

Be prepared this hurricane season

Are your windows and doors sturdy? ... Page 10A.



'Christopher Robin' magical for kids, nostalgic for adults

TBN Entertainment Editor Lee Clark Zumpe says Disney's new live-action take on Winnie the Pooh a delight for kids, a reminder for adults that it can stink to get older. ... Page 3B.

LARGO LEADER

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August 9, 2018



VACATION DESTINATION

Did you hit the road this summer for your annual summer vacation? Did you sail the high seas or explore the pyramids of ancient Egypt? Submit your photos to Imosby@TBNweekly.com for a chance to be featured on TBN's new travel page each month.

ENTERTAINMENT

Largo show pays tribute to U2, INXS

Vertigo, a tribute to U2; and Original Sin, a tribute to INXS will hit the stage Saturday, Aug. 11, at the Central Park Performing Arts Center. Also check out our Divisions section to read about the lineup for the Largo Lions Club annual Spotlight Series and Theatre eXceptional's latest performance. ... Page 1B, 3B.

LARGO

Time is now for Tutterow sign-ups

Registration for the 2018-19 Tutterow Dance Academy programs will be held for returning students Friday-Saturday, Aug. 10-11, at the Largo Community Center. The academy offers professional instruction in ballet, tap, jazz, hip hop, lyrical, acro, and preschool classes for boys and girls ages 2 to adult. ... Page 5A.

POLICE

29 unlicensed contractors caught

Pinellas County Sheriff Bob Gualtieri sent a message to unlicensed contractors during an Aug. 6 press conference in St. Petersburg. "Go get licensed, stop doing it illegally, or you're going to go to jail," said Gualtieri, who announced that investigators arrested 29 suspects with over 60 criminal charges. ... Page 6A.

VIEWPOINTS

Debra Saunders

Trump's Twitter rants raise questions. ... Page 11A.



Also online

Check out TBNweekly.com for more local news, including:

- Former Madeira Beach city manager facing a hearing before the State Commission on Ethics.
- Efforts to persuade restaurants and bars to discontinue the use of plastic straws are having a rippling effect in beach communities.

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LARGO CITY COMMISSION

Incumbents return to posts

Election canceled after four commissioners are uncontested, re-elected by default

By CHRIS GEORGE
Tampa Bay Newspapers

LARGO - There will be no suspense in Largo when elections arrive Nov. 6. In fact, there will be no election at all, because all four city commissioners whose seats were up were re-elected by default Aug. 3 when no one came forward by the end of the candidate qualifying period to challenge them.

Therefore, Michael Smith, Samantha Fenger, Donna Holck and John Carroll will serve another four years on the commission, which is comprised of six

commissioners and the mayor, all of whom are elected in nonpartisan, at-large elections. The annual salary of each commissioner is just over \$15,000.

The only suspense was whether all of the incumbents would qualify in time by completing the requirements, which included getting 200 registered voters of the city to sign petition cards nominating them. It came down to the last few days, but they all managed to do so, clearing the path for their re-election.

According to City Clerk Diane Bruner, who serves as the city elections official, the last time an entire election was canceled

Also inside

Read about the three County Commission candidates - Larry Ahern, Barb Haselden and Kathleen Peters - who are competing for Republican votes in the Aug. 28 primary election. Page 8A

in Largo was 2004. It also means the city won't have to pay the approximately \$6,500 the election was expected to cost.

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

member, is a Largo native elected to the commission in 2011 and re-elected in 2014. He is a library assistant at the Barbara S. Ponce Public Library in Pinellas Park.

Fenger was elected to the commission in 2014. 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

See ELECTION, page 4A

DRESSING UP CENTRAL PARK DRIVE



Photo by CHRIS GEORGE

Artist Tiffany Beasi shows off a portion of the crosswalk she painted on Central Park Drive between the Largo Public Library and Central Park Performing Arts Center. The freelance artist based of Boca Raton said the concept behind the design, which is titled "Growing is Key" and meant to represent both facilities, is that music, art and reading are a natural and important part of a person's growth and development.

a CROSSWALK to REMEMBER

City hopes first painted crosswalk spurs excitement for public art

By CHRIS GEORGE
Tampa Bay Newspapers

LARGO - If you've wondered why a portion of Central Park Drive had been closed for about 10 days the past two weeks, there's a colorful explanation.

Artist Tiffany Beasi has been battling the elements as part of a public art project funded by the North Pinellas Cultural Alliance to paint the crosswalk between the Largo Public Library and Central Park Performing Arts Center.

The arts group, whose mission is to promote the arts in Pinellas County north of Ulmerton Road, which includes Clearwater, Dunedin, Palm Harbor, Safety Harbor, Oldsmar and Tarpon Springs, funded the \$2,000 project that was completed Aug. 3.

Beasi, a freelance artist based out of Boca Raton, said the concept behind the design, which is titled "Growing is Key" and meant to represent both facilities, is that music, art and reading are a natural and important part of a person's



'Growing is Key'

Artist Tiffany Beasi said the concept behind the design, which is titled "Growing is Key," is that music, art and reading are an important part of a person's growth and development. The center of the painting features a key growing from a musical instrument base as branches stretch across the whole crosswalk. On the east side, books are flying from the growing key toward the library and to the west is a music bar with performers dancing across toward the Performing Arts Center.

See ART, page 4A

CITY COMMISSION

City moves forward with rate increase

20 percent solid waste fee hike would increase bills by about \$3.50 monthly

By CHRIS GEORGE
Tampa Bay Newspapers

LARGO - City commissioners took the first step toward increasing solid waste fees Aug. 7 when they voted 4-3 to approve a 20 percent residential and commercial hike.

The increase, which would be the first since 2007 and take effect Oct. 1, would cost each resident about \$3.50 more each month and generate about \$2 million annually.

Because revenue from commercial properties has been subsidizing the residential program, city staff recommended a 25 percent residential increase. Commissioners, however, agreed with the Finance Advisory Board's 20 percent across-the-board recommendation in order to be more equitable.

"Strategically, with some of the things we've been trying to do in the city as far as a reserve fund for our budget and some other things, I think this kind of follows that path," Commissioner Jamie Robinson

See RATE HIKE, page 4A

CLASSES START AUG. 13

Schools get set for the opening bell

By SUZETTE PORTER
Tampa Bay Newspapers

LARGO - Pinellas County public schools open for classes Aug. 13, and staff will be ready, according to Superintendent Michael Grego.

Grego updated School Board members July 31 about work done over the summer and last minute preparations to make sure everything was good to go when students arrive.

During that last Board meeting before the start of school, Grego said it was a "time of great excitement," as he thanked all those who had worked to prepare and taken part in staff development over the summer.

He said the District's transportation system was ready. All buses on 450 routes have a driver. The Transportation Call

See SCHOOLS, page 3A

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Back to School

If you missed our Back to School special section, don't worry. You can visit TBNweekly.com to find the entire section, which features plenty of tips and information for the new school year.

SCHOOLS, from page 1A

Center is open. Grego encouraged parents with questions about bus routes to call 727-587-2020 now, instead of waiting until school starts. The Call Center is open Monday-Friday, 6:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Grego plans to greet bus drivers as they start their day at 4:30 a.m. Aug. 13 before heading out to visit the schools, starting with the new Pinellas Technical School in Seminole.

He asked that parents take note of bell time changes that occurred when the start time for high schools was changed to 7:20 a.m. For more information, visit psb.org/belltimes.

One of the biggest challenges staff faced over the summer was implementing safety and security measures as required by state law following the school shooting in Parkland. Grego said all building assessments had been completed and sent to the Florida Department of Education. The mental health plan also has been submitted to the state.

New schools police officers have completed training. Clint Herbic, associate superintendent for operational services, said the officers would receive their school assignments Aug. 2. They then will get an opportunity to meet with the school principal and get to know their school.

Staff will complete training by time classes begin. Age-appropriate training videos for students also are ready to be viewed soon after school starts. School Board members asked for an opportunity to review the videos prior to them being shown to students.

Grego said he had looked at draft videos and had been assured they were age appropriate.

"I want our young people to be safe, but I also want them to enjoy and be comfortable at school," he said.

In another area of safety, Grego reminded residents that roads would be more crowded when students return to classes.

"Those big yellow buses hold precious cargo," he said.

He recommended that motorists leave a few minutes early to allow for the increase in traffic. He also asked that they pay attention to the laws and the children. He asked for patience, especially in the first few days as some students navigate the bus system for the first time.

School Board member Peggy O'Shea added that motorists needed to slow down in school zones. She said law enforcement would be visible and would be giving tickets.

"Watch out for our kids," she said.

For more information on back to school, visit psb.org/Page/3039.

New name for Food Services

School Board members unanimously approved a request to change the name of the Food Services Department to Food and Nutrition. Director Lynn Geist said the request was the result of work done by a task force to update the department's mission statement and goals. She said the name better reflected the "nutrition aspect of our business."

The task force also recommended a new mission statement: Providing Energy for Education with Pride, Dedication and Nutrition. A new logo accompanies the changes, which Geist said was a "little more modern."

Work continues on a strategic plan.

School Board member Terry Krassner asked about the work done over the summer to feed students, who rely on the schools for food when classes are in session. The School District collaborates with child hunger advocates, which have helped to expand the program.

About 10,500 lunches a day were served over the summer, Geist said.

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

City Briefs

Teens invited to join Leadership Council

LARGO - The Largo City Commission is accepting applications for the Largo Youth Leadership Council, which serves to engage young people in local government.

Selected teens will learn about city government, complete various community service projects and learn leadership skills, such as making public presentations, meeting management and project leadership.

To apply to be a member of the council, applicants must be in grades 9-12, residents of the city of Largo and have a desire to learn about city government. Interested students can visit Largo.com/LYLC and complete an online application. City leaders will review qualified applicants and selected candidates will be appointed by the commission. Deadline to apply is Sept. 15.

Council meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of the month from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at City Hall, 201 Highland Ave. NE.

For more information, visit Largo.com/LYLC or contact the committee liaison at 727-587-6702 or LYLC@largo.com.

Registration 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 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 budget 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.

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.

Highland, Southwest offer after-school care

LARGO - The city of Largo's Recreation, Parks and Arts Department is now offering after-school care at Southwest and Highland recreation complexes.

During their time in after care, kids will rotate every 30-45 minutes through fun activities, such as karate, tennis, STEM, cooking, yoga, Zumba, archery, fishing, crafts and more. Children also can take advantage of homework help.

Transportation to facilities is available for the following schools: To Highland Recreation, 400 Highland Ave. NE.: Ponce, Belcher, Fuguitt, Pinellas Preparatory Academy and Pinellas Academy of Math & Science.

To Southwest Recreation, 13120 Vonn Road: Mildred Helms, Anona, Oakhurst and Plato Academy-Seminole.

Register to reserve a spot. The cost is \$75 each week and Early Learning Coalition funding is accepted.

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ELECTION, from page 1A

ected to the commission in 2014. 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 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.

Looking ahead

Tampa Bay Newspapers reached out to all four and asked what their main priorities will be and what they hope to help the city accomplish in the next four years? Here's what they had to say.

Donna Holck

My priorities are to continue to serve the citizens of the city of Largo.

I am looking forward to working with my fellow commissioners in moving Largo in a forward direction. I am excited about the development that is being done in the downtown area. It has



been talked about for years and is finally coming to fruition.

Michael Smith

My top priorities will continue to be public safety, economic development/redevelopment, improving multimodal transportation, fostering cultural and recreational opportunities throughout the city, and get our citizens involved with what's happening in Largo. The key to a healthy functioning democracy is an active, vocal, and well-informed public.

**John Carroll**

I hope to continue the solid working relationships we have with fellow Largo commissioners and officials in neighboring communities. We can accomplish great things if we listen to our citizens, communicate effectively, and seek win-win solutions. This requires fostering and maintaining good relationships with elected officials at the county, state and federal level as well. Our involvement in the Florida League of Cities (Suncoast League) has allowed us to make great strides in this area. (I am a big fan of Steven Covey's "7 Habits



of Highly Effective People"). In order for us to effectively represent our citizens, we need to regularly review our oath of office, maintain a reputation for respect and cooperation, and be staunch defenders of Home Rule. Largo is a city of 80,000 people, and we need to act like it.

We have spent a great deal of time and effort developing and implementing a solid financial plan, strategic plan, rebranding and marketing plan, enhancing our outreach efforts, improving communication (website, etc.) and creating a work environment of trust, respect and prudent risk taking. Long-range thinking and planning allow us to see beyond the next budget cycle or elected official's term. I see these efforts bearing fruit. Nothing speaks as loudly as success, and successful projects and initiatives instill a sense of community pride.

I am truly honored to serve my community, and help make Largo "The Community of Choice in Tampa Bay."

Samantha Fenger

My priorities include ensuring sustainable growth (e.g., implement Largo Environmental Action Plan strategies, focus on affordable housing); promoting economic development while maintaining quality of life (e.g., city department service levels); and providing the most efficient and effective city services.



Photos by CHRIS GEORGE

Artist Tiffany Beasi shows off the east end of the crosswalk she painted on Central Park Drive between the Largo Public Library and Central Park Performing Arts Center. The \$2,000 project was funded by the North Pinellas Cultural Alliance.

ART, from page 1A

growth and development.

She said the center of the painting features a key growing from a musical instrument base as branches stretch across the whole crosswalk. On the east side, books are flying from the growing key toward the library and to the west is a music bar with performers dancing across toward the Performing Arts Center.

"I feel strongly about public art and its importance to society's happiness," she said. "Public art is art for everyone, it can be accessible to anyone and it costs nothing for the viewer to experience the benefits of art, like a sense of wellbeing, a feeling of connection and decrease negative emotions."

Beasi, who said she just finished a 13-foot high, 500-square-foot mural in Lake Worth, had never painted a crosswalk before, so the challenge was one of the reasons she answered the Alliance's call.

And Mother Nature made sure it was a challenge.

"The weather the first couple of days had me in a panic, but it's worked out," she said.

The rain and heat forced her to paint in the early morning and late afternoons and some paint did runoff at first, so the project took about 40 hours to complete.

Since it features special paint for roadways that has a sealant inside, she hopes those 40 hours will lead to a piece that lasts for years.

"Hopefully it will last five, 10 years, but nothing lasts forever, especially in this kind of environment," she said. "Even if you do a wall, it's not going to last forever."

Sparking public art

City Commissioner Jamie Robinson hopes the project leaves more than just a mark on Central

**Leave Your Mark**

The city of Largo invites everyone to stop by the Largo Public Library through Saturday, Aug. 11, to pick up a free mini-box of chalk and draw hearts, smiley faces and messages of appreciation to the artist, Tiffany Beasi, and the North Pinellas Cultural Alliance on the sidewalk on either side of the project between the library and the Central Park Performing Arts Center.

Park Drive.

"I'm hoping people will realize that Largo is open to public art and hopefully will want to start coming to Largo," said Robinson, who sits on the Alliance's board and suggested the site.

During the past several years, city-subsidized public art programs to promote murals and artistic wraps on traffic control boxes have been discussed but derailed by funding concerns, which is why the city has worked to build a relationship with the Alliance.

"I think it's safe to say that both of those programs are sitting on a backburner," Assistant City Manager Michael Staffopoulous said. "There are commissioners that have an interest in promoting arts within the community. We've just not had the right opportunities to really get behind yet."

Robinson said he is one of those commissioners and would like to revisit the idea of wraps on traffic control boxes in downtown. He also hopes the crosswalk will spark other projects.

"We've talked about it (art programs) a lot and there's never been any type of action taken on it, so I'm hoping this crosswalk will show people it's something we want in Largo," he said.

Staffopoulous said the project also could become an impetus for more artwork occurring on private property throughout the community.

But until the commission decides otherwise, he said the city will continue to partner with groups such as the Alliance to help fund or facilitate projects.

"It's our hope that at some point it'll circle back around and come back to Largo to pick a second location for another type of artwork, whether it be painting on a crosswalk, a mural or some other type of static art and we can work with them further," he said.

Beasi said it was a great experience, so she'd be happy to return to Largo.

"Seeing people's feedback and people's faces light up and that kind of inspiration coming through and the supportiveness of the community is what makes it worth it for me," she said.

RATE HIKE,

from page 1A

said. "And it's not as big of a hit to the citizens as some of these other options that are there."

Largo resident Robert Bullard said 20 percent was still too costly.

"Some residents of Largo are on tight, limited and/or fixed incomes and could find that any tax increase results in risky choices becoming necessary — food or necessary medications or risking heat stroke because you are unable to afford A/C and various other things could be problems."

Reasons for the hike

Assistant Finance Director Rebecca Spuhler said there were several reasons for the increase, including slow revenue growth, increased costs for fuel and salaries, the establishment of a \$2 million debris removal reserve, and a change in Chinese policy regarding recyclables.

China, which takes in about half of the world's recyclable materials, instituted a new policy this year that bans the import of dozens of types of solid waste. Since 2014, the Progressive Waste Solutions plant in St. Petersburg has paid the city about \$300,000 each year for its recy-

clables, but that contract will end in February, meaning the city could have to pay its own recycling disposal fees for the first time.

Spuhler said that cost could be as much as \$500,000 annually, so the city is seeking ways to keep the recycling program viable.

Until worldwide markets settle, Commissioner Curtis Holmes, who joined commissioners John Carroll and Samantha Fenger in voting against the ordinance, said the city should consider maintaining the recycling program but pay less by taking the materials to the county's waste-to-energy facility where it would get burned.

City Manager Henry Schubert said the city would continue to explore its options, including putting its materials out for bid, but he urged patience.

"One of the awkward things is, yes from a purely economic perspective, it probably would not make any more sense to do recycling," he said. "Obviously there's a lot of support to continue recycling. I think it would be difficult to get out of the recycling business for two, three, four years until the market sorts itself out and then try to get back into it."

Robinson said recycling wasn't the only reason he voted for the increase.

According to Spuhler, debris removal associ-

ated with Hurricane Irma cost the city about \$1 million, so the city has set up a debris removal reserve in case another storm arrives.

"And that was for a very, very weak storm comparatively," Robinson said. "It was a tropical storm that was in and out in a couple of hours and we spent months cleaning up debris."

A second and final vote on the increase will take place at the Tuesday, Aug. 21, at City Hall.

In other news

Six new police officers and five new firefighters were officially sworn in and introduced to the Largo community. Largo Fire Rescue's Greg Cargill also was recognized for his promotion to lieutenant.

The new officers are Stephen Malandro, Matthew Misner, Dylan Norris, Shane Quick, Shaylin Santana and Courtenay Taylor.

Fire Rescue's newest members are firefighter/paramedics Eric Krueger and Jorge Pairo, and firefighter/EMTs Ryan Herndon, Alessandro Rivas and Spencer VanBuskirk.

• Commissioners voted 7-0 to authorize city staff to move ahead with a Florida Department of Environmental Protection loan not to exceed \$62 million to finance improvements to the wastewater reclamation facility.

Around Largo**Park to host skateboarding competition**

LARGO — Show off your skateboarding skills at Bayhead Action Park's first skateboarding competition Saturday, Aug. 18, from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Skateboarders of all ages and levels are welcome to participate at the skatepark at 375 Seminole Blvd. by preregistering at Southwest Recreation Complex or at the gate at the day of the event.

The cost is \$20 to skate and \$2 to watch.

For more information, call 727-518-3125.

Skyway Cat Club to host TICA show

LARGO — The Skyway Cat Club of Tampa Bay will host The International Cat Association All-breed Cat Show on Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 18-19, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Minnreg Hall, 6340 126th Ave. N.

Cats will compete in 12 different rings both days. Judges from all around the world and the United States will evaluate cats both days. The event will include feline education and welfare. Attendees will have an opportunity to learn about different breeds of cats and how to care for them.

The show will feature more than 25 breeds of cats. Vendors will have cat trees, cat beds, toys, unique gifts, and much more cat-related items for sale. Cats and kittens will be available for adoption from local shelters. There will be a raffle and food will be available for purchase.

Parking is free. Admission is \$6 for adults, \$3 for children and free for children age 5 and younger.

Event organizers will be collecting items for a local spay and neuter clinic. Attendees are encouraged to donate items such as blankets, bleach, paper towels, printing paper, tall kitchen trash bags, cleaning supplies, office supplies, baby wipes and cat and dog crates. Those who bring a can or dry cat food to donate will receive a \$1 discount on admission.

For information, visit www.skywaycatclub.com or call 727-289-1989.

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. Pre-registration is required.

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

Free swing dance lessons offered

LARGO — Free West Coast swing lessons are offered at 8 p.m. each Friday at the Suncoast Ballroom, 7500 Ulmertown 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.

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 offers 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.

Highland Recreation Complex

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

Class to teach kids how to become a mermaid

LARGO — Children won't have to go all the way to Weeki Wachee to learn how to become a mermaid because Highland Recreation Complex will host Mermaid 101 on Saturday, Aug. 11, from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Using swimmable mermaid tails, instructor Karen Tickner will teach kids age 6-13 mermaid swimming skills and underwater tricks. Participants will also receive an "Official Mermaid Certification."

The cost is \$59 for each child. For an additional cost, mermaids can take home their own tails.

The class is limited to eight participants, who must be able to float on their back, roll over on the surface, and can swim 25 yards unassisted and be comfortable in deep water.

Lifeguards will be on duty.

Tickets on sale for pair of family 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

LARGO, from page 4A

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.

Highland offers day care

LARGO – The city of Largo offers Little Pals Preschool, a full-time day care for children ages 3 through 5. Licensed by the Pinellas County Licensing Board, Little Pals will promote a school readiness curriculum that works on developing children's social and creative skills and prepare them for kindergarten.

Preschoolers have access to a private outdoor playground and PlayWorld, a three-story indoor playground.

Head teacher Paula Squitieri has worked in child care for more than 17 years.

Little Pals Preschool is open Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Cost is \$140 per week per child. Space is limited to 15 children and children must be potty trained.

Highland also has a VPK program available for eligible children.

Ballroom dancing classes offered

LARGO – Highland Recreation Complex is now offering ballroom dancing classes for families, who will be taught in a casual, fun environment with lively, contemporary music.

Class will be on Thursday evenings from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

The monthly cost is \$40 for members and \$80 for nonmembers.

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.

With over 65 tables, you are bound to find some great treasures. The garage sale 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.

Trick dog training courses available

LARGO – Learn to do more tricks with your dog during a course at Southwest Recreation Complex.

Owners and dogs will be introduced to all the skills necessary to be evaluated for a novice trick dog title during the outdoor classes, which will be held on Wednesdays Aug. 22-Sept. 12; Oct. 3-24; Nov. 14-Dec. 12. No class will be held Nov. 21.

The cost is \$85 for members and \$170 for nonmembers for each session.

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 registration coming up

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 1:15 p.m. For an additional cost, participants may stay for a choreography class that builds off the technique taught each week. Tap Technique is \$5 for members and ballet classes are \$7 per class for members.

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.
- Karaoke: Tuesdays, 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. Perform your favorite tunes to sing-along CDs, bring your own CDs or select from those available. The cost is \$1.50 for members.
- Mahjong games: Thursdays, 12:30 to 4 p.m. Beginners are welcome. The cost is \$1.50 for members and \$5 for nonmembers.
- 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.

Bi-monthly events

- 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.

- 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 Cafe, 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.

Alzheimer's caregiver support group

LARGO – The Largo Public Library will host an Alzheimer's caregiver support group the second Tuesday of each month.

The group provides an opportunity for caregivers affected by Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia to share their experiences and receive inspiration, guidance and support.

To register or for more information, contact Maria Pepe at 727-479-7071 or MariaPepe@EmpathHealth.org or Tracy Christner 727-536-7364 or TracyChristner@EmpathHealth.org.

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ST. PETERSBURG

29 unlicensed contractors arrested

Detectives set up undercover sting that leads to over 60 criminal charges

By SUZETTE PORTER
Tampa Bay Newspapers

ST. PETERSBURG – Pinellas County Sheriff Bob Gualtieri sent a message to unlicensed contractors during an Aug. 6 press conference in St. Petersburg.

“Go get licensed, stop doing it illegally, or you’re going to go to jail,” Gualtieri said.

At the press conference held at the Veterans of Foreign Wars, 4145 34th St. N. in St. Petersburg, Gualtieri announced the results of “Operation Flush Out,” which took place Saturday, Aug. 4, through Monday, Aug. 6.

Investigators arrested 29 suspects with over 60 criminal charges. These charges include unlicensed specialty contracting violations, workers compensation fraud, and various other criminal charges unrelated to unlicensed contracting.

Deputies assigned to the Economic Crimes Unit along with the Florida Department of Financial Services, and the State Attorney 6th Judicial Court worked collaboratively to charge and arrest unlicensed contractors during the sting operation at a business at 2705 54th Ave. N., Suite 6 in St. Petersburg.

Gualtieri said the undercover detectives responded to ads placed on websites, including Craigslist, social media sites and the Nextdoor app. He said people who showed up offered to do a variety of work including electrical, painting, dry wall, tile and framing. None of them was a licensed



Screenshot

Pinellas County Sheriff Bob Gualtieri announces the results of “Operation Flush Out” during a press conference Aug. 6 in St. Petersburg. Investigators arrested 29 suspects with over 60 criminal charges, including unlicensed specialty contracting violations, workers compensation fraud, and various other criminal charges unrelated to unlicensed contracting.

contractor and they all wanted to do the work without pulling a permit, he said.

“Nobody, not one single person who showed up at this business we set up to do work, not one of them had a license,” Gualtieri said. “Every single one was doing this under the table.”

He said the 29 arrested were charged with a variety of criminal offenses, including possession of cocaine and driving with a suspended license. Several had outstanding warrants for offenses such as DUI, failure to appear, unlicensed contracting and not having workers compensation insurance.

Gualtieri singled out one of the persons arrested, Jason White, 47, of Largo who he said was well known to investigators. Gualtieri

classified White as a “habitual offender.”

He said White “showed up during this sting” when he had four active arrest warrants. Three were out of Pinellas for failure to have workers compensation insurance, unlicensed contracting and grand theft. The fourth was out of Polk County for unlicensed contracting.

White is known to do “extremely shoddy work,” Gualtieri said.

“We’ve had a number of complaints about him,” he said.

The Sheriff’s Office began doing investigations for the Pinellas County Construction Licensing Board, which was an independent agency, about a year ago. As of July 1, that Board is now part of Pinellas County government. The Sheriff’s Office is continuing to in-

vestigate criminal activities.

Gualtieri said unlicensed contractors know what they’re doing is wrong. He said one of the men that talked to undercover detectives during the sting offered to do the work on the weekends and cover the windows to avoid any “red flags.”

“This is not something people don’t know about,” he said. “They know what the obligation is. They know what the law is. They just choose not to follow it because they don’t want to get licensed. They don’t want to get the permits.”

Gualtieri said unlicensed contractors prey on vulnerable people by taking their money without doing the work, failing to complete the job or doing shoddy work.

“This is very, very frustrating to those who are licensed,” Gualtieri said. “They’re trying to do the right thing and run their business legitimately. They’re abiding by the law, getting the licenses, getting the permits and they’re being undercut by unlicensed people. It’s not fair to legitimate business owners.”

Gualtieri described the problem as “pervasive.”

“It’s a serious problem when electrical work is not done right, plumbing is not done right, dry wall is not done right,” he said.

“Then they (the public) call us and complain,” he said.

Gualtieri said his office would continue to do sting operations until they start to see the numbers of arrests go down.

“Then we’ll know we’re having an impact,” he said. “Right now, we could do these every day and probably get the same results.”

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

Police Beat

Deputies investigate fatal crash in St. Pete

ST. PETERSBURG – A vehicle under surveillance by the Violent Crimes Task Force ran a red light in the early morning hours of Aug. 2 and crashed into a vehicle driven by a South Pasadena man who later died from his injuries.

According to deputies assigned to the Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office Major Accident Investigation Team, the crash occurred at Fifth Avenue North and 49th Street North in St. Petersburg.

Investigators say a Violent Crimes Task Force deputy was driving his marked Chevrolet Tahoe in the area of 22nd Avenue South and 23rd Street South in St. Petersburg about 4:15 a.m. when he saw a gold 2001 Chevrolet Malibu driven by John Owa, 28, of St. Petersburg.

The deputy pulled his cruiser behind the Malibu and ran the tag. The vehicle’s tag showed that Owa, who is the registered owner, had a suspended driver’s license.

The deputy attempted to conduct a traffic stop and activated all of his emergency equipment, but Owa fled westbound on 22nd Avenue South. The deputy deactivated his emergency equipment and did not follow or pursue.

The deputy then notified undercover VCTF members who were able to monitor Owa from a distance utilizing unmarked vehicles.

Owa continued westbound and entered the Child’s Park Area of St. Petersburg. He continued to drive through the residential neighborhood at slow speeds. Deputies say Owa picked up speed and at one point hit a curb in the residential neighborhood, damaging a tire on the Malibu.

Owa then made a northbound turn on 49th Street South where he accelerated to approximately 70 mph and drove through at least three intersections with red traffic lights.

Deputies from VCTF continued to monitor Owa’s Malibu from a distance with no emergency equipment activated as the vehicle approached the intersection of Fifth Avenue North and 49th Street North in St. Petersburg.

Deputies say a 2007 Ford Mustang driven by Donald Young, 56, of South Pasadena, was traveling eastbound on Fifth Avenue North. The Mustang entered the intersection of 49th Street North with a green traffic light.

A witness told deputies that Owa’s Malibu was traveling northbound in the southbound lanes of 49th Street North when Owa ran the red traffic light at the intersection and struck the passenger side of Young’s Ford Mustang.

Young was treated on scene by EMS and transported to a local hospital where he died.

Owa was transported to the hospital for non-life-threatening injuries and was then taken to the Pinellas County Jail. He was charged with vehicular homicide, driving while license suspended and/or revoked causing injury or death, aggravated fleeing and eluding police, and possession of marijuana. Bail was set at \$40,150.

Deputies: Drowning of woman not suspicious

SEMINOLE – Pinellas County Sheriff’s deputies are investigating the Aug. 1 drowning of a 66-year-old Seminole woman.

Deputies responded to a residence on Cypress Trail in Seminole about 10:28 p.m. in reference to a drowning. Paramedics told deputies that Mary Parrish Anderson had been found unresponsive in the pool. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

Deputies say Mary’s husband, Eric Anderson, 70, and brother-in-law, Mark Anderson, 68, of Chalmette, Louisiana, were asleep inside the residence. They awoke to find Mary unresponsive in the pool and called 911.

Deputies say the incident does not appear suspicious.
– Compiled by SUZETTE PORTER

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PINELLAS COUNTY COMMISSION

Three fight for Republicans' votes in county race

By SUZETTE PORTER
Tampa Bay Newspapers

Three candidates want to be the Republican's candidate in the Nov. 6 election for Pinellas County Commissioner representing District 6.

Larry Ahern, Barb Haselden and Kathleen Peters are competing for votes in the Aug. 28 primary election, which will be decided by registered Republicans living in District 6, which includes Feather Sound, Pinellas Park, Seminole, northeast St. Petersburg and the Gulf beaches from Redington Shores south. The winner will face Democrat Amy Kedron in November.

For more election information, visit votepinellas.com.

Larry Ahern is no stranger to politics. He has served in the Florida House of Representatives, representing District 66, since

2012 and he represented District 51 from 2010-2012.

Ahern's answer as to why he is running for commissioner is:

"I'm not a politician. I'm a businessman, a husband, father and grandfather, and a friend to this community. I grew up in a large family where discipline and personal responsibility were a way of life. I served in the United States Air Force and am a strong supporter of our veterans."

"As a veteran, small business owner and conservative, I will bring business-like, common-sense principles to government, ensuring that the county performs its core functions, including building



Ahern

and maintaining infrastructure, ensuring public safety, reducing traffic, and preserving our beaches and green spaces, in the most effective and efficient way possible. ... My goals are to keep taxes low, make government smaller and smarter, and protect freedoms."

"As a business owner in this community, I created jobs and balanced budgets. That business experience in creating jobs, balancing budgets and making tough decisions, is part of the reason I was successful in the Florida House of Representatives, where I voted to limit government, lower taxes and cut job-killing regulations."

"My background has shaped me into the Conservative I am today. No matter the issues we face in Pinellas, I will apply these principles: Protect the Free Market, Lower Taxes, Limit Government, Make our Community Safe, Empower Individuals and Families, and Preserve our Freedoms."

He said people in District 6 should vote for him because he has "lived in this community for 40 years, running a business, raising my children and volunteering for my church and community."

"I am blessed with a strong faith in God and the principles that made this country great - the ones that put God and family in the center of our lives," Ahern continues. "I have a loving wife, Maureen; three incredible daughters and two awesome sons-in-law, Lauren, Lindsay (Andrew), Sarah (Chase) and a beautiful granddaughter, Stella. It is because of my children and grandchildren and your children and grandchildren that I chose

public service and hope to make a difference on the Pinellas County Commission."

For more information, visit www.larryahern.com.

Barb Haselden is a political newcomer. She has been a homeowner and business owner in St. Petersburg for 30 years. She is a mother and has three grandchildren.

"When asked why she is running for the job of county commissioner, she wrote, 'I am not a career politician. I have never sought elected public office. In fact, for the past nine years, in addition to running my business, I have built a group of 1,000 conservative minded Pinellas citizens that focus our activities on keeping our local elected officials accountable to us ... the taxpayers.'"

Haselden began attending the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority meetings in December 2010 to learn about the light rail project that was "bubbling up as a possibility for our county."

"The numbers were dismal, the risk huge, the management not in place either to build or operate such a huge system in Pinellas," she said.

Haselden formed No Tax for Tracks in 2014.

"... Under my leadership and raising \$94,000, this group was instrumental in defeating the Greenlight Pinellas light rail tax increase referendum in November of 2014," she said.

She was awarded the "Good Guy Award" by Florida Watchdog, and No Tax for Tracks was awarded the "American Dreamer" National Award from the American Dream Coalition.

"There are so many wonderful things about our Pinellas, including hundreds of good people who work for our county. But the leadership, the County commissioners, has gained too much power, have no term limits, some in for 18-19 years. They are pushing regionalism, increased density and yes, still light rail in their dreams."

"This terrific experience I have lived over the last nine years as a citizen engaging with the Pinellas County government has made running for the open seat on the County Commission a natural next step for me in serving my fellow citizens doing what I love, following local issues from a citizen's perspective."

"We need a citizen advocate on the Board."

When asked why people should vote for her, she promised to deliver on five "pressing issues."

- Enact term limits for county commissioners.
- Solve the ongoing sewage crisis and protect our water quality.
- Reduce traffic congestion with enhanced road projects that complete on time.
- Be a watchdog against wasteful spending and pet projects.
- Balance our county governance with a strong conservative voice.

For more information, visit www.electbarbhaselden.com.

Kathleen Peters is an experienced elected official. She has served in the Florida House of Representatives since 2012 representing District 69. Peters also served on the South Pasadena City Commission from 2008-2012 and was selected as the city's mayor in 2009. She has lived in Pinellas County since 1985.

She says she is running for commissioner "to bring substantive impacts to Pinellas County in areas where we truly need reform and advancement."

"Local government is my passion, and I'm ready to hit the ground running to make our county a more prosperous place to live," Peters wrote in her answer. "I have the experience and ideas to bring meaningful changes to all residents while meeting the core functions of local government: public safety, infrastructure, sewers and water protection/management."

"In addition, since I led the charge, with members of the Legislature, to change the policies related to mental health and addiction at the state level, it is my goal to ensure Pinellas County has a central receiving facility and a coordinated system of care for mental illness and addiction with access through any door."

When asked why people should vote for her, she said, "I hope to continue earning the support of the residents in District 6 because I am a true public servant with a 'get-the-job-done' mentality. As a County Commissioner, my primary goal will be to create a coordinated system of care in Pinellas County for the mentally ill and those battling addiction problems; oftentimes these issues are co-occurring. I will keep Pinellas County taxes low and continue bringing businesses and jobs here. I'll protect local governments from state over-reach, and ensure that all of our waterways are clean and properly cared for."

For more information, visit kathleenpeters.com.



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Pets of the week

Gracesa

What a beautiful medium-haired Russian blue Gracesa is. This friendly sweetheart is a senior but doesn't act like one. Will someone give her a loving home? She will offer lots of love and purrs in return. Call 727-463-0694 to meet Gracesa at SOS Cat Haven in Pinellas Park. Other felines may be viewed online at saveourstraysinc.com.



Henry

Henry is a big scruffy boy who is very loving and eager to please. He is great on a leash and very playful in the yard. He likes to play with other dogs and cats but would love a home with no small children. The 4-year-old, 50-pound terrier mix is housebroken. Pet Pal Animal Shelter is at 405 22nd St. S., St. Petersburg. Call 727-328-7738 or visit Petpalanimalshelter.com.



Dealer

Dealer is a 3-month-old kitten who loves toys, people, and poker games. Dealer's choice would be a loving home with a happy family. She is spayed, vaccinated, microchipped, and her adoption fee is \$40. Pet Pal Animal Shelter is at 405 22nd St. S., St. Petersburg. Call 727-328-7738 or visit Petpalanimalshelter.com.



Binx

Binx is thought to be 3 years old and weighs 22 pounds. The wire coat mixed terrier is current on his shots, microchipped, neutered and on heartworm prevention. Binx is good with other dogs and takes to new people readily. He is good on a leash, loves walks and gets a A-minus on house training. To submit an application, visit www.viprescue.org.



Scooby

Large golden eyes and large butterscotch ears add an appealing impishness to elfin 8-year-old Scooby. Rescued from Lake County Animal Services, the 9-pound Chihuahua is understandably wary of new people, but once he warms up to you, he lowers his guard and invites you in. His perfect loving home is one with no small children. For information, email CanineEstates@canineestates.com or call 727-412-0558.



Bailey

Bailey is a sweet senior 50-pound coonhound who is looking for a comfy couch to snuggle upon. She is calm, well-mannered and loving. She is crate and leash trained, spayed and up to date on all shots. The 8-year-old gets along well with all people and other dogs. She is located at Fluff Animal Rescue in Seminole. To fill out an application, visit www.fluffanimalrescue.org/adoption-application.



Pearl

Looking for a Siamese mix? Pearl is a sweetheart that loves to be petted and thinks other cats are just fine. She has been spayed, vaccinated and is microchipped. Meet this blue-eyed beauty at SOS Cat Haven in Pinellas Park. Call 727-463-0694 for details. Visit saveourstraysinc.com to see additional felines.



Lil Anne

Gentle, sweet, and friendly best describes Lil Anne. The 1-year-old is a charming hound mix with beautiful patches of copper coloring in her fur. While at the shelter, Lil Anne loves to play and hang out with other dogs. Her adoption price is \$85. For information, call the Humane Society of Pinellas at 727-797-7722 or visit www.humanesocietyofpinellas.org.



Consider holistic care for your pet's health

Acupuncture and other alternative medicines are on the rise for not just humans, but for animals too. Veterinary practices use minimally invasive and gentle techniques of holistic medicine, which can positively impact your pet's well-being.

Alternative therapies and Western medicines are often most beneficial when used together. At SPCA Tampa Bay, we consider the therapies, medicines and treatments that would be best for each pet and offer holistic options like acupuncture to aid a pet's health.

Common holistic approaches that owners are choosing for their pets include:

- Acupuncture: Much like humans, dogs and cats can benefit from their body's natural pain relief and anti-inflammatory responses to acupuncture, which also enhances

Speaking of Pets

Mary Giron, D.V.M.



your pet's circulation. It can act as a form of pain management for hip dysplasia or chronic conditions like arthritis in older animals without the side effects of medication. Acupuncture is especially beneficial to senior pets and pets with chronic medical conditions.

- Massage: Humans get massages to improve well-being and relaxation, and massage therapy

has similar benefits for animals. Massage therapy can improve your pet's range of motion, reduce scar tissue, and aid in digestion. It can increase lymphatic circulation and improve circulation by increasing blood flow, lowering blood pressure and improving cardiovascular health. Massage can be beneficial to older pets experiencing pain with inflammation and arthritis.

- Supplements: Supplements can help maintain your pet's good health throughout each stage of their life. Pets might need vitamins or supplements as they age, during pregnancy or if they have an illness. Some of most common uses for supplements in pets are supporting joints, conditioning the skin or coat, and improving digestive health, but supplements can help manage a pet's allergies, anxiety and urinary issues. Plus, supple-

ments are good for a pet's overall health.

While many pets can benefit from alternative medicine, it's important to talk to your veterinarian about the best care for your pet. Call 727-220-1770 to learn more about the holistic care options at SPCA Tampa Bay Veterinary Center.

Mary Giron, DVM, is a veterinarian at SPCA Tampa Bay Veterinary Center in St. Petersburg, which offers comprehensive pet care services ranging from vaccines and general care to surgery and services like dermatology, oral health and acupuncture for dogs and cats. The center also offers low-cost spay and neuter services for dogs and cats. Giron has a special interest in dentistry and veterinary acupuncture.

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Around Pinellas

Pinellas earns top recycling rate in Florida

Pinellas County leads the state of Florida in recycling efforts, according to data recently released by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

The agency's 2017 annual recycling rates for individual counties and the entire state show that Pinellas has the highest county recycling rate at 82 percent. This is due to a credit for producing renewable energy at its Waste-to-Energy facility and recycling through traditional programs, such as curbside recycling.

For the last three years, the county has led the state in recycling. However, there is still room for improvement. Residents may be aware of challenges facing recycling markets and can do their part by placing quality materials in their recycling containers.

From the curb, materials are transported to a materials recovery facility. Plastic, glass, metal bottles and containers, and paper are processed at facilities, then baled to be sold and used again.

The Tampa Bay area is a "MRF shed." A MRF shed is similar to a watershed, in that water in a region flows to a water body. Recyclable

material in the Tampa Bay area flows mainly to two regional MRFs.

Therefore, what one municipality does in the MRF shed can impact the other municipalities. Placing the right materials in recycling containers increases the efficiency of the MRFs and the quality of material produced. The cleaner the material, the better for all.

Sharing MRFs means that regional municipalities are able to share the same message about how to properly recycle across Tampa Bay. To further citizen engagement, Pinellas joined a regional "Trash the Tangler" campaign to encourage residents to keep recycling tangler-free.

A tangler is an item, such as plastic bags, cords and clothes that jam recycling processing equipment, making it difficult for MRFs to recycle valuable material. Residents are encouraged to get the most out of their recyclable material by keeping tangles out of their recycling bin. Residents can place tangles in the trash or recycle at alternative locations.

To learn more about the regional campaign and proper recycling procedures, visit www.TampaBayRecycles.org and www.pinellascounty.org/recycle.

Meet the county administrator candidates

ST. PETERSBURG – Pinellas County Chairman Ken Welch and commissioners invite the public to attend a community forum to meet the county administrator candidates on Monday, Aug. 13, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Hilton Carillon Park, 950 Lake Carillon Drive, St. Petersburg.

No RSVP or registration required.

PSTA to host public hearing on service changes

ST. PETERSBURG – The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority will hold a hearing to gather public input on the following proposed service changes Tuesday, Aug. 14, 6 p.m., in the PSTA Auditorium at 3201 Scherer Drive, St. Petersburg.

Proposed changes to begin Oct. 7 include:

- Folding Route 97 and Route 98 into the current Route 52
- The new Route 52 will continue to serve the Carillon office complex on select runs to continue providing service there for current Route 97 and Route 98 Riders.



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Windows and doors are especially susceptible to wind damage and water can infiltrate your home quickly if these openings are breached. Wind coming in through compromised window and door openings can create dangerous pressure inside a home that can destabilize the walls and roof. There are steps you can take to protect your windows and doors from hurricanes. Not only can these improvements pay off during a hurricane, but they might even lower your insurance premiums.

To encourage homeowners to take steps to minimize damage, many insurers offer discounts for hurricane-mitigation improvements. For example, the annual insurance premium on an older Florida home insured for \$150,000 runs between \$3,000-\$8,000, without hurricane-mitigation improvements. With improvements, such as storm shutters or high-impact glass, the same home would cost between \$1,000-\$3,500 to insure.

Taping windows is ineffective against hurricanes, but there are a number of other ways to prepare windows for wind and rain. Some improvements cost little, and you can do the work yourself. Others require the services of a qualified contractor.

Hurricane film: Clear plastic film is popular because it's unobtrusive and can be left in place year-round. Homeowners can install peel-and-stick hurricane film for about \$25/linear foot.

The downside to film is that while it may keep glass shards from becoming dangerous missiles, it does nothing to prevent wind from blowing in the entire window frame. That's why most insurance companies don't offer discounts for hurricane film.

Plywood: An effective and inexpensive option for covering windows, figure you'll spend \$1-\$2/sq. ft. if you do the work yourself. The downside to plywood is that it must be put up at the last minute, when a hurricane is approaching. Pre-installing screw anchors around openings speeds up installation. More expensive than plywood are panels made from steel, aluminum, plastic, reinforced fabric, or composite materials.

Storm shutters: Roll-up or accordion shutters are permanently attached to a house, which makes them easier to deploy than plywood. Storm shutters can be expensive, depending on styles and materials. Expect to spend anywhere from \$10-\$50/sq. ft. for professional installation. Aluminum shutters are common, but also look for shutters made of reinforced fabric or aluminum-wrapped foam.

High-impact glass: Expect to pay as much as \$50/sq. ft. for single-glazed impact glass and \$70/sq. ft. for double-glazed glass. High-impact windows look like standard windows, so they don't affect a home's appearance. As a bonus, they're always in place. Other than cost, the downside is while the glass is impact resistant, water is still likely to penetrate the interior in a hurricane. High-impact glass windows usually qualify for discounts on homeowners insurance policies.

Exterior Doors: Having three hinges on outside doors, rather than two, adds strength. You might want to replace existing hinge screws with longer ones to anchor the door to the wall structure. Be sure the door threshold is tightly screwed into the house, not just the door frame. Adding a one-inch deadbolt to a door also makes it more wind resistant.

The ability to quickly recover following a hurricane requires a focus on preparedness, advance planning, and knowing what to do in the event of a hurricane. Planning and preparing can make a big difference in safety and resiliency in the wake of a hurricane.

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LETTERS

'Guys' should be neutered

Editor:

Is anybody else as irritated as I am when it seems like the entire country addresses mixed-gender groups as "Guys?" Full disclosure, I'm not a subscriber to political correctness, so this essay could offend political sensibilities.

The global term to describe a group of people is thrown around town like it's going out of fashion. "Hey guys," "so guys," "um, guys." Guys, guys and more guys! In almost every context it's considered a gender-neutral term.

As I've been working on eliminating the phrase from my vocabulary I've been amazed by how many people use it; even highly educated professionals who should know better. On a recent Alaskan cruise, an historian lecturer used "you guys" so often I had to seek him out afterwards and let him know how I felt. His answer, "Well, everyone does it."

Restaurant waiters might be the most consistent offenders, but even media figures like Dr. Phil and Oprah address their guests as "you guys."

Around five years ago, it struck me that the term "guys" had become commonplace. I thought, "women aren't guys! How has it come to be that girls and women are constantly called 'guys?'" From that moment on, I began to feel uncomfortable when mixed gender groups were all referred to as "guys." Furthermore, I began to notice that women were calling each other "guys" as well. Suddenly, things seemed sort of crazy. We're not calling mixed groups of men and women "gals" and men don't call each other "gals," so why has the planet become populated with "you guys?"

Are we perpetuating gender bias if we use it? Is it sexist? Is it professional? I believe using the word "guys" to describe a mixed-gender group of individuals is creeping sexism.

The prevailing feeling seems to be, "It's inaccurate, but it's not actually hurting anyone." That very fact – that it's gendered – is true whether or not we're thinking about reinforcing male privilege or alienating women or promoting sexism when we say it.

But the words we use also can reinforce current realities when they are sexist, racist or heterosexist. Words are tools of thought. Once you use the term, you have "assumed" people are "ok" with it. It is then for them to "defend" themselves from "rudeness."

Perhaps the time has come for a consensus on an acceptable general alternative. What one- or two-syllable word could be substituted after "hi" without becoming too formal?

The English language doesn't offer a simple, standard, general-neutral alternative, which is probably part of the reason "guys" has survived so long.

Here are some alternatives that I think would work just fine and not be offensive:

Friends, Folks, Everyone, Colleagues, Gang, Team, Y'all, Guys and Gals, You, and Mates.

This from a member of the ivory tower of academia: "The process is very normal in language, and is called bleaching. As a word takes on a new use, its original meaning is bleached out. So, the guys in the pronoun 'you guys' doesn't actually mean guys." Huh?

You can think of the push to drop "guys" as political correctness run amok, or you can think of it as making a tiny change that doesn't cost you anything and will keep you from being a jerk to half the population – and help you make the world just a tiny bit more fair. Do we want a truly inclusive language or one that just pretends? English is supposed to be an articulate language.

That doesn't mean it will be quick or easy, but I feel we need to keep working on it. They say awareness is the first step to changing a bad habit. In the past, I never even noticed I said it, let alone others. Now I notice it every time and I wince when it comes out of my mouth. So, I'm going on a one-woman crusade and will begin addressing mixed-gender groups thus: "Hi Gals!"

As a pain-in-the-ass activist, I don't like language usage that relies on and reinforces the idea that men are the default people. And as someone who cares a bit about the English language, I dislike the fact that it's simply inaccurate. And, I'm fully aware this qualifies me as an old fart!

Lil Cromer
Belleair

Handicap parking needs enforcement

Editor:

Do you know anyone who has a physical disability and is handicapped? Well, I do – my sister ... she has MS and has to walk with a cane and a walker because she has lost almost all mobility in one of her legs. This has put a lot of stress on her other leg and spinal column, resulting in even more pain and suffering. In spite of all this, she still wants to go out and enjoy a good meal every once in a while or go to the beach, just as long as she does not have to walk too far because she gets tired very easily. So, being able to park in a handicap parking space is a must for her.

However, far too many people today are abusing this privilege afforded only to the handicapped. Not too long ago, I was at the beach and witnessed this very abuse by someone who exhibited no problem either walking or running. How in the world did we ever get to this point? Have the requirements for obtaining a handicap parking permit become so lax that anyone with a stomach ache can get one? Yet, some people have the gall and the arrogance to park in these handicap parking spaces even if they don't have any problems or a permit. Their selfishness and arrogance knows no limits to their entitlement. Such is the case of the man who was recently shot over this very same dilemma at the Circle A Food Store on 1201 Sunset Point Road in Clearwater, according to media reports.

This has been long in coming; the state and local governments should review and examine all current and future applications for handicap permits to ensure that the people who really need it are the ones who get them and then the police should enforce them. Folks, anyone who is able to walk without a cane, a walker or a wheelchair is not handicapped; this should be the red line. Applying for these permits today has become akin to applying for recreational marijuana!

M.R. Maribona
Clearwater

Why play a game of Russian roulette?

Editor:

In the Aug. 2, edition of the Seminole Beacon a letter writer from Pinellas Park had his letter published in the editorial section of the newspaper that essentially asked the question – Any ideas as to how we (loyal cult trumpets) can protest or end this "witch hunt" (Trump investigation)?

My first question for this gentleman is why? Do you not understand sir that the Mueller investigation has national security implications? What American patriot in his right mind would not want to find out the truth about Trump's ties to Russia, Putin and their apparent conspiracy to undermine the 2016 presidential election, regardless of how long it takes?

My second question is: Are you afraid of the answer; were you duped through social media to vote for a man that appears to be compromised and or corrupt to the core?

By his actions and tweets over the past three years he apparently has become a lying corrupt politician with considerable ties to Russia/Putin.

Do you not understand that if the allegations are true, that he is effectively the Manchurian Candidate, that our very democracy and national sovereignty may be at risk? Why play this game of Russian roulette? Why not find out the truth and if the allegations are not true, clear his name once and for all?

Or sir, were you one of the frenzied cultists that attended his rally in Tampa last week? Were you one of the rude and immature people that was shouting obscenities at the media and displaying your middle finger to the national TV cameras? Were you one of the people that embarrassed us as a community? If so, then my last question is: "Have you no decency sir" or are you just a bigot?

Chuck Wolowitz
Seminole

All about nuclear warfare and sex

Humankind is faced with many dangers. Two of them are nuclear warfare and sex. The nuclear threat is pretty much in the hands of a few powerful persons living in several capital cities around the world. In contrast, sex is situated in the bodies and minds of almost everyone on earth.

Why should sex be regarded as a danger? In most cases it need not be. As you may already have heard, sexual urges and practices can lead to a great number of nice things such as romance, marriages, babies, blockbuster movies, best-selling novels and cozy settlements like The Villages. You can make your own list of sexual benefits, I'm sure.

But sex can also blow up in our faces. With one thoughtless grope, sex can send a career, fame, personal empires, treasured memories and 30-year marriages flying into the waiting dumpsters that fate has provided for those who violate the tricky rules – spoken and unspoken – of acceptable sexual behavior.

A variety of sexual urges appear in the minds of most people from an early age and will last until the funeral director says, "Okay, Charlie, the mourners have all gone to the reception. Let's close the lid and get this guy into the limousine before it starts to rain." God, fate or nature (take your pick) has given us the sexual stimulus, and it's up to you and me to choose our responses.

The responses (real or alleged) of several well-known and respected men have caught our attention in recent months. They have been accused by (mostly) women of making unwanted sexual advances. The most recent



Driver's Seat
Bob Driver

incident (as I write this on July 31) is the head of CBS, Les Moonves. I took special notice of this because Moonves graduated from Bucknell University 15 years after I did.

Unlike many colleges, Bucknell can point to only a few graduates who went on to become celebrities or major successes. They include baseball pitcher Christy Mathewson, author Philip Roth and philanthropist Ken Langone, who invested wisely in a hardware outlet that later became Home Depot.

That's enough alumni news. What I need now is how to say something wise, enduring or far-reaching about sex. My problem is that other persons – far brainier than I – have already done that. So I'll settle for listing a couple of thoughts that entered my mind when I read the headlines about the alleged sexual offenses of Bill Cosby, Charlie Rose, Harvey Weinstein and other notables.

(1) How do we know that the charges against these guys are real? Answer: we often don't. But in so many cases the evidence and testimonies of the accusers weigh so strongly against the defendants that the likelihood of false charges is reduced to zip.

(2) Will the #MeToo movement grow and remain strong? I hope so. This organization

has become a worldwide effort to combat sexual harassment in all its forms. Even with its many thousands of supporters, #MeToo must face the fact that the sex cards will continue to be stacked against women as the years go by.

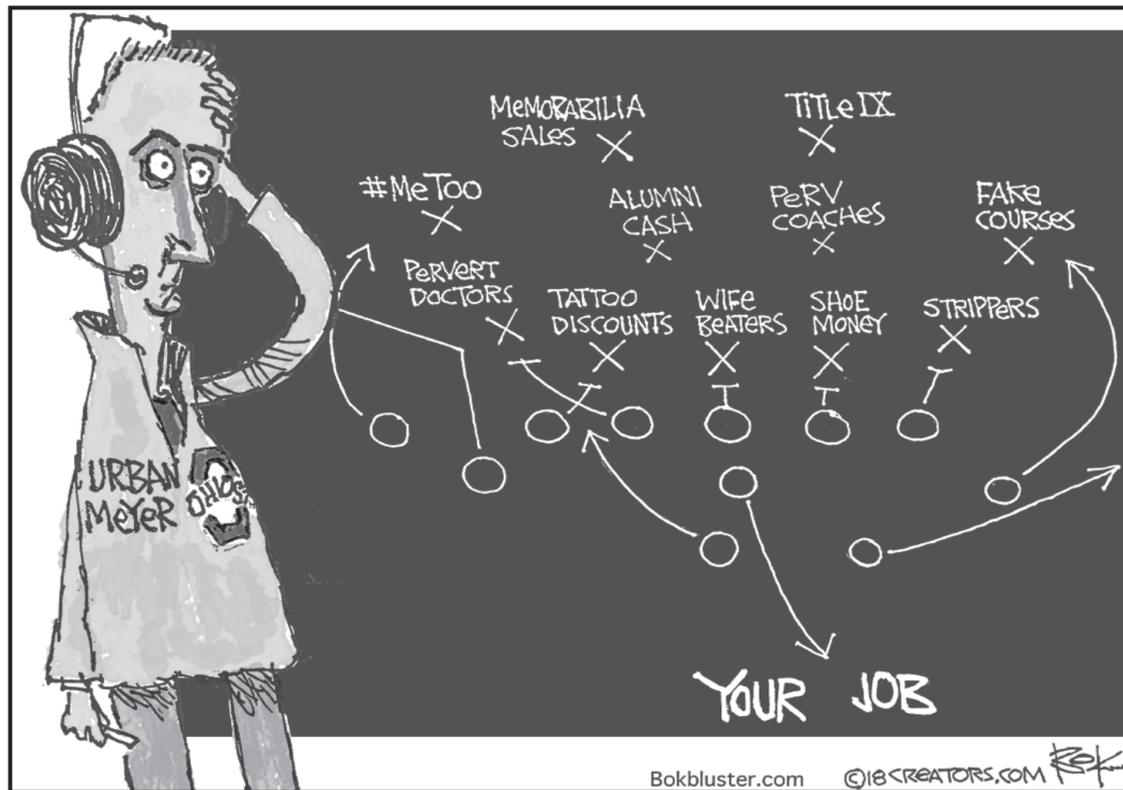
But the odds will be changing. I hope the day will come when even the most casual sexual offender will be greeted with the same public hostility that occurs today when someone utters the "N" word in a conversation.

A quote from the writings of feminist Gloria Steinem: "I think one of the great innovations of sexual harassment law was that it did not use the word 'consent.' It used the word 'welcome.'"

And this thought from Gretchen Carlson: "We're not going to fix the sexual harassment epidemic unless we can acknowledge that this is not a women's issue, this is a man's issue. The burden should not be on the shoulders of women only to solve this, because we can't do it alone and it's not fair. We're seeing now the tsunami of all these women coming forward, which is such a blessing. But the tipping point will be when men in the workplace decide to be our allies."

It occurs to me that a common form of gender harassment is when a woman is paid less than a man for doing the same work he does. Couldn't this be referred to as financial rape?

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



Obstruction or Trump being Trump?

WASHINGTON – When President Donald Trump sat down for an interview with NBC's Lester Holt on May 11, 2017, the president did what he often does when he talks on camera – he did not hold back his grievances and he contradicted previous White House staff pronouncements.

When Trump acts out in this way, his supporters usually shrug and say that it's just Trump being Trump, and maybe he knows what he's doing because he did, after all, win the White House.

In this interview, however, the stakes could not have been higher. It was two days after Trump had fired FBI Director James Comey, ostensibly based on the recommendations of Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein.

In a letter urging the firing, Rosenstein condemned Comey's public pronouncements on the FBI probe into former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server. Rosenstein scolded Comey for flouting a "longstanding principle" at the FBI: "we do not hold press conferences to release derogatory information about the subject of a declined criminal investigation."

Comey held two such press conferences – one on July 5, 2016, the other within a week of the election.

The White House distributed the Sessions and Rosenstein letters as the basis for Trump's decision to fire Comey.

Two days later, in the Holt interview, Trump made a mockery of the administration's official line.

"Regardless of recommendation, I was going to fire Comey," Trump confided to Holt. "When I decided to just do it, I said to myself, you know, this Russia thing with Trump and Russia is a made up story, it's an excuse by the Democrats for having lost an election they should have won."

To be sure, few Washingtonians had bought



Debra Saunders

the official White House line.

During the 2016 election, Trump seemed pleased with Comey's behavior. Then there was a matter of the timing. If Comey's Clinton press conferences were the catalyst for Trump's decision, why didn't the president fire Comey shortly after he took office? Also, the cold manner in which Comey was canned – Trump sent a letter to Comey's office while the FBI chief was in Los Angeles – suggested there was some anger behind the move.

The Holt interview was a disaster as it revealed a chief executive who had used top members of his team to peddle a narrative he knew to be false – with little concern for their reputations.

Trump effectively corroborated what his critics suspected – that the Rosenstein memo was a beard – just because he felt like it. It was a betrayal breathtaking in its lack of utility.

Last month, The New York Times ran a story that suggested Rosenstein felt poorly used in the Comey firing – which may have been a factor in his decision to designate former FBI Director Robert Mueller as special counsel days later. A Department of Justice spokeswoman denied the link.

In his book, "The Briefing: Politics, the Press and the President," former White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer wrote about the difficulty he had lining up Republicans who would defend the Comey firing the night it happened.

"We got a universal, 100 percent 'no' from Republican Senators," Spicer wrote, a response

for which he credited the White House's failure to notify and consult GOP members.

Trump has used Twitter to ask valid questions about the Russian probe. Why couldn't Mueller have found a Trump donor to join the many Clinton donors in his stable of lawyers? The Democratic National Committee and Clinton bankrolled the unverified "dossier" cited by prosecutors – is that collusion?

Alas, Trump being Trump means not leaving well enough alone. Wednesday the president took to Twitter to urge Sessions, who recused himself from the Russian probe, to "stop this Riggged Witch Hunt right now." He brought himself back to the dark days of May 2017 when Washington waited to see if he would try to impede a federal investigation.

While D.C. Democrats slammed the Twitter rant as another attempt to obstruct justice, many in the usual chorus of cable news Trump boosters were eerily silent.

"The last thing that the Republicans need is to look like they are covering up for the president," explained Mark Corallo who briefly worked as a spokesman for Trump's Russia legal team.

And it doesn't help that Trump leaned on Sessions on the heels of the July joint press conference with Russian President Vladimir Putin at which Trump repeated Putin's claim that Russia did not meddle in the 2016 election. "He just said it's not Russia," Trump said. "I will say this, I don't see any reason why it would be."

Is this again Trump just being Trump? Because it's getting old. If there was no collusion between the Trump campaign and Russian actors, why doesn't Trump act like it?

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Here are some more guidelines for letters:

- Letters are printed on a first-come, first-served basis. They may be edited to correct grammar, spelling and factual errors. They also may be edited for clarity.
- Please keep letters to editor to 700 words. Longer letters may be cut due to space limitations.

Business Briefcase

Pinellas Community Foundation moving offices in Clearwater

CLEARWATER – Pinellas Community Foundation recently moved to a new office space located in Bayside Center at 17755 U.S. 19 N., Suite 150, Clearwater. PCF moved from its previous location, 5200 East Bay Drive in Clearwater, in the Regions Bank building on July 6. PCF will celebrate its 50th year in 2019 and is nearing \$100 million in charitable assets.

"The 3,000-square-foot office, located in the middle of Pinellas County, will enable us to better support our growing operations and the community," said PCF CEO Duggan Cooley, noting the previous space was 800 square feet. "The expanded accommodations for donors, a large meeting space plus a work space for our itinerant partners will increase connectivity with our community."

Pinellas Community Foundation seeks effective solutions for Pinellas County's most challenging social, environmental and educational issues, while supporting the advancement of arts and culture. PCF is the only charitable foundation of its kind solely dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all Pinellas County residents. In 2017, more than 100 charitable organizations received donor-funded grants to support their community programs. It is thanks to the generosity of donors that this work is possible. For more information about PCF, contact Duggan Cooley, CFRE dcooley@pinellascf.org or visit www.pinellascf.org

Institute recognizes local attorney

LARGO – The American Institute of Family Law Attorneys recently recognized the performance of Catherine Day Hult, a family law attorney, as 2018 10

Best Family Law Attorney for Client Satisfaction.

The American Institute of Family Law Attorneys is a third-party attorney rating organization that publishes an annual list of the Top 10 Family Law Attorneys in each state. Attorneys who are selected to the 10 Best list must pass AIOFLA's rigorous selection process, which is based on client and/or peer nominations, thorough research, and AIOFLA's independent evaluation. AIOFLA's annual list was created to be used as a resource for clients during the attorney selection process.

Hooters volunteers partner with Habitat for Humanity

Dreams came true for three families that received Habitat for Humanity homes over the past three years from Hooters Management Corp.

The most recent family to receive a home is the Hicks family. Employees from 12 Tampa Bay area Hooters restaurants volunteered more than 500 hours to help build a new home for Sara Hicks and her family.

"For the past three years, Habitat Pinellas has enjoyed a rewarding relationship with Hooters Management Corp.," said Mike Sutton, CEO of Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas County. "Without collaborations with companies like Hooters, stability, self-reliance, and the dream of homeownership for families like the Hicks' would not be possible."

The Hicks family received their keys during a June 7 dedication ceremony.

Hooters Management has also sponsored homes for the Hooten family and the Miller family. Since 2016, employees have donated over 1,000 hours of their time to build homes in Pinellas County.

"We are so thankful to have the opportunity to change lives of families in our local community and assist them with a place to call home," said Denise Williams, chief marketing officer of Hooters Management. Hooters Management has presented Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas County over \$216,000 for the three homes. Most recent, Hooters Management Corp. presented a donation of \$82,000.

Since 1985, Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas County has constructed 480 homes for struggling families in Pinellas County, using locally raised funds. Volunteers and the future homeowners construct the homes, which are sold at no profit and financed with a zero-interest loan.

Habitat Pinellas homeowner candidates earn 30 to 75 percent of area median income. For Pinellas County, that translates to as little as \$27,000 a year for a family of four. Candidates must also demonstrate need for adequate shelter; ability to pay back a zero-interest loan and willingness to partner with Habitat Pinellas to invest 350 to 450 sweat equity hours. Mortgage monies are used to build even more homes, making each donation to Habitat a perpetual legacy to the community. Habitat believes that home ownership contributes to family stability, leading in turn to community stability.

Seminars on reverse mortgages set

Public seminars on reverse mortgages will present the facts about the FHA Reverse Mortgage in the coming weeks.

Informational seminars for senior homeowners will take place Tuesday, Aug. 14, 2 p.m., at Panera Bread, Bardmoor Promenade, 10801 Starkey Road, Largo; Wednesday, Aug. 15, 1 p.m., at Safety Harbor

Public Library, 101 Second St. N., Safety Harbor; and Thursday, Aug. 16, 1 p.m., at Seminole Community Library, 9200 113th St. N., Seminole.

The presentations will provide information on the basics, how they work, the benefits and the downsides. Also included is a review of the types available, examples of critical documents and what they mean. Program protections, the government's role, homeowners ongoing obligations, effects on Medicaid, SS and estates will also be addressed.

There is limited seating for the Aug. 14 seminar at Panera Bread. To reserve a seat, call 727-831-3416.

Barnes & Noble Clearwater celebrates educators

CLEARWATER – To celebrate educators just in time for back-to-school, Barnes & Noble Clearwater will kick off the school year with Educator Appreciation Days every Saturday and Sunday in August.

On Saturdays and Sundays in August, Barnes & Noble Clearwater is featuring special discounts to celebrate pre-K-12 public, private and homeschool teachers and administrators, including 25 percent off most merchandise such as books, toys and games; and limited-time giveaways from Sterling Publishing, while supplies last. The offer will also be valid online at BN.com Saturday, Aug. 25, and Sunday, Aug. 26.

August's Educator Appreciation Days special discount offerings are:

- 25 percent off list price on most books, gifts, music, DVDs, and toys and games for classroom purchase
- 10 percent off all Café consumables purchases
- 10 percent off select products to encourage tech-based fun.

Health & Fitness News

Largo Medical Center names new chief medical officer

LARGO – Dr. Christos Politis was recently named the new chief medical officer at Largo Medical Center.

Politis comes to Largo Medical Center from Tampa Community and Memorial Hospitals in Tampa, where he served as CMO of both facilities.

"While achieving incredible growth in the operating rooms at our sister hospitals as well as Dr. Politis' strength in the fight against severe infections, we are proud to have such an experienced, well-rounded physician working with us to improve the quality of life for all our patients," said Anthony Degina, CEO at Largo Medical Center.

After attending the University of South Florida in Tampa for medical school, Politis went on to specialize and become a board certified urologist.

"I feel privileged to be working here in the Tampa Bay area, doing what I love most, in a place I enjoy calling home," said Politis. "While in private practice I worked in south Pinellas County with other HCA hospitals and am thrilled to now be working with the team of experts at Largo Medical Center."

Politis will begin his new role at Largo Medical Center on Monday, Aug. 13.

Session on how to quit tobacco set

The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County is encouraging those who want to quit tobacco for good to register for the Tobacco Free Florida Group Quit Session set for Tuesday, Aug. 28, 1 to 3 p.m., at DOH-Pinellas in Mid-County, 8751 Ulmerton Road, Largo.

The face-to-face session will take place in a group setting that is open to the public and presented by the Gulfcoast North Area Health Education Center at no cost.

In addition to the group session, tobacco users who want to quit also can receive nicotine replacement patches, gum and lozenges at no cost (while supplies last and if medically appropriate). The session provides information on how to prepare a plan to quit, how to deal with cravings and what to expect during the process. The program covers all forms of tobacco.

During August, numerous classes are held at other locations in Pinellas County, too. Registration is required. For information about other sessions or to register, call 813-929-1000 or email info@gnahec.org. Visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/quityourway for other resources.

For more information about GNAHEC, go to www.ahectobacco.com.

For more information about DOH-Pinellas, go to www.PinellasHealth.com or follow us on Twitter at @HealthyPinellas.

Free amplified phones offered

Florida Telecommunications Relay is offering an innovative new amplified telephone to Pinellas County residents with hearing loss.

State law requires all Florida landline phone companies to distribute free specialized phones to residents with hearing loss. In Pinellas County, these phones are available at the Family Center on Deafness, in Largo, and other locations throughout Pinellas County.

The newest amplified phone is an easy-to-use cordless device with caller identification that boosts incoming sounds up to 50 decibels. The phone is designed to meet varying degrees of hearing loss, from moderate to severe. The phone also features large, easy to read buttons that help people with vision loss ensure they can operate the phone easily. The Arthritis Foundation praises this cordless phone for its ease of

use, as the ergonomic design makes it easy to operate.

For a new client to obtain the phone, they must be permanent Florida residents who have a hearing loss. Call 727-399-9983 and press 1 to make an appointment or for more information.

Nutritional analysis sessions offered

SEMINOLE – Brandi Stewart, of Stewart Analysis, will be the special guest Friday, Aug. 31, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., at Sunshine Health Foods, 6989 Seminole Blvd., Seminole.

Stewart will conduct Nutritional Blood Cell Analysis sessions. Nutritional analysis reveals deficiencies such as digestive issues, toxins, yeast overgrowth, parasites and much more.

"Our goal with each client is to help them understand the whole picture of holistic health," said Stewart in a press release. "We educate and provide support to help you make the right choices."

Session costs vary depending on length and type. Reservations are required. To make a reservation or for more information, visit Sunshine Health Foods or call 727-397-5333.

Cardiologist hosts Walk with a Doc

SEMINOLE – Walk with a Doc will take place Saturday, Sept. 8, 3 p.m., beginning at Shelter 5 in Walsingham Park, 12615 102nd Ave., Seminole.

Dr. John Norris, a local cardiologist, will lead the session. This is a monthly free event to promote walking as a healthy lifestyle. Attendees may walk at their own pace.

For information, call 727-587-6999.

Physician feted for homeless care

In recognition of his dedicated health service to the homeless, Dr. Raju Mungara was named the winner of the Florida Association of Community Health Centers' Jessie Trice Outstanding Clinician Award.

The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County physician provides services at the Bayside Health Clinic and on the Pinellas County Mobile Medical Unit, a vehicle that takes health services to locations accessible to homeless people. Mungara has been serving this population since 2006.

The award is named after Jessie Collins Trice, the first African-American graduate of the University of Miami's School of Nursing and a champion for health care for the underserved. The association represents more than 500 health centers that serve 1.4 million Floridians who are uninsured, covered by Medicaid or have very low incomes.

The MMU and the freestanding Bayside Medical Clinic at 14808 49th St. N., Clearwater, serve the homeless with funding from the Pinellas Board of County Commissioners. Both are staffed by DOH-Pinellas employees, including Dr. Mungara.

Harvest & Bluegrass Fest set

DUNEDIN – The 11th annual HOME Harvest & Bluegrass Fest will take place Saturday, Nov. 3, 7 to 10 p.m., at the Conny Center, 750 San Salvador, Dunedin.

Cost is \$35 a person or \$325 for a table. RSVP is required by Oct. 25. For tickets and information, call 727-786-7951. Proceeds will benefit the House of Mercy and Encouragement.

The event will feature music performed by the Ranglegrass Band as well as food, drinks, raffles and a silent auction.

The House of Mercy & Encouragement Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to faithfully providing mental health and educational services to children and their families that encourage caring, compassion, and a sense of well-being in a welcoming and comfortable environment.

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Politis

Saved from the sand



Photo courtesy of CITY OF MADEIRA BEACH

Marine biology graduate student Andie Fisher of Sand to Sea holds a turtle hatchling rescued Aug. 2 during "excavation" of a sea turtle nest on Madeira Beach. At a depth of about 2 feet, Fisher found four hatchlings that had been unable to leave the nest out of which their siblings had crawled out of three nights earlier. Karen Pankaew, of Blue Earth Research Group, which co-sponsored the rescue, told onlookers it was not unusual to find hatchlings that failed to get out of the nest. Taking notes is Janet Melia, also a volunteer with Sand to Sea. Following the excavation, Madeira Beach city officials adopted a nearby nest due to hatch soon. The rescued hatchlings were released that evening.

Anglers should start, finish early

Snook and trout have been at the top of the list this past week. Early starts have been the key for fooling the better snook, while the trout seem willing to bite for a few hours after sunup.

The pre-dawn snook bite has been solid lately. Targeting areas that have fresh water creeks and drain pipes will no doubt put you around some snook right now.

Live pilchards can be found holding on bridge shadow lines at night and have been the ticket for firing up the snook. The tide hasn't been as critical as the time of day. Getting to that first spot before the sun comes up will pay big dividends as the snook bite slows considerably by 8 a.m.

Trout fishing has been very good throughout the Intracoastal Waterway. Target the outside edges of grass flats on the later portion of



Fish Tales
Capt. Tyson Wallerstein

the outgoing tide and then again on the first part of the incoming tide. Fish with live pilchards either free lined or suspended below a rattle float to get the fishes attention. The trout also will readily take a variety of artificial lure, including shad tail jigs or 2- or 3-inch twitch baits both in the olive back pearl belly colors.

Keep an eye open for tripletail. This past week we were able to find and sight cast several smaller tripletail holding around crab trap floats. Once again small live pilchards under a float were eaten every time.

Offshore red grouper fishing has been good in 100- to 130-foot of water. Target bottom and drift fish when at all possible. Live pinfish work great but frozen sardines and frozen squid also will work.

Shark fishing has been very good lately along the beaches. Schools of fry bait are attracting ladyfish and mackerel and in turn plenty of 3- to 4-foot blacktip sharks. Live pinfish under a small balloon work great for bait, and deploying a frozen chum block will help to bring the sharks in.

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

Outdoors News

Park to host birds of prey show

LARGO - The Look Alive Bird Show will be presented Sunday, Aug. 12, from 1 to 2 p.m., at the Narrows Environmental Education Center, 11901 146th St. N.

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.

Brooker to host bird hike

TARPON SPRINGS - The Birds of Brooker hike will be offered Saturday, Aug. 11, 8 to 10 a.m., at Brooker Creek Preserve, 3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs.

Birds seen and heard will be identified while attendees meander along a 1-mile trail gathering information. All ages are welcome. Children age 15 and younger must be accompanied by an adult. Children age 5 and younger may find this hike challenging.

Volunteer hike guides will meet participants outside the exhibit hall 10 minutes before the scheduled start time. Attendees should wear sturdy closed-toe shoes, sneakers or boots. Insect repellent is strongly recommended. Hikers also should bring plenty of drinking water and a snack. A hat, sunglasses and sunscreen are also recommended.

Registration is required. Call 727-453-6800 or visit www.brookercreekpreserve.eventbrite.com.

Clearwater Community Gardens to host annual fundraising brunch

CLEARWATER - Clearwater Community Gardens

will host its fourth annual summer brunch fundraiser Sunday, Aug. 19, 11 a.m., in the Crystal Ballroom at the historic Fort Harrison, 210 S. Fort Harrison Ave., Clearwater.

Tickets for the brunch are \$20, with all funds collected going to the community garden. To purchase tickets, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/44646895065.

The incoming president of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs will be the keynote speaker.

"We will be celebrating our success over the past three years while raising funds for a new seedling greenhouse and children's gardening area," said Howard Warshauer, the founder and president of Clearwater Community Gardens Inc., a local 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. "We do this while we enjoy the excellent food from the Fort Harrison staff and chefs, the camaraderie of our supporters, wonderful entertainment and much more."

This year's theme is "Gardening - Good for the Soul." Organizers hope to inform guests how important gardening is to long term health, daily lives and mental stability, said Warshauer.

Included in the event will be a raffle of many garden and gardening items, gift cards to some of downtown Clearwater's shops, restaurants, and theaters. All proceeds will benefit the Gateway Community Garden. Amanda Thompson, Clearwater's new CRA director, will inform guests about all the changes taking place in downtown Clearwater.

In its first three full years of operation, the community garden has expanded to 50 plots and has added a rainwater system, a shelter, a 600-square-foot pollinator garden, two bee colonies and many fruit and flowering trees. They regularly host potluck dinners and educational programs for the community.

School Notebook

Supplies needed for foster children and teens in crisis

With the start of each school year, thousands of east and central Florida foster children and teens in crisis attend classes amongst their peers. Often, they are not prepared, lacking school supplies and proper school uniforms.

To combat the challenges these youth face, Eckerd Connects is creating an opportunity for the community to support these children through August.

The numbers are daunting. According to the Casey Family Foundation, 75 percent of children in foster care are working below grade level, and more than 50-percent will never graduate from high school or obtain a GED.

Young people who struggle with homelessness and the juvenile justice system are also behind due to trauma, displacement, and lack of resources. The funds raised in this campaign will go toward supporting these children with the materials they need to ensure a successful school experience.

Eckerd Connects will use this supply drive to support six local programs in need of support:

- Project Bridge, a central and south Florida program supporting teens as they transition from the juvenile justice system;
- Raising Hope, a Tampa Bay program providing hygiene items to those in foster care.
- E-Nini-Hassee, an all-girls outdoor therapeutic camp in Floral City, Florida.
- Challenge Youth Academy, an all-boys juvenile justice center in Hernando County.
- Foster children in Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas counties.

To support the "Back 2 School" campaign, residents can give supplies at any drop-off center (locations on Eckerd.org/Back2School) or donate on Eckerd.org. A gift of \$25 supports a child with either one school uniform or one backpack full of supplies.

Tax Collector collecting supplies

Throughout the month of August, all Pinellas County Tax Collector locations are official school supply donation sites. All school supplies will be accepted, including binders, notebook paper, pencils, highlighters, and more.

Items will be provided to the Pinellas Education Foundation to assist local students who are homeless or in financial need. According to the Foundation, 13 percent of families in Pinellas County are at poverty level and more than 3,000 children in our community are homeless.

In addition, the office is promoting the red apple Support Education license plate in honor of back to school month. The plate's \$20 annual fee benefits the Pinellas Education Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to improving public school education in the county.

For more information about the Pinellas Education Foundation, visit PinellasEducation.org.

SPC forum to explore myths of gun violence

SEMINOLE - Bursting gun violence myths is the focus of a forum sponsored by the Institute for Strategic Policy Solutions at St. Petersburg College. The forum, titled "Guns in America: Myth-Busting in Search of Solutions," will be on Thursday, Aug. 30, 6-8:15 p.m., at the Seminole campus of SPC, 9200 113th St. N.

Advance registration to the dinner event is required. Media co-sponsors are the Tampa Bay Times and WEDU Television.

The lead speaker will be Dr. John S. "Jack" Rozel, associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh and co-author of a study of gun violence titled "The Link Between Mental Illness and Firearm Violence: Implications for Social Policy and Clinical Practice."

Joining Rozel in addressing other aspects of the gun violence equation will be Dr. Gary Mormino, professor emeritus of history at USF St. Petersburg; Pinellas County Sheriff Bob Gualtieri; and David T. Kronenfeld, Tampa attorney. The moderator will be David Klement, executive director of the Institute for Strategic Policy Solutions.

Admission to the dinner and program is \$25, or \$20 for students and educators. To register, go to solutions.spcollege.edu, or phone 727-394-6942.

Students invited to attend Pinellas YAC open house

CLEARWATER - There is no minimum age for being an engaged citizen, and Pinellas County's Youth Advisory Committee is looking for young people interested in being community leaders or future public servants.

YAC is hosting an Open House for students in grades nine through 12 Wednesday, Aug. 22, 3 p.m., in the fifth floor Commissioners' Conference Room, 315 Court St., Clearwater. The program will provide information about YAC and ways teens can participate in local government. Refreshments will also be provided.

Students interested in attending should RSVP to yac@pinellascounty.org or call 727-582-2656. Anyone interested in joining but not able to attend the open house can apply for membership at www.pinellascounty.org/yac. The deadline is 3 p.m., Friday, Aug. 24.

Established in 2001, YAC is a vehicle for young people to provide input to Pinellas County commissioners. Members assist the Commission by helping to identify the needs of young people, organizing youth-based activities that benefit the local community and by becoming active participants, with their adult counterparts, in county programs.



Photo courtesy of SPC

The ceramic work of Hadi Abbas will be on display at the Crossroads Gallery in Clearwater.

SPC to display professor's work

CLEARWATER - The Crossroads Gallery at the St. Petersburg College Clearwater Campus is hosting an exhibition of the ceramic work of Hadi Abbas from Aug. 20-Sept. 26.

A reception is planned on Wednesday, Sept. 12, 6-8 p.m. Abbas is assistant professor of ceramics at the University of Central Florida.

Abbas focuses on wood-fired pottery, drawing on a variety of influences of Japanese ceramics and Middle Eastern architecture. Abbas is an internationally recognized artist, who brings a unique perspective to contemporary ceramics. He designed and built the first Anagama Kiln in the state of Florida.

The exhibit will be open Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., and Friday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. The gallery is at 2465 Drew St., Clearwater. Admission is free. Call 727-791-2548.

Events to raise funds for memorial Scholarship

Two events are planned to raise funds for the Kathryn Mezerowski Memorial Scholarship at St. Petersburg College.

The first is an Open Car & Truck Show on Sunday, Aug. 19, 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m., at Wagon Wheel Flea Market, 7801 Park Blvd., Pinellas Park. The event includes door prizes, 50/50, music and trophies. Participants can pre-register for \$10 or pay \$15 day of show.

Email okayz8@knology.net or text 727-459-3688. Include name, phone number, vehicle makes, model and year of vehicle.

A second fundraiser for the scholarship is Drag Queen Bingo on Sunday, Aug. 5, 5 p.m., at Hamburger Mary's, 2901 Tyrone Blvd., St. Petersburg. Reservations are highly recommended. Call 727-851-9386.

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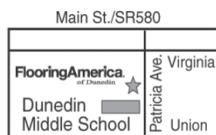
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