

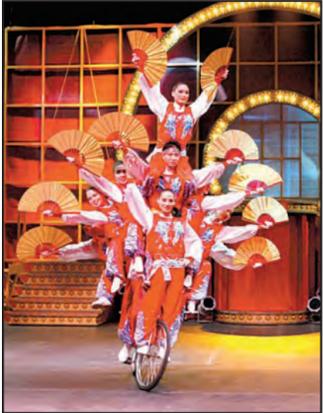


Ashton Kutcher stars in 'New Year's Eve,' romance, comedy

Also opening in theaters this weekend is 'The Sitter' and 'I Melt With You' ... Page 1B.



ENTERTAINMENT



Acrobats coming to Tarpon Springs

The Golden Dragon Acrobats represent the best of a time-honored tradition that began more than 25 centuries ago. The Golden Dragons are recognized throughout the United States and abroad as the premiere Chinese acrobatic touring company of today. The Golden Dragons combine award-winning acrobatics, traditional dance, spectacular costumes, ancient and contemporary music and theatrical techniques to present a show of breathtaking skill and spellbinding beauty.

... Page 5B.

LARGO Mobile food trucks to be discussed

City commissioners have scheduled a work session Dec. 13 on a proposed ordinance regulating food trucks.

... Page 2A.

COUNTY Council member to become mayor

Sandra Bradbury, current Pinellas Park councilwoman and daughter of a former mayor, will take over as Pinellas Park mayor in March.

When the qualifying period ended Nov. 22, Bradbury was the only candidate who had qualified for mayor.

... Page 5A.

PET CONNECTION Speaking of pets

Beautiful holiday plants and flowers can pose a health hazard to our pets. Dr. Kim Donovan of Oakhurst Veterinary Hospital in Seminole lists the plants and symptoms to watch out for.

... Page 10A.



VIEWPOINTS Bob Driver

All about obituaries. What you didn't know - See Driver's Seat

... Page 11A.



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Pets of the week	10A
Schools	9A
Viewpoints	11A

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City OKs plan for construction loan

Final vote set for Dec. 13 on financing of Highland Recreation Center work

By TOM GERMOND

LARGO - City commissioners are moving forward with plans to borrow \$17 million for the Highland Recreation Center construction project through two loans at interest rates of 1.72 and 1.74 percent.

They unanimously approved a loan proposal Dec. 6 of up to \$20 million from JP Morgan Chase Bank for the recreation complex and the refinancing of an existing wastewater fund loan. Commissioners authorized staff to lock in the interest rate through an agreement with the bank.

City officials plan to finance the loan with proceeds

from the 1-cent local option sales tax revenue. Payments on the loan will be made for a period up to Jan. 1, 2020. The interest rates were lower than city officials expected.

"We've been projecting 3 to 4 percent," said city Finance Director Kim Adams.

The 40,000-square-foot complex is expected to be built on the existing site off Highland Avenue. The current complex was built in 1972 and has leaks and other structural problems. Construction is expected to begin in January.

Commissioners plan to vote on a resolution giving final approval for the two loans at their meeting Tues-

day, Dec. 13. The resolution will establish final loan terms.

City officials have said borrowing money from a bank is a better option than issuing bonds because of the relatively short borrowing period and lower costs involved. A similar plan was used to finance the new Community Center, which is being financed with a loan at 3.4 percent interest. The cost to borrow the money for the recreation complex would be about \$1.25 million.

Commissioner Harriet Crozier asked if Chase Bank

See LOAN, page 2A

That's the spirit



Photo JIM LAYFIELD

Kay Wade of Seminole and Rich Wilson of Safety Harbor try the chocolate fountain at the Death by Chocolate event sponsored by the Rotary Club of Largo and held at the Largo Cultural Center Dec. 2. The event is the club's largest fundraiser.



Photo by TOM GERMOND

Don and Linda Gignac, with their granddaughter Katelyn Gignac 3, all of Largo enjoy the parade as floats pass by during Largo's Christmas Parade Dec. 3, which weaved its way through downtown to Ulmer Park. Participants in the parade rode floats and threw out beads and candy to dozens of spectators who lined the streets. More pictures of the parade are on page 13A.

A passion for music

Firefighter enjoys singing opera, tuning pianos

By BOB McCLURE

LARGO - It's not every day that you run into a firefighter who moonlights as an opera singer and a piano tuner.

But as 55-year-old Nolan Marshall, a 16-year veteran of the Largo Fire Department, points out, he moonlights as a firefighter to support his passion for music.

To hear Marshall sing, it's evident. The bass baritone vocalist puts every ounce of energy in his soul into his craft - something he has only recently discovered.

At 6-foot, 6 inches and 280 pounds, he looks like he could be a former NFL defensive end, but that's far from his genetic makeup.

Actually, opera was far from his mind until 2003 when he was called upon by well-known opera tenor Giorgio Aristo to move a grand piano for opera singer Horst Hoffmann, who was relocating to Belleair from Australia.

"He (Aristo) heard my voice and asked me about singing," said Marshall, a former volunteer fireman and resident of Seminole. "He had me sing some scales and all of the sudden he's teaching me two times a week."

Later Hoffmann joined the process. "Who on this planet can say that?" asked Marshall.

Slowly the two opera stars molded the Fond du Lac, Wis., native into an effective opera performer.

Finally, Marshall said, he found what means the most to him.

"Singing is a natural thing. It's a God-given thing, of sorts."

- Nolan Marshall Largo firefighter

"Singing is a natural thing," he said. "It's a God-given thing, of sorts. To me, it's now my passion in life."

He sings regularly at First Lutheran Church in Clearwater and performed Dec. 4 at Grace Lutheran Church in St. Petersburg with the Pinellas Lutheran Choir's production of Handel's "Messiah."

On Dec. 9 at 7 p.m., he will sing as part of a Christmas program at Belleair Town Hall.

However, opera is clearly his favorite style of music.

"The story lines are designed to grab emotions and make people cry," Marshall said. "That's what opera does and that's why I love it."

Among his favorite operas is "The Flying Dutchman" by Richard Wagner, which tells the story of a mysterious ghost character that comes back every seven years to find a woman who will be faithful to him through eternity.

His favorite opera singers include the late

See FIREFIGHTER, page 3A



Photo by BOB McCLURE

Nolan Marshall demonstrates his opera singing skills in his home studio.

County commissioners discuss new ideas for EMS

By SUZETTE PORTER

CLEARWATER - Pilot programs, pension concessions from St. Petersburg, cost-savings on a contract renewal with Paramedics Plus, EMS millage rates by district, fire fees and more.

Pinellas County commissioners talked about several new ideas to cut costs for Emergency Medical Services during a work session Nov. 28.

Paramedics, firefighters and other interested parties filled the commission chamber to talk about proposed changes to EMS. Should the county continue to con-

tract with a private company, Paramedics Plus, to run Sunstar, or should local fire departments take over ambulance service.

Sunstar employees, many long-time county residents, expressed concern about losing their job. They worry that fire departments won't hire them because their expertise is with health care - not fighting fires. Paramedics employed at local fire stations also are worried about their jobs due to a second plan that calls for funding fewer positions at municipal fire departments and fire districts.

No one wants to change the current system of provid-

ing EMS services that garners praise as one of the best in the nation. It all comes down to affordability in the current economy.

However, commissioners are concerned about the growing dissension as people and organizations take sides.

"There are no bad guys in this scenario," said Commissioner Ken Welch, who requested the 8 a.m. Monday meeting.

See EMS, page 4A

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City commissioners to discuss rules for food vendors

By TOM GERMOND

LARGO – City commissioners have scheduled a work session Dec. 13 on a proposed ordinance regulating food trucks.

Commissioners liked the concept of allowing mobile food vendors in Largo, but raised many questions Oct. 18 about regulating them.

Some raised concerns about possible competition between a restaurant and a mobile food vendor parked near a restaurant.

City officials addressed those concerns and others. They said in a memo that landlords typically try to accommodate real estate exclusivity for tenants as much as reasonably possible since the success of their tenants is in their best interest as well.

"While some competition is inevitable, due to the nature of the food truck business, which features

unique, 'to go' foods, it is likely that they do not provide direct competition with the services provided by a sit-down restaurant," the memo said.

Another concern was that the typical mobile food vendor would serve as a moving sign. City officials said that restricting the vendors from using the colorful vinyl wrappings could defeat the intent of the ordinance because they would lose their identities and not be visible from the roadway.

The potential for illegal disposal of grease by mobile food vendors also was discussed. The ordinance would allow city officials to inspect commissary logs for the disposal of fats, oil and grease at the mobile food vendor's commissary. All state-licensed mobile food vendors must have a local commissary that they use to prepare, store and dispose of their waste at the end of the day.

City officials also are recommending that a review

of the ordinance be undertaken before the end of the first year that it is in effect.

The mobile food vendors' popularity is increasing in Florida, and several are operating in the Tampa Bay area.

According to a recent consumer survey, nearly six out of ten American adults say they would be likely to visit a food truck if their favorite restaurant offered one, up from 47 percent just one year ago, the National Restaurant Association said on its website.

"Though food trucks are often equated with chefs and entrepreneurs, they also present opportunities for operators of established restaurants to expand their operations and presence, as a majority of consumers say they would visit a food truck run by their favorite restaurant. Mobile foodservice can be a good way to extend an existing restaurant brand

beyond the four walls of the establishment," said Hudson Riehle, senior vice president of the Research and Knowledge Group for the National Restaurant Association.

Also under the proposed city ordinance, the permitting fee for the vendors is \$200. Vendors can only operate on nonresidential private parcels and not on the public rights of way. Proposed operating hours are 6 a.m. to 3 a.m. The vendors won't be allowed to be present on one location more than 24 hours at a time.

"A site visit in October to a local MFV by staff and administration provided a better understanding of the business model and the ability to make sure that the ordinance would be fair and reasonable to the vendors while meeting the city's objectives required to properly monitor the industry," a city memo said.

LOAN, from page 1A

had bid before on projects.

"No, they are a relatively new player in this market," Adams said.

He said that the city's bond counsel has dealt with Chase on other deals and "they found them to be very professional."

"We do have good references on them," he said.

In other matters Tuesday, commissioners approved an amended development order for the Bay Area Outlet Mall, which is located at the southeast corner of U.S. Highway 219 and Roosevelt Boulevard, on the site of the former Crossroads Mall.

The project is considered a development of regional impact, undergoing a state and regional review process.

The development is approved for 646,460 square feet of retail area, 30,000 square feet of office area and 258 condominiums or apartments. A bus transfer station will also be on the property.

The developer is the Sembler Co. of St. Petersburg.

"Traditionally, you guys do an excellent job," Commissioner Curtis Holmes said, speaking to a Sembler representative.

Among its many projects is the 800,000-square-foot Oakleaf Town Center in the southwest portion of Duval County; the Boynton Town Center, featuring 400,00 square feet of retail, 10,000 square feet of office space and more than 1,100 residential units and Town Brookhaven in Atlanta, Ga., which will consist of 600,00 square feet of big box retail, junior anchors, restaurants and boutiques.

Detectives seek suspect in robbery

LARGO – Robbery/homicide detectives are asking for the public's help to identify a man wanted in connection with the Dec. 3 robbery of the Achieva Credit Union, 10125 Ulmerton Road.

The suspect is described as a white male, 40 to 50 years old, about 5 foot 7 inches to 5 foot 8 inches tall and weighing about 170 to 180 pounds. He was last seen wearing jeans, black sneakers with white trim, a royal blue short-sleeve polo shirt, and a beige cap.

According to Pinellas County sheriff's detectives, the suspect entered the bank about 3 p.m., approached the teller, implied a weapon and demanded cash. The teller complied with the demand and the suspect then fled the bank with an undisclosed amount of cash.

Anyone with information that may assist investigators in this case is asked to contact Detective Jeff Capra of the Robbery/Homicide Unit at 582-6200.

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Around Largo

City events



Free genealogy/family history classes, December, Largo Library, 120 Central Park Drive.

Description: "Free classes this month include: How to use the huge ancestry.com genealogy collection; details of the 1940 census records to be released in April 2012; How to overcome brick walls in your genealogy research and more. See the complete listing with details of classes and scheduled times at www.flpg.org/classes.aspx. Email Bob Bryan at BBryan84@gmail.com or call 595-4521 for more information."

The event is free.
Holiday showcase, Dec. 10, 2 to 4 p.m., Largo Community Center, 400 Alt. Keene Road.

Description: "Enjoy an afternoon filled with dancing and singing. Entertainment includes the Tutterow Dancers, Pizazz and Talent Show Stars. This special seasonal showcase supports the Largo Community Center."
Fees are \$10.

Storytime with Mrs. Claus, Dec. 10, 9:30 to 11 a.m., Southwest Recreation Complex, 13120 Vonn Road.

Description: "Join Mrs. Claus for storytime, crafts and a holiday snack. Time will be set aside for your little one to take a picture with Mrs. Claus, so don't forget to bring your camera. Registration is required by Tuesday, Dec. 6. For more information call 518-3125."

3125."

The fee is \$5 per child.
Happy Holidays Car Show, Dec. 10, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Largo Community Center.

Description: "Enjoy a wonderful afternoon of classic and beautiful cars and see some of the area's nicest cars."
Call 518-3146.

Free to attend. Entry into car show is \$10.

Habitat Cleanup Day, Dec. 12, 9 to 11:30 a.m., George C. McGough Nature Park, 11901 146th St. N.

Description: "Help us protect our Largo nature parks from offshore debris and invasive/exotic plants that choke out our native vegetation. We will be working to remove trash and waste from our two nature parks. Participants also will help to remove invasive air potato and Brazilian pepper from the native habitats. Water and gloves will be provided but

please remember to wear closed-toe shoes."

The event is free.
Call 518-3047.

The teen scene, Dec. 12, 5 to 7 p.m., Largo Public Library.

Description: "The Society for Creative Anachronism will present this program on kumihimo, a decorative art of Japanese braiding that dates back over 1,000 years. For teens ages 13 to 18. Space is limited. Register in the Teen Room."

The event is free.
Call 587-6715.

Breakfast with Santa, Dec. 16 and 17, 9 to 10:30 a.m., Highland Recreation Complex, 400 Highland Ave. NE.

Description: "Santa is making his list and checking it twice to see if you will join him for breakfast! Santa's helpers will be serving breakfast from IHOP, helping with crafts and taking pictures with Santa. Please preregister by Wednesday, Dec. 14."

Fees are \$8 per child, \$3 per adult.
Call 518-3016.

Lego building, Dec. 17, 10 to 11:30 a.m., Southwest Recreation Complex.

Description: "Get hands-on experience and a lot of fun playing with Lego kits. Learn construction, programming and teamwork skills. Children will participate in building a variety of Lego sets."

Fees are \$7 per child.
Call 518-3125.

Monthly night hike, Dec. 17, 6:30 until 7:30, George C. McGough Nature Park.

Description: "Join us every third Saturday of the month for a guided walk through the woods, seeking out nocturnal animals such as raccoons, owls, opossums, bats and more. Flashlights are optional. Donations are kindly accepted. Preregister by calling 518-3047."

The event is free.

Christmas stories with Santa and Mrs. Claus, Dec. 19, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Largo Public Library.

Description: "Learn about Christmas traditions through stories and songs in this special program with books read by Santa and Mrs. Claus. Bring the whole family for an evening of holiday enjoyment!"

The event is free.
Call 587-6715.

FIREFIGHTER, from page 1A

American tenor Mario Lanza and Russian opera singer Feodor Chaliapin, the "mac-daddy of Russian music," according to Marshall because of his deep bass tones and magnetic personality.

His idols figure heavily in his style.
"When I first started singing opera. I thought it was like skydiving," Marshall said. "It's like that's a pretty cool experience. You open up and soar with your music."

While his goal is to sing opera one day with a full orchestra behind him, he is finding satisfaction in performing a variety of music styles.

"I'm still looking for the real me to come out in me and I'm finding it's church music and Christmas music," Marshall said. "There's a message there that people need to hear from Handel and I want to make the connection with the audience."

His love affair with music began at age 5 when he started piano lessons and that's where it stopped ... for a while.

After a brief stint as a college basketball player at Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minn., Marshall relocated to Pinellas County at age 24, did some construction work, got married, found another job selling pianos and ultimately opened a piano repair business called The Piano Doctor, which did restorations, piano moves and tuning.

"As time went on, I realized I knew more about it than some of the people that were my tuners," he said. "Gradually, I learned the nuts and bolts of the piano."

Thirty years and a divorce later, he is still performing the same service as a sole proprietor. He admits his income is minimal, but that's not an issue.

"Money is not everything," Marshall said. "I feel like (if you own a piano) you need my service and that makes me feel good. That means a lot. So I'll never be rich."

Thanks to the support of his new wife of four years, Laurrain, his musical interests continue to soar.

The smile on his face says it all. It's a ride he's enjoying.

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State lawmakers put the brakes on EMS changes

By SUZETTE PORTER

PINELLAS PARK – State legislators won't be considering changes to the Special Act that created Pinellas County's EMS Authority when the session starts in January.

The Pinellas County Legislative Delegation voted unanimously Nov. 30 to approve a proposal set forth by Sen. Jack Latvala, R-Clearwater. The proposal requires the county to pay for a study, using EMS funds, by an independent nationally recognized accounting firm on the costs and potential revenue from two proposed plans to change the EMS system. The study also will consider the system currently in use.

The study must be complete by July 1, 2012. Local legislators will assist in the selection of an impartial group of people representing municipalities, fire service, the county and the current ambulance service provider. The six- to eight-member committee must be selected by Jan. 1.

In addition, the county cannot implement changes to the system proposed by a consultant and entities opposing those changes cannot take legal action.

The Nov. 30 meeting was called after the county's legislators were asked to sponsor two opposing local bills that would change the special act that created the county's EMS Authority.

"These are two very different bills," Latvala said. "We didn't understand it (the situation) enough to make a decision."

He said the intent was to listen to as many perspectives as possible during a time-certain hearing.

"We all know why we're here today," he said. "There is no responsibility higher than protecting citizens – keeping them safe."

The auditorium at the Pinellas Park Performing Arts Center was carefully staged with proponents of the bills sitting at tables to the right and left of a long one in the front where the legislators were seated.

Pinellas Park Mayor Bill Mischler welcomed the crowd and said the arrangement reminded him of a WWE SmackDown with opponents on both sides.

The county was asked to present its perspective first. Commission Chair Susan Latvala said the special act needed to be amended to give the EMS Authority, which is the county commissioners, the ability to control costs by changing the method used to reimburse providers for advanced life support (first responder) services. She also said the authority needed to be able to set the level of service.

She said it wasn't "fair or equitable" to give the commission the authority to raise taxes but not control costs.

"We want help to stabilize costs," she said.

County Administrator Bob LaSala said the intent was to provide a uniform level of service for the entire county. He said the current level of service of 7.5 minutes 90 percent of the time was considered a platinum level of service in the United States.

He said changes were needed to help the authority achieve equity in the distribution of revenue and expenditures, as well as allow for cost control and containment, which the county cannot do now due to budgets being set by the providers of the service.

He said the changes in the county's local bill would not threaten home rule as it gives the providers the ability to provide a higher level at their own expense.

"It's quite simple," LaSala said. "The board wants the authority and accountability that is unclear and lacking in the current special act."

He explained that the EMS system uses a public utility model that provides transport by a private provider doing work under the county's license and brand of Sunstar. The county does the billing using information provided by the transport provider.

He said Paramedics Plus was chosen via a sealed bid process and a contract was negotiated that included options for renewal ensuring continuity of service for the life of the contract. County commissioners most likely will vote to renew the contract with Paramedics Plus for at least one year on Dec. 6.

He said the service provided by Paramedics Plus was superb and second to none in the state of Florida.

"We have a service that is uniform throughout the county," he said. "It is a cost-effective model of delivering effective service."

He then outlined the areas where the county and the firefighters agreed and the areas where they did not. Perhaps the biggest sticking point is the issue of cost. Capt. Jim Millican with Lealman Fire Rescue and Lt. Scott Sanford, firefighter and paramedic with Palm Harbor Rescue, authors of a plan that advocates fire-based transport in place of a private ambulance company, say their plan will save money. However, county staff says actually it will cost more – at least \$25 million more than a system using changes recommended by the county's consultant.

State officials want to get to reality figures, which is the impetus behind Sen. Latvala's proposal to hire an accounting firm to go over the numbers contained in the proposals from the firefighters and county's consultant.

Regardless of which plan costs the most, some providers are opposed to changing the way the county pays for their services. The city of St. Petersburg says the method the county proposes to use to reimburse the 18 providers of advanced life support (first responder) services, if the Special Act is amended, would put them out of business. St. Petersburg argues that the county's plan does not really save money to the system – it just shifts the burden of cost to fire departments and fire districts.

Sanford served as the spokesperson for the plan to allow fire-based transport.

"Jim and I started working on our proposal in direct response to LaSala's IPS plan to save money," he said.

He said many believe that the plan supported by LaSala and county staff does not save money or improve service. He said rather than just cutting costs, they had looked for a way to improve service and efficiencies to save money.

He said the fire departments had been good partners with the county and had done their best to reduce expenses unlike the transport provider who actually increased the cost of its service to residents.

"Incorporating fire-based transport is the best way to sustain the system into the future," he said.

He said the county's statement that their plan continues the dual response system currently in use is not quite accurate, although multiple units could still respond to calls that warranted dual response.



Sen. Jack Latvala, R-Clearwater, talks about the importance of protecting citizens during a Nov. 30 public hearing at the Pinellas Park Performing Arts Center called by the Pinellas County Legislative Delegation about local bills to amend the Special Act that created the EMS Authority. Latvala is flanked on the left by state Rep. Peter Nehr, R-Palm Harbor, and on the right by state Rep. Jim Frishe, R-St. Petersburg.

Photo by TERRE PORTER

He said the firefighters' plan saves money by reducing management and still puts more units on the streets.

Response times

Sanford said a response time of 4.5 minutes on average could be maintained with the firefighters' plan, which is quicker than the 7.5 minutes 90 percent of the time that is the county's new standard for level of service.

St. Petersburg Fire Chief Jim Large said the county's standard is lower than what has been achieved in the past. He told the legislators that the current average response time in the county is 6.23 minutes 90 percent of the time – more than 1 minute faster than the county's mandated standard.

Sen. Latvala asked county officials how local response times compared to other areas that use fire-based transport and the county had no answer. The legislators then asked Bill Nesmith, a retired Hillsborough County fire chief, who happened to be in the audience, for the answer.

Nesmith worked with Tampa Rescue for 24 years and retired as division chief in 1994. He accepted the position of assistant chief with Hillsborough County Fire Rescue that same year and was promoted to chief in 1996. Nesmith is credited with merging the Hillsborough County Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services.

Nesmith said response time goals in Hillsborough were 6 minutes 90 percent of the time in urban areas, 7 minutes 90 percent of the time in the suburbs, and 10 minutes 90 percent of the time in rural areas, which Pinellas does not have. Only the rural areas had a response time greater than Pinellas County's standard of 7.5 minutes.

Nesmith said when Hillsborough merged its two departments no paramedics lost their jobs unless they wanted to go. He said paramedics who wanted to do so were cross-trained as firefighters. Others were placed on ALS engines as paramedics.

He said he was concerned about delays in ambulance response, which was the complaint of some of the public, who talked about receiving quick response from the fire department only to end up waiting for an ambulance. Another complaint from the public was the cost of ambulance transport via Sunstar.

Large said the county's plan would not really increase the number of units on the streets. He said while it did increase the number of Advanced Life Support units, it decreased the number of units overall. The county's consultant recommends removing smaller rescue units in favor of the larger ALS engines. Large said if that happened, it would mean a reduction of 23 rescue units and 13 paramedics, which could lower response times.

Support for fire-based transport

The tide seems to be turning in favor of fire-based transport – if it proves to be as affordable as some firefighters believe. The majority of people speaking at the Wednesday afternoon public hearing supported at least exploring the option of fire-based transport. No one spoke in support of the county's plan.

St. Petersburg Mayor Foster said up until Nov. 28, the county had refused to discuss fire-based transport, which he also supports. He said his city, the largest in the county, responds to 33 percent of the first responder calls in the county, which explains why it employs the most paramedics and has the highest cost of any provider in the system.

Foster objects to the proposed new funding formula that he says would shift the costs to the cities. He said the situation was much like the 1980s when the county tried to change how it paid its providers and lost a lawsuit against St. Petersburg. He warned of more legal action if the county proceeded with marginal cost funding.

Others talked about potential problems with priority dispatch, although most agreed there needed to be a better way to do dispatch so multiple units weren't called to deal with minor injuries.

Millage rates

Largo Fire Chief Mike Wallace doesn't think a change in the special act is necessary. He thinks everything the county needs to manage and fund the system exists today. He showed a chart of historical EMS

millage rates for the years 1981-2009, which shows a steady decline in the amount levied.

Some residents were unhappy when Pinellas County commissioners raised the EMS millage rate 46 percent for the current fiscal year to 0.85 mills, the same rate levied in 1992. However, some say that the current millage rate is not too much to pay for good service.

During much of the 1990s, millage rates hovered around 0.92 before spiking to 1.06 in 1989. The next year it fell to 0.7 mills. In subsequent years, the highest rate was 0.87 in 1993 and 0.75 in 2001. From 2002 to 2005, the millage rate remained the same, 0.66 mills. It was further lowered to 0.63 in 2006 and to 0.58 in 2008 where it remained until the current fiscal year.

When voters approved the referendum, which established the current EMS system, they approved a millage cap of 1.5 mills – far above what the EMS Authority (county commissioners) has ever levied.

Foster faults the county for not raising the millage rate when property values bottomed out and ad valorem tax collections decreased dramatically. Instead, they chose to use up the reserves, he said.

Wallace supports raising the millage rate to pay for the system, which he says has already been approved by the voters. He said it would not require amendments to the special act or changes in the funding formula.

Large agrees. He said cost containment wasn't the real issue; instead, it is declining revenue due to lower property tax values.

"It's the millage," he said. "We're containing costs fairly well."

Large doesn't support any of the local bills. He says the special act should be repealed.

Local bills won't be considered this year

After listening to the speakers, Sen. Latvala was met by silence when he asked the delegation if anyone had an interest in moving either local bill forward.

Rep. Ed Hooper, R-Clearwater, said the county's Cadillac system of EMS services had worked "beautifully" for years, but with less money coming in to pay for it, "we now have to shop at the Chevy dealership."

He said any major changes to the special act should be approved by the voters.

"The citizens ought to have a say," he said.

Rep. Peter Nehr, R-Palm Harbor, said his sponsorship of the county's bill did not imply an endorsement. He said he agreed to sponsor it to open the matter to debate. He pointed out the vast differences between the two plans. He supported an independent study of both proposals.

"If we were to vote today, it looks like the support would be for the firefighters," he said.

Rep. Rick Kriseman, D-St. Petersburg, said it was all about public safety. He said the difference between a response time of 4.5 and 7.5 minutes was life and death. He also supports fire-based transport if it can maintain service levels. Ultimately, he thinks the county and its municipalities should find a way to work it out without asking the state to get in the middle.

Rep. Jim Frishe, R-St. Petersburg, said there was a mandate from the people that allowed the EMS Authority to charge up to 1.5 mills when the current rate is only 0.85, which means the system probably could be funded by millage. He said a bigger "bone of contention" was the taxes for fire services in some of the smaller districts.

Finally, Sen. Latvala asked to outline a proposal.

"The biggest point of contention is what Millican-Sanford says it will cost and what the county says it will cost," he said. "There's a huge difference. Somebody is way off."

He said the best way to determine who was right in an impartial way was by hiring a nationally recognized accounting firm to study all the numbers.

"Then we can take further action," he said.

LaSala said it would probably take six to eight months for a study to be completed – too late for the upcoming legislative session.

Sen. Dennis Jones, R-Treasure Island, urged the delegation to support Latvala's proposal.

"Waiting another one session is worth it if we make the right decision from facts we all can agree to," he said.

EMS, from page 1A

Furthermore, there should be no "us against them" mentality, commissioners conceded. However, difficult decisions are necessary, they say, and not everyone will be happy in the end.

"We've received a lot of input," Welch said of the two plans currently on the table.

The IPS plan, prepared by Integral Performance Solutions, a consultant hired by the county administrator, continues to use Sunstar as the sole provider of ambulance (transport) service and it suggests a new funding formula that would reduce the amount some fire departments would be paid for first responder services.

A second plan, prepared by two local firefighters, has fire departments taking over transport services, emergency and non-emergency, eliminating the contract with Paramedics Plus, the company currently operating as Sunstar under the county's license.

Welch said the commission had taken "some heat" for not taking a stand in support of either plan; however, he said it was better that commissioners had taken their time to get feedback from the public and others.

Now, the question is "where the board wants to go," he said.

Welch said he had recently studied the court's judgment in the county's 1989 lawsuit against St. Petersburg, in which the city prevailed.

"It was pretty striking," he said. "If you didn't read the title, it could have been written for 2011."

He said it seemed, due to the lawsuit, the county can't require fire departments to use advanced life support engines instead of rescue units and it can't use cost averaging to pay for services – two concepts the IPS plan relies on to make EMS more affordable.

"Is IPS implementable," he asked County Attor-

ney Jim Bennett, who replied that it could be in a "cooperative manner," but admitted there could be problems with "implementing unilaterally."

"We've listened to everyone, that's to our credit," Welch said.

He talked about the problem of managing costs using millage only. He said if the commission managed EMS costs using only increases in millage, the rate most likely would have to double to be sufficient.

"We should not do that (raise the millage to the cap) until we make sure the system is as efficient as it can be," he said.

Welch talked about new options on the table since the commission met with St. Petersburg city officials on Oct. 31. The city of St. Petersburg has offered to take the issue of unfunded pension costs off the table – a savings of \$750,000 a year and several million dollars over the next several years.

St. Petersburg also suggested trying a fire-based transport pilot, allowing eight of the city's rescue units to provide transport services during non-peak hours. The revenue would go to the county, just as the revenue generated by Paramedics Plus goes to the county.

"I'd like to see how much it (the pilot) would save," he said.

Welch said he would not support any action that was simply managing by millage – or "just transferring the millage line on the TRIM notice (from county to a municipality)."

Lastly, Welch said he would like to see an independent review of losses versus revenues from a fire-based transport system versus continuing the contract with Paramedics Plus.

Bob Swain with the county attorney's office explained his take on the situation from the perspective of the 1989 court judgment in favor of St. Petersburg. He said the county is required to pay

for what fire departments and districts use to provide first responder services. He said without a change to the state's special act that created the countywide EMS Authority, the authority (commission) couldn't force change, in particular the recommendation by IPS to use ALS engines instead of rescue units.

"It would be hard to put ALS in a community that doesn't want it," he said.

Welch talked about a worst-case scenario where a city, for example St. Petersburg, would take the county to court and win.

"That would force the authority to raise the millage," he said. "And the city could go after general fund dollars."

Swain said since the special act caps the millage rate, that argument "may or may not be true." He said the EMS was a separate taxing authority (not acting as the county commission) so there were a lot of unknowns. He said although the amount the authority can raise the millage rate is capped, nothing precluded the commission from allocating more money from other sources to go toward EMS.

Discussion turned to the challenges involved with coordination of 18 different entities providing transport services, including licensing requirements, the need to keep the revenue stream currently provided by Sunstar intact and compliance with Medicare regulations.

"There are definite pros and cons," Welch said.

Commission Chair Susan Latvala said splitting up the system was a step backwards.

"The system was consolidated by the Legislature for a reason," she said.

Craig Hare, the county's EMS division manager, said Paramedics Plus's administrative staff was responsible for a variety of programs, including training, medication management, fleet replacement and patient business services, which make sure ambu-

lance runs are billable, among others.

He said Paramedics Plus also operated a central warehouse for supplies and delivered them to service providers.

Commissioner John Morroni asked Hare about the feasibility of a pilot program. Hare said it would be difficult due to accountability and the design of the current system. He said it was a question of how to run it and implement it.

"We all know paramedics can take patients to the hospital," he said. "It's more the mechanics of the process."

Mark Postma, COO for Paramedics Plus' Sunstar operation since 2004 and company vice president, said his organization had "sat back and idly watched" the discussions about different plans to overhaul the county's EMS system.

"We stand on our merits provided to the county," he said. "We're (Paramedics Plus) the largest provider of services in Florida."

Most of the commission favored offering Paramedics Plus a one-year extension, or perhaps three one-year extensions.

The public and several commissioners advocated getting an independent group involved to review the firefighters plan and the contention that it did not adequately cover costs.

Welch advocates an independent study and trying at least the pilot program suggested by St. Petersburg.

"There are no bad buys," he said. "There's nothing wrong with asking for an independent analysis. The numbers on fire-based transport are all over the place."

Commissioner Karen Seel advocates forming a task force to look at the entire system – fire services and EMS. She is currently on a "listening tour" of the different municipalities to find out the issues that a task force should address.

Man charged with attempted murder in car accident

DUNEDIN – A Palm Harbor man is facing multiple charges including attempted murder of a law enforcement officer after a hit-and-run crash Nov. 30 in Dunedin.

John Michael Lyons, 33, also was charged with aggravated assault of a law enforcement officer; fleeing and eluding with wanton disregard; aggravated assault with a motor vehicle; leaving the scene of an accident with property damage; possession of hydrocodone, diazepam, methadone and morphine.

He remains in the Pinellas County Jail in Clearwater on bonds in excess of \$160,000.

The incident started when the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office responded to a hit-and-run traffic crash about 6:46 a.m. Wednesday on the Dunedin Causeway Bridge. The victim, Avria Traveleard, 46, of Largo was parked off the roadway of Causeway Boulevard near the drawbridge doing paperwork as part of his job as foreman for Roland Inc.

Lyons was driving a red 2006 Hummer SUV on Causeway Boulevard when he left the roadway and crashed into the rear end of Traveleard's 2006 Ford pickup truck. Lyons then backed up and fled the scene. Traveleard immediately called the Sheriff's

Office and reported the crash with a description of the suspect vehicle.

Deputies spotted the suspect vehicle not far from the scene traveling southbound on U.S. Alt. 19 near San Jose Boulevard in Dunedin. They attempted to make a traffic stop but the suspect refused to stop and a pursuit ensued. The pursuit continued through the Dunedin area onto Hancock Street east-



John Michael Lyons

bound from U.S. Alt. 19. The suspect drove over bushes of residences and then back onto Alt. 19 at speeds of 45 mph.

Deputies tried to use "stop sticks" to disable the Hummer at several points in the pursuit, but the suspect was able to see them in the roadway and drove around them. At one point, Lyons saw a deputy deploying stop sticks in the area of Curlew Road and County Road 1, and he drove off the road onto the median at the deputy. The deputy was able to get out of the way. Lyons also attempted to ram and force pursuing deputies off the road several times during the chase.

The chase eventually ended back onto Causeway Boulevard as Lyons began driving at speeds exceeding 55 mph not stopping for deputies. At the western end of the causeway is the entrance to Honeymoon Island Park, which was closed. Lyons crashed through the gate into the park continuing westbound. There are no other entrances in or out of the park, which is surrounded by water. Lyons tried to go eastbound back through the entrance but deputies were waiting with stop sticks.

Lyons was unable to avoid the sticks and ran over them flattening the tires of the Hummer. He

attempted to continue driving but was rammed by a deputy, forcing the Hummer off the road into a power pole at Elgin Place and Causeway Boulevard. When deputies pulled Lyons from the vehicle, he was only wearing a T-shirt and boxer shorts.

Deputies found several different types of prescription drugs in his vehicle, including oxycodone, morphine, and eight syringes. Lyons told deputies he was planning on fishing from the causeway when for unknown reasons he went off the road and crashed into Traveleard. Deputies did not find any fishing tackle in his vehicle.

Bradbury to become next mayor of Pinellas Park

By JULIANA A. TORRES

PINELLAS PARK – Sandra Bradbury, current Pinellas Park councilwoman and daughter of a former mayor, will take over as Pinellas Park mayor in March.

"It meant a lot that the citizens believed in me," Bradbury said. "I'm excited to take on the new chapter."

Elections for the city of Pinellas Park will be held on Tuesday, March 13. However, when the qualifying period ended Nov. 22, Bradbury was the only candidate who had qualified for mayor.

Two candidates qualified for Bradbury's current council seat: Pinellas Park business owner Patricia Johnson and community activist Ed Kosinski.

The candidates needed 40 petitions from registered voters who are Pinellas Park residents. Initially, 15 of Kosinski's petitions were thrown out because the signatures were from residents of Pinellas County, but not Pinellas Park. He scrambled to replace those the morning the qualifying period ended, he said, and turned in exactly the 40 he needed.

Johnson challenged Kosinski's

petitions, requiring that the signatures be verified. She said more than 10 residents asked her to challenge Kosinski's petitions, arguing that if only one were wrong, he would be disqualified, and the city would save the cost of an election.

However, after a meeting at the Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections' office the morning of Nov. 29, Johnson said she decided not to go through with the challenge.

"We decided it would be better for the city," she said.

Kosinski, who spearheaded a campaign to clean up the Davis Field neighborhood, said he thought he had "as good a chance as any" to win the two-candidate election.

"The city's been good to me,"



Sandra Bradbury

Kosinski said, "I feel I can give back to the city too."

His opponent is the owner of Amber Glen Feed Depot and Equestrian Center. Both have served on advisory boards for the city of Pinellas Park.

"I live here, work here, my family is here, my businesses are all here,"

Johnson said. "I feel like I can do some really good things with the council members that are there."

Both candidates ran in 2008, the last time there was an open seat on the Pinellas Park City Council. In that election, six candidates vied for the seat eventually won by Councilman Jerry Mullins.

Mullins and Councilmen Rick Butler were the sole candidates running for their seats when the qualifying period ended at 1 p.m. this year. City Clerk Diane Coma announced Nov. 22. They effectively have been elected to another four-year term each, starting in 2012.

After current Mayor Bill Mischler

announced his retirement Oct. 27, Bradbury resigned her seat on the Pinellas Park City Council, effective in March, to run for mayor. She is the daughter of former Mayor Cecil Bradbury and a longtime resident of the city. The council elected her to act as vice mayor in March, a position she's held in 2003 and 2007.

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Bellevue Biltmore Hotel's future still anyone's guess

By BRIAN GOFF

BELLEAIR - Could a resolution regarding the future of the Bellevue Biltmore Hotel be near? If so, how near?

Town officials say at a minimum it will be a year before there is any noticeable change on the property, and that is if all the decisions and plans and procedures don't hit any snags.

It is possible the entire process could begin as soon as January, if nothing changes in the meantime.

The owners of the property, Daniel and Raphael Ades of Miami, have made it clear that they are not in a position to spend the \$100 million they say it would take to rehabilitate the old hotel. The managing member of the ownership group, Matt Cummings, says their priority is to sell it to someone with plenty of money and a commitment to keep the property as a hotel.

"We're not bad guys, we're trying to figure out what to do," he said. "If somebody can come up with the money who really is a hotel builder we're all for it. We just don't think that's possible."

Cummings said he has tried time and time again to find a big hotelier to buy the property and return it to its former glory. But time and time again he has failed.

Now the owners have proposed turning the property into upscale town homes, as many as 80 of them, ranging in price from \$375,000 to \$775,000.

"They will look like the original buildings with same white shingles and green roofs. They will go from 3,000 square feet to 2,100 square feet," Cummings said. "They will be beautiful and they will follow the history and tradition."

He said the town homes would maintain some of the actual pieces of the hotel.

"We'll take the Tiffany glass from the ceiling of the ballroom, about 100 pieces and put a piece in each one of the town homes that will really save a lot of the history in the new homes."

That would go ahead if no one steps up to buy the property. Cummings has made it clear that a prospective buyer would have to maintain it as a hotel.

"If they want to build condos then we are not going to sell it," he said. "We turned down a really lucrative offer but their offer was for over 400 apartments. We don't want to disgrace the site. The site has history and value. I want to keep the history."

In fact the plans call for the actual preservation of a portion of the hotel.

"If we can't sell the property by say January, we'll go to the town with a plan to save a portion of the lobby, the upstairs, and the Sunshine Room (carriage porch) and build in it, a museum of the history of the hotel. We would re-create the ice cream shop," he said.

How does all that sit with the various players in the scenario? Mayor Gary Katka says while most people would probably like to see the hotel restored it is time to get practical.

"There is nothing that the town can do but sit and wait until the owners make a decision on what they want to do. They are touting town homes. I can see where the sentiments of the people have changed," he said. "The RPD people have lost millions of dollars of value on their condos. The town has lost \$250,000 to \$300,000 a year on water, sewage and tax money, so something has to happen soon."

The president of the Bellevue Biltmore Homes Association, Jim White agrees. He said the presence of the hotel makes it tough to even sell a property in the area.

"I mean from driving in the gate and looking at that building, how do you explain to a prospective buyer how long that is going to be there, and what is going to replace it? You can't."

White said the town home option is one they would welcome. "Basically the sense of the board was high end townhomes would be very good. On the other hand the zoning process is complicated and could take as much as two years."

He isn't far wrong with his timetable. Town Manager Micah Maxwell said both the demolition and zoning process is complex and will take time.

"They would have to go through demolition process first. It is a lot more significant than any other building. Historical preservation ordinance requires a certificate of appropriateness. That's a state document with its own set of rules. Then it must go through the Historical Preservation Board and then the Planning and Zoning Board and then to the (Bellevue) commission. Then they can demo."

That alone he says could take up to three months at least and possibly as much as six months. Then the site plans and construction plans and land use changes have to be dealt with. So it will be a minimum of a year before anything is done to the property.

For Katka it can't come soon enough. Even while admitting he'd like to see the hotel restored, he isn't sure it is possible. Particularly after a tour of the inside of the building recently.

"I was in the hotel about three weeks ago and it was very depressing and I was just on the ground floor," he said. "The odor was unbearable, the ceilings parts had come down, and I walked into the Tiffany ballroom and sat there and cried when I saw it. I had been there for weddings and conventions and the place had such a great life to it. To see it like this ..."

Katka said the hotel has reached the point of diminishing returns and predicts, "2012 will be a tough year for the Biltmore."

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Briefs

Long-time Pinellas County educator dies

LARGO - Funeral services for School Board member Lew Williams will be held Saturday, Dec. 10, 1 p.m. at First Baptist Institutional Church, 3100 Third Ave. S., St. Petersburg.



Lew Williams

Williams, who had undergone heart surgery late last week, died Dec. 3.

"Lew's sweet spirit will be sorely missed, as will his love of young people and the passion he had for their well-being and learning," Superintendent John Stewart said in a statement posted at the Pinellas County Schools website.

Williams was elected to the School Board in November 2010. He is a well-known community supporter and former Pinellas County School administrator.

Williams began his career in education in 1970 as a social studies teacher. He served as principal at Fairmont Park, South Ward and Dunedin elementary schools, and Seminole Middle and Pinellas Park High schools.

In 1987, he became director of school operations and was later promoted to associate superintendent for pupil assignment and area II superintendent until his retirement in 2005.

Williams received his bachelor's degree from Allen University in Columbia, S.C., and his master's degree from South Carolina State University. He and his wife, Arthurene, have two children.

A public viewing for Williams will be held Friday, Dec. 9, 3 to 5 p.m. at Lawson Funeral Home, 4535 Central Ave. The wake will be held Friday, Dec. 9, 7 to 8 p.m. at Bethel Community Baptist Church, 2901 54th Ave.

Speedway property may be leased

CLEARWATER - Sen. Jack Latvala, R-Clearwater, announced that at his suggestion District 7 of the Florida Department of Transportation has

begun the process of determining if an underutilized state asset can be put back to work to help create jobs and new economic activity in central Pinellas County.

The old Sunshine Speedway not only generated family-oriented entertainment, but also fostered a number of small auto repair businesses in the corridor between Ulmerton Road and 118th Avenue North. This property was purchased by the state for the Roosevelt Boulevard connector, which has been postponed.

Constituents of the senator have suggested re-opening the speedway in the interim, which he then discussed with FDOT. Officials have now agreed to advertise for bids on leasing the property.

"This is a win-win situation for the state, which will receive rent until it is used for road construction, and for the community, which will benefit from jobs at the facility and in the collateral auto repair businesses related to the track," Latvala said.

For more information, call Latvala's office at 556-6500.

Cameras focus on PSTA hybrid buses

A production crew from Carmel, Ind., was crisscrossing Pinellas County while shooting a video featuring Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority's diesel electric hybrid buses.

"The fuel economy on our hybrids has been consistently 26 to 40 percent better than the standard diesel buses. When the manufacturer of the bus transmissions found out, they asked if they could feature our buses in a promotional video," said PSTA CEO Brad Miller. "Of course we're always eager to be featured as a transit success story."

The video crew began taping PSTA buses and staff Nov. 29, and was expected to wrap up the shoot by the end of the week. Once finished, the video will be used worldwide by Allison Transmission to promote the company's diesel electric transmissions, which are the heart of the hybrid bus technology.

Currently, PSTA has a fleet of 191 buses, 24 of which are hybrids. Another eight are on order with delivery expected late summer or early fall. The fuel efficiency of the hybrids varies with the routes the buses run. Lower speed, frequent stop routes get the highest mileage, because they maximize the use of electric power cells rather than using diesel fuel.

When the PSTA Board of Directors authorized the agency's first purchase of hybrid buses in 2008, board members were told to expect a fuel efficiency increase of approximately 20 percent over standard diesel buses. Since the agency was using about 2.1 million gallons of fuel a year and prices were going through the roof, it was a logical decision, PSTA officials said. Now, three years and 24 hybrid buses later, the decision has paid off.

"Not only are the diesel electric buses cutting fuel costs, but they reduce emissions by 90 percent or better over standard diesel models, so they benefit our bottom line, the environment and our community," said Miller.

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Biz notes

First Bank adds vice president, sales manager

DUNEDIN - Ron Guido recently joined First Bank Mortgage as a vice president and area sales manager in the Florida market.

Guido, whose office will be located at First Bank's Dunedin branch, has more than 20 years of sales, marketing and operations management experience in the services industry. He has more than five years of banking experience.

A graduate of Youngstown State University with a bachelor's in speech communications, Guido is involved with the Pinellas Realtor Organization, Habitat for Humanity, United Way and the Tampa Bay Society. He lives in Palm Harbor.

Local designer wins Award of Distinction

BELLEAIR - Interior Designer Ivy Scheinholz has been named Miromar Design Center's Designer of Distinction.

Scheinholz is the principal of IvyMary Designs LLC, now based in Belleair. Known for her collaborative relationship with her clients, Scheinholz has been designing interiors for more than 20 years. She has been selected preferred designer in Boston, Miami and now Miromar Design Centers. Scheinholz works with clients across the country and has an extensive residential and commercial portfolio. She is an allied member of the American Society of Interior Designers and has been featured in Luxury Living magazine.

"I am honored to have received this award, but more importantly I am excited to be a part of this vibrant community," Scheinholz said. She recently moved to Belleair.

BankUnited opens new branch in Oldsmar

OLDSMAR - BankUnited, one of the largest

banks headquartered in Florida, opened its newest branch recently at 4015 Tampa Road in Oldsmar, making it the fifth location in Pinellas County.

There are currently two branches in Hillsborough County. Other branches set to open before the end of the year include one on Central Avenue in St. Petersburg and one on Henderson Boulevard in Tampa. In total, BankUnited has plans to open 10 new branches in Florida before the end of the year.

Golden Glow Medical Spa to open

LARGO - Golden Glow Medical Spa, a new medical spa located in Largo, will celebrate its grand opening Thursday, Dec. 8, 2 to 8 p.m., at 150 Clearwater Largo Road.

Golden Glow is a state-of-the-art "green" medical spa, offering skin-rejuvenating treatments.

The medical spa specializes in noninvasive cosmetic medical procedures using advanced FDA-approved technology to offer a preferred combination of aesthetics and science.

Local physician Mira Mahajin will make hourly live presentations and product demonstrations of noninvasive cosmetic medical procedures and services such as liquid facelifts, wrinkle correction, Botox, Intense Pulsed Light photo facials, hair removal, skin resurfacing and skin rejuvenation. Question-and-answer sessions will follow each demonstration.

As part of the grand opening, the mayor of Largo and the Chamber of Commerce will hold a special ribbon-cutting ceremony at 5 p.m.

Please the Senses opens

MADEIRA BEACH - Please the Senses opened its doors Nov. 11 at 15004 Madeira Way.

The shop offers essential oils, aromatherapy, organic cosmetics, teas, local honey, handmade soaps, soy based candles, accessories and gifts. Wines also are available.

All in good taste



Photo by PAMELA RAMSDELL
A grand opening ceremony for Edible Arrangements, which is located in the Largo Mall, was held Dec. 1. Dan Brown attracts an audience as he juggles in front of the store. Laurie and Dennis Jolicoeur are the owners.

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Fall can take its toll on plants

The wet days of summer are gone and the dry season is now upon us. Plants that were continually wet all summer may have lost some of their root system due to lack of oxygen. Now, as the weather dries, they have less of a root system to gather precious water. We can help plants thrive with proper watering, both during the wet and dry season. Selecting plants for the site conditions is the best, low maintenance way to go.

Hopefully, you turned off your irrigation system during the wet summer. As long as plants are getting rain every few days during the summer, or if the soil is staying saturated, there is no need to apply water. As the soil starts to dry out and the rain frequency slows down we need to pay close attention to our plants. Many plants will start to wilt under drought stress, but they can also wilt if they have a rotted root system from too much water. It is important to check the soil moisture. Pull away the mulch and test the soil with your finger. Poke down about two or three inches and see if you feel any moisture. If it is dry all the way down then you probably need to apply water, especially if the plant is wilting.

It is best to water early in the

Growing Wise

Jane Morse



morning to avoid disease development. When plants are watered late in the day, they will stay wet for a much longer time period and this allows fungal diseases to infect them. If you can water at 6 a.m. that is much better than 6 p.m.

It also is best to water deeply and infrequently, rather than shallowly and frequently. Watering deeply allows the root system to go deeper in the soil and allows the plant to become more drought-tolerant. It is usually best to apply one-half to three-fourths inch of water and then wait for symptoms of wilt before watering again. This will promote a deeper root system and a healthier plant. Use a rain gauge to know how much water has already been supplied by rainfall.

Plant beds should be on a different irrigation zone than lawn areas because they usually need to be watered less often than grass. Installing drip irrigation to plant bed areas is easy and can save water, too. Check all irrigation systems at least once a

month and repair any leaks or broken heads. Irrigation heads should spray from head to head for proper coverage. Make sure that driveways and sidewalks aren't getting watered (they don't need it).

Fall is a great time to apply mulch. It works both as a weed preventer and a water conserver. Just be sure to keep it away from the plant base, as it should not cover the root ball area. Mulch can prevent water from getting to the plant roots if it covers the root ball.

Make your grass more drought-tolerant by raising the mower height. Standard St. Augustine varieties, like Floratam, Palmetto or Bitterblue, should be mowed at 4 inches. Dwarf St. Augustine varieties, like Sapphire, Seville or Captiva, should be mowed at 2.5 inches.

If you are looking at all the growth that took place during the summer and wanting to hack it back - don't. This is the wrong time of year to prune most plants. Spring flowering shrubs, like azalea, should be pruned in late spring. Plants that flower on this year's growth (hibiscus, rose, crape myrtle) should be pruned while dormant or just before the spring growth spurt. Shade trees should be pruned during dor-



Many plants will start to wilt under drought stress.

mancy (winter) or just after a growth flush. Most evergreens, (podocarpus, holly, ligustrum) can be lightly pruned anytime. A rule of thumb is to leave at least two-thirds of the plant intact.

For answers to your gardening

questions, please contact your local Extension office at 582-2100. Their Lawn and Garden Help Desk via phone is available Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Walk-in help is available

Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. You can also ask your question via computer at AskExtension.org or see the Extension website at PinellasCountyExtension.org for more information.

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Fronts may slow down fishing

If the past two weeks are any indication of things to come, fishing might be a little tough for those heading out on the weekends until we get a change in the pattern. With cold fronts coming through late-week, brisk north winds will prevail for a couple of days until high pressure settles in and we start to see those east winds again, and just about the time those winds lighten up enough to make things feel comfortable out there, you can pretty much plan on another one coming through.

Days with light east winds have allowed for short offshore runs into the gulf for the tasty white grunts, sea bass and porgies. Depths of 25 to 30 foot have been most productive for the grunts and porgies and shallower ledges in 15 to 20 foot have been best for sea bass. Squid will work for all three species, but a piece of sardine or small white bait works best for the sea bass.

Inshore fishing has been tough over the past week; a major cool down followed by strong winds



Fish Tales
Capt. Tyson Wallerstein

will usually put fish off for a few days. With any luck this week's front won't be nearly as dramatic. Full moon tides will hopefully have fish on the feed. Morning negative low tides will give you a chance to stalk tailing redfish if the winds aren't too strong. A live select shrimp will get the job done. If the winds blowin' anchor up and fish with cut ladyfish or pinfish on the bottom.

Morning mid-level high tides this week will have redfish, gator trout and sheepshead cruising the flats searching for crustaceans and bait fish before this next front comes through. If the winds stay light and the skies are clear, sight fishing can be excellent.

Drifting, poling or running the trolling motor on low will allow you to get close enough to the fish for an accurate shot. Once a pro-

ductive area is found stake off and patiently wait for fish to come within range. A live select shrimp tail hooked is the bait of choice; however a weed-less rigged soft plastic jerk bait in watermelon/red flake works quite well.

Sheepshead are all over the flats and are pretty tricky to catch when they're that shallow. As the water continues to cool off and we get on these big moon phases, look for the sheepshead to school up around the bridges and jetties. Fresh pieces of shrimp or live fiddler crabs work great for sheepshead. Just be sure to use a small enough hook so that you stand a better chance for hook-ups.

Until next week, get bent!
Tyson Wallerstein can be reached at capt.tyson@hotmail.com. To get a fish photo in the paper, send the photo along with your name, when and where it was caught to editorial@tbweekly.com or mail it to Tampa Bay Newspapers, 9911 Seminole Blvd., Seminole, FL 33772.

Conservation celebration set

LARGO - The Holiday Conservation Celebration will be Wednesday, Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m., at the Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmertown Road.

The Florida Native Plant Society and the St. Petersburg Audubon Society will sponsor this free event. Manley Fuller,

president of the Florida Wildlife Federation, will share information about how citizens can take an active part in the legislative process and help to preserve natural resources.

The event will include refreshments, exhibits by local environmental groups and door prizes.

A silent auction of nature-themed items will take place with proceeds used for conservation projects throughout Pinellas County.

For information or to donate an item to the auction, call Katy Roberts at 726-1455 or email kroberts@ij.net.

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Elks Club names students of the month for October

The Largo Elks Lodge 2159 has announced its students of the month for October. Two students are chosen from Clearwater Central Catholic High School and Largo High School each month.

Students of the month from Clearwater Central Catholic High School are Carlos Andres Dohse and Bridget Claire Harrington. Carlos Dohse is the son of Gerald and Aidee Dohse. He is a member of the Spanish Honors Society and is a National Honor Society invitee. Volunteering for a Tarpon Springs thrift shop and working at Independence



Carlos Dohse

Center keep Dohse busy after the school day. He also enjoys baseball and was voted the most improved player.

Bridget Harrington is the daughter of Jeffrey and Alyson Harrington. She has been on the honor roll all four years of high school and is in the International Baccalaureate program. Harrington is a member of many organizations including Spanish Honors Society, Math Honors Society, National Honor Society and is vice-president of the International Club. She enjoys basketball and is the co-captain of



Bridget Harrington

her team this year.

The students of the month from Largo High School are Laura Elizabeth Morris and Xingqi Zhao. Morris is the daughter of Jeff Morris and Sharon Krick. She has held many leadership positions, including president of the International Thespian Society and president of Rho Kappa History Honorary. During the last three years, Morris has been a facilitator for EXCEL Foundations of Excellence workshop. Morris also gives to her community by volunteering at Morton Plant Hospital's Rainbow Recovery



Laura Morris

Room, Stomp Out Hunger, and gives her time to many church activities.

Xingqi Zhao is the son of Santo and Xoayun Casella. He has been on the honor roll all through high school, and attends St. Petersburg College for business. Zhao is a member of the following organizations: National Honor Society, National French Honor Society, and National English Society. He enjoys professional speaking, composition and trigonometry and volunteering for Heritage Village's history museum, and as a youth swim coach.



Xingqi Zhao

Notepad

Students raise money for cancer

MADEIRA BEACH - Madeira Beach Fundamental students, for the second year in a row, are helping raise awareness and funding for brain tumor research.

Sponsored by the student council, the Madeira Beach Manta Rays launched a "Going Gray" fundraiser, and all proceeds will go to Miles for Hope Inc.

CCC announces students of the month

CLEARWATER - Clearwater Central Catholic High and CCC alum Katherine Jones of Katherine Jones Insurance Agency Inc. have partnered to recognize outstanding CCC students with the State Farm Student of the Month Award.

Students chosen for this award demonstrate exemplary leadership, dedication and hard work in the classroom, in extra-curricular activities and in the community.

Senior Michael Purcell of Safety Harbor was named CCC State Farm Student of the Month for August. He is an honor student with a 4.5 grade-point average, is a member of the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society, Spanish Honor So-

ciety and the Quill and Scroll Society. He also is Student Executive Council president, editor-in-chief of the school newspaper, secretary general of Model UN, and a member of the CCC Ambassadors Leadership Team.

Senior Rachel Sticco of Oldsmar earned CCC State Farm Student of the Month for September. She is an honor student in the International Baccalaureate Program. She is a member of Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society, Span-

ish Honor Society, the International Thespian Society, CCC Student Ambassadors, Student Council, the Academic Team and Drama Club. She is a competitive ice skater who earned two gold, three silver and one bronze medal at last year's ISI 50th Anniversary Ice Skating Championship. She plans to study business administration, management and accounting in college.

Junior Ryan Orr of Belleair earned CCC State Farm Student

Athlete of the Month for August. He is an honor student with a 4.0 grade-point average. He is a member of the CCC varsity boys golf team, for which he has been selected MVP all three years. He recently qualified to compete in the state championships and has won many local and regional tournaments. He intends to play golf in college where he will study business and agronomics.

Junior Kaitlin Englert of Belleair won CCC State Farm Stu-

dent Athlete of the Month for September. She is an honor student in the International Baccalaureate Program with a 4.1 grade-point average. She is a member of the National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, CCC

Ambassadors Leadership Team, Key Club and is a hospice volunteer. In addition to competing on CCC's varsity cross country, soccer and track teams, for which she is captain, she also coaches a special needs soccer team.

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Cramer

Cramer is a 5-month-old orange and white tabby who is very friendly and sweet. He is neutered and current with his vaccinations. He gets along fine with other pets. Call Pat at Second Chance For Strays at 535-9154. Visit www.secondchanceforstrays.petfinder.com.



Goldie

Goldie is a very pretty 5 1/2-year-old kitty that has been at the Suncoast Animal League since April, patiently longing for a family to call her own. Goldie would love a quieter, adult home and she would prefer to be an only pet, so she can have all the attention. Stop by the Suncoast Animal League at 1030 Pennsylvania Ave. in Palm Harbor, or call 786-1330 to meet Goldie, who deserves to have her very own family for the holidays.



Eloise

Eloise is a 10-month-old pit bull terrier mix who tips the scales at 45 pounds. She is full of energy and looking for a loving family. If you bring this article with you to Pinellas County Animal Services, Eloise can be yours for the low fee of \$25. Meet Eloise and the other cats, dogs, puppies and kittens up for adoption at 12450 Ulmertown Road in Largo. Call 582-2600 or visit www.pinellascounty.org/animalervices/petfind.htm.



Ike

Smart and playful, quirky and affectionate, Ike would make a great best friend for someone lucky enough to choose him. He is a gorgeous 1 1/2-year-old boy with an orange coat and golden eyes. He would prefer to be an only pet in an adult home. Adopt Ike at Friends of Strays, 2911 47th Ave. N. in St Petersburg. Call 522-6566.

Pets and poisonous holiday plants

Speaking of Pets

Kim Donovan, D.V.M.



that these are not ingested. This plant can cause significant vomiting, diarrhea, difficulty breathing, decreased heart rate, erratic behavior, sudden collapse and

The holiday season is upon us once again. Decorating for the holidays most always includes using plants and flowers to beautify our environment.

There are many plants and flowers that are toxic to pets but only a few of the most popular holiday plants will be discussed here. It is important to know what parts of the plant or flower are toxic and what symptoms your pet may experience.

- Holly is used in making wreaths or decorating mantles. It is the berries that are toxic. The severity of the symptoms usually correlates with how many berries are eaten. The symptoms seen after ingestion are vomiting, diarrhea, and depression.

- Mistletoe is customarily hung in doorways so that when two people are under the mistletoe at the same time they are obliged to kiss. The berries are toxic but some sources say that the leaves and stem are more toxic than the berries. Either way, it is important to make sure

even death.

- Amaryllis (with red or red and white flowers) is very popular during the holiday season. It is the flower that is most toxic. Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, depressed appetite, excessive salivation, tremors, and sometimes abdominal pain.

- Poinsettia is probably the most frequently seen holiday plant. It is the sap from the leaves (not the flower) that can be irritating if ingested. If enough is eaten it can cause vomiting but it is basically non-toxic.

- Christmas cactus only blooms around Christmas time and is generally used for center pieces. This plant is mainly toxic only in large quantities. Vomiting and diarrhea sometimes with blood, and depression are the typical symptoms.

- Christmas rose is a plant with a white flower. The entire plant is toxic. The most commonly seen symptoms are diarrhea with blood, abdominal pain,

vomiting, and delirium.

- Jerusalem cherry is a plant that has orange and red berries and is typically used as a centerpiece. These berries are extremely toxic especially in the green and yellow states. Ingestion results in vomiting, diarrhea, depression, mouth ulcers, shock, and even death.

It is extremely important to contact your veterinarian or veterinary emergency clinic if you suspect your pet has ingested a toxic plant. The more information you can give your veterinarian the better. Knowing what type of plant was ingested, how much was ingested, the time of ingestion, and what symptoms your pet is showing will help your veterinarian take appropriate action.

Kim Donovan, D.V.M., is an associate veterinarian and medical director at Oakhurst Veterinary Hospital in Seminole with 13 years of experience and a special interest in feline medicine and dermatology.



Christmas cat

Wolfie, 2, couldn't resist the temptation to climb the Christmas tree at the Erbs' house in Seminole last Christmas. No damage done, he just made himself comfortable and snuggled in. As our pet photo winner this month, Wolfie wins a \$25 gift certificate to Seminole Boulevard Animal Hospital and Bird Clinic. Send your pet photos to csouthmayd@TBNweekly.com. The January winner will receive a \$25 gift certificate to Classy Canines Mobile Pet Salon.

Dig this

Pet Supplies Plus opens new store

CLEARWATER - A new Pet Supplies Plus store will celebrate its grand opening Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 10-11, at 1500 N. McMullen Booth Road.

Pets and their human companions will be fed, entertained, and otherwise pampered during the grand opening celebration. The 9,750-square-foot store will feature a wide variety of pet services and products, including aquatics, small animal departments, full-

service grooming, many different brands of natural pet foods and both fresh-frozen and raw pet foods.

"We're ecstatic to open our doors, meet our new two-legged and four-legged neighbors, and show them all we have to offer," said Dave Oser, new store co-owner, in a press release. "And we're pulling out all the stops to make sure that every visitor has a great time during our grand opening celebration."

Call 726-5544 or visit www.petsuppliesplusfl.com.

Pet Pal and Moscow Ballet team up

ST. PETERSBURG - Pet Pal Animal Shelter and the Moscow Ballet are partnering to raise money for homeless animals.

For every ticket purchased to the Moscow Ballet's Great Russian Nutcracker performances on Dec. 26 and 27 at Mahaffey Theater, a \$5 donation will be made to Pet Pal Animal Shelter.

Andy Duguay of the Moscow Ballet learned of Pet Pal Animal Shelter when he saw the story of

Lotus, a sickly puppy rescued from a St. Petersburg canal now being cared for at Pet Pal Animal Shelter.

"While guests are enjoying the award-winning performance of a family Christmas favorite, they also will be giving to a great cause. We hope to raise more than \$10,000 to save more homeless animals' lives," Duguay said.

To purchase tickets, call 800-320-1733, ext. 15 or visit www.nutcracker.com/petpal.

To donate to Pet Pal Animal Shelter, call 328-7738.

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December Special Savings: New patients will receive a 20% discount on their first examination!

EDITORIAL

City plan lays groundwork Clearwater takes action to spur business growth

The Clearwater City Council has set aside \$100,123 to fund a plan that has much potential for economic development in the city.

Despite the costs involved, the council needs to take such steps to lay the groundwork to improve the business climate in the city.

Along those lines, an economic development specialist will be hired at a cost of \$52,746 to conduct research, support business retention and expansion efforts and implement other aspects of the plan.

The plan prepared by TIP Strategies Inc., a Texas consulting firm, envisions an employment center overlay district, a technology district in the Cleveland Street corridor and medical overlay district near Morton Plant Hospital.

The idea is to accomplish the goals through business friendly initiatives, a formal incentive policy and a business retention and expansion program as well as using tourism marketing to create business opportunities.

Such goals mirror some of the recommendations in the Clearwater Business Task Force's final report, issued in August.

During its review, the task force found that the city's process is viewed by the general public and business community as too complicated, time-consuming and expensive.

The task force recommended that the city should adopt a culture of becoming "customer-centric," requiring that services be designed around customers' needs. The city should have a proactive strategy if it wishes to be recognized as the premier place to do business in the Tampa Bay region among surrounding municipalities that have adopted more user-friendly codes and services, the task force said.

City of Largo officials also have embraced more business-friendly practices, and officials say they are hearing positive comments from the business community, after years of hearing complaints.

Certainly, improving business opportunities in any city takes time, especially in a sputtering economy. A multi-faceted approach, looking at the array of city community development services and regulation, often is needed.

But if Clearwater officials continue to make economic development and business-friendly incentives a priority, they should see results. The costs to achieve the necessary goals may raise eyebrows, but major changes in communities often require a solid commitment – from the pocketbooks as well as the lips.

LETTERS

Kudos for Rep. Young

Editor:

I would like to recognize U.S. Rep. Bill Young for his leadership that has resulted in outstanding benefits for our deserving elders. I was pleased to help honor him with the 2011 RetireSafe Standing Up For America's Seniors Award in his district office on Nov. 28.

During Young's many decades of service, he has championed legislation that helps seniors. During the 111th Congress he supported many bills, including the Comprehensive Immunosuppressive Drug Coverage for Kidney Transplant Patients Act; the Medicare Patient IVIG Access Act; and the Medicare Access to Rural Anesthesiology Act, all serving to increase access to care. He also founded the Congressional Social Security Caucus, which is dedicated to protecting and preserving the Social Security system. He genuinely cares about seniors.

RetireSafe, who led the award, is recognizing a bipartisan group of U.S. representatives across the country that put seniors first, and it is only fitting that Rep. Bill Young is among them.

Austin Curry

Executive director
Elder Care Advocacy of Florida

Thanks for the donations

Editor:

On behalf of the staff, teachers and students of Largo High School, we want to thank you for the donations of flowers, shrubbery and plants that you have given us over the past year. Last year we asked that you donate your poinsettias instead of trashing them. Wow, you sure did. Unfortunately, as you know, not everything you plant makes it. The ones that did survive look wonderful. We have our finest plant next to the administration. It's about 4 feet high and doing well.

I've had people ask why I'm spending money on plants when the school is needing tighter spending. I hope this will explain where we get our plant supplies. We ask people at garage sales, landscapers who have over ordered and they have been generous. I bring many things from my own yard. I've traded other folks for what I have for something they have. Also, I am a volunteer. Happily many of our students help us out in keeping the campus looking good.

So I hope this answers your questions. Now, if you have a plant or etc. that you don't want, please call me. I'll help you extract it from the ground and I will plant it on the grounds.

Thank you all for mentoring our school. I must confess I graduated from LHS class of 1959. Yes, that's right, I'm older than mud.

We work at LHS with all of our employees; our maintenance team is the best in the county. Our teachers and coaches are the best. Just look at our athletic teams. Far above the rest of the county. Well, that's my personal opinion.

So before you throw away your Thanksgiving and Christmas flowers, please consider dropping them off to LHS. We thank you in advance.

Marie F. Hoke-Singer

Master gardener
Largo

What do you think?

Please type letters to the editor (or print legibly) and include your name, town of residence, phone number and signature and mail to Tampa Bay Newspapers, 9911 Seminole Blvd., Seminole, FL 33772. Emails should include town of residence and telephone and be sent to tgermond@TBNweekly.com. We will not print the letter writer's phone number.

Here are some more guidelines for letters:

- Letters are printed on a first-come, first-served basis. They may be edited to correct grammar, spelling and factual errors. They also may be edited for clarity.
- Please keep letters to the editor to 500 words. Longer letters may be cut due to space limitations.
- Letters should address issues or current events. Please refrain from making unsubstantiated allegations. The newspaper will not print letters that contain slanderous or racial statements.
- Please do not use profanity.
- We do not publish poetry or songs in letters to the editor.
- Each writer may submit one letter per month.
- We can't return letters to the editor.

How to contribute

All press releases are published on a space available basis. They are subject to editing for grammar, length and general newspaper style.

We are not able to predict exactly the issue it will be printed – or even guarantee that it will be used. Press releases that affect readers in our circulation areas will take top priority.

The deadline for all copy is Friday, noon, preceding publication date. The newspapers are published Thursdays.

For upcoming events, please send in your announcement two weeks in advance, if possible. There is no need to send press releases to all the editors. Any release sent to an editor will be distributed to the other editors since we share the same office.

An examination of the obituary page

A newspaper's obituary page is a thing of great comfort, if you regard it the right way. It's the most democratic part of the paper, in that it focuses on one of the few things that happens to us all – dying. It's where we average blokes are finally able to stand eye-to-eye with the captains and the kings of the world. Some obituaries are grandiose and gassy; others are so brief they make you wonder how and why an entire life can be reduced to a few lines.

Many obits do not completely or accurately reflect the life of the deceased. Rather, they state only what the survivors wish to have the public believe. The numbers of dead folks who die "surrounded by a devoted spouse and children" are roughly ten times more numerous than the totals of genuinely happy families. Or so I have suspected over the years.

Some obits list cause of death; others do not. I'm astounded and alarmed by the number of women who succumb to breast cancer. I hear that progress is being made against cancer (and it surely should be, if the number of fundraising road races, marches and dinners are any indication), but the obit pages don't seem to show it.

When the cause of death is not stated, readers are left to wonder why. Possibly (although by no means necessarily) the death is the result of alcoholism, drug use, HIV infection or suicide. Even when the alcoholic or drug addict has been sober and straight for the final years of his/her life, it's rare to see that triumph mentioned in the obit.

Each time I read an obit page I'm relieved to find no mention of my name or that of my friends. I'm fascinated by the varying eternal destinations of the departed. Some go to a final resting-place. Others to the waiting arms of Jesus or the Lord God Jehovah. Still others go to rejoin their predeceased family members or poker buddies. Many simply die. It's nice that we all have these choices.



Driver's Seat
Bob Driver

Each time I read an obit page I'm relieved to find no mention of my name or that of my friends. I'm fascinated by the varying eternal destinations of the departed.

If a family wanted an obit to read "Harry kicked the bucket" or "Julie finally bought the farm," would a newspaper allow such colloquial references? I don't see why not. Such offhand phrasing would in no way demean the other obits on the page.

If you think you stay well-informed about who's who in the world, reading the obit pages will quickly persuade you otherwise. Each week I'll encounter the obits of geniuses and titans of science, finance, literature, government and entertainment – none of whom I'll have heard of until the day they die.

A similar reaction occurs when I read the obit of someone I thought had died years ago. A recent example was the death of the New York Times political reporter Tom Wicker. I had thought he cashed in his chips years ago. Turns out he was only retired.

Maybe that's why some folks refuse to retire. They equate retirement with death. I suppose there are some similarities.

I own a marvelous paperback book titled "The Portable Obituary – How the Famous, Rich and Powerful Really Died." The author is Michael Largo, who must have spent several years digging through obits and news reports following the deaths of hundreds of well-known and less known public figures. The entries in this book tell as much or more about the subjects' lives as about their deaths. Example: Stephen Foster, America's first composer of popular songs ("Beautiful Dreamer," "Oh, Susanna," and "Old Folks at Home") earned only \$15,091 for his entire lifetime's work. Music companies and other thieves stole his royalties, and Foster drank away what little was left. At his death in 1864, he had 38 cents in his pocket.

If you ask a thousand people, "What are your thoughts about death?" you'll get a thousand different answers. Pianist Oscar Levant was so afraid of death he refused to allow its mention by anyone in his presence. I feel sorry for anyone like that. I especially am saddened by people who believe in hell, and who therefore fear going there.

Comedian Woody Allen's most famous quote about death: "I'm not afraid of dying. I just don't want to be there when it happens." Actress Katharine Hepburn said "Death will be a great relief – no more interviews." Playwright August Wilson: "Death ain't nothing but a fastball on the outside corner."

Philosopher and atheist Richard Dawkins: "Being dead will be no different from being unborn – I shall be just as I was in the time of William the Conqueror or the dinosaurs or the trilobites. There is nothing to fear in that."

Perhaps the healthiest attitude toward death was expressed by J.M. Barrie, author of "Peter Pan." He said, "To die will be an awfully big adventure."

Bob Driver is a former columnist and editorial page editor for the Clearwater Sun. Send Driver an email at tralec71@comcast.net.



Here's the problem with China envy

In 2008, I wrote a book called "Liberal Fascism." That title came from H.G. Wells, one of the most important socialist writers in the English language. He believed, as did his fellow Fabian socialists, that Western democratic capitalism had outlived its usefulness.

What was needed was a new, bold, forward-thinking system run by experts with access to the most modern techniques. For Wells, the label for such a system mattered less than the imperative that we implement a revolution-from-above. He admired how the Germans, Italians and Russians were getting things done. In 1932 he proposed calling his revolutionary movement "enlightened Nazism" or "liberal fascism."

Wells was hardly alone. Such arguments were being made in all the Western democracies, under a thousand different banners. Most progressives rejected terms like "fascist" or "Communist," but they still touted foreign tyrannies as superior to the outmoded democratic capitalism of the 19th century.

Lincoln Steffens, the muckraking journalist, was a great fan of both Italian fascism and Soviet communism. He returned from a trip to Russia to proclaim, "I have seen the future, and it works!"

Some things never change. Andy Stern announced recently that he's been to the future, and it works. In this case, the future resides in China, which he says has a superior economic system. "The conservative-preferred, free-market fundamentalist, shareholder-only model – so successful in the 20th century – is being thrown onto the trash heap of history in the 21st century."

Who's Andy Stern? He's just the guy who, until last year, ran the Service Employees International Union, which under his leadership spent more than any organization to get



Jonah Goldberg

Obama elected in 2008, some \$28 million. Comparatively, Stern's influence in the Democratic Party eclipses that of, say, the allegedly sinister Koch brothers or anti-tax activist Grover Norquist among Republicans. Stern himself visited the White House more than any other person during Obama's first year in office (53 times).

Stern sees the Chinese government's allegedly keen ability to "plan" its way to prosperity as the new model for America. It is an argument of profound asininity. China had five-year plans before it started getting rich. Under the old five-year plans, China killed tens of millions of its own people and remained mired in poverty. What made China rich wasn't planning, it was the decision to switch to markets (albeit corrupt ones). The planners were merely in charge of distributing the wealth that markets created.

Indeed, rapid economic growth always makes government planners look like geniuses when the reality is that the planners are more like self-proclaimed rainmakers who started dancing only after it started raining. When the rain stops, which it will, they'll have much to answer for.

Oh, and what about labor? There's one labor union in China, and it's run by the government. (The Nazis had pretty much the same system.) Stern doesn't seem to care.

More intriguingly, SEIU is a huge supporter of the Occupy Wall Street movement, which, taken at its word, is most concerned

with income inequality and the back-room corruption that comes from "crony capitalism." And Stern touts China as the model for how to fix things? China has 115 billionaires and at least 115 million people living on a dollar a day or less. Nearly all of those billionaires got rich gaming a corrupt political system.

Obviously, the core problem with China envy is not economic but moral. To the extent that China's economic planning "works," it does so because China is an authoritarian country. (Japan has been planning its economy within democratic restraints and has been dying on the economic vine for nearly 20 years.) You can hit your building quota a lot more easily when you can shoot inconvenient people and trample property rights at will. The Three Gorges Dam displaced more than a million people who were given three choices: move, jail, death.

Stern joins a long list of liberals who've seen China embrace authoritarian capitalism and conclude that the secret to that success had to be the authoritarianism. New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman, my usual whipping boy in this department, has written thousands of words rhapsodizing about his "envy" of China. President Obama himself has said he's envious of China's president and has touted China's infrastructure spending as something to emulate.

If you want to copy China because its authoritarian capitalism is better than our democratic capitalism, it seems pretty obvious that what you envy is the authoritarianism. H.G. Wells had a phrase for that.

Jonah Goldberg is editor-at-large of National Review Online and a visiting fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. You can write to him in care of this newspaper or by email at JonahsColumn@aol.com, or via [Twitter@JonahNRO](https://twitter.com/JonahNRO).

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Publisher/President: Dan Autrey
dautrey@tbnweekly.com

Accounting Manager: Andrea Marcarelli
tbnandy@yahoo.com

Retail Advertising Manager: Jay Rey
jrey@tbnweekly.com

Classified Advertising Manager: Shelly Fournier
sfournier@tbnweekly.com

Executive Editor: Tom Germond
tgermond@tbnweekly.com

9911 Seminole Blvd., Seminole, FL 33772
727-397-5563 • Fax: 727-397-5900 • www.TBNweekly.com

Production Manager: David Brown
production@tbnweekly.com

Internet Services Manager: Suzette Porter
webmaster@tbnweekly.com

Seminole/Beach Beacon: Bob McClure
bmcclure@tbnweekly.com

Largo Leader/Dunedin Beacon: Tom Germond
tgermond@tbnweekly.com

Belleair/Beach Bee: Chary Southmayd
csouthmayd@tbnweekly.com

Clearwater Beacon: Alexandra Lundahl
alundahl@tbnweekly.com

Pinellas Park Beacon: Juliana A. Torres
jtorres@tbnweekly.com

General Editorial
editorial@tbnweekly.com

Circulation: L. Shifflett
Phone: 727-397-5563



It's not easy dealing with office goodies and parties

'Tis the season for break room treats and office social gatherings. Between office festivities, and finding the need to accommodate the mountain of party invites throughout the holiday season, it is easy to find yourself a little worn down. Incorporating active fun and healthy food into the office holiday season can keep your staff from being physically drained and unproductive.

Lunch hour: Get out of your chair and enjoy Tampa Bay's sunshine! Break up that long workday with a little bit of playtime. Recess isn't just for the schoolyards anymore. An active body leads to a fit and healthy



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brain. Whether by yourself or with your colleagues it's time to rejuvenate - just like the good ol' days on the playground! Head out for a brisk walk or start a pick-up game. Four square, Frisbee or hopscotch anyone?

Break room treats: It seems like this time of year you come to work and become drowned in a sea of high-calorie deliciousness. Cookies, brownies, and festive

treats galore. Combat the goodies by challenging your co-workers to bring in healthy-inspired treats. Whoever brings in the most health-conscious (and tasty) yummys wins the title of the office fun-meister.

Deck the halls. Instead of making the office intern put together the office tree and hang up the wreath, grab the entire staff and make an afternoon of decking the halls. Not only will the celebration bring joyful smiles and bonding among the office, but employees will get a workout.

Team building: Tackle extra pounds before the New Year arrives. Band together with co-

workers to achieve weight loss goals by starting now. The holidays are a perfect time to get together with your favorite office buddies and challenge each other to battle the bulge. Share holiday season successes via email, such as: "This weekend I escaped my sister's annual party without eating 12 crab rangoons ... my fave!" It will brighten up the day by providing a few laughs. Plus, everyone will gain the support they need to fend of the dreaded holiday pounds.

Make the switch! Don't let holiday party beverages become the Grinch who stole your fabulous waistline. Ditch the office party

eggnog and champagne for healthful, yet flavorful alternatives. Make the office fruit punch sparkle with a little sugar-free punch mix and flavored sparkling water. Find more holiday cooking alternatives and ideas at www.findthefunnow.com.

Looking for other new ways to enjoy active fun with your coworkers? The website www.findthefunnow.com provides a database of active fun ideas throughout Pinellas County.

Find the Fun Now is part of the Communities Putting Prevention to Work program being funded by the Centers for Disease Control and

Pinellas County and 49 other communities across the United States to address the nation's two leading causes of death and chronic disease: obesity and tobacco.

The obesity prevention campaign is built around a Web-based application that helps area residents find active fun and healthy food options. FindTheFunNow.com includes a database of hundreds of local activities as well as information about local farmers' markets and other places to find fresh produce.

This article was provided by the Pinellas County Health Department.

Briefs

Largo Medical gets new equipment

LARGO - Largo Medical Center recently began using a new piece of equipment in the treatment of Peripheral Arterial Disease.

Peripheral Arterial Disease occurs when cholesterol causes blockages in the leg, which impede blood flow to the lower extremities. Getting that blood pumping the way it should is getting easier thanks to new tech-

nology call Stealth. Stealth is used to restore blood flow to extremities in an effort to avoid amputation.

"The device uses a diamond coated burr to cut through plaque in the small vessels in the

leg," said Merrill Krolick, D.O., and interventional cardiologist, in a press release. "The procedure is done without a surgical incision."

"Dr. Krolick is one of the first in the area to use the Stealth at Largo Medical Center," said Janet Morra, vice president of cardiovascular services at Largo Medical Center. "Patients can often have their procedure done early in the morning and are discharged later the same day."

It is estimated that 12 million

Americans suffer from PAD. It will often present with symptoms including: tired legs, heaviness in the legs, non-healing ulcers, and pain while walking. People who have this disorder may have underlying coronary artery disease and can die of a heart attack. PAD is a serious condition that if not treated can lead to painful legs, gangrene, and removal of toes or even removal of a limb. It is important that an evaluation of the peripheral circulation be done

and to make every effort to restore any impaired blood flow to the limb.

Krolick says patients who may not be well enough for an open surgical procedure to restore circulation, can be treated safely with this technique.

Relay for Life event set

LARGO - A Relay for Life Largo Team Party will take place Wednesday, Dec. 13, 5:30 to 7 p.m., at Everest University, 1199 East Bay Drive.

The free event will include team fundraising ideas. Attendees will learn how to raise funds online through Facebook and via email.

For information, call 812-7026.

Hospital earns second Energy Star

DUNEDIN - Mease Dunedin Hospital continues to rank among leading facilities nationwide recognized for superior energy efficiency, earning it the prestigious Energy Star for the second consecutive year.

Energy Star is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy that is designed to minimize energy consumption, cut costs and reduce impact on the environment through voluntary energy-efficient products and practices.

"Earning a second Energy Star rating is a significant achievement because it validates that these efforts are successfully in helping to manage our resources, while also benefiting the environment through better conservation practices," said Lou Galdieri, chief operating officer for Mease Dunedin, in a press release.

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Christmas cheer

Largo's holiday parade draws a crowd to downtown Dec. 3



The Kiwanis Club of Largo/Mid-Pinellas is on a roll.



The Knights of Columbus of Largo brought some angels to Largo's Christmas parade along Fourth Street.

Photos by TOM GERMOND



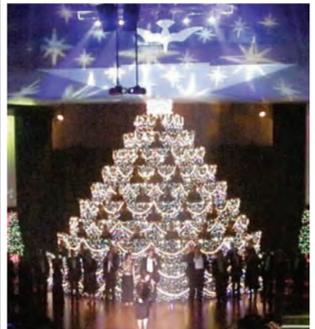
There was no shortage of candy throwers in the parade.



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Belleair Beach 3BR/2BA	\$330,000
SOLD This spacious beach townhome sold after being on the market for 12 days. It has partial views of the Gulf and is fully furnished. Located in a private gated community of 32 townhomes, it is surrounded by lovely landscaping and has a gorgeous pool. Julie Folden Coldwell Banker Belleair	

Here and there

Knights sponsors bingo

LARGO – Knights of Columbus Council 4892 sponsors bingo every Tuesday from 7 to 10 p.m. in the St. Patrick's school cafeteria, 1507 Trotter Road. Coffee and doughnuts are free and other refreshments are available. Information can be found at www.koc4892.com or by calling Art at 504-0003.

Foster parents needed

Foster homes are needed for many children in Pinellas and Pasco counties. There are more than 3,500 dependent children in these two counties due to child abuse, neglect or abandonment, and many of them need loving foster parents. For more information, call Eckerd Community Alternatives Recruitment Line at 866-233-0790.

Bikers' toy run set

CLEARWATER – The Suncoast Brotherhood will host its 31st annual Toy Run on Sunday, Dec. 18, beginning at noon from the Kmart parking lot at U.S. 19 and State Road 580 in Dunedin. The police-escorted motorcycle toy run will proceed along Main Street to celebrate gift giving at the American Legion Post 275 at 360 Wilson St., Dunedin. Bikers are asked to bring a \$5 donation and an unwrapped toy per person for area foster children. Suncoast Brotherhood is a bikers' rights group. Visit www.suncoastbrotherhood.org.

Social security lecture set

People who are considering starting social security benefits soon or have begun benefits within the past 12

months are invited to attend an educational seminar. The lecture will discuss maximizing one's benefits, which involves planning that may include a rarely used option that most people are not aware of. The complimentary seminars are offered on the following dates:

- Tuesday, Dec. 13 or Jan. 10, 6:30 p.m., at Largo Community Center, 400 Keene Road, Largo
- Wednesday, Dec. 14 or Jan. 18, 5:30 p.m., at Clearwater Recreation Center, 69 Bay Esplanade, Clearwater Beach

The seminar will be presented by Sylvester Thomas and Dan DeMarco of P3 Financial. To RSVP, email info@p3financial.com or call 813-829-8472 and leave a name, number in your party, and which date you will be attending.

SHINE volunteers needed

Volunteers are needed for Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders to help people understand Medicare and provide free, unbiased information and counseling. Training will be offered in January. Call 800-96-ELDER (800-963-5337).

ROWC to meet

ST. PETERSBURG – The Retired Officers Wives Club of St. Petersburg will meet Tuesday, Dec. 13, at Isla Del Sol Country Club, 6000 Sun Blvd. Social hour will begin at 11:30 a.m., followed by lunch at 12:15 p.m. The program will be Christmas music by Steve Middents. All retired or active duty military spouses, their widows and retired or active duty female officers are invited to attend. Reservations are necessary. For reservations, call 347-7976 or 399-1272.

Posani-Kish



Maria Posani of Largo and Thomas Kish of Clearwater will be married on Oct. 20, 2012, at Doubletree Beach Resort by Hilton, North Redington Beach.

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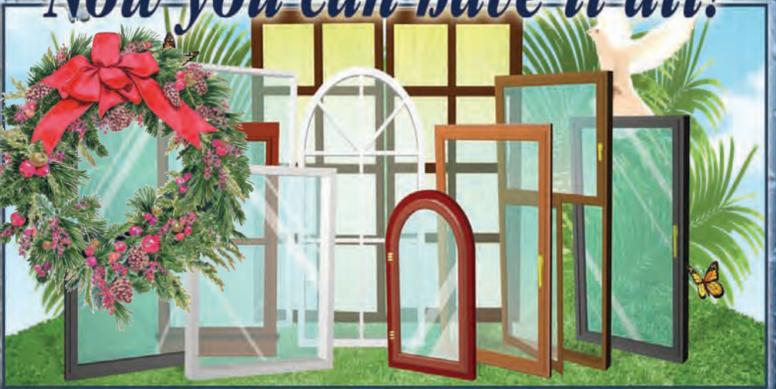


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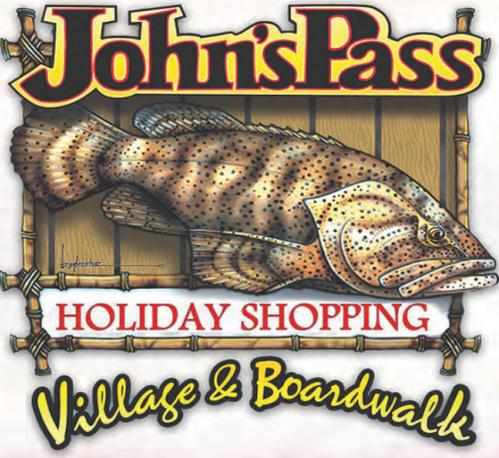
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Diversions

Things to do around Pinellas County



- Classifieds
- Events
- Movies

Leader
Section B
December 8, 2011
Visit www.TBNweekly.com

Top five diversions

• **Tierney Sutton Band**, Friday, Dec. 9, 8 p.m., at the Largo Cultural Center, 105 Central Park Drive, Largo. Tickets are \$35 in advance and \$40 the day of the show. Call 587-6793 or visit largoarts.com. The band is currently celebrating its third consecutive Grammy nomination for Best Vocal Jazz Album. During a collaboration that has spanned 17 years, they have garnered praise throughout the world, leading to a JazzWeek Award for Vocalist of the Year, as well as consecutive nominations for Jazz Journalist Association Awards.

• **The Florida Orchestra: Christmas at the Pops!**, Friday, Dec. 9, 8 p.m., at the Straz Center, 1010 N. W.C. MacInnes Place, Tampa. Call 813-229-7827 or visit www.strazcenter.org. The performance will be repeated Saturday, Dec. 10, 8 p.m., at Progress Energy Center's Mahaffey Theater, 400 First St. S., St. Petersburg. Call 892-5767 or visit www.mahafeytheater.com. A final performance will be presented Sunday, Dec. 11, 7:30 p.m., at Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Road, Clearwater. Call 791-7400 or visit www.rutheckerdhal.com. The 130 voices of the Master Chorale will join the orchestra in this Yuletide celebration for the entire family with everyone's favorite Christmas carols along with such beloved musical chestnuts as "Santa Claus is Coming to Town," "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and "Frosty the Snowman."



Photo by LEFTARIS

Tierney Sutton brings her band to Largo Cultural Center Dec. 9.

• **Nate Najar's Holiday Show**, Friday, Dec. 9, 8 p.m., at the Palladium, 253 Fifth Ave. N., St. Petersburg. Tickets range from \$25 to \$35. Call 822-3590 or visit www.spcollege.edu/palladium. Najar is back by popular demand. The guitarist will lead an all-star band in a special holiday music show. The show will feature two great New York City jazz artists: Harry Allen on tenor sax and Jon-Erik Kelloso on trumpet, plus John Lamb on bass, Stephen Bucholtz on drums and a female vocalist. A portion of the concert will include Ellington's Jazz Nutcracker.

• **Michael McDonald and America**, Saturday, Dec. 10, 8 p.m., at Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Road, Clearwater. Tickets range from \$48 to \$95. Call 791-7400 or visit www.rutheckerdhal.com. McDonald, a five-time Grammy winning singer-songwriter, is best known for hits such as "What a Fool Believes," "Takin' It to the Streets" and "Sweet Freedom." McDonald has contributed to American pop music for more than three decades. His instantly recognizable voice reaches beyond just one genre. For this show, McDonald will team with Grammy-winning America, who skyrocketed to fame with hits "A Horse With No Name," "Ventura Highway," "Sister Golden Hair" and "Tin Man." For 40 years, America has delivered timeless, uplifting songs and lush harmonies. The concert will feature both classic hits and Christmas songs.

• **Livingston Taylor**, Saturday, Dec. 10, 8 p.m., at Tarpon Springs Performing Arts Center, 324 Pine St. Tickets are \$28 for adults and \$24 for members and students. Call 942-5605 or visit www.tarponarts.org. Livingston, an award-winning singer-songwriter, will bring together the pure joy of performance with a professionalism gained from 40 years of experience. Livingston's ease in the presence of his audience makes the musical ride an exhilarating journey showcasing a diverse repertoire that includes country, Broadway, bluegrass and blues. From Top 40 hits such as "I Will Be in Love with You" and "I'll Come Running," to "I Can Dream of You" and "Boatman" both recorded by his brother James Taylor, Livingston's creative output has continued unabated.



Photo by ANDREW SCHWARTZ

Ashton Kutcher stars as Randy and Lea Michele as Elise in New Line Cinema's romantic comedy "New Year's Eve," a Warner Bros. Pictures release.

Opening this weekend

Kutcher celebrates 'New Year's Eve'; Oldman stars in spy flick

Compiled by LEE CLARK ZUMPE

A number of new movies will hit theaters this week, including the following films opening in wide release:

'New Year's Eve'

Genre: Romance and comedy
Cast: Ashton Kutcher, Jessica Biel, Hillary Swank, Katherine Heigl, Zac Efron, Sarah Jessica Parker, Michelle Pfeiffer and Lea Michele

Director: Garry Marshall
Rated: PG-13
Director/producer Garry Marshall is joined by a stellar ensemble cast to ring in the 2011 holiday season with the romantic comedy "New Year's Eve."

"New Year's Eve" celebrates love, hope, forgiveness, second chances and fresh starts, with intertwining stories told amidst the pulse and promise of New York City on the most dazzling night of the year.

'The Sitter'

Genre: Comedy
Cast: Jonah Hill, Ari Graynor, Max Records, Kevin Hernandez and J.B. Smoove

Director: David Gordon Green
Rated: R
When the world's most irresponsible babysitter takes three of the world's worst kids on an unforgettable overnight adventure through the streets of New York City, it's anyone's guess who's going to make it home in one piece.

"The Sitter" is a new level of twisted and debauched hilarity from the director of "Pineapple Express," starring Jonah Hill.

'Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy'

Genre: Adaptation and thriller
Cast: Gary Oldman, Kathy Burke, Colin Firth, Tom Hardy and John Hurt
Director: Tomas Alfredson
Rated: R
The time is 1973.

The Cold War of the mid-20th Century continues to damage international relations. Britain's Secret Intelligence Service, aka MI6 and code-named the Circus, is striving to keep pace with other countries' espionage efforts and to keep the U.K. secure. The head of the Circus, known as Control (John Hurt), personally sends dedicated operative Jim Prideaux (Mark Strong) into Hungary. But Jim's mission goes bloodily awry, and Control is forced out of the Circus - as is his top lieutenant, George Smiley (Gary Oldman), a career spy with razor-sharp senses.

Estranged from his absent wife Ann, Smiley is soon called in to see undersecretary Oliver Lacon (Simon McBurney); he is to be rehired in secret at the government's behest, as there is a gnawing fear that the Circus has long been compromised by a double agent, or mole, working for the Soviets and jeopardizing England. Supported by younger agent Peter Guillam (Benedict Cumberbatch), Smiley parses Circus activities past and present. In trying to track and identify the mole, Smiley is haunted by his decades-earlier interaction with the shadowy Russian spymaster Karla.

The mole's trail remains cold until maverick field agent Ricki Tarr (Tom Hardy) unexpectedly contacts Lacon. While undercover in Turkey, Ricki has fallen for a betrayed married woman, Irina (Svetlana Khodchenkova), who claims to possess crucial intelligence.

See **OPENING**, page 2B

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8 channels and 10 bands
3 noise management options, on or off adaption
1-year warranty

Competitor's price **\$2,199**
Our Price **\$1,099**

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8 channels and 12 bands
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OPENING, from page 1B

Separately, Smiley learns that Control narrowed down the list of mole suspects to five men. They are the ambitious Percy Alleline (Toby Jones), whom he had code-named Tinker; suavely confident Bill Haydon (Colin Firth), dubbed Tailor; stalwart Roy Bland (Ciaran Hinds), called Soldier; officious Toby Esterhase (David Dencik), dubbed Poor Man; and - Smiley himself.

Even before the startling truth is revealed, the emotional and physical tolls on the players enmeshed in the deadly international spy game will escalate.

The following will open in limited release. It may be several weeks before these films appear in local movie theaters.

'I Melt With You'

Genre: Thriller and drama
 Cast: Thomas Jane, Jeremy Piven, Rob Lowe, Christian McKay and Carla Gugino
 Director: Mark Pellington
 Rated: R
 Richard (Thomas Jane), Ron (Jeremy Piven), Tim (Christian McKay), and Jonathan (Rob Lowe) are friends from college who gather for a weekend each year to celebrate their friendship and catch up with each other.

On the surface, they look like other men going through life: They have careers and families and responsibilities. But as with many people, there is more to them than meets the eye. As the weekend progresses, they go down the rabbit hole of excess. Fueled by sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll, their bacchanalian reunion drives them to an unexpected place where they are forced to confront themselves and the choices they've made.

'Young Adult'

Genre: Comedy
 Cast: Charlize Theron, Patton Oswalt, Patrick Wilson, Elizabeth Reaser and Collette Wolfe
 Director: Jason Reitman
 Rated: R
 Charlize Theron plays Mavis Gary, a writer of teen literature who returns to her small hometown to reclaim her happily married high school sweetheart (Patrick Wilson).
 When returning home proves more difficult than she thought, Mavis forms an unusual bond with a former classmate (Patton Oswalt) who hasn't quite gotten over high school, either.



Photo by JACK ENGLISH

Gary Oldman, left, stars as George Smiley and John Hurt as Control in Focus Features release of Tomas Alfredson's "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy."

Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	
13				14				15		16				
17									18					
19				20				21						
22			23		24		25	26				27		
28				29		30				31				
			32		33		34		35	36				
			37				38							
39	40								41					
42						43		44		45		46	47	48
49				50	51				52		53			
54			55					56		57		58		
59						60	61				62			
63						64								
65								66				67		

Across

- 1. Aroma
- 5. Phi Delta, e.g.
- 13. Little devils
- 16. Rake
- 17. Betrothal gift (pl.)
- 19. Cloak-and-dagger org. (acronym)
- 20. Clairvoyance, e.g. (acronym)
- 21. Not dispatched
- 22. Chuckers
- 24. Wife of King Prium of Troy
- 27. "For shame!"
- 28. Carry away, in a way
- 30. Amstrayed
- 31. Actors
- 32. "Go on ..."
- 34. Height (pl.)
- 37. Offensively
- 39. Odd-jobber
- 41. Gangster's gun
- 42. "What are the ___?"
- 43. "Bleah!"
- 45. Short series of chords (pl.)
- 49. "___ to Billie Joe"
- 50. Group within a larger group

Down

- 1. African veneer
- 2. 1973 Elton John hit
- 3. System of scientific rules (pl.)
- 4. ___ Victor (acronym)
- 5. Mouthing off
- 6. Kind of room
- 7. A pint, maybe
- 8. Big ___ Conference
- 9. Western blue flag, e.g.
- 10. Pecuniary
- 11. Short, upturned facial feature
- 12. Some stanzas
- 14. "Act your ___!"
- 15. Blunted end

18. Biochemistry abbr. (acronym)

- 23. Rises upright onto feet
- 25. Dried dung fuel
- 26. "Do ___ others as..."
- 29. "Men always hate most what they ___ most": Mencken
- 31. Sectarian
- 33. Faint
- 35. Calendar abbr.
- 36. Boris Godunov, for one
- 37. Set in from the margin
- 38. Slap on
- 39. Indiana, The ___ State
- 40. Extras
- 44. Lumberjacks
- 46. Extremely hard
- 47. Coffin
- 48. Men's form-fitting swim briefs
- 50. "Dear" one
- 51. Annul
- 52. Perfect, e.g.
- 55. Animal shelters
- 57. "Silent Spring" subject (acronym)
- 60. "The Three Faces of ___"
- 61. ___ green
- 62. "Dig in!"

Horoscopes

December 8, 2011

Capricorn

December 22 - January 19
 Teen angst makes for trying times at home. Be patient, Capricorn. It will work itself out well before the festivities begin. A change in venue is welcomed.

Aquarius

January 20 - February 18
 Warm wishes add gaiety to your week, Aquarius. A shopping trip with friends turns up some great finds and makes for a very merry time.

Pisces

February 19 - March 20
 The wishing well is not dried up. Reveal what it is that you want and watch what happens. Travel plans get ironed out. Get ready to pack your bags, Pisces.

Aries

March 21 - April 19
 Ties with family grow stronger with a string of events at each other's homes. A letter finally makes its way to you, and boy, Aries, are you surprised by what's inside.

Taurus

April 20 - May 20
 Avenues open up, and you're on the way to financial freedom. A change in dates sends everyone scurrying at the office. Take it in stride, Taurus.

Gemini

May 21 - June 21
 Gift exchanges at home call for different rules than gift exchanges at the office, Gemini. Be aware of the differences and plan accordingly. A new recipe hits the spot.

Cancer

June 22 - July 22
 Doubt creeps in, and you begin to rethink your plans. Relax, Cancer. Some minor adjustments will make everything right. A fitness goal is reached.

Leo

July 23 - August 22
 Boredom sets in at work, but not for long, as the mad dash begins to get things out the door. Don't worry, Leo. It won't be easy, but you will finish on time.

Virgo

August 23 - September 22
 Financial concerns take precedence this week, Virgo. Find ways to cut back and create a budget you can live with. An evening of conversation turns you onto a new pastime.

Libra

September 23 - October 22
 Think you're finished shopping, Libra? Think again, as a new round of party invites arrive. Consider gifts that give back for those hard to buy for.

Scorpio

October 23 - November 21
 Change is in the air. Embrace it, Scorpio. There are good times to be had. Colleagues go gaga over your report. Give yourself a pat on the back.

Sagittarius

November 22 - December 21
 The gossip mill kicks into high gear with an announcement. Don't add fuel to the fire. Say what you know and leave it at that, Sagittarius.

Sudoku

		3	5					9
	5			9	3			1
			7			8		5
3			4			9	2	
		2				7		
	9	7			8			3
7		8			1			
9			8	4				5
	2				9	4		

Place a Number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

Sudoku answers from last week

9	1	8	6	4	7	3	2	5
6	7	5	2	3	8	1	4	9
2	3	4	5	9	1	6	8	7
7	5	3	9	8	4	2	6	1
1	8	6	7	2	3	5	9	4
4	2	9	1	6	5	8	7	3
5	9	1	8	7	6	4	3	2
8	4	7	3	1	2	9	5	6
3	6	2	4	5	9	7	1	8

Crossword answers from last week

T	O	R	S	V	P	R	A	N	I				
U	R	I	C	P	E	N	A	L	E	R	I	N	I
M	A	G	I	H	E	I	N	E	T	E	E	D	
L	I	F	E	E	X	P	E	C	T	A	N	C	E
D	I	A	N	A	S	T	R	I	A	E			
C	A	N	R	O	M	E	T	R	O	N			
A	G	E	L	I	N	E	A	M	E	N	T	S	
R	U	S	S	O	N	A	N	P	R	E	E	N	
R	E	S	U	R	R	E	C	T	S				
S	E	B	A	H	T	E	L	L	A	L	B		
S	E	P	T	E	M	T	R	O	O	S	T		
I	M	P	L	E	M	E	N	T	A	T	I	O	N
N	E	R	O	B	R	I	A	N	P	R	E	E	N
C	L	O	T	A	L	K	I	E	L	E	G	D	
A	L	I	M	S	S	E	E	N	E	S	A	L	

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Theater review

Time warps, suspense and salvation fuel WCP production of 'Communicating Doors'

When attending a performance of Alan Ayckbourn's 1994 drama-comedy "Communicating Doors," the first thing that comes to mind is how much Rod Serling (of "Twilight Zone" fame) would have enjoyed the play.



Curtain Call
Lee Clark Zumpe

Ayckbourn, a prolific English playwright, uses a device straight out of the golden age of science fiction to set up this drama that is at times wildly comic and at times splendidly suspenseful.

West Coast Players' thoroughly engaging production of "Communicating Doors" runs through Dec. 18 at West Coast Players Theatre, 21905 U.S. 19 N., Clearwater.

What is Ayckbourn's clever device? The "Communicating Doors" of the play's title are in fact a set of doors found in a sixth-floor suite in the five-star Regal Hotel. The doors don't lead to a run-of-the-mill broom closet, though: They allow characters to travel through time - with some restrictions.

The play opens in 2014.

Julian, a clearly cold-blooded businessman and apparent caregiver, has negotiated the services of Poopay, a prostitute/dominatrix, for his lifelong business partner

Reece, a frail and elderly man. When Julian leaves the two alone, Reece reveals he isn't interested in her professional services. Reece wants her to sign a document as witness to his confession of a lifetime of transgressions and wrongdoing. Once she has signed it, Reece beseeches her to deliver it to a specific attorney.

It is revealed that while Reece has enjoyed a prosperous life, his success came at a high price: He admits to a string of atrocious acts and admits Julian murdered two of his wives.

Before Poopay can leave the hotel suite, Julian realizes Reece has spilled the beans and that he can't allow the prostitute to escape.

Escape she does, however, through the time-warping doors - delivering her back 20 years to the same room and introducing her to Reece's second wife, Ruella. Of course, Poopay doesn't immediately realize what has happened and it's fun to watch the two women try to reason things out. Eventually, Ruella has a go at the doors, too.

Here's where those time-traveling restrictions come into play.

Poopay can only travel back and forth between 2014 and 1994; Ruella can only travel back and forth between 1994 and 1974.

Fortunately, each accessible point in time happens to be a crucial moment in Reece's life. Ruella, for instance, stumbles into the room in 1974 interrupting Reece's honeymoon with his first wife, Jessica.

"Communicating Doors" seems to draw from a number of sources, including the classic British bedroom farce, Serling's brand of character-driven science-fiction storytelling and Alfred Hitchcock's tense psychological thriller. Ayckbourn clearly intends the play as a study of the concepts of fortune and free will, but his presentation is cyclically witty, persuasive and poignant.

Directed by Ashlie Mohnhey, West Coast Players' production of "Communicating Doors" stars Janice Creneti as Ruella, Tara Fuller as Jessica, Andrew Hughes as Reece, John Kobasic as Harold, Julia Rudgers as Poopay and Gary L. Smith as Julian.

Rudgers manages to capture the inconsistency of

her character in the opening scene: Of all the players in "Communicating Doors," Poopay - whose real name is Phoebe - seems dislodged in time, as though something has gone amiss. That disoriented and adrift aura Rudgers exudes gets the audience on her side. Rudgers is no weak Poopay, though - her frequent wisecracks are delivered with merciless cynicism.

As Julian, Smith is cold and callous and a little creepy. Smith does a wonderful job making the character magnificently menacing - a necessity since Julian has to intimidate an indomitable dominatrix.

Creneti shines as Ruella. Ruella is the play's puzzle master, solving the riddle of the doors and motivating the other characters into action. Creneti, who gave a brilliant performance in West Coast Players' production of "Small Craft Warnings" in October, exemplifies the levelheaded hero.

In contrast, Jessica, Reece's first wife, isn't the brightest bulb in the chandelier. Fuller does a fine job of presenting Jessica as someone who might argue

with a signpost without making her seem so dimwitted that she can't comprehend Ruella's repeated warnings. Moreover, Fuller emphasizes Jessica's innocence and completes the power triumvirate between the three women.

Kobasic plays the hopelessly perplexed Harold, hotel security man. The more confused Harold becomes, the fun-

nier Kobasic is.

Finally, Hughes portrays Reece. Hughes was seen recently in Eight O'Clock Theatre's production of "Mister Roberts." Hughes successfully conveys a considerable conversion of character. In fact, he does such a fine job of making the penitent Reece so repellent that it's difficult to find any compassion for the character.

In a way, Reece is the play's weakest point - but it's not the fault of Hughes.

More than likely, Ayckbourn kept this character decidedly detached and unapproachable in the opening scene, a choice that elicits little or no sympathy for him from audience members throughout the course of the play. But "Communicating Doors" isn't so much about Reece's potential redemption as it is about challenging predestination and empowerment. Upon grasping their respective futures in the initial time-line, Poopay, Ruella and Jessica act accordingly in the hopes of altering their lives.

Audiences of all ages will enjoy Ayckbourn's suspenseful, science-fiction tinged play. Because of the time-traveling twist, "Communicating Doors" might hold special appeal as an introduction to theater for younger generations - particularly the 20- and 30-somethings who have found a new attraction to the genre through television shows such as "Doctor Who," "Fringe" and "Terra Nova."

Of course, as the director points out in her notes, time travel has been the vehicle of the imagination of authors and filmmakers for years.

"Often we have wished that in real life we could turn back the hands of time to alter life's events," Mohnhey writes.

Mohnhey acknowledges, though, that "Communicating Doors" is too complex to describe as a simple time-travel story. It is the "message of redemption" and the "ability to alter one's fate through personal action," as Mohnhey puts it, that lies at the heart of this engrossing play.

Performances are Fridays and Saturdays, 8 p.m. Matinees are Sundays, 2 p.m. Tickets are \$18 for adults, \$15 for seniors, students and military. For reservations, call 437-2363 or visit www.wcplayers.org.



Photo by DANIEL HAMMERBERG

From left, Julia Rudgers stars as Poopay, Janice Creneti as Ruella and Tara Fuller as Jessica in West Coast Players' production of "Communicating Doors," running through Dec. 18.

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Looking ahead

Clearwater

• **"The Sensuous Senator,"** by Michael Parker, presented by Early Bird Dinner Theatre, through Dec. 23, at the Italian-American Club, 200 S. McMullen Booth Road. Seating for performances is Thursday through Sunday, 4 p.m. Seating for matinees is Thursday and Saturday, 11 a.m. Cost is \$29.90 a person. For reservations, call 446-5898. Visit www.earlybirddinnertheatre.com. Senator Douglas is running for president on a "morality" platform, but when his wife Lois leaves to attend a conference in Chicago, he does not hesitate to invite Veronica, his secretary and lover, over. Finding her unavailable, he has an escort agency send voluptuous Fiona. All seems well until his elderly Congressional colleague and neighbor locks himself out and asks to spend the night. Then Congressman Jack Maquire drops in unexpectedly and Fiona, unsure who her client is, zeros in on him.

• **The Exhibiting Society of Artists exhibit,** through Feb. 29, 2012, at Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Road. TESA will be exhibiting this winter season for three full months at Ruth Eckerd Hall. Artwork by TESA's 50 professional artist members, most of whom reside in and around Pinellas County, includes all-media works available for purchase. TESA has been exhibiting at Ruth Eckerd Hall for nearly 10 years, in the East and West Galleries located on the upper level of the main theater area. The galleries are open for viewing by Ruth Eckerd Hall ticket holders during scheduled performances. For information, call Gayle DeCoste at 474-3386.

• **"Annie,"** with music by Charles Strouse, lyrics by Martin Charnin and book by Thomas Meehan; presented by Francis Wilson Playhouse, through Dec. 18, at the playhouse, 302 Seminole St. Performances are Thursday through Saturday, 8 p.m. Matinees are Sunday, 2 p.m. Tickets are \$26 for adults and \$13 for students. Call 446-1360 or visit www.franciswilsonplayhouse.org. Winner of seven Tony and Drama Desk Awards in 1977, "Annie" tells the story of Little Orphan Annie and how she came to meet Oliver Daddy Warbucks. This Depression-era family musical features such tunes as "Tomorrow," "NYC" and "You're Never Fully Dressed Without A Smile."

• **"Communicating Doors,"** by Alan Ayckbourn, presented by West Coast Players, through Dec. 18, at West Coast Players Theatre, 21905 U.S. 19 N. Performances are Friday and Saturday, 8 p.m. Matinees are Sunday, 2 p.m. Admission is \$18 for adults and \$15 for seniors and students. Call 437-2363 or visit www.wcplayers.org. A bit of time travel - courtesy of a set of hotel doors - transports a group of characters between past and present in an effort to rewrite history.

• **Wanda Sykes,** Monday, Dec. 12, 8 p.m., at

Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Road. Tickets range from \$42.50 to \$59.50. Call 791-7400 or visit www.rutheckerdhall.com. Sykes, comedian and actress, is known for her late night talk show "The Wanda Sykes Show" on Fox and the CBS show "The New Adventures of Old Christine." She has had two standup specials air on HBO, both of which were nominated for primetime Emmys for Outstanding Variety, Music or Comedy Special and for Outstanding Writing for a Variety, Music or Comedy Special. Sykes also has been in feature films such as "Evan Almighty" and "Monster-In-Law" as well as the animated films "Over the Hedge" and "The Barnyard."

• **Flavor of Jazz VI: Peter White Christmas,** Tuesday, Dec. 13, at Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Road. Tickets range from \$55 to \$93. Tastings will begin at 6 p.m. The concert will start at 7:30 p.m. Call 791-7400 or visit www.rutheckerdhall.com. Attendees will celebrate the season and indulge themselves with luscious culinary delights from some of the area's finest restaurants. The concert will feature the music of guitarist Peter White and saxophonists Kirk Whalum and St. Petersburg's own Minda Abair. Proceeds from the show will benefit of The Marcia P. Hoffman Performing Arts Institute and Clearwater Jazz Holiday jazz education programs. The Ruth Eckerd Hall/Clearwater Jazz Holiday Youth Band opens the show for this festive evening.

• **Tony Orlando's Great American Christmas,** Tuesday, Dec. 13, 1 p.m., at Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Road. Tickets range from \$35 to \$43. Call 791-7400 or visit www.rutheckerdhall.com. One of America's most endearing and enduring stars, Orlando is known for his warmth, his energy, a host of hits including five that made it to No. 1, a successful television variety show, roles in movies and on Broadway, and as a popular casino entertainer. It all began with the surprise hit "Candida," followed by "Knock Three Times," "Sweet Gypsy Rose," "Cupid," "He Don't Love You" and his signature song of 1973 "Tie A Yellow Ribbon 'Round The Ole Oak Tree," now an ongoing American anthem of hope, homecoming, reunion and renewal.

• **Singles 50+ Dance,** Saturday, Dec. 17, 7 p.m., at Colreavy Hall, 820 Jasmine Way. Sponsored by SCIPS, cost is \$5 for members and \$7 for nonmembers. Live music will be provided by the Sincerely Yours band. Door prizes will be awarded. No reservations are necessary. Attendees may bring their own snacks and beverages. Cups and ice are furnished, and sodas are available. Monthly dances, featuring live music, are scheduled for third Saturdays. Other scheduled activities include dining out, theater, movies, picnics, sporting events and visits to museums. Call 446-1619 or 461-7104 or visit scips.tripod.com.



Photo courtesy of TARPON SPRINGS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
Golden Dragon Acrobats visit Tarpon Springs Performing Arts Center Jan. 11.

• **Tedeschi Trucks Band,** Thursday, Dec. 29, 8 p.m., at Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Road. Tickets range from \$29.50 to \$75. Call 791-7400 or visit www.rutheckerdhall.com. Husband-and-wife team Derek Trucks and Susan Tedeschi have put together a new band. They're now out on the road in support of their studio album "Revelator." The first generation of this new lineup made appearances at some of the most prestigious festivals of last year including New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Fest, Eric Clapton Crossroads Guitar Fest, Telluride Blues and Brews Festival, and Japan's Fuji Rock Fest. In addition, Derek and Susan collaborated with Herbie Hancock on his "Imagine Project," performing with the jazz master at high profile events such as "Late Night with David Letterman" and "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," as well as both of his 70th birthday parties held at Carnegie Hall in New York and the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles.

• **Howie Mandel,** Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2012, 7:30 p.m., at Capitol Theatre, 405 Cleveland St. Tickets range from \$69 to \$85. Call 791-7400 or visit www.atthecap.com. Mandel has been in show business for more than 30 years. Known for such television gigs as being a judge on "America's Got Talent," he's also received an Emmy-Award nomination for his role as the host on "Deal or No Deal." Among many other shows, the Toronto-born entertainer also is recognizable as being the starring voice on the children's cartoon "Bobby's World," a show he created. The stand-up comic came to the attention of the American television viewers during the six-year run, in the '80s, of the medical drama television show, "St. Elsewhere," on which he played Dr. Wayne Fiscus.

See LOOKING AHEAD, page 5B

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LOOKING AHEAD, from page 4B

Dunedin

• **The Greatest Holiday Show on Earth**, through Dec. 23, at Dunedin Fine Art Center, 1143 Michigan Blvd. On a yearly basis, DFAC curators look to put together the best art, with a gift-giving perspective in mind. The result is a collection of works from around the country that any of your friends or relatives would be delighted to find under their tree. This festival holiday show features work by more than 100 artists such as Brooke Allison, Rocky and Kathleen Bridges, Nancy Cervenka, Elizabeth Coachman, Brngt Hokanson and Trefny Dix, Lisa Ward Landsman, Susan Maxon, Melissa Miller Nece, Steve Pawloski, Stacy Perry, Wendy Thurlow, Markissia Toulitatos, Aimee Trachtenberg, Glenn Woods, Gail Wynne and Kreg Yingst. Also on display are a dozen exceptionally decorated themed trees and a selection of hard-to-find gifts. Tradition has it, for this exhibit only, that purchases can go home with buyers. Gallery and gift shop hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, 1 to 4 p.m. Call 298-3322 or visit www.dfac.org.

• **Coffee and Conversation with Bonnie Bowman**, Thursday, Dec. 8, noon, at the Dunedin Fine Art Center, 1143 Michigan Blvd. As part of the free Coffee and Conversation series sponsored by the Sterling Society of DFAC, Bowman will look at how her artistic pursuits led her to basketry. She'll address the collection and preparation of natural materials, as well as extracting botanical colors from local vegetation. Bonnie will share not only an historical look at the evolution in her work with clay and fiber, but also personal insights on mentoring and sources of inspiration. Bowman is an artist who believes the pursuit of mastering ancient craft techniques is relevant and essential to the well being of our "present minds." She has sold her work through commissions from private and corporate clients, as well as produced ceramic work which was marketed and sold to an international market. For information, call 298-3322 or visit www.dfac.org.

• **Opening reception**, Friday, Dec. 9, 6 to 10 p.m., at the Stirling Art Studios and Gallery, 730 Broadway. The Pinups and Puppies exhibit runs through Dec. 31 and features authentic 1940s and 1950s collector prints by artists such as Vargas, Petty, DeVors, Frahm and Patterson. Artist Anna Hamilton of Murals for Mutts will sketch puppies with a portion of sales proceeds benefitting Shih Tzu Rescue. The opening reception will include music, food and a silent auction.

Gulfport

• **Third Saturday Art Walk**, Saturday, Dec. 17, 6 to 10 p.m., along Beach Boulevard. Attendees can preview and purchase the work of more than 50 artists and crafters. Also taking part in the event will be authors, antique dealers and entertainers. The district's shops, boutiques and galleries also will be open. Live entertainment often includes performances by artists such as Mile Marker Zero, Double M Band, Paul Anthony Band and New Horizons Band. The Industrial Art Center will offer mini-classes with master glass blower Jackie Ballard and the IAC team. For information, visit www.gulfportma.com.

• **USA Dance**, Monday, Dec. 19, 7 to 10:15 p.m., at Gulfport Casino, 5500 Shore Blvd. Admission is \$7 and includes a dance workshop, professional and amateur exhibitions, dance hosts and snacks. Beverages are available for purchase. For information, call 397-5754.

• **USA Dance**, Monday, Jan. 30, 2012, 7 to 10:15 p.m., at Gulfport Casino, 5500 Shore Blvd. Admission is \$7 and includes a dance workshop, professional and amateur exhibitions, dance hosts and snacks. For information, call 397-5754.

• **USA Dance**, Monday, Feb. 27, 2012, 7 to 10:15 p.m., at Gulfport Casino, 5500 Shore Blvd. Admission is \$7 and includes a dance workshop, professional and amateur exhibitions, dance hosts and snacks. For information, call 397-5754.

Indian Rocks Beach

• **Opening reception for Home for the Holidays exhibit and sale**, Friday, Dec. 9, 6 to 8 p.m., at the Beach Art Center, 1515 Bay Palm Blvd. The holiday show and sale will run through Jan. 6. Works will be in a variety of media, including oil, acrylic, watercolor, mixed media, pottery and jewelry. The opening reception will include a cook-out. David Shankweiler, the center's executive director, will be smoking chicken wings and drumsticks. Attendees are invited to bring a dish to share. For information, call 596-4331, email at arts1515@aol.com or visit www.beachartcenter.org.

Largo

• **Peace Frog**, Saturday, Dec. 10, 8 p.m., at Largo Cultural Center, 105 Central Park Drive. Tickets are \$24 in advance and \$29 the day of the show. Call 587-6793 or visit largoarts.com. Peace Frog, the ultimate Doors tribute band, recreates the primal, poetic atmosphere of a vintage Doors concert. The band also will celebrate the first anniversary of Morrison's pardon requested by Governor Charlie Crist. Crist suggested the possibility of a posthumous pardon for Morrison, which was approved unanimously by the state clemency board on Dec. 9, 2010.

• **Saturday Afternoon Movie**, Saturday, Dec. 10, 2 p.m., at Largo Public Library, 120 Central Park Drive. The feature film will be "The Smurfs." Call 587-6715.

• **Sunday Matinee Music Program Series**, Sunday, Dec. 11, at Largo Community Center, 400 Alt. Keene Road. The featured entertainment will be a Holiday Show with the Florida Suncoast Barbershop Chorus. Each show in the series will feature a meal, live entertainment and dancing. Dinner is served at 3:30 p.m. Entertainment starts at 4 p.m. Dancing follows the entertainment from 6 to 10 p.m. A cash bar is available. Advance tickets are \$12 for dinner and show; \$18 for dinner, show and dance; or \$8 for the dance only. Dinner tickets must be purchased by the Wednesday prior to the show.

Call 518-3131 or visit LargoCommunityCenter.com.

• **The Four Freshman**, Sunday, Dec. 11, 7 p.m., at the Largo Cultural Center, 105 Central Park Drive. Tickets are \$33 in advance and \$38 the day of the show. Call 587-6793 or visit largoarts.com. The Four Freshmen, member of The Vocal Group Hall of Fame, will return to the Largo Cultural Center with a stunning holiday show. The quartet will perform favorite holiday tunes plus their many hits such as "It's a Blue World," "Mood Indigo," "Day by Day" and "Graduation Day."

• **Monday Matinee**, Monday, Dec. 12, 12:30 p.m., at Largo Public Library, 120 Central Park Drive. The feature film will be "Four Christmases." Call 587-6715.

• **Saturday Afternoon Movie**, Saturday, Dec. 17, 2 p.m., at Largo Public Library, 120 Central Park Drive. The feature film will be "Finding Nemo." Call 587-6715.

• **Monday Matinee**, Monday, Dec. 19, 12:30 p.m., at Largo Public Library, 120 Central Park Drive. The feature film will be "A Christmas Story." Call 587-6715.

• **Saturday Afternoon Movie**, Saturday, Dec. 31, 2 p.m., at Largo Public Library, 120 Central Park Drive. The feature film will be "The Jungle Book." Call 587-6715.

• **Saturday Afternoon Movie**, Saturday, Jan. 7, 2 p.m., at Largo Public Library, 120 Central Park Drive. The feature film will be "Toy Story 2." Call 587-6715.

• **Sunday Matinee Music Program Series**, Sunday, Jan. 8, 2012, at Largo Community Center, 400 Alt. Keene Road. The featured entertainment will be The Knockouts presented by Tony Belmont. Each show in the series will feature a meal, live entertainment and dancing. Dinner is served at 3:30 p.m. Entertainment starts at 4 p.m. Dancing follows the entertainment from 6 to 10 p.m. A cash bar is available. Advance tickets are \$12 for dinner and show; \$18 for dinner, show and dance; or \$8 for the dance only. Dinner tickets must be purchased by the Wednesday prior to the show. Call 518-3131 or visit LargoCommunityCenter.com.

• **Monday Matinee**, Monday, Jan. 9, 12:30 p.m., at Largo Public Library, 120 Central Park Drive. The feature film will be "Body Heat." Call 587-6715.

• **Saturday Afternoon Movie**, Saturday, Jan. 14, 2 p.m., at Largo Public Library, 120 Central Park Drive. The feature film will be "Toy Story 3." Call 587-6715.

• **Saturday Afternoon Movie**, Saturday, Jan. 21, 2 p.m., at Largo Public Library, 120 Central Park Drive. The feature film will be "Winnie the Pooh." Call 587-6715.

• **Monday Matinee**, Monday, Jan. 23, 12:30 p.m., at Largo Public Library, 120 Central Park Drive. The feature film will be "Apollo 13." Call 587-6715.

• **Monday Matinee**, Monday, Jan. 28, 12:30 p.m., at Largo Public Library, 120 Central Park Drive. The feature film will be "Happy Feet." Call 587-6715.

• **Sunday Matinee Music Program Series**, Sunday, Feb. 12, 2012, at Largo Community Center, 400 Alt. Keene Road. The featured entertainment will be a Valentine Spectacular with the Four Tune Nuts Barbershop Quartet. Each show in the series will feature a meal, live entertainment and dancing. Dinner is served at 3:30 p.m. Entertainment starts at 4 p.m. Dancing follows the entertainment from 6 to 10 p.m. A cash bar is available. Advance tickets are \$12 for dinner and show; \$18 for dinner, show and dance; or \$8 for the dance only. Dinner tickets must be purchased by the Wednesday prior to the show. Call 518-3131 or visit LargoCommunityCenter.com.

• **"Funny Girl"**, with book by Isobel Lannart, music by Jule Styne and lyrics by Bob Merrill; presented by Eight O'Clock Theatre, Feb. 24 through March 11, 2012, at Largo Cultural Center, 105 Central Park Drive. Performances are Thursday through Saturday, 8 p.m. Matinees are Sunday, 2 p.m. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$12 for students age 19 and younger with identification. Call 587-6793 or visit www.eightoclocktheatre.com. "Funny Girl" is the semi-autobiographical tale of Fanny Brice's meteoric rise to fame and her stormy relationship with Nick Arnstein, a wealthy and charming gambler. From her start as a gawky Brooklyn teen fast-talking her way into show business to becoming the toast of New York to the unraveling of her personal life, "Funny Girl" is a stunning, richly told tour de force about one of Broadway's biggest stars.

• **Sunday Matinee Music Program Series**, Sunday, March 11, 2012, at Largo Community Center, 400 Alt. Keene Road. The featured entertainment will be a tribute to the Irish with the Headless Horsemen from Rancho Village. Each show in the series will feature a meal, live entertainment and dancing. Dinner is served at 3:30 p.m. Entertainment starts at 4 p.m. Dancing follows the entertainment from 6 to 10 p.m. A cash bar is available. Advance tickets are \$12 for dinner and show; \$18 for dinner, show and dance; or \$8 for the dance only. Dinner tickets must be purchased by the Wednesday prior to the show. Call 518-3131 or visit LargoCommunityCenter.com.

• **Sunday Matinee Music Program Series**, Sunday, April 22,

2012, at Largo Community Center, 400 Alt. Keene Road. The featured entertainment will be a New Orleans Special Treat with Cabaret Unlimited. Each show in the series will feature a meal, live entertainment and dancing. Dinner is served at 3:30 p.m. Entertainment starts at 4 p.m. Dancing follows the entertainment from 6 to 10 p.m. A cash bar is available. Advance tickets are \$12 for dinner and show; \$18 for dinner, show and dance; or \$8 for the dance only. Dinner tickets must be purchased by the Wednesday prior to the show. Call 518-3131 or visit LargoCommunityCenter.com.

• **"Broadway's Best"**, presented by Eight O'Clock Theatre, May 4-13, 2012, at Largo Cultural Center, 105 Central Park Drive. Performances are Thursday through Saturday, 8 p.m. Matinees are Sunday, 2 p.m. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$12 for students age 19 and younger with identification. Call 587-6793 or visit www.eightoclocktheatre.com. The well-known dynamic creative team of Rocco Morabito (director) and Ronnie DeMarco (choreographer) have designed their dream show: a revue combining favorite ballads, laments and show-stoppers from Broadway's best. The lineup includes gems from musicals such as "Cabaret," "Chicago," "A Chorus Line," "Damn Yankees," "Gypsy," "Godspell," "Guys & Dolls" and "Mame."

• **Sunday Matinee Music Program Series**, Sunday, May 6, 2012, at Largo Community Center, 400 Alt. Keene Road. The featured entertainment will be Mother's Favorite with the Sunstation Show Chorus. Each show in the series will feature a meal, live entertainment and dancing. Dinner is served at 3:30 p.m. Entertainment starts at 4 p.m. Dancing follows the entertainment from 6 to 10 p.m. A cash bar is available. Advance tickets are \$12 for dinner and show; \$18 for dinner, show and dance; or \$8 for the dance only. Dinner tickets must be purchased by the Wednesday prior to the show. Call 518-3131 or visit LargoCommunityCenter.com.

• **"Nonsense II"**, with book, music and lyrics by Dan Goggin; presented by Eight O'Clock Theatre, July 13-20, 2012, at Largo Cultural Center, 105 Central Park Drive. Performances are Thursday through Saturday, 8 p.m. Matinees are Sunday, 2 p.m. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$12 for students age 19 and younger with identification. Call 587-6793 or visit www.eightoclocktheatre.com. This sequel takes place six weeks after the Little Sisters of Hoboken's first benefit show, and now they are back with a big Thank You show. They're a bit slicker, having been "bitten by the theater bug." Things get to off to a rousing start, and before long chaos erupts. Two Franciscans come to claim Sister Mary Amnesia (who has won the Publishers' Clearing House Sweepstakes). The nuns hear that a talent scout is in the audience.

Tarpon Springs

• **Golden Dragon Acrobats**, Wednesday, Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m., at Tarpon Springs Performing Arts Center, 324 Pine St. Tickets are \$28 for adults and \$24 for members and students. Call 937-0686 or visit www.tarponarts.org. The Golden Dragon Acrobats represent the best of a time-honored tradition that began more than 25 centuries ago. The Golden Dragons are recognized throughout the United States and abroad as the premiere Chinese acrobatic touring company of today. The Golden Dragons combine award-winning acrobatics, traditional dance, spectacular costumes, ancient and contemporary music and theatrical techniques to present a show of breathtaking skill and spellbinding beauty.

• **Alex DeGrassi: Story of the Floating Weeds**, silent film and concert, Saturday, Jan. 21, 7:30 p.m., at Tarpon Springs Performing Arts Center, 324 Pine St. Tickets are \$22 for adults and \$18 for members and students. Call 937-0686 or visit www.tarponarts.org. Often cited as one of the world's top finger-style, steel-string acoustic guitarists, the Grammy nominee will perform his original music score of the silent film "A Story of Floating Weeds" by Yasujiro Ozu which will be projected for the audience to watch.

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LARGO: LARGE 1BR, \$550. Includes water. Nice neighborhood, Petless. Year's lease, credit check. (727)584-6952.
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SEMINOLE: 55+ 2BR/2BA, Enclosed Patio, Waterview. Completely Redecorated! Great Amenities & Location. No Smoking, No Pets. \$850/Month, Includes W/S/G. (727)639-9801.
SEMINOLE GARDENS: DELUXE 1BR, 1,012sf. Immaculate, new AC, appliances, 13'x22.6' BR. Walk-in closet, large screened porch, \$675/month. 55+. (727)743-3589.
S.W. LARGO: LG. 1BR/1BA, \$500/Month. Quiet. Laundry on Premises. Petless. \$400 security. Yearly lease. (727)595-2228. Last Month FREE!
185. Beach Rentals
INDIAN ROCKS BEACH. Cozy, Clean, Furnished Cottages. 1-2BRs, starting at \$315/week. Steps to Gulf Beach. Pet Friendly. (727)595-8013. www.UncleMitsCottages.com.
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190. Waterfront Rentals
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190. Waterfront Rentals

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195. Seasonal Rentals

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Field Assistant:
This key position will assist in the fulfillment of day-to-day business and distribution operations in assigned geographical areas and distribution centers. Assists in coordinating resources and relationships with customers, staff, independent contractors, and public.
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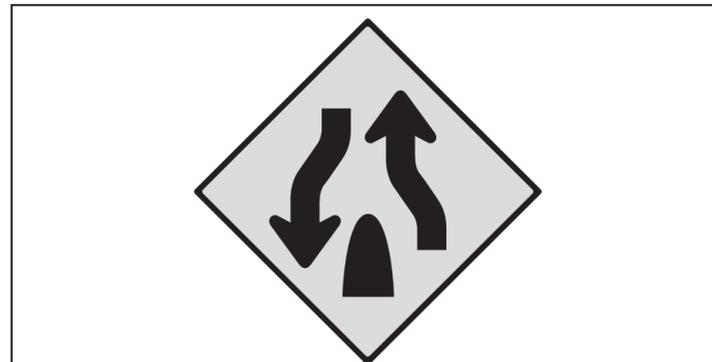
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Attention: Pinellas County Contractors/Professional Service Providers: Licensing and Advertising
Revisions to Chapter 22 of the Pinellas County Code Countywide Building Construction Industry Regulation and Construction Codes
Please be advised that Pinellas County Ordinance 10-68 was approved on December 14, 2010, by the Board of County Commissioners which revised Pinellas County Code, Chapter 22, Buildings and Building Regulations, Section 22-14, Acts prohibited and Section 22-15, Limitation on power of investigators, director, inspectors; subpoenas; telephone records. The Ordinance can be viewed at the Pinellas County Construction Licensing Board's website: www.pccib.com
Acts Prohibited: (and subject to fines).
Contractors may not:
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• Intentionally furnish any materially false, misleading, or misrepresentative information on an application for permit or license
• Hold oneself out as being licensed or registered when not so licensed or registered
• Engage in any activity requiring a permit without having obtained the appropriate permits
• Advertise to the public in any publication, transmission, business card, pamphlet, telephone directory, signs or otherwise that he is a contractor or that he will perform work in a trade requiring licensure without being duly qualified (licensed) to do so.
• Submit an advertisement to any publisher for placement in any publication which is primarily circulated, displayed, distributed or marketed within the County, which advertisement identifies a contractor offering services regulated by the State or County without including the name of the contractor or business and the certification or registration number issued by the state or the county to that contractor.
• Subcontract any work to a person, firm or business organization not holding an active certificate of competency for work involved in the subcontract.
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Holiday Lights in the gardens



Florida Botanical Gardens' annual Holiday Lights display will be open to the public through Jan. 1, 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. More than 500,000 lights illuminate thousands of plants and trees. Entertainers perform nightly and refreshments are available.

Photo by TOM GERMOND

Lions Club slates 15th Spotlight Series

LARGO - It's that time of year again for the 15th season of the Largo Lions Spotlight Series. Tickets are now on sale for this season's lineup which is full of comedy, country, doo wop and rock 'n' roll.

All performances are held at the Largo Cultural Center, 105 Central Park Drive. Times of shows are either 2 p.m. or 7 p.m. The cost is \$68 for the series of four shows (\$20 savings), \$19 per ticket for groups of 10 or more and \$22 for single tickets. The city of Largo adds a \$3 handling fee.

• Show 1: "Women Fully Clothed" - Monday, Jan. 23.
This show features four of Canada's most celebrated and talented comedienne, Robin Duke, Jayne Eastwood, Kathryn Greenwood and Teresa Pavlinek. They tackle all sorts of topics from mother-daughter relationships to career responsibilities and the environment. These ladies' stories and songs are guaranteed to have both men and women alike laughing with them.

• Show 2: "Kings of Country" - Monday, Feb. 27.
A fabulous evening with America's top artists performing the music of Kenny Rogers, Johnny Cash and Willie Nelson. This is as close as you can get to experiencing the real thing. Their voices are dead-on singing great songs the artists made famous, such as "She Believes in Me," "Lady," "Man in Black," "Walk the Line," "Always on My Mind," and "On the Road Again."

• Show 3: "Doo Wop with a Twist" - Monday, March 19.
Stroll down memory lane with Joey Dee and Tommy Mara. These great rock 'n' roll entertainers will have you moving in your seat as they perform some of their great hits, including "Peppermint Twist," "Shout," "16 Candles" and "Step by Step."

• Show 4: "Tonight's the Night - Rod Stewart Tribute" - Monday, April 2.
Starring Bob Stewart, a third cousin to Rod Stewart, is among the top look- and sound-alike tribute artists in the country. A high-energy show with Bob singing all your favorites with that distinguishing raspy voice including "Maggie Mae," "Hot Legs" and "Do ya! Think I'm Sexy."

All proceeds from these events go directly to Lions Club volunteer projects, such as sight conservation, eye operation and glasses. For more details, call 587-6793.

Briefs

East Lake freshman to star in musical

TARPON SPRINGS - Alyssa Esposito, a 14-year-old freshman at East Lake High School in Tarpon Springs, stars in the new Christmas musical "Holiday Inc.," which will be presented Dec. 16-22, at Tampa's David A. Straz Jr. Center for the Performing Arts, 1010 N. W.C. MacInnes Place.

In this collaboration between Tampa-based production company ESP Theatricals and worldwide theatrical producer Douglas C. Evans, Esposito takes center stage as Ivy, an elf who believes that the meaning of the holidays is getting lost because of the stress and hustle we place upon the day to make it special.

Esposito recently returned to the Tampa Bay area from New York City, where she was a student at the Professional Performing Arts School. She is currently a member of the East Lake drama and choral departments and is a member of all-county chorus and Pinellas County Thespians. She came to the "Holiday Inc." project through the show's writer/director, Jonathan Van Dyke, who directed Esposito in a youth program several years ago. After impressing him with her talent, he asked her to create the role of the young elf at the show's premiere at the Friday Morning Musicals in Hyde Park in December 2009.

Being a part of "Holiday Inc." in its latest incarnation at the Straz Center is an amazing opportunity, she said, even though it means juggling a full high school course load with the rigors of a professional production and rehearsals. Esposito is no stranger to the stage, however; she was recently seen in POSH Productions' "Wait Until Dark" and Francis Wilson Playhouse's production of "Brighton Beach Memoirs."

In "Holiday Inc.," Esposito's character, while searching for the meaning of the season, is led by the Holiday Inc. board of directors. This mythical group of executives is responsible for the magic that takes place each year. They include Tinsel Garland, Giving and Receiving; Hearth Tannenbaum, Home and Family; Figgy Von Nogg, Food and Merriment; Angel Divine, Faith; and Frankie Feliz, Celebration. Each of these characters adds a vital piece to Ivy's journey, through Broadway-style production numbers and musical styles ranging from traditional holiday ballads to Motown and swing.

The cast also includes diverse Tampa talent Heather Krueger, Amy Quijano, Meredith McDermott, Aaron Washington, Eileen Lymus-Sanders, Dax Quijano, and Kerri Sullivan.

In addition to the performances at the Straz Center, "Holiday Inc." is planning a 2012 national tour and a storybook.

"Holiday Inc." runs 90 minutes with a 15-minute intermission. Tickets start at \$36.50. Call 813-229-7827 or 800-955-1045. Visit www.strazcenter.org or www.holidayintheshow.com.

Club at TI names New Year's Eve headliners

TREASURE ISLAND - The Club at Treasure Island will welcome the Isley Brothers on New Year's Eve.

Beneath the island moonlight, the Isley Brothers - members of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the only band in world history to record at least one Hot 100 hit in six consecutive decades - will perform their greatest hits in a private, outdoor New Year's Eve concert under the stars.

The largest pool in Treasure Island will be completely covered with a custom-built, see-through floor cover, allowing partygoers to literally dance on the water by Boca Ciega Bay. Ice sculptures, a temporary tattoo parlor, free-flowing champagne and dazzling, multicolored light shows will add to the ultra-VIP ambiance.

The Club at Treasure Island - named Tampa Bay's "Best Private Club" by Tampa Bay Magazine and Best Surprise in the Entertainment Scene by Creative Loafing - is no stranger to big New Year's Eve gala events.

"Our 2009 extravaganza featured Jon Secada and really set the standard for New Year's Eve parties in Tampa Bay," said Jeff Thomas in a press release. Thomas is The Club at Treasure Island's general manager and executive director. "And last year's celebration with KC & The Sunshine Band raised the bar even higher. Well, this year we challenged ourselves to blow all of our previous parties completely out of the water. We've spared no expense in creating the biggest, most spectacular New Year's Eve party in club history. I promise you, this party will be legendary!"

This year's headliners, the Grammy-winning Isley Brothers, boast nine No. 1 albums on the R&B charts - plus eight No. 1 smash-hit singles such as "It's Your Thing," "Fight the Power," "The Pride," "Livin' the Life," "Don't Say Goodnight" and "Down Low (Nobody Has to Know)" with R. Kelly. The Isley Brothers' first million-selling hit record was the classic "Shout" - followed three years later by the timeless "Twist and Shout."

New Year's Eve tickets are \$150 each. Availability is limited. Non-members may call 888-695-0888 or visit www.theclubti.com. A portion of the proceeds will benefit All Children's Hospital, the club's official community partner.

The Club at Treasure Island is a private, members-only club that has recently showcased a slew of top-tier entertainers, including Jon Secada, Wayne Brady, Emeril Lagasse, KC & The Sunshine Band, Richard Lewis and Lou Gramm of Foreigner.

Holiday Dining

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