



Music in the Park returns to Seminole for 6-week run

Seminole City Park home to 22nd annual music festival that showcases Tampa Bay musical talent ... Page 1B.

LARGO LEADER

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take a look INSIDE

When you open this week's edition, you might notice something new. TBN's entertainment section, Diversions, has a brand new look. Featuring all the entertainment news you've come to expect from us, an updated presentation helps create a more reader-friendly and modern look. Also new are our weekly features pages: Cravings, Home & Garden, Excursions and Celebrations. Do you have a favorite recipe, travel photo or recent wedding photo you'd like featured? Email Imosby@TBNweekly.com.

Looming red tide proves to be a pain

Along Pass-A-Grille's beach, not only did red tide not come ashore, but the ongoing perceived threat of it annoyed some beachgoers and businesses. On Monday morning the beach was pristine and air quality, no doubt bolstered by a brisk wind from the east that fought against the Gulf's algae bloom, was stellar. Not a dead fish was in view and not a cough could be heard.

... Page 3A.

LARGO Annual food fest comes with a kick

The 18th annual I Like it HOT! Festival returns to Minnreg Hall this weekend. The event is one of the largest gourmet spicy food festivals in the state and features food vendors that will have hundreds of spicy foods available to sample and purchase.

... Page 4A.

ENTERTAINMENT Dinner theater set to kick off season

Just for Laughs Dinner Theater will kick off its new season with the comedy "Academia Nuts," running Sept. 8 through Nov. 10, at Jackpot's Grill in Largo.

... Page 2B.

BEACHES New hotel eyed for John's Pass

A developer who is proposing a 78-room six-story hotel for the heart of John's Pass Village says he is ready to proceed on the project, as soon as he gets the city's approval.

... Page 11A.

VIEWPOINTS John Morton

Tampa Bay Newspapers' newest reporter is seeing red.

... Page 9A.



Features

Beaches	11A
Business	10A
Classifieds	6-9B
County	6A
Entertainment	1-5, 10B
Health	.8A
Just for fun	2B
Largo	4-5A
Outdoors	10A
Police beat	2A
Red Tide	.3A
Schools	.8A
Viewpoints	.9A

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Largo Historical Society, American Legion salute WWI soldiers with event, gear up for trip to France



Photos by LOGAN MOSBY

State Sen. Jeff Brandes, left, and Largo Mayor Woody Brown speak with a member of the Largo Area Historical Society on Sept. 1 at the Historic Feed Store during an event saluting local soldiers who took part in World War I. Brandes and a representative from U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio's office presented members of the Society and American Legion Post 119 with state and U.S. flags in honor of two of those soldiers - Ralph Heisler, top left, and Worth Johnson.

'A reminder of our roots'

By CHRIS GEORGE • Tampa Bay Newspapers

LARGO - It's been 100 years since two sons of Largo were killed on the battlefields of France during World War I, but two groups are going to great lengths at home and abroad to make sure the soldiers' sacrifice hasn't been forgotten.

On Sept. 1, the Largo Area Historical Society and Heisler-Johnson American Legion Post 119 honored the two doughboys - Worth Johnson and Ralph Heisler - during an event that attracted an estimated 250 people, including city, county and state officials such as state Sen. Jeff Brandes and Mayor Woody Brown, to the Historic Largo Feed Store in Central Park.

At the end of the month, five members of the two organizations also will pay their respects 4,800 miles away when they travel to northeast France to attend ceremonies honoring fallen soldiers, including the Largo natives who served in the American Expeditionary Force.

"We're very fortunate that those two young boys gave their lives for us to have the peace that we have, even 100 years later," said Marilyn Short, a member of the Historical Society who will be making the trip to Lintal, France.

For Short, the trip has been nearly 18 months in the making.



See WWI, page 4A

World War I reenactor Bill Matthews of Old Town brought his collection of vintage arms, medals and equipment to the event. Matthews, who has been a reenactor for the past 20 years, said he is just trying to "keep the history alive."

LARGO FIRE RESCUE

New fire chief 'excited' for opportunity to take reins

By CHRIS GEORGE
Tampa Bay Newspapers

LARGO - After two nationwide searches that produced 119 applicants, City Manager Henry Schubert didn't have to look far to find his new fire chief.

Schubert announced Aug. 29 that Chad Pittman, deputy chief of Palm Harbor Fire Rescue, will take the helm at Largo Fire Rescue, replacing Shelby Willis, who took a position as deputy fire chief in Ogden, Utah, in March.

"We did a national search, and while there's benefits to hiring someone local, we considered people from outside the area and outside the state as well, and we feel he was clearly the

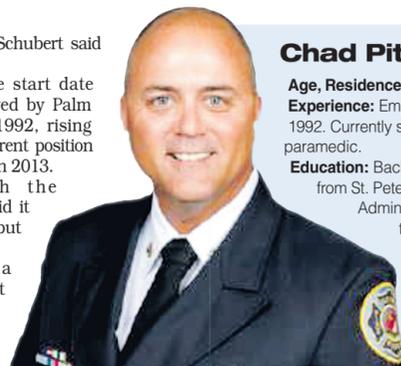
best of all the candidates," Schubert said Aug. 30.

Pittman, whose tentative start date is Oct. 4, has been employed by Palm Harbor Fire Rescue since 1992, rising through the ranks to his current position of deputy chief of operations in 2013.

After 26 years with the department, Pittman, 48, said it will be bittersweet to leave, but he's eager for the opportunity.

"Leaving Palm Harbor is a little bit outside my comfort zone, but that's why I want

See CHIEF, page 2A



Chad Pittman's résumé

Age, Residence: 48, Tarpon Springs
Experience: Employed by Palm Harbor Fire Rescue since 1992. Currently serves as deputy chief and is a certified paramedic.
Education: Bachelor's degree in Public Safety Administration from St. Petersburg College. Master's degree in Public Administration from Troy University. Graduate from the Executive Fire Officer program at the National Fire Academy and has received the Chief Fire Officer designation from the Center for Public Safety Excellence.
Family: Married to wife Tiffani and father of three teenage boys.

LARGO

Mother charged in death of son, 2

Police: Mother admitted to fatally striking son and hiding his body in woods

By CHRIS GEORGE
Tampa Bay Newspapers

LARGO - Almost three days of searching ended in tragic results Sept. 4 when Largo police announced they had found the body of 2-year-old Jordan Belliveau in a wooded area near Lake Avenue and McMullen Road, and that the mother would be charged with first-degree murder.

According to the arrest affidavit, the mother, Charisse Stinson, 21, admitted to striking the child in a moment of frustration with the back of her hand, which caused the back of his head to hit the wall of her Largo home.

The report states that Jordan then suffered from seizures during the night and, as his health declined the next day, she carried him to a wooded area and left him there. Police said the recovered body had injuries consistent with Stinson's story.

FDLE canceled the AMBER Alert earlier in the evening after officials discovered the body near the Largo Sports Complex.

See MOTHER, page 2A

LARGO CENTRAL PARK

Event to put local artists on display

By CHRIS GEORGE
Tampa Bay Newspapers

LARGO - Central Park is already picturesque, but city officials hope to make it even more so with an upcoming event showcasing the work of local artists.

The inaugural Art in the Park on Saturday, Sept. 8, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., will transform the park into an outdoor gallery, as original and handmade pieces from more than 40 local artists will be on display and for sale.

"We just want to bring art to the community in every avenue we can," said Kara Piehl, who works on special events for the city.

Piehl said the free event will feature a diverse crowd of artists, including painters,

See ART, page 4A

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Police Beat

Deputies seek SUV involved in fatal crash

OLDSMAR – Pinellas County Sheriff's deputies are investigating a fatal vehicle versus pedestrian crash that occurred about 10:24 p.m. Aug. 24 at the intersection of Tampa Road and St. Petersburg Drive in Oldsmar.

According to deputies assigned to the Major Accident Investigation Team, Mark Coomes, 55, of Oldsmar was driving his 2010 Toyota Four Runner, traveling westbound in the curb lane of Tampa Road approaching St. Petersburg Drive, with a green traffic light.

Investigators say a pedestrian, Eric Feinstein, 64, of Dunedin, was walking in an unknown direction, crossing the intersection of Tampa Road and St. Petersburg Drive.

Coomes' vehicle struck Feinstein in the intersection, near the right curb lane of Tampa Road and St.

Petersburg Drive. Coomes told deputies he did not see Feinstein and was unable to take evasive action to avoid the collision. Deputies do not know if Feinstein was in the crosswalk.

Investigators say after Feinstein was struck by Coomes' Four Runner, he was immediately struck again by another unknown vehicle that continued traveling west on Tampa Road.

Deputies are investigating to determine the identity of the second driver. No description of the second vehicle is available at this time. It is also unknown if the impact from Coomes's Toyota Four Runner caused the fatal injury to Feinstein.

Paramedics immediately responded to the scene and pronounced Feinstein deceased.

Investigators do not believe speed or impairment were factors in the first crash involving Coomes. Deputies are attempting to

locate and identify the driver of the second vehicle that struck Feinstein.

Pinellas deputies investigate fatality crash in Palm Harbor

PALM HARBOR – A 22-year-old man died at a local hospital from injuries suffered in a single-vehicle crash that occurred about 6:55 p.m. Aug. 28 on Curlew Road in Palm Harbor.

Deputies assigned to the Pinellas County Sheriff's Major Accident Investigation Team say Austin Marr was driving a 2014 Volkswagen GTI westbound on Curlew Road when the crash occurred. Witnesses, including Deputy Derrick Gregory, who was off-duty, drove past Marr who initially appeared to be slowing and/or stopped along the curb lane of Curlew Road just west of Belcher Road.

Gregory told investigators that before he could safely turn around to check on Marr, the Volkswagen abruptly accelerated westbound on Curlew Road at a high rate of speed, turning left in a southerly direction across all lanes of traffic.

The vehicle struck a light pole, a utility box, and traffic sign then became airborne, striking a large oak tree before coming to a stop.

Paramedics arrived on scene and extricated Marr from his badly damaged vehicle. He was transported via Bayflight to St. Joseph's Hospital where he later died from his injuries.

Investigators say it is unknown what caused the erratic driving that led to the crash.

– Compiled by SUZETTE PORTER

MOTHER, from page 1A

"As you can imagine this is an extremely emotional and difficult time for us," Largo Police Chief Jeff Undestad said during a press conference Tuesday night.

Stinson initially told police they were walking on East Bay Drive near Belcher Road about 9:30 p.m. Sept. 1 when a person unknown to them by the name of "Antwan" offered them a ride.

Stinson told police that after she got in the vehicle with the child an "altercation" took place and she was struck in the face and lost consciousness. When she regained consciousness, about 1:30 a.m. Sept. 2, she said she was in a wooded area inside Largo Central Park and the child was missing.

Authorities later released a composite sketch of the man and a video of a potential witness, and said they received more than 40 tips across the state, but to no avail.

The AMBER Alert was issued Sunday morning, and Largo police and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Child Abduction Response Team (CART) conducted extensive searches of the area.

"Over the years, our agency has deployed our resources throughout CART hoping to never utilize their services in our city," Undestad said. "Well, it happened in our city this weekend."

Undestad said CART provided a pool of professionals from multiple agencies who rapidly deployed to assist Largo with the investigation. He said aid was also received from other agencies, including the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, St. Petersburg, Clearwater and Treasure Island police departments, Pasco County Sheriff's Office, Sarasota K9



Photo courtesy of PCSO

Charisse Stinson, 21, has been charged with the murder of her son, 2-year-old Jordan Belliveau, shown below.

Search and Rescue and Largo's DFW.

Undestad added citizen involvement was key to finding Jordan.

"Without them (the public), extra ears and eyes out there, I don't think this would've come to a conclusion as fast as it has," he said.

Largo police said this was still an active homicide investigation so more details would be released.

Visit TBNweekly.com for more updates as they are released.



Visit TBNweekly.com for more police news from around Pinellas County

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CHIEF, from page 1A

to go to Largo also," he said. "It's a new challenge. I was very, very excited."

And it will be a challenge. Largo Fire Rescue, which is one of less than 150 departments in the U.S. to have an ISO public protection rating of Class 1, responded to about 29,500 EMS and fire calls in 2017. Palm Harbor Fire Rescue responded to 9,619 calls last year.

LFRR's 152 employees also serve several jurisdictions, including unincorporated portions of Pinellas County and the West Highpoint areas and has contractual agreements to provide fire and EMS services to Belleair and Belleair Bluffs.

The demand and lack of staffing have consistently led to large

amounts of overtime. In the month of July alone, for instance, the department had 2,125 hours of overtime.

Schubert said Pittman's move to a larger department, however, wasn't a concern.

"Clearly, this is a growth opportunity for him," he said. "This is a bigger department and he and I both recognize that, but I'm confident he's up to the challenge."

Pittman said his many years of experience in Palm Harbor have prepared him for the new role and his familiarity with Pinellas County probably gave him an advantage in last week's selection process, which included fire station tours, a public meet-and-greet session and several rounds of interviews conducted by city administration and management.

"It certainly helped, but it

certainly wasn't the only reason (he was chosen)," Schubert said. "He knows the players and he knows how the system works, so that is helpful. He's the kind of person that instills a lot of confidence. He's very knowledgeable of fire and EMS, and I think he's certainly at the point in his career when he's ready to move on to the next step to be a chief."

Pittman said he has kept an eye on fire chief openings for several years, but Largo's piqued his interest because he admired the operation.

"I've always respected the department," said Pittman, a Tarpon Springs resident who is married with three teenage boys. "I like the people there. I'm familiar with a lot of them through Hazmat training and Hazmat response through the county. So, I thought, as selective as I am, Largo would be

a good fit if it worked out for me." He added that the selection process and the warm welcome he received from city commissioners, administration and staff made him feel even more comfortable in his decision.

His first goal when he starts in early October will make sure the department's staff are also comfortable with him.

"I want to get to know the personnel better," he said. "Just to take a little time to get to know them so they can get to know me. Evaluate the system and how it's working. I don't have any plans for big changes immediately. There's going to be a growth period."

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

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ST. PETE BEACH



Photo by JOHN MORTON

Vacationers Julieann and Tim Savatt enjoy both a good book and good shoreline conditions on Pass-A-Grille's beach Monday morning.

Beachgoers brush off concerns over bloom

By JOHN MORTON
Tampa Bay Newspapers

ST. PETE BEACH – Labor Day weekend was damp here, but far from dirty or disgusting in that red tide sort of way.

Along Pass-A-Grille's beach, not only did red tide not come ashore, but the ongoing perceived threat of it annoyed some beachgoers and businesses. On Monday morning the beach was pristine and air quality, no doubt bolstered by a brisk wind from the east that fought against the Gulf's algae bloom, was stellar.

Not a dead fish was in view and not a cough could be heard.

"Everything you've seen online has not been helpful at all," Amanda Jaradat, a part-time resident of the area who splits time in Nashville, said as she walked a beach access. "In fact, it's been misleading. The website we watched (via the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conversation Commission) only shows three colors (yellow, orange and, most severely, red) and now that it's red here it gives the impression that things are as bad as the other areas that truly are bad.

"I mean, what red tide? This is silly," Jaradat said.

Last week for the first time, the FWC website reported that a red-tide bloom discovered 10 miles off the Pinellas County coast – specifically straight out from Pass-A-Grille – had entered its red-color designation. That means conditions had reached high concentrations of

bacteria as far as the commission was concerned.

Counties to the south have been plagued by the same designation for weeks, but contrary to Pinellas have suffered massive dead-fish wash-ups and diminished air quality.

Julieann Savatt, a regular visitor from Milton, Pennsylvania, said she had checked the Pass-A-Grille Facebook page for weeks leading up to her visit with her husband, Tim. It was always a good report, she said, but she still worried.

"We were going to come regardless. Nothing was stopping us," she said as she and Tim read books with their toes in the Gulf. "Now that we're here, we are very relieved. Not only is it at least equally beautiful as before, I'll say I've never seen the water this clear.

"There was nothing to worry about."

Thus far, the ongoing reports predicting a red tide landing that has yet to surface has had ill effects beyond the shores, some say.

"Has it hurt us? Very much so," Maggie Caruso, co-owner of the Havana Inn on Gulfway Boulevard, said on Monday afternoon. "We did have the influx of people coming from the south (in recent weeks), but then they said Fort De Soto and Pass-A-Grille were affected. I had most rooms booked but the ones left to fill ended up staying empty. Things were sensationalized, by both the news media and social media."

Added Christiane Vinet, Caruso's

desk clerk, "I got frustrated and tired seeing the warnings. We have received calls constantly. Usually, all of our rooms are sold out this weekend.

"This should not have happened. The beach is fine."

Byron Bates, general manager of the nearby Sea Critters Café on Pass-A-Grille Way, sympathized with the hoteliers.

"I heard they are not where they'd like to be, and I'm sure some people were scared away by the reports," he said.

How was his weekend business? "We are actually up from last year, but still not where we expected to be," he said. "For us, the inclement weather probably made us suffer the most."

The notion that the red tide is out there in the Gulf didn't stop Indian Rocks Beach resident Tom Cipolla from taking a scheduled boat trip off Pass-A-Grille to Shell Island with his friends.

"I've been through several red tides so I'm not really worried what's out there. It's nature," he said. "This has been extreme this time around seeing all the dead fish (to the south), but it will be fine. It will pass."

Caruso echoed the idea that red tide is part of life here and laments the increased concern.

"Usually, people tell you they get a tickle or a cough and they move on," she said. "This time, it's different. You go online or turn on the TV, and it's the first thing you see. Everyone talks about it. Yet, it's not here."

CLEARWATER

County officials making plans for cleanup efforts

By BRIAN GOFF
TBN Correspondent

CLEARWATER BEACH – Pinellas County's director of environment management had agreed to speak at the regular meeting of the Barrier Islands Governmental Council on Aug. 29. What she didn't know in advance was that she would be bringing bad news to the group.

Kelli Hammer Levy knew she was there to talk about red tide, but not particularly the news that she had gotten just the evening before.

"I wish the results were better," she said. "There is medium concentration of red tide at Fort De Soto Park – there has been a fish kill there."

Hammer Levy, whose group along with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission monitor the beaches every day, said a week ago there was no sign of red tide north of Fort De Soto. Now that has changed.

"There is a low concentration all the way up," she said.

That brought Hammer Levy to the subject she brought to the group, how to pay for the cleanup.

She said Pinellas County is wrapping up negotiations with a contractor who will clean up the beaches when asked. The state will pay for the work.

She explained that the contractor would not be called out to do small jobs, just the bigger ones. Small cleanups will be up to the individual communities.

"We will be taking a four-pronged approach to dealing with the cleanup," she said. "First there is offshore harvesting where the contractor will go out in a skimmer boat and get the dead fish before they can get to shore."

TBN For the latest updates on the red tide bloom, visit TBNweekly.com

"Then there is beach raking where the contractor goes onto the beach for the cleanup."

Hammer Levy said the last two approaches had to do with cleaning up the Intracoastal Waterway and the canals if any dead fish manage to get into those areas.

Cynthia Jefferson of the county's Economic Affairs Department, explained that the state is making loans available to any company or business that needs help in paying for losses incurred by the Red tide. There have been reports of tourists canceling their plans because of the red tide.

"There is a bridge loan available by the state," she said. "Companies can get a \$50,000 loan, which has a term of 180 days. It must be paid back and if not it will go to collection."

Jefferson said there is \$500,000 available in the fund for the loans, and she suggested that any

company interested should apply soon. She said consultants in her department are available to help interested companies to fill out the appropriate form. The number to call is 727-453-7200.

"So far, we know of three companies that have expressed an interest in getting a bridge loan but none has made a final decision," she said.

Hammer Levy reminded mayors that the state is only going to pay for the cleanup done by the approved contractor engaged by the county. The smaller cleanups will have to be paid for by the communities themselves.

She did provide a little relief in that the county is not going to charge tipping fees for the disposal of the dead fish at the waste facility. Once dumped the fish are quickly covered with dirt to eliminate the odor once they begin to decompose.

Red tide can cause respiratory problems in humans and it can affect pets. If dogs play among the dead fish they run the risk of ingesting toxins. Pet owners are advised to wash their animals as soon as possible after they have been in contact with the dead fish.

How to contribute

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

We are not able to predict exactly the issue it will be printed – or even guarantee that it will be used.

The deadline for all copy is Friday, noon, preceding publication date. The newspapers are published Thursdays. For upcoming events, please send in your announcement two weeks in advance, if possible.

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CATCH, RELEASE

FWC issues restrictions on fishing of snook, redfish

Snook and redfish have been temporarily made catch-and-release only along parts of the Florida Gulf coast, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has announced.

FWC Director Eric Sutton issued the restrictions in an executive order made public Aug. 30. The order affects the northernmost point of Anna Maria Island in Manatee County to Gordon Pass in Collier County.

The action was taken in response to the naturally-occurring red tide bloom in southwest Florida and is in effect until the next FWC Commission meeting, which starts Sept. 26.

Sutton has spent significant time in the areas most impacted by naturally-occurring red tide, according to the FWC statement. He and staff will continue to work with local communities and partners as the FWC manages this issue to ensure recovery of the fisheries.

"We've seen the devastation to the redfish and snook populations in southwest Florida, and we support the catch-and-release initiative taken by FWC," said Brian Gorski, executive director of Coastal Conservation Association Florida. "In working with the FWC on this initiative, we've heard support from members and guides throughout the state who also understand the need for such a change, to ensure that generations to come can enjoy the thrill of catching one of these iconic species."

Regulations outside of those counties remain unchanged, including the Sept. 1 snook season opening that occurred in other Gulf and Atlantic state waters.

For more information, visit MyFWC.com and click on "About," then "Executive Orders."

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CITY COMMISSION

City leaders OK tax rate, budget

Commissioners say maintaining millage rate puts city in a position for success

By CHRIS GEORGE
Tampa Bay Newspapers

LARGO – Commissioners offered high hopes for the financial future of Largo on Sept. 4 when they gave initial approval to next year's budget and property tax rate.

City leaders unanimously voted on first reading to maintain the current millage rate of 5.7413 mills, or \$5.74 for each \$1,000 in taxable value.

Because of a 7.46 percent spike in property values, however, the owner of a homesteaded single-family home with a taxable value of \$92,000, which is roughly the average in Largo, would still pay

about \$17 more next year.

OMB Manager Meridy Semones said the rate, which would be the fifth-highest in Pinellas County, would generate an additional \$1.71 million in total revenue in the general fund and continue progress toward rebuilding fund balance.

"The tax rate is supporting the city's goals to rebuild the reserves in the general fund so that the city can maintain operations when unexpected circumstances arise, like financial downturns, natural disasters, periods of increased service demand based on unforeseen community conditions and fiscal constraints placed on municipalities by the state Legislature," she said.

Semones said the revenue boost will help if a constitutional amendment adding another homestead exemption is passed in November. She said the measure would cost the city at least \$740,000 annually in property tax revenue

beginning in fiscal year 2020.

Aside from the potential hit by the homestead exemption, Will Payne, management analyst and budget project manager, said prospects are looking up in Largo.

"Total city taxable value has still not returned to prerecession levels," he said. "However, for FY19, it is estimated just slightly below the FY 2008 figures, so we're almost there."

City commissioners also were optimistic about the \$164.1 million budget, which they said, as a result of years of work and long-range planning, has put the city in position for success.

"It's no accident that our city is being widely recognized for award-winning programs and initiatives," City Commissioner John Carroll said. "It's no secret that the enthusiasm and creativity of our staff have been kind of unleashed by the fact that we're not in this gloom and doom do-more-with-less

mentality that we've been in in the past."

Highlights of the budget include the addition of three police officers at a cost of \$385,200. Two will be assigned to the Problem Oriented Policing Unit and one will be a mental health liaison officer who will partner with a social worker from a nonprofit, Directions for Living, in an effort to improve mental health services and reduce call volume.

As part of the public safety staffing plan, Largo Fire Rescue also will convert three firefighter/EMTs to firefighter/paramedics in an effort to alleviate the department's paramedic shortages and overtime.

The budget also allows for citywide technology upgrades, such as the deployment of smartphones for field staff.

The second public hearing for both the tax rate and budget will be held Tuesday, Sept. 18, at City Hall.

Around Largo

Spicy food festival returns to Largo

LARGO – The 18th annual I Like it HOT! Festival returns to Minnreg Hall, 6340 126th Ave. N., Saturday-Sunday, Sept. 8-9.

Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. The event is one of the largest gourmet spicy food festivals in the state and features food vendors from all around Florida that will have hundreds of spicy foods available to sample and purchase.

The festival also will include a pepper eating contest, hot sauce, barbecue sauce and salsa competitions, a whip cracking demonstration and more.

Admission is \$5 and children age 12 and younger are free. Parking is also free.

For more information, visit likeithotfestival.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.

Classical guitarist to perform at library

LARGO – Edwin Culver will present a full-length classical guitar performance Monday, Sept. 17, at 6 p.m., in Gallery 120 at the Largo Public Library.

Culver's performance will feature works of varying styles, including Renaissance dances, Brazilian waltzes, Cuban etudes and his own contemporary compositions.

All ages are invited to hear the story of music's history explained by the composer and told through his guitar.

The event is free and no registration is necessary.

Library to hold donation drive

LARGO – In honor of Welcoming Week, a movement to embrace new Americans and their contributions to our country, the Largo Public Library has partnered with several refugee resettlement agencies to help newly placed refugee families in Pinellas County by holding a monthlong donation drive starting Sept. 1.

The library will collect new and unused items to put together four different types of welcome baskets for families: bathroom, kitchen, baby and child, and backpacks for teens. The welcome kits provide the essential household items refugees need for their new start in a place of safety.

Suggested item lists will be available at the library. Those who wish to participate may donate individual items or put together a complete basket.

Welcoming Week is spearheaded by the Largo Public Library and the Tampa Bay Refugee Task Force, in collaboration with Pinellas Park Public Library, Clearwater Public Library System, UCMC Suncoast, the Woman's Club of Upper Pinellas and hundreds of Pinellas County residents.

For more information, visit LargoPublicLibrary.org or call 727-587-6715.

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.

Highland Recreation Complex

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

First Sports Challenge slated for Sept. 8

LARGO – Largo Athletics will hold its first Sports Challenge on Saturday, Sept. 8, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Highland Recreation Complex.

The event will include a day full of sports, including Tug O' War, log rolling, wiffle ball, dodgeball, 3v3 basketball and soccer, volleyball, kickball, cornhole and a swimming relay race.

Teams will be made up of a minimum of five players and a maximum of 10. A maximum of 12 teams will be split into two groups, and each team will play 10 scheduled games throughout the day with two scheduled byes. Check-in will be at 9 a.m. with game play beginning at 10 a.m.

Team fees, which include an event T-shirt, beer and food ticket, are \$300 per team if registered by Saturday, Sept. 1.

Payment must be brought to the Largo Golf Course, 12500 Vonn Road, or paid with a credit card over the phone.

For more information, call 727-593-6165.

Tickets on sale for pair of family events

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

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

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

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

Tickets for Daddy Daughter Date Night are \$39 per couple and \$12 each additional daughter. Mom Son Messy Madness tickets are \$25 per couple and \$8 for each additional son. Tickets are on sale at the Largo Community Center, Highland Recreation Complex and Southwest Recreation Complex.

Space is limited for both events. Preregister by Sept. 10. For more information, call the Community Golf Center at 727-518-3131, Highland at 727-518-3016 or visit PlayLargo.com.

Highland Rec Complex 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.

Southwest Recreation 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.

Team to host synchronized swimming clinic

LARGO – Children can try out synchronized swimming for free when the Suncoast WaterWorks team hosts a free clinic Saturday, Sept. 8, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Southwest Recreation Complex.

Participants will meet at 11 a.m. in the deep end with a swimsuit on, goggles and a towel.

See LARGO, page 5A



Photos by LOGAN MOSBY

Jonathan Torres, regional director for U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, second from left, state Sen. Jeff Brandes, third from left, and Mayor Woody Brown, second from right, present city, state and U.S. flags to Largo Area Historical Society members Charlie Harper, left, Marilyn Short, and Don Forehand, right.

WWI, from page 1A

In April 2017, French historian Hubert Martin reached out to the city and enlisted the help of the Historical Society to learn about and honor Johnson, a 17-year-old bugler who was severely wounded by German artillery fire and was among about 50 soldiers who died in Martin's hometown of Linthal.

Ever since Martin's initial correspondence, Short and fellow Society member Charlie Harper have been researching Johnson and Heisler and have remained in contact with Martin, who extended an open invitation to the ceremony where a monument will be dedicated to those who died on the battlefield there.

"It's such an honor to be asked to go and participate in the ceremony where they're dedicating the monument," said Carla Kerns, a Historical Society member who will make the trip and was portraying Johnson's mother, Lizzy, at the Sept. 1 event that included historical photos and maps, memorabilia and a World War I reenactor.

Charlie Wing, a former commander of Post 119 who also will be traveling to France, said he's both excited and nervous.

"I just hope I can hold my emotions in check, so to speak," he said. "It's going to be very tough, especially considering that our two namesakes of the Post were killed in action over there."

After paying tribute to Johnson in Linthal, Wing and another member of the Post will take part in ceremonies at the Oise-Aisne American Cemetery at Seringes-et-Nesles, where Heisler is buried.

Pvt. Heisler was assigned to the 42nd Rainbow Division as a machine gunner. On July 28, 1918 – just one month after arriving in France – while manning his post at the battle of Chateau-Thierry, the Germans overran the position and Heisler was killed.

"Seeing that up close and putting the name of the Post to a person makes it different and very exciting," he said.



A patron of the event Sept. 1 looks over an exhibit from the Heisler-Johnson American Legion Post 119 in Largo. Below, a Historical Society exhibit shows some information members have collected about local soldiers Worth Johnson and Ralph Heisler.



'Reminder of our roots'

If not for his mother's death, City Commissioner John Carroll might also be making the trip.

Carroll, a Historical Society member and Army veteran who was stationed in Germany, said both he and his wife's grandfathers were World War I veterans, so the

event and trip struck a chord with him.

"A hundred years seems like a long time to us, but it's not really that long ago, so it's just a good reminder of our roots here in Largo and keeps us connected to the past," he said.

Carroll wasn't the only elected

official who was drawn to the event at the Feed Store.

Brandes and Jonathan Torres, regional director for U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, presented members of the groups with state and U.S. flags that flew over the U.S. Capitol and state Capitol, and the city of Largo donated a ceremonial city flag to the Historical Society's traveling ambassadors to present to their French hosts later this month.

City and Pinellas County proclamations in memory of Johnson and Heisler also will be presented at the ceremonies in France.

"I wish I could go to represent the city, but I don't think we could be in better hands between the Legion and the Historical Society," Carroll said. "And it's actually kind of neat to tie those two organizations together in this same project, because they are great ambassadors for us. They are going to go over there and represent us well."

ART, from page 1A

photographers, sketch artists, potters, woodburners, jewelry makers and florists.

She said the event, which was developed as a result of resident feedback and interest in enhancing Largo's art culture, also will include an interactive element, such as free classes and demonstrations from a variety of artists.

"They (artists) are extremely excited and grateful for the opportunity," she said.

Consider Mickey Krause one of them. The executive director and resident artist at Art Lovers Place, a nonprofit studio on Clearwater-Largo Road, said her and four other

artists who work at the studio will participate.

"It's an honor to be a part of this event. We are excited about having the opportunity to inform the community about our mission of helping seniors, disabled and veterans," she said, adding that the event will help spread the word about pieces for sale in the studio's gallery.

Two of those artists, Rand Marsters and Jim Melton, will be painting on site and selling pieces.

Established artists aren't the only ones who will get a chance to participate.

Piehl said Largo High School will have a tent showcasing the work of students and even children from Mildred Helms Elementary will put

art on display.

"I wanted the youth to come out there and see how amazing artwork is," Piehl said.

The city worked closely with the Pinellas County Arts Council and Indian Rocks Beach Art Council to spread the word to artists, and Piehl said the number of applicants – more than 60 – shows how excited the arts community was to reach a larger crowd.

"We were blown away that we had so many applicants," she said.

"Not everybody is out there trying to make money," she added. "A lot of people just want to come together and get their work out and teach others about their art. And try to get other people involved in art."

Art in the Park

WHEN: Saturday, Sept. 8, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

WHERE: Largo Central Park, 101 Central Park Drive

DETAILS: Original and hand-made pieces from local artists will be displayed throughout the park, as well as interactive art exhibits. Food vendors and art purchases also will be available.

COST: The event is free to attend and onsite parking is free. Demonstrations and classes also will be free.

MORE: Visit this story at TBNweekly.com to view a list of the participating artists.

LARGO, from page 4A

Experience is not required, but children need to be comfortable in deep water and be able to swim 25 yards. Children will decorate a cap, learn basic swimming strokes, synchronized swimming moves and a short routine.

At the end of the clinic, swimmers will show off what they learned in a mini-show.

For more information, email synchro4fun@yahoo.com.

Southwest to host trick dog training courses

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.

Largo Community Center

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

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 \$5 for members and \$6 for nonmembers. Call Joan Wall 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.

• Free movies: Fridays 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.

Monthly events

• Open Mic Fridays: First Fridays, 2 to 5 p.m. Bring acoustic instruments or choose from thousands of songs in house. Family-friendly comedians and spoken-word performers are welcome. Cost is \$5.

• Senior adult luncheon: Third Thursdays, noon to 2 p.m. Tickets are \$14 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, from 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, from 7 to 11 p.m. The cost is \$8.50 and includes bacon-wrapped filet mignon served with a salad, baked potato and rolls. Coffee is \$1.

Sons of the American Legion sponsor "Wing Madness" each Monday, 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 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Each Thursday from 7 to 9 p.m., bingo will be held. Games 1-11 have a single winner prize of \$40. Game 12 is a progressive coverall with a possible prize of \$250 or a consolation prize of \$125.

Proceeds benefit the Special Olympics, Fisher House at Bay Pines, 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 largokiwaniis.snack.ws/ or call 727-536-0412.

GFWC Woman's Club

LARGO – GFWC Woman's Club of Clearwater will host its first luncheon of the season at 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 12, at the Palms of Largo, Royal Palms Building, 200 Lake Ave. NE, Largo.

Ladies interested in the organization are welcome to attend.

Largo Woman's Club

LARGO – The Largo Woman's Club meets the first Tuesday of each month at the Royal Palms, 200 Lake Ave. NE, from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The cost is \$9, which includes lunch and a special guest speaker.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, Oct. 2, and the speaker will be Marie Emmerich of Advantage Cruises and Tours.

Meetings and fundraisers are open to all women, and a Largo residency is not required to attend.

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 MaríaPepe@EmpathHealth.org or Tracy Christner 727-536-7364 or TracyChristner@EmpathHealth.org.

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Around Pinellas

New operations manager hired for Heritage Village

LARGO - Pinellas County recently announced it had completed its search for a new operations manager for Heritage Village.

Monica Drake reported to work Sept. 4.

Drake served as assistant curator/registrar at the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse & Museum. Prior to that she was the director of the Lake Wales Museum & Cultural Center.

Drake earned her bachelor of arts in art history and her master of arts in public history & museum studies from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She has strengths in collections management, exhibit development, program development, and project management.

Tampa Bay Water making progress on master plan

CLEARWATER - At an August workshop for the Tampa Bay Water Board of Directors, Tampa Bay Water staff previewed the initial results of four years of detailed analyses that composes the agency's Long-term Master Water Plan.

The plan includes several evaluations that help determine how much new water is needed by the member governments, when it is needed and how the agency can meet that new demand.

Updated conservation and facility analyses show that Tampa Bay Water and its members could delay the need for new water supplies until after 2030 through active conservation and facility improvements.

Current projections show Tampa Bay Water's member governments will need approximately 10 million gallons per day of new supply in the 2028 timeframe and an additional 10 million gallons per day in the 2035 timeframe.

However, Tampa Bay Water has identified efficiency and conservation initiatives that the members could implement to save at least 6 million gallons per day by 2025 and a total of 11 million gallons per day by 2030.

Those conservation measures would cost less than 40 cents per 1,000 gallons to delay the need for new water supplies.

In October, the agency will apply for a block grant from the Southwest Florida Water Management District for cofunding of the identified conservation measures. Tampa Bay Water will work with its members to determine how to allocate and spend funds to achieve the savings and help delay capacity development.

Upgrading existing facilities to yield more water could also delay capacity development by 5-10 years. For example, the Tampa Bay Regional Surface Water

Treatment Plant could provide an additional 5 million gallons per day annual average by re-rating the filtration capacity and existing processes. Upgrades and enhancements at the desalination plant could yield similar results.

Even with conservation and facility upgrades, the region will need additional water at some point in the future, so Tampa Bay Water has analyzed potential new projects to bolster our regional drinking water supply.

Over the next four months, Tampa Bay Water will finalize its Long-term Master Water Plan and present the completed plan in December to its board of directors for approval. The agency anticipates asking the board to approve a short-list of potential new supply projects for further study to meet demand, when needed.

Sheriff's Office awarded contract to target pedestrian, bike safety

The Pinellas County Sheriff's Office recently received a \$26,800 contract from the Florida Department of Transportation for a High Visibility Enforcement Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Project.

The project began Sept. 4 and continues through May 17, 2019.

Deputies will be conducting on-the-street high visibility education and enforcement details that stress the importance of pedestrian and bicycle safety.

The details are funded through a contract with the University of North Florida in partnership with FDOT's focus initiative to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety.

The purpose of the project is to educate and enforce safe pedestrian, bicyclist and driver behavior in designated hot spot areas in an effort to reduce traffic crashes and fatalities involving pedestrians and bicyclists.

The operation will include the distribution of educational materials, as well as the issuance of warnings and/or citations to pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists in accordance with Florida Statutes.

Assigned deputies will conduct high visibility patrol details at eight different pre-designated "hot spots," over the eight-month period.

The 8 different "hot spot" locations include:

- 54th Avenue North (34th Street to Haines Road)
- Gulf Boulevard (75th Avenue to 37th Avenue)
- Gulf Boulevard (129th Avenue West to 131st Avenue West)
- Main Street/State Road 580 (Belcher Road to Patricia Avenue)
- Main Street & Pinellas Trail
- U.S. 19 North & Alderman Road
- Seminole Boulevard (122nd Avenue to 102nd Avenue North)
- U.S. 19 North (SR 580 to Curlew Road)

COUNTY COMMISSION

Commissioners OK contract offer for new administrator

Base pay, housing assistance prove to be sticking points

By SUZETTE PORTER
Tampa Bay Newspapers

CLEARWATER - The relationship between Pinellas County commissioners and their top pick for a new administrator is starting out less than harmoniously.

During a meeting on Aug. 29 to approve upping the salary range and a contract with Barry Burton, currently the county administrator for Lake County, Illinois, commissioners made it clear they were unhappy with the deal negotiated by Commission Chair Ken Welch.

It even seemed for just a moment that negotiations would fail as Welch asked for permission to talk to the No. 2 pick, Roberto Hernandez.

In the end, commissioners voted 4-2 to approve a contract offering Burton a base pay of \$267,500, plus \$15,000 in deferred compensation and a \$7,200 car allowance. Commissioner Jay Beyrouti was unable to attend the Wednesday afternoon meeting.

In addition, Burton will receive \$3,000 for house hunting expenses and be eligible for reimbursement for up to \$18,000 in moving expenses and \$2,000 a month for housing assistance. The housing assistance will end when he sells his residence in Lake County. Burton also will receive \$1,800 to pay for health insurance (COBRA) until he is eligible under the county's plan.

Burton will start the job with 208 hours in paid time off and be eligible for benefits the same as a 10-year employee. If his employment ends within the first year for any reason, he will have to pay back the 208 hours front-loaded into this account.

The final deal is not what Burton asked for nor is it the original offer Welch presented.

The first offer was for a base salary of \$267,500 in base compensation. Burton's base pay at Lake County is \$253,260. Burton asked for a base pay from Pinellas of \$272,000. The initial offer had included \$15,000 in deferred compensation, but Burton wanted \$22,000. Burton agreed to accept the \$7,200 car allowance.

The offer also had included \$900 for mobile phone expenses; however, it was pointed out at the meeting that all employees who need a phone to do their job already receive a \$65 a month

allowance.

The total salary and compensation package offered was \$290,600. Burton's request was for \$302,100.

Commissioners said Burton's request was too much.

"\$300,000 is not something I would approve as long as I sit in this chair," said Commissioner Charlie Justice, adding that \$250,000 would be a fair amount.

Another sticking point was the housing assistance. The initial offer had been for \$42,000 split into a fixed amount of \$15,000 for moving expenses, \$3,000 for house hunting plus \$24,000 in housing assistance. Burton requested a fixed sum of \$60,000 and he wanted to receive a check for any money not spent on the move.

Commissioner Dave Eggers expressed displeasure with that request.

"How can you ask for a cash payment if he didn't use the money for moving," he said, adding it was in "bad taste."

Commissioner Pat Gerard agreed, saying it sent the wrong message to other employees.

"We have employees who don't make that (\$60,000) in a year," Gerard said.

Before the talk about the contract, commissioners unanimously approved increasing the maximum amount an E1 employee could receive to \$275,000. Currently, the only E1 employees are the county administrator and county attorney.

The range had been from \$165,547 to \$258,357. With the approval, the new maximum would be \$275,017.60, or \$132.22 an hour.

Commissioner Dave Eggers pointed out that if Burton's starting salary were near the top of the range, it would leave no room for raises. Welch disagreed, saying Burton would receive an evaluation at six months and then annually after that and could receive raises. Welch said if necessary, the Commission could approve a new cap.

Welch compared the contract amounts in the initial offer and the totals after negotiations with Burton to previous administrators and other counties. He said it was a "fair offer."

Commissioner Karen Seel pointed out that she hadn't supported some of the requests in previous administrator Bob LaSala's contract. She said the initial offer had been "more than generous." She was especially disapproving of Burton's request for moving and housing expenses.

"He may have dual households, but that's his choice," she said. "That's not my problem."

Seel said Burton knew the county had a conservative financial policy.

"At some point there is a top out," Justice said. "It's not a race with other counties. We're not recruiting him. He's recruiting us."

Commissioner Janet Long remains concerned about Burton's start date. The Commission had expected him to start Oct. 1, but he has to give a 60-day notice that Lake County won't change, so he can't start until Nov. 1.

Long insists that she asked him how soon he could start and he didn't mention the 60-day notice. She said he instead said his second in command was capable of taking over the job. She said Burton wasn't "truthful."

Commissioners discussed that concern and in the end, they agreed that they had not specifically asked him if he could start Oct. 1.

During the meeting, Welch received a text from Burton. Welch asked for a short recess to talk to him.

When the meeting reconvened, Welch conveyed a message from Burton that he had not meant to offend the Commission.

"He wants to be here," adding that Burton was willing to take the initial offer with only minor changes.

Burton wants to make sure he starts the job with accrued time off so he can visit his daughter, who is a senior in high school. He said his visits would not interfere with his job.

"I'm sensitive to his desire to be near his daughter in her senior year," Long said. "But it was his choice to apply for this position."

She objects to "giving him everything up front," with no way to incentivize his performance. Eggers agreed.

Justice said he "appreciated the (Burton's) concessions."

"But there's something about the whole tone," he said, adding that he didn't begrudge Burton trying to get all he could get.

Burton will make appreciably more than current Administrator Mark Woodard with a salary of \$252,241. Woodard has worked without a contract and asked for no more than any other employee would receive in benefits.

"Mark has been very generous," Eggers said.

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

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School Briefs

Ridgecrest Elementary earns national praise

LARGO - The Ridgecrest Elementary Center for Gifted Studies in Largo has been recognized as a Nationally Certified Demonstration School by Magnet Schools of America.

Magnet Schools of America, the national association of magnet and theme-based schools, created this national certification process to recognize the most exemplary magnet schools in the nation.

Ridgecrest Elementary was among 21 schools in 12 states to successfully complete a rigorous nine-month evaluation process and demonstrate through evidence, reflection, and strategic action that they have established the Magnet School Standards of Excellence in their schools. Ridgecrest Elementary now joins Douglas L. Jamerson, Jr. Elementary Center for Mathematics & Engineering as the district's only Magnet Schools of America nationally certified schools.

PCS launches new app for parents

Pinellas County Schools is helping parents stay connected to their children's education with the Pinellas County Schools App. The app, developed by Focus, helps families access student information on their cellphones and mobile devices. Parents and students can still use the Focus website on desktop computers, but the app is designed to work better with mobile devices.

Parents and students receive real-time notifications of grades, attendance, upcoming assignments and test scores. App users also are able to view school district news, Facebook posts and school messages. Links to the student calendar, school menus, school bell times, family engagement opportunities and transportation info also are available.

The app can be downloaded from the Google Play Store or the Apple App Store.

Belcher Elementary a Power-Library School

CLEARWATER - Belcher Elementary School in Clearwater has been named a 2018 Florida Power-Library School.

Belcher received the honor due to the innovative opportunities for students and staff available in their media center. The school has been invited to participate in the Florida Association for Media in Education's 46th Annual Conference in November.

The school's media center features a 3D printer, makerspace and of course, lots of books.

Pinellas Schools holds countywide graduation

ST. PETERSBURG - Pinellas County Schools Countywide Graduation will be held at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 13, at the Mahaffey Theater. The event celebrates students receiving a GED or high school diploma. Registration for the event will continue until the morning of ceremony.

The keynote speaker will be School Board Chairwoman Rene Flowers. Dixie Hollins High School JROTC will present the colors and Seminole High School Chamber Orchestra will perform the music. PCS employee Sherlonda Carty, a support staff member at Pinellas Technical College, will sing the national anthem.

Job fairs for bus drivers to be held

Job Fairs for Pinellas bus drivers will be held from 4-7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 13, and Tuesday, Sept. 25, at Walter Pownall Service Center, 1111 S. Belcher Road in Largo.

Full and part-time positions are available.

Applicants will have the opportunity to participate in onsite drug testing and dexterity testing. Applicants are urged to wear comfortable clothing and closed-toe shoes.



Photo SUBMITTED

Belle of the Ball's homecoming "shopping days" will take place 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays, Sept. 8, Sept. 22, Oct. 6 and Oct. 20.

Belle of the Ball announces shopping days

Belle of the Ball's homecoming "shopping days" will take place 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays, Sept. 8, Sept. 22, Oct. 6 and Oct. 20. The boutique, which has more than 3,000 dresses, is at 1210 Holt Ave. in Clearwater.

Belle of the Ball is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that provides prom and homecoming dresses to high school girls who are experiencing financial challenges.

More information is available at www.Belleoftheballproject.com

All Access Career Conversation with Amazon

St. Petersburg College's Career Services will be hosting an All Access Career Conversation with Amazon HR/Recruiting Specialist from 12:30-2 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 12, at St. Petersburg/Gibbs Campus, SS-Lobby, 6605 Fifth Ave. N.

This event is an opportunity to hear directly from Amazon about what kind of employment opportunities/employees they're looking for.

Lealman Innovation Academy seeks mentors

LEALMAN - The Lealman Innovation Academy needs mentors for some of its students.

Persons interested in becoming a mentor can attend any of the mentor workshops offered in September by Pinellas County Schools. The schedule is:

- Thursday, Sept. 13, 4-6 p.m., at Pinellas Education Foundation, Wells Fargo Conference Room, 12090 Starkey Road, Largo.
- Wednesday, Sept. 19, 8-9 a.m., at SPC Clearwater Campus, Room ES104, 2465 Drew St., Clearwater.
- Wednesday, Sept. 19, 10-11 a.m., at SPC Clearwater Campus, Room ES104, 2465 Drew St., Clearwater.
- Wednesday, Sept. 19, noon-1 p.m., at SPC Clearwater Campus, Room ES104, 2465 Drew St., Clearwater.
- Wednesday, Sept. 19, 8-10 a.m., at city of St. Petersburg Water Resource Building, Conference Room, 1650 Third Ave., N., St. Petersburg.
- Tuesday, Sept. 25, noon-1 p.m., at Pinellas County Schools, Administration Building, 301 Fourth St. SW, Largo.

For more information about volunteering at the Lealman Innovation Academy, call Keosha Simmons at 727-528-5802.

PINELLAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Four more measles cases are identified

The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County has identified four additional cases of measles in unvaccinated people since the first one was announced on Aug. 13. The number of cases in Pinellas now stands at seven.

Prior to the recent cases, measles had not been seen in the county since 1998.

Some of the individuals have familial relationships with one reporting international travel. The cases are no longer contagious, but DOH-Pinellas is working with community health care partners to continue its investigation. It encourages all residents and visitors who have not been immunized to get vaccinated.

Measles is a highly contagious and potentially dangerous disease, especially for young children, pregnant women and persons with compromised immune systems. It is vaccine-preventable and has largely been unseen since the MMR (Measles Mumps Rubella) immunization was routinely provided to babies and children as part of a regular schedule of care.

Measles is a virus spread by air droplets when infected people breathe, cough or sneeze. The first symptoms are a fever that may

spike to 105 degrees, cough, runny nose and red, watery eyes. The blotchy rash commonly associated with measles appears three to five days later.

"Our message continues to be that immunization is the best protection against diseases such as measles," said DOH-Pinellas Director Dr. Ulyee Choe, an infectious disease specialist. "Measles is highly contagious and can have potentially serious health effects. We have not seen measles in 20 years in Pinellas because of the success of the safe, effective vaccines that prevents it."

Unvaccinated individuals who are exposed to measles may be excluded for up to 21 days from public places such as school and work where they could infect others. Those with up-to-date MMR immunizations have immunity that unvaccinated people do not. Individuals who are coughing, have a runny nose and red eyes need to contact their health provider, even before they notice a rash associated with measles.

For more information about measles, visit www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/vaccine-preventable-disease/measles/index.html.

Health Briefs

DOH-Pinellas to host Quit Your Way session

Give yourself the best early holiday gift this year by quitting tobacco before it's time for holiday get-togethers and shopping.

The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County will host a Quit Your Way session from Tobacco Free Florida Tuesday, Sept. 25, 1 to 3 p.m., at DOH-Pinellas in Mid-County, 8751 Ulmerton Road, Largo.

The group sessions are 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 can also 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 September, and every month, classes are held at several locations in Pinellas County. For information about those sessions or to register, call 813-929-1000 or email info@гнаheec.org. Visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/quityourway for other resources.

For more information about GNAHEC, visit www.ahectobacco.com. For more information about DOH-Pinellas, visit www.PinellasHealth.com.

Angry Open to benefit Melanoma Foundation

LARGO - The Philip A. Bryant Melanoma Foundation will host the ninth annual Angry Open Thursday, Oct. 25, noon to 6 p.m., at Bardmoor Golf & Tennis Club, 8001 Cumberland Road, Largo.

The tournament will be a four-player scramble format. The event will feature a shotgun start at 1 p.m. Free skin screenings will be offered between 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Cost is \$125 and includes lunch, cart, greens fees, range balls, goodie bag, dinner and awards ceremony.

There also will be raffles and a silent auction throughout the day. Proceeds will benefit the foundation.

For information, visit www.pab40foundation.org.

BayCare, Rays to celebrate Recovery Month

ST. PETERSBURG - In celebration of National Recovery Month, BayCare Behavioral Health will join with the Tampa Bay Rays to offer discounted tickets when the Tampa Bay Rays take on the Toronto Blue Jays Sunday, Sept. 30, at 3:10 p.m.

A \$22 ticket includes a lower level seat for the game, special activities in recognition of National Recovery Month and the regular Family Fun Days activities. Kids 14 and younger will receive a Rays PopSocket, while supplies last. Parking is free for cars with four or more passengers.

September is National Recovery Month. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration predicts that by 2020, mental and substance abuse disorders will surpass all physical diseases as a major cause of disability worldwide.

This national observance helps spread the positive message that behavioral health is essential to overall health, that prevention works, treatment is effective and people can and do recover.

To purchase discounted tickets for this event, go to groupmatics.events/event/RaysRecovery.

Deadline to purchase discounted tickets is Monday, Sept. 24. Lower level tickets in sections 129 and 132 are \$22. As an added incentive, two individuals will have an opportunity to win a baseball autographed by either Kevin Kiermaier or Matt Duffy.

Obituaries

CASSIDY, Margaret, age 92, of Seminole, FL, passed away August 23, 2018. For service information, send condolences, or full obituary visit: www.MohnFuneralHome.com 727-393-3481.

LUDWIG, Audrey M., age 90, passed away Monday August 27, 2018. For service information, send condolences, or full obituary visit: www.MohnFuneralHome.com 727-393-3481.

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Trump may have learned from case against Clinton

WASHINGTON — Lanny Davis became a TV news staple during President Bill Clinton's second term as the White House lawyer who battled a Senate investigation into Clinton fundraising practices, with a focus on suspected Chinese attempts to influence the 1996 election.



Debra Saunders

Davis left the White House only to rail against independent counsel Kenneth Starr as he homed in on Clinton's false testimony about his relations with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

Twenty years later, as President Donald Trump is under investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller, Davis is back — but on the side of prosecutors and partisan critics he once derided.

Then as now, there's indignation over a special counsel straying from his original mandate, surreptitiously recorded audiotapes of conversations and an old-school regard for men who lie about sex. The arguments are the same, but now Republicans are taking umbrage and Democrats are on the attack.

Hillary Clinton blamed a "vast right-wing conspiracy" for Starr's pursuit of the Lewinsky story. Trump blames the "deep state" for Mueller's probe into Russian interference in the 2016 election.

The Clinton White House constantly gnawed at Starr's motives and reputation. On Twitter, Trump accuses Mueller's team of engaging in a "witch hunt."

"It's going to sound very much like the Clinton investigation all over again," noted Saikrishna Prakash of the University of Virginia's Miller Center.

This time, Davis is playing offense as the spokesman and attorney for Michael Cohen, Trump's former personal attorney, who pleaded guilty last Tuesday to felony charges of tax fraud, bank fraud and campaign finance violations. Those charges have nothing to do with Russian interference in the 2016 election.

As Davis tells it, Cohen was so troubled by Trump's news conference with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki that he decided to offer up information on his former client. Through Davis, Cohen provided an audiotape of a conversation with Trump that Cohen secretly recorded about paying off two women who say they were Trump's lovers. Likewise, Lewinsky friend Linda Tripp recorded private conversations that went public.

Davis rejects the notion that Democrats who bashed Starr are the mirror image of Republicans who deride Mueller.

"I've met Ken Starr and I've met Bob Mueller," Davis told the Las Vegas Review-Journal. "And Ken Starr is no Bob Mueller."

Davis compared Mueller to "a silent submarine" that operates underwater and out of public view, while Starr made himself the public face of the Clinton saga and his staff leaked like sieves.

As for charges that Mueller has exceeded his mandate, Davis noted that U.S. District Judge T.S. Ellis, a special counsel critic, ruled that the prosecution of former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort was in keeping with Department of Justice instructions.

Starr, on the other hand, won approval to pursue the Lewinsky angle from Clinton Attorney General Janet Reno.

If Mueller has learned from Starr's missteps, Trump may have learned from Clinton. Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani has claimed that Mueller is trying to lay a "perjury trap" to ensnare a president who frequently offers different versions of the same event.

"The arrogance of Bill Clinton that he could just waltz in and perjure himself," observed California-based Republican strategist Sean Walsh. "Lesson learned there."

Twenty years ago, Democrats were arguing that everyone lies about sex; hence Clinton's less-than-truthful statements under oath were not worthy of impeachment. However, Republicans saw his actions as obstruction of justice, one of two successful charges in the House articles of impeachment that passed a floor vote.

Now Republicans defend Trump's payments of hush money to a porn actress and a former Playboy playmate as irrelevant, despite Cohen's guilty plea on two counts of campaign finance violations relating to those transactions.

Former Federal Election Commissioner Bradley Smith argued that paying off one's mistress is not a campaign matter.

Top Democrats like House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi have urged other Democrats not to use the word "impeachment" ahead of the November midterm elections, in which they hope to flip more than 24 seats and regain control of the House.

"The last time they impeached a president, the president's poll numbers went up," Prakash observed.

After the GOP House impeached Clinton, his Gallup poll approval rating hit its highest point, 73 percent. Democrats credited the strong economy under Clinton for his high approval.

That doesn't mean the House won't vote to impeach. Given the Democratic base's fury at the GOP president, it's hard to imagine a Democratic House not moving toward impeachment.

But conviction is another matter. After the GOP-controlled House voted to impeach Clinton in 1998, the Senate failed to convict and remove the president. Conviction requires a two-thirds vote, and the GOP Senate voted against convicting Clinton 55-45.

Contact Debra J. Saunders at dsaunders@reviewjournal.com or 202-662-7391. Follow @DebraJSaunders on Twitter.

Hymns bridge many troubled waters

If someone asked you to name your favorite hymn, could you do it? When is the last time you joined in singing one?

I've enjoyed hymns, or at least been interested in them, ever since I was a boy. In a Sunday School I once attended, I joined several kids who carried Christian flags around the perimeter of the church congregation as we sang "Fling out the banner! Let it float skyward and seaward, high and wide; The sun that lights its shining folds, The cross, on which the Savior died." Marvelous lyrics and imagery. It made me feel good, as if I were part of something big.

The word "hymn" comes from a Greek word meaning "A song of praise." Thus defined, a hymn need not be religious in nature. It can be devoted to a nation, an event, a holiday such as Christmas or Easter, or a person living or dead.

Protestants and Roman Catholics share many of the same hymns. Muslims don't have hymns or other religious music. Listings of America's favorite hymns usually include Amazing Grace, How Great Thou Art, Jerusalem, Rock of Ages, In the Garden and Blessed Assurance. Catholics might vote for Ave Maria as their favorite hymn.

Handel's Hallelujah Chorus easily meets the standards of a bona fide hymn. Less so, to my way of thinking, (despite its official title) is The Battle Hymn of the Republic. I've always thought of the Battle Hymn as a warlike, vengeful expression of the Union's dislike, if not outright hatred, for the Confederacy and slavery. You may disagree.

A number of Christian hymns have a military



Driver's Seat
Bob Driver

air about them. I'm thinking of "Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war" and "Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross." In Martin Luther's "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," references are made to an ancient foe, armed with cruel hate, who seeks to work us woe in a world filled with devils. As with other religions, Christianity has a paranoid side to it, often with cause.

A popular song can sometimes have a hymn-like feel to it. "You Light Up My Life," written by Leeann Rimes and sung by Debbie Boone, was intended to be a love song. But its lyrics, without undue bending, could easily be seen as a declaration of religious faith in God or Christ.

Simon and Garfunkel's "Bridge Over Troubled Waters" is a statement of encouragement and hope, spoken by whom? A friend? A lover? Or by a spiritual power that will never desert us? Take your pick. I would guess that this song, heard at a moment of despair, may have saved many almost-lost souls from climbing over the bridge railing.

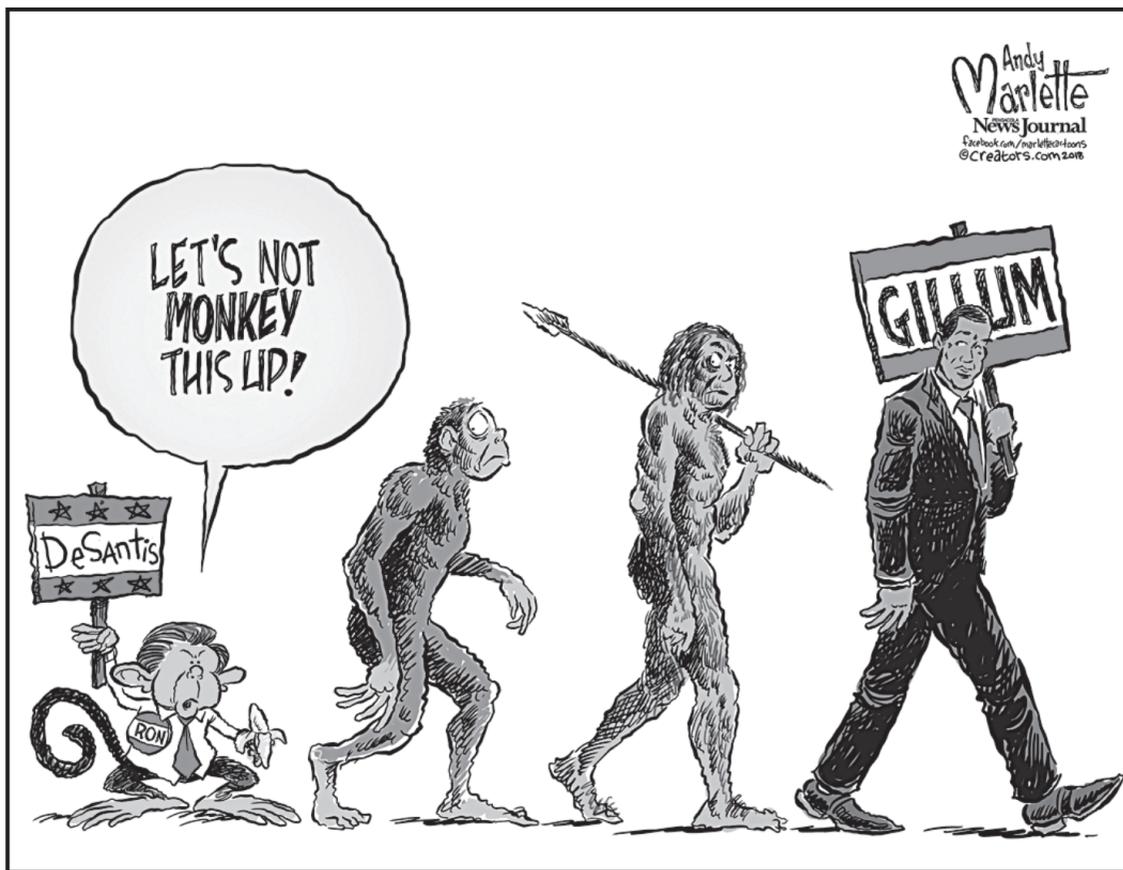
A composer of hymns is known as a hymnodist. I thought you might enjoy knowing that. Famous hymnodists include Julia Ward

Howe, Franz Schubert, Isaac Watts and William Cowper. Don't feel bad if their names don't ring a loud bell for you. Should gospel music, spiritual songs, and certain memorable musical statements from Hollywood films and Broadway productions be regarded as hymns? If so, then we're crawling with hymnodists, living and dead.

A hymn can sadden as well as inspire. I'm writing this during the week in which we say farewell to Sen. John McCain. I expect that the Navy Hymn will be played during the ceremonies. If so, it will surely re-awaken memories of those tragic days in November 1963 when another distinguished sailor and American servant was laid to rest. "Eternal father, strong to save ..." Do you weep, inwardly or otherwise, when you hear those words? I do.

The civil rights anthem "We Shall Overcome" may not be technically regarded as a hymn, but it has become a centerpiece for millions of Americans — black, white, rich, poor, young, old, gay, straight, multi-otherwise — to sing and rally around as we traipse through today's swamps and along hope-filled highways. In this turbulent time, is there not a composer out there who can write a new anthem-hymn, one that might re-capture the ideas and ideals that have sustained America through other dark days we have faced? I'd like to think so.

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



Andy Marlette
News Journal
Dartmouth, New Hampshire
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Red alert! Here's a colorful reporter

Ever since I began my new job here, I've been up to my neck in it.

No, not work (sorry boss!), but the Gulf water. I come to you as the new Clearwater reporter from Fort Myers Beach — a place where, thanks to the releases from Lake Okeechobee that travel downriver to the beach, it's polluted beyond belief. Think of a cup of coffee that goes on forever, and that's how it looks. And whatever it is that's floating among it — well, let's just say those aren't sugar cubes.

So, despite living across the street from the Gulf of Mexico while there, I never dared go into the water above my knees — and that was only to track down an occasional errant Frisbee throw. Otherwise, I avoided it.

Then, just before I came here, the mother of all red tides arrived. Fort Myers Beach was ground zero for it, and there was at least a week where the island bordered on uninhabitable.

So, you can understand why I've spent each and every available hour the past week bobbing up and down in Pinellas County's warm and crystal-clear Gulf.

An even bigger relief is this: The red tide hasn't followed me. Or at least not yet. People would certainly blame me for that one. And it doesn't help that your city is called CLEARwater! That's a lot of pressure.

So yes, I'm knocking on wood, crossing my fingers and toes, and praying to the stars above.

Any day now, for good measure, my rabbit's foot should be arriving by FedEx. That beats the seahorse head that would no doubt wind up in my bed if that dreaded blue-green algae shows up here.

Anyway, now that I'm in the clear for now, I've enjoyed reacquainting myself with a place I haven't visited since the late '70s. How charming to see you haven't changed one bit. Ha!

Just joking, of course. The grand and glori-



John Morton

I come to you as the new Clearwater reporter from Fort Myers Beach — a place where, thanks to the releases from Lake Okeechobee that travel downriver to the beach, it's polluted beyond belief.

ous hotels and resorts are sure impressive and I was awestruck as I first approached them. I truly had no idea.

My goodness how big you've gotten. But, seeing as everyone seems to be friendly, it's nice to know it hasn't gone to your head. Nor your Hilton head (you'll get used to my bad jokes).

Then there's your No. 1 beach in America ranking. I'm pinching myself that I'll get the chance to be a part of that setting.

Another delight I've discovered is your steady stream of world-class entertainment in your downtown. The first weekend I'm here and you're telling me The Fixx is in town? I've always loved their alt-rock classic "Red Skies."

But there's that word again — red. (Hey, I just checked the tour schedule of Sammy

Hagar, the Red Rocker, just in case. How's that for paranoia? No plans for Clearwater anytime soon. Whew. As for the members of Simply Red ... don't you ever think about it.)

OK, now I'm back in my car, visiting the outskirts. Belleair Bluffs looks nice, but where are the bluffs?

Yes, I know your max elevation of 46 feet makes you the county's tallest town, but come on now.

Funny, in Wisconsin (my home state, Go Big Red!) I've covered a place called Menomonee Falls, where the longest drop-off of water is a foot and a half, and a place called Summit, where the highest point came in the form of a speed bump. So, I'll give the folks in the Bluffs a break.

Now I'm out in the countryside, east of Belcher Road. Just like that, one turn to the right and there's rural tranquility and Allen's Creek to anchor it. How nice this manages to exist in such an urban region. I've rolled down the windows, the breeze in a face that is turning a bit red — of course.

Next stop is ... well, every block or so! My goodness there are a lot of red lights here. And there's that word again.

But with traffic comes lots of energy and a clear sign that people want to be here. And that includes yours truly.

And speaking of red skies, looks like another perfect sunset is easing its way down to end this perfect day. Wow. Look at those colors.

Here's to me becoming an asset to your community — you know, on the positive side of the ledger. By no means do I want to put you in the red.

John Morton is a staff reporter for Tampa Bay Newspapers. He may be reached at jmorton@TBNweekly.com.

About the Cartoonist

Born and raised by underpaid public school teachers in Sanford, Fla., Andy Marlette graduated from the University of Florida and became staff editorial cartoonist at the Pensacola News Journal in 2007. Marlette received a priceless editorial cartoon education while living with his uncle and Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Doug Marlette in Hillsborough, N.C. Doug's tragic death in July of 2007 made evermore poignant the elder Marlette's fierce and faithful devotion to the art form of editorial cartooning as a cornerstone of American free speech.

With this in mind, Andy works daily to learn and uphold the disciplines and values passed on to him by his late uncle. Andy's editorial cartoons have become both hated and adored by daily readers. His work has been awarded by the Florida Society of Newspaper Editors for best editorial cartoons on state issues and former Governor Charlie Crist referred to himself regularly as Marlette's biggest fan, despite the fact that he was also regularly a target in cartoons.

What do you think?

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

Here are some more guidelines for letters:

- Letters are printed on a first-come, first-served basis. They may be edited to correct grammar, spelling and factual errors. They also may be edited for clarity.
- Please keep letters to editor to 700 words. Longer letters may be cut due to space limitations.
- Letters should address issues or current events. Please refrain from making unsubstantiated allegations. The newspaper will not print letters that contain slanderous or racial statements.
- Please do not use profanity.
- We do not publish poetry or songs in letters to the editor.
- Each writer may submit one letter per month.
- We can't return letters to the editor.

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Business Briefs

Opening set for veterans clinic

PINELLAS PARK - National University of Health Services will host a grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony for its new veterans clinic Friday, Sept. 7, 11 a.m., at the NUHS Whole Health Center, 6630 78th Ave. N., Pinellas Park.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony will begin at 11:30 a.m. This is the second veterans clinic operated by National University Whole Health Centers. The new clinic will join its sister location in Lombard, Illinois.

The clinic will specialize in treating a wide variety of injuries and disorders that affect combat veterans, including PTSD, addiction, musculoskeletal injuries, and chronic pain. The facility will offer natural and drug-free health options along with a wide-range of health care services.

Largo tax professional honored

LARGO - H&R Block recently recognized 30 company and franchise associates, including Steven Spears of Largo, for going above and beyond for their clients.

Spears earned the 2018 Henry W. Bloch Excellence in Client Service award. The awards recognize H&R Block and Block Advisors tax-office associates for their extraordinary client service, exceptional tax expertise and ongoing commitment to solve problems and advocate for clients. For the second year in a row, every winner also earned service quality scores of 90 percent or greater.

Spears has worked for H&R Block for the past 12 years as a tax professional. He can be found at the office located at 13819-D Walsingham Road in Largo.

The award is named in honor of Henry W. Bloch, co-founder and honorary chairman of H&R Block. More than six decades ago, Henry Bloch and his brother, Richard Bloch, began preparing taxes for clients with a clear principle in mind: providing

exemplary service for a fair cost.

"Every year, the Henry Bloch Excellence in Client Service Awards recognize the best that H&R Block and Block Advisors have to offer," said Karen Orosco, H&R Block senior vice president for retail. "As an H&R Block tax preparer myself, I found examples and inspiration I can use in my own client interactions. The care and thoughtfulness Steven and our other award recipients provide truly sets us apart from the competition and drives our clients to return year after year."

Cosmetics studio gets new owner

SEMINOLE - Merle Norman Cosmetics recently announced a change in ownership of its Seminole studio.

Irena Pilecka is the new owner of the Merle Norman Studio at 11125 Park Blvd., Suite 109, in Seminole. Now the studio offers cosmetics, quality wigs and skin care services.

To celebrate, a public grand opening is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 15, noon to 4 p.m.

The event will offer many opportunities for visitors to try the latest Merle Norman cosmetic products, high end wigs and receive free makeup lessons and waxing.

"This is my second Merle Norman Studio in Pinellas county," said Pilecka. "Visitors to our Studio will continue to enjoy the high quality of products and unparalleled level of customer service that have made this studio so popular with Seminole women for more than two decades."

For information, call 727-392-6993.

To submit business news, email editorial@TBNweekly.com. Please include contact information on all submissions. Announcements are printed as space allows.

Anchor over near-shore jetties, structures to catch variety of fish



Fish Tales
Capt. Tyson Wallerstein

After a lengthy drought of usable-sized white-bait, aka pilchards, it looks like we may be coming out of the late summer micro-bait season in the northern part of the county. Pelicans can be seen working the swash channel aggressively as it has been loaded with small- to medium-sized pilchards when the conditions are right.

Filling your bait wells with a few hundred of these little guys can give you quite a few options. Targeting near shore structures and jetties we've been able to catch flounder, mangrove snapper and Spanish mackerel with good consistency.

Using a quarter inch mesh sized cast net to minimize gilling, target

the super shallows right off the beach. These baits can often be seen dimpling the surface before the sun is up. However, there are droves of micro fry in these same areas and throwing on them can really be a mess. It's almost better to wait until there's enough light to see into the water, so you can target the larger baits.

Anchoring over near-shore reefs will put you in position to chum up a variety of fish. Handfuls of

free baits and a fresh chum block off the side of the boat will attract schools of medium-sized mackerel and mangrove snapper. An Aberdeen style hook is light enough to allow the bait to work naturally and has a long enough shank to guard against cut-offs. Work the bottom with a drop-shot rig and a stouter hook, as you search the edges of the reef for flounder.

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 Briefs

Park to host birds of prey show

LARGO - The Look Alive Bird Show will be presented Sunday, Sept. 9, 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.

Pinellas Trail bridge

to close for repair project

ST. PETERSBURG - Beginning Monday, Sept. 10, the bridge portion of the Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail that crosses Boca Ciega Bay along the north side of Bay Pines Boulevard in St. Petersburg will be closed. The trail closure is due to a scheduled reclaimed water main repair project.

The reclaimed water main runs alongside the trail bridge across Boca Ciega Bay. The repair work is located midway along the bridge and will require the use of a crane, effectively closing the entire bridge while the repair work is underway.

Trail users will be provided a map at the trail closure locations to aid them in navigating around the closure; however, there are no established detours around the closure. The repair work and closure is scheduled to take two weeks. The county expects to reopen the trail on Friday, Sept. 21.

Florida State Fairgrounds to host Tampa Boat Show

TAMPA - The Tampa Boat Show will be presented Friday through Sunday, Sept. 21-23, at the Florida

State Fairgrounds, 4808 U.S. 301, Tampa.

Hours will be Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The event is open to the public and admission is free.

This is the largest boat show in the Tampa Bay area. The event will feature millions of dollars of inventory on hand from Tampa Bay's leading boat dealers.

The show offers a great way to see and compare all available makes and models in one location. The show will include pontoons, cruisers, center consoles, inflatables, Jet Skis, SUP, exhibits and more. Attendees can also check out the Florida Fishing Seminar Series on Saturday and Sunday. This series of presentations will be led by the area's top fishing guides and local experts and will feature great tips, secrets, and fun.

For information, visit tampabayboatshows.com.

High Point Center to host program on urban vegetable growing

CLEARWATER - A program on urban vegetable growing will be presented Tuesday, Sept. 11, 7 to 8 p.m., at High Point Neighborhood Family Center, 5812 150th Ave. N., Clearwater.

Marva Perry will share her expertise in this Farm & Garden Series sponsored by the Pinellas Farm Bureau. Attendees will learn techniques and strategies for successful vegetable growing.

For information, email bonniej1990@yahoo.com.

Rare Plant Network to host sale

ST. PETERSBURG - The Rare Plant Network will host a plant sale Saturday, Sept. 8, at the Garden Club of St. Petersburg, 500 Sunset Drive, St. Petersburg.

The sale will feature exotic plants, rare tropicals, and variegated plants, including ornamentals and perennials, along with other items. For information, call 727-867-4356.

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ELECTRONICS
Cell phones, computer towers/CPUs, drives (e.g. hard drives, CD drives), laptops, monitors, rechargeable batteries (remove from device, place device in garbage), smart phones, tablets, televisions.

NO What NOT to bring Find out how to get rid of these items in the **A to Z Guide** at www.pinellascounty.org/recycle

A/C units, alkaline batteries, appliances, biological/infectious waste, camcorders, CD players, copiers, digital cameras, DVD players, empty paint cans, explosives, fax machines, fire extinguishers, garbage, gas cylinders larger than one pound (e.g. propane tanks), GPS units, marine depth finders, medicine, microwave ovens, portable players (e.g. MP3, iPod), printers, printer/toner cartridges, radioactive waste, radios, stereo equipment, telephones, tires, video game players.

Attention Businesses:
Use **EnviroBusiness Days** (second Wed. monthly at HEC3 entrance on 110th Avenue). Take advantage of reduced disposal costs and pay contractor directly. For information call (727) 464-7500.

Pinellas County HEC3
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2855 109th Ave. N., St. Petersburg

For more information on household electronics and chemical collection, visit www.pinellascounty.org/solidwaste or call (727) 464-7500.

FOR EVERYBODY'S SAFETY, PARTICIPANTS MUST BE IN A VEHICLE.

Pinellas County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To obtain accessible formats of this document, please call (727) 464-4602 (V/TDD).

Estate Planning Essentials
Tuesday, September 11, 5:30 p.m.

- Wills v. Trusts
- Probate and Probate Avoidance
- Incapacity Planning: Durable Powers of Attorney and Advance Directives
- Medicaid and Asset Protection Strategies

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MADEIRA BEACH



Image courtesy of JOHN A. BODZIAK

Shown is an artist's rendering of the proposed hotel for John's Pass Village.

Hotel proposed for John's Pass Village

By WAYNE AYERS
TBN Correspondent

MADEIRA BEACH – A developer who is proposing a 78-room six-story hotel for the heart of John's Pass Village says he is ready to proceed on the project, as soon as he gets the city's approval.

But commissioners at their Aug. 28 workshop did not agree to having a "shared use agreement" on a city-owned alleyway that runs through the center of the property, which the developer says is needed.

The commission wanted developer Jack Bodziak to go ahead with an informational meeting with affected residents Thursday, Sept. 6, to be followed by further discussions at the September city commission meeting. Commissioners asked that residents from the entire city be invited to the meeting, well beyond those within 200 feet of the project as required by city code. Bodziak agreed to include all city residents in advertisements for the meeting.

A hotel development at John's Pass has been talked about for some time, but this was the first formal presentation of the plans. City Planning and Zoning Director Linda Portal said Bodziak has submitted an application for the hotel. He also asked that the city attorney prepare an agreement for shared use of a city-owned right of way bisecting the site, called Fisherman's Alley, which

would allow him to build over it and connect the two sides of the property.

The location is between 129th Avenue and Boardwalk Place, where there is currently a large dirt surface parking lot along 129th and shops facing Boardwalk Place.

Bodziak said he designed the hotel "to make it as viable as possible for the commission." He reduced the height from eight stories to six, responding to commissioners' concerns. Bodziak said the 78 hotel suites are "well within the city's density requirements."

A hotel has been lacking at John's Pass, Bodziak said. "We can get this done," he said.

The property parcels are assembled and the plans have been developed. A water park, pool and retail shops as well as a three-story parking garage are incorporated into the hotel design.

The parking garage will include about 300 parking spaces, but only half of them will be needed for the hotel, Bodziak said. The other half would be available for general parking.

"We will solve the parking problem and bring a new element of hotel space to the Pass. This will be a very pleasant addition," he said.

The garage parking will be on both sides of the alley, connected three floors up, Bodziak said. He is proposing that the city will receive a

portion of the parking proceeds, as a "thank you" for allowing shared use of the city-owned alleyway.

Bodziak said the alley will be paved and widened, with enough height to allow for garbage and maintenance trucks to pass through.

"We want to improve it and will pay the expenses of maintaining it," he said.

The agreement he is seeking with the city for the alley is a "shared use agreement." Bodziak emphasized he is not asking the city to give up ownership of the alley and will not inhibit use of it in any way.

"We want to build over it to make our parking more efficient. And we'll share the revenue with the city," he said.

Despite the assurances, most commissioners were not ready to give their approval to Bodziak's hotel project along with agreement for the alleyway.

Commissioner Deby Weinstein said, "I am not an advocate of joint public and private arrangements when the city does not really have control."

Weinstein said she wants to see the outcome of the meeting with affected residents "where members of the community can come and see it."

"I don't agree with having our attorney present us with any kind of an agreement until you've gotten the feel of the whole community,"

she told Bodziak.

Commissioner Nancy Oakley said she wants to see the results of a survey in progress that will "show who owns what in the Pass."

"I want to hold off until this has been completed," she said.

Oakley also said the biggest issue is with traffic. She said it's not just this project, but all of the developments planned for the city that could bring big traffic problems.

"How are all of these going to play out throughout the whole city?" she asked.

Mayor Maggi Black said she was fine with letting the process move forward to a neighborhood meeting.

Only Commissioner Nancy Hodges said she totally supports the project.

"I'm all for it. I've seen the plans. It's a great idea," she said.

Commissioner John Douthirt was absent from the meeting.

City Manager Jonathan Evans said the next step for the Johns Pass Resort project will be to go through the community meeting process, where the city will get feedback from residents and businesses. That will be followed by a commission workshop discussion. The project also will go through the Planning Board.

Though Bodziak said "we are ready to proceed when we get approval," that may not happen in the two to three-month timeframe he said he is looking for.

REDINGTON SHORES

Town expands paid parking near beach

By WAYNE AYERS
TBN Correspondent

REDINGTON SHORES – Following complaints from town residents that parking spaces near the beach are increasingly hard to find, the Town Commission decided at their Aug. 29 workshop to charge nonresidents a \$2 an hour parking fee at the Old Town Hall lot.

Residents can park free with a sticker, which costs \$3, available at Town Hall. A parking pay station will be installed at the lot. Commercial businesses will be given a few parking passes for their employees.

The decision to have metered parking for visitors and free parking for residents is a change from last month, when the commission decided to limit parking at the Old Town Hall lot to residents only, by permit. Charging visitors a fee was discussed, but turned down because of the high cost of parking pay stations. The lot is currently free to all.

This time, commission members were open to a parking fee charge. Mayor Mary Beth Henderson reported the added revenue gained by raising the parking charge from \$1 to \$2 an hour at County Park, the town's only paid lot, was "unbelievable." Not charging for parking at the Old Town Hall lot is "a missed opportunity for the town," Henderson told the commission.

The lack of beach parking spaces for residents has been a familiar complaint.

"People that don't live here, beachgoers that bring absolutely nothing to the town, come in and take all the parking spaces, every bit of it," said Mayor Henderson.

Commissioner Pat Drumm said, "These groups come in, park, and go right across the street to the beach, and residents don't have a place to park."

"We need to have a (parking) meter out there," Drumm said.

Former Mayor Bert Adams said finding a parking space near the beach during busy times is nearly impossible.

"If you go down there during season, or on a weekend, there's no parking in that lot," he said.

"After 8:30 in the morning, it's gone," Henderson added.

"Residents can go to Town Hall and get a parking sticker that lets them park free," said Commissioner Michael Robinson.

He recommended a sticker

rather than a tag, which he said could be "passed around."

The commission agreed by consensus to look at companies that can supply a parking pay station for the Old Town Hall lot, to set a parking fee, which likely will be \$2 an hour, the rate charged at County Park. They also agreed to provide commercial businesses a few parking passes and let residents park free.

Commissioners will vote on the parking changes at next month's commission meeting.

The town also has free parking areas on 180th Avenue, 182nd and 183rd, and spaces on Gulf Boulevard that will remain.

"We have lots of parking in the town," Henderson said.

No wake or not

The commission backed off a decision made last month to ask the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to declare the town's large cove, located along Gulf Boulevard by the Seabreeze restaurant, a no-wake zone. That came after a number of residents, led by Denise and

Don Vought of 180th Avenue East, showed up at the July commission workshop to request that change.

At the August workshop, residents favoring the no-wake designation were outnumbered by those opposed to it. Asked for a show of hands vote, five residents wanted the no-wake, requiring boat traffic to slow down, which they said would protect the manatees and dolphins living in the cove. Nine wanted the cove left as is, open to boaters traveling "a normal speed."

Denise Vought began the discussion, saying she and others are requesting the no-wake zone "due to the manatees, dolphins and wildlife in the cove."

Vought said she has "witnessed baby manatees and baby dolphins being born in the cove."

"We've got babies out there," she said. "It's a breeding ground." She said people in boats "fly through the cove," endangering the wildlife.

Vought said she had a petition signed by 32 residents of 180th Avenue requesting a no-wake zone for the cove.

Mayor Henderson said the town

has not heard anything about injuries to animals.

Resident John Kaleel said, "I don't see where this is a big issue. I haven't seen that many manatees."

He said the no-wake zone advocates are "trying to fabricate" a problem.

Matt Bettencourt said the Conservation Commission has established "Manatee Protection Zones and concluded this was not going to be one of them."

ST. PETE BEACH

City extends lease for 2 concession stands

By MARK SCHANTZ
TBN Correspondent

ST PETE BEACH – Customers of Paradise Grille on Upham and Pass-A Grille beaches can sit back and enjoy their favorite beachfront eatery for at least another five years.

At their Aug. 28 meeting, city commissioners unanimously voted to grant a lease to Starson LLC and owner Mike Janecek to operate the two city-owned concession stands as he has for the last decade.

During a five-monthlong campaign in support of Janecek to keep his lease, eatery patrons served up a lesson in fan loyalty and tenacity to commissioners during meetings, on social media and in emails.

Earlier this year city commissioners said they wanted to test the restaurant waters and see what else was available from other vendors who might operate the two facilities.

The city sought bids from other vendors and set off a firestorm of objections from beach residents who enjoyed both Paradise Grille eateries just the way they are.

At earlier meetings Janecek told commissioners, "It hurts, I spent 10 years of my life and put my heart and soul into it...I rebuilt the place."

"We took hold of these two little concession stands and in 10 years molded and massaged them into the world class beach destinations they are today," he told city officials in his bid package, adding there is always room for improvement and he

is ready to implement changes desired by the city.

After accepting bids, the City Commission initially chose to negotiate a contract with United Park Services, Inc. which was ranked first by staff.

UPS operates the Mad Beach Snack Shack on Archibald Beach in Madeira Beach, a concession stand for Pinellas County at Fort Desoto Beach, along with Anna Maria Island and Coquina Beach concession stands for Manatee County.

Staff's second bid choice was Barry and Kelly Streib, operators of the Brass Monkey Restaurant for the last 13 years on Eighth Avenue in Pass-A-Grille. Janecek was selected third in bid rankings.

Earlier this month, City Manager Wayne Saunders told commissioners United Park Services dropped out of contention; Commissioners decided to negotiate a contract with Janecek's firm, which they said offered the best bid package.

At the Tuesday meeting, Mayor Al Johnson surmised UPS dropped out of contention because it wanted to devote its time to starting a new concession operation at the St. Pete Pier.

Janecek will pay a monthly rent of \$15,000, and a 3 percent increase each year.

Staff added a request to contract terms, suggested by Commissioner Ward Friszolowski, which permits the city to terminate the agreement for convenience at any time, "when it is deemed in the best interests of the City, by giving lessee at least 90 days prior written notice."

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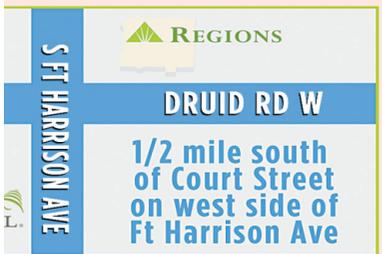
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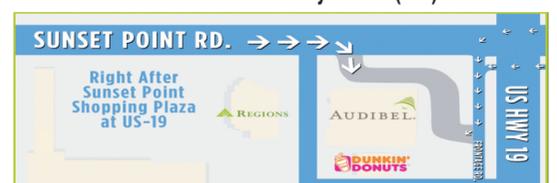
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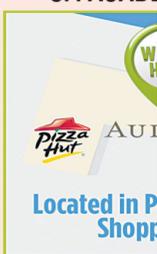
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