all House legislation — without compromising occasionally.

"Compromising ideas is acceptable. Compromising principles is not," Rubio said. "I've never compromised on my principles."

Rubio's record is conservative. Many supporters of former Gov. Jeb Bush, and even Bush, consider Rubio the inheritor of Bush's anti-government social conservative mantle.

There are areas, however, where the record doesn't match the rhetoric.

In a harbinger of the ad war to come, Crist's campaign is attacking Rubio on these issues. In some cases, Rubio doesn't deny the specifics. Instead, he contends Crist was more liberal on the same issues.

For example, Rubio acknowledges backing a cap-and-trade plan to cut carbon emissions but says that was to forestall a worse Crist plan.

To Crist's charge that Rubio backed a \$60 million tax break for the Florida Marlins stadium, Rubio replies that Crist backed that and other stadium subsidies.

Crist campaign manager Eric Eikenberg responded that Rubio "needs to stand up to his own rhetoric."

Rubio said, "The fact that the governor is falsely attacking me for things he himself supports speaks volumes about his record and his candidacy."

Here are issues on which Crist contends Rubio's record and rhetoric don't match:

Stimulus spending

Blasting Crist for supporting President Barack Obama's economic stimulus plan is the bedrock of Rubio's campaign.

A photo of Crist embracing Obama at a February 2009 rally in Fort Myers to promote the stimulus has become Rubio's iconic campaign image. Last week, Rubio went to Fort Myers to mark the anniversary of the event.

He also opposes the Obama plan for \$13 billion in stimulus spending to begin a national high-speed rail system, including a \$1.25 billion grant for a Tampa-Orlando leg.

Rubio acknowledges that as governor, he would have accepted some of the money.

"The central issue is, if Charlie Crist had been in the Senate he would have been one of only three Republicans to vote in favor of the stimulus plan, and if I had been in the Senate, I would have voted against it," he said.

Once the program was passed, accepting the money is a different question, he said.



Gov. Charlie Crist, left, and then-Florida House Speaker Marco Rubio hug in May 2008 at a ceremony honoring Rubio for his service. Staff file photo

"That's a red herring." "Ultimately, I would have accepted those portions of the money that would not have put Florida in a worse position off in the future than it is right now."

Taxes

"I have never voted for a tax increase," Rubio says on his Web site.

However, he has voted for actions that some neutral observers call increases in a tax he says he abhors: property taxes.

As a West Miami city commissioner in 1998-99, he cast votes on budgets that included property tax increases, according to news reports.

While he was in the House, and property values were soaring statewide, the Legislature shifted the burden of education funding from general revenue to property taxes. It requires school districts to levy, said Kurt Wenner, of Florida TaxWatch, a non-partisan tax watchdog group.

State-required property taxes more than doubled to \$8.2 billion in 2008, Wenner said.

At the same time, the Legislature cut taxes it imposes directly — inheritance taxes, corporate taxes and intangibles taxes — that would have helped pay for schools.

Rubio responds that he never voted to increase tax rates in Miami or statewide.

"I have never supported an increase in the tax rate," he said. The increased revenue was "a function of property values. The tax rate is what the government controls."

Rubio also notes that he sought to do away with all property taxes on homesteaded property, including the school taxes, replacing them with an increase in the state sales tax. That "tax-

swap" idea, which would have required a constitutional amendment, didn't make it through the Legislature.

Rubio has been endorsed by Grover Norquist, a Republican activist and founder of the anti-tax Americans for Tax Reform, who says Rubio has adhered to his "no tax increase" pledge.

Cap-and-trade

Rubio repeatedly has blasted Crist for supporting action against climate change. In particular, for backing a cap-and-trade plan to cut carbon emissions, but in 2008 Rubio backed creation of a state cap-and-trade plan.

Such plans let polluters buy credits for emitting pollutants. Companies that cut emissions get credits they can sell.

In 2008, the Florida Legislature, with Rubio's backing as speaker, passed a bill directing the state Department of Environmental Protection to create such a plan; the House voted unanimously in favor.

Rubio said his goal was to prevent Crist's cap-and-trade plan, which he calls "European-style" and "California-style," from taking effect by executive order.

His bill, he said, would establish a "market-based" plan and give the Legislature, not the governor, the final decision on implementing it.

Rubio said last week that he doesn't accept the scientific evidence for human-caused climate change.

Immigration

In his campaign, Rubio has taken a hard line on illegal immigration — not a popular stance in his heavily Hispanic

home of Miami.

In 2008, Rubio's last year as speaker, he declined to make a priority of proposed bills that would have cracked down on illegal immigration, including requiring law enforcement, social service agencies and government contractors to use federal citizenship verification.

The bills, opposed by Rubio's Hispanic colleagues from South Florida in the Legislature, died in committee.

Rubio responds that the same bills failed to pass before and after he was speaker and that under his leadership the legislation got its only committee hearing.

He also contends Crist is weak on the issue. Crist backed Sen. John McCain's immigration reform plan, reviled by conservatives as amnesty.

Rubio says immigration policy "should consist of border enforcement, fixing the visa process and ensuring that no law extends amnesty to illegal immigrants."

English as official language

In June, Rubio got a major break, an endorsement by South Carolina Sen. Jim DeMint, one of the Senate's hardest-line conservatives, a Tea Party hero and the first senator to break ranks with party brass and back Rubio.

Rubio said then that he agrees with DeMint's positions on issues, including making English the official language. He was quoted as saying only "nuances" separate the two on immigration issues.

One of those nuances is crucial, DeMint says government services and documents should be provided in English only — heresy in much of Florida, par-

ticularly in Miami.

"I do believe English is the official language of the U.S. government. I do believe it's a unifying language," he told the Tribune, but, he added, "I have no problem with documents being translated into, for example, Spanish or Creole."

"I'm not talking about outlawing the ability of government to communicate with people in the language they're familiar with."

Pork

Rubio campaigns as the candidate of limited government; that doesn't mean he has been immune from earmarks, called "turkeys" or "member projects" in Tallahassee.

In 2007, the Legislature, with Rubio as speaker, passed a budget that Florida TaxWatch said had "a near record" 505 turkeys that were worth \$256 million. About one-fifth of them, worth \$47 million, were for Miami-Dade County.

Crist eventually vetoed turkeys worth \$459 million.

Rubio responds that he didn't request any member projects from 2004-08 and that the 2007 budget the House passed was lower than the budget Crist proposed and lower than the previous year's state budget.

Rubio's campaign also offered research comparing his career with that of the previous speaker, Allan Bense.

Rubio requested fewer member projects during his career than Bense, and as speaker he presided over production of final budgets with less turkey spending than Bense's two years, that research states.

Reporter William March can be reached at (813) 259-7761.

JOBS AGENCY

Continued From Page 1

quets and award ceremonies — money meant to help the unemployed find work.

The board of directors for Workforce Florida, the agency that sets policy for the state's regional workforce boards, voted unanimously on Thursday to send a letter to the Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance board, urging that Gilmore be placed on unpaid leave until an inspector general investigation of the agency's spending was complete.

A report by the inspector general for the state Agency for Workforce Innovation found that in a 13-month period, the Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance spent more than \$133,000 on food. Investigators determined \$24,400 was disallowed and must be repaid immediately. Purchases totaling \$81,000 are in question and also might have to be repaid.

Agency records show that Blount attended meetings where lunches and dinners were served.

"I did eat, sometimes I did not, sometimes I brought my own lunch," Blount said in an interview after the meeting.

The inspector general report noted what appeared to be a double standard at the agency: A \$10-per-meal cap for staff was in place, but there was no limit for executives.

Investigators also questioned why agency executives couldn't go to the nearby food conces-



Chairman Dale Schumacher, left, announced Monday the resignation of Renee Gilmore and that James Blount, center, would run the Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance for the time being. Staff photos by JIM REED

sion at the organization's Net Park Corporate location and buy their own meals like inspector general staff did when they were in town.

In its letter to the local agency, the Workforce Florida board noted that many of the expenditures cited in the inspector general report "directly benefited individuals rather than program activities."

The Workforce Florida board decided last week to postpone recertifying the local Workforce Alliance and urged board members to act on its recommendation to place Gilmore on leave.

State Sens. Mike Fasano, R-New Port Richey, and Ronda Storms, R-Valrico, and Hillsbor-



Agency records show that Blount attended meetings where lunches and dinners that are under scrutiny were served.

ough County Commissioner Schumacher said Gilmore called him on Sunday to notify him she was resigning. He re-

"I believe Renee did what she thought was in the best interest of the Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance."

DALE SCHUMACHER

Workforce board of directors chairman, of Renee Gilmore's resignation received official written notice on Monday.

Schumacher also said at the meeting that Senior Vice President Julie Sanon will be out on family medical leave.

The board will form a search committee within the next 10 days. Board members have until close of business Thursday to submit interim president nominees.

"I didn't expect it, but I'm not surprised. I think it was the right decision," Sharp said after the meeting.

The agency's finance committee chairman, Ron Smith, said: "As a finance committee, we were not seeing exceptional items that would raise red flags that would indicate that there was anything going on."

In November, Smith dismissed questions about the agency's food expenditures, calling it "nitpicking."

"Were there some bad judgments made, was there some excessive spending, yes, there was," Smith said at the meeting.

Reporter Steve Andrews can be reached at (813) 221-5773.

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