



Winnie the Pooh heads to the big screen

Christopher Robin is reunited with his band of spirited and lovable stuffed animals as he navigates the adult world. ... Page 1B.

LARGO LEADER

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LARGO CITY COMMISSION

Incumbents unrivaled thus far

No challengers have stepped up to contest four commissioners running for re-election

By CHRIS GEORGE
Tampa Bay Newspapers

LARGO - Even though four Largo City Commission seats are up for grabs, it appears election season will be pretty uneventful come November.

Candidate qualifying period ends Friday, Aug. 3, and as of noon Aug. 1, no one has stepped up to challenge the four incumbents - Michael Smith, Samantha Fenger, Donna Holck and John Carroll.

Also, as of Aug. 1, Smith and Fenger are the only incumbents who have completed all the qualifying requirements, according to City Clerk Diane Bruner, who serves as the city elections official.

In addition to being a qualified voter who has lived in the city for at least a year, each candidate is required to designate a campaign treasurer, open a campaign account in a local financial institution and submit a completed Statement of Candidate. The City Charter also requires



Smith



Fenger



Holck



Carroll

that 200 registered voters of the city sign petition cards nominating the candidate for election to a specific seat on the commission.

The City Commission is comprised of six commissioners and the mayor, all of

whom are elected in nonpartisan, at-large elections to four-year terms. The annual salary of each commissioner is just over \$15,000. A drawing for ballot position

See ELECTIONS, page 4A

ENTERTAINMENT

Time to break out the tie dye gear

Peace, love and happiness is what it's all about when the Hippiefest Tour rolls into town. This year, the tour, which will be presented Saturday, Aug. 4, at Ruth Eckerd Hall, will feature performances by Vanilla Fudge, Rick Derringer, Mitch Ryder & The Detroit Wheels and Badfinger featuring Joey Molland.

... Page 3B.

LARGO

Get set for school at pair of events

A pair of events in Largo on Saturday will help parents and students prepare for the new school year. Prince of Peace Lutheran Church will host its 18th annual Back to School Health and Safety Fair, where free physicals and supplies will be offered. Highland Recreation Complex's back to school expo and open house will provide plenty of information, goodies and wellness exams.

... Page 4A.

POLICE

Father, son killed in Seminole crash

Two men died at the scene of a four-vehicle crash at the intersection of Park Boulevard and 104th Lane in Seminole on July 28. Investigators say speed and alcohol are factors in the crash, and criminal charges are pending.

... Page 8A.

BEACHES

Town shell-shocked about turtle nests

Some Belleair Shore commissioners are taking issue with the relocation of turtle nests on residents' beachfront property.

... Page 9A.

VIEWPOINTS

Joe Henderson

Democrats charging hard in state races.
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Report shows mental health, substance abuse, obesity among growing concerns in Pinellas

By SUZETTE PORTER • Tampa Bay Newspapers

Compared to the state, Pinellas County has some startling health statistics. For example, the county has a much higher suicide rate among people of all ages except those aged 19-24 and older than 85. A huge gap exists in the rate of suicide being higher in Pinellas among ages 55-64, 45-54, 35-44 and 25-34.

Pinellas also had a higher rate of motor vehicle accidents in 12 of the past 20 years. During the years 2011-2015, the number of crashes in Pinellas involving drivers ages 15-19 increased from 1,616 to 3,128.

These are just a couple of the results revealed in the county's recently released Community Health Assessment 2018 from the Department of Health.

See HEALTH, page 4A



OMINOUS NUMBERS

CANCER RATES

1 out of every 5

deaths in Pinellas is caused by cancer. Incidence rates of breast cancer (125.9 per 100,000), lung cancer (64.9), and skin cancer (28.0) are higher than the Florida averages (118.6, 58.9, and 24.0, respectively).

SUBSTANCE USE, ABUSE

20.4% of adults

are current smokers in the county, which is higher than the state rate of 15.5 percent. The rate of adults engaging in heavy or binge drinking increased from 12.8 percent in 2007 to 20.9 percent in 2016.

MENTAL HEALTH

18.3 out of every 100K

people commit suicide in Pinellas County, which is higher than the state average (14.1). Pinellas males are nearly three times more likely to do so than females. According to the report, 24.1 percent reported being diagnosed with a depressive disorder.

OBESITY

64% of Pinellas adults

are obese, according to the survey, and 63.2 percent of Florida adults are overweight or obese.

LARGO

City moves forward on \$60 million project

Officials say improvements to wastewater plant also will benefit environment

By CHRIS GEORGE
Tampa Bay Newspapers

LARGO - For more than a decade, several projects have been in the works to overhaul the city's wastewater plant in an effort to cut down on sanitary sewer overflows, accommodate population growth, replace deteriorated infrastructure and make discharged waste cleaner and safer.

City officials say the last of those long and expensive projects is moving forward as staff work to finalize its design and secure a \$60.2 million loan from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Engineering Services Director Jerald Woloszynski said the biological treatment improvements project, which will provide upgrades to the mid-portion of the plant where bacteria and enzymes break down sewage, has two main goals.

The first is to improve the plant's ability to remove nitrogen from the waste stream discharged into Old Tampa Bay via Feather Sound.

Nitrogen and phosphorus can lead to harmful and expensive health and environmental conditions, such as algae

See PROJECT, page 4A

PRIMARY ELECTION

Four seats on School Board up for grabs

By SUZETTE PORTER
Tampa Bay Newspapers

Voters will decide who will represent them in four of seven districts on the Pinellas County School Board during the Aug. 28 primary election.

The School Board election is nonpartisan, meaning all registered voters can cast a ballot, regardless of political affiliation.

Districts up for election include 2 and 3, which are at-large positions, meaning all voters have a say, and 6 and 7, which are single-member districts and only voters who live in those districts can decide who will represent them.

In District 2, incumbent Terry Benjamin Krassner has two challengers: Lisa N.

See BOARD, page 2A

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BOARD, from page 1A

Cane and Jeff Larsen. In District 3, incumbent Peggy O'Shea also has two challengers: Nicole Carr and Carl "Z" Zimmermann.

Incumbent Linda Lerner, who has served District 6 since 1990, is not running for re-election. Three are vying for her seat, including Bill Dudley, Lorena Grizzle and Matt Stewart. District 7 incumbent Rene Flowers, who currently serves as School Board chairwoman, has three challengers: Tharius K. Bethel, Bilan Joseph and Nicholas Wright.

Learn more about the candidates at an upcoming forum.

• Thursday, Aug. 2, 6-8 p.m., St. Petersburg College Auditorium, Seminole Campus, 9200 113th St. N., Seminole.

District 2

Incumbent **Terry Krassner** began serving on the Board in 2010 and was re-elected in 2014. According to information provided to the Supervisor of Elections Office, she is a third-generation Pinellas County resident and a graduate of Northeast High School in St. Petersburg.

She earned a bachelor's degree in education from the University of South Florida and a master's degree in educational leadership from Nova Southeastern University. She served as a teacher of elementary and middle school grades; assistant principal at Starkey Elementary School; and principal at Westgate Elementary School where she retired in 2008.

Terry and her husband, Al Bonnette, have four children who graduated from Pinellas County public schools. For more information, visit TerryKrassner.com.

Lisa Nicole Cane has lived and worked in Pinellas County since 1988, according to information at VoteLisa.org. Her professional background includes being a creative director at Tampa Bay Performing Arts Academy, president of Nicola Productions Inc., musical director of Calvary Christian High School and preschool music teacher at Young Days Preschool.

She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Eckerd College and an Associate of Arts degree from St. Petersburg College. She attended East Lake High School, Carwise Middle School, and Highland Lakes and Forest Lakes elementary schools.

She and her husband have four children. Two attend Pinellas County Public Schools. For more information, visit VoteLisa.org.

Jeff Larsen is a middle school reading teacher at Gulf Middle School in New Port Richey, according to information at VoteJeffLarsen.com.

He has coached both boys and girls teams for Gulf Middle School in New Port Richey for the past 13 years. He has served the school as a department head of the Dropout Prevention Program, Professional Learning Community facilitator for the reading department and worked on curriculum development for Pasco County. Larsen is a member of the teachers' union and currently serves as an alternate building representative.

He lives in Tarpon Springs and has served the city as a commissioner and vice mayor. He grew up in Palm Beach County and graduated from Florida Southern College with a degree in Business Administration.

Larsen and his wife, Dory, have two school age sons who are actively involved in soccer and theater. For more information, visit VoteJeffLarsen.com.

District 3

Nicole Carr is an educational specialist, who has worked as a teacher, school counselor, assistant principal, and district accountability coordinator, according to information provided to the Supervisor of Elections Office.

She has experience working as an educator at all levels of education: elementary, middle, high school and college. She earned her doctorate in school counseling



Photo by CHRIS GEORGE

The entrance to Pinellas County Schools' Administration Building at 301 Fourth St. SW in Largo displays the names of School Board members. Voters will decide who will represent them in four of seven districts on the board during the Aug. 28 primary election.

from the College of Education at the University of Florida.

Carr lives in St. Petersburg with her husband, two children and two dogs. For more information, visit www.Nicolecarr.com.

Incumbent **Peggy O'Shea** has served on the School Board since 2006 and is currently the vice chairwoman. She served as chairwoman during the 2016-2017, 2015-2016 and 2008-2009 school years and as vice-chairperson during 2013-2014 and 2007-2008, according to information on the School District's website.

Prior to her election, she was appointed by the Governor to serve as chairwoman of the Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County and was a member of the Florida Early Learning Advisory Council. O'Shea serves on the board of the Council of Great City Schools, Pinellas Education Foundation, Pinellas County Health and Human Services Leadership Board and the School Transportation & Safety Committee.

Prior to her election, O'Shea, who is a resident of Palm Harbor, managed a commercial arbitration and mediation service.

Carl "Z" Zimmermann has spent more than 30 years as a classroom teacher in Pinellas County teaching TV production, broadcast journalism and film, according to information at www.CarlZimmermann.com. He is a six-time teacher of the year, including three-times as Tampa Bay Journalism Teacher of the Year and 2003 State of Florida Journalism Teacher of the Year.

He studied at Buffalo State College and earned a bachelor's and master's degree in education/English. He went on to a professional advertising career in New York, working as a production manager, copy chief and account executive.

He served in the Florida House of Representatives from 2012-2014 and was a member of the Education Committee, K-12 Subcommittee, Higher Education and Workforce Subcommittee and Military and Veterans Affairs Committee.

He is a resident of Palm Harbor. For more information, visit www.CarlZimmermann.com.

District 6

Bill Dudley served on the St. Petersburg City Council for eight years, and has lived in District 6 most of his life, according to information dudley4schools.net. Before that, he was a teacher and coach working the majority of his 38 years at Northeast High School, where he graduated in 1963. He has taught at all three grade levels - elementary, middle and high school.

His coaching career began as a basketball coach at Meadowlawn Junior High and then continued at Northeast High where he coached football for 14 years, cross country for 20 years and wrestling for 34 years.

He received an Associate of Arts degree in architecture from St. Petersburg College, a Bachelor of Arts in education from the University of South Florida, and

a Master of Arts in educational leadership and administration, general from Stetson University, according to information on his LinkedIn page.

Dudley and his wife, Michelle, live in St. Petersburg. For more information, visit dudley4schools.net.

Lorena Grizzle was raised in Pinellas County and has been a teacher since 2004. Prior to that, she worked for 16 years for the state of Florida in the Department of Lottery, according to information found at lorenagrizzle.com and on her LinkedIn page.

She is a graduate of Largo High School and received an associate degree in general studies from St. Petersburg College. She received her Bachelor in fine arts from Colorado State University, a Master in reading education and Master in exceptional student education from the University of South Florida.

For more information, visit https://lorenagrizzle.com.

Matt Stewart is a Pinellas County native, born and raised in Clearwater, according to information at the Supervisor of Elections website. He is a Human Resources manager for Hillsborough County. He is also an adjunct instructor at St. Petersburg College in the College of Policy, Ethics, and Legal Studies.

He is a graduate of Largo High School. He has several degrees, including a Bachelor of Arts in philosophy from St. John Vianney, Master of Arts in theology from St. Vincent de Paul, Master of Arts in philosophy and religious studies from University of South Florida, and a Doctor of philosophy from the University of South Florida College of Education, according to his LinkedIn page.

Matt and his family live in St. Petersburg, where they are foster parents with Eckerd Connects. They have assisted six foster children, ranging in age from 4 to 13. For more information, visit Matt4Pinellas.com.

District 7

Incumbent **René Flowers** currently serves as School Board chairwoman and has served on the Board since 2012. She served on the St. Petersburg Council from 1999-2008 and is a former president of the Florida League of Cities, according to information on the School District's website.

She is a corporate trainer at Gulf Coast Jewish Family Services where she has been employed since 2009. Flowers is a former vice president of Community Action Coalition (2001-2005), Education Prevention specialist with Community Health Centers of Pinellas (1991-1998).

She graduated from Dixie Hollins

High School and has an Associate of Arts degree from Tallahassee Community College, a Bachelor of Arts Degree in occupational studies from Eckerd College and Master in public administration from Capella University. She also attended Howard University and University of South Florida.

Flowers is a resident of St. Petersburg. She has three adult children and two grandsons. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/youknowrene.

Bilan Joseph is a native of St. Petersburg and has 11 years of experience as an elementary, middle and high school English teacher, according to information at the Supervisor of Elections website. She has also taught in public, private and charter schools within the state.

She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in English with a concentration in secondary education from Georgia State University, a Master in education, secondary education and teaching from Jones International University, and a Doctor of education, specializing in reading and literacy, from Capella University.

Joseph and her husband have three children. For more information, visit StandWithBilan.com.

Nicholas Wright has been a teacher in Pinellas County for 12 years with experience at the middle and high school level as well as adult education. Currently, he teaches technology to middle school students at Lealman Innovation Academy, according to information at www.votenicholaswright.com.

Wright worked for more than two decades in the private sector in technology and finance before beginning his teaching career at Gibbs High School.

In 2007, while at Gibbs High School, he wrote a proposal for the introduction of a computer-based curriculum for teaching business applications to high school students. That program was approved for use at the school, and subsequently adopted by other high schools around the county.

He and his wife live in St. Petersburg. They have two adult sons, who are graduates of the Florida public schools system. For more information, visit www.votenicholaswright.com.

Tharius K. Bethel provided no contact information at the Supervisor of Elections Office and a search of the internet returned nothing about the candidate.

For more information on the upcoming elections, visit VotePinellas.com.

Suzette Porter is TBN's Pinellas County editor. She can be reached at sporter@TBNweekly.com.

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PARKS AND RECREATION



TBN file photo

Daddy Daughter Date Night will be held Saturday, Sept. 15, from 5 to 8 p.m., at the Largo Community Center.

Tickets on sale for Mommy-Son, Daddy-Daughter evening events

LARGO - Tickets are on sale now for a pair of annual events that will provide plenty of fun for the whole family.

The 2018 Daddy Daughter Date Night will be held Saturday, Sept. 15, from 5 to 8 p.m., at the Largo Community Center, 400 Alt. Keene Road.

Dads and daughters can enjoy all things Parisian at this fun evening complete with dinner, dancing, games and plenty of photo opportunities.

While dads and daughters dance the night away, Highland Recreation Complex, 400 Highland Ave. NE, will host the fifth annual Mom Son Messy Madness from 6 to 8 p.m., a special night just for moms and sons in grades K-8. Dinner, dessert and interactive messy games are all included.

Tickets for Daddy Daughter Date Night are \$39 per couple and \$12 each additional daughter. Mom Son

Messy Madness tickets are \$25 per couple and \$8 for each additional son.

Tickets are on sale at the Largo Community Center, Highland Recreation Complex and Southwest Recreation Complex.

Space is limited for both events. Preregister by Sept. 10.

For more information, call the Community Center at 727-518-3131, Highland at 727-518-3016 or visit PlayLargo.com.

City Briefs

Portion of Central Park Drive closed for public art project

LARGO - A portion of Central Park Drive will be closed to traffic Friday, July 27, through Monday, Aug. 6, as part of a public art project funded by the North Pinellas Cultural Alliance.

An artist will be painting the pedestrian crosswalk between the Largo Public Library and the Central Park Performing Arts Center.

In order to access the library from East Bay Drive, motorists will need to take a detour from Seminole Boulevard to Eighth Avenue Southeast and then onto Central Park Drive.

Access to the north parking lot of Central Park will be available from East Bay Drive only. Access to the south parking lot of Central Park will be available from Eighth Avenue Southeast only.

For questions, call 727-587-6784.

Other road closings

Jefferson Avenue at Ponce De Leon Boulevard will be closed for approximately three weeks for road and drainage improvements, according to city engineers.

For more information, call 727-560-8290.

Registration now open for Citizens' Academy

LARGO - Largo residents are invited to get a behind-the-scenes look into city government at this year's Citizens' Academy.

Participants will experience hands-on demonstrations, field trips and learn what is involved in running a city. Elected officials and City leaders will host sessions designed to provide attendees

insight on how local government works.

Registration is now open for the free 10-week course scheduled for Monday evenings from Sept. 17 through graduation on Dec. 4. Classes generally meet from 6 to 8 p.m. Applications are available at Largo.com/Volunteer and must be submitted by Sept. 3.

For more information, call City Clerk Diane Bruner at 727-587-6710 or email dbruner@largo.com.

City seeks feedback with new budget-balancing app

LARGO - The city of Largo hopes to spark engagement with its new online community budget input app, Balancing Act, designed to make the budget process more accessible.

With Balancing Act, residents can learn about the city's General Fund budget, adjust revenues and expenditures to create a balanced budget, while providing feedback to city Leaders on budget decisions. Engage in the budget process by choosing to increase funding for programs, decreasing taxes, trimming expenditures or sharing comments all while balancing the City budget.

"We are excited for Largo to provide the Balancing Act application to our community, so they can more easily be a part of the budgeting process," said OMB Manager Meridy Semones. "We look forward to community engagement to help determine what our future Largo will look like."

To launch the app, visit Largo.com/BalancingAct. Feedback received through Balancing Act will be reviewed by City Commission and city leaders in the next few months.

The community is also encouraged to engage further by attending public hearings or emailing OMB@largo.com.

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HEALTH, from page 1A

According to the introduction, a Community Health Assessment is a collection of data used to inform communities and develop goals to improve health outcomes. The Department of Health Pinellas County developed the assessment in collaboration with a number of governmental and nongovernmental partners.

It is not the first CHA conducted in the county. According to the report, the 2018 CHA builds on a 2012 assessment and outcomes from a 2012-2017 Community Health Improvement Plan. The CHA adds to data collected in 2016 from local nonprofit hospitals.

More than 85 "community partners" attended a meeting in July 2017 to talk about health needs in Pinellas. They developed a "shared vision" and identified priorities and "forces of change" that affect Pinellas.

They decided on several priorities considered most important to the county in 2018, including improved access to care; mental health and substance abuse; built environment and access to transportation; socioeconomic factors; and collaborative partnerships.

A community survey was conducted from May-July 2017, and using cell and landline phones, 702 adults ages 18 and older were contacted. Those surveyed were asked questions about what they eat, how much exercise they get, and questions about mental health, social support and perceived discrimination in healthcare settings.

Additional data came from the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Florida Department of Health, Florida Agency for Health Care Administration, Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.



Photo courtesy of DOH - PINELLAS

Dr. Ulyee Choe, director of DOH-Pinellas, talks about the results of the recently released Community Health Assessment.

Results

The assessment showed that the leading causes of death in Pinellas are heart disease and cancer, which accounted for more than half of all causes of death in the county in 2016. However, the number of deaths due to heart disease and cancer are decreasing, according to the assessment results, while the rates of unintentional injury, Alzheimer's disease and suicide are increasing.

Pinellas has higher than average rates of heart disease and heart attacks than the state and a higher rate of death from diabetes than the state average. Cancer accounts for one in five deaths in Pinellas. Cases of breast cancer, lung cancer and skin cancer are higher than the state average. Rates of prostate cancer, colorectal cancer and cervical cancer are lower than the state average.

Obesity, defined as excessive fat in the body that presents a risk to health, is a problem the county health department is working on by trying to help people get more

active and eat healthier. According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 64 percent of adults in Pinellas are obese.

Mental health is a big concern in Pinellas. The assessment found that people with less education and lower incomes had higher rates of depression. The suicide rate in Pinellas is higher than the state average with the rate for males nearly three times higher than females.

Just over 24 percent of county residents reported being diagnosed with a depressive disorder, and 21 percent said they almost never felt confident in their ability to handle personal problems. Almost 25 percent said they sometimes, often, or very often felt difficulties piling up so high they could not overcome them. Only about half of people surveyed said they had someone to talk to about their problems.

More people smoke in Pinellas, about 20 percent, than the state average of 15.5 percent. More adults are binge drinking - nearly

21 percent in 2016 compared to 13 percent in 2007. More people are dying in Pinellas from opioids and heroin abuse.

The assessment also found that the infant mortality rate in Pinellas was higher than the state rate. In addition, the rate at which black infants die during their first year of life is more than double that for white infants, which is a great concern for health officials.

Domestic violence is another concern. The assessment showed that the number of domestic violence incidences is decreasing; however, the rate in Pinellas remains higher than the state rate.

One of the priorities set by health officials was improving access to care. Of those, more than 14 percent said they had no place to go if they got sick, and nearly 15 percent said there was at least one time in the past year when they needed to see a doctor but could not due to cost.

The assessment data found a "significant relationship" between income and insurance status with those making less than \$25,000 being less likely to have health insurance compared to those who make more than \$25,000.

Local health officials will use the results from the assessment to create a Community Health Improvement Plan with a goal to address health priorities identified in the report.

"Assessment is an essential part of public health, but the data needs to be actionable," said Dr. Ulyee Choe, director of DOH-Pinellas. "We need more focus on the social determinants of health because where you're born and where you live play a large role in your health. We need to create change by determining where we are and where we need to be."

For more information, visit pinellashealth.com.

Suzette Porter is TBN's Pinellas County editor. She can be reached at sporter@TBNweekly.com.

PROJECT,

from page 1A

blooms and fish kills, so the city has been under an FDEP administrative order since 2012 to come up with a way to reduce the amount it discharges.

"If there was ever a project that we do here at the city that benefits the environment, this is the project to highlight," Woloszynski said. "Basically, we're committed to reducing the nitrogen going into Tampa Bay."

The second goal is to replace or rehabilitate aging components of the facility, raise or harden portions of the treatment system that are susceptible to flood damage and storm surge, and enhance safety features for personnel.

Woloszynski said the improvements will be the final piece in fully restoring the plant, because the city is wrapping up the \$25 million headworks project, which includes a 5 million-gallon holding tank, and the disinfection and influent pumping project, which includes upgrades to the pumping system and aims to ensure treated effluent meets water quality standards.

"When we complete this new project, basically we're going to have a fully recapitalized treatment plant that is going to be suitable to operate for the next number of decades," he said.

Those two projects were part of an effort to comply with a FDEP consent order requiring the city to reduce the amount of sewage it was discharging into local waterways and cut down on the number of sanitary sewer overflows by the end of January.

Since all three projects affect each other, Woloszynski said staff are working with FDEP to merge the administrative and consent orders to better track them and possibly reset the deadline to make sure the city has adequate time to complete the new project and review the results of its performance.

He hopes that will give the city time to reduce nitrogen in the effluent from its current rate of 27 tons per year to the required 19 tons per year, both of which are based on a five-year rolling average.

A hefty price tag

It won't be cheap. Previous estimates to complete the project were between \$20 million and \$30 million, but Woloszynski said the cost has doubled because construction demand is so high that there's a



Photo courtesy of the CITY OF LARGO

The \$25 million headworks project, which includes a 5 million-gallon holding tank, and the disinfection and influent pumping project, which includes upgrades to the pumping system and aims to ensure treated effluent meets water quality standards, will complement the city's latest efforts at the wastewater reclamation facility, the biological treatment improvements project.

"If there was ever a project that we do here at the city that benefits the environment, this is the project to highlight. Basically, we're committed to reducing the nitrogen going into Tampa Bay."

- Jerald Woloszynski, Engineering Services director



scarcity in the availability of large construction firms and labor across the U.S.

"There is so much demand for construction, it has outstripped the amount of capacity that these large construction companies have, let alone the labor workforce to do it," he said. "To complicate it, some of the ambiguities with the tariff situation have put pricing structures in flux to those major nationwide contractors."

The city's top-ranked contractor, Kiewit Infrastructure South, put out a bid for \$52.6 million, which is why staff are applying for a State Revolving Fund loan that has been used to pay for three other consent order projects totaling more than

\$80 million.

"We're a big customer for them (FDEP), so that's something that works in our favor," said Finance Director Kim Adams during a City Commission work session in June. "Their job is to get money on the street and also to improve the environment. So, when they can build an \$80 million environmental project like they have with us that's going to improve the environment, they're all for it. They're jumping on it."

Adams said the city is looking to borrow about \$60.2 million for a 20-year period with a .03 percent interest rate.

"We think, conservatively, we could save \$10 million and possibly

even more than that in funding based on going out for conventional loans," he said.

Woloszynski said there is still a long road ahead in order to make sure everything is done correctly.

Aside from applying for and officially receiving the loan, which will take several months, he said staff still have to negotiate the final guaranteed maximum price with the contractor. The City Commission will then award the design-build contract sometime this fall, and when the project eventually breaks ground, it will likely take about two years to complete.

"We're really ... committed to making sure that we're doing the right thing, not just because we have an administrative order, but doing the right thing to reduce this nitrogen because the waters of Tampa Bay and where Tampa Bay flows to benefits everyone," he said.

Chris George is editor of the Largo Leader. He can be reached at 727-397-5563, ext. 316, or by email at cgeorge@TBNweekly.com.

ELECTIONS,

from page 1A

will take place at the Aug. 7 City Commission meeting.

According to the city code, if no candidates qualify for the other two seats, the commission will appoint members to serve until the next election in November 2020.

A look at the incumbents

• Smith, who currently serves as vice mayor and is a Forward

Pinellas board member, is a Largo native who was elected to the commission in 2011 and re-elected in 2014. He is a graduate of Osceola High School, attended St. Petersburg College and is a library assistant at the Barbara S. Ponce Public Library in Pinellas Park.

• Fenger was elected to the commission in 2014. She has a master's degree in sustainable management from Marylhurst University in Oregon and a bachelor's in environmental studies from Eckerd College. She was formerly a land use planner with

Pinellas County and the city of Tampa and is a Realtor with Imapp Realty Group.

She also serves on the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority Board of Directors.

• Holck of West Islip, New York, was elected to the commission in 2014.

She is a graduate of Seminole High School and attended St. Petersburg College.

She owned and operated Unique Nails Etc., Inc., for 20 years, and currently is the owner of DGH Tax Consulting, Inc. She also is

a member of the Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board.

• Carroll of Oswego, New York, also was elected to the commission in 2014.

He is a Largo High School graduate and has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Eckerd College.

Carroll is an Army veteran and was a member of the Largo Police Department for 33 years, serving in many roles including chief. He currently is first vice president of the Suncoast League of Cities Board of Directors.

Around Largo**Church to host Back to School fair**

LARGO - Free school physicals and free school supplies will be offered Saturday, Aug. 4, from 9 a.m. to noon at the 18th annual Back to School Health and Safety Fair at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 455 Missouri Ave., Largo.

School physicals, excluding sports physicals, will be available by registering from 9 to 11 a.m. on the day of the fair. A parent or legal guardian must accompany the child.

School supplies and healthy snacks will be given away, and information will be given out on

Girl and Boy Scout registration and after-school programs. The fair also will include clowns, face painting and more.

For more information, call 727-585-9969.

Kiwanis set for Family Fun Fishing

SEMINOLE - The Kiwanis Club of Seminole Breakfast will celebrate its 14th year of Family Fun Fishing, Saturday, Aug. 4, 8-11 a.m., at Taylor Park, 1100 SW Eighth Ave., Largo.

Family Fun Fishing occurs four times a year from April through October and is free for children up to 14 years of age.

The Kiwanis Club of Seminole Breakfast provides the bait and fishing poles, but kids are welcome to bring their own gear. Prizes are given out for the first fish caught, most fish caught and the first, second and third largest fish.

Coffee or juice and a donut will be provided by 1st Home Bank. Donations go toward purchase of bait for the fishing days.

For additional information, call the Kiwanis Club of Seminole Breakfast, Leah Hoffman, at 727-873-7852.

Health screenings coming to Largo church

LARGO - Residents living in and around Largo can learn about their risk for cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, diabetes and other chronic, serious conditions with affordable screenings by Life Line Screening.

Screenings will be offered Friday, Aug. 24, at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 455 Missouri Ave. N., Largo.

The screenings can check for:

- The level of plaque buildup in your arteries, related to risk for heart disease, stroke and overall vascular health.

- HDL and LDL Cholesterol levels

- Diabetes risk

- Bone density as a risk for possible osteoporosis

- Kidney and thyroid function, and more

Screenings are affordable, convenient and accessible for wheelchairs and those with trouble walking. Free parking is also available. Packages start at \$149. Preregistration is required.

For information, call 877-237-1287 or visit www.lifelinescreening.com.

Free swing dance lessons offered

LARGO - Free West Coast swing dance lessons are offered at 8 p.m. each Friday at the Suncoast Ballroom, 7500 Ulmerton Road, Largo.

West Coast Swing is a six-count, slotted partner dance that uses a variety of music formats.

For more information, visit www.tbwca.com.

Largo Central Park

Largo Central Park is at 101 Central Park Drive. Within the park are the Central Park Performing Arts Center, 105 Central Park Drive; the Largo Feed Store, 295 Central Park Drive; and the Largo Public Library, 120 Central Park Drive. To contact the library, call 727-587-6715.

Learn Vietnamese cooking at library

LARGO - Explore the culture and cuisine of Vietnam with the Pho Queen on Monday, Aug. 6, 6:30 p.m., at the Largo Library.

Learn how to make bánh mì, a baguette sandwich that is a fusion of French and Vietnamese flavors.

This event is free and open to the public. Registration is required: online at LargoPublicLibrary.org or call 727-587-6715.

Exhibit celebrates band's 50th anniversary

LARGO - The Largo Public Library is celebrating the Largo High School Band of Gold with a 50th anniversary exhibit in Gallery 120 through Aug. 30.

Follow an interactive timeline, with special memorabilia featuring sights and sounds, as the original 1968 "Packer Band" transforms into the world champion Band of Gold under the leadership of band director Robert R. Cotter, bringing national and international fame to Largo.

Library offering genealogy classes

LARGO - The Largo Public Library hosts several free genealogy classes each month.

Class duration is 60 to 90 minutes depending on content and questions.

No registration required. For the complete listing of all classes and scheduled times, visit lpgs.blogspot.com, email Bob Bryan at BBryan84@gmail.com or call 727-595-4521.

SHINE offering assistance at library

LARGO - If you are celebrating your 65th birthday this year, recently retired or just want to know more about your health care options under Medicare, SHINE may be able to help.

SHINE, a free program offered by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and the local Area Agency on Aging schedules free, unbiased and confidential counseling appointments the first and third Wednesday each month at Largo Public Library. Please call 727-587-6715 to schedule your appointment.

Ukulele society to hold monthly workshop

LARGO - A monthly ukulele workshop will be held at the Largo Public Library on the third Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m.

Hosted by the Tampa Bay Ukulele Society, the workshop provides an introduction to the ukulele. A limited number of instruments will be supplied by the society, so participants are urged to bring their own if you have one.

For more information, call 727-587-6715, email libraryinfo@largo.com, or visit www.LargoPublicLibrary.org.

McGough Nature Park

McGough Nature Park is at 11901 146th St. N. and includes the Narrows Environmental Education Center. Visit largoparks.com or call 727-518-3047.

Center to host Look Alive Bird Show

LARGO - The Look Alive Bird Show will be presented Sunday, Aug. 5, from 1 to 2 p.m., at the Narrows Environmental Education Center.

Attendees will get a glimpse at the world of Florida's fabulous flighted hunters. The show details the amazing adaptations that raptors use to exploit the natural world for their gain. The show includes owls, hawks, falcons and Sarge, the center's own bald eagle and the star of the show.

Cost is \$3 a person.

Highland Recreation Complex

Highland Recreation Complex is at 400 Highland Ave. Visit HighlandRecreation.com or call 727-518-3016.

Highland to host back to school expo

LARGO - A free back to school expo and open house will take place Saturday, Aug. 4, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Highland Recreation Complex, 400 Highland Ave. NE, Largo.

Vendors focusing on youth and families will be on site with information, back to school goodies and wellness exams. On-site school and sport physicals will be available.

For information on attending or becoming a wellness vendor, call Mike Baker at 727-518-3016.

Visit HighlandRecreation.com.

Party to celebrate end of summer

LARGO - A glow-in-the-dark teen pool party to celebrate the end of

See LARGO, page 5A

LARGO, from page 4A

the summer will be held Tuesday, Aug. 7, from 8 to 11 p.m., at the Highland Family Aquatic Center.

The party will include music provided by a DJ and an extra-long swim time.

The cost is \$5.

Southwest Rec Complex

Southwest Recreation Complex, which includes an aquatic complex, is at 13120 Vonn Road. Call 727-518-3125 for recreation or 727-518-3126 for the pool. Visit PlayLargo.com or LargoPools.com.

Garage sale sets up at Southwest

LARGO – A Communitywide Garage Sale will be held Saturday, Aug. 18, 8 a.m., at Southwest Recreation Complex.

The garage sale, which features over 65 tables, is free to attend and features deals on home goods, children's toys, gently used clothing and more.

To host a table, call Southwest Recreation at 727-518-3125. Tables are \$10 each; limit two tables per person.

Aqua bike cycling classes offered

LARGO – The Aquatics Division is offering Aqua Bike Cycling, a high-energy water exercise using new aqua bikes at Southwest Pool.

The class will be offered Monday and Wednesdays from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. and Tuesday from 6:15 to 7 p.m. starting in June.

This class is limited to eight participants per class.

Cost is \$7 for members and \$14 for nonmembers.

Community Center

The Largo Community Center is at 400 Alt. Keene Road. Visit LargoCommunityCenter.com or call 727-518-3131.

Tutterow fall registration coming

LARGO – Registration for the 2018-19 Tutterow Dance Academy programs will be held for returning students Friday, Aug. 10, from 5 to 8 p.m., and new students on Saturday, Aug. 11, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.,

at the Largo Community Center.

Tutterow Dance Academy offers professional instruction in ballet, tap, jazz, hip hop, lyrical, acro, and preschool classes for boys and girls ages 2 to adult.

The academy is also home to the Tutterow Stars of Tomorrow, an award-winning performance company, giving students additional performance and competition opportunities.

For more information on class registration or audition opportunities for the performance company, call 727-585-1232 or visit tutterowdancers.com.

Classes and lessons

• Adult tap and ballet classes: Tap classes are Tuesdays from 1 to 2 p.m. and Thursdays from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Ballet classes are Wednesdays from noon to 1 p.m. For an additional cost, participants may stay for a choreography class that builds off the technique taught each week. Tap Technique is \$4.50 for members and the combination class is \$7 for members. Ballet classes cost \$7.50 per class for members.

• Ukulele lessons: Hourlong private lessons are \$25. Students must provide their own ukulele. Instructor Michael Desselle will focus on basic chords, timing, strumming and learning melodies.

Weekly events

• Bridge games: Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:30 to 4 p.m. All players are welcome to join the American Contract Bridge League-sanctioned games. The cost is \$4 with membership or \$5, with snacks included. Call Joan Waff at 727-895-9073.

• Mahjong games: Thursdays, 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. Beginners are welcome. The cost is \$1.50 for members.

• Sunday Social Dance: Sundays, 6 to 10 p.m. Dress to impress and join about 150 singles and friends of all ages to dance to an extensive music library to fit every taste. The cost is \$10.

Bimonthly events

• Karaoke party: First and third Fridays, 7 to 10 p.m. Using the big screen in Studio A, singers can choose from an extensive online library. Admission is \$5 per person and beer and wine will be available for purchase.

• Free matinee movies: Every other Thursday, 1 p.m. Doors open at 12:30 p.m. Limited refreshments will be sold and movie fun facts will be provided.

Monthly events

• Free movies: First Wednesdays at 1 p.m., and third Fridays at 7 p.m. All movies are rated G, PG or PG-13 and are shown with closed captioning when available. Light concessions will be available. Check the Largo Lantern or call 727-518-3131 for a listing of movies.

• Open Mic Night: First Fridays, 7 to 10 p.m. Bring acoustic instruments or choose from thousands of songs in house. Family-friendly comedians and spoken-word performers are welcome. Cost is \$5 and limited concessions will be available, including beer and wine.

• Senior adult luncheon: Third Thursdays, noon to 2 p.m. Tickets are \$12 and include lunch and a show. Tickets go on sale for Recreation Card holders on the first of the month prior to each show. Those without Recreation Cards can purchase tickets on the second of the month. On the day of the show, doors open at 11:45 a.m., lunch is served between noon and 1 p.m. and the show is from 1 to 2 p.m.

Group meetings

American Legion Post 119

LARGO – American Legion Post 119, at 130 First Ave. SW, will host several events that are open to the public.

Lunches featuring burgers and specials will be served Monday and Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. On Wednesday, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., a steak hoagie special will be served. Lunch will not be served Thursday or Friday, but takeout orders are accepted by calling 727-584-2038.

Friday Night Dinners are served from 5 to 8 p.m., with music by Karaoke DJ Bill Johnson, 7 to 11 p.m. The cost is \$7.25 for shrimp or a four-piece chicken dinner or all-you-can-eat fried fish. It is served with rolls, French fries and coleslaw.

Saturday Night Dinners are served 5 to 8 p.m., with music by various artists weekly, 7 to 11 p.m. The cost is \$8.25 and includes bacon-wrapped filet mignon served with a salad, baked potato and rolls. Coffee is \$1.

Sons of the American Legion Post 119 sponsor "Wing Madness" every Monday night, 5 to 8 p.m. Enjoy chicken wings served hot, mild, barbecue, butter and garlic and spicy barbecue for \$5 for six or \$8 for 12. French fries and onion rings are available. Bob

Swenson provides music from 6 to 8 p.m.

Proceeds benefit the Special Olympics, Fisher House at Bay Pines, and American Legion National Child Welfare Foundation and National Emergency Fund.

VFW Post 10094

LARGO – VFW Post 10094, at 14450 Walsingham Road, offers several events each week that are open to the public.

Each Monday, Bingo starts at 6:30 p.m. Hamburgers and hot dogs are served beforehand for \$3. On Tuesday afternoons, Trivia Time is held from 2 to 4 p.m. and darts are offered starting at 7 p.m. Each Thursday, dinner is served from 6 to 7 p.m. for \$6 to \$7. A different meal is served each week, and entertainers vary from week to week. Friday is Karaoke With Mollie, which begins at 6 p.m., with hot dogs and hamburgers offered from 6 to 7 p.m.

Live entertainment is on Friday, Saturday and Sundays inside and outside, weather permitting.

All are welcome, but you must have a current membership card to be served alcohol.

Proceeds benefit the Bill Young VA Hospital programs, the VFW National Home, Sea Cadet Youth activities and the Boy Scouts.

Largo Lions Club

LARGO – The Largo Lions Club meets on the first and third Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. at Tailgaters, 13847 Walsingham Road.

The club is a network of volunteers who serve their communities, meet humanitarian needs, encourage peace and promote international understanding.

For more information, email info@largolionsclub.org or visit largolionsclub.org.

Kiwanis Club of Largo/Mid-Pinellas

LARGO – The Kiwanis Club of Largo/Mid-Pinellas meets for dinner at 6:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Thursday of each month at The Suncoast Café, 1921 West Bay Drive.

Each meeting features a speaker and fellowship over a meal, where members plan service and fundraising projects.

Kiwanis is a worldwide service organization founded in 1915 to serve the children of the world and at the local level.

For more information, visit largokiwanis.snack.ws/ or call 727-536-0412.



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PUBLIC SAFETY

FEMA releases new preliminary flood map for Pinellas

The Federal Emergency Management Administration recently announced the release of updated, digital flood hazard maps that show the extent to which areas throughout the county are at risk for flooding.

The new preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Map is based on updated coastal modeling and shows flood hazards more accurately than older maps.

The preliminary map is available to residents and businesses on the online Flood

Map Information Service found at www.pinellascounty.org/flooding. Property owners in unincorporated Pinellas County can call the Flood Information Services hotline at 727-464-8900 to ask questions and get answers about the new flood map. Property owners within municipal boundaries should call their city.

Over time, flood risks change due to weather events, environmental changes, erosion, land use and other factors. Maps are updated periodically to reflect these changes. Pinellas County's FIRM has not

been updated since 2009.

"Historically, flooding is one of the most costly natural disasters affecting Pinellas County," said Commission Chairman Ken Welch. "The modernization of outdated flood maps represents an important step toward increasing public safety by better equipping our residents to make decisions about protecting themselves and their properties."

FIRMs indicate whether properties are in areas of high, moderate or low flood risk. In

reviewing the new Pinellas County FIRM, many property owners may find that their risk is higher or lower than they thought. If the risk level for a property changes, so may the requirement to carry flood insurance.

The updated flood map allows property owners to make better financial decisions about protecting themselves and their property. The map also helps community officials, engineers, builders and others make important determinations about where and how new

structures and developments should be built, making Pinellas County a safer place to live.

The updated FIRM is still preliminary and has not yet been officially adopted. To ensure that all residents and business owners understand the map change process and are aware of their options, a series of educational and outreach activities will be held. Public meetings will be scheduled in the coming months so that residents can view the new maps, understand how their properties

may be affected and learn more about financial steps that they may need to take to protect their investment.

The newly released map is part of a large, multiyear coastal flood risk study effort to better identify, quantify and communicate the coastal flood hazards and associated risks in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina, producing updated FIRMs.

For more information, visit www.pinellascounty.org/flooding.



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How to Prepare Your ROOF for a Hurricane or Tropical Storm

If you are a homeowner in Florida, then you know that the hurricane season can get rough at times. There are a lot of things that can end up damaging your home during a hurricane, from the strong hurricane winds to the debris that the winds kick up to the torrential downpours. There are many ways to prepare your home for the hurricane season, however the one part of your home you should pay special attention to is the roof. Your roof is the first line of defense against the elements, which means that you should do what you can in order to prepare it for the potential force of any oncoming hurricanes.

Have Your Roof Professionally Inspected. Making sure your roof is inspected at least once a year is very important. You'll want to make sure that your roof is in good shape. Any issues that your roof has are going to worsen during a hurricane, thereby only making your home more vulnerable to the elements. The following are a few of the issues that a roof inspector will look for:

Broken or damaged shingles or tiles - Shingles that are broken or damaged are more likely to become completely detached during a hurricane. They also leave the underlayment exposed to both wind and rain, increasing the chances that your roof is damaged even more or that your roof will begin leaking.

Dents - Dents in the roof can lead to water pooling. When water pools, it will weaken the roof and potentially lead to leaks, which will damage the structure of your home as well as potentially damage the possessions within your home.

Have Your Gutters Cleared - It's important that your gutters are completely clear before hurricane season begins, so make sure that you have all dirt and debris cleaned out. If your gutters are blocked, the rain water can build up and seep into your home. Backed up water can also weaken the gutter system, making it easier for hurricane-force winds to rip it from your home.

Add Wind Resistant Straps - Have a professional roofer install wind resistant fasteners and metal straps to your roof to prevent hurricane winds from lifting the roof off the home.

Trim Nearby Tree Branches - You need to make sure that there are no tree branches nearby your roof. You don't want these branches to break off during a hurricane and fall onto your roof as this can cause major damage. You may want to consider removing any trees that are too close to your home as well.

Purchase a Tarp and Store as Needed - After a storm, roofers run into a major supply shortage. Tarps are a rare find during this time and unfortunately, they are a major necessity. Your best bet is to purchase tarps before the storm that way you are prepared.

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FLORIDA POLITICS

State Attorney won't press charges against Latvala

Former state senator accused of violating state corruption laws

By SUZETTE PORTER
Tampa Bay Newspapers

Residents of District 16, which encompasses most of northern Pinellas County, have been without a state senator since the end of last year. They had no representation during the past Legislative session.

Former Sen. Jack Latvala resigned Dec. 20, 2017, after being accused of violating state law and sexually harassing and assaulting women. His resignation technically became effective Jan. 5.

Latvala's resignation was prompted by the opinion of a retired judge who said in a report that Latvala might have violated state corruption laws in reference to anonymous claims of sexual harassment by several women.

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement has since completed an investigation into allegations that Latvala's actions, while in a relationship with a former lobbyist, violated a state statute, which prohibits unlawful compensation or reward for official behavior, according to a July 26 letter from

Jack Campbell, State Attorney for the Second Judicial Circuit of Florida in Leon County.

"We agree with FDLE's conclusion that there is insufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Mr. Latvala was unlawfully compensated or rewarded for his official behavior as a Florida Senator," Campbell said in his letter. "Since criminal charges are not warranted, this office will take no further action on the matter."

Campaign for governor derailed

Latvala, 66, a Republican from Clearwater, was a longtime state legislator. He served in the Senate, representing Pinellas, from 1994 to 2002, when he had to leave due to term limits. He returned to the Senate in 2010 and served until the day he resigned.

Latvala was on his last term as a legislator due again to term limits and had turned his eye toward the governor's race before the allegations derailed his campaign.

In August, he held a rally at Clearwater Marine Aquarium to announce his intention to run in that race.

During the rally, Latvala pointed to his record of accomplishments, which include helping to pass Forever Florida, a program that dedicated millions each year to buying environmentally sensitive lands, and creating Tampa Bay Water, which supplies water to Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas counties, and St. Petersburg, New Port Richey and Tampa.

Residents of District 16 will get a chance to elect a new senator to represent them in the Nov. 6 election. Ed Hooper of Clearwater and Leo Karruli of Palm Harbor are vying for the Republican spot in the race during the Aug. 28 primary.

The winner will face Democrat Amanda Murphy of New Port Richey. District 16 also includes a portion of Pasco County.

Suzette Porter is TBN's Pinellas County editor. She can be reached at sporter@TBNweekly.com.



Photo courtesy of JACK LATVALA CAMPAIGN

Former Sen. Jack Latvala announced his intention to run for governor during a rally Aug. 16 at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium. He was joined by his wife, Connie Prince, left, and his son state Rep. Chris Latvala and daughter, Stephanie Courson.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

County seeking buyers for STAR Center in Largo

The Pinellas County Industrial Development Authority is soliciting a sealed Request for Negotiation for the sale of the Young-Rainey Science Technology and Research (STAR) Center, a 96-acre manufacturing and technology campus on Bryan Dairy Road in Largo.

This is a prime mid-county location with ample parking and easy access to I-275, Tampa International Airport and St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport.

Approximately 27.61 acres of the campus are under long-term ground leases and 10.43 acres are available for immediate development. The entire complex meets site stormwater retention and drainage requirements for current and future development. A full site ALTA survey (2017) is available.

The STAR Center's main building address is 7887 Bryan Dairy Road, Largo, and the site address is 11400 Belcher Road South. It is zoned M-1, as a light manufacturing and industry district. The leasable square footage of the property's main building and leased out-buildings totals 661,697 square feet and is currently 81 percent occupied. The anchor tenant, a large defense contractor,

occupies over 76 percent of this space.

The purpose of the RFN is to enter into negotiations to complete the sale/purchase, lease/purchase or another approach to the sale of such property to advance one or more of Pinellas County's development goals. The Pinellas County IDA will consider all qualified responses to this RFN and evaluate each response based on the evaluation criteria established in the RFN document.

All questions pertaining to the terms and conditions or scope of work of this RFN must be sent in writing to the Pinellas County Purchasing Department and received no later than Oct. 1 at 3 p.m.

This is also the deadline for inspection of the property. The Statements of Interest for the RFN are due Oct. 11 at 3 p.m.

All of the details and the process for the STAR Center RFN, including deadlines, inspection and questions, as well as documents related to the appraisal, environmental reports, leasing, licenses and permits can be found at www.PCED.org/StarCenter. No oral interpretations will be made to any firms as to the meaning of this RFN.



Photo courtesy of PCED

Pinellas County is soliciting Requests for Negotiation for the sale of the Young-Rainey Science Technology and Research Center in Largo.

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Police Beat

Charges pending after father, son killed in Seminole crash

SEMINOLE - Two men died at the scene of a four-vehicle crash at the intersection of Park Boulevard and 104th Lane in Seminole on July 28.

Pinellas County Sheriff's Office identified the dead as Edward Scott Delzer, 59, of New Port Richey and Harvey Vern Delzer, 86, of Madeira Beach.

According to investigators with the Sheriff's Major Accident Investigation Team, James Harrison Wolf, 60, of Seminole was driving a 2005 Chevrolet SUV westbound in the median lane of Park Boulevard, approaching the intersection of 104th Lane about 6:56 p.m.

They say that Wolf ran a red light and struck the rear of a 2001 Lexus that was stopped at the light. Edward Delzer was driving the Lexus. His father, Harvey, was a passenger.

Witnesses told investigators the force of the impact pushed Delzer's Lexus and Wolf's Chevrolet into the eastbound lanes of Park Boulevard. Delzer's Lexus then struck a 2017 Chrysler van being driven by Kelly Shallow, 38, of Gulfport who was traveling eastbound on Park Boulevard.

Wolf's Chevrolet struck a 2015 Infiniti SUV being driven by Michael Young, 52, of Seminole, who was also traveling eastbound.

Paramedics from Seminole Fire Rescue responded. Edward and Harvey Delzer were pronounced dead at the scene. Wolf was transported to Bayfront Health St. Petersburg Hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. Shallow and her three passengers were uninjured, and Young was uninjured.

Due to the severity of the crash, deputies closed Park Boulevard for several hours while they conducted their investigation. Investigators say speed and alcohol are factors in the crash.

Criminal charges are pending for Wolf.

Man charged with sexual battery on two children in Largo

Pinellas County Sheriff's detectives charged a Middleburg man July 26 with two counts of sexual battery on two female victims, who were between the ages of 5 and 8 at the time of the incidents, which occurred between December 2017 and February 2018 at a residence in unincorporated Largo.

Levern Brown, 75, is currently being held in the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office Department of Corrections on a separate charge of lewd/lascivious molestation with a victim under age 12.

Pinellas County detectives began their investigation July 6, after the victims admitted Brown had engaged in inappropriate activity with them. Detectives report that Brown has been a registered sexual offender since 2005.

Jacksonville Sheriff's Office arrested Brown July 21 for one count of lewd/lascivious molestation with victim under age 12 that occurred in their jurisdiction.

Pinellas detectives interviewed Brown July 24 at the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office Department of Corrections, 500 East Adams St. in Jacksonville, where Brown reportedly admitted to the allegations. They then presented the case to the Pinellas/Pasco State Attorney's Office and a warrant was issued for two

counts of capital sexual battery (familial authority). Jacksonville Sheriff's Office served the warrant for Brown at the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office Department of Corrections about 10:58 a.m. July 26. He will later be transferred to the Pinellas County Jail for his charges.

Clearwater police arrest former city employee for stealing

CLEARWATER - Clearwater Police detectives arrested a former city employee about 9 a.m. July 27 for stealing more than \$148,000 from the Parks and Recreation Department.

Robert Carpenter, 58, of Clearwater was charged with one count of scheming to defraud, a first-degree felony. He was booked into the Pinellas County Jail. Bail was set at \$250,000.

According to a press release from Clearwater PD, Carpenter is accused of taking cash payments from a concessionaire at Eddie C. Moore Complex and from a soccer league that rented fields from the city, in addition to cash thefts from two other sources or events.

Carpenter was a recreation supervisor assigned to the athletics area of the Parks and Recreation Department when the accounting discrepancies first were noticed internally earlier this year. He resigned March 28 as an internal audit and police investigation began. The thefts date back as early as 2013, police say.

"Our detectives spent months piecing together this case," said Police Chief Dan Slaughter in the press release. "This is a supervisor who was supposed to be responsible for making sure taxpayers' money is not stolen. Now it is going to cost him."

"We are disappointed that one of our own employees engaged in such behavior," said City Manager Bill Horne. "We have hired a forensic auditor and will be implementing recommendations for putting into place the proper checks and balances."

Carpenter was hired by the city in August 1997. At the time of his resignation, he earned \$52,699 annually.

Clearwater police accuse man of firing gun on Causeway Bridge

CLEARWATER - Clearwater Police arrested a 28-year-old Lutz man July 28 for firing a handgun out of the open sunroof of his car on the Memorial Causeway bridge.

Police say the incident occurred about 9 a.m. Several calls came in to the police department about a Volvo traveling west on the causeway with the driver shooting a gun out of the vehicle.

Officers began searching for the car and located it minutes later in the 500 block of South Gulfview Boulevard where Jelani Dixon was arrested.

More than a half-dozen shots were fired from the Ruger .40-caliber semiautomatic handgun, which was recovered from the car. Multiple pedestrians were on the bridge at the time of the incident. No injuries were reported.

Dixon was charged with discharging a firearm from a vehicle in public. He is being held in the Pinellas County Jail on \$10,000 bail.



Photo courtesy of PCSO

A surveillance photo taken from a video shows one of the two men using a bow to illegally harvest snook from the dock of a closed business in Madeira Beach.

Two charged with armed trespassing at beach business

MADEIRA BEACH - Pinellas County Sheriff's deputies arrested two men for trespassing at a business in Madeira Beach and illegally harvesting snook using a compound bow.

According to deputies assigned to the Marine and Environmental Lands Unit, the incident occurred about 4:30 a.m. July 9 at Don's Dock located at 215 Boardwalk Place, Madeira Beach.

Deputies say 35-year-old Derrick Ennis of Dade City and Carols Gonzalez, 27, of St. Petersburg walked around a 6-foot chain link fence armed with two compound bows and trespassed at Don's Dock, which was closed.

Deputies say Ennis and Gonzalez ignored the posted "no trespassing" signs and used the compound bows to shoot and kill snook that were in the water next to the dock. Surveillance video at the business captured images of the men illegally harvesting and killing multiple snook at the business.

Deputies say Ennis and Gonzalez were then seen leaving the area in an older model Ford Ranger truck.

Later that same day, the business owners viewed the surveillance video and notified deputies of the incident. Deputies obtained the surveillance video and placed photographs of the men on social media in an attempt to identify the suspects.

Through various investigative techniques and with the help of social media, deputies were able to confirm Ennis and Gonzalez were the men in the video.

Deputies presented the case to the Pinellas/Pasco State Attorney's Office and a warrant was issued for Ennis on the criminal charge of armed trespassing. Deputies interviewed both men and they reportedly admitted to the allegations.

Ennis was arrested by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission officers July 25 at his residence in Dade City. Ennis was booked into the Pasco County Jail and he will later be transported to Pinellas County for his charges.

Deputies arrested Gonzalez on July 26 at his home in St. Petersburg. He was transported to the Pinellas County Jail where he was charged with one count of Armed Trespassing.

Deputies say additional fishery violations are pending on both men for illegally harvesting snook out of season, over the bag limit, and illegal method for

harvesting snook.

St. Petersburg man charged with first-degree murder

PINELLAS PARK - Pinellas Park police arrested a 24-year-old St. Petersburg man July 29 in connection with a shooting that occurred July 27 outside Bell Apartments.

Pinellas Park police investigators spent the weekend looking for the suspect who shot and killed Maurice Cole, 20, from Colorado Springs, Colorado. Police identified Derrion Vontrell Rich as the shooter and obtained an arrest warrant late July 28. He was located and taken into custody about 11:30 a.m. July 29 outside his home in St. Petersburg.

Rich was booked into the Pinellas County Jail on one count of murder in the first degree. He is being held without bail.

Police responded to the parking lot of the Bell Apartments, 4030 78th Ave. in Pinellas Park, about 7 p.m. after receiving a report that an adult male had been shot and transported to the hospital.

Police say Cole, who had been living in the complex since July 16, was in the parking lot speaking with another person when the shooting took place. The unknown suspect fled the scene after the shooting. Cole was transported to Northside Hospital where he later died.

Investigators believe that the July 27 shooting was the result of a dispute over a narcotics transaction that took place between Cole and Rich. Police say Rich has a lengthy criminal history that includes various felony charges and multiple narcotics charges that date back to January 2013.

Strong rip currents lead to two calls, rescue of five

CLEARWATER - Clearwater Fire & Rescue Department personnel assisted five different swimmers at two different scenes who were struggling with strong rip currents the evening of July 23 - all within an hour.

The first incident was reported in the 700 block of Eldorado Avenue at about 7:15 p.m. An adult male and his son were stuck in the strong currents and yelling for help offshore in the rough Gulf of Mexico seas. Firefighters responded, and one crew member was able to swim out on a surfboard to help the two get to shore.

Shortly thereafter, just after 8 p.m., a call was received for swimmers in distress south of Pier 60. Crews responded there and a fire medic on a surfboard had to assist three swimmers caught in the strong currents.

None of the five required medical treatment or transport.

Clearwater PD seeks person of interest in July 23 shooting

CLEARWATER - Clearwater Police detectives are asking for the public's help to identify a person of interest in the July 23 shooting that occurred outside The Nolen Apartments.

Clearwater Police and Clearwater Fire & Rescue responded to a report of a shooting at 8:17 p.m. Monday at The Nolen Apartments, 971 Park St., after residents called after hearing a disturbance. A male victim was found with multiple gunshot wounds, police said. An adult male was taken to Bayfront Health St. Petersburg as a trauma alert.

Police identified the victim as Lorenzo Hearn, 35. As of the morning of July 24, Hearn was listed in critical condition at Bayfront Health.

Police are looking for a man they believe may have information about the shooting. He is thought to be Hispanic in his late 30s or early 40s. Police say he has a muscular build, about 5 feet 10 inches tall and weighs 200 pounds.

Anyone with information on his identity should call Clearwater Police at 727-562-4242.

- Compiled by SUZETTE PORTER

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BELLEAIR SHORE

Turtle nest relocation riles town

Commissioners say aquarium violated property rights

By **WAYNE AYERS**
TBN Correspondent

BELLEAIR SHORE – Some town commissioners are taking issue with the relocation of turtle nests on residents' beachfront property.

This year's beach renourishment of the northern beach strip began in mid-June, at the height of the turtle nesting season. To protect the eggs, Clearwater Marine Aquarium officials decided to move endangered nests to Belleair Shore, which does not participate in beach renourishment. That is due to the town's claim that the residents own the beach in front of their property.

The beach there appeared to be an ideal safe haven. The turtle nests would not be disturbed by the renourishment activity, which goes on 24 hours a day and could definitely impact the nighttime hatching of baby turtles attempting to reach the water.

But the nests relocation to property above the tide line, which Belleair Shore residents claim as their own, violates property rights, said Commissioner Steve Blume at the July 24 town commission meeting.

Commissioner Deborah Roseman said she was astounded to find six turtle nests behind her home.

"For the life of me, I can't see how they should be able to relocate six nests onto (my) private property," Roseman said.

"Who gave them permission to come onto our property to relocate the turtles?" asked Blume.

"Nobody that I'm aware of," said Mayor Robert Schmidt.

"I think it's an abuse of personal property for them to not even contact us," Blume said.

He wanted to know if there was anything the town could do about it.

Town Attorney Regina Kardash said that is up to the individual property owners.

"If they came onto your private property, that's a private property right. That's not a town property right."

The turtle relocation issue remained unresolved at the commission meeting. But commission members were clearly riled that their private property



Photo by WAYNE AYER

Numerous turtle nests that were relocated for protection from the beach renourishment activity further north are pictured in this stretch of Belleair Shore.

rights were violated, in their view.

"We want to protect the turtles, but they are on private property, and there are liability and other issues involved," said Roseman, in a later comment.

Blume said later the matter has to be addressed.

"These are trespassers on our property. Each homeowner should have been contacted," Blume said.

Millage rate to remain unchanged

The commission decided the town's millage rate will stay at .6954, which is the lowest in the county.

"The goal is for the town not to have a tax increase," said Mayor Schmidt.

Although they are keeping the millage rate unchanged, town commissioners will actually get an increase in revenue because the property values are rising.

There was more good financial news from auditor Jeanine Bittinger of the firm Davidson, Jamieson and Cristini. She presented a review of the town's finances, which is done in years when a full audit is not required. Bittinger declared the town to be in

"a very strong financial position," despite showing a slight loss for the year 2016. That was due to the expense of replacing the gates at the town's three beach accesses, she said.

"Belleair Shore has the strongest financial statement of any municipality in the state, according to an article in the St. Pete Times," Schmidt said.

"Absolutely," said Bittinger. "You have more reserves than any municipality I have ever audited," she said.

The town's overall financial position shows "a lot of strength for a town of its size," Bittinger said.

Tennis court in yard decision put off

A decision on whether to approve a resident's application to construct a 95-foot by 49-foot tennis court in his yard was put off again by the commission. This was the second time the commission has considered, and failed to approve, the multi-purpose court, despite (the resident agreeing to) requested modifications to the design.

Questions about lighting, screening from neighbors, and hours of use and other concerns

have been addressed, said attorney Kami Corbett, representing homeowner Sean Hyer.

"We are not asking for anything outside your code," Corbett said.

Blume wanted to know if the neighbors on each side of the property had been notified and had approved of the planned tennis court.

Corbett said there had been an article on the subject in the Beach Bee, which did serve as public notice. She reminded the commission that Hyer is not asking for a variance, so notification of neighbors is not a requirement.

Hyer appeared frustrated over the lack of approval by the commission of his building permit application.

"There is nothing in the code that says we can't do this. We thought the newspaper article would notify the neighbors," Hyer said.

Town Attorney Kardash said adjacent property owners should be notified but not asked for their approval.

The commission agreed with Blume's request to delay approval of the tennis court until next month's meeting, to allow time to notify the immediate neighbors and give them a chance to respond.

BIG-C

Project to renourish beaches nears end

By **BRIAN GOFF**
TBN Correspondent

BELLEAIR BEACH – This round of the renourishment of the Pinellas beaches should be finished in early fall. Members of the Barrier Islands Governmental Council heard the update at their monthly meeting July 25.

Andy Squires, Pinellas County's coastal resources manager, reported to the group that the last beach to be done, Indian Rocks Beach, should be finished in early October. Work on that beach began earlier in July but has been slowed by weather.

Work on renourishing the beaches began on the north end of Sand Key, and then it shifted to St. Pete Beach and moved north with IRB last in line.

IRB Mayor Cookie Kennedy noted that the last holdout gave in and provided the easement the Army Corps of Engineers needed to begin the renourishment. This year, the Corps required beachfront properties to provide an easement allowing the renourishment work to be done. The Happy Fiddler condominium was the last one to grant the easement.

"I'm pleased that the Army Corps of Engineers, and the county managed to get the Happy Fiddler to provide the easement," she said.

One glitch in finalizing the entire renourishment occurred on Upham Beach in St. Pete Beach.

Squires noted that the county has been building four large rock "groins" on the beach to prevent sand erosion. Upham Beach has traditionally been hard hit by wave action that removes the sand. Ironically, because that construction is not finished the renourishment could not happen and the contract for

renourishment will have expired by the time the work is done.

However, Squires said county will get the job done.

"We will do it ourselves," he said. "We were hoping to get some federal funds, but that fell through. But we do have enough money from the county and from state grants to do the job. It will be a 50/50 split."

Squires said the groin work will be finished in late August or early September and it will be a year by the time all the design work and permitting is done to finish the work. He said they will be using the design and methods of the Army Corps of Engineers.

Squires was asked about the large piles of stones and shell left in the wake of the renourishment on the beaches. The rocks and shells were sifted out from the sand that was brought in from offshore. Squires said those piles will not be left on the beach; they will be trucked away.

All the beach communities with the exception of Belleair Shore have their beaches renourished. Because Belleair Shore has no public access to its beach it doesn't qualify for renourishment.

Another speaker at the BIG-C meeting was Jackie Larson, the executive director of the Florida Shore and Beach Preservation Association. She urged the mayors to consider attending her group's conference in September in Clearwater.

"The conference will deal with issues involving all our beaches," she said.

Those issues will include that of beach erosion. The group is a coalition of local cities and counties and is a non-profit organization.

She said the conference will be held at the Hyatt in Clearwater from Sept. 19-21.

INDIAN ROCKS BEACH

Officials consider ending recycling program

By **BRIAN GOFF**
TBN Correspondent

INDIAN ROCKS BEACH – Recycling in Indian Rocks Beach could be a thing of the past if the worldwide market for recyclables doesn't pick up.

City commissioners are considering dropping the contract with Waste Connections and ending the city's recycling program when that contract expires in December.

The issue of recycling came up during budget discussions at the commission meeting on July 24. The proposed budget for the next fiscal year shows an increase in the monthly recycle fee from \$25.28 to \$27.81 and a 25 percent increase in commercial container rates.

Calvin Warren, the city's solid waste supervisor, told commissioners that China, the country that normally buys all recycled material, has stopped buying as much because the market just isn't there anymore, thus the increase in cost.

More than that he said because there is no demand for local recyclables. Much of what is picked up goes to the dump and not to the recycle center at all.

Trash in Pinellas County goes to a giant incinerator that actually produces electricity. Warren noted

that recycled material is still being recycled but in a different way.

The hitch in that story is that in the next budget, recycling will cost the city of IRB more than \$200,000 annually. Whereas it would only cost the city \$54,000 if the recycling program were dropped, and the recyclables went with all the other trash to the incinerator.

Warren said he couldn't say how much of the current recyclables goes to be recycled, but he felt most of it goes to the incinerator.

Another reason why the contents of those blue recycle bins end up in the trash is because of what they call contamination. That is when people put items that are not recyclable into the bins. Ten percent contamination is acceptable; 15 percent is not. Warren said most towns have between 15 and 20 percent contamination in their recyclables.

"No matter how much you educate people they will still contaminate the bins. It is a problem nationwide not just here," he said. "An expensive education program would take six to eight months to kick in," he said, referring to the ongoing contamination of the recycle bins.

"We are creating a backlog in the current environment," said Commissioner Ed Hoofnagle.

"Pinellas County's solid waste facility is a great operation; people come from all over to see it but the concept of recycling as we know it might be gone. Why not take it to the dump and burn it?"

Commissioner Phil Wrobel wondered if the city could just use recycle depots where people could bring their own bins and empty them.

City Manager Gregg Mims warned against that because he said it would overtax the facilities. He said if the recycle program were ended then the city should get out of it altogether.

He also cautioned commissioners that if city officials discontinued the recycle program then it would be a big job to get people back to recycling once things change. He was confident they would change someday.

So was Commissioner Phil Hanna. "I don't see recycling coming to an end," he said. "People want to recycle but if there is nowhere for it to go then what can we do?"

Commissioner Wrobel said before a decision is made to abandon the program residents should be told why it is happening.

"I would like to educate people," he said. "Let's cut our losses and get out of the program in December."

ST. PETE BEACH

Longtime eatery Silas Dent's sold

ST. PETE BEACH – Silas Dent's Restaurant, an iconic local landmark for nearly 40 years, has been sold, owner Rob Stambaugh announced July 27.

"The concept of Silas will be changing and the new owners will be putting their own mark on the new restaurant. Silas Dent will be taking his place in history," Stambaugh said in a press release.

The name of the buyer or the sales price were not released.

Stambaugh, who was born and

raised on St. Pete Beach, opened Silas Dent's on July 13, 1979.

He began working in the hospitality business at age 14 at The Little Dutch Bakery on Corey Avenue. He was part of the team that helped open Walt Disney World.

In 1978, Ted Stambaugh, Rob's father, purchased the Madame Tussauds London Wax Museum on St. Pete Beach. Adjacent to the museum was a vacant restaurant. A year later, Rob Stambaugh opened Silas Dent's in the spot.

The restaurant, at 5501 Gulf Blvd., featured late night entertainment. Its theme was meant to reflect the pioneer days of the real Silas Dent, "the happy hermit of Cabbage Key," who settled in the Tierra Verde area in the early 1900s.

Stambaugh and his wife, Debbie, own the adjacent banquet facilities and catering company and will continue to own and operate them under the name "Bayside Banquets," the release said.

Obituaries

WILLIS, Damon, age 52, passed away July 20, 2018. For service information, send condolences, or full obituary visit: www.MohnFuneralHome.com 727-393-3481

GERRITY, Patrick "Pat", age 58, passed away July 22, 2018. For service information, send condolences, or full obituary visit: www.MohnFuneralHome.com 727-393-3481

JENSEN, Elizabeth "Jane", age 86, passed away July 22, 2018. For service information, send condolences, or full obituary visit: www.MohnFuneralHome.com 727-393-3481

HARTSTEIN, Patricia, age 70, passed away July 25, 2018. For service information, send condolences, or full obituary visit: www.MohnFuneralHome.com 727-393-3481

KOLAR, Grace, age 84, passed away July 25, 2018. For service information, send condolences, or full obituary visit: www.MohnFuneralHome.com 727-393-3481

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Democrats try a different tactic in Fla.: fighting back

For decades, Republican candidates have been successful in Florida by rarely deviating from a script that labels Democrats as big-spenders, soft on crime, anti-business and anti-gun.



Joe Henderson

When confronted by these aggressive tactics, Dems generally answered with flustered babble that, roughly translated, was basically "that's not nice."

This campaign has been different though. Instead of trying to stay above the fray or pretending no one will be silly enough to listen to those doddering old Republicans, Democrats have saddled up.

Sure, top candidates trying to win a primary have criticized each other along the trail. But their public media is all about making the case to beat Republicans.

I guess two terms of Rick Scott in the governor's mansion and total control of the Legislature by Republicans convinced them that it was time to show voters why they would be better.

They have been hitting back hard on Republicans and generally have stayed focused on their main themes: education, health care, standing up to the NRA and overall gun reform, and transportation.

Take the in-your-face mailer from Democratic gubernatorial candidate Jeff Greene, the one that has gotten NRA lobbyist Marion Hammer in such a twist. It's the mailer that shows cutouts of children being used as target practice at a school slaughter.

In case anyone didn't get the message, the cutouts are emblazoned with the NRA logo (color Hammer not pleased) and the words AR Practice.

"As a mother, grandmother and a proud NRA member for decades, I find his mailer repulsive," Hammer told the Tampa Bay Times in an email.

"It is clear that Jeff Green is bankrupt of ideas and he has to resort to these dumb ideas to try and get attention for himself and his campaign. When people can't win on fact, they have to resort to cheap stunts like this."

I think Greene wins the argument there, though, because what's really repulsive is having 17 people shot to death at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. And what made it worse was how Hammer and NRA hardliners tried to stop the even tepid revisions to Florida's gun laws in the aftermath of that slaughter.

I don't think a major Democratic candidate would have responded that way four, eight, or 12 years ago. They would have been wary of NRA backlash and decided that, no, let's just ease on down that road.

That's one reason they lose.

You see a different attitude now though.

Gwen Graham has been sharply focused with her points that 20 years of total Republican rule in Tallahassee is enough. When she talks about all the things she believes the common folks in the state have lost because of GOP policies, I think her punch line "we're gonna take it back" is resonating.

Philip Levine has been hammering hard for better pay for teachers. Other Democrats have been joining in that chorus.

It has even filtered down to the local level.

After serving as House Minority Leader, Janet Cruz of Tampa changed her mind about running for the Hillsborough County Commission to challenge Republican Dana Young in SD 18.

Her motivation was Young's absence from the Senate floor when the vote was being taken in March on an assault weapons ban. Young, a staunch gun supporter, said she was attending to other business and later recorded her votes.

Cruz has called her a coward for not being on the floor during the emotionally charged debate.

Polls show their race could be a squeaker.

It's clear Democrats believe the issues are on their side this time and they are charging hard. No matter which candidates emerge from the Aug. 28 primary, in most races he or she will find the battle lines already drawn against a Republican opponent.

That will save them time and money trying to define their opponent.

It's an unusual position for Democrats to be in, and it's too early to say it will be successful. But if they lose this time, at least it will be on the issues and not because they just laid down and took a beating.

Joe Henderson has had a 45-year career in newspapers, including the last nearly 42 years at The Tampa Tribune.

LETTERS

Are Americans tired of the witch hunt by Mueller?

Editor:

Mueller was the wrong choice to begin with because of his close ties to Comey, but it's too late now. His intention in the beginning was to extend the investigation into or past the mid-term elections in hope of electing Democrats.

It appears that the Democrats are the only party that is good at protesting.

Any ideas as to how we can protest and/or end this "witch hunt"?

Chuck Graham
Pinellas Park

About the Cartoonist

Born and raised by underpaid public school teachers in Sanford, Fla., Andy Marlette graduated from the University of Florida and became staff editorial cartoonist at the Pensacola News Journal in 2007.

His work has been awarded by the Florida Society of Newspaper Editors for best editorial cartoons on state issues and former Governor Charlie Crist referred to himself regularly as Marlette's biggest fan, despite the fact that he was also regularly a target in cartoons.

What do you think?

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- 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.
- Please allow two weeks from the time you submitted your letter for it to be published before inquiring as to its status.
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- We won't print letters that are submitted merely to promote a business.
- Thank you letters are accepted.

About Mac, Annabelle and the blimp

Following is a fable about two dogs that once lived in Gulfport, a quaint village in Florida:

One of Gulfport's main attractions was its Kitsching Science Reading Room. It was more than a room – it was a complex of alcoves and nooks, filled with shelves and thousands of books and papers about the science of kitsching.

The dogs – Max and Annabelle – liked to go there. The inside of the room was always quiet and cool. Many of the patrons brought their dogs with them, although the superintendent insisted that the dogs behave themselves. His name was Paul Poltroon. He was the grandson of the Reading Room's founder, Hans Maarschalk, a Dutch designer of odd pots whose ship was blown off course in the Great Storm of 1922, causing the ship to take refuge in Gulfport's harbor. Hans M. (as people soon came to call him) judged Gulfport's residents to be as whacked-out tolerant as any place on earth. So he stayed, designing odd pots and eventually establishing the Kitsching Science Reading Room.

One day as Annabelle and Max walked to the Reading Room, Annabelle said, "Exactly what is kitsching?"

Max said, "I think it's about making things that are tasteless, inferior and cheap, while at the same time imitating high quality objects."

"Wow," Annabelle said, "you certainly know a lot about kitsch."

Max replied, "You watch enough PBS, you learn."

When the dogs arrived at the Reading Room, they were greeted by an armed guard, a dark-haired woman dressed in a military uniform. On her hip was a revolver. The dogs had never seen her before.

She said, "Are you two interested in



Driver's Seat
Bob Driver

kitsching?"

Annabelle lied, "Yes. We talk about it all the time. We love cheap things. We watch Jerry Springer every day. You're new here, aren't you? My name is Annabelle. This mass of hair beside me is Max. What is your name, ma'am?"

The armed guard said, "You ask a lot of questions. You remind me of the Communists in my native land, Bulgaria. My name is Galina."

The dogs soon made friends with Galina. They learned she had moved from Bulgaria to Gulfport after breaking up with her longtime boyfriend, a fellow named Zlatkov.

Max said, "What sort of work does Zlatkov do?"

"He is captain of a blimp. He flies blimps for the Zagorka brewery. He looks for fields of hops that might be used in making beer."

Annabelle said, "Why did you leave him?"

Galina said, "Zlatkov is a scoundrel. He ruined my life. He turned me into a blimpophobe."

Max said, "What is that?"

"It's someone who hates and fears blimps. Each time I see one I want to run away. That's how much I detest Zlatkov. What's worse, he hates me, too. He has threatened to follow me to the USA and punish me for having deserted him."

"When did you leave him?"

"A year ago."

A few weeks later the dogs were strolling past a large cemetery. A shadow fell over the grass and tombstones. The dogs looked up and saw a blimp descending.

Max said, "I bet that's Zlatkov!"

Annabelle said, "I'll dazzle him while you warn Galina."

Max took off. Annabelle snagged one of the blimp's landing lines in her teeth and helped it safely reach the ground.

The pilot climbed out and shook Annabelle's paw. "My name is Zlatkov. I have come looking for my ex-sweetheart Galina. Do you know her?"

Annabelle said, "Yes. Everyone knows her. Did you bring some Bulgarian beer with you? Are you a Communist?"

Annabelle tied Zlatkov up with chit-chat as long as she could. Finally she had no choice but to take Zlatkov to the Kitsching Science Reading Room.

Galina was waiting for him. She drew her revolver as Zlatkov approached. Without warning she opened fire. Annabelle skittered behind some hydrangeas. Zlatkov turned tail and ran back towards his blimp as fast as he could. Half an hour later Galina and the dogs saw the blimp rising above the trees, homeward bound for Bulgaria.

The Gulfport police arrested Galina for assault with a deadly weapon, but soon released her when they learned that Zlatkov was a jealous Bulgarian, bent on revenge.

Galina thanked the two dogs for their help against Zlatkov. Max said, "It was nothing. We expect odd things to happen. After all, this is Gulfport."

Bob Driver's email address is tralee71@comcast.net.



A long way to go before mid-terms

A few things to keep in mind as the midterms heat up. One: Take with a grain of salt pontifications from pollsters, especially those who have misunderstood recent elections. Two: Don't believe pundits' predictions more than three months out, especially when they say that the races are basically done. Three: Remember that, as a result of social media, election momentum changes faster than it used to. Finally: Bear in mind that candidates and messages matter in election outcomes.

This Tuesday, Sabato's Crystal Ball released its latest prediction, "The House Tilts Toward the Democrats." The takeaway: "Democrats are now a little better than 50-50 to win the House. This is the first time this cycle we've gone beyond 50-50 odds on a House turnover. We're making 17 House ratings changes this week, all in favor of the Democrats."

Reminder: On Nov. 9, after Donald Trump's presidential win, the same group released "Mea Culpa, Mea Culpa, Mea Maxima Culpa." Here's what it said: "We wrongly insisted for months that Clinton was always leading the race," they noted, "and never put her below 270 electoral votes." Trump ended with 306 votes versus 232 for Hillary Clinton.

They blew their 2016 House projections, too. "We overshot on a Democratic gain of 13 seats." Pundits' predictions that the outcome is all but preordained deserve skepticism. "Every sign is pointing to a Democratic wave in November," wrote CNN's Chris Cillizza this past Wednesday. Cillizza cited Sabato's Crystal Ball's prediction (with no mention of its 2016 track record) but then moved on, attempting to persuade the reader that the election outcome is nearly set: "But 105 days is an eternity in politics, you say! And it is – sort of. But the

As I See It

Jackie Gingrich Cushman

history of midterm elections won't be changing between now and November 6. Fundraising tends to be momentum driven, meaning that if you don't have a lot of cash, it's harder to just go and get it (unless, of course, you are independently wealthy). And once the playing field shifts in a particular direction, it usually takes a cataclysmic event to shift it back in any meaningful way.

"All of which is to say: The cake isn't totally baked on the 2018 election yet. But it's getting close to finished and the final product isn't likely to be to Republicans' liking."

Cillizza appears to have forgotten that, while cash is important, it does not always determine the outcome. If it did, Hillary Clinton would be president and Jon Ossoff would be the Georgia 6th District representative.

Momentum can change quickly. The runoff this week in Georgia for Republican gubernatorial nominee is a great example. Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle was ahead until two weeks out, when his opponent, Secretary of State Brian Kemp, was endorsed by two previous Republican competitors who did not make it to the runoff. Cagle was then endorsed by Nathan Deal, Georgia's wildly popular governor. About that time, Cagle and Kemp were neck and neck.

A week out, Kemp was endorsed by President Trump, Vice President Mike Pence and former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (my dad). The final tally: Kemp 69

percent, Cagle 31 percent.

Finally, while pollsters and pundits like to look at money raised, that's not all that matters. So, too, do candidates, messaging and campaigns. The "Contract with America," which led to the Republican takeover of the House in 1994, was released just six months before the elections. It was unifying and positive, and it worked.

House Republicans have rolled out "Better Off Now," which focuses on their legislative accomplishments. Their message: Are you better off than you were? If so, vote for us.

House Democrats have unveiled two themes that represent their impossible mission of attempting to placate the far left while spanning the center.

To cover the center, Minority Whip Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md., has rolled out "Make It in America," focusing on education, entrepreneurship and infrastructure. The phrase is similar to "Made in America," which Trump often uses.

Rep. Cheri Bustos, D-Ill., co-chair of House Democrats' messaging arm, recently rolled out the campaign slogan, "For the People." She cited "addressing health care and prescription drug costs; increasing wages through infrastructure and public works projects; and highlighting Republican corruption in Washington."

As the dog days of summer heat up and drain you of energy, be wary of pollsters and pundits while remembering that momentum can shift rapidly. And don't forget that candidates and messages matter. Once Labor Day arrives, the pace will pick up – into a sprint to the finish.

Jackie Gingrich Cushman is a syndicated columnist.

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The Great Outdoors

Great Bay Scallop Search slated for Aug. 25

TIERRA VERDE – Tampa Bay Watch has recruited 40 volunteer boats to participate in the Great Bay Scallop Search, set for Saturday, Aug. 25. The annual event is a resource monitoring program where community volunteers snorkel to search for scallops in select areas within Boca Ciega and Lower Tampa Bay. The event has been conducted annually since 1993 with the goal to monitor and document the health and status of the local bay scallop population. Forty volunteer boaters with more than 180 participants will search selected sites for the elusive bay scallops.

Some years, volunteers find many scallops and other years they don't. Factors that may affect the scallop population include water quality, red tide, high rainfall, and storms. An all-time high for the event was 674 scallops, found in 2009. Bay scallops disappeared from Tampa Bay in the early 1960s when the bay water was highly polluted from dredging operations and industrial and municipal wastes. Tampa Bay's water quality and seagrass beds have since improved to levels that will once again support the bay scallop population. In fact, a 2014 research study by Southwest Florida Water Management District's Surface Water Improvement and Management Program states that Tampa Bay now supports 40,295 acres of seagrass beds, an equivalent amount of seagrass measured as in the 1950s.

Reservations are required for the Great Bay Scallop Search. Registered scallop searchers will meet Saturday, Aug. 25, 9 a.m., at the Fort De Soto boat ramp in Tierra Verde to receive survey equipment and instructions for the monitoring event. At each site, a weighted transect line 50 meters in length is laid along seagrass beds. Snorkelers count scallops along each side of the transect line, within 1 meter of each side, creating a 100 square meter survey area.

For more information on upcoming events, or to become a volunteer or member, visit www.tampabaywatch.org, or call 727-867-8166.



Photo courtesy of TAMPA BAY WATCH

Community volunteers take to the waters of the Tampa Bay area for the annual Great Bay Scallop Search.

Amberjack, triggerfish harvest reopens

Recreational harvest of greater amberjack and gray triggerfish reopened in Gulf state and federal waters Aug. 1. The amberjack season will remain open through Oct. 31 in state waters. The triggerfish season will remain open through Dec. 31 in state waters.

For greater amberjack in the Gulf, the minimum size limit is 34 inches fork length and the daily bag limit is one fish per person.

For gray triggerfish in the Gulf, the minimum size limit is 15 inches fork length and the daily bag limit is one fish per person.

To learn more about regulations for these species, visit MyFWC.com/Fishing and click on "Saltwater Fishing" and "Recreational Regulations."

Near-shore waters the most active right now

Days following heavy rains have been better for targeting redfish and trout, water temperatures can drop 4 or 5 degrees in the shallows overnight depending on the amount of rain the night before.

Cooling water temperatures will only help as far as the reds and trout are concerned, but the hotter action will still be found in our near-shore waters. Jetties and near-shore artificial reefs are holding a variety of species.

Fishing around the structure on the bottom will bring a mixed-bag of flounder, trout and the occasional redfish. Meanwhile, free-lining baits off the back of the boat will keep you plenty busy with mackerel, ladyfish and there's always a chance for a cobia encounter this time of year.

Inshore fishing has been good for Tampa bay tarpon and bull sharks. Targeting 10 to 15-foot-deep dredge areas along Tampa bay bridges at times can be excellent for both. Light winds make for



Fish Tales
Capt. Tyson Wallerstein

perfect conditions when looking for rolling tarpon. Ease your way to the fish with the trolling motor on low speed. Then either cast artificial lures such as slow sinking plugs or broadcast a spread of fresh dead bait such as mullet and shad. The latter will also attract the occasional 4- to 6-foot bull shark, so using a trace of wire is helpful.

Offshore, mangrove snapper is your best bet with gag grouper not being a bad option either. Days of onshore winds have all but shut down our offshore fishery. Now with a good forecast on tap for this weekend anglers should be able to get out 10 to 15 miles where they can find both species holding along natural ledges as well as artificial reefs.

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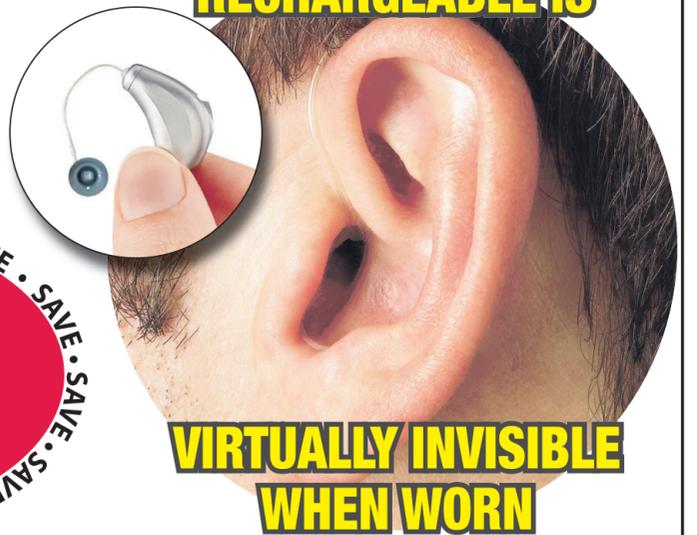
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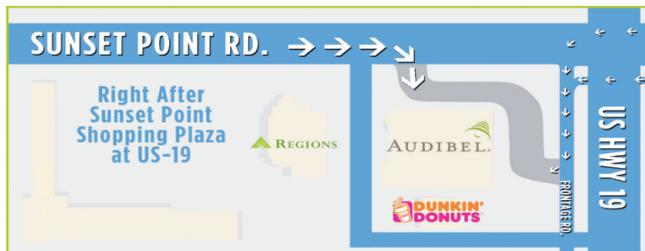
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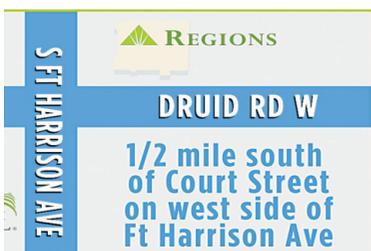
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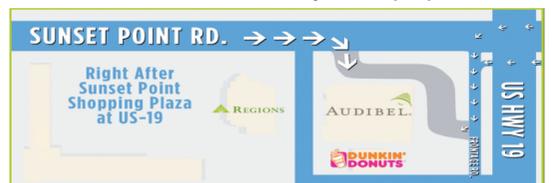
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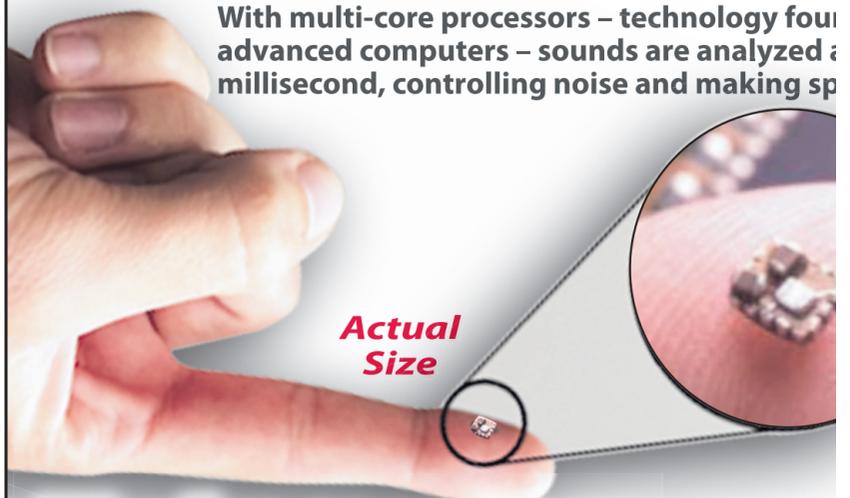
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