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MAY 14, 2015

THURSDAY

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University High Titans fired up for first trip to Final Four

By BRIAN LINDER
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ORANGE CITY — Logan Allen got the rock-star treatment Wednesday at University High School.
 A day after pitching the Titans past nationally ranked Orlando Olympia and into the Final Four of the state Class 8A baseball tournament, the sophomore's day was filled with pats on the back and fist bumps.
 His best moment?
 "When I walked into my

More Inside
 Take a look at the teams of the Final Four.
Sports 1B

fourth-period, pre-calculus class, they all gave me an ovation," he said.
 Allen wasn't the only athlete feeling the love.
 The Titans' underdog story — they were just 12-12 heading into the postseason — had

the hallways buzzing.
 University is in the playoffs for the first time in the school's fifth year of existence.
 The Titans have won five of their past six games, and their 7-1 romp over Olympia was a David vs. Goliath moment.
 "I think everyone is way up on Cloud Nine," said Penny Nichols, a standout softball player. "Everybody is on board. We want to see them

SEE **TITANS**, PAGE 7A



University players Julio Medina, left, and Danny Acevedo celebrate during their game against Orlando Olympia on Tuesday.
 University's upset victory earned the team a spot in the state tourney's Class 8A Final Four.

News-Journal/PETER BAUER

FOOD BRINGS HOPE

SCOTT: NO LIMITS

Gov. tells local students to study hard and live their dreams



News-Journal/JIM TILLER

Luis Velazquez from Holly Hill Elementary School shakes hands with Gov. Rick Scott at an awards ceremony Wednesday for Food Brings Hope at Mainland High School in Daytona Beach. Also on stage is Superintendent of Volusia County Schools Tom Russell, left, and Forough Hosseini, founder of Food Brings Hope.

By DUSTIN WYATT
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Gov. Rick Scott told about 600 elementary and high school students Wednesday about some of the luxuries that come with his job: a mansion, two full-time chefs, traveling around the world, dinners at the White House.

"How many of you want to be governor?" he asked, triggering hands to rise throughout the room.
 "Everyone should raise their hands, this is a great deal. ... But how do you get there? You study."

The students in the crowd belong to families that face financial hardships and receive support from an after-school program called Food Brings Hope. Scott, who said his parents struggled to put food on the table at times during his childhood, was the honorary speaker for the year-end celebration at Mainland High School.

SEE **GOVERNOR**, PAGE 7A



More Online

Photos and video from the ceremony
news-journal
online.com

SEE **GOVERNOR**, PAGE 7A

VOLUSIA COUNTY EDUCATION

Schools set rules on gifts from vendors

Issue led to ouster of former superintendent

By ANNIE MARTIN
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DELAND — The Volusia County School Board moved this week to clamp down on gifts that employees can accept from vendors in the wake of a board member's complaints about two employees going for a night on the town on a curriculum company's dime.

Three employees were disciplined this year in connection with a night last November that included a plane ride from DeLand to Orlando and dinner at the Omni Orlando Resort. The trip was paid for by Studies Weekly, a Utah-based company that provides social studies materials to the county's elementary school students.

Board members agreed during Tuesday night's regular meeting to advertise a policy change that, if given final approval, would prohibit employees involved in the purchasing process from accepting gifts valued at more than \$50 from vendors or potential vendors. The same standard already applies to board members.

Board member John Hill presented the allegations against curriculum department employees Jennifer Cleary and Gail Waldon during a Jan. 13 meeting, complete with five photos from Facebook showing Cleary and Waldon outside and sitting in the cockpit of a jet with the name Studies Weekly printed on the tail. He said other Volusia school employees commented on the photos and liked them on Facebook.

Hill, who was elected in November, broached the matter as part of a call to fire former Superintendent Margaret Smith, calling the photos evidence she failed to discourage unethical behavior. Though Smith described Hill's allegations as "without merit or based on a lack of understanding," she stepped down from her position



JOHN HILL

SEE **GIFTS**, PAGE 7A



News-Journal/DAVID TUCKER

Gov. Rick Scott visits Edgewater boat maker Boston Whaler to celebrate job growth in the private sector.
Business 6A



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AT HOME 1D	HOROSCOPE 5D
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CLASSIFIEDS 7D	PUZZLES 3D, 5D
COMICS 4-5D	TELEVISION 2D



FORECAST
 Clouds and sun with a 25% chance of rain.
 High 84; low 71.
WEATHER 6C

CRAIGSLIST SAFE ZONE
 Flagler Beach Police open headquarters for online traders to help stem violence.
LOCAL 1C

AMTRAK DERAILMENT
 Investigators: Train was going 106 mph on a curve where the posted speed was 50 mph
NATION 3A

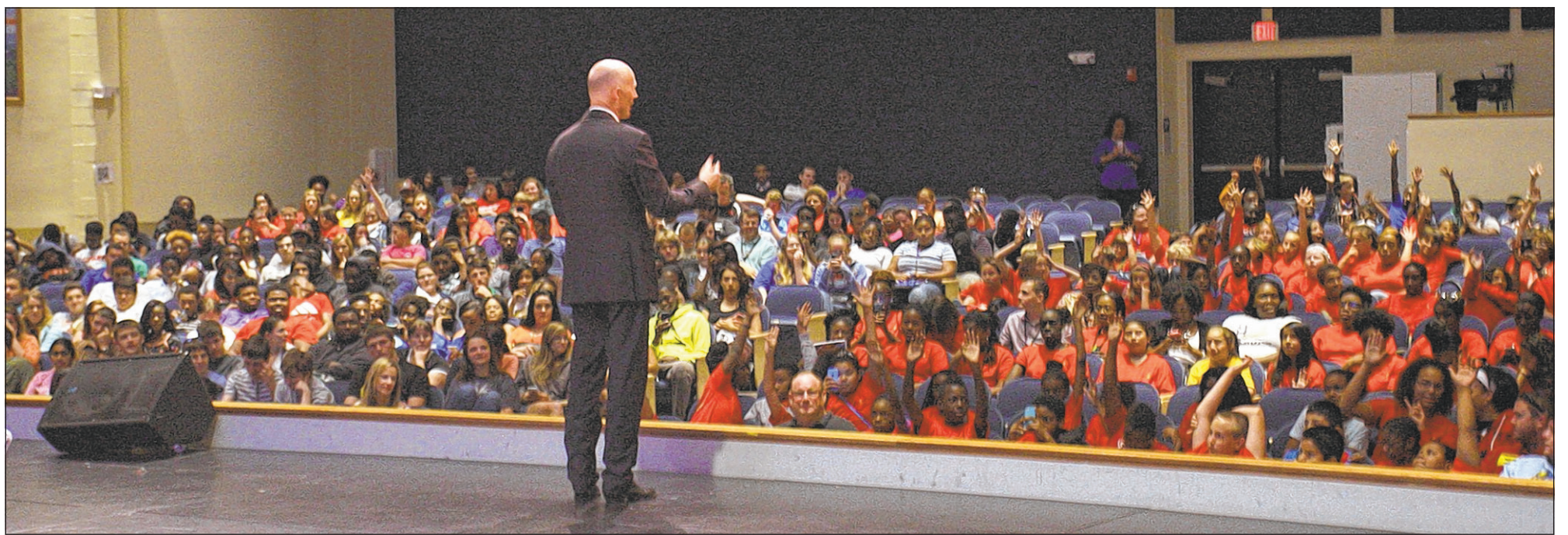
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News-Journal photos/JIM TILLER

Gov. Rick Scott speaks to students at Mainland High School in Daytona Beach during a ceremony Wednesday for the Food Brings Hope program.

GOVERNOR FROM PAGE 1A

“My mother told me: ‘You’re going to study hard, because it’s your only way out of poverty,’ he said. “If you (study), whether you want to be an actor, build a company or be president of the United States, there is no limitations because you live in the greatest country in the world.”

He did not take questions from the media after the ceremony.

Food Brings Hope began in

2007 at one elementary school, providing food, fun and tutoring services to only 27 students. Today, with the help of volunteers and principals, it’s in 14 different schools serving 615 students.

“It’s been wonderful how we have grown,” said its founder Forough Hosseini. “It’s just been amazing.”

After the ceremony, students took buses to Daytona International Speedway for food and games.

“These kids never get the chance to leave their neighborhoods,” Hosseini said. “To

give them the chance to see the Speedway and see what the Speedway is all about is such a good treat for them. This is really a treat.”

Wrapping up his speech about the value of education, Scott invited the students to visit his office in Tallahassee someday.

“Education gave me a shot to live a dream,” he told the students. “Come to Tallahassee, and if I’m not there my office we’ll give you a tour and show you what it’s like to be governor. ... Keep studying hard.”



From left, Forough Hosseini, Gov. Rick Scott and Mori Hosseini listen to speakers at Mainland High School on Wednesday.

TITANS FROM PAGE 1A

win state.” Tuesday’s triumph stretched beyond the campus’ limits.

Coach Frank Martello said he had around 125 texts and emails — some from area coaches and administrators and some that came in from across the state — Wednesday morning.

“I told the guys that this would probably be one of the best days that they’d have in school,” Martello said. “We are getting congratulations from the principal, right down to custodians and workers in the cafeteria.”

And most seemed to be making plans on how they would get to Fort Myers to see the Titans (17-13) play Timber Creek (19-10) in their 7 p.m. game Wednesday.



FRANK MARTELLO

For Martello, that meant a steady stream of teachers and administrators stopping by his office — some even

offering to act as chaperons in exchange for a ride on the team bus.

That brought a smile to the face of senior short-stop Danny Acevedo.

“You can tell that everybody is right there behind us,” Acevedo said. “They want us to go all the way.”

Ed Paige, a 71-year-old substitute teacher, was one of those cheering on the Titans. Paige said he grew up in New York, fell in love with baseball and the Yankees the year before Mickey Mantle broke into the league. Now, he can’t get enough of the Titans.



News-Journal

A sign at University High School in Orange City wishes success to the Titans baseball team, which earned a spot in the state tournament’s Final Four.

“This is something that is going to carry this school for years to come,” Paige said. “These kids are amazing, and this is an incredible journey they’ve been on.” Paige said he had yet to

make his travel plans but hoped to make it to the game.

University also had yet to finalize its travel plans. Martello said a luncheon is planned for the players Friday, and

If You Go

WHAT: Class 8A state baseball semifinal
WHO: University (17-13) vs. Orlando Timber Creek (19-10)
WHEN: 7 p.m. Wednesday
WHERE: JetBlue Park, 11500 Fenway South Drive, Fort Myers (Spring training facility of the Boston Red Sox)
COST: \$9 per day

(Parking: \$10 for cars/\$50 for fan buses)
NEXT GAME: Winner faces Lake Worth Park Vista-Miami Columbus winner for the Class 8A state title at 7:35 p.m. next Thursday in Fort Myers
LIVE COVERAGE: You can follow the game online at news-journalonline.com/sports and on Twitter @dbnjsports

that he hopes to leave for Fort Myers on Tuesday morning.

And, while the idea had been kicked around, plans for a fan bus had not been cemented.

Martello said he still had several meetings in line to discuss financing it all because, after all, it’s new territory for the Titans.

Principal Dennis Neal

said the baseball team is changing the culture on campus.

“There is always the expectation for immediate results in today’s society,” Neal said. “For a program that is just in its fifth year, going into its sixth ... University is on the map. People are taking notice, and they won’t be overlooking us on the schedule.”

GIFTS FROM PAGE 1A

Jan. 27, more than two years from her planned retirement.

The three employees told district staff at the time they didn’t think they’d done anything wrong. Waldon said in an interview with district staff that she didn’t feel the trip was a bribe and that the “entire district goes to dinner with vendors.”

Chairwoman Linda Costello said this week she feels many employees don’t realize how their actions can be perceived because they’re not politically minded people. The policy changes should ensure

everyone understands the rules.

“School district employees don’t realize they work for a government entity,” Costello said.

The trip ran afoul of district policies, as well as Florida Administrative Code. The district hadn’t run into this issue before, spokeswoman Nancy Wait said.

“It certainly brought to light that we needed to have a policy in place,” she said.

After Hill made the allegations, the school district told Cleary, Waldon, and their supervisor, Lyndi Goepfert, they’d be suspended and demoted from their positions. All three appealed the action successfully and received

lesser penalties. Wait said. Cleary and Waldon reimbursed Studies Weekly for the estimated cost of the night out (\$250), completed training and received “letters of caution” from the district. Though Goepfert wasn’t included on the trip, she was ordered to serve a five-day unpaid suspension and complete training for “a lack of professional judgment” because she knew about the outing and didn’t report it. The three women couldn’t be reached for comment.

The night out included a meal for about a dozen people at the David’s Club restaurant valued at \$824.38. Ed Rickers, CEO and owner of Stud-

ies Weekly, said the 1985 Beechcraft King Air 200 turboprop twin engine plane stopped in DeLand while carrying his employees from Jacksonville to Orlando. The group left DeLand about 6:30 p.m. and returned about 11 p.m. that night.

During the 2011-12 school year, Volusia purchased six years of social studies materials from Studies Weekly for elementary students across the county for a total of \$449,259. Rickers said the disposable booklets provide content similar to a traditional textbook.

Cleary, a former teacher on assignment, left the district in March and now

works in Studies Weekly’s Boynton Beach office, where she helps write assessment materials. The company often hires former educators but hasn’t employed anyone else from Volusia, Rickers said Wednesday.

Rickers said he feels the change in the district’s policy is fair, but the night out last fall was never intended as a bribe. He described Hill’s version of events as “a fairy tale.” The company hired Cleary, he said, after she felt the district “threw her under the bus.”

“We felt bad with all of the hell that (Cleary) was put through,” Rickers said.

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WEDNESDAY Supper Club or Lunch Bunch

Dining Review of Local Restaurants THE DAYTONA BEACH NEWS-JOURNAL

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