



Public Defense In Jeopardy

Lawmakers' cuts could mean some criminals get off scot-free

"The court system, in effect, is imploding under this weight of the bad economy,"

— State Rep. Darryl Rouson

BY EVAN WILLIAMS

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The U.S. Constitution guarantees the right to a fair trial and that means having an attorney.

But there may not be enough money in state coffers to provide adequate representation for the poor.

The courts take on thousands more cases every year, yet the state Legislature has responded with budget cuts, said Kathleen Smith, the public defender for the 20th



Kathleen Smith

Judicial Circuit. Further cuts will mean some alleged criminals might not be provided a public lawyer.

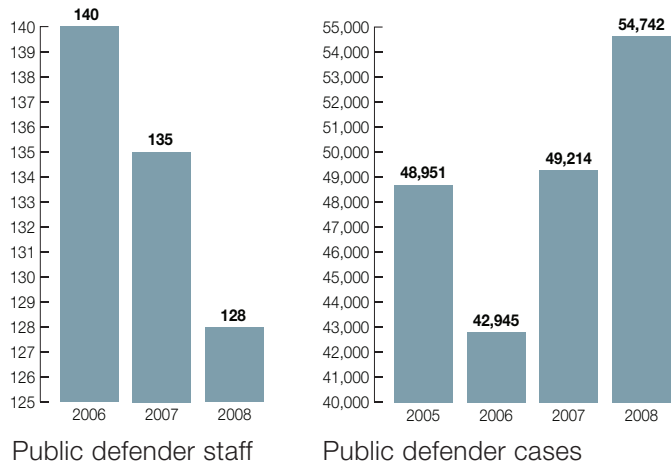
"It will come to a point where I'll have to ask the court to not be appointed some cases," Ms. Smith said.

"America was founded on that right: access to the courts and adequate representation. We feel that is being jeopardized by our eroding budgets and staff. It's really impeding us carrying out our mission."

>>Inside: Percentage of cases by county A9

SEE DEFENSE, A9 ▶

20th Judicial Circuit



Teaching the ancient art of magic

BY E.I. ROTTERSMAN

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Terry Harris knows how to capture a child's attention and imagination without the use of video games or high-tech wizardry.

One could call it magic.

Mr. Harris does. After all, he is Terry "The Trickster" Harris, a member of the Society of American Magicians (founded by Harry Houdini in 1906).

Although Mr. Harris has been a practicing magician since his first paid show — at the age of 10 — pulling rabbits out of hats or

making people disappear is not the magic he loves best.

He considers his greatest performance teaching children how to perform magic tricks.

For the past three years, Mr. Harris, with the assistance of another magician — Peter Washburn of Cape Coral — has been running the Society of Young Magicians in Fort Myers. He started the chapter to give youngsters ages 7 to 17 a way to learn the art of magic. The long-established Society of



COURTESY PHOTO

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Terry "The Trickster" Harris.

INSIDE



'All Shook Up'

Evan Adamson shakes up tradition with his set design at the Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre. C1 ▶



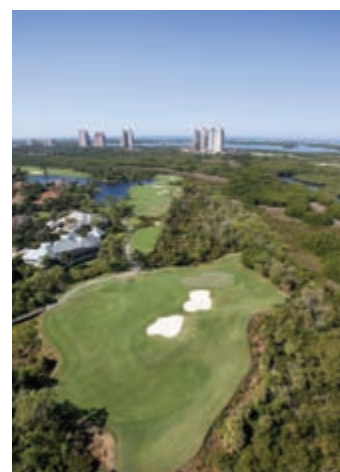
Valentine's Day

See who was out and about in Lee County society. C34, 36 & 37 ▶



The Boss

Chris Spiro's marketing firm turns 20 years old. B1 ▶



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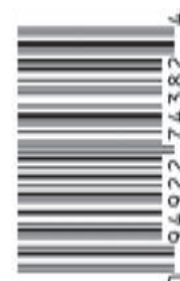
NETWORKING B10 & 11
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