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How the storied family put Manalapan on the high-society map



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Win or lose tonight, he's a star for the ages

**IN SPORTS** 

# The Palm Beach Post

Saturday, May 30, 2009

The Home Page of Paradise

'You have to be careful you don't get caught on the

softball field by some guy with a bat.'



ALFREDO ESTEPA, doing time for drugs



## Convicts solving conflicts



Mediation instructor John Cohen works with prisoners in the South Bay Correctional Peer Education Mediation Program this month.

### Inmates learn how to mediate flare-ups, with the goal of helping others.



An inmate takes notes during a mediation class. Showdowns over real or perceived slights happen all the time in prison, inmates say.

> PRACTICING PEACE IN PRISON Can convicts learn how to think before acting out?

PalmBeachPost.com/yourpost

By JOHN LANTIGUA Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

SOUTH BAY — Juan Cervante sums up every convict's nightmare. "You come in here sentenced

to a year, you get into it with some guy, and the next thing you Beach County in 2005 after know that year turns into a life sentence," he says. In other words, an argument

with another inmate, in the hothouse confines of prison, turns violent. You hurt him or kill him — maybe even in self-defense - and corrections officials throw

away the key. Inmates know such calamities

happen and that is one reason why, on a recent day at South Bay Correctional Facility, 20 of 1,863 residents sat in class listening carefully to former British magistrate John Cohen.

Cohen, who moved to Palm working as a judge in Britain for 12 years, is a professional mediator. He sports jacket and tie and speaks with a British accent. His students wear prison uniforms and a museum's worth of tattoos.

"I'm training this group to mediate conflicts between other inmates in this prison before those

See MEDIATION, 8A ▶

## **Prelude** to panic: Tax rolls plummet

With countywide values lower than feared, scrambling officials ponder tax hikes, layoffs and sharp cuts.

By JENNIFER SORENTRUE Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

WEST PALM BEACH — The financial forecast for Palm Beach County and its municipalities was already bleak.

On Friday it became dire.

Many local cities learned that their tax base has plummeted even faster than Property Appraiser Gary Nikolits had projected last month, when he was expecting the quickest free fall since the Great Depression.

Now people may have to search even further back for comparisons, Nikolits said Friday.

"I can't imagine anything has been this widespread," he said. "There was a bust way back in the 1800s.

In late April, Nikolits' office estimated that the total value of taxable properties countywide had fallen nearly 12 percent since 2008. But a new estimate released Friday puts the drop at 13.5 percent, leaving many local governments with a larger-than-expected hole in their finances.

It's too soon to say how all the cities will react, but the major options include tax hikes, layoffs and sharp cuts in services. On Thursday, county administrators proposed a 13.5 percent tax-rate increase and layoffs of 175 workers.

In Lake Worth, managers had been bracing for a 15 percent drop in the tax base. But Nikolits' new estimate puts the decrease at 24.3 percent.

See VALUES, 4A ▶

### The biggest losers

Largest estimated declines in property tax bases among Palm Beach County municipalities:

Loxahatchee Groves: 26.3 percent Lake Worth: 24.3 percent Greenacres: 23.8 percent Palm Springs: 23.6 percent **Hypoluxo:** 20.9 percent

### Snitching on McCarty lops 2 years off Newell's prison term

'The greater good is served,' a federal judge says.

By GEORGE BENNETT and SUSAN SPENCER-WENDEL Palm Beach Post Staff Writers

WEST PALM BEACH — Disgraced former Palm Beach County Commissioner Warren Newell's willingness to corruption.

sing from behind bars might not have gone over well with Pensacola, but on Friday it earned him a hefty reduction in his five-year sentence for

Marra slashed two years from Newell's sentence after prosecutors said his cooperation helped them nail former Commissioner Mary McCarty on his fellow federal inmates in corruption charges. She faces also is helping them with other as much as five years in prison criminal investigations, which at her sentencing next week.

"But for Mr. Newell's cooperation, Mary McCarty would

State universities to raise tuition

U.S. District Judge Kenneth still be on the county commission," Marra said during a brief hearing at the federal courthouse on Clematis Street. The greater good is served.'

Prosecutors said Newell they did not discuss publicly.

Newell's testimony See NEWELL, 4A ▶

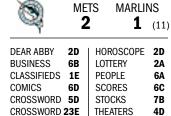


The former county official's testimony provided authorities with 'critical' information, an assistant U.S. attorney says. RICHARD GRAULICH 2007 staff file photo

Newell sings:

### Judge to Cuba: Pay up

In Miami, he awards man \$1 billion over father's 1959 suicide. Story, 2A



4B

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4D

### 15 percent; largest hike in 17 years By KIMBERLY MILLER Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

All of Florida's public universities plan to increase tuition 15 percent in the fall, the maximum allowed under a new state law and the biggest rate hike students have seen in 17 years.

"It's awful, there are no jobs but tuition is going up," said Stuart resident Andy Werner, whose daughter attends the University of Central Florida.

Werner said both he and his wife lost their jobs this year.

The costs go up, and you're thinking, Where is the money going to come from?" Werner said. For most students, the tuition increas-

es mean they will pay between \$370 and \$400 more for a full 30-credit year. The hikes are particularly biting be

### **FAU increase**

'08-'09 per credit: \$82.03\* '09-'10 per credit: \$94.33\* '09-'10 full year: \$2,830\* \*Does not include fees.

■ See all state school increases, 5A

■ FAU to lay off 30 workers. Local, 1B

cause Bright Futures Scholarships will

not pay for the extra tuition. Schools were required to give the Board of Governors their 2009-10 tuition proposals by Friday. For the first time, all 11 universities have the power to raise

tuition above what lawmakers set to 15 See TUITION, 5A ▶

