



The Florida Orchestra set to launch new season

The orchestra will officially kick off its season with Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 on Sept. 28. ... Page 1B.

LARGO LEADER



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LARGO

Packers face stiff test in Countryside

After rolling over Dixie Hollins, 37-0, last Friday, the Largo High School football team seeks its fourth win of the year when it takes on a tough squad in Countryside (3-0). After taking out Osceola 46-7 in Week 1, the Cougars beat a quality Boca Ciega team 50-33 and then toppled in-town rival Clearwater, 23-20. ... Page 3A.

Event to put local authors on display

If you're looking for something to do this weekend, head to the Largo Library, which will be holding a Local Author Showcase on Saturday. The free event allows visitors to meet local authors, browse their publications, buy their favorites and take home signed copies. ... Page 4A.

COUNTY

Local group aids disaster victims

Operation Float is back in action after Hurricane Florence pummeled the Carolinas and surrounding states. The initiative, which falls under the umbrella of the St. Petersburg-based Everyday Hero Project, is working hard to collect donations for those affected by Florence. ... Page 6A.

COMMUNITY

Innisbrook takes swing at remodel

Innisbrook executives are working to ensure the resort remains a major player in the industry by remodeling the greens on two courses and renovating every rental unit in advance of the resort's 50th anniversary celebration in 2020. ... Page 10A.

VIEWPOINTS

John Morton

Time flies by faster than the Concorde. ... Page 8A.



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RED TIDE IN PINELLAS

County ramps up cleanup efforts

Crews working on beaches, offshore to harvest mounting numbers of dead fish

By SUZETTE PORTER
Tampa Bay Newspapers

CLEARWATER - Pinellas County's staff and its contractor are working 24/7 to keep dead fish and other negative effects of red tide off local beaches.

"We've been working very diligently since last Friday (Sept. 7) to remove fish that have been washing up on our beaches," Kelli Levy, Environmental Management division manager, told county commissioners during a Sept. 13 meeting.

Much of the work is going on offshore with crews "harvesting" dead fish before they come ashore, she said. Extensive work involving rakes and "a lot of people" also is taking place on the beaches as crews manually remove fish and dispose of them.

Levy said work in the Intracoastal Waterway "has really ramped up" as some of the fish are getting through despite efforts to harvest them offshore. Cleanup efforts also are taking place in interior

See TIDE, page 2A



Photo courtesy of KELLI LEVY

Aerial photos showing discolored water caused by red tide help cleanup crews target areas that need the most attention. Work is going on offshore to "harvest" dead fish before they can come ashore local beaches.

More on the bloom

- Beach cities going into "emergency management mode" trying to limit the damage, clean up dead fish. 2A
- Red tide keeping local anglers on edge. 9A

For more updates, visit TBNweekly.com.



For one longtime baseball fan, a trip to Tropicana Field's mound was the perfect way to honor late father and grieve



Photo by KEVIN SABITUS/TAMPA BAY RAYS

A special Jumbotron introduction was produced for Dirk Howard as he prepared to throw out the ceremonial first pitch before the Tampa Bay Rays' Sept. 10 game against the Cleveland Indians at Tropicana Field. Below, Howard, who suffers from cerebral palsy, celebrates after a perfect first pitch.

A Pitch for Pops

By JOHN MORTON • Tampa Bay Newspapers

ST. PETERSBURG - He was pitcher perfect on a night that was picture perfect.

Dirk Howard tossed the ceremonial first pitch Sept. 10 at Tropicana Field in front of family, friends, and his beloved Tampa Bay Rays baseball team. He would also pass out customized, autographed baseball cards that featured his likeness. To top it off, he appeared in a Jumbotron video that made him larger than life.

All on the eve of his 39th birthday.

"I didn't feel nervous," said Howard, who has cerebral palsy. "I'm proud that I did it all on my own."

Through all the fun and hoopla, the Oldsmar resident also put to rest some sadness and uneasiness with being at the ball park. After all, that's where he and his father, Rick, loved to spend time before Rick

See PITCH, page 4A

CENTRAL PINELLAS CHAMBER AWARDS

Service runs in family for Citizen of Year

By CHRIS GEORGE
Tampa Bay Newspapers

CLEARWATER - Despite it happening 25 years ago, Laurie Bunce remembers every detail of the night her father, Pat Milan, won the Greater Largo Chamber of Commerce's Citizen of the Year Award.

She remembers her outfit, how she wore her hair and, most importantly, the pride they both felt.

The president of Central now has a day her children and grandchildren can remember, because she joined her late father in winning the Citizen of the Year award from what is now the Central Pinellas Chamber of Commerce on Sept.

11 during the organization's 66th annual Meeting and Awards Breakfast at the Sheraton Sand Key Resort in Clearwater.

"I remember those details because I remember what an honor this was for him and how thrilled he was to be given this award," she said, holding back tears. "And I just want to say I feel the same."

The award recognizes individuals who have helped improve the quality of life in central Pinellas through work success and distinguished community service.

The outgoing chairman of the Largo-based chamber, Scott Lake of R.S. Williams & Associates, said Bunce, who also won the Small Business Leader

See CHAMBER, page 4A



Photo by CHRIS GEORGE

Central Pinellas Chamber of Commerce Chairman Scott Lake presents Laurie Bunce of Central with the Citizen of the Year Award.

CITY COMMISSION

City leaders OK budget, unchanged millage rate

Budget reflects new high in spending for West Bay redevelopment district

By CHRIS GEORGE
Tampa Bay Newspapers

LARGO - After months of discussions, city commissioners unanimously signed off on next year's property tax rate and \$164.1 million operating budget Sept. 18.

The millage rate of 5.7413 mills, or \$5.74 for each \$1,000 in taxable value, will remain unchanged, but, because of a 7.46 percent increase in property values, the owner of a homesteaded single-family home with a taxable value of \$92,000, which is roughly the average in Largo, will still pay about \$17 more next year.

The rate, which is the fifth-highest in Pinellas County, is expected to generate an additional \$1.71 million in total revenue in the general fund.

Commissioner John Carroll said the revenue is needed in order to build fund balance and weather any unexpected expenses, such as the \$20,000 in overtime City Manager Henry Schubert said the city

See BUDGET, page 4A

LARGO

Rosery Road project takes step forward

Early design plans include road, safety improvements

By CHRIS GEORGE
Tampa Bay Newspapers

LARGO - City leaders continue to give the green light to road improvement projects they say will make streets safer and easier to traverse for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

The latest project that has moved to the next step after City Commission approval is the first phase of the Rosery Road reconstruction project, which intends to make a number of repairs and improvements to the corridor's 0.8-mile stretch from the Pinellas Trail to Missouri Avenue.

Phase 2 will provide similar improvements between Missouri Avenue and Eagle Lake Park.

See ROSERY, page 4A

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TIDE, from page 1A

canals. As of Sept. 13, approximately 103 tons of dead fish had been removed and taken to the county's Waste to Energy Plant, where they are burned. County Administrator Mark Woodard said tipping fees at the WTE Plant have been waived for municipalities so they can dispose of dead marine life without charge.

Working together

Levy talked about the collective effort going on to combat red tide on the beaches, offshore and from the air.

"Cities have just been outstanding," Levy said. "Without them this wouldn't work."

She said businesses had "stepped up" and allowed dumpsters to be placed in locations that makes cleanup more convenient so "we can get to the fish quicker."

"Our contractor (DRC Emergency Services) has hired a number of local boat captains to work the project," she said. "This has truly been a community effort."

County Environmental Management staff is receiving help from Boca Ciega, and Dunedin Fire Department staff, which is collecting samples at Caladesi Island and Honeymoon Island.

County staff has been collecting and analyzing water samples since the first signs of red tide began appearing Aug. 15. Levy said with the help, staff now has a "full picture" of local conditions.

Visit www.pinellascounty.org/environment/watershed/red-tide.htm for the latest report.

In addition, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Pinellas County Sheriff's Office have been flying up and down the coast mapping the bloom and identifying areas with large quantities of dead fish. Levy said the U.S. Coast Guard joined in the effort Sept. 13-14 providing aerial support.

She said boats have been working offshore 24/7 harvesting the dead fish. Thanks to the information from the aerial surveys, areas with large blooms and a sizable number of dead fish can be targeted, which is lessening the amount of dead fish washing ashore.



Photo courtesy of KELLI LEVY

Dead fish litter a local Pinellas County beach recently. From Sept. 7-16, approximately 172 tons of dead fish have been removed. There are six boats working off and near shore and 12 in the Intracoastal Waterway.

"It makes our operations run a lot smoother," she said.

Staff expects to continue its work as long as is needed. How long that will be is a question that no one can answer.

The first reports of red tide affecting larger marine life came in Sept. 13. Levy said Clearwater Marine Aquarium had rescued two manatees that morning from John's Pass and was attempting to recover a dead dolphin that afternoon offshore Clearwater.

County commissioners unanimously agreed to accept a \$1.3 million emergency grant funding agreement with the Florida Department of Environmental Management, which will help pay for the cleanup.

Accurate information

"This is a challenge of communication," said David Downing, CEO of Visit St. Pete-Clearwater, the county's marketing agency, adding that all the county's departments were working together "to put our best foot forward."

"This is a place we've been before," Downing said Sept. 13. "And because it's about communication, it means it's beach by beach, day by day."

An example of what Downing is talking about can be found at beachesupdate.com, a new webpage publishing the "best, cleanest, more accurate

information" available from multiple sources. It is updated twice daily.

An update published the morning of Sept. 16 reported normal conditions at only three local beaches - Fred Howard Park and Fort De Soto Park bay side and Fort De Soto Park Gulf side. Others had conditions ranging from clear water to dark water, slight odor to strong odor and mild to strong respiratory irritation.

Downing said Visit St. Pete-Clearwater staff has been explaining to visitors and people in the tourism industry what the beaches look like on a daily basis, which prompted the launching of beachesupdate.com.

He said conditions were "asymmetrical."

"Sometimes you'll have beaches that have issues and other beaches that are perfectly clear," he said.

For those concerned about the effect red tide will have on the local tourism industry, Downing had a positive message.

"If there is a little bit of silver lining in all this, this timing is as the season winds down and the slowest time of the year for tourism," he said. "I know that doesn't help the bottom line, but it gives perspective and perspective is important here."

He said staff had identified money in Visit St. Pete-Clearwater's reserves that could be used if

needed to "combat" negative publicity about red tide in Pinellas.

He said Visit Florida, the state's marketing agency, was planning a messaging campaign for the entire Gulf Coast once it is clear of red tide, which has been a problem for areas south of Pinellas since November.

The Sept. 14 red tide report from FWC said the bloom now stretches along 130 miles of coastline from northern Pinellas south to Lee County. It also extends offshore for more than 10 miles. Increased concentrations of red tide, scientific name *Karenia brevis*, were found in water samples at multiple locations in Pinellas, Manatee, Sarasota and Charlotte counties.

Meanwhile, water sampling, communication and cleanup efforts will continue in Pinellas. Crews were especially busy over the weekend.

"Many" to "few" dead fish on numerous local beaches were reported the morning of Sept. 16 on Pinellas County's Environmental News Facebook page, PinellasEnviroNews, another good source for current conditions. Dead fish began to come ashore local beaches in larger numbers Sept. 15. Cleanup efforts continued through the night and on Sunday.

"We are doing everything we can to make our community's experience out there as positive as possible," Levy said.

DEALING WITH DEAD FISH

Beach cities focus on cleanup efforts

TBN Staff

CLEARWATER - Red tide has arrived on Clearwater's beaches, putting the city's Public Works Department into what director Kevin Dunbar calls "emergency management mode."

"We've been on this since the beginning of August," Dunbar said of the looming algae bloom as it slowly made its way up from counties to the south. "We were cleaning beaches on a daily basis, but now we are expanding our operations."

With the fish kill intensifying last weekend, the city's cleanup operations were an all-day effort on Saturday and Sunday, Dunbar said. Otherwise, cleanup usually begins at 5:30 a.m., unless sea turtle nests are spotted with hatchlings. Dunbar said his team works with Clearwater Marine Aquarium on monitoring the turtles. If turtles are present, cleanup begins between 7:30 a.m. and 8 a.m., he said.

Either way, the job is typically done by 9 a.m., he said, with the dead fish hauled off to the Pinellas County landfill.

Meanwhile, the city has contracted with the county to provide boats that go out into the Gulf of Mexico and scoop up dead fish before they reach the beach - an endeavor known as harvesting.

Another challenge is the fact that dead fish are now appearing in the Intracoastal Waterway, often accumulating alongside residents' docks and piers.

Dunbar said homeowners will have to remove them on their own.

"Unfortunately, we don't have the resources to clean up behind everyone's house," he said.

- JOHN MORTON, Tampa Bay Newspapers

Madeira Beach

Madeira Beach is working with Pinellas County Environmental Management staff and its contractor, using private fishing trawlers out in the Gulf to collect dead fish. City officials say east winds have pushed the bloom

closer to Madeira Beach. All available manpower is being deployed on the city's beaches and in the water to try to mitigate the situation as much as possible.

Officials say the number of boats dispatched to collect dead fish in the Gulf has increased from two to seven, and more are on the way. Kelli Levy, division director of Environmental Management, confirmed on Sept. 14 that additional boat captains are being hired.

Property owners dealing with smaller amounts of dead fish are advised to put the fish into a trash bag, seal the bag and then put it out for normal trash pickup. For larger amounts of fish, Pinellas County has established a hotline 727-464-4425 or email watershed@pinellascounty.org for assistance.

For more information, call Curt Preisser, city of Madeira Beach public information officer, at 727-391-9951, ext. 299 or email cpreisser@madeirabeachfl.gov.

St Pete Beach

City of St. Pete Beach staff will be collecting dead fish in the wrack line on the Gulf beach every day for as long as the red tide persists, according to a press release. However, as the tides cycle through the day the wave action will wash dead fish up on the beach continuously, officials say.

Residents on the Bay side of the island can call Public Works at 727-363-9243 for a red tide collection service. Residents are asked to place the dead fish in a heavy-duty plastic bag closed tightly on the curb for collection. Leave your address with the city's receptionist or on the city's voice mail. Collection will be Monday-Friday starting at 2 p.m.

Hotels, condos and residents on the Gulf who would like to assist in the collection effort can do so by placing the dead fish in a heavy-duty plastic bag closed tightly and leaving the bag at the nearest public trash can on the beach.

- SUZETTE PORTER, Tampa Bay Newspapers

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City Briefs



Photo courtesy of CITY OF LARGO

The city of Largo celebrated the completion of the first project to utilize Largo's new Neighborhood Matching Grant Program with a ribbon-cutting Sept. 12.

Neighborhood grant brightens up the block

LARGO - The city of Largo celebrated the completion of the first project to utilize Largo's new Neighborhood Matching Grant Program with a ribbon-cutting Sept. 12.

The Rainforest Homeowners Association used the grant, which was unanimously approved by the City Commission earlier this year, to remove a stretch of rotted fence and replace it with a vinyl fence.

Commissioner Jamie Robinson, City Manager Henry Schubert, members of city staff and homeowners from the Rainforest Neighborhood on Largo's east side were in attendance at the gathering.

"The overall thankfulness expressed by neighbors in support of this project lets us know that we made the right decision in supporting this grant program," Robinson said in a press release.

Officials say matching grant funds remain for neighborhood projects. Information and application instructions can be found at Largo.com/Connect.

Christmas parade seeking entries

LARGO - The Old Fashioned Christmas Parade in Downtown Largo is seeking entries for this year's parade.

This event, which is organized by small business owners in Largo, will be held on Saturday, Dec. 15, at noon. The parade route is just 1 mile long and proceeds at a walking pace. Civic groups, community organizations and other not-for-profit entities may join it free of charge, but there is a small fee for business entries.

Anyone who wishes to participate must be registered before the entry deadline of Nov. 17. The parade has room for 67 entries and organizers reached capacity last year.

For more information, visit LargoParade on Facebook or call 727-518-1967.

Share your thoughts on downtown

LARGO - The city of Largo invites area businesses to share their input on three new proposed logos for downtown Wednesday, Sept. 26, from 6 to 7:30 p.m., at Sages West Bay Bistro, 883 West Bay Drive.

Meet other local businesses and learn about Downtown Branding and upcoming project developments in the area. Light snacks will be served.

Limited space is available, so RSVP to connect@largo.com by Monday, Sept. 24.

New hours set for Highland Aquatic Center

LARGO - The Highland Family Aquatic Center has new operating hours for weekend recreational swimming, according to Mark Abdo, recreation program supervisor at the center.

Through Oct. 28, swimming will be allowed each Saturday and Sunday from noon to 2 p.m. The cost is \$5 for members and \$8 for nonmembers.

The pool will be closed Sept. 29 and Oct. 27.

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.

All submissions can be dropped off at the office or mailed to Tampa Bay Newspapers, 9911 Seminole Blvd., Seminole, FL 33772, emailed to editorial@TBNweekly.com or faxed to 727-397-5900.

Questions? Call 727-397-5563 or send an email. Please include a contact name and number on all submissions.

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.

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Largo, Pinellas Park keep rolling

Staff reports

PINELLAS PARK - Running back Lawrance Toafili rushed for nearly 180 yards and three touchdowns and added another score on a 97-yard kick return as host Pinellas Park picked up a program-first victory over Class 7A District 10 rival East Lake.

"To me it's really big," Toafili said after the Patriots' 45-24 win. "That was one of my goals. We were supposed to beat them last year but we lost by one point."

Pinellas Park hung 31 points on East Lake during a dominant, game-changing second quarter that included a pair of interceptions by junior safety Cody Willoughby and Toafili's 97-yard kick return.

Pinellas Park is 4-0 and tied atop the league standings with St. Petersburg, which beat Seminole 45-0. The Patriots are off next week and head to St. Pete on Sept. 28.

Largo 37, Dixie Hollins 0

LARGO - Six players combined for 285 rushing yards, including 71 by Jayion McCluster, as the Packers rolled over Dixie Hollins



Photo by ERIC HORCHY

Pinellas Park running back Derek Bryant totaled almost 200 yards of offense against East Lake last week.

on Sept. 14.

McCluster, who also scored two touchdowns and had 12 tackles, helped the Packers improve to 3-1 in front of the home crowd.

The Packers will now take on a tough squad in Countryside (3-0). After taking out Osceola 46-7 in

Week 1, the Cougars beat a quality Boca Ciega team 50-33 and then toppled in-town rival Clearwater, 23-20.

Largo will have a challenge with the trio of quarterback Chris Cooper and running backs Brandon Warren and Tyrese Fortune.

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092018

CHAMBER, from page 1A

Award in 2008 and President's Award in 2016, has met that criteria in a variety of ways.

Lake said Bunce's job titles at Largo-based Centratel, which has provided telecommunications equipment and services to businesses since 1978, have included receptionist, dispatcher, sales coordinator, vice president and president since 1999.

"Laurie instills a strong sense of giving back to the community with her employees, and you'll find many of them engaged with the chamber and other associations," he said before a crowd of more than 170 business and community leaders and elected officials.

Lake said Bunce's contribution to the chamber has played a pivotal role in helping to build its positive standing in the region.

"Laurie has been a hands-on leader in moving our many goals and objectives forward at many levels. She has represented the organization in nearly every capacity, including the highest leadership rank, which is chairman of the board," he said, adding that she is the only two-term chairman of the board in chamber history.

She also has led many fundraising activities in support of the Shriner's Hospital for Children, volunteers for many civic and business associations and is past president of the former Suncoast Hospital Foundation.

It's because of people like Bunce that Lake, who will be replaced as chairman Oct. 1 by Sean Tobe of Brown & Brown of Florida, said the chamber had such a successful year.

"Through engagement at many levels and an increase in our communications outreach, the organization's visibility and relevance continues to grow," he said. "Through our active advocacy efforts and regional engagement, we have



Photos SUBMITTED
Recipient of the President's Award, Sue Osborne of Brookdale Pinecrest in Largo, stands with Central Pinellas Chamber of Commerce Tom Morrisette.

become a sought after and recognized voice in the community.

"We provide a long list of programs and services that touch thousands of people throughout the year. Our track record has truly been impressive."

Other awards

- The Silver Hammer Award, which recognizes brick-and-mortar projects that have a positive

impact on the region's economy and quality of life, was presented to Mayor Woody Brown and City Manager Henry Schubert for the city's efforts in constructing Fire Station 43 in Belleair Bluffs.

"Largo Fire Station No. 43 is one of the most unique public construction projects ever," chamber President Tom Morrisette said. "It's believed to be the only construction project in Florida to apply a joint partnership of four different public agencies."

- The Mac Norcross Small Business Leader Award, which recognizes individuals who have shown outstanding achievement in business and community affairs, was given to Ellen and Jeff Petracco of Wealth Builders, a real estate investors association, and Value Properties, a property management company.

When presenting the award, Abe Moussa of Total Tile Solutions and Abe's Place Tap and Grill said Ellen enjoys helping single mothers find quality housing for a fair price and Jeff is a "huge contributor to the community."

"As for engagement with the chamber, there are no greater cheerleaders than Ellen and Jeff," Moussa said.

- The Business Member of the Year, created to honor businesses or associations that have supported the chamber, was given to Clearwater-based Bizzo Technologies.

- The President's Award, presented to individuals who go above and beyond in chamber service, went to Sue Osborne of Brookdale Pinecrest in Largo.

"Sue has been a hands-on leader moving the chamber's goals and objectives forward for many years," Morrisette said. "She has represented the organization in nearly every capacity."

- The Committee Chairman of the Year Award was given to Kristina Hellerty for her leadership on the Pinellas West Village Inn Breakfast Club.



Photo courtesy of CITY OF LARGO

The first phase of the Rosery Road reconstruction project aims to make a number of repairs and improvements to the corridor's 0.8-mile stretch from the Pinellas Trail to Missouri Avenue.

ROSEY, from page 1A

Engineer consultant Peter Nikolov of Clearwater-based Pennoni Associates told commissioners Sept. 11 during a work session that completion of the project will transform Rosery Road into a multimodal corridor.

"That's going to provide a great connection for anybody traveling or traversing this particular area from the Pinellas Trail all the way to Eagle Lake Park and back," he said. "So, it's a great, great connection and continuity."

The scope of the first phase of the project, which Nikolov estimates will cost about \$6.1 million to complete, includes:

- Reconstruction of the existing roadway;
- A median island with midblock crossing near the Shangri-La and Teakwood Village West mobile home parks;
- A 10-foot multimodal path on the south side of the entire stretch of road;
- A 5-foot sidewalk on the north side of the road, with ADA improvements on both sides, including a sidewalk crossing at the CSX railroad tracks;
- Bicycle accommodations;
- Stormwater and sanitary sewer improvements

Construction, however, is still far off. Nikolov

said 30 percent of the design plans should be completed by October and work isn't slated to begin until the end of next year.

Resident input

Nikolov said the recommendations are based on public feedback from meetings at nearby mobile home parks and from an online and direct-mailed questionnaire to residents in the vicinity.

"The residents out there want a separated bike path," he said. "They want to fix all the drainage and the pavement condition out there because there's a lot of localized flooding that's occurring. They want to fix the CSX crossing."

He said the stretch of road in front of the Aldi grocery store at 1177 Missouri Ave. prompted some of the biggest concerns from residents.

Commissioner John Carroll, who called the project "fantastic," said safety improvements are necessary because of an increase in commercial activity and foot traffic in the area.

"You'll make a lot of people happy if you get rid of those bollards and no U-turn signs," he said. "I mean that's almost comical to sit out there and watch what goes on."

Nikolov agreed, adding that they are also considering a midblock crossing and a

landscaped median that could serve as a safe haven for pedestrians.

"There's so much conflict in turning movements here that it's really something that really needs to get fixed, and this project is going to fix that," he said.

Nikolov said the new Rosery Storage Facility is also redeveloping the property across the street from Aldi, so there will be an improved frontage road and additional visibility and access for pedestrians.

In addition, Barry Westmark, a senior engineer with the city, said engineers are working with the developer of Rosery Court, a 224-unit apartment complex at the southwest corner of Clearwater-Largo and Rosery roads.

"The design of the facility will also benefit the new residents by providing on-street parking and access to this multimodal facility," he said.

Nikolov said that intersection also will see improvements, such as increased visibility of the crosswalks.

The public will have more opportunities to provide input, he added. A public meeting will be held sometime after November, and when they reach the 60-90 percent design stage, a final meeting will be held where engineers will inform the public about what to expect from construction.

PITCH, from page 1A

succumbed to breast cancer on Sept. 20 last year after a nine-year battle.

"I did it for my dad," Howard said.

He said he was relieved he could balance his emotions while being in the spotlight.

"I was happy to be able to do that," Howard said. "That could have been tough."

Howard loves baseball, and you could even say he's the face of the Clearwater Threshers. After all, he's the first one you see when you walk on in. He's the guy pitching you a program.

"They call him their Brand Ambassador," Robin Lally, the founder of the Clearwater-based Help Us Gather organization, said of Howard.

HUG advocates for inclusion and connects people with disabilities to social events and activities, so a Rays game made an ideal outing.

But, when Lally organized a trip to the Trop, she learned Howard passed on the invite.

"The more he thought about attending a game without his father, the more he started to grieve," Lally said. "He called HUG and said he could not go because he would be too sad."

So, Lally went to bat for Howard.

First, she asked the Rays management team if Howard could throw out the first pitch. Delighted with a yes response, she took it to another level when she asked if she could produce a video to appear on the team's giant scoreboard.



Photo SUBMITTED

Team ambassadors from Help Us Gather flank Dirk Howard before his opportunity to throw out the first pitch at the Sept. 10 Rays game. From left are Ashley Richmond, HUG founder Robin Lally, Howard, Nicole Barre and Kevin Stamper.

It would mirror the elaborate introduction that showcases each player.

"We put Dirk in front of a blue screen and had him do all sorts of fun baseball actions, just like the players do," she said. "We even had him putting on his cap in slow motion. It turned out just great."

Howard could hardly say no to all the excitement, so it's to the mound he went as the crowd cheered him on.

That included his mother, Cindi, and his sister Brandi.

"I know this will sound overly dramatic, but it was epic," Cindi Howard said. "It was an opportunity to heal and it was also such a great tribute to Rick. They were very close."

Brandi, who often joined her brother and father at Rays games, was down on the field with Dirk.

"She was in tears," Cindi said of her daughter. Lally enjoyed seeing the reaction.

"It served as a real healing process for the family to see such a smile on his face," she said. Lally, who started her organization just a year ago, shared in what she called "absolute joy."

"It was so special to see him connect back to something so important to him," she said.

As someone who is up-close to people who have to take on daunting challenges day in and day out, it had extra meaning to Lally.

"It ranks pretty high up there," Lally, a resident of Belleair Beach, said of the event. "To see everything we've been working toward come to life like that, and to see that HUG logo on his shirt out there, and to know we helped fulfill a dream - well, it just fuels our desire to do what we set out to do."

As for the baseball cards HUG created for Howard, they'll now grace the 300-plus card collection he enjoyed accumulating with his dad.

How does Howard feel about having his card mixed in with his favorite big-leaguers?

"It's kind of weird," he said with a laugh.

Around Largo**Rotary Club to hold fundraiser**

LARGO - The Rotary Club of Central Pinellas will host its annual Bowl-a-thon at Liberty Lanes Bowling Alley, 11401 Starkey Road, on Saturday, Sept. 29, from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Registration begins at 11:30 a.m. and bowling begins at noon. A barbecue lunch will be provided and there will be fun and entertainment for the whole family.

The fundraiser goes to support children's literacy and other projects in the area.

The cost is \$40 per person or \$150 for a team of four. Call 813-758-3555 for more details.

Largo Fire Rescue set for Open House

LARGO - Largo Fire Rescue's annual Open House returns Saturday, Oct. 13, from 1 to 4 p.m., at Fire Station 41, 180 Fourth St. SW.

This year, the free event will include three local barbecue restaurants competing to win Citizen's Choice Best BBQ of Largo. Citizens can sample barbecue and cast their vote by contributing a donation to the fire boot on each restaurant's table.

Participating restaurants are Rib Shack BBQ, Frankie's Patriot BBQ and Sonny's BBQ of Largo. All donations will benefit the Children's Burn Foundation of Florida.

The event also will include family-friendly activities, such as a "Jaws of Life" demonstration, station tours, fire engine rides, Bayflite landing zone demonstration and a side-by-side fire sprinkler burn demonstration put on by Piper Fire Protection.

Parking will be available in the Pinellas County School Administration Board parking lot across the street from the fire station. For more information, call Largo Fire Rescue at 727-587-6737.

Homespun Arts and Crafts Show set

LARGO - The 23rd annual Homespun Arts and Crafts Show will be presented Saturday, Oct. 13, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., in the Christian Life Enrichment Center at St. Paul United Methodist Church, 1199 Highland Ave., Largo.

Shop 95 local craftspeople at this large indoor-outdoor show. The show will feature all unique, handmade items. Door prizes will be given out all day. Food will be available for purchase. Admission is \$1 at the door. Proceeds will support outreach ministries in the community. Visit www.stpaulumc.org.

Church to host fall festival

LARGO - A fall festival will take place Saturday, Oct. 20, 2 to 6 p.m., at Christ the King Lutheran Church, 11220 Oakhurst Road, Largo.

This community-wide family event will feature games, field day contests and activities, touch-a-truck opportunities, pony rides, a petting zoo, hay bale bowling and hay rides. There will be live entertainment provided by local musician Tom Davis from 4 to 6 p.m. Bratwurst, hot dogs, hamburgers, popcorn, cotton candy and s'mores will be available.

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.

Central Park to host free movies

LARGO - Bring your blanket or chair out to Largo Central Park to enjoy a movie on the lawn at 6:30 p.m. each Friday through Oct. 19.

There is no cost to view the family-friendly movie.

The lineup is as follows:
Sept. 21: "Sherlock Gnomes"
Sept. 28: "Early Man"
Oct. 5: "Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul"
Oct. 12: "Home"
Oct. 19: "A Wrinkle in Time"
Visit LargoEvents.com for rainout information.

Library to hold Local Author Showcase

LARGO - The Largo Public Library will hold a Local Author Showcase on Saturday, Sept. 22, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

During the event, which is part of Get Lit Largo, a series of literary events to bring readers and writers together, visitors can meet local authors, browse their publications, buy their favorites and take home signed copies.

This event is free and open to the public and no registration is necessary.

Friends of Library to hold fall book sale

LARGO - The Friends of Largo Library will hold its fall book sale Wednesday-Saturday, Sept. 26-29, at the Largo Public Library.

The sale will feature CDs, DVDs, audiobooks and books from a variety of genres for 50 cents each book for \$1 for three books.

Credit cards will not be accepted.

The hours are as follows:
Sept. 26: 3 to 5 p.m. for members only;
Sept. 27-28: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sept. 29: 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., visitors can fill a paper grocery bag with books for \$1.
For more information, call 727-587-6715.

Genealogists offer free day of research

LARGO - Pinellas Genealogy Society and Largo Public Library are offering Family History Assistance Day on Saturday, Oct. 13, noon to 4 p.m., in the Jenkins "A" room on the library's first floor.

Bring details of your families' history (names, dates, places of birth, death, marriages, residences, etc.) and receive free, one-on-one research assistance from a PGS consultant who will help you find your ancestors. No appointment is necessary; first come, first served.

Tours of the library's genealogy center will also be offered. For questions about the event, call Bob Bryan at 727-595-4521 or email Bbryan84@gmail.com.

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.

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.

McGough Nature Park

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

Center to host Look Alive Bird Show

LARGO - The Look Alive Bird Show will be presented Sunday, Sept. 23, from 1 to 2 p.m., at the Narrows Environmental Education Center.

Attendees will get a glimpse at the world of Florida's fabulous flighted hunters. The show details the amazing adaptations that raptors use to exploit the natural world for their gain. The show includes owls, hawks, falcons and Sarge, the center's own bald eagle and the star of the show. Cost is \$3 a person.

Highland Recreation Complex

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

Highland to host Aquathlon family race

LARGO - Highland Recreation Complex will host an Aquathlon as

BUDGET, from page 1A

has paid as a result of the investigation into 2-year-old Jordan Belliveau, whose body was found after a fake Amber Alert and two-day search.

Redevelopment spending reaches new high

City leaders, acting as the Community Redevelopment Agency, also voted 7-0 to adopt the FY 2019 budget for the West Bay Community Redevelopment District.

Economic Development Manager Teresa Brydon said proposed expenditures for the district, which is funded solely through Downtown Tax Increment Financing, are just over \$2.5 million - a new high.

"This is the largest proposed budget

expenditure for this fund since its inception," she said. "Typically, proposed expenditures for this fund have been around \$600,000, \$700,000. However, due to the re-budgeting ... of funds for the trailhead project and then two new projects that are coming online - we have the downtown plaza and of course the re-pavement project for West Bay Drive - the expenditures for the new fund grew exponentially."

Brydon said she thinks the investments will soon start returning money to the city's coffers.

"I'm pretty confident that with all the projects that are underway, that we'll continue to see an increase as well in the taxable value within the district," she said, "and I do think that we're going to be in the future seeing a little bit higher peaks in the way that we see the revenues come through."

Brydon added that the budget should prove to

state lawmakers, who have been scrutinizing the handling of CRA funds by municipalities, that the city knows what it's doing.

"The good news is the funds are there," she said. "We have the resources and that's why we've been good stewards in making sure we maintain the dollars because we knew we had identified them for these projects."

Commissioner Jamie Robinson said Brydon should show those legislators the city's plans to display the value of CRAs.

"We'll definitely put our best foot forward and show the unique projects that we're doing to benefit, not only downtown, but I really do think the larger part of the population in Pinellas County," Brydon said.

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

LARGO, from page 4A

part of its Family Fun Race Series on Saturday, Sept. 29, from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

The event includes a run/walk around Highland Recreation's trails followed by a lap swim in the pool. It is not a timed event.

Grab a swag bag, enter to win prizes and more. Race-day check-in starts at 8:30 a.m. and the race starts at 9:30 a.m.

The cost is \$20 per family and \$10 for individual participants. Participants must register by Sept. 26 and be able to swim/walk in a maximum depth of 4 feet.

Register online at PlayLargo.com/Register and type 371709 into the "Activity Number" box or in-person at Highland Rec.

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.

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 Oct. 3-24; and 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.

Crop Til You Drop Weekend coming up

LARGO – The Largo Community Center will kick off a weekend of cropping and socializing starting at 3 p.m. Friday, Sept. 28.

The ballroom will feature electrical outlets at every table, a large selection of background music and dining areas.

The event will be held 3 p.m. to midnight Friday, Sept. 28; 8 a.m. to midnight Saturday; and 8 a.m. to noon Sunday.

For information about the cost, call the Community Center at 727-518-3131.

Center to host film festival

LARGO – The Community Center will host a Comedy Legends Film Festival on Friday, Oct. 5, starting at 2 p.m.

From silent film legends like Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton to comedic duos like Bud Abbott and Lou Costello, the festival will explore the contributions of comedic icons of the golden age of movies.

The cost is \$5 for members and \$10 for nonmembers.

City to present Rock Your Golden Years event

LARGO – Rock Your Golden Years, a lifestyle event for adults age 50 and older, will take place Tuesday, Oct. 9, 1 to 4 p.m., at the Largo Community Center.

Families looking for a central place to get information about active aging will find it all here, set in a fun and entertaining atmosphere.

The expo will feature free admission and parking, live entertainment, national and local vendors, guest speakers, lifestyle workshops, fashion consultants, beauty products, adult activities, career options, tasting stations, fun stations and more. Wellness screenings are available throughout the event.

There also will be a raffle of door prizes and giveaways. Attendees will have an opportunity to gather information about events, classes, workshops and excursions.

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 Waff at 727-895-9073.
- Karaoke: Tuesdays, 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. Perform your favorite tunes to sing-along CDs, bring your own CDs or select from those available. The cost is \$1.50 for members.
- Mahjong games: Thursdays, 12:30 to 4 p.m. Beginners are welcome. The cost is \$1.50 for members and \$5 for nonmembers.
- Sunday Social Dance: Sundays, 6 to 10 p.m. Dress to impress and join about 150 singles and friends of all ages to dance to an extensive music library to fit every taste. The cost is \$10.
- 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

- 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. Takeout orders are available by calling 727-584-2038. There is no lunch Thursday or Friday.

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 \$7.50 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 10 p.m. The cost is \$8.50 and includes bacon-

wrapped filet mignon served with a salad, baked potato and rolls. Coffee is \$1.

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.

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.

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.

Kiwanis Club of Largo/Mid-Pinellas

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

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

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

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

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.

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ST. PETERSBURG

Group comes to aid of storm victims

Operation Float collecting items for those affected by Hurricane Florence

By TIFFANY RAZZANO
Tampa Bay Newspapers

ST. PETERSBURG – Operation Float is back in action after Hurricane Florence pummeled the Carolinas and surrounding states.

The initiative, which falls under the umbrella of the St. Petersburg-based Everyday Hero Project, got its start in 2016 following the Pulse shooting in Orlando. A gunman opened fire at the nightclub, killing 49 and wounding 58. A group of friends in Pinellas County – Cici Danielson, Jess Smith, Michael Dacosta, Mick Ferrari and Tristan Weghorn – with the help of local businesses collected food, water and monetary donations for the victims and their families.

The friends reactivated last year in the wake of hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, rushing to get needed supplies to those devastated by the storms in Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico. The group's efforts in Puerto Rico have continued throughout the past year, said Catalina Tiamson, executive director of Everyday Hero Project.

"I'm a little shook up right now that we're still doing hurricane relief from last year and we're being activated again," she said.

The organization is working hard to collect donations – hygiene products, food and more – for those affected by Florence.

"Items that we need right now are just the fundamentals – deodorants, toothbrushes," said Chantal Baldowski with Operation Float. "One of the things that I know a lot of people are afraid to ask for are adult diapers. I like to say we need everything except clothes and condoms."

Working with Boondocks K9 Search & Rescue, the first



Operation Float volunteers pack up donations to be delivered to hurricane victims.

How to help

Those interested in donating to Operation Float and Hurricane Florence victims should call 727-386-8894 or visit www.everydayheroproject.org/donations. Items also can be dropped off at Muddy Water Kava, Coffee & Tea Bar in St. Petersburg, Speakeasy Kava in Largo and Got Split Ends? salon in Pinellas Park.

shipment of donations deployed Sept. 18. The group is still collecting items, though, and plans to send another shipment to North Carolina later this month.

Several businesses have stepped up to serve as donation drop-off centers. So far, Muddy Water Kava, Coffee & Tea Bar in St. Petersburg, Speakeasy Kava in Largo and Got Split Ends? salon in Pinellas Park have opened up their doors to donors, Baldowski said. Tiamson added that a fourth drop-off location, a private home in Oldsmar, is also available to northern Pinellas County and Tampa residents.

All items collected will go directly to those in need, Baldowski said. The volunteers work in conjunction with other smaller nonprofits and search and rescue groups rather than larger relief aid organizations.

"We feel that the larger organizations care more about

airtime than actually helping the community," she said. "We just don't feel that it should have to go through so many channels. We just go directly to the communities in need."

If any items collected for Florence victims go unused, she added, the overflow will be used for the continuing efforts in Puerto Rico.

There are other ways to get involved with Operation Float, Tiamson said. This past year, Everyday Hero Project, Operation Float and Boondocks K9 partnered to create a Community Emergency Response Team training program. Though 12 attended the first 20-hour training program, not enough signed up for the second offering of the program and it was canceled, she said.

With Florence affecting so many people and there still being several months left to the hurricane season, Tiamson hopes this is "a wake-up call."

She said, "It's a terrible way to get people on that awareness again. People have to understand that they have to do this (training) before (another hurricane) comes here."

There are also opportunities to help Operation Float in Puerto Rico. The group still collects supplies for the victims of Hurricane Maria and makes regular trips there. Volunteers with the organization have helped on a variety of missions – medical,

distribution, search and rescue.

They're also offering a new program, Community Upliftment Tours, also called CUTS. The last trip took place in early September for a school enrollment event in Cubuy.

"Kids have not gone to school over there since the hurricane," Tiamson said. "Depression is really setting in a lot of these kids. Some of them because their parents decided to head over to the United States and leave them with grandparents, some lost people. One of the biggest needs is this mental health stage that a lot of people who are left are having to deal with."

They gave away school supplies at the school registration event. They also had a licensed cosmetologist with the group who gave haircuts to the children, and licensed massage therapists who offered massages to parents waiting in line. There was musical entertainment and a clown, as well. They also brought art supplies with them and set up fun activities, Tiamson added.

"These kids hadn't touched paints or colored pencils in a year," she said.

The results were staggering, she added. Compared to other cities, Cubuy residents saw a shift in their mental health.

"That city stuck out because people were still talking about our event," she said. "The mental upliftment was significant and (we) did not expect it to be as significant as it was."

The next trip will take place Jan. 24-29. After that, Operation Float will likely send groups over on a monthly basis. Anyone is welcome to join them. Cost is \$500 per person, which includes, once they're in Puerto Rico, transportation, accommodations and breakfast.

Those interested in donating to Operation Float and Hurricane Florence victims should call 727-386-8894 or visit www.everydayheroproject.org/donations.

Pair of paramedics honored



Photo courtesy of SUNSTAR PARAMEDICS

Two Sunstar Paramedics employees were honored with Sutherland Masonic Lodge's Paramedic of the Year awards Aug. 21 during the lodge's annual First Responders Appreciation Night. Matthew Caravona, left, was recognized for his dedication to training new employees at Sunstar and instilling the importance of the EMS profession. Scott Markowitz was honored for his commitment to high-quality patient care and mentoring new employees.

Police Beat

Largo motorcyclist dies after crash on Courtney Campbell Causeway

CLEARWATER – A 29-year-old Largo man died at a local hospital Sept. 14 from injuries suffered in a crash with a car on the Courtney Campbell Causeway.

Clearwater police and Clearwater Fire & Rescue responded to the crash in the westbound lanes of the Courtney Campbell Causeway about 3:16 a.m. The crash occurred about 200 yards east of Damascus Road. According to police, Nathaniel N. Varnadore was operating a 2018 Suzuki that rear-ended a 2005 Honda Civic being driven by Anthony C. Tucker, 59, of Dunedin. Police say the motorcycle caught fire after the impact.

Varnadore was taken to Mease Countryside Hospital where he later died. Tucker was taken to Mease Dunedin Hospital as a precaution. No other injuries were reported.

Motorcyclist killed in crash with school bus

LEALMAN – A 21-year-old St. Petersburg man died at the scene of a crash that occurred about 4:51 p.m. Sept. 11 on 62nd Avenue North in Lealman.

According to Florida Highway Patrol, a Pinellas County school bus, driven by Hector Ramon Paz, 60, of Largo was traveling westbound on 62nd Avenue North. Wanderley Rosales Echemen was operating a 2012 Honda motorcycle traveling eastbound on 62nd Avenue North.

Troopers say as both vehicles approached the intersection of 28th Street North, the bus turned south onto 28th Street North and into the path of the motorcycle. The front of the motorcycle then collided with the right side of the bus. Echemen, who was wearing a helmet, died at the scene.

Seven passengers were on the bus – all adult students of Nina Harris School, ranging in age from 60 to 18. None of the students or the bus driver was injured. Charges are pending.

Motorcyclist injured in crash with deputy

PINELLAS PARK – A 29-year-old St. Petersburg man suffered serious injuries when he ran a red light and crashed into a Pinellas County Sheriff's cruiser about 7:11 p.m. Sept. 9 at the intersection of 66th Street North and 70th Avenue North in Pinellas Park.

According to deputies assigned to the Major Accident Investigation Team, Dannie Tran was traveling on a 2008 Harley Davidson motorcycle westbound on 70th Avenue North, approaching 66th Street North.

Deputy Dominic Brissett, 32, was stopped at the red light on 66th Street North and 70th Avenue North. When the light turned green, Brissett proceeded north with his 2016 Chevrolet Tahoe in the median lane.

Deputies say Tran failed to stop for the red light and crashed into Brissett's cruiser. The force of the crash caused Tran to be ejected from his motorcycle. He was transported to Bayfront Medical Center with serious but non-life threatening injuries.

Deputies say impairment does not appear to be a factor in the crash. – Compiled by SUZETTE PORTER

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Business Briefcase

DIY studio to host women's networking group

LARGO – Aerie Lane studio locations, a do-it-yourself creative studio and event space venue, recently launched The Table.

The Table is a non-membership women's networking group. The cost per table guest is \$40 per meeting. The Table is a non-membership group meaning that there are no additional fees to participating in a meeting. To ensure that there is no conflict of interest and to cultivate a culture of choices and not competition, each individual Table meeting allows only one spot per profession.

The Table is open to all women. Whether you are a business owner, entrepreneur, career seeker, female employee, or stay-at-home mom.

"We wanted to create a beautiful space where all women are invited to experience true connection, authentic conversation, and genuine community develop and thrive," said Renee Lee in a press release. "The Table gatherings take place around a beautifully table-scaped table where a hot meal is provided and the table host leads strategic conversation that will grow each participant personally and professionally."

To register for a meeting at Aerie Lane Largo, located in the Village Plaza at 1901 West Bay Drive No. 18, visit www.eventbrite.com/o/the-table-largo-florida-17762445811.

Chamber to host B2B Happy Hour Event

LARGO – The Central Pinellas Chamber of Commerce will host its next Business to Business Happy Hour Thursday, Sept. 20, 5:30 to 7 p.m., at Fat Cat's Tavern, 3665 E. Bay Drive, No. 100, Largo.

The event will include an opportunity to meet and network with current chamber members, enjoy food and learn about the Central Pinellas Chamber. Cost to attend is \$10 online for members and nonmembers and \$20 for members and nonmembers at the door.

To register, call 727-584-2321 or visit www.centralchamber.biz/events.

RCS to host Help and Hope Grand Gala

CLEARWATER – RCS Pinellas returns to The Conny Center in Dunedin on Sept. 22 for its fourth annual Help & Hope Grand Gala, "A Night of Inspiration."

The organization's signature black-tie event, the gala raises funds to aid Pinellas County residents facing hunger, homelessness, and domestic violence. Keynote speaker will be ESPN SportsCenter's Jay Harris with special guest Rob Brandenburg, a professional basketball player and 2011 NCAA Final Four.

The evening will include dinner by award winning ClearSky Beachside Café, music by DJ Dani, live and silent auctions, open bar, games, raffles, and dancing. Co-presenting sponsors are Siracusa Staffing & Leasing and MBA Modern Business Associates.

For top level sponsors, there will be a VIP cocktail reception on Sept. 21 for an opportunity to meet Harris. To become a sponsor, purchase tickets, or learn more about the event, visit www.rcsgrandgala.com.

Over 130,000 Pinellas County individuals are served annually with dignity at the RCS Food Bank, the RCS Grace House, The Haven of RCS, and RCS thrift store partnerships.

Hofbrauhaus to host Oktoberfest celebration

ST. PETERSBURG – In true Bavarian tradition, Hofbrauhaus St. Petersburg will host its annual Oktoberfest starting Saturday, Sept. 22, which is also the opening day of Munich's festival. Celebrations will continue through the end of October.

A ceremonial wooden keg tapping of HB's Oktoberfest bier will kick off the party Sept. 22 at noon. Following the tapping, the celebration will feature Hofbrauhaus beer and cuisine as well as traditional Bavarian musicians and other entertainment, including nightly stein holding competitions and beer chugging contests. This year's Oktoberfest sponsors are Keller Williams St. Pete, J. J. Taylor Distributing Florida Inc., and FC Bayern Munchen Fan Club St. Pete.

This year Hofbrauhaus will present its first annual Bier Olympics, inviting both corporate and public teams to participate.

Bier Olympics events will include stein holding, dizzy bat tray race, bier chugging, bier pong, and flip cup. Over \$10,000 in prizes will be awarded including Stein Club memberships and gift cards. All participants will receive a T-shirt. Teams may sign up in person up to the day of the event. Email events@hofbrauhausstpetersburg.com for more information about Bier Olympics. Participants must be over 21 years of age. Space is limited. Hofbrauhaus is at 123 Fourth St. S., St. Petersburg.

Harry's Beach Bar reopens at Sirata Resort

ST. PETE BEACH – Sirata Beach Resort, located directly on the pristine Gulf Coast waters, recently announced the reopening of Harry's Beach Bar as part of the resort's \$15 million transformation.

Set on one of the most desirable beaches in the world, guests and locals alike can now enjoy a renovated Harry's Beach Bar that includes more open-air bar space and positioned perfectly for full enjoyment of breathtaking ocean views and sublime sunsets.

Harry's new menu will continue to serve its famous tropical cocktails, such as Harry's Hurricane and The Harry Navel, as well as an extensive beer selection that includes seasonal and local craft beer on tap. Food options

BBA meets



Photo SUBMITTED

Members of the Bluffs Business Association meet for a recent after-hours mingle hosted by Richard's Foodporium, 2927 West Bay Drive, Belleair Bluffs. Guests enjoyed refreshments and making new business contacts. The next mingle will be Thursday, Oct. 11, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., at JK Flowers & Gift Baskets, 420 Indian Rocks Road, Belleair Bluffs. For more information visit BluffsBusinessAssociation.com or call 727-686-8797.

complete the menu with selections such as the waffle fry poutine, Harry's signature Avocado Mango Tango burger, salads, sandwiches and Harry's wings.

Harry's Beach Bar opened in 1983. Harry's Beach Bar is open seven days a week for lunch, dinner and drinks from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Visit www.sirata.com/restaurants/harrys-beach-bar.

Tampa Bay Technology Center relocates

CLEARWATER – The Tampa Bay Technology Center is hosting its meeting and all other activities, including its repair clinic and classes, at the Resource Center, 2189 Cleveland St., Suite 229, Clearwater.

Founded in 1984, the Tampa Bay Technology Center is one of the largest in the southeast. A 501(c) not-for-profit organization, the center serves the Tampa Bay area by educating the community on all aspects of technology in the tradition of "people helping people."

For a complete calendar of happenings, visit www.tampa-bay.org.

Car, truck show to benefit scholarship fund

ST. PETERSBURG – An open car, truck show and swap meet will take place Saturday, Sept. 29, 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., at Cody's Original Roadhouse, 4360 Park St., St. Petersburg.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the Kathryn Mezerowski Memorial Scholarship at the St Petersburg College.

Pre-registration cost is \$10. Cost is \$15 on day of show for a car space. To pre-register, email okayz8@knology.net or text 727-459-3688 with name and car info or name for swap.

There will be music, door prizes, trophies, silent auction and 50/50 drawing. Event sponsors include Mamas Kitchen, Golden Bear Restaurant, Mr. Car Wash, Harbor Freight Tools, Fresco's Waterfront Restaurant, Meineke of Seminole, Bloomin Brands, Graphix, Sweet Sage Café, Winghouse of Ulmerton, Culver's of Seminole, Tijuana Flats of Pinellas Park, Big Jim's Tap and Tavern, and Joto's Pizza.

There is no charge to look at the unique and beautiful vehicles.

Duke Energy Foundation recognizes nonprofits

ST. PETERSBURG – For the third consecutive season, the Duke Energy Foundation committed \$1,000 for every Rays win this season to charities that support veterans in the community through the Victories for Veterans program, a unique partnership with the Tampa Bay Rays.

A total of \$85,000 will be invested in 13 organizations to provide services to more than 2,500 veterans in Florida.

The 13 recipient organizations were recognized Sept. 16 with a check presentation by Duke Energy and Tampa Bay Rays representatives.

Tampa Bay area recipient organizations include:

- Homeless Emergency Project Inc.



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The Duke Energy Foundation provides philanthropic support to address the needs of communities where its customers live and work. The Foundation contributes more than \$5 million annually in charitable gifts throughout its Florida service territory.

Beaches chamber to host candidate forum

MADEIRA BEACH – The Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber of Commerce will host a candidate forum for candidates running in the November election Thursday, Oct. 4, 9 a.m., at Madeira Beach City Hall, 300 Municipal Drive, Madeira Beach.

Complimentary coffee and bagels will be provided by Whitco Insurance. Attendees will have an opportunity to learn about local candidates running in the November election and ask questions.

For information and to register, visit www.tampabaybeaches.com/events.

Manufacturers Association to hand out awards

OLDSMAR – The Florida Suncoast Manufacturers Association will host its sixth annual award ceremony Thursday, Oct. 4, 6 to 9 p.m., at Nielsen, 501 Brooker Creek Parkway, Oldsmar.

The association serves manufacturers in Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas counties. The event is held to recognize those who have shown extraordinary leadership in advancing the strength of the regional manufacturing sector as well as to help display the diversity and strength of area manufacturing. There are more than 60,000 manufacturing jobs in the region and manufacturing provides more revenue to the Pinellas economy than tourism.

The theme of the event is "Advanced Manufacturing." The guest speaker will be Dean Bartles. Bartles is an internationally recognized expert in the field of advanced manufacturing and nanotechnology and is current president of the National Tool and Machinists Association. We will also recognize outstanding students pursuing a career in the manufacturing sector.

This event is open to the public. Dinner will be served by Amici's Catering. Space is limited. Reservations are required. Cost is \$60. Visit www.utbchamber.com or call 813-855-4233 for additional information.

Shabby Chic Market set for Safety Harbor

SAFETY HARBOR – The Fall Shabby Chic Market will take place Sunday, Oct. 14, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., on Main Street in Safety Harbor.

The event will feature live entertainment and DIY shabby chic craft workshops provided by local sponsor Dixie Belle Paint Company. Guests can create their own one-of-a-kind shabby chic home décor item, and try out Dixie Belle's high-quality chalk mineral paint. Event partner and plant vendor Green Thumb Creations will be offering a Succulent Creation Station where guests can purchase their own pot, and plant of their choice, and build their own succulent or cacti. The Shabby Chic Markets are completely free to attend and free to park. More than 80 local artisans take part in the market.

To submit business news, email editorial@TBNweekly.com. Submissions also may be faxed to 727-397-5900, dropped off at the office or mailed to Tampa Bay Newspapers, 9911 Seminole Blvd., Seminole, FL 33772. Please include contact information on all submissions. Announcements are printed as space allows.

Obituaries

Donald Thomas NIEMANN



Donald Thomas Niemann, 81, of Seminole, Florida, died Monday, September 10, 2018. Don was born October 9, 1936 in Louisville, Kentucky. He is survived by his loving wife, Devera; his children, Donald Niemann Jr., Penny Niemann, Barry Niemann, Brent Niemann; his brother, Kenneth Niemann; nine grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Cancer Society, the Alzheimer's Association, or locally to pawsrescuegroup.com. Memorial services will be held on Saturday, September 22, 2018 from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. with Celebration of Life beginning at 1:00 p.m. at Garden Sanctuary, 7950 131st Street, Seminole, FL. For biography, video tribute and to place tributes, please visit www.gardensanctuaryfunerals.com

BIHR, Col. Michael Wm., of Largo, FL, passed away Saturday, Sept. 8, 2018. For full obituary, services and more information go to: www.Mohnfuneralhome.com, or 727-393-3481

HASSINGER, Lee M., 93, of Seminole, FL, passed away Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2018. For full obituary, services and more information go to: www.Mohnfuneralhome.com, or 727-393-3481

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Health care group puts priority on safety concerns

As we reflect on what we've learned since Hurricane Irma blasted Florida one year ago, Florida's nursing centers are continuing their work of improving preparations, education, and training - to be ready for a storm of comparable power and impact.

As I See It

Emmett Reed

We cannot forget the lessons of the tragedy that struck a South Florida nursing center last year. Even though that center was not a member of Florida Health Care Association, the loss of life there was felt deeply throughout the long-term care profession. The episode has served as an immeasurable motivator for our member nursing centers and assisted living facilities to remain prepared to keep our more than 70,000 residents safe throughout the storm season.

Following Florida's brush with Tropical Storm Gordon last week and three powerful systems brewing in the Atlantic as this is written, these dedicated caregivers continue to demonstrate strong leadership to be ready for whatever comes their way.

Since Gov. Rick Scott implemented new generator requirements for long-term care centers, our members have been working tirelessly on their emergency power plans, including strengthening steps for both evacuation and shelter-in-place scenarios. They're enhancing their systems for communicating with family members and enhancing relationships with emergency managers so those authorities have a better understanding of the centers' residents and the complexities of their medical needs. They're also putting those plans to the test, running disaster drills and training seminars so both staff and residents are familiar with the steps that will be taken during an emergency.

Centers are also working to install their permanent generators to keep residents safe, cool, and comfortable if they experience a loss of power. The generator installation process can take an average of 38 weeks to complete - these are not like a portable generator to cool your home, they are massive and custom-fit for buildings that, on average, house 120 residents. While centers are navigating through the logistics of permitting, zoning, engineering, construction, and inspection of these massive generators and the fuel to accompany them, they're bringing in mobile generators or making plans to evacuate should the power go out.

Compliance with regulations to keep residents safe is a responsibility our member centers have and always will take seriously. At the same time, these centers are demonstrating that there's more to their mission than just compliance - it's about providing quality care and enriching the lives of elders who can no longer care for themselves at home.

Every day - whether in the midst of hurricane season or not - FHCA members remain dedicated to improving health outcomes for our residents. Their care and safety remain our first priorities, and we are steadfast in our commitment to do everything we can to ensure their well-being no matter what nature throws our way.

One year after Irma, Florida's long-term care residents should feel a greater sense of comfort knowing their caretakers are prepared for any situation that comes their way. And family members should feel at ease with the reassurance that their loved ones are in good hands.

Families with loved ones in a care center can see how facilities in that county are complying by visiting the Emergency Preparedness section of FHCA's "Elder Care Florida" website.

Emmett Reed is the executive director of the Florida Health Care Association.

LETTERS

Medicare for all is Medicare for none

Editor:

The utopic idea of Medicare for all being free health care with all the trimmings is a hoax. Sooner or later, the resources required to pay for this single payer system will run out of money. Someone has to pay, and the payment will be in the form of exponentially higher taxes, probably costlier than the actual premiums. Overall, cost estimates approximate \$32 trillion over 10 years; probably underestimated. Medical research could very well suffer from decreased funding, thereby impeding the further development of new technology and drugs.

As Americans, we are used to choosing our healthcare needs. With government in total control, choice will disappear, extended waiting times to see a doctor will follow, and the current available medical technology will be increasingly rationed. Medicare today does not pay the total cost of care. With private insurance supplements, the 20 percent not covered is cost shifted into a private policy. Medicare for all will not be cost shifted, so very possibly the elderly, having paid into Medicare during their working years, will be shortchanged as the system is flooded with "Medicare for All." Unlike Europe, our country is neither homogeneous, nor was it built upon socialism. Lastly, P.J. O'Rourke, a political satirist, stated, "If you think healthcare is expensive now, think how much more expensive it will be when it is free." I agree and so should Americans.

Pamela McAloon
Palm Harbor

Vote yes on amendment to end dog suffering

Editor:

In November, voters will have the opportunity to protect dogs from injury and harm by voting Yes on Amendment 13, which would phase out the cruelty and corruption of dog racing by 2020.

Every three days, a greyhound dies at a racetrack in our state. Also, Florida is one of only two states that does not routinely track greyhound injuries. State investigation reports have nonetheless documented greyhounds that suffered broken legs, broken backs, head trauma, seizures, paralysis and deaths by electrocution. Seminole County introduced its own injury reporting system in May 2017, and since that time there have been 87 racing injuries, including 64 greyhounds that suffered broken bones and five dogs that died.

Backwood Turner was one of these ill-fated dogs. Only 4 years old, he "went down right out of the (starting) box" and "suffered a spinal disc rupture." Two days later, he was destroyed.

The racing industry hopes that its record of suffering will be overlooked. But dogs like Backwood Turner deserve better. Please vote Yes to protect dogs and vote Yes on 13.

Jaimee Parry
Tarpon Springs

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.
- Please allow two weeks from the time you submitted your letter for it to be published before inquiring as to its status.

Notes on football fever: three degrees

As you may be aware (or not) football season has arrived. It comes around at this time of year as we start noticing school buses on the streets.

Another sign of football season is the sound of people greeting one another with How Bouts. As in "How bout them Gators?" or "How bout them Buccaneers?" or (up here in the tundra, where I live) "How bout them Patriots?"

Professional football has overtaken baseball as our country's national sport. Between Labor Day and Superbowl Sunday (usually in early February) millions of Americans can be roughly divided into three groups.

(1) FOOTBALL FANATICS. These are persons who live and breathe football. Their value systems and lifestyles hinge on next (or last) weekend's gridiron performances by dear old Alma Mater or their city's NFL warriors.

(2) FOOTBALL KNOW-NOTHINGS. These folks are not only unaware of football's vital role in our national heritage, they don't really care.

(3) THE MILDLY INTERESTED AND THEREFORE FAIRLY STUPID, whose uninformed comments and questions about football drive the sport's fanatics crazy. I'm a longstanding member of this group.

For example, I've long wondered why do many NFL players intently study those big white cards while resting on the sidelines? What's on the cards? The names of opposing players? The salaries of teammates?

And why do coaches often hide their mouths behind their own white cards when giving instructions to the quarterback, or whoever? Do the coaches really believe their opponents across



Driver's Seat
Bob Driver

the field can lip-read, and thereby sabotage the home team's strategies? Wouldn't that be considered cheating? Is cheating allowed, in professional football? (Answer: Officially no. Tolerated? Sometimes. Practiced? Yes.)

It seems plain to me that the TV networks who broadcast the NFL games are biased against women. The main clue: the TV cameras seldom show the cheerleaders for more than four seconds at a time as they do their rah-rah and high kicks. Those ladies are attractive and highly-trained, but are probably paid less than 2 percent of what a backup wide receiver earns. They deserve greater onscreen time for the viewers' enjoyment.

Speaking of which: TV viewing of NFL games has decreased in the past year or two. One reason, I'd guess, is that commercial sponsors of each game are allowed to dominate the goings-on. This can slow things. On a fourth down, with too many yards to go, a team will normally punt the ball downfield. No matter what the receiving team does, the action is then halted for a commercial break that may last several minutes. This custom and others are some of the reasons an NFL game may last four hours or more.

Next time you run into a know-it-all football fan, ask him or her to name the title and duties of all the officials in the striped shirts. The top whistle-blower is the referee, followed by the umpire, head linesman, line judge, back judge, field judge, and ball-squeezer judge (who makes sure that no one has tampered with the inflation of the football.) I'm only joking about the squeezer, of course, although the Deflategate semi-scandal of 2015 triggered accusations against the New England Patriots.

Football terminology is a work continuously in progress. When I was young, the offensive player who got each play rolling was called the center. Today the center is more specialized. He is sometimes a long snapper. He sends the football maybe 15 yards back to a punter. If a point-after-touchdown play is on deck, the coach may send in a short snapper. And so on.

In the old days, an offensive team suddenly lost possession of the ball in two ways: a fumble, or an intercepted pass. Today those terms have been grouped into one: the take-away.

Some of today's NFL games have turned into political rallies. Shall I herewith narrate the beliefs of the opposing participants? No? Oh, goody.

Instead let's close with a quote about college football. It was uttered a century or so ago by writer-philosopher Elbert Hubbard. He said, "College football bears the same relation to education that bullfighting does to agriculture."

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



It's time for my little one to take flight

I would never suggest to a young person what I think they should do for a living. No, instead I usually just outright tell them.

For example, I tell my sons they should be roosters. After all, they've never seen a sunrise (get up you lazy slugs!)

But my strong-willed 18-year-old daughter Aly, who would absolutely kill to see peace and love rule this world, could be a tough sell.

So, here we go. Gulp.

Dearest Aly, my wonderful hippie-dippie, don't-you-give-me-no-lip-pie, daughter of mine:

Sorry, but you are not going into environmental sciences. You will not be taking Save the Whales 101. Nor History of the Spotted Owl.

The Peace Corps? No more.

Instead, you're going into aviation. And here's why.

You are about to attend your freshman year at Western Washington University (not in Walla Walla, but it sure should be - "I go to WWU in Walla Walla" would be so fun to say).

Anyway, you will be 3,300 miles away from me!

And yes, for the record, I have noticed you couldn't have picked a school further away from your Old Man.

You may very well be closer to India than Indian Shores.

So, you'll need a pilot's license and your own plane. Don't worry, your new hometown of Bellingham isn't too far from Seattle, where Boeing is headquartered. There are thousands of 747s right there, so no excuses. And yes, I'm sure they have ones painted tie dye.

OK, OK, maybe you're right. With all of your new responsibilities and the need to get acclimated, the onus should be on me to come visit you.



John Morton

I see on your school calendar that Parents Weekend is Oct. 19-21. That's less than a month after your first day of classes. Wouldn't that be, like, so embarrassing for you to have your father show up so soon? How lame! Wouldn't they all shout, "What a daddy's girl!" Or, "How can you have so much hair when your father has so little?"

No, I want to give you the space, the trust, the independence you deserve.

That said, I'm proud to announce, with you and you only in mind, I won't smother you with a visit until... November. Yeah, that sounds better. How about mid-November? That gives you plenty of breathing room but still makes it clear how much I care.

What's that you say? My beloved Green Bay Packers are playing in Seattle against the Seahawks on Nov. 15? I had no idea! What a coincidence!

(This Bad Dad Moment is brought to you by Ball Park Franks. They plump when you cook 'em. Ball Park Franks.)

Or, in the interest of fairness... Wait, time out. Now that you are old enough to know the truth about life, I'm here to tell you it isn't fair. I mean, you were born in Wisconsin! Case closed.

Anyway, back to the interest of fairness, why don't we meet halfway?

And where that spot would be is none other than Kimball, Nebraska. Population 2,496. Salute! (Google "Hee Haw" if needed).

It's a town in the Nebraska panhandle - yes, not just Florida has that problem. Ha! - and it's the county seat.

Tell you more about it? Well, aren't you just hungry for knowledge!

OK, well, um, it was founded by county agent Hank Kimball. Well, maybe it wasn't founded... heck, I wasn't even aware it was lost. Anyway, it's the pride of the panhandle. Not that handling a pan should make you proud... unless, of course, you wore an oven mitt. That would be wise, and for that you should be proud. Anyway, what was your question? (Google "Green Acres" if needed).

On a serious note, it sure is mind boggling that my youngest child has flown the coup. Me, an empty nester? Yes, time does fly by faster than the Concorde.

Yet I'm proud my daughter couldn't be talked into college in Florida when her heart was out west. She's been a camp counselor every summer in Wisconsin's deep woods and created her own line of organic jewelry. She's been a vegan for years. To say she's got her feet on the ground is an understatement. And she adores that ground.

So, hugging trees is where she should be. I said trees, not boys, young lady. Trees.

And don't worry, I won't be a helicopter parent. I'll be a DC-9 Daddy!

Just kidding, sweetie. You've earned your freedom. Enjoy your new world... and enjoy making it better.

John Morton can be reached at jmorton@tbnweekly.com.

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Awesome amberjack



Photo courtesy of MARIE SHIPLEY

Jonathan Shipley of North Redington Beach caught this 20-pound amberjack while fishing with his father about 40 miles west of John's Pass in about 100 feet of water on Sept. 9. Jonathan is 13 years old, an avid fisherman and an eighth grader at Madeira Beach Fundamental School.

Anglers on edge as red tide continues

Current red tide conditions along Pinellas beaches come as a major disappointment as we look forward to our fall fishing season.

Red tide began to show last week up and down our coastline. The bloom has progressively worsened each day.

Thus far, Tampa Bay waters remain free and clear of any red tide. Fishing for snook and redfish has been good at times in the Bay. But we are still a couple of cool fronts away from the shallow water action really getting good.

High-tide fishing along the mangroves has been good for snook and a few redfish, especially days following heavy downpours. The cooler fresh water dumping into the Bay can really get the snook feeding.

Live pilchards are working well and can be chummed up on nearly any grass flat south of Gandy Bridge at first light. Tropical fish food and water mixed to a pastelike consistency will lure the baits to you. Be sure that you're throwing a quarter-inch mesh cast net. Many of the baits are small but make great chummers.

Low tides and windless



Fish Tales
Capt. Tyson Wallerstein

conditions will allow you to find small schools of redfish that are tailing at times on many Tampa Bay flats. Stalk these schools with topwater lures if the floating grass isn't too bad. Otherwise a weed-less rigged soft plastic will work. Live bait will also work. However, the fish moving fast aren't picky.

Spanish mackerel can be found throughout the entire Bay. Look for flocks of dipping terns to indicate feeding frenzies. Anglers can troll small silver spoons and catch plenty of mackerel around the bait schools. Also target artificial reef structures from the Skyway bridge north to the old St. Petersburg pier. Anchoring and chumming with live pilchards and cut threadfins will not only get the mackerel around, but will also get the attention of any mangrove snapper in the area.

Tyson Wallerstein can be reached at capt.tyson@hotmail.com.

Outdoors Briefs

Tampa Boat Show set at Fairgrounds

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 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.

For information, visit tampabayboatshows.com.

SuperHero 5K to benefit Guardian ad Litem

SAFETY HARBOR – The fourth annual SuperHero 5K will take place Saturday, Oct. 13, starting and ending at Nolan's Pub, 230 Main St., Safety Harbor.

This family-friendly event seeks to raise community awareness for the more than 5,000 children in Pinellas and Pasco counties who have been removed from their homes by no fault of their own. The event offers participants an opportunity to show their support for abused and neglected children in the community.

Superhero costumes are encouraged but not required. The race course will run along the Safety Harbor waterfront. The 5K race will kick off at 8:30 a.m. with carnival activities afterwards for runners and families. Awards will be given for top qualifiers of the 5K run. Snacks and water will also be provided. A school uniform collection drive will be held to benefit the children served by the Guardian ad Litem program.

Registration is preferred in advance for the SuperHero 5K. To register, visit www.thesuperhero5k.com.

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Volunteer boaters needed for Fishing Line Cleanup

ST. PETERSBURG – The 25th annual Fishing Line Cleanup, organized by Tampa Bay Watch and Audubon Florida and sponsored by Sea World Busch Gardens Conservation Fund, will take place from Saturday, Oct. 6, through Sunday, Oct. 14.

Audubon and Tampa Bay Watch desperately need volunteer boaters to help remove tangled

fishing line from local mangroves and shorelines. Registration is required, and interested boaters can register at tampabaywatch.org.

This cleanup, scheduled when most birds are not nesting, reduces the threat of entanglement for not only birds but other marine animals. Last year's cleanup resulted in an

estimated 18,860 feet of fishing line being removed from 25 different coastal nesting sites around Tampa Bay.

Abandoned fishing line ensnares and kills thousands of birds every year. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission biologists have identified fishing line as the No. 1 killer of adult brown pelicans.

Registered volunteers receive cleanup locations, equipment list and data sheets. Additionally, volunteers are instructed on how to free entangled live birds they may encounter during the cleanup and given information on local rescue groups that can assist.

Visit tampabaywatch.org or call 727-867-8166, ext. 233, for more information on the event.

Real estate newsmakers

Weichert welcomes new team members

ST. PETERSBURG – Weichert affiliated offices in the St. Petersburg area have recently welcomed three additions to their team.

Stephen J Fischbacher, Scot Hoard and Daniel Horner have joined the team of agents at Weichert, Realtors – Equity in St. Petersburg. Each Weichert franchised office is an independently owned and operated affiliate of Weichert Real Estate Affiliates Inc.

RE/MAX ACR Elite Group announces top agents

BELLEAIR – RE/MAX ACR Elite Group Inc. recently recognized its top agents in the Belleair office in closed sales for the month of July.

The No. 1 agent was Gina (Ruffner) Poore. The No. 2 was Tom Varga. The No. 3 agent was Kelly Castellano.

Smith & Associates announces 357 on 5th

ST. PETERSBURG – Nick Janovsky, Realtor at Smith & Associates Real Estate, understands the fast-paced downtown market and the desire to find new construction options in St. Petersburg.

Janovsky is part of a development team bringing 13 new homes to downtown St. Petersburg through a new construction mid-rise luxury condo tower, 357 on 5th, located adjacent to the booming "Innovation District" in the heart of downtown St. Petersburg.

The tower will feature three two-story penthouses, eight homes with three beds, two baths offering 1,537 square feet, and two homes that will be 1,031 square feet. The homes will have expansive terraces – many with east facing views and luxury finishes such as quartz countertops, LED lighting, and 10-foot-high ceilings.

World-renowned artist and St. Petersburg resident Ya LaFord has been commissioned for original pieces on the southeast exterior corner of the building to reflect the style and culture of St. Petersburg and this new development.

"The culture of downtown St. Petersburg is connected to the arts. Our downtown is brimming with a diverse spectrum of colors and unique art that enhances our city's artistic vitality. I was thrilled to be a part of 357 on 5th with a sculpture that reflects the energy of this vibrant part of town in such proximity to the Warehouse Arts District," said Ya LaFord in a press release.

Smith & Associates Real Estate is the exclusive listing agent and accepting reservations now. For information, visit 357on5th.com.

Coldwell Banker Clearwater names top producers

CLEARWATER – Coldwell Banker Residential Real Estate's Clearwater office recently named its top producers for July.

The Marcy Daniels Team is the top producing team in listings and sales transactions. Renee Gialousis is the top producing agent in listings. Stephanie Joines is the top producing agent for sales transactions, with Jan Blanchard the top producer in sales volume.

"July was a brisk month. These top performing associates demonstrated their ability to successfully market and close," said Julia Standler, managing broker, in a press release.

RE/MAX ACR Elite Group announces top agents

BELLEAIR – RE/MAX ACR Elite Group Inc. recently recognized its top agents in the Belleair office in closed sales for the month of August.

The No. 1 agent was Tom Varga. The No. 2 agent was Dorita Mayeux. The No. 3 agent was James (Tony) Clouse.

Engel & Völkers Madeira Beach welcomes Jon Bond

MADEIRA BEACH – Engel & Völkers Madeira Beach recently announced that Jonathan Bond will join its shop as a real estate advisor, dedicated to serving the specialized property needs within the area.

"Mr. Bond brings intense knowledge of the Tampa Bay area and a passion for real estate to our team," said Cherie Pattishall, license partner of Engel & Völkers Madeira Beach. "Our real estate advisors are very highly trained, dedicated to their professions and truly understand our clients' special needs in the high-end real estate market. I am sure

that the Mr. Bond will feel perfectly at home in our shop and will push us to even greater success."

Coldwell Banker Residential Real Estate names top sales associates

BELLEAIR – Coldwell Banker Residential Real Estate's Belleair and Clearwater Beach office recently recognized several independent sales associates and teams for their effort in August 2018.

Terry Tillung was the top listing agent. Amber Carson-Davis sold the most number of homes and Margie Pretzman had the highest volume of new contracts.

Within the Thorn Collection, K.J. Kein was the top sales agent in volume and units as well as the top listing agent.

Realty Executives Adamo & Associates names top associates

SEMINOLE – Realty Executives Adamo & Associates recently announced its top agents for the month of August.

Mark Murphy was recognized as the top listing associate for the month of August 2018. Mike Murphy was the top sales associate for the month. Team Forrest Murphy was the top listing team as well as the top sales team for August.

Florida Realtors name Jodi Avery 2018 Humanitarian of the Year

Florida Realtors honored local Realtor Jodi Avery Aug. 9 with the 2018 Humanitarian of the Year Award. The award was presented at the FAR Convention Leadership Awards Luncheon at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando.

Avery was recognized for making a difference in her community with her Giving Matters Initiative.

"As a Realtor, I come across so many homeowners who have wonderful items they just can't keep because they are downsizing or maybe don't use anymore," said Avery. "I am a board member of several non-profits and know how much charities can use these items. After matching up the charities with the homeowners several times, I came up with the initiative. Giving Matters gives everyone, whether moving or not, the opportunity to purge their unwanted belongings while also making an impact on other people's lives. These donations may seem small, but they are positively affecting the community and the families receiving them."

Giving Matters aims to recycle common household goods, clothing, equipment and furniture and turn them into impactful donations for Tampa Bay charities in need. There is a special section dedicated to Giving Matters on Avery's website and in her A-List, which is a book she publishes and gives to clients each year called Avery's A-List, where she highlights the 'best of the best' services providers in the Tampa Bay Area. You can find it at www.jodiavery.com.

Stephen Kynion joins EXIT Realty Gulfside

LARGO – EXIT Realty Gulfside recently welcomed Stephen Kynion. Kynion joins a growing team of dedicated real estate sales professionals. EXIT Realty Gulfside, in Largo, is member EXIT Realty Florida's network of independently owned and operated brokerages across the region.

Pinellas Realtor Organization honors Sandy Hartmann

SEMINOLE – Sandy Hartmann was honored at the Pinellas Realtor Organization Sept. 14 to celebrate her Emeritus Membership Status for 40 years of tenure as a licensed Realtor.

Sandy Hartmann & Associates, Hartmann's company, continues to be one of the leading real estate teams in Pinellas County.

Press releases are published as space allows and are subject to editing for grammar, length and general newspaper style. Tampa Bay Newspapers cannot predict exactly when an announcement will be printed – or even guarantee that it will be used. All submissions can be dropped off at the office or mailed to Tampa Bay Newspapers, 9911 Seminole Blvd., Seminole, FL 33772; emailed to editorial@TBNweekly.com; or faxed to 727-397-5900. Questions? Call 727-397-5563 or send an email.

What's Selling in Pinellas County

<p>Largo</p> <p>3 Bedroom / 2 Baths</p> <p>\$313,000</p> <p>SOLD</p> <p>This 2,069 sq. ft. remodeled home features an abundance of living space, new kitchen, breakfast bar and granite counters and easy care tile and laminate floors.</p> <p>Martha Thorn Coldwell Banker/The Thorn Collection</p>	<p>Treasure Island</p> <p>Waterfront</p> <p>\$562,500</p> <p>SOLD</p> <p>Waterfront Isle of Palms 2 story that will be bulldozed and a custom home will be built! Deep water, wide canal and end of cul-de-sac.</p> <p>Rich Rippetoe Coldwell Banker/SunVista Realty</p>
<p>South Pasadena</p> <p>2 Bedroom / 1.5 Bath</p> <p>\$115,500</p> <p>SOLD</p> <p>Private townhome style condo. No neighbors upstairs or downstairs in the conveniently located Les Chateaux.</p> <p>Don Taylor Realty Executives/Adamo & Associates</p>	<p>Treasure Island</p> <p>5 Bedroom / 3.5 Bath</p> <p>\$1,250,000</p> <p>SOLD</p> <p>Meticulously maintained Key West style home overlooking the deep boating water of the Intracoastal. Enjoy easy access to the Gulf of Mexico from the 14,000 pound boat lift (w/brand new motors) & jet ski lift, plus a 50 ft. dock with electric/water and tie poles.</p> <p>Sandy Hartmann Keller Williams Seminole/Sandy Hartmann & Associates</p>

PALM HARBOR

Innisbrook gears up for makeover

Executive says the famed golf resort still faces challenges

By JEFF ROSENFELD
Tampa Bay Newspapers

PALM HARBOR - Innisbrook Golf and Spa Resort is known worldwide, particularly for its famed Copperhead Course, site of the PGA's annual Valspar Championship.

But the 950-acre resort, at 36750 U.S. 19 N., is much more than Copperhead and its trio of 18-hole companion courses, according to Innisbrook Managing Director Mike Williams. Owned by the Virginia-based Salamander Hotels & Resorts, Innisbrook also features 300 rental condo units, an award-winning steakhouse and grill, 65,000 square feet of conference and meeting space and a world-class tennis center, salon and spa.

Despite offering a variety of options for golfers looking for a complete package of attractive amenities, Williams said, Innisbrook is facing some of the same issues affecting the rest of Florida's hospitality industry, including an influx of vacation rentals and the timing of the school calendar. Williams said he discussed these issues last month with U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis, R-Palm Harbor, during a visit to the resort by the veteran lawmaker.

"We have a number of issues we talked to Congressman Bilirakis about, including short-term rentals and opposition to (vacation rentals by owners), which have had a dramatic negative impact on us and the hospitality industry in general," Williams said. Bilirakis was at Innisbrook for the American Hotel and Lodging Association's "Heart of the House" hotel tour on Aug. 30.

"We wanted to talk to him about that, as well as state issues," Williams said.

The issues included the Pinellas County School Board's decision to push back the school start date. The schedule change, he said, "affects us negatively because it takes August out of play for an industry that caters to vacations and con-



Photo by JEFF ROSENFELD

Innisbrook Golf Resort and Spa in Palm Harbor is remodeling the greens on the Osprey South and Osprey North courses and completely renovating every rental unit in advance of the resort's 50th anniversary celebration in 2020.

ferences."

In addition to meeting with state and industry officials, Williams said, Innisbrook executives are working to ensure the resort remains a major player in an ultra-competitive industry for years to come. These steps include remodeling the greens on the Osprey South and Osprey North courses and completely renovating every rental unit in advance of the resort's 50th anniversary celebration in 2020.

"It's an exciting time for Innisbrook," Williams said, "with the renovations to the guest accommodations set to start at the beginning of September and be completed by the end of the year, combined with the reopening of our Osprey South course."

Innisbrook is 48 years old and the greens as well as the rooms needed refreshing, according to Williams. "Now we have four championship courses, 72 holes, with the same surface as Copperhead,

and individually-owned accommodations that can be rented out and are more like residences than hotel rooms. We truly think of ourselves as America's golf resort."

Copperhead, the best known of the Innisbrook golf course, is the site of the PGA's Valspar Championship.

While he is proud of the new features Innisbrook can use to entice vacationing golfers, Williams is equally excited about some of the amenities and events Innisbrook has on tap for the public.

"We recently confirmed we will host a senior tennis event next year at our tennis center, which is the finest in the Tampa Bay area," he said. Former U.S. Open champions John McEnroe and Andy Roddick and former Dade City resident Jim Courier, winner of French and Australian Open titles, are expected to participate.

Although many people assume Innisbrook is a strictly private resort, its spa and Packard Steak-

house and Salamander Grill are open to the public. "We have something for everyone," he said.

Even with all the improvements to the facility, which started shortly after Salamander Resorts CEO Sheila Johnson, the co-founder the BET cable network, purchased the property in 2007, for many people Innisbrook will remain the place where they can see the best golfers in the world compete at the highest level every year, at the Valspar Championship.

The 2018 edition of the tourney, held March 8-11, got a big boost when Tiger Woods, seeking to hone his game prior to this year's Masters, made his first Innisbrook appearance since 1996, when he competed in what was then the JC Penney Championship with LPGA golfer Kelli Kuehne.

"We've always had a strong field, but this year we had many names that really draw a crowd," Williams said of a field that in addition to Woods included Jordan Spieth, Rory McIlroy and the 2018 winner Paul Casey.

"Last year we had a gate of 111,000, and this year it was 150,000, and certainly Tiger was a big part of that," Williams said.

Woods' performance in the Valspar, tied for second with 2018 Masters champion Patrick Reed, has had a lingering effect, Williams said. "Every golfer up north was on the phone or online the next day saying, 'I want to play where Tiger Woods played.'"

INDIAN ROCKS BEACH

City takes action on short-term rentals

Ordinance forces landlords to post phone number on sign, obtain license

By BRIAN GOFF
TBN Correspondent

INDIAN ROCKS BEACH - City commissioners unanimously passed an ordinance Sept. 11 governing short-term rentals in the city.

The move came after weeks of meetings dealing with the matter, all underlined by the fact that the city could not pass any ordinance dictating the length or frequency of a rental. The state Legislature took that power away from municipalities some time ago.

The ordinance passed by the city forces landlords to obtain a business license and to post the number of that license along with their phone number on a sign attached to the front of the home. Rentals with the owner on site do not require the sign.

Going into the meeting, that part of the ordinance required the name of the landlord be posted, but several residents who attended the meeting were concerned about that.

Joe Farrell, representing Pinellas Realtors, said his group was concerned about the sign.

"It is a matter of safety and harassment," he said.

Laura Lindsay agreed. "I am concerned about safety," she said. "It is redundant; if we have to have a license then you know who we are."

Another landlord added her voice to the argument.

"I'm a condo owner and a representative of all the people in my building," she said. "Having a sign on the front door would be asking for trouble. I've already had issues with the homeless; it puts me in danger."

City Attorney Randy Mora explained that the sign was important for the police, who may be called to the residence to quell a disturbance, to know who to contact.

Another complaint from residents at the meeting dealt with the number of people who could be in a rental property at the same time. One man said he saw 22 people come out of a duplex.

Mora said the commissioners discussed that issue at length and decided enforcing such a regulation would be impossible.

"What do you do when the renter says he has all these

people over to watch the game?" He said several Florida communities are facing lawsuits over the issue.

At previous meetings, where the issue of short term rentals was discussed, residents who showed up were mostly homeowners who objected to having short-term rentals as their neighbors. This time most of those in attendance were renters, people who owned rental property or who rented their property through Airbnb.

Still some of the old issues resurfaced. Resident Hugh Burton called it a matter of responsibility.

"How do we get people to be responsible?" He asked. "There are still issues of noise, trash and maintenance. You might want to consider that property owners be fined after a certain number of complaints."

Later in the meeting Mora said that idea was not practical.

"Just because someone has been investigated by the police doesn't mean they have committed an infraction, so the number of calls is irrelevant in this case."

Mora cautioned the audience and the commissioners that things could change in the future.

"We are trying to adapt here," he said. "We have to be aware that the Florida Legislature could pass legislation that could make everything we did here null."

Mayor Cookie Kennedy wrapped up discussion on the matter by saying it was a difficult issue to deal with.

"This commission has been good stewards of this issue," she said. "We are interested in being fair for both neighbors and owners. This is not a one size fits all issue; problems are different throughout the issue."

Kennedy noted that Indian Rocks Beach had just passed some ground-breaking legislation.

"I've been invited to speak in Largo where they do not have an ordinance governing short-term rentals. Our city is being looked at as a prototype."

Kennedy nominated for board position

Mayor Cookie Kennedy has been nominated as the city's representative on the board of Forward Pinellas, the county's planning organization.

Kennedy is the current representative on the board representing all beach communities. If elected her term would expire in 2021.

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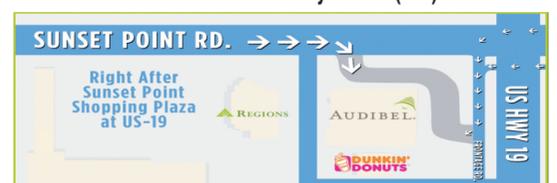
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