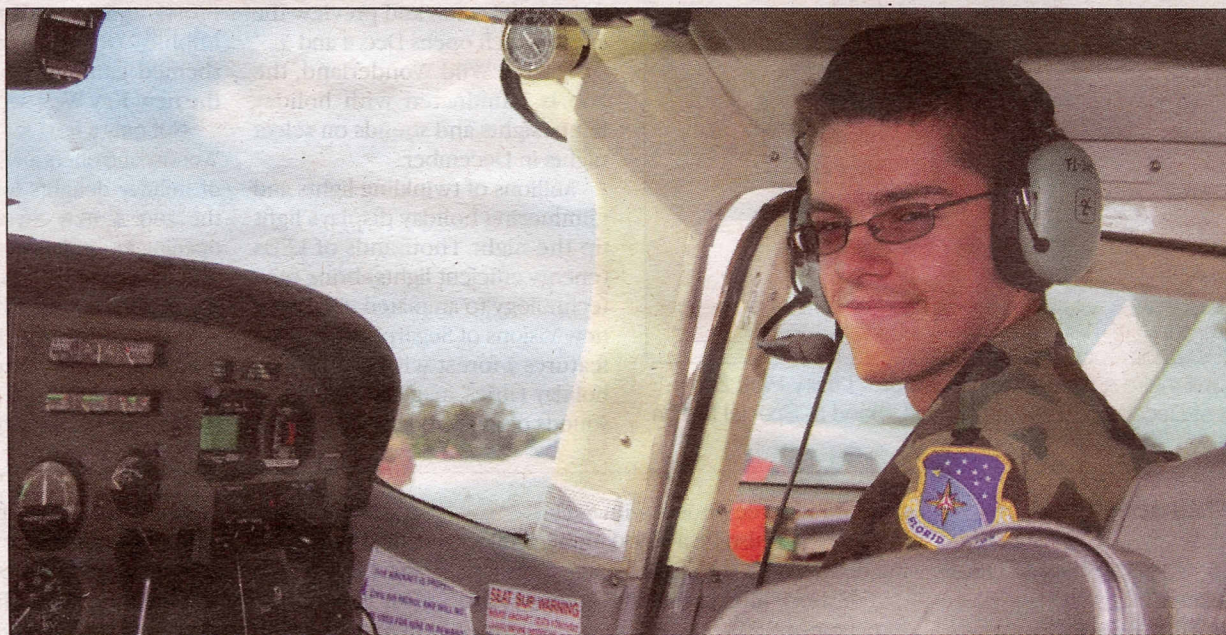


WESLEY CHAPEL

# The LAKER

*It's Not Wednesday Until You Read The Laker!*

| December 2, 2009



Cadet 1st Lt. Alec Lampasona prepares to fly and co-pilot a Civil Air Patrol Cessna 182 during monthly Fly Day activities at Clearwater Airpark. Special to The Laker.

## New squadron opens in Wesley Chapel

**Air Force official auxiliary for all who love flying**

**By Kyle LoJacono**  
*Staff Writer*

WESLEY CHAPEL — Until recently, Civil Air Patrol Members from Wesley Chapel had to journey outside their town for meetings.

"It is a little drive to get out here each

week," said 1st Lt. Steve Lampasona, Senior Deputy Commander for the Pasco Cadet Squadron of the CAP.

The Pasco Squadron meets in New Port Richey, and Lampasona, 54, has been a member for nine years. His wife, 1st Lt. Joyce, and son, cadet 1st Lt. Alec, are also members.

Lampasona has lived in Wesley Chapel for the last 11 years and recently helped bring a squadron to his hometown.

"I'm helping run both squadrons now

so that the Pasco Squadron doesn't get hurt by me and some of the cadets going to the Wesley Chapel Squadron," Lampasona said.

The Wesley Chapel Squadron's first meeting was Oct. 21, and it meets each Wednesday from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at the Tampa North Aero Park.

There is also a new CAP squadron in Zephyrhills. For more information on the Zephyrhills Squadron, e-mail Rebekah

**See SQUADRON, page 28**



Members of the North Tampa-Lutz Cadet Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol were invited to perform the presentation of the colors during the Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem for the first Ronald Reagan Day Dinner on Oct. 9 at The Pepin Center. Pictured are Alexis Zayas, Casey Repko, Florida Gov. Charlie Crist, Sean Fox and Cody Sugg. Special to The Laker.

## SQUADRON, from page 1

Davison at eveningstar3619@msn.com.

Lampasona explained the CAP is the official auxiliary of the Air Force that started during World War II, during which it worked directly with the military and sunk several German U-boats. Some involved in the CAP have military backgrounds, but many, like Lampasona, do not.

"I joined because I was a pilot and was looking for additional reasons to fly," Lampasona said. "The (CAP) has the largest single-engine fleet in the world with almost 600 aircrafts. So it's a good thing for a pilot to be involved in."

Today, cadets in the CAP are both girls and boys between 12 and 21 years old. After age 21, they can be senior members and continue to enjoy the organization.

The CAP now has three missions: emergency services; aerospace education; and cadet programs. The first mission involves providing support during homeland security and disaster recovery situations. Lampasona said that the CAP helps with search and rescue of 90 percent of the inland aircraft crashes in the United States.

The education mission provides educational materials to schools, and the cadet programs are all the activities at the weekly meetings. At CAP meetings, cadets learn about the Air Force and other aerospace topics. Members go through physical and written tests to earn rank and also go through character development programs.

The national CAP is broken into eight regions and further into wings for each state. Florida CAPs are in the Southeast Region, Florida Wing.

For kids who love flying, the CAP is just what they need to express their talents and interests.

"I want to go to the Air Force Academy, so the patrol is great for me," Tyler Gay, 13, said. "When I was about 5, my parents would find drawings of plans in my stuff... The program teaches a lot of leadership and different qualities that will help me later."

Gay, of Land O' Lakes, attends Pine View Middle and is a cadet tech sergeant in the

North Tampa-Lutz Cadet Squadron, which meets at the Old Lutz Schoolhouse on US 41 from 7 to 9:30 p.m. each Tuesday. For more information on the North Tampa-Lutz Squadron, visit [www.northtampacadet-squadron.com](http://www.northtampacadet-squadron.com).

"We have kids from all over north Tampa and up into Land O' Lakes," said Diane Westcott, senior member of the North Tampa-Lutz Squadron. "One of our big events is our Santa Breakfast that kicks off the nights of the decorated Christmas house at the Old Lutz Schoolhouse."

The breakfast is Dec. 12 from 9 a.m. to noon and the first night of the Christmas house is that evening.

Some of the more exciting activities CAP members do is fly airplanes and gliders. They also fly around the perimeter during operations like shuttle launches to make sure the airspace is clear.

Gay has not gone gliding yet but has flown a Cessna 172.

"It was amazing to fly," he said. "At first, I was just thinking don't crash. After I got over that, it was like the plane was me and I was the plane. I love every minute of it."

For more information on the CAP, visit [www.gocivilairpatrol.com](http://www.gocivilairpatrol.com).



Logo of the Florida Wing of the Civil Air Patrol.

## Local Civil Air Patrol Squadrons

Wesley Chapel Squadron meets at the Tampa North Aero Park on Wednesdays. E-mail [slampasona@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:slampasona@tampabay.rr.com)

Zephyrhills Squadron meets at the AeroCenter at the Zephyrhills Airport on Wednesdays. E-mail [eveningstar3619@msn.com](mailto:eveningstar3619@msn.com).

North Tampa-Lutz Squadron meets at the Old Lutz Schoolhouse on Tuesdays. E-mail [wwdw@verizon.net](mailto:wwdw@verizon.net).

Pasco Cadet Squadron meets at River Ridge High on Mondays. E-mail [slampasona@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:slampasona@tampabay.rr.com).