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editorials

What do we do about cock-a-doodle-doo?

Zephyrills - skydiving mecca, street dancing haven, home of bottled water and retreats - has a dilemma in its youth these days. People are scratching for a solution. What to do with the WM Chickens of Zephyrills? Wild flocks are roaming neighborhoods near downtown. They're walking people early in the morning. They're noisy and, some residents say, destructive to lawns. The townfolk are divided into two camps. You either love them or hate them, those WM Chickens of Zephyrills. People such as Dorothy Hyslop

love them and are even inspired by them. Hyslop, hoping it would help save them, painted a portrait of a chicken and exhibited it at a recent city council meeting. Others, such as Mary Redout, are concerned the chickens pose a health threat through encephalitis. But Pasco County Health Department Director Marc Yacht says about the only health threat the chickens pose is their claws or beak scratches. And the chance of that is kind of remote, he says. "By and large," Yacht says, "they're really shy of people. They just want to get away from you. However,

because there is a number of them, they are a nuisance." Chickens do not cause encephalitis, he says. People are confused, he says, because a special type of chicken is used to test for encephalitis. Mosquitoes cause the disease. Yacht stresses. But it is obvious that the chickens, which apparently flew a domestic coop many years ago, are a pest to several people. That's why the city is trying to do something about them. The question is what. It would be so easy call it so no cared. But given the sympathy of some residents, the city should make

every effort to find someone to trap the fowl and relocate them in a secluded area outside the city. The state Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission South Region in Lakeland doesn't have any officers based in Pasco, but does contract with several local trappers. Although Lt. Rip Sabeay says the chickens are considered "domestic fowl" outside the commission's jurisdiction, perhaps those trappers could "volunteer" their time to help the people in Zephyrills and help the chickens set up coop in a nearby area. That way, both sides would have something to crow about.

Leads are few in mystery of severed finger

A Tribune staff report HUDSON - A woman whose finger was found lying in U.S. 92 remains missing, although detectives have checked a couple of small, dark, short-haired, spikemouth Kevin Dool said Thursday.

Just recently, a hiker reported seeing Diane Augt, 40, of Odessa walking north on U.S. 92 near New York Avenue the afternoon of April 11. Dool said. Her mother reported her missing that day.

Part of Augt's finger was found in that same area by a woman walking to work April 15. Another tip came in three days later that some of Augt's possessions were stolen or moved out of her Odessa home, Dool's reports said. Before she disappeared, Augt reportedly had allowed people to have parties there.

Detectives aren't sure if there is any connection in her disappearance. Anyone with information is asked to call Detective Jeff Bonquist at (813) 847-9678, Ext. 7427.

WATER/Pasco approves water pact

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peacefully Pasco residents, but the pact isn't making other member governments completely happy either, said George Nickerson, a West Coast-based lawyer who helped broker the deal.

"While no one had ever 'thing they wanted to do, I think it's fair to say I had everything they needed," said Nickerson.

West Coast Pasco commissioners during their meeting that the Tampa City Council, which also took up the issue Thursday morning, had approved the pact. Florida legislators later Thursday passed the necessary changes that will allow West Coast to alter its state-granted charter.

■ **Water Rights** covers Pasco County government. Reach him at (813) 855-5892.

Plugging private schools

There are a slew of sound reasons a growing number of parents want to take their children out of public schools and enroll them in safer, more efficient private schools. Issues such as providing their children a better education, having and enjoying public schools are clearly at the top of the list.

Many politicians, bureaucrats and school administrators have already learned that public schools often do not consider their child's best interests and have been so expelled their kids in private ones. Problem is, while many of the aforementioned groups live relatively content lifestyles funded by taxpayers, they don't want the children of less affluent parents to have an equal opportunity for the best educational experience possible. A merger tax voucher that would assist average parents in affording their children a relatively safe and complete private education is often utilized by opponents as an attempt to undermine the sanctity of the public school system as if that would necessarily be a bad thing. In Florida's falling public

schools, students face huge obstacles to learning that were virtually nonexistent for their parents and grandparents 20 years ago. Today, we routinely read about young female students being raped in school bathrooms, multiple students being shot to death in hallways and classrooms, and young bodies being buried and buried by falling switchblades on school grounds. Current battleships, often, students who should be concerned with things like adolescent love and SAT's instead fear for their very lives in school. Meanwhile, public school administrators who receive salaries and perks comparable to those of governors' term political allies with anti-school-choice politicians, all bent on showing public policies that detract from the educational choices available to the children of Florida.

Incredibly, in 1998, children are still forced to walk through dangerous pedestrian traffic to accommodate the whims of busling advocates. Among public school administrators continue to draw up new regulations that force these children to be

letters

Volunteers praised

I would just like to acknowledge publicly a wonderful volunteer program in Pasco County that gets very little recognition. The Pasco County Freedom For Counselor Program has numerous women who volunteer their time to provide information and support to mothers who are breast-feeding. All of the peer counselors have been trained at least one child for six months or longer and have gone through a training program and sponsored by the Deane Health Department, WIC/Nutrition Division. These women spend many hours keeping themselves informed of the most up-to-date research on

breast-feeding so they can supply accurate information. They use their personal experiences to help women through difficult times. The peer counselors volunteer to provide services because they know how limited breast-feeding information and support are in Pasco. They also know how frustrating it is to need help and not know where to get it or be told to "just give the baby a bottle of formula."

—LARRY CLIFTON Land O' Lakes

—JUDY W. COOPER Pasco County Health Department New Port Richey

Advertisement for Suncoast Home, Garden, & Remodeling Show. Includes details about the show's location, dates (May 1-3, 1998), and features like 'Everything for your Home & Garden', 'New Show Features!', and 'Save \$1.00' on admission. Also includes information about the Land O' Lakes Chamber of Commerce Business and Taste of the Towne Expo.