

Tim Burton's take on 'Dumbo' falls flat

TBN Entertainment Editor Lee Clarke Zumpe says the new adaptation dims Disney's fairy-tale luster. ... Page 1B.



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POLICE

Largo fire deemed a murder-suicide

Largo police announced March 28 that the two people killed at Avalon RV Resort in February has been determined to be a murder-suicide. The deceased were identified as Diane Marie Morrocco, 52, and Carol Ann Benton, 50. ... Page 7A.

OUTDOORS

Seafood Festival to stay at John's Pass

After months of uncertainty, Madeira Beach officials reached a consensus at a recent workshop on a partnership agreement with the John's Pass Merchants Association that would keep the annual Seafood Festival in Madeira Beach, at least for the coming year. ... Page 9A.

Keep your eyes open for alligators

As alligators become more active in spring, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission recommends taking precautions when having fun in and around the water. ... Page 9A.

COMMUNITY

Group looking for a few good men

With dwindling membership, local Marine Corps League detachments are finding it harder to put together honor guard units for military funerals. ... Page 12A.

VIEWPOINTS

Bob Driver

Politics, like life and dice, is subject to change. ... Page 10A.

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LARGO CITY COMMISSION

City repeals sign deadline

Commissioners adopt ordinance that allows well-maintained pole signs to remain

By CHRIS GEORGE
Tampa Bay Newspapers

LARGO — A round of applause broke out in commission chambers April 2 after city leaders officially voted to repeal a nearly 12-year-old deadline to ban pole signs that was just two months from going into effect.

Commissioners voted 5-2, with Samantha Fenger and Michael Smith dissenting, to adopt an ordinance that both elimi-

nated the deadline and strengthened the city's code to expedite the transition to monument signs.

"I do believe that we want to remain a business-friendly city, and I think this ordinance proved that to a lot of people," City Commissioner Donna Holck said.

Several of those people thanked commissioners for allowing them to keep their well-maintained pole signs.

Atul Jobanputra, whose family owns the Belleair Village Motel on Clearwa-

ter-Largo Road, said his sign has been standing since 1965 and is part of the DNA of his business.

"I appreciate all of you for having the vision and courage to place the needs of small business owners above politics," he said.

Terri Hepburn, manager of East Bay Animal Hospital, said she appreciates the change in course.

"I, too, would like to thank you all for stepping outside politics maybe for a few

minutes and acknowledging the hardships that some of the small business owners have and with the sign issue, and I think we've reached a very good compromise," she said.

If commissioners didn't eliminate the June deadline, the city would have had to fine nearly 600 property owners for not transitioning their pole signs to monument signs, which can cost tens of thousands of

See SIGNS, page 4A

A full month of Fun & Games

The month of April is packed with events that cater to just about everyone. Whether you are a child, adult, gamer, comic book fan, music lover, animal lover or just a plain lover, there is something for you. Special events kick off Saturday, April 6, at Largo Central Park with the return of the popular Touch-a-Truck and Playing! Unplugged events. The next day, couples looking to tie the knot can check out the Brides for the Arts Wedding Expo. The following weeks will include Pawfest, the free carnival where canines take center stage; the return of the Largo Live Central Park Music Series; the Largo Playcon Gaming and Comic Convention; and more.



Playing! Unplugged and Touch-a-Truck

Two of Largo's most popular free events arrive Saturday, April 6, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., when Playing! Unplugged and Touch-a-Truck return to Central Park.

Touch-a-Truck allows children to climb, honk and play around in a variety of vehicles, including fire trucks, dump trucks, buses and an 18-wheeler.

The day also will include the annual Playing! Unplugged ... Just What the Doctor Ordered. The event's new host, Dr. Cesar Lara, invites children of all ages to unplug from technology and participate in a variety of activities, including a ropes course, obstacle course, Nerf battle, tree and rock climbing and more.

Free limited on-site parking is available and park and walk will be offered from Largo Middle School.

Brides for the Arts Wedding Expo

The Central Park Performing Arts Center will host its annual wedding expo on Sunday, April 7, from noon to 3 p.m. The Center will showcase some of the best wedding and event professionals in the Tampa Bay area.

Couples looking to tie the knot will have the opportunity to interact with selected vendors from various categories, see the latest trends, enjoy guided tours of the Central Park wedding sites and rustic Historic Largo Feed Store.

The event is free to all attendees who pre-register online by Friday, April 5, with the first 100 brides registered to receive a special bridal swag bag. All brides will be entered into (must be present to win) a drawing for a stay at Camelot Beach Resort in Clearwater Beach or a VIP Experience Package to WTR at The Godfrey Hotel and Cabanas, as well as a chance to win other prizes.

Walk-ups are welcome at \$10 per entry with all of the proceeds going to Central Park Performing Arts Center theatre camp scholarships. For more information, call 727-587-6751.

13th annual Pawfest

The Kiwanis Club of Largo/Mid-Pinellas will present its 13th annual Pawfest on Saturday, April 13, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Largo Central Park.

Co-sponsored by the city of Largo, Pawfest is a free carnival for children and dogs with fun activities for the whole family.

Besides offering plenty of adoptable pets, the festival will include dog agility demonstrations and a K-9 demonstration by the Largo Police Department. Other activities include contests for the best-costumed dogs, best trick dogs, and largest and smallest dog. Children contests include musical chairs and hula hoops. Bounce houses also will be back, and Largo Central Railroad will offer rides. Sponsorships, vendor fees and drawings help fund the Kiwanis Club's many service programs for the year.

For more information on Pawfest or to learn about Kiwanis membership, call 727-536-0412.



Read about more upcoming events on Page 4A

TRANSPORTATION

PSTA seeks a quick fix to avoiding service cuts

Board members say they favor funding solutions instead of axing routes

By SUZETTE PORTER
Tampa Bay Newspapers

ST. PETERSBURG — PSTA staff is continuing to search for ways to increase funding in lieu of cutting services.

However, for now, action is moving forward to brief bus operators, supervisors and other staff about proposed service adjustments. A public hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, April 10, 6 p.m., at PSTA headquarters, 3201 Scherer Drive, St. Petersburg.

Proposed cuts include elimination of Routes 22 and 58, as well as the Safety Harbor Connector and Dunedin/Palm Harbor Connector. In addition, a portion of Route 5 west of Grand Central Station would be cut, and Route 9 would be extended to cover the eastern portion.

Part of Route 16 would be axed north of 38th Avenue North, and Route 38 would be rerouted to cover a portion south of 38th Avenue North. Service to the Coffee Pot area also would be eliminated.

If service cuts are approved, DART service would be scaled back to comply with federal regulations that require service to be available within 3/4 of a mile of an

See PSTA, page 4A

INDIAN ROCKS BEACH

Food pantry services in high demand

By BRIAN GOFF
TBN Correspondent

INDIAN ROCKS BEACH — For more than 10 years the Beach Community Food Pantry has been helping feed people in need from a wide area of Pinellas County.

The Food Pantry is located in the Calvary Episcopal Church and three times a week those less fortunate can come to the pantry and pick up food that they cannot afford to buy.

Connie Curran, who has been involved in the Pantry for nine years, is now the director of the operation. She said the demand continues.

"Yes, there is a demand," she said. "It is a demand not only for residents of Indian Rocks Beach and Largo, but for people from all over. Anybody with a low income

See FOOD, page 2A

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SEMINOLE

Using art to pay tribute to veterans

By TIFFANY RAZZANO
Tampa Bay Newspapers

SEMINOLE — After retiring early from his role as art director at New York City's Metropolitan Transportation Authority nearly a decade ago, Cliff Militello decided to focus on his own endeavors through his creative moniker, Madfog.

Inevitably, he said, the first thing he's asked when people learn about his work is: "What is Madfog?"

"In the creative process, it appears to me that it's this mad thing, flittering around, this mad fog, and every once in a while, I can grab a piece and make something of it," he said.

For Militello, this "something" has been a lot of different things. He's a cartoonist "at heart," he said. It's how he got his start as an artist. But he's also invented board games, and as a graphic designer, outside his work at the MTA, he's taken on a variety of freelance gigs. Locally, the Seminole resident's artwork can be found in the form of a series of hand-drawn murals at Roll It Ice Cream in Largo, and he designed nearly 30 of the giant Christmas cards on display in Indian Rocks Beach each holiday season. He's even self-published a book, "Murder at Transit."

Now, he's trying his hand at a medium that's new to him: music.

"I was always writing lyrics, always being creative," he said. "I invent board games, I write, I do art, I do a bunch of different kinds of craziness. [I'm] a real renaissance kind of guy."

At 64, he wrote and recorded his first album, which he will release through Madfog Music. The native New Yorker has written lyrics for decades, though.

"I'd just tuck them away," Militello said. "Sometimes I'd have a tune to go with it, how it would sound. But I never did anything with them."

He doesn't play any instruments and says



Photo by TIFFANY RAZZANO

Artist Cliff Militello works on a mural at Roll It Ice Cream in Largo.

he has "no musical talent."

He added, "I write lyrics really well and sing badly. But I sing good enough for rock and roll."

In recent years, he began to think seriously about doing something more with the lyrics he's written.

Two songs, "Taps," a story song written in the vein of Harry Chapin and Warren Zevon as a tribute to World War II veterans, and the more personal, "I Never Got to Serve," stood out for him. Though he grew up in the Vietnam War era, the draft ended before his number was selected.

At the time, he "didn't care about the war," he said. "I was just trying to eke out a life, find my way."

As he grew older, though, Militello realized he owes all veterans "a debt of gratitude."

He said, "These songs are my homage to the veterans. ... I'm grateful. I wouldn't have all this if it weren't for them."

He connected with local musician and songwriter Stick Martin, who also owns Monkey House Studios, a digital music studio. Martin wrote the music to go with Militello's lyrics.

The album features a range of genres.

"Rock and roll, country, reggae, gospel, eclectic contemporary and a whole bunch ... otherwise," he said.

With an album in hand, he's ready to get his music out there to the world. He's interested in using his songs "Taps" and "I Never Got to Serve" to help veterans "any way [he] can," he said. He's hoping to partner with military organizations and veterans groups.

He's also hooked on his new creative outlet.

"I almost find (making music) more interesting to me than the art was, and I never thought anything would be more interesting than art," Militello said.

FOOD, from page 1A

and having a hard time meeting their needs can come here to get help."

Curran said no one is asked to prove they are in need, if they show up they get help.

The only restriction is that people can only get help once every two weeks.

"There are repeat people who come to get food," she said. "If you are standing in line then we are here to give it to you. We are here to help the people who need it."

Curran said she is particularly pleased with the way the Food Pantry distributes the food, calling it "free shopping."

"People can pick what they want," she said. "This way they are getting something they like and won't discard it or throw it away. This way they will use it because they are picking it out."

Included are fresh fruit and vegetables. It all comes from a variety of sources.

David Kline, former director of the Food Pantry and now a volunteer, listed the diverse variety of sources for the food.

He said they get meat and some produce from RCS Pinellas County and a lot of food from Feeding Tampa Bay.

"We buy our own, we're involved in Publix Food for Sharing program. There are various food drives, community donations and programs involving students," he said.

That might seem like a lot of help. However, there is that insatiable demand that has to be met every month. Nearly one thousand meals are provided to those in need.

And things don't always go smoothly.

"An illustration of that is the most recent government shutdown," said Kline. "That caused a lot of anxiety in the world of the temporary needy and our food resources were redirected and that meant we didn't get the food we normally get."

Yet Kline said it showed what a community can do as IRB and other local communities held extra food drives and private citizens got involved so the de-

mand was met.

Private citizens are also needed on an ongoing basis as volunteers. Regularly 30 volunteers are needed for various jobs. Those jobs range from helping out at the pantry on distribution day or driving to the various places to pick up food.

The demand for volunteers is never ending.

The food pantry was founded by Carole Beaucham, who as a member of Calvary Episcopal Church, was there 10 years ago when a man wandered in and asked for help. He needed something to eat. The church people got him some food and then realized they should do more than that, and the Food Pantry was born. It is still located in the church where it began.

"We have maybe 500 square feet of space here in a section of the church which is dedicated to the Food Pantry," said Kline. "We are totally on site here at Calvary Episcopal."

Helping at the Food Pantry can be a rewarding and fulfilling activity. It can also be a sad one.

Connie Curran said she is often upset by what she sees every week.

"I do feel sad; I'll be honest, it does sadden me that there is such a need," she said. "Elderly people bother me the most, they come to Florida for retirement and they get squeezed out and they need to make their money stretch. I've heard people say they have eaten pet food and I say 'no no no.'"

"I get saddened. There are also elderly people who are raising their grandchildren and they just can't afford it, they come here for help," she said.

The Beach Community Food Pantry is located in the Calvary Episcopal Church at 1615 First St. in Indian Rocks Beach. Their phone number is 727-595-2374.

Hours of operation are from 10 a.m. to noon on Mondays and Wednesdays and 5-7 p.m. on Thursday evening.

Another way people can help the Food Pantry is by attending a fish fry at Crabby Bill's on April 13 from 5-7 p.m. Tickets are available at the door or in advance by calling the Food Pantry.

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City Briefs

Florida Suncoast Chorus captures first place at statewide competition

LARGO — The Florida Suncoast Chorus, which is based at the Largo Community Center, placed first among mixed choruses in recent statewide competitions in Orlando sponsored by the Barbershop Harmony Society.

The Barbershop Harmony Society has more than 80,000 members worldwide. Tracing its roots back some 60 years, the Florida Suncoast Chorus performs throughout Pinellas County and beyond. Its repertoire includes folk tunes, patriotic numbers, love songs, spirituals, holiday classics, American standards, and pop tunes — all sung a cappella in close harmony.

The chorus rehearses each Monday at 6:30 p.m. at the Largo Community Center, and the public is welcome to watch.

Membership in the chorus is open to men and women of all ages.

Its next performance is slated for Sunday, April 7, at 2 p.m., at the Community Center.

For information about the chorus or to arrange for a performance, call 727-667-5502.

Foundation gears up for Art Hops 2019

LARGO — With a nod toward the 50th anniversary of Woodstock and all things groovy, the Greater Largo Library Foundation will hold its 12th annual Art Hops! Art Hops 2019 — The Library Experience on Saturday, April 27, from 6 to 9 p.m., at the Largo Public Library.

The event will offer an array of interactive activities and demonstrations, including a variety of popular library programs. Art Hops will also feature artists and artisans with items for sale, a silent auction, entertainment, dinner and dessert, a cash bar, and a craft brew garden.

Event tickets are \$35.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit glff.org.

New electric vehicle charging stations installed

LARGO — In partnership with Duke Energy, the city of Largo has installed six electric vehicle charging stations on city property that are free of charge for residents, visitors and staff.

The three newest stations are in the front parking lot of City Hall, at the Belcher Soccer Complex and at Southwest Recreation Center.

Largo also recently joined the Tampa Bay Clean Cities Coalition, a group committed to reducing emission and improving local air quality through the promotion and use of alternative vehicles and technology. These efforts support Largo's strategic focus on sustainability and its commitment to transition to a 100 percent electric fleet by 2030.

Parks division gives boost to bees

LARGO — The city of Largo Parks Division will participate in a sustainability initiative to promote the support and growth of critical pollinator colonies, which include bees, wasps, butterflies and many others.

Recently the wildflowers in the grass at the Largo Cemetery have been

blooming, attracting thousands of bees and other pollinators to the area. While the area may appear that it needs to be mowed, parks staff say they will refrain from mowing the grass until the more active growing season arrives and the wildflowers are out of bloom.

For any questions or concerns, call the Parks Division at 727-586-7415.

Water Conservation Challenge kicks off

LARGO — Mayor Woody Brown is joining other mayors across the country in asking residents to make a commitment to conserve water by taking part in the annual Mayor's Challenge for Water Conservation.

Last year, residents from thousands of cities across the country pledged to reduce their water usage by nearly 2 billion gallons.

To participate, enter online at mywaterpledge.com, and then make a series of online pledges to conserve water on behalf of the city of Largo. One winning city will be determined from five population categories. The city with the most pledges in each population category will win. Residents from the winning cities who take the online pledge will also be entered to win hundreds of environmentally friendly prizes, including \$5,000 for home utilities, water-saving fixtures and home improvement gift cards.

Each person who takes the pledge also has the option to select a charity within the community to win a new Toyota RAV4 hybrid vehicle.

For questions, visit OurFutureLargo.com or email Sustainability@largo.com.

Summer camp registration open

LARGO — Registration has begun for the city of Largo's more than 60 full- and half-day summer camps for preschool, elementary, middle school and teenage children.

Parents can choose from six full-day camps, 15 sports camps, 33 specialty camps, theater and dance camps, aquatic camps, pre-camp days and the new Teen Adventure field trip created for ages 12 and older.

For the newly published summer camp guide, download a copy at LargoCamps.com or pick up a Play! Magazine at any Largo recreation facility, City Hall or the Largo Public Library. For information, including camp scholarships, visit LargoCamps.com or call 727-518-3016 or 727-518-3125.

City launches camp scholarship program

LARGO — The city of Largo's Recreation, Parks and Arts Department is seeking donations to help fund a new youth scholarship program called "Every Child Deserves to Attend Camp."

The department serves over 1,200 children each summer through its 60-plus camps. However, many of the families within the community need financial assistance to allow their children to attend the camps.

A donation of \$100 allows one child to attend one week of camp while a gift of \$1,000 allows one child to attend for 10 weeks. All of the donated funds go to camp registration.

To receive a pledge card, call Mark Abdo at 727-587-6740, ext. 5008 or by email at mabdo@largo.com.

Coming through for CASA



Photo SUBMITTED

Largo Cracker Quilters' officers, from left, Karen Barrie, Paige Rapson, Rebecca Mullen, Mary Anne Skinner and Ruthanne Arnold are shown during the group's annual Irish Tea on March 11. The guild presented Mullen, representing Community Action Stops Abuse (CASA) a check for \$2,079. The funds were raised from the Guild's Opportunity Quilt during its bi-annual Mid-Pinellas Quilt Show at the Seminole Recreation Center in February. A second donation of \$230 also was made in memory of Eleanor Javid, a guild member who died in January. The guild meets each Monday at 10 a.m. at Christ Presbyterian Church, 3115 Dryer Ave. in Largo.



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PSTA, from page 1A

established bus route. PSTA has been providing service beyond federal requirements, which would no longer be offered. In addition, DART service would be eliminated in some additional areas should the proposed route changes be approved.

DART, which stands for Demand Response Transportation, provides services to disabled people who are unable to safely and independently use regular bus services. PSTA contracts with Care Ride, which provides the service. DART is one of PSTA's largest expenses.

Two Seminole residents talked to the board members during a March 27 meeting, trying to persuade them to keep Route 58, which travels from the Gateway Mall in St. Petersburg to the Seminole City Center.

Chase Holloway says he has used PSTA for 30 years. He currently uses the bus on Route 58 to get to his job on 118th Avenue. He even worked out an arrangement with his boss to adjust his hours to match the bus schedule. He says if he misses his bus in the afternoon when he gets off it is an hour-and-a-half wait for the next one.

He suggested that scheduling could be an issue causing low ridership, and he suggested that PSTA talk to employers in the area about their employees' needs.

PSTA Board member and County Commissioner Pat Gerard asked PSTA External Affairs Officer Bob Lasher if anyone had talked to employers as Holloway suggested. Lasher said they had, but not since 2017. He said the times on Route 58 had been set to match schedules of the call centers in the area. Gerard suggested it might be time to talk to employers again.

Robin Shaw also depends on Route 58 to get to her job at Raytheon on Bryan Dairy Road, and she says she's not alone. She's worried that her livelihood will be threatened if PSTA eliminates her route. She told PSTA board members that she has been trying to bring awareness to the situation by handing out information to fellow bus riders and companies along the route.

She said she had tried using other routes, but is late to work due to scheduling. She said her "bus family" needs Route 58 and suggested adjusting schedules on other bus routes, such as 59 that runs every 15 minutes and often doesn't have a lot of riders.

Since staff announced the \$1.7 million deficit in the current year's budget, PSTA board members have been struggling to find ways to make up the losses without making proposed service cuts.

PSTA CEO Brad Miller has been meeting with County Administrator Barry Burton and Forward Pinellas Executive Director Whit Blanton about PSTA's funding dilemma. Miller said the three had met several times, including on March 26.

Miller said Blanton had put together a detailed plan showing priority corridors where enhanced transit service is warranted if PSTA had more money. Burton is more focused on a comprehensive review taking into account not just transportation needs but affordable housing and jobs with an emphasis on people getting to and from work.

The goal is to find a quick fix to eliminate the need for PSTA's immediate service cuts. Then they'll look for more long-term funding sources.

"The county administrator is very positive about helping us look for solutions," Miller said.

County staff will be working with PSTA, and Miller is scheduled to meet with county commissioners that are not on the PSTA board.

Chief Financial Officer Deborah Leous is looking at all the options. Leous doesn't want to eliminate services, but she also doesn't want to use up all of PSTA's reserves.

She showed a chart depicting how even with the \$800,000 in savings from service cuts, which would begin in June, PSTA's reserves would be gone by fiscal year 2022 without an influx of additional money. If the reserve fund runs out, the agency would have no money for capital projects and no ability to provide funding for matching federal or state grants.

Another chart showed what would happen with an additional \$5 million a year. No service cuts would be needed through at least FY 2023 and funding would be available for capital projects. But no money would be available for matching dollars for grants. Reserves would be depleted by FY 2024.

Still the second scenario would give PSTA some time to explore long-term funding options.

PSTA Chair and County Commissioner Janet Long asked about the possibility of using reserves instead of making service cuts this year, which garnered support from the majority of board members.

"I like hearing this," said Darden Rice, PSTA Board member and St. Petersburg council member. "Cutting service is not where we want to go."

The board will make a final decision on service cuts at a meeting on Wednesday, April 24, 9 a.m., at PSTA headquarters in St. Petersburg.

SIGNS, from page 1A

dollars.

Instead, the commission compromised, deciding to amend the code so that signs now must meet minimum appearance standards, including the foundation, rust, dents, holes, exposed electrical components and proper landscaping.

Any nonconforming sign that will require a permit to be modified or repaired will now have to be removed or replaced with a monument sign within 90 days.

Also, changing the Master Signage Plan as a result of adding or modifying signage on a property would mean all signs would have to be replaced.

Amendments were also made to target abandoned signs and even conforming multitenant signs that are 60 percent or more blank.

Opponents of amending the code, such as Fenger, Smith and members of the Planning Board, said the move was unfair to those who had already complied and that it sent the message that the city was not willing to follow through on its decisions.

Andrew Grantham, co-owner of Tampa Bay Extended Stay Hotel on Ulmerton Road, said the decision is a win for everybody.

"I'm so grateful you (the commission) listened to our stories and reasoning about the ordinance," he said. "And not only did you listen, but you reacted with a compromise that works for the



Photo courtesy of the CITY OF LARGO

Police Chief Jeff Undestad presents Detective Keith Wedin with the Officer of the Year Award on April 2 during a City Commission meeting at City Hall.

city and the businesses."

In other news

Police Chief Jeff Undestad announced the department's employees of the year.

The officer of the year is Detective Keith Wedin, a member of the Investigations Division who was the primary investigator in the case of Jordan Belliveau, a 2-year-old Largo boy whose mother is now facing charges for allegedly killing the child and filing a false report.

"Through the many days of the investigation, Detective Wedin showed extreme dedication and professionalism," Undestad said. "Although the thought was what the mother had done was unimag-

inable, he worked tirelessly to find that child. After finding the child, without missing a beat, he obtained a confession and arrested the mother. With so many moving parts, the investigation was exhausting mentally and physically, but Detective Wedin never faltered. He managed the ongoing investigation for two weeks after the arrest to ensure the case was ready for presentation to the grand jury."

Other award winners were:

Supervisor of the Year: Sgt. Thomas Carvello

Civilian of the Year: Amber Walters

School Crossing Guard of the Year: Judy Michaud

Volunteer of the Year: Gerald "Jerry" Jiovani

A full month of *Fun & Games*



Playcon Gaming and Comic Convention

Highland Recreation Complex will host the second annual Largo Playcon on Saturday, April 20, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

In partnership with M&M Video Games, this family-friendly event is for fans of all ages with an appreciation for gaming and comics.

Featured will be vendors of toys and collectibles, artwork, apparel, comic books, games and more.

There will also be gaming competitions and free play, a costume contest, cosplay guest and a chance to meet local comic book artists.

Event wristbands are on sale and can be purchased at Highland Recreation, M&M Video Games locations and online at PlayLargo.com.

Cost is \$7 in advance and \$10 at the door for ages 12 and older. Children age 11 and younger get in free.

For more information, call 727-518-3016 or visit HighlandRecreation.com.

Footgolf tournament

The David Haines Memorial Footgolf Tournament benefiting the Pinellas Chapter of Special Olympics will be held Saturday, April 13, at the Largo Municipal Golf Course, 12500 Vonn Road.

Registration for the event, which substitutes soccer balls for golf balls, will run from 8:30 to 10 a.m. Play will begin at 10 a.m. and continue for the nine-hole course until noon, but participants may complete the 18-hole course. Lunch will be available for purchase in the golf course clubhouse and water will be furnished throughout the tournament.

Cost is \$20 per player and \$20 per "virtual" player for those wishing to contribute but not actually play. Each entry fee includes nine holes and an opportunity to win prizes. Each paid entry also sponsors a Special Olympics athlete to participate in the tournament at no cost to the athlete. An adult must accompany players age 13 and younger. No cleats will be allowed on the course. Players may bring their own regulation size 5 soccer ball or one will be provided. A silent auction will be conducted throughout the tournament and each player will receive a swag bag. Opportunities to purchase tickets to win other prizes will be available during the event.

Registration may be done online at specialolympicsflorida.org/pinellas/foot-golf-scramble. For more information, contact Cydni Weiner at cydniweiner@sofl.org.

Largo Live Central Park Music Series

The Betty Fox Band will kick off the Largo Live Central Park Music Series with a performance Friday, April 19, 7 to 10 p.m., in Largo Central Park, 101 Central Park Drive, Largo.

This new music series will feature a different local headliner each month. The free concerts will be presented on third Fridays at the park and also will feature food vendors, beer and wine.

Upcoming headliners include country rock band Soul Circus Cowboys on May 17 and pop-rock performer Chris McCarty on June 21. For information, visit LargoEvents.com.

Around Largo

Church to host Apologetics Conference

LARGO — The Reasons for Hope conference will be presented Friday and Saturday, April 5 and 6, at St. Paul United Methodist Church, 1199 S. Highland Ave., Largo.

Why do bad things happen to good people? Is there factual evidence that the gospels are true? These are just two of the questions that will be discussed at the conference. Apologetics scholars from across the country will speak during the two-day conference, covering topics ranging from what the Bible says about women to why God allows evil. The Christian scholars who will be speaking at the conference include Dr. Clay Jones, professor at Biola University; Laurie Stewart, president of Women in Apologetics; John Stewart, author and award-winning radio personality, and more.

Cost for both days is \$30, and discounts are available for students, groups and others. For information or to register, visit www.stpaulumc.org.

Yard sale to benefit Children's Center

LARGO — A yard sale will take place Saturday, April 6, 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., at Christian Fellowship Church of Largo, 900 Starkey Road. Proceeds will benefit Sabal Palms Children's Center.

Fashion show to celebrate the disabled

LARGO — Beyond Incredible, a fashion event to celebrate exceptional men and women with disabilities, will be presented Saturday, April 6, 5 to 8 p.m., at St. Paul United Methodist Church, 1199 S. Highland Ave., Largo.

This event is organized by Help Us Gather, a local nonprofit with the mission to connect people with disabilities to social events. HUG is pulling out all the stops to make sure this special event is a night to remember.

More than 250 people will dress to the nines and gather at the church. Guests with special needs will be pampered with hair, makeup, jewelry, accessories and more before walking a red carpet and taking photographs with local beauty queens.

Four individuals with special needs will be honored that evening for their exceptional contributions to the Tampa Bay community. The honor comes with the title of Charitable, Powerful, Fearless or Inspirational. What makes this event unique is that HUG books celebrity appearances in Tampa Bay for each of its title holders. 2018's celebrity appearances included a live TV interview, receiving an "Honorary Deputy" title from the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office and a special appearance at Julie Weintraub's Denim and Diamonds fundraiser, benefitting Hands Across the Bay.

Help Us Gather is part of The Helping Project, a public charity with 501(c)3 status. Lally founded Help Us Gather in 2017. Help Us Gather is a way to find or share events for people of all abilities in Tampa Bay. For information, visit www.helpusgather.org.

American Legion to host luau party

LARGO — The Heisler-Johnson American Legion Auxiliary, Unit 119, 130 First Ave. SW, will hold a Luau Party on Sunday, April 7, from 2 to 5 p.m.

The event will feature a dinner of pulled pork, baked beans, pineapple coleslaw, corn-on-the-cob and dessert. Entertainment will include dancer Lady Darjuxena and music by Bob Swenson, along with contests.

The cost is \$8 per person.

Rosedale Chorale to perform at church

LARGO — The Rosedale Chorale will perform in concert Monday, April 8, 7 p.m., at Suncoast Community Church, 12855 110th Ave., Largo.

The chorale, directed by Kenneth Miller, is a select group of students from Rosedale Bible College. The program includes compositions ranging from the Renaissance to contemporary and includes a special feature for children. This concert is free and open to the public. For more information, call 727-595-1739.

Rosedale Bible College is an evangelical Mennonite junior college located near Columbus, Ohio. RBC offers an accredited associates degree in biblical studies as well as courses in the humanities, mathematics, and social sciences that transfer to many four-year universities. For information, visit www.rosedale.edu.

Raise money, cut a rug at Sock Hop

LARGO — The 20th annual Spring Fling Sock Hop fundraising event will be held Saturday, April 13, from 6 to 10 p.m., at St. Patrick's Catholic Church, 1507 Trotter Road.

The event, which is presented by longtime dance club FL 50's Original Rockers, will feature music by the Impacts, a local band that plays music from the 1950s, '60s and more.

Hamburgers, hot dogs and more will be made available by the Knights of Columbus in-house restaurant. There is also a cash bar and snacks.

Tickets are \$10 each at the door or in advance. Call 727-786-1624 or 813-837-3335.

A portion of all the proceeds are given to local charities. The FL 50's Original Rockers are a nonprofit organization, and donate each year to many charitable organizations in the area.

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.

Ride the miniature trains

LARGO — Folks can ride miniature trains around Largo Central Park on Saturdays and Sundays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., during the first full weekend of the month.

Rides are free, though donations are accepted.

Train rides can be accessed via the tan-roofed shelter at the east side of the park.

For more information, visit lcrailroad.com.

Largo hosts free movies in the park

LARGO — Central Park will show free family-friendly movies on select Fridays in April starting at 6:30 p.m.

On-site parking and concessions will be available. Alcohol is not permitted.

Movie titles include: "Teen Titans Go to the Movies" (April 5), and "Ralph Breaks the Internet" (April 12).

Presentation to examine presidential history

LARGO — The Presidents' Escort: The Joseph Browning Corbin Story will be presented Thursday, April 4, at 6:30 p.m. at the Largo Public Library.

This event will take place in the Jenkins Community Wing on the first floor of the library.

During the event, learn about the life of Joseph B. Corbin, a World War II veteran and Seminole resident who was recently awarded the French Order of Légion d'Honneur, the highest honor in France.

Corbin served five U.S. presidents as a presidential motorcycle escort during his career with the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, D.C. Discover his firsthand impressions of our former presidents — from Harry Truman to Richard Nixon — and follow his journey through the politics, relationships and fanfare of the White House.

This event is free, but registration is required by visiting www.LargoPublicLibrary.org.

Library offering genealogy classes

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

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

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

SHINE offering assistance at library

LARGO — If you are celebrating your 65th birthday this year,

LARGO, from page 4A

recently retired or just want to know more about your health care options under Medicare, SHINE may be able to help.

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

Highland Recreation Complex

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

Brunch with the Bunny

LARGO — Brunch with the Bunny events will be held at Southwest Recreation Complex on Saturday, April 6, at 9 a.m., and at Highland Recreation Complex on Thursday, April 11, at 10:30 a.m.

Enjoy brunch, crafts and games with a spring theme. Register at any of the city's recreation facilities for the event, which is for children age 6 and younger. The cost is \$6 each child and \$2 each adult.

Family Fun Run Series continues

LARGO — The Spring Has Sprung Fun Run will be held Saturday, April 13, 8 a.m., at Highland Recreation Complex.

Pre-registration at any of the city's three facilities is recommended to reserve a spot. The cost is \$10 for an individual or \$20 for the whole family.

Largo Community Center

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

Chorus set for Spring Concert

LARGO — The Suncoast Barbershop Chorus will hold a Spring Concert on Sunday, April 7, from 2 to 4 p.m., at the Largo Community Center.

Enjoy the smooth stylings of the chorus as they sing your favorite springtime songs in true barbershop fashion. The cost is \$16 with a meal or \$10 for the concert only.

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

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

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 overall with a possible prize of \$250 or a consolation prize of \$125.

The American Legion sponsors "Wing Madness" each Monday, 5 to 8 p.m. Enjoy chicken wings served hot, mild, barbecue, butter and garlic and spicy barbecue for \$5.50 for six or \$8.50 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.

Largo Lions Club

LARGO — The Largo Lions Club meets on the first and third Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. at Jimmy Guana's, 401 Second St., Indian Rocks Beach, in the Holiday Inn Harbourside.

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

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

Kiwanis Club of Largo/Mid-Pinellas

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

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

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

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

Rotary Club of Largo

LARGO — The Rotary Club of Largo meets each Monday at noon at Alfano's Restaurant, 1702 Clearwater-Largo Road.

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

Founded in 1905, Rotary is the oldest worldwide service organization with 1.2 million Rotarians in over 30,000 clubs. Rotary is comprised of business and professional persons who accept the ideal of service, individually and collectively, as a basis for success and happiness in business and community.

A delivery of diapers



Photo courtesy of BRUCE BLAZEJ

Jennifer Ellis of A Woman's Place Medical Clinic accepts a donation of 2,424 diapers from the Kiwanis Club of Largo/Mid-Pinellas at its meeting March 28. The donation was a part of the Florida Kiwanis First Lady's Project (wife of the current Florida Kiwanis District Governor) for Kiwanis clubs throughout the state to collect diapers and donate them to local facilities that need them. The Largo club chose A Woman's Place (formerly Pinellas Pregnancy Center), which provides health and social services, education and birthing to local women. In 2018, the organization at 1610 E. Bay Drive provided 1,440 pregnancy tests, 806 ultrasounds, educated 819 clients and gave out 18,989 diapers.

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BARRIER ISLANDS GOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL

Mayors fume about vacation rentals

Officials from beach areas keep pressure on state lawmakers

By **BRIAN GOFF**
TBN Correspondent

REDINGTON BEACH — The mayors of the Pinellas beach communities have vowed to keep the pressure on state legislators as bills relating to short-term rentals are coming up for consideration in both the House and the Senate.

For several years local municipalities have been upset with laws that prevent them from regulating short term rentals in their communities. They are not allowed to dictate how often or for how long homeowners can rent their property.

With the advent of organizations such as Airbnb, more and more homeowners are renting their homes for weekends. This has led to neighbors complaining about renters having loud parties at all hours. Other than citing

homeowners for noise infractions, there is little a municipality can do to curb the practice.

On March 27 at the monthly meeting of the Barrier Islands Governmental Council, the BIG-C, the mayors expressed frustration over the state laws and said they were determined to keep fighting against them.

North Redington Beach Mayor Bill Queen was vocal in his opposition to what is happening in Tallahassee.

"It is terrible what they are doing," he said. "There are a lot of issues involved with this, and I'm hearing the legislators are getting a lot of blow back over it."

Indian Rocks Beach Mayor Cookie Kennedy said she was happy to hear that.

"It means that maybe our message is getting through," she said. "The people are speaking."

St. Pete Beach Mayor Alan Johnson noted that a new group in Tierra Verde supports what state lawmakers are doing.

"They are called Save our Rentals and they want to keep

moving forward with more freedom for renters," he said. "I talked to one man who said he wanted to be able to rent to anyone anytime. When I said to him 'fast forward to when you are living there and there is a wild party going on next door, is that what you want?' "There was nothing but silence on the other end of the phone."

"They always talk about property rights," said Kennedy. "But I say what about the rights of the people they are bothering?"

Staying on message, acting as a group

Clearwater Mayor George Cretekos cautioned the group not to stray from its mission.

"Each city is different," he said. "We need to keep focusing on the message about what the people want. The legislators don't represent their party, they represent their communities and we have to keep reminding them of that."

Cretekos noted that the mantra of the Republican Party is that the

government closer to the people is the best government.

Indian Shores Mayor Pat Soranno said the beach mayors had to continue to act as a group.

"If we stay together then we can use our political clout to get things done," he said.

Queen said that because the big rental entities pay tax to Tallahassee the lawmakers are siding with them. He said that wasn't good enough.

"They are willing to sell our neighborhoods and our peace of mind for money," he said. "If we don't pay attention to what they are doing, we will keep losing."

Queen said the mayors have got to get the message out to their constituents who can in turn complain to their legislators.

"The people who will make a difference in this are the people who, right now, don't know what is going on."

The BIG-C mayors decided to form a committee to keep watch over what is happening with the issue and to give the group regular updates. The committee consists of Queen, Kennedy and Redington Shores Mayor MaryBeth Henderson.

Around Pinellas

Agencies to survey seniors about their needs

CLEARWATER — The Pinellas Community Foundation and the Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas are joining forces to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of the area's aging community. Nearly 30 percent of residents in Pinellas and Pasco counties are over 60 years old.

"This assessment is critical to determining if we are preparing correctly to support the growing number of residents who are over 60 as their needs change," said Duggan Cooley, Pinellas Community Foundation CEO. "There hasn't been a comprehensive needs assessment done like this before."

The goal of the assessment is to gather direct feedback from residents aged 60 and over to identify unmet needs.

"We'll be seeking feedback about overall community quality, current services in the community, participation in activities, health and wellness, design and land use, and disaster preparedness," said Ann Marie Winter, executive director, Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas.

A survey will be sent to 10,000 randomly selected households across every Pinellas and Pasco ZIP code in which at least one resident is known to be aged 60 and over.

Surveys will be sent the week of April 8. Residents are encouraged to complete the survey to provide critical information. Residents who have questions may contact the AAAPP helpline at 727-217-8111. Data collection will continue through May 21.

Officials break ground on new Service Center

ST. PETERSBURG — Pinellas County officials broke ground March 29 on a new 40,000-square-foot service center at 2500 34th St. N. in St. Petersburg that will offer expanded services for south county residents. The facility will provide services from the tax collector and property appraiser, which will be relocated from their current location at 1800 66th St. N., St. Petersburg.

The relocated facility will offer an improved customer service experience, including more parking and on-site driver license road tests in a closed driving course. Construction at the new site is expected to be completed by spring 2020, with the Tax Collector and Property Appraiser offices relocating to the 34th Street North location shortly thereafter.



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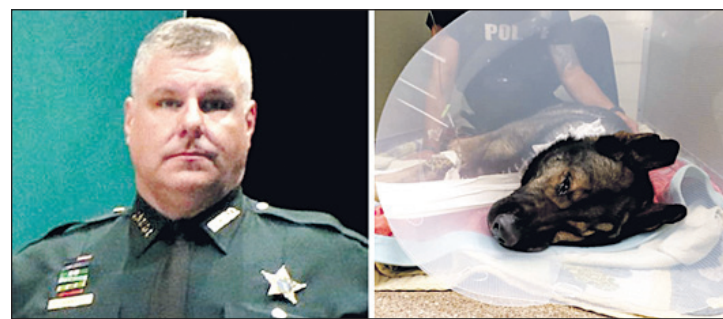
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Police Beat



Photos courtesy of PCSO, SPPD

Pinellas County Sheriff's Sgt. David Stang and St. Petersburg police K-9 Titan are recovering after being shot March 29 while searching for a suspect that fled during a traffic stop in St. Petersburg.

Deputy, police K-9 shot while searching for suspect in St. Pete

ST. PETERSBURG — A Pinellas County Sheriff's sergeant and a St. Petersburg police K-9 are recovering from injuries suffered when they were shot while searching for a man who fled after a traffic stop about 1:49 a.m. March 29 in St. Petersburg.

The suspect is dead from an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound. The incident started when law enforcement officers from the Violent Crimes Task Force stopped Elijah Johnson, 23, of St. Petersburg for a traffic violation near the intersection of Third Avenue South and 30th Street South in St. Petersburg, according to a press release from the sheriff's office.

Investigators say Johnson initially stopped for officers but then fled. Officers did not pursue the vehicle and the Flight Unit responded. Johnson then abandoned the vehicle near the intersection of Third Avenue South and 26th Street South and fled on foot.

St. Petersburg police Officer Greg Shone and his K-9 Titan responded and began tracking Johnson. Investigators say "at some point during the track," Johnson shot at K-9 Titan striking and injuring the dog. Officer Shone was not injured.

A short time later, Johnson fired shots at Sgt. David Stang, 51, with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, who was in his unmarked cruiser near the intersection of Third Avenue South and 27th Street. Sgt. Stang was shot in the shoulder.

Law enforcement officers later found Johnson dead near Third Avenue South and 26th Street South, with what appears to be a self-inflicted gunshot wound. St. Petersburg police say it appears that no deputy or officer fired a weapon.

Sgt. Stang was transported to Bayfront Health in St. Petersburg Hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. He is reportedly in stable condition. K-9 Titan underwent surgery and also is in stable condition.

The St. Petersburg Police Department is investigating the shooting. The Sheriff's Office Forensic Science Division is processing the crimes scenes.

Fire at Largo mobile home ruled murder-suicide

LARGO — Largo police announced March 28 that the double fatality fire at Avalon RV Resort in February had been determined to be a murder-suicide.

The deceased were identified as Diane Marie Morrocco, 52, and Carol Ann Benton, 50.

Largo police detectives say Morrocco stabbed Benton to death in the early morning hours of Feb. 8. Morrocco apparently attempted to kill herself with a knife following the murder. She then set fire to the bedroom area and died inside the bathtub from carbon monoxide toxicity.

Makeshift barricading on the inside of the north entry door and deadbolt locking of the south door prevented neighbors from gaining entry to help when they noticed the fire about 5:15 a.m.

Detectives say their conclusions were supported by District 6 Medical Examiner's Office autopsies and collaboration with the State Fire Marshal. No suicide note was found.

Detectives say according to her family, Morrocco had a prior history of Baker Acts and mental health issues.

Family of murdered Clearwater couple increases reward for information

CLEARWATER — Clearwater police held a press conference March 29, exactly six months after David and Mina Swan were found murdered in their home on Flushing Avenue.

The reason: their families have decided to up the reward for information leading to an arrest and conviction to \$50,000.

David, 88, and Mina, 80, were found shot to death in their home the afternoon of Sept. 29, 2018. They were last seen alive on Sept. 27.

The family needs closure. Noel Devine, Mina's daughter, thanked law enforcement for the "tremendous efforts to find out what happened to my mother and to David Swan."

"It's extremely important to us as a family," she said. Brian Kanicki, a detective with Clearwater PD's homicide unit, said Outfront Media was donating billboard space to advertise the increased reward in hopes to get someone to speak up.

Clearwater police continues to sift through the more than 200 pieces of evidence that was collected from the murder scene. They have the help of the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the FBI.

Detectives are continuing to interview neighbors and residents in the area where the murder occurred. Kanicki said detectives had been out in the neighborhood the day before the press conference conducting interviews.

Detectives have gone through hundreds of hours of surveillance videos and followed up on dozens of tips.

But police need help to solve what Kanicki described as a "tough case." Kanicki encourages people with information about the crime to call the tip line at 727-562-4141.

Pinellas deputy injured in rollover crash

TIERRA VERDE — A Pinellas County Sheriff's deputy suffered non-life-threatening injuries in a crash that occurred about 6:48 p.m. March 30 on the Pinellas Bayway South.

Deputies assigned to the Major Accident Investigation Team say Deputy Luis Guiral, 23, was driving his 2018 Chevrolet Tahoe northbound on Pinellas Bayway South responding to a call about a stolen vehicle in progress. His emergency lights were on.

As Guiral approached the Fort De Soto Park boat ramp entrance, traffic stopped in front of him in the northbound lanes. Guiral then proceeded northbound in southbound lane of Pinellas Bayway South so he could pass the traffic stopped in front of him.

Mariela Martin, 26, of Tampa was driving a 2015 Lexus RX350 northbound on Pinellas Bayway South. Deputies say when Martin began making a left turn into the boat ramp parking lot her Lexus struck the passenger side of Guiral's Tahoe as he was attempting to overtake her vehicle.

The impact caused Guiral to lose control of the Tahoe and his cruiser overturned, coming to final rest on its passenger side in the southbound lane of Pinellas Bayway South.

Deputies say citizens helped to extricate Deputy Guiral from his cruiser. Paramedics transported him to Bayfront Health St. Petersburg Hospital for non-life-threatening injuries. Martin and her passengers were uninjured.

Deputies say Guiral did not have his emergency siren on at the time of the crash. Neither speed nor impairment appears to be factors.

St. Petersburg man charged with lewd and lascivious molestation of child

ST. PETERSBURG — Pinellas County Sheriff's detectives charged a 24-year-old man March 27 with four counts of lewd & lascivious molestation involving a young girl.

Ryan Justice Phillips of unincorporated St. Petersburg was booked into the Pinellas County Jail after detectives with the Crimes Against Children interviewed him at the Sheriff's Administration Building in Largo where he reportedly admitted to the allegations. Bail was set at \$200,000.

Detectives say the female victim was between the age of 9 and 10 when the incidents occurred from November 2017 to July 2018 at a residence in Pinellas County.

Detectives began an investigation on March 25, after the 11-year-old told a family member about inappropriate sexual contact with Phillips. Detectives say the victim accused Phillips, who is known to her and her family, of kissing her, touching her inappropriately and encouraging her to touch him.

Detectives say it's possible there are more victims in this case. Anyone who believes their child may be a victim or has information regarding this case is asked to contact Detective Geoghegan of the Crimes Against Children Unit at 727-582-5662.

— Compiled by SUZETTE PORTER



Proctor

Bob and Bonnie Proctor celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary April 2 during dinner with family and friends. The couple was wed in Toronto, Canada. Mr. Proctor retired from a specialist position with IBM. Mrs. Proctor retired from Blood-Horse Publications. The couple has two children, David and Raina, and five grandchildren. They reside in Belleair.

For more local news, visit TBNweekly.com

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Making a difference



Photo courtesy of SABAL PALMS

Sabal Palms Children's Center, a pediatric long-term care and rehabilitation facility in Largo, partnered with Make A Difference Fishing to host its third annual fishing tournament recently. Over 30 residents and 15 families participated in the special fishing day designed especially for the residents of the Children's Center. The event allowed children of all abilities, even those on ventilators, to take part in the fun. More than 50 fish were caught and released throughout the day, and families were treated to a cookout. Each participant also received a medal. Make A Difference Fishing Tournament Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping children with disabilities through fishing tournaments and other programs that facilitate involvement in marine education and recreation.

25TH OUT OF 67 COUNTIES

Pinellas' health ranking shows slow improvement

By SUZETTE PORTER
Tampa Bay Newspapers

The overall health of Pinellas County's residents is continuing to improve, according to the 10th annual County Health Rankings released March 19 by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.

The county's Health Outcome rank is 25 this year. Last year, it was 26, and Pinellas ranked 28 in 2017. The state's healthiest county is St. Johns County, ranked No. 1, and the least healthy is Union County, ranked 67.

The Health Outcome rank includes measures in eight categories: Length of Life, Quality of Life, Health Factors, Health Behaviors, Clinical Care, Social & Economic Factors and Physical Environment.

The annual rankings provide a snapshot showing how "where you live influences how well and how long you live," according to a press release from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. In places with high housing costs, families may live in unsafe or overcrowded conditions. They may even become homeless. The high cost of housing influences Social & Economic Factors and Physical Environment.

Families that pay more than half of their income on housing can't afford essentials that contribute to good health, including healthy food, medicine or transportation.

"Our homes are inextricably tied to our health," said Dr. Richard Besser, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation president and CEO. "It's unacceptable that so many individuals and families face barriers to health because of what they have to spend on housing. This leaves them with fewer dollars to keep their families healthy."

Pinellas does OK in the category of Social & Economic Factors, ranking 16 out of 67, and there are signs of improvement. Fewer children are living in poverty today, only 17 percent, compared to 20 percent in 2018 and 21 percent in 2017. The statewide average this year is 21 percent.

However, the numbers show that race makes a difference. Out of a population of 970,637, 10.5 percent of Pinellas County's residents are black, 9.7 percent are Hispanic and 74 percent are white. But a disproportionate number — 45 percent of the county's children living in poverty are black and 24 percent are Hispanic. Only 13 percent are white.

"Children of color face a greater

likelihood of growing up in poverty, and low-income families struggle to pay rent and get enough to eat," said Dr. Sheri Johnson, acting director of County Health Rankings & Roadmaps.

Social & Economic Factors also include the number of children living in single-parent households, which declined slightly to 40 percent in 2019 compared to 42 percent last year. The statewide average is 38 percent.

Officials say education is a ticket out of poverty. To that end, Pinellas' high school graduation rate is continuing to improve. It was 83 percent in 2019. The statewide average was 82 percent. The high school graduation rate was 78 percent in 2017 and 2018. Sixty-six percent of residents had some college in 2019, compared to 65 percent last year and 64 percent in 2017. The state average is 62 percent.

Unemployment continues to drop. Only 3.7 percent were unemployed in the county in 2019, compared to 4.4 in 2018 and 4.9 percent in 2017. The statewide average in 2019 was 4.2 percent.

"We are continuing our efforts to improve the health of all people in Pinellas," said Dr. Ulyee Choe, director of the Department of Health-Pinellas.

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MADEIRA BEACH

Seafood Festival to stay at John's Pass

City and merchants agree to pact for at least one more year

By WAYNE AYERS
TBN Correspondent

MADEIRA BEACH — After months of uncertainty, the City Commission reached a consensus at its March 26 workshop on a partnership agreement with the John's Pass Merchants Association that would keep the annual Seafood Festival in Madeira Beach, at least for the coming year.

Though the agreement covers only the 2019 festival, it confirms a proposal outlined at February's commission workshop that City Manager Jonathan Evans said "would ensure the event's long-term success and viability."

John's Pass Merchants Association President Sonny Flynn said the agreement is "definitely doable." Speaking of the Seafood Festival's long-term value to the city and the John's Pass merchants, she said, "We love our city. We don't want (the festival) to leave."

The agreement contains some significant changes from past contracts. Before, the city waived the parking fees associated with the festival while charging the direct cost to the event organizers.

Under the new contract, Evans said the city "will have exclusive rights and control over parking, but will not levy any fees associated with direct costs."

A memo written by Evans said the city will "ensure that appropriate support services are provided, such as fire prevention, sanitation, road closures, and other ancillary costs."

The costs typically run about \$6,100, Evans said, and are easily affordable within the city budget.

The agreement is a trade-off, Evans said. Allowing the city to manage and operate the parking offers a significant revenue opportunity. Evans said the city can make a lot of money from the parking at John's Pass Park and 130th Avenue. The plan is to charge festival



City commissioners took action March 26 that will allow the John's Pass Seafood Festival to continue for at least another year.

goers a flat \$20 parking fee rather than the \$2.50 an hour meter rate.

"There are 133 parking spots. We normally turn over our parking spaces two or three times daily. If we turn them over twice, we get \$15,000 in revenue. Three times a day gives us \$23,000," he said.

Also, as part of the agreement, Evans said the Merchants Association will elevate the city's sponsorship level of the festival similar to a level of sponsors who contribute \$25,000 to \$50,000.

"We will be listed as one of the headline or top billing sponsors," he said.

Evans said the new John's Pass Seafood Festival partnership agreement with the Merchants Association offers the city "the opportunity to generate revenue that would offset the costs the city would incur, and forge that bond to be a genuine partner with the event organizers."

Just as the commission appeared united in support of the proposed agreement, Commissioner Deby Weinstein raised an objection. She said she took offense

to a letter written by Merchants Association President Flynn in early March that appeared on the Next-Door website.

In the letter, written on behalf of the Merchants Association, Weinstein quoted Flynn as saying, "I urge you to vote on March 12 and critically evaluate the progress Madeira Beach has not made over the last three years."

Flynn recommended that residents vote for Doug Andrews and Steve Kochick.

Weinstein called the letter "inappropriate" and said "I'm tired of any association holding the city as what I call a 'hostage' in these types of events."

She went on to say she thinks "the John's Pass Merchants Association should pay the hard costs of the Seafood Festival, and the city should not give them any of the parking revenues."

After hearing Weinstein's comments, newly-elected Commissioner Doug Andrews said, "Wow! That is certainly conduct unbecoming a city official. You just trampled on

her constitutional right to support a candidate."

Weinstein got no support from the other commission members.

Commissioner Nancy Hodges said, "I believe there has been a lot of give and take on both sides. We need to bring this to an end right now, and go ahead and go with this agreement."

When Mayor Maggi Black asked, "Do we have a consensus to approve the agreement?" there were no objections.

Black thanked Flynn "for all your hard work." She told Flynn, "You are doing a great job. If you're OK, we can shake hands and go forward."

"We have a consensus to move forward. We will work out the nuances," Black said.

On the contract agreement, Black said, "Both sides will gain from it and work together to ensure that this event stays here in Madeira Beach."

The agreement will be ratified by the commission at its next regular meeting April 9.

FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

FWC urges caution as gators get more active

The American alligator is found throughout the state in fresh water lakes, ponds, swamps and slow-moving rivers.

During spring, alligators become more active and visible. When temperatures rise, their metabolism increases and they begin seeking prey. Although alligator bite incidents resulting in serious injury are rare in Florida, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission recommends taking precautions when having fun in and around the water.

Because alligators control their body temperature by basking in the sun, they can be easily observed. If you see an alligator, keep your distance. Also, never feed alligators because it is dangerous and illegal. When fed, alligators

can overcome their natural wariness and learn to associate people with food.

Alligators are most active between dusk and dawn. To reduce the chances of conflicts with alligators, swim only during daylight hours and in designated swimming areas. The FWC also recommends pet owners keep their animals on a leash and away from the water.

The FWC urges people who believe an alligator poses a threat to people, pets or property to call FWC's toll-free Nuisance Alligator Hotline at 866-FWC-GATOR (866-392-4286). When someone concerned about an alligator calls the Nuisance Alligator Hotline, the FWC will dispatch one of our contracted nuisance alligator trappers to resolve the situation.



Photo courtesy of FWC

Alligators become more active in the spring.

April looks good for anglers

Cool, crisp mornings recently have kept water temperatures from climbing up too quickly. Although this is most likely the most normal spring in recent years, let's face it, it was a chilly March. April is getting off to good start as finally a long-range forecast without any strong wind is upon us.

The kingfish bite offshore was good over the weekend as the water cleaned up a bit and the bait move in closer to the beach. Hard-bottom areas found a mile or two offshore are holding bait and kingfish alike. Slow trolling live threadfins and blue runners in areas such as the Clearwater hard bottom, the Blind's Pass drop and the shipping channel near Egmont Key have been producing lots of action. Kingfish in the 10- to 15-pound class are abundant, and plenty of fish up to 45 pounds have already been caught this spring.

Spanish mackerel fishing has been good in the lower bay region. Anglers fishing the Skyway piers and the Fort De Soto piers have been catching plenty of mackerel. Gotcha plugs and trolling sinkers trailed by a 00 spoon have been working well.

Triple tail continue to move through the area. This has been a banner season for triple tail so far. Scanning crab trap floats as your heading offshore or slow trolling will no doubt reveal a few fish. Those that have made more of an effort by covering lots of territory have been rewarded with more keeper sized fish. The minimum size for tripletail is 18 inches, which is a pretty big fish, so you may want to pass on the marginal sized fish in order to search out the big ones.



Fish Tales
Capt. Tyson Wallerstein

Tampa Bay snook fishing heated up at the end of last week. Water temperatures are still too cool for an outright feeding frenzy. However, the fish are more and more beginning to remain on the flats after a cold front passes through. Mid-morning low

incoming tides have been best. Look for the fish to be staged up off of the mangroves at the lower tides where they are much easier to target.

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

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Outdoors Briefs

Pinellas Pioneers to host annual picnic
LARGO — The Pinellas Pioneers Association will host its 56th annual picnic Saturday, April 6, 10 a.m., at Shelter No. 3 in Eagle Lake Park, 1800 Keene Road.
Attendees are asked to bring their own food, beverage, table service and folding chairs. The event will get underway at 10 a.m. Lunch will begin at noon.
Association membership and picnic admission are free and open to all who have an interest in Pinellas County history. The event will feature live music. Attendees are encouraged to bring historical show-and-tell items.
For more information, call association president Terry Fortner at 727-786-2837.

Moccasin Lake to host bird walk
CLEARWATER — A free Audubon guided bird walk will be offered Saturday, April 6, 8 a.m., at Moccasin Lake Environmental Education Center, 2750 Park Trail Lane, Clearwater.
Participants may bring binoculars and field guides. Meet in the Moccasin Lake parking lot.
For information, email Lloyd Simmons at Lloyd.Simmons@mclearwater.com.

Kayak for free at Highland Lake
LARGO — Enjoy a free day of kayaking at Highland Lake on Saturday, April 13, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
All equipment will be provided.
Call 727-518-3016 for more information.

McGough Park set to celebrate Arbor Day
LARGO — Celebrate Arbor Day at McGough Nature Park on Saturday, April 13, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
The free event will showcase the park's many animals, including owls, snakes and reptiles. Attendees also can take home a free tree or, for a donation, get a picture taken with Sarge, the park's American bald eagle.

Botanical Gardens seeks gift shop assistant
LARGO — The Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation is currently seeking volunteers for its Botanical Bounty Gift Shop in the lobby of the Pinellas County Extension Building at 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo.
As a gift shop volunteer, you will conduct sales transactions, help customers, and interact as a "goodwill ambassador" for the Florida Botanical Gardens and the Foundation.
Year-round residents are preferred, for consistency. All sales proceeds benefit the gardens.
Every day is divided into two shifts: 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 1:30 to 5 p.m. A commitment of one shift per week is required. No previous sales experience is needed, but reliability is extremely important to the shop's success.
To apply, visit www.pinellascounty.org/volserv. Choose "Complete the volunteer application."

Obituaries

Normandee VANDYKE-LUDWIG
Normandee Van Dyke-Ludwig, 94, of Largo, Florida, passed away Monday, March 18, 2019, at Regal Palms Assisted Living in Largo, Florida where she had resided for the last four years. She was born on December 4, 1924 in Springfield, Ohio, the daughter of Esther and James Reich. She attended Ohio State University and later received a BA degree in History from the University of South Florida, with an interest in ancient history and cultures. Normandee was a life-long advocate for animals and animal rescue. It was one of her many passions in life. Prior to moving to Florida, she bred, raised and showed Doberman Pinschers. She was an avid bridge player, belonging to several bridge groups. Normandee is survived by her loving daughter, Sherry Dunn, of Jensen Beach, Florida and husband, William Hicinbotham of Largo, Florida. Memorial contributions in Normandee's name may be made to Suncoast Hospice. <https://suncoasthospicefoundation.org>

Easter

DINING GUIDE

Easter Brunch

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Easter Sunday, April 21st
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Mass in the Tent
• 7:30am, 9:00am, 10:45am and 12:30pm
Mass in the Church

There is NO 5pm Mass on Easter Sunday.

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Don't answer the telephone — ever

In January, a Denver couple received a scam phone call from a man who told them he had kidnapped their daughter. The man was very convincing that their daughter was in his possession. In the background they heard a woman's voice begging for help. The call was convincing enough that they tried to wire money to the man. Fortunately, the money didn't go through. Police soon showed up after the wife left a note with the bank teller explaining what was happening. The police determined it was a scam.



Glenn Mollette

A 90-year-old friend received a call a couple of years back. The caller explained that he was with the Internal Revenue Service. He alleged my friend was \$40,000 behind in his federal taxes and that payment had to be made immediately. My friend didn't owe anybody and had always been a model citizen. The worry and fear for this 90-year-old man were more than he could handle. He committed suicide a few days after the call.

Several years ago, I received a call after my son had boarded a submarine. I would not be able to communicate with him for several months. The caller in a very convincing voice stated my son owed \$350 and if not paid immediately he would file charges against him that would be very negative toward his military career. I explained he would not be available for a while. The caller insisted that someone needed to intervene to prevent the black mark against my son. You guessed it, I fell for it and paid the demanded money. Of course, within a couple of hours and some research I knew I had been scammed.

Somehow, somewhere there is someone keeping an eye on soldier's families that they can catch at a vulnerable moment and scam them.

When you are scammed you feel like an idiot when it's over. It's embarrassing. However, these telephone artists are professionals. This is all they do every day. In places like Nigeria where many of these calls originate from people who go to work from 9 to 5 every day like you go to your daily job. Only, their daily job is to come up with real life convincing lies to scam you out of your hard-earned money.

Some of us have only lost a few hundred dollars but others have lost thousands and in the case of my friend, he ended his life over a very believable telephone call.

I remember our first telephone. I was about 9 years old. Telephone calls were cool. I talked to friends on the telephone for hours. When the telephone rang we knew it was family or friends calling and answering it was enjoyable and important. Today, a ringing telephone is a nuisance. Some days I receive five to 10 calls from local numbers who end up being people selling health insurance, credit cards, student loan payoffs, car warranties, scams pertaining to taxes owed and numerous others. Thus, I no longer answer the phone if I don't recognize the number. Leave a message and I promise I'll call you back. If the person calling you is real and legitimate they won't mind leaving you a message and a real number to return the call.

Dr. Glenn Mollette is the author of 12 books. His syndicated column is read in all 50 states. Contact him at GMollette@aol.com. Learn more at www.glennmollette.com. Like his facebook page at www.facebook.com/glennmollette.

LETTERS

Legislature could be cure for Floridians' pain

Editor:
Florida has a problem and the diagnosis is clear: too many of our state's residents are in pain. Fortunately, the prognosis is good should lawmakers follow my recommendation — continue increasing access to medical cannabis.

As a practitioner with 23 years of experience in Interventional Pain Management, cannabis is the only medication I have found that actually improves the patient's quality of life, while keeping them off the road to opiate addiction.

In fact, a growing body of research illustrates the benefits of cannabis in fighting the opioid epidemic. A 2016 study found a 42 percent reduction in patients' opioid use after three months of medical cannabis treatment, while Scientific American reported in March "there is much promise for the development and use of cannabis-based medicines in the treatment of opioid addiction." That's particularly important for Florida, where opioid-related overdose deaths top the national average and have seen a dramatic increase in recent years.

Since the legalization of medical cannabis in 2016, I've treated patients with a variety of serious medical conditions. I've had incredible success using cannabis to wean patients off the addictive opioids that kill hundreds every day. I've seen cancer patients manage the side effects of chemotherapy and reduce the size of their tumors, while those with Crohn's disease saw complete resolution of their symptoms.

It is truly a life-changing treatment. That is not to say that every patient is guaranteed the same results, but decades of research have shown cannabis to be a safe and effective medication for multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, PTSD and many other serious conditions. And particularly relevant to my field of work, a comprehensive review by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine found strong evidence to support the use of cannabis or cannabinoids as an effective treatment for chronic pain in adults.

As patients' access to medical cannabis increases in their local communities, the benefits will continue to spread. And recent changes in Florida's cannabis laws have opened new doors for patients. Governor DeSantis's lifting of the state's ban on smokable flower will allow patients to access vital treatments that improve their quality of life.

It was so encouraging to see lawmakers listen to their constituents and work together to improve the lives of Floridians in need of the full spectrum of cannabis' medicinal benefits. Regardless of politics, this is the right thing to do. We must always put the health of our community first.

At the end of the day, that's what being a doctor is all about. Nothing has provided me with more satisfaction than seeing my patients enjoy improved health, better relationships with friends and family, and a new outlook on life they never thought possible.

I hope that Florida's elected leaders will continue to remove barriers to medical cannabis access, so that more people who are suffering are able to improve their wellness and lead reinvigorated lives.

Mark Hashim
Hudson

(Mark N. Hashim, M.D., is a board certified anesthesiologist with offices in Hudson and Tampa.)

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.
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 - We do not publish poetry or songs in letters to the editor.
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 - We won't print anonymous letters.
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87 weeks remain; so here we go again

As most of you are aware, only 87 weeks remain until the next presidential election. So, you and I better get started studying the issues, getting to know the candidates and becoming the informed, dedicated citizens that all Americans (including legal immigrants) wish to be. Here are a few related points:



Driver's Seat
Bob Driver

1. Election Day will be Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2020. It will be the 59th quadrennial election to be held in our history. "Quadrennial" is from a Latin word meaning "Thank God this madness will cease for another four years."

2. Actually, we won't really vote for the presidential candidates. We will vote for members of the electoral college. They will then cast ballots for the president and vice president, unless by then House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has succeeded in abolishing the college on grounds of several states being under-populated and thus unworthy of being counted.

3. Primary elections for major parties will be held from Feb. 11, 2020, in New Hampshire, to June 16, 2020, in Washington, D.C. In addition, there will be a gamut of political caucuses, pretty much held by anyone who can round up enough attendees. The word "caucus" comes from a Native American word "cawcawwassough," meaning "one who pushes" or a "promoter." That sounds about right to me.

4. As I write this column, the big news is the recently released Mueller report. Republicans throughout the land are celebrating with "No collusion! No more indictments!" cocktail parties. Democratic leaders are preparing to impeach President Trump for non-collusionary crimes. They (the Democrats in the House of

Representatives) will almost surely form a study group to determine whether a sitting president (i.e. Mr. Trump) can govern while sitting in a prison cell awaiting trial for obstructing justice.

5. About 15 Democrats have announced their candidacy for the White House. By this time next year there may be 15 more. This will add to the burden of concerned Americans (this includes you and me, of course) to memorize each candidate's name, age, place of birth, and so forth.

By the time this column appears in print, former Vice President Joe Biden may have become a candidate. Joe and I were born about 20 miles apart in northeastern Pennsylvania. He hails from Scranton, and I came from Tunkhannock, a small town whose name (in Native American dialect) means "neighbors of Joe Biden."

6. When complete, the field of Democratic candidates will contain as varied a collection of Americans as has ever set their sights on the highest office in the land. There will be Caucasians, persons of color, women, men, newcomers to politics and persons

already serving in Congress. This variegated assortment will give each of us a chance to vote for the candidate of our choice.

However, a big question will be hanging out there as the primary candidates slug it out enroute to the Democratic convention in Milwaukee from July 13 to 16, 2020. The question: out of this crowded Democratic field, will there emerge one or two contestants sufficiently attractive, dynamic, experienced and battle-ready to defeat Donald Trump? Even if in November 2020 Trump is under indictment or threat of impeachment, he will be the GOP candidate. His party does not have anyone gutsy or suicidal enough to challenge him. And he will still have his voter base, the American men and women who don't care whether Trump is the devil incarnate or the second coming of Christ.

But I could be wrong. Politics, like life and dice, is subject to change.

7. One thing that will not change in the next 19 months is the slavish addiction of our major TV networks to covering almost nothing except our national politics. If a moon-sized comet from outer space were to slam into Asia tomorrow, news coverage of that event by ABC, FOX, CBS, NBC and MSNBC would play second fiddle to the upcoming presidential election. As days pass, I increasingly rely on PBS, BBC, Newsy and a few other outlets for world news. I'm even getting close to understanding what is Brexit, and why.

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



There was no collusion, Adam Schiff

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump called on House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff to resign from Congress. That, of course, is not going to happen.

Even after special counsel Robert Mueller found no conspiracy or coordination between Trump's 2016 campaign and Russian actors, Schiff told The Washington Post, "Undoubtedly, there is collusion."

That establishes Schiff as a facts-don't-matter chairman who makes fellow Democrats seem immune to reality. But that's their right, and Schiff did win his Southern California district with 78 percent of the vote.

So instead of resigning, Schiff shrewdly started fundraising and campaigning on the heels of Trump's demand. "Adam won't be intimidated," a campaign tweet said, "Show Adam you have his back: Add your name now."

On Thursday, all nine Republicans on the committee called on Schiff to resign his chairmanship because he continued to argue there is evidence of collusion between Team Trump and the Russians. As House Speaker



Debra Saunders

Nancy Pelosi called GOP members "scaredy cats," Schiff doubled down on his collusion claim, with sound bites about his high standards that soar above the low-ball behavior of the Trump campaign and Republicans who defend the Trump team.

"You may think it's OK how Trump and his associates interacted with Russians during the campaign," Schiff said to his colleagues. "I don't. I think it's immoral. I think it's unethical. I think it's unpatriotic. And yes, I think it's corrupt."

When interacting becomes synonymous with colluding, you're in guilt-by-association territory. And that's worse than having a pencil neck. Trump ignores the truth when he says

Mueller absolved him of obstruction of justice, when Mueller expressly did not.

Schiff ignores the truth when he finds guilt where the dogged Mueller, after 22 months, issuing more than 2,800 subpoenas and interviewing some 500 witnesses, found none.

Attorney General William Barr reported to Congress that Mueller "did not find that any U.S. person or Trump campaign official or associate conspired or knowingly coordinated with the IRA (Russian Internet Research Agency) in its efforts."

Did Trump associates talk to Russians? Yes. Did they collude with Russians to win in 2016? No.

They can keep holding hearings trying to find collusion, but it's not going to happen. Trump won, and if they want to get to the truth, maybe they should ask American voters what happened.

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

They said it

Quotes from famous people born in April.

"We are not expected to be translated from despotism to liberty in a featherbed."
— Thomas Jefferson

"Anything you have to acquire a taste for was not meant to be eaten."
— Eddie Murphy

"God bless America. God Save the Queen. God defend New Zealand and thank Christ for

Australia."
— Russell Crowe

"Art does not exist only to entertain, but also to challenge one to think, to provoke even to disturb, in a constant search for truth."
— Barbara Streisand

"The war is over — the rebels are our countrymen again."
— Ulysses S. Grant

"Don't be afraid to go out on a limb. It's where all the fruit is."
— Shirley MacLaine

"Time stays long enough for anyone who will use it."
— Leonardo da Vinci

"When the line started to blur between the fans and the players, sometimes things can get ugly."
— Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

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PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

School name keeps girl's legacy alive

Palm Harbor school to be renamed in honor of slain girl

By **SUZETTE PORTER**
Tampa Bay Newspapers

LARGO — Elisa Nelson was 10 years old in 1980 when she was kidnapped while riding her bicycle to Palm Harbor Middle School and later murdered.

But that's not the memory her family, friends and classmates want for a girl whose life means so much to her community.

Instead, they want her to be remembered as a girl with a giving spirit, who was a Girl Scout and enjoyed sports, loved reading and animals, and to dance. They say her death forever changed the Palm Harbor community and brought people together.

A dozen people attended the March 26 Pinellas County School Board meeting to support renaming Palm Harbor Elementary School in honor of Elisa.

The school district closed Palm Harbor Elementary in 2009. In 2018, administration decided to reopen it. The school at 415 15th St. is currently under renovation and scheduled to open in August. It will be the home of the Center for Gifted Students (grades one-five) and the Center for Literacy Innovation (grades one-four).

In February, the district asked the community for suggestions for a name for the repurposed school. From Feb. 11-25 members of the Palm Harbor community submitted nominations online and in writing. In the end, 634 were received with 107 unique suggestions.

The suggestion of Elisa Nelson Elementary won out three-to-one. School Board members agreed with



Photo courtesy PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS

Palm Harbor Elementary will have a new name when it reopens in August. It will be known as Elisa Nelson Elementary School to honor the legacy of a little girl whose death has forever changed a community.

that suggestion, voting 7-0 in favor of the new name.

Those who made a nomination were asked to give a rationale. Many of those rationales echoed the words spoken by supporters at the school board meeting.

The Rev. Timothy Nehls recalled the overflow crowd at his church during Elisa's service.

"Her death brought the community together," he said.

He said at that time, some wanted to name one of two schools under construction in Elisa's honor. But that didn't happen.

Elisa's brother, Jeff Nelson, thanked the community for its support of his sister's legacy. He said he didn't know what happened to change the decision to name a school after Elisa in the 1980s, but suggested it wasn't the right time.

Naming the elementary school where "she lived and played" is a better fit, he said, especially considering it will house a literacy center.

run. In cooperation with the Pinellas Education Foundation, the money has purchased books for Palm Harbor school libraries, funded scholarships and provided financial support for the Girl Scouts, youth athletics, animal charities and organizations that help children.

Jeff Nelson believes renaming Palm Harbor Elementary as Elisa Nelson Elementary is the "way it was always meant to be."

"Her life was a unique narrative that no one else has or will have," he said. "She united the community. Let's turn the tragedy into good."

"I'm so touched this morning," said School Board member Lisa Cane, who added that her hometown of Palm Harbor was "an incredible place."

"Heroes are not always measured by what they do in their lifetime, but by their legacy," she said. "The world is changed one small voice at a time."

Meet and greet

Hema Adhia will be the principal at Elisa Nelson Elementary School. A meet and greet for students and families will be held Tuesday, April 9, 6-7:30 a.m., in the auditorium at Palm Harbor University High School, 1900 Omaha St.

Representatives from District Application Programs, Exceptional Student Education and the Transportation Department will be on hand to answer questions. Meet the principal and hear her vision for the school, find out how to get involved and sign up for a demonstration classroom tour.

For more information, visit www.pcsb.org/Domain/10370.

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

Pet of the Week



Mikey

This pup was born in a rural field in Tunica, Mississippi, saved by the local Humane Society and transported to Fluff Animal Rescue in Seminole. He came from a litter of five. He is about 12 weeks old. The hound mix will grow to be about 45-50 pounds — with long legs so a 6-foot backyard fence is a must. Mikey is on the shy side, but warm up quickly once they meet you, get picked up and petted. The adoption fee is \$250 and pups will come vetted, microchipped, spayed/neutered and with one month free heartworm medication. Applications may be submitted online at www.fluffanimalrescue.org/adoption-application.

Pet Briefs

Bags & Bling event set

LARGO — SPCA Tampa Bay's Women's Giving Group will host Bags & Bling Thursday, April 11, 6 to 8 p.m., at The Bayou Country Club, 7979 Bayou Club Blvd., Largo.

Attendees will have an opportunity to shop gently used hand bags, jewelry and accessories for a good cause. There will be a wine tasting, chance drawings, appetizers and more. Cost is \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door. Advance RSVP is required. Email LDean@SPCATampaBay.org or call 727-586-3591.

Skyway Cat Club to host cat show

LARGO — The Skyway Cat Club of Tampa Bay will host The International Cat Association All-breed Cat Show on Saturday and Sunday, April 20-21, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Minnreg Hall, 6340 126th Ave. N., Largo. Cats will compete in 12 different rings both days.

Parking is free. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$3 for children and free for children age 5 and younger.

Notebook

Largo Christian School to host open house

LARGO — Largo Christian School, 11633 137th St. N., Largo, is hosting an open house Tuesday, April 9, 6-8 p.m. For more information, call 727-517-2153 or visit www.largochristianschool.org.

Pinellas Park High to host annual Disaster Day

LARGO — Disaster Day will be held starting at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, April 10, at Pinellas Park High School, 6305 118th Ave., Largo.

Pinellas Park High Schools' First Responder program educates and prepares students for a variety of emergency-response careers. Seven years ago, the school's first Disaster Day simulation began in an effort to put skills into action. This year's student-led exercise simulates a hospital bombing. First Responder seniors will triage, treat and transport more than 100 simulated victims. Additionally, this year's event will be the first to fully involve the Center for Law Education, otherwise known as the Criminal Justice Academy Program.

SPC conference to focus on climate change

SEMINOLE — The emphasis will be on adaptation, resilience and opportunity when St. Petersburg College hosts a two-day conference on climate and sea level rise Friday and Saturday, April 5-6, at the Conference Center at the SPC Seminole Campus, 9200 113th St. North.

Presented by SPC's Institute for Strategic Policy Solutions and the

Suncoast Sea Level Rise Collaborative, the conference will interpret the recent National Climate Assessment findings for Tampa Bay communities and assess actions planned or already in progress by local governments and businesses to turn the impacts of climate change into opportunities for economic growth. It also will highlight action steps for individuals and policymakers to mitigate or adapt to climate change impacts and to capitalize on opportunities created by a blue-green economy.

The conference will be from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. April 5 and 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. April 6. Advance registration is required at <https://solutions.spcollege.edu/>. Cost is \$20 for both days, or \$15 for first day only or \$10 for second day only. The program is free for students, and anyone is welcome to request attendance free of charge. For further information, visit the website or phone 727-394-6942 or 727-394-6251.

Best Buy, Intel donate \$10K to Dunedin school

DUNEDIN — Best Buy and Intel presented Dunedin Elementary School with a check for \$10,000 March 29. The money will be used to help the school make technology upgrades and give youth hands-on access to the tech education and tools they need to be successful in school and in their future careers.

The donation comes from the Score with Intel Core, an annual event in which Best Buy stores compete to help improve the quality of sales interactions. Stores that win can then donate cash to local schools of their choosing.

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Business Briefcase

Bluffs Wine Walk draws a crowd

BELLEAIR BLUFFS — The Belleair Bluffs Business Association's Wine Walk March 30 attracted more than 800 guests, up from 500 in years past.

The money raised from the event, which included business along Indian Rocks Road and West Bay Drive, goes back into the community in several ways. The organization sponsors the Bluffs Fourth of July picnic and the holiday tree lighting. The association also makes donations to Shepherd's Village, the Suncoast Performing Arts Foundation theatrical camps as well as supporting other charitable causes.

Business owners who dedicated many hours to organizing and running the event are Dr. Kimberly Bender, Dr. Patrick Lepeak, Dr. Kathie Erwin, Karen Rodowicz, Marya Flurnoy, Gary Fustino and Bonnie Trembulak.

"Our group of four Canadians had a fabulous time last night. Great food, great wine and amazing organization," said Bert Beechy. "One of us even purchased shoes at one stop."



Photo by TOM GERMOND

Brian Franzese, president of Bella Vino Wine, pours wine for a participant in Belleair Bluffs Wine Walk.

ernment officials and Operation Homefront. Operation Homefront, a nonprofit agency supporting military families, was given a check for \$5,000 by Luke Griffith, the proprietor of the Seminole Outback location.

The new Outback is in Seminole City Center at 7885 113th St., Seminole. Call 727-384-4329 or visit Outbackonlineordering.com.

SCORE offers small business counseling

SAFETY HARBOR — The Safety Harbor Public Library partners with SCORE to bring free and confidential small business advice to the community on second and fourth Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., by appointment, at the library, 101 Second St. N., Safety Harbor.

SCORE: Counselors to America's Small Businesses provides mentorship and guidance in ethically sound business practices. SCORE volunteers help thousands of entrepreneurs start small businesses and achieve new levels of success in their existing businesses. SCORE is a valuable network of more than 13,000 volunteers nationwide. SCORE volunteers offer mentoring services to small business entrepreneurs free of charge.

Registration is required. To make an appointment, call 727-724-1525, ext. 4112.

Chamber to present Island Optics ribbon-cutting ceremony

MADEIRA BEACH — The Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber of Commerce host a ribbon-cutting Wednesday, April 10, 5 p.m., at Island Optics, 15037 Madeira Way, Madeira Beach.

The ceremony will welcome Island Optics to the neighborhood. Those who join the ribbon cutting will enjoy complimentary beverages and snacks, networking and will be entered in a raffle to win a new pair of Ray-Ban sunglasses.

Island Optics is a full-service optometrist's office offering exams, contact lenses, and prescription eyewear. For information, visit www.islandopticsfl.com. For event information, email Jessica Morrow at jessica@tampabaybeaches.com or visit TampaBayBeaches.com.

CLEARWATER

Marine Corps League seeks volunteers for honor guard

By **JOHN GUERRA**
Tampa Bay Newspapers

CLEARWATER — With dwindling membership, local Marine Corps League detachments are finding it harder to put together honor guard units for military funerals.

Everyone has seen the powerful solemnity of military funerals: the firing of the rifle volley; the sound of a bugler playing Taps; the folding of the Stars and Stripes over the coffin; and the presentation of the American flag to the survivors.

Phil Schantz and Joshua Magidson of Clearwater Marine Corps League Detachment 54 are among the dwindling number of veterans in squared-away uniforms and white gloves one sees performing those honors at Bay Pines National Cemetery and other local cemeteries.

The two veterans perform the rites for a couple of reasons: first, to display the traditions that unite all soldiers in death, and second, to show respect to the families of those who served in the nation's military.

Survivor families appreciate the solemn traditions of military funerals, Schantz said.

"Afterward, when we're putting stuff away in the guy's car who takes the rifles home and cleans them, people come up to us and say, 'Thanks a lot for coming and doing this,'" said Schantz, who served in the Marines from 1955 to 1959. "People always like to see the shooting of the rifles; such tradition shows survivors that the deceased's life was one of service."

Magidson, a Clearwater attorney with Macfarlane, Ferguson & McMullen, served in the Marines between 1969 and 1975. He agrees with Schantz that the funeral traditions symbolize shared experiences.

"When you're in Parris Island, you're called all kinds of names — maggots, low-life," Magidson said. "You're not referred to as a Marine until you graduate from Parris Island."

"This is what makes the Marine Corps such a big club," Schantz said. "If you went through Parris Island, you went through hell, I mean that was tough."

After serving some time as an admiral's adjutant, Schantz went ashore with a force of 14,000 Marines during the Lebanon Crisis in July 1958. Known as Operation Blue Bat, the Marines were there to protect the port and international airport during the civil war be-

tween Maronite Christians and Muslims.

"We lived for about three months in the mountainsides above Beirut," said Schantz, 84. "In the night time we could see down into the city and see the firing back and forth. I was fired at and I heard the bullets go over our heads. That's my claim to fame."

So, when Bay Pines National Cemetery in St. Petersburg puts a call out for Marine Corps League volunteers to serve as honor guards and color guards for an upcoming funeral, the men and women of Detachment 54 answer the call. Sometimes, however, there are not quite enough volunteers.

"We have a short list of people in our unit that will serve, but it's diminished by scheduling," Magidson said. "You can have as few as four and as many as eight or 10 serving in the funeral. It all depends if we are sharing with an active-duty unit or what the family requests in the ceremony."

So, the Marine Corps League is looking for a few good members who can help fill the need for color or honor guards at military funerals, he said.

"Right now, our active membership is fewer than 20 people. The main message we have is, if you're a Marine and you're in the Clearwater area, please give us a call. We'd love to talk to you about joining," said Magidson, who drove 5-ton trucks, ambulances, and other vehicles in the service. He now serves as Detachment 54's judge advocate.

The detachment does a lot more than lay colleagues to rest; most of their activity surrounds the living.

"There's an important social part to all of this," he said, "including doing community events, working with other veterans' organizations, Wounded Warriors, the Junior Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program at Clearwater High School, Toys for Tots, and other groups in the community."

The group meets the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m. at the VFW Hall, 1401 N. Hercules Ave., in Clearwater.

For more information about joining Marine Corps League Detachment 54, call 201-232-2996; if you're interested in volunteering in the honor guard, call Pete Kristal, 727-474-5737. Full members must have served in the U.S. Marines, or served as a Navy chaplain or corpsman; non-military can join as associate members, said Detachment 54 member Rudy Fontaine.

Outback opens in Seminole City Center

SEMINOLE — Outback restaurant is now open for business in Seminole City Center.

Hosted by the Seminole Chamber of Commerce, the ribbon cutting ceremony was a celebration for residents, local gov-

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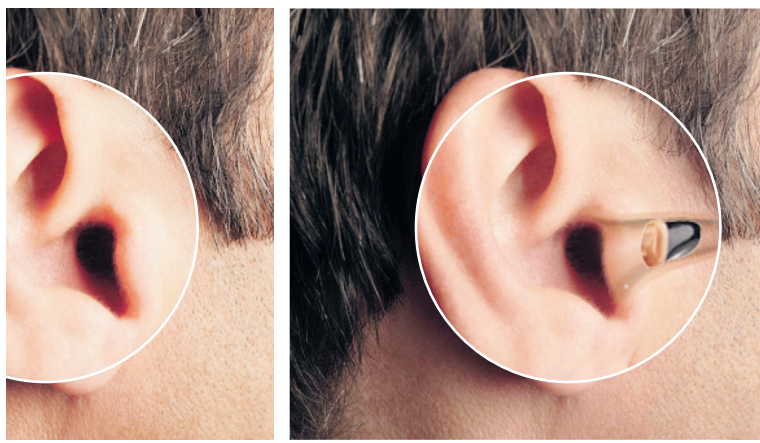
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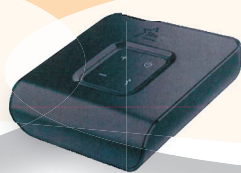
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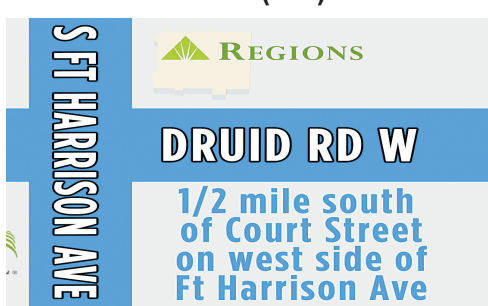
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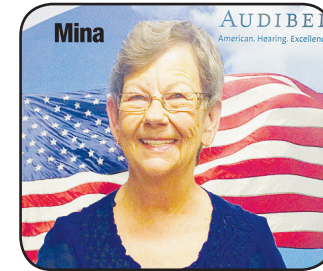
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Special Report On Advanced Technology For Hearing Loss

Advanced Technology & Medical Breakthroughs Can Prevent, Reduce, or Even Relieve Hearing Loss!

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Tampa Bay, FL - Do you ever have difficulty hearing clearly?

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A Quiet Epidemic

As our population ages, and baby-boomers embark upon their senior years, there is a quiet epidemic spreading throughout society. It is an epidemic of hearing impaired middle aged adults and elders.

Three Types Of Hearing Loss:

Your ability to hear reveals an amazingly complex auditory system. There are three types of hearing loss: #1 **Conductive**, #2. **Sensorineural**; and #3. **Mixed**, which is a combination of both.

#1. Conductive

Conductive hearing loss occurs in the outer ear and the middle ear. Your ear canal and your middle ear conduct sound waves to the sensory receptors of our inner ear. If something blocks this pathway, sound waves are disturbed. This results in the reduced perception of sound. This can come from an excessive build-up of ear wax, middle ear infections, or head trauma.

#2. Sensorineural

Sensorineural hearing loss is when damage to the tiny delicate structures of the inner ear, such as the hair cells in the cochlea or the nerve fibers leading from the cochlea to the brain, cause hearing loss. This type of damage is most commonly a result of aging, known as presbycusis, or exposure to too much loud noise. Other damage to the inner ear could arise from a high fever, strong medications, or tumors.

Thanks to recent developments and breakthroughs in technology, medicine, and science, help is on the way for those seeking a solution of hearing problems.

Hearing Is An Essential Human Sense

It's no secret that hearing is one of the most essential human senses. Some believe it is more important than sight. In fact, when Helen Keller was asked about being blind and being deaf, she said, "Blindness separates us from things, but deafness separates us from people."

A Cause Of Divorce And A Reason For Early Retirement

And, as we age, one of the great realizations about life is that friends and family are the real gold

we cherish in life. In fact, gradual hearing loss can create tension in marriages and the cause for divorce. When you lose your ability to hear clearly, it puts tremendous strain and responsibility on your spouse. That's because in many cases, they have to become your ears and tell you what's going on and what everybody said.

A Simple Conversation Can Be Exhausting!

Problems in the work place and the main reason for early retirement. Intimate relationships between family and friends are discarded simply because it can be exhausting just trying to carry on a conversation. It's difficult for the person who can't hear clearly and it's aggravating for the person trying to communicate with a loved one who has a hearing problem.

The Root Of Depression

Not being able to hear clearly creates a sense of isolation. For many, it can also be the root cause of depression. It's no fun living in our fast paced world loaded with entertainment, social, and educational opportunities that all require your ability to hear clearly.

In fact, when you start to lose your hearing, one of few non-confrontational activities you can do is to read. If you have a hearing problem there is little joy in going to the movies, listening to music, meeting friends for dinner at a restaurant, even going on a nature walk.

Most people who have a hearing loss problem spend their time alone, hoping that no one will notice that they can't hear clearly, and have great difficulty caring on a conversation in public- not because they don't want to- but because they simply *can't hear what's being said*.

The Source of Great Misunderstandings!

Hearing loss causes great misunderstandings. As you slowly withdraw from your normal activities, many people will see you as aloof, or think that you are angry with them or that you're just mean. When in reality your main reason for reducing your participation in life is that you simply can't hear what's going on.

For most, hearing loss is gradual and you don't really notice how it can change your personality and your attitude about life and the ones you love.

And so, the big question is this: If hearing loss can be so devastating to one's life, why don't people do something about it instead of continuing to spiral down and eventually become lonely, isolated and irrelevant?

The Average American Spends 5-7 Years Living In Denial Of Hearing Loss!

The reason is that because the loss of your hearing is gradual, the average American spends between 5-7 years living in denial of hearing loss. As mentioned, there is a high price to pay for this denial, because if you do nothing, your situation will surely deteriorate and get even worse. In fact, left unattended, in mild hearing loss can easily morph into profound hearing loss and then deafness.

Don't let this happen to you. If you are experiencing the signs of premature hearing loss now is the time to take action. Now is the time to be proactive and do your research. You need to find out what's going on with your hearing and the only way to do that is to get your hearing checked.



First U.S. President To Wear Hearing Aid

President Reagan began wearing a custom-made, technologically advanced hearing aid (at age 72) after experiencing increased difficulty hearing high-pitched sounds. Reagan's hearing problem dates from the 1930's, when a .38 caliber pistol was fired near his ears while he was acting in a movie.

Sure, it's important to tell your doctor about your hearing issues, but even then, some doctors may tell you it's just part of getting older and to get used to it.

Newest Generation Of Hearing Aids Reveals Amazing Technology

There have been extraordinary advances in overcoming hearing loss and damage from exposure to loud noises. The latest generation of hearing aids are absolutely amazing.

Not only are today's Behind – The-Ear styles extremely small and discreet, some In-The-Canal hearing aids are 100% invisible when worn. And consider this: *hearing aid wearers and their families often comment that hearing loss is far more noticeable than any size or model of hearing aid!*

And that's not all! There are new accessories that turn your hearing devices into a wireless stereo headset so you can listen to music or cell phone conversations in both ears, and watch TV at your preferred volume. Built-in remote control capabilities now allow you to make one-touch volume and program adjustments.

Just imagine that there are no restrictions on your activities and that you can hear like you did when you didn't have a hearing deficit. Imagine hearing the birds chirping, the horns honking, and the crisp sound as leaves rustle in the wind.

Imagine wearing hearing devices that you don't even know you're wearing because they fit so perfectly you don't even notice they are there. Hearing aids should

Sound Level Noise

Sound Level (In Decibels)	Noise
30	Whisper
40	Refrigerator Hum
60	Normal Conversation
70	Washing Machine
95	Motorcycle, Lawn Mower
100	Snow Mobile, Power Drill, Blow Dryer
110	Chain Saw, Rock Concert
120	Ambulance Siren
140	Jet Engine
165	12 Gauge Shotgun
180	Rocket Launch

(From the National Institute on Deafness and Hearing Impairments, 2006, and American Tinnitus Association, 2007)

make hearing effortless and provide sound so natural that you can focus on what you're hearing rather than how you're hearing it.

All this is possible in today's advanced technological world. You can now have the best science, technology, and medicine the world has to offer. Some hearing devices are obviously more expensive than others. But the cost of hearing devices has come way down and is expected to drop even more as the technology advances.

Your improved hearing all starts with a simple high-tech hearing exam.

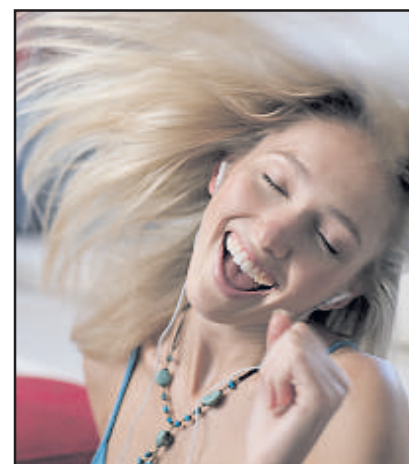
Right now you may be wondering if you really do have a hearing problem or if it's just that everyone else is not speaking clearly, or that your kids expect you to hear them when they talk to you from another room. Or maybe you have years of wax build-up impacted in your ear canal that prevents you from hearing clearly.

If so, take the simple test on this page and find out if you are showing the tell-tale signs of one who is experiencing hearing loss. It only takes a minute and it will give you a sense of how your hearing is affecting your life today.

The longer you let your hearing deteriorate, the more difficult your life will be and the more difficult it will be to get help when you finally overcome the natural sense of denial that comes with hearing loss.

The Old Stigma Of Wearing A Hearing Aid Is Gone!

The old stigma of *"he's old, he's wearing a hearing aid,"* is gone. In fact, you'll seem much older if everyone has to say things twice and you are always saying WHAT? and HUH?



Teen Hearing Loss on The Rise From MP3 Players & Ear-Buds

Young adults and teens worldwide are in for a big surprise as they get older when they discover that listening to loud music on their iPods and MP3 players with ear-buds embedded deep within their ear canals has caused long term hearing loss.

You'll be amazed at how much younger, more active, and in control you'll feel with a state-of-the-art, technologically advanced hearing device.

Get help now before it's too late and your hearing loss progresses into deafness. Remember, as our hearing declines, we have an extraordinary ability to compensate for loss.

In a way, this is good; but it is important to realize that the very act of compensating can fool you into thinking that your hearing is fine. Make an appointment to get your hearing tested today. It's the best decision you can make so you can enjoy the rest of your life.

A Simple Way To Test Your Hearing

Here's a simple test that takes only a minute and it will tell you if you are experiencing hearing loss:

If the statement feels accurate check YES, if not, check NO.

	YES	NO
1. You have difficulty hearing because others mumble or speak to softly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Since you've noticed a decline in your hearing, you can't do all the things you like to do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Others are afraid to make jokes about your hearing difficulty when you are present.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. You don't hang out with as many people as before, because you can't hear well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. You refuse to be seen wearing a hearing aid because of what others might think.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. If you're on your own in a conversation, you don't trust what you hear.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. You think people don't think you're as smart as you were because you can't hear as well as you did when you were younger.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. If You don't exactly hear what a person says the first time, you'll remain quiet thinking it's a waste of time because you can't hear them clearly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. You can't assert yourself as well as before since your hearing has declined.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. It is difficult for you to admit that you are experiencing hearing loss.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered YES to three (3) or more statements, it's time for you to get a hearing exam. It only takes about an hour and you'll know the cause and the degree of your hearing loss, and what you can do about it. See the next page about how you can get a free ear examination by a National Board Certified Hearing Instrument Specialist. See next page for complete details.



PRESIDENT BUSH Used Cupped Hand for Better Hearing

In 2004, President George W Bush's doctors reported that he had "a mild high frequency hearing loss that does not affect everyday conversation." Here you can see him cupping his right ear, a common technique used by individuals when having difficulty hearing.

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TOP FIVE THINGS TO DO



Photo by ZACKERY MICHAEL

The Revivalists play Jannus Live April 5.

The Revivalists April 5, 7 p.m.

The Revivalists, Friday, April 5, 7 p.m., at Jannus Live, 200 First Ave. N., St. Petersburg. For information or to purchase tickets, call 727-565-0550 or visit jannuslive.com.

ABBA the Concert April 5, 8 p.m.

ABBA the Concert, Friday, April 5, 8 p.m., at Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Road, Clearwater. Tickets start at \$38.75. Call 727-791-7400 or visit www.rutheckerdhall.com.

John Waite April 5, 8 p.m.

John Waite and John Parr, Friday, April 5, 8 p.m., at Capitol Theatre, 405 Cleveland St., Clearwater. Tickets start at \$35. Call 727-791-7400 or visit www.atthecap.com.

Dunedin Highland Games & Festival April 6, 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Dunedin Highland Games & Festival, Saturday, April 6, at Highlander Park, 1920 Pinehurst Road, Dunedin. Visit dunedinhighlandgames.com.

"Death by Golf" April 6-June 9

"Death by Golf," April 6 through June 9, at Just for Laughs Dinner Theater, inside Jackpot's Grill & Bar, 1999 Starkey Road, Largo. For performance times, ticket information or to make reservations, call 727-466-6546 or visit justforlaughsdinnertheater.com.

MOVIE REVIEW



Caring for baby Dumbo are, from left, Holt Farrier (Colin Farrell), Milly Farrier (Nico Parker) and Joe Farrier (Finley Hobbins) in Tim Burton's live-action adaptation of "Dumbo." Photos courtesy of WALT DISNEY STUDIOS

Tim Burton's 'Dumbo' dims Disney's fairy-tale luster

Believing an elephant can fly may turn out to be easier than believing Walt Disney Studios needed to make a live action adaptation of its 1941 animated classic film of the same name.

The original film — produced by Walt Disney Productions and released by RKO Radio Pictures — has its own significant problems when viewed through the lens of a post-Civil Rights Movement era. Thankfully, there is no chorus of racially insensitive crows in director Tim Burton's new take on the titular baby elephant with oversized ears.

In fact, Burton's version strays far from the original storyline as he weaves in darker themes about the seamier side of show business and the loss of innocence. It's clear from the very beginning that the director — working from a screenplay written by Ehren Kruger, best known for his work on the Transformers film franchise — intends to populate his film with a cast of sullen, pessimistic outcasts with bleak prospects.

Set in 1919, former star Holt Farrier (Colin Farrell) returns to the Medici Brothers' Circus after losing his arm in World War 1. His wife died during his absence, a victim of the 1918 influenza pandemic. The outbreak also claimed other performers in the circus, leaving Max Medici (Danny DeVito) in dire financial straits. Max has placed any hope of resurrecting the circus on a soon-to-be-born baby elephant. When the baby arrives, his oversized ears make the circus owner think he's been swindled by the man who sold him the pregnant elephant.

Holt and his children Milly (Nico Parker) and Joe (Finley Hobbins) are assigned the task of caring for the newborn. The kids discover that Jumbo Jr. — soon to be cruelly renamed Dumbo

Reel Family Time

Lee Clark Zumpe & B.C. Zumpe



— has an unusual gift.

Once Dumbo starts flying under the big top, the star performer of Medici Brothers' Circus attracts the attention of show business entrepreneur V.A. Vandevere (Michael Keaton). Max soon accepts an offer that will make Dumbo a centerpiece of Vandevere's Dreamland amusement park.

Burton's eccentricity and visual panache are completely missing in "Dumbo." Instead of fun, quirky characters, the film's primary players are flat and detached. The acting is tragically mechanical, with Farrell droning his lines with what barely passes as chronic grief. DeVito delivers the best performance, but his character is so morally ambiguous that he never endears himself to the audience.

It may be that Burton wanted to keep his cast distant and indifferent to focus the audience's empathy on Dumbo and his mother. If so, it didn't work: CGI elephants — particularly ones that don't talk — simply can't charm an audience.

On the other hand, Burton may be giving us a palette full of varying shades of gray. Max is only slightly less corrupt than Vandevere. Holt is ineffective and trapeze artist Colette Marchant (Eva Green) seems to have a moral compass that is governed mainly by self-preservation.

In Burton's "Dumbo," the protagonists only do the right thing when apathy and indecision are no longer an option. Vandevere often mentions "the mystique" that draws crowds and drives revenue. He thinks it can be

See REVIEW, page 3B

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OPENING THIS WEEK

Compiled by **LEE CLARK ZUMPE**
Tampa Bay Newspapers



Zachary Levi, left, stars as Shazam and Mark Strong as Dr. Thaddeus Sivana in New Line Cinema's action adventure "Shazam!," a Warner Bros. Pictures release.

Photo by STEVE WILKIE/DC COMICS

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

'Shazam!'

GENRE: Action, fantasy and adventure
CAST: Zachary Levi, Asher Angel, Mark Strong, Jack Dylan Grazer, Grace Fulton, Faithe Herman, Ian Chen, Jovan Armand, Cooper Andrews, Marta Milans, Adam Brody and Djimon Hounsou
DIRECTOR: David F. Sandberg
RATED: PG-13
We all have a superhero inside us, it just takes a bit of magic to bring it out. In Billy Batson's (Angel) case, by shouting out one word — "Shazam!" — this streetwise 14-year-old foster kid can turn into the adult superhero Shazam (Levi), courtesy of an ancient wizard. Still a kid at heart — inside a ripped, godlike body — Shazam revels in this adult version of himself by doing what any teen would do with superpowers: have fun with them. Can he fly? Does he have X-ray vision? Can he shoot lightning out of his hands? Can he skip his social studies test? Shazam sets out to test the limits of his abilities with the joyful recklessness of a child. But he'll need to master these powers

quickly in order to fight the deadly forces of evil controlled by Dr. Thaddeus Sivana (Strong).

'Pet Sematary'

GENRE: Horror
CAST: Jason Clarke, John Lithgow and Amy Seimetz
DIRECTORS: Kevin Kolsch and Dennis Widmyer
RATED: R
Based on the seminal horror novel by Stephen King, "Pet Sematary" follows Dr. Louis Creed (Jason Clarke), who, after relocating with his wife Rachel (Amy Seimetz) and their two young children from Boston to rural Maine, discovers a mysterious burial ground hidden deep in the woods near the family's new home. When tragedy strikes, Louis turns to his unusual neighbor, Jud Crandall (John Lithgow), setting off a perilous chain reaction that unleashes an unfathomable evil with horrific consequences.

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

'The Public'

GENRE: Drama
CAST: Alec Baldwin, Emilio Es-

tevez, Jena Malone, Taylor Schilling, Christian Slater, Gabrielle Union, Jacob Vargas, Michael K. Williams, Jeffrey Wright and Che "Rhymefest" Smith
DIRECTOR: Emilio Estevez
RATED: PG-13
What begins as an act of civil disobedience becomes a stand-off with police and library officials when a conscientious librarian turns the Cincinnati Public Library into an impromptu homeless shelter for one night during the most brutal cold snap in recent Cincinnati history.

'Unicorn Store'

GENRE: Drama
CAST: Brie Larson, Samuel L. Jackson, Joan Cusack and Bradley Whitford
DIRECTOR: Brie Larson
NOT RATED
After failing out of art school and taking a humdrum office job, a whimsical painter gets a chance to fulfill her lifelong dream of adopting a unicorn.

'The Haunting of Sharon Tate'

GENRE: Thriller
CAST: Hilary Duff, Jonathan Bennett and Lydia Hearst
DIRECTOR: Daniel Farrands

RATED: R

Based on one of Hollywood's most chilling murder cases, this spell-binding thriller follows 26-year-old actress Sharon Tate (Hilary Duff), a rising star about to have her first baby with her husband, director Roman Polanski. Plagued by terrifying premonitions, Sharon sees her worst nightmares come to life with the appearance of Charles Manson and his deadly cult.

'Native Son'

GENRE: Drama
CAST: Ashton Sanders, Margaret Qualley, Nick Robinson, Kiki Layne and Bill Camp
DIRECTOR: Rashid Johnson
NOT RATED
Based on the classic novel by Richard Wright, "Native Son" tells the story of Bigger Thomas (Ashton Sanders), a young African-American living in Chicago who is hired as a chauffeur for affluent businessman Will Dalton (Bill Camp). As Thomas enters this seductive new world of money and power — including a precarious relationship with Dalton's daughter, Mary (Margaret Qualley) — he faces unforeseen choices and perilous circumstances that will alter the course of his life forever.

GAMES, from page 2B

The impact of the volunteers cannot be understated.

"The games and festival couldn't work without the help of volunteers," Smith said. "The event is put on by the nonprofit Dunedin Scottish Arts Foundation, whose members take on the bulk of running the event, but without volunteers it wouldn't be able to succeed in its goal of helping the community. All of the profits are used to assist in the Dunedin Scottish Arts programs and the Dunedin middle school and high school band programs, which rely heavily on these events for sustainability. Without volunteers willing to give back to the community with their time and talent, the event wouldn't be what it is today and couldn't provide for the benefit of those programs."

Smith said he could still use more volunteers for this year's event.

"As of today there are still several volunteer positions waiting to be filled," he said. "There is no deadline, and we often have volunteers sign up on the day of the event if there are openings. In return for a few hours of time, our volunteers gain free entry into the event, a volunteer T-shirt, and free beverage of their choice."

Volunteer registration is available through the Sign Up Genius website. To access it, visit dunedinhighlandgames.com and click on Volunteer beneath the Contact tab.

"We utilize Sign Up Genius for

enrolling volunteers because it assists in organizing everyone and keeping track of vacancies, as well as giving an avenue to communicate with everyone to pass along details and information to assist in running everything smoothly," Smith explained. He reiterated the fact that walk-up volunteers may also find a spot the day of the event. "As stated previously, there are people who show up on the day with the desire to volunteer, and if there is an opening, oftentimes it's a great benefit to both parties."

The Scottish heavy athletics component of the Dunedin Highland Games will feature a number of events, such as:

- Caber toss
- Sheaf toss
- Hammer throw
- Stone throw
- Weight over bar

The athletic competitions will get underway at 8:30 a.m. The Highland Trail Run 5K will start at 9 a.m. The opening ceremonies will take place at 11:45 a.m., followed by the massed highland fling at noon, the Parade of Clans at 12:10 p.m., and national anthems and introductions at 12:30 p.m. Competitions will resume at 1 p.m.

This year's musical entertainment will feature sets by Celtic Conundrum, The Brayzen Heads and Off Kilter.

Formed on the idea of playing music as culturally diverse as the crew one might find on a ship, a dock, or a pub by the port, Celtic

Conundrum brings songs and instruments that came with them from the taverns of their home countries. The band has been known to play Celtic tunes and sea shanties as well as songs from Ireland, Scotland, and England, and the great colonies of America and Australia.

According to their Facebook page, The Brayzen Heads have been performing live since 2000. They have performed more than 4,000 shows throughout Europe and the United States. Between 2000 and 2011, Shane Farrell and Dave Gilmore played a nightly residency at the infamous Shamrock Bar, Spain. Since 2012, they have been playing and residing in the United States. They recently finished a three-year residency performing at Raglan Road Irish Pub in Disney Springs.

Farrell plays fiddle, banjo, mandolin and whistles. Gilmore plays guitars and sings vocals.

Off Kilter — a high-energy, progressive Celtic band that became a staple at Walt Disney World — blends many hard-driving musical styles, bringing a new twist to Celtic music.

For 20 years, Off Kilter performed regularly at Epcot's Canadian Pavilion, harvesting a loyal fan base with their grab-bag of "rocked-up" traditional Celtic tunes, familiar rock and roll with a Celtic twist and original material that incorporates the sound of bagpipes.

The band was formed in 1997. Members include Jamie Holton,

piper and vocalist; Mark Weldon, bass player and singer; Scott Zymowski, drummer; Randy Holbrook, lead guitar; and Jason Thomas, fiddle.

REVIEW, from page 1B

captured and caged and prodded into performing whenever the spotlight shines, show after show, day after day, season after season. That "mystique" is no different from the fairy-tale charm of old Disney classic animated films. It's foolish to think that every Walt Disney Studios film can recapture that old magic. Burton's film certainly does not.

By the way, it's hard not to see similarities between the film's greedy, dream-crushing Vandevere and a real-life 20th century theme park entrepreneur. If so, the film can be viewed as a critique of corporations that buy up rival enterprises, exploit their resources and lay off their employees. Was Burton taking aim at the very company for which he has directed a number of films? I'll let audiences debate that possibility.

Assistant reviewer B.C. Zumpe, a 12-year-old, shares her thoughts on the film:

This movie is based on the first "Dumbo," but it's not just a remake. The story changes, because the ending of the initial film is in the middle of the new one. It goes on further and shows what happens after Dumbo reveals that he can fly, and there are also new characters.

I liked the movie because of the way it portrayed the child characters. I also liked how it continues the story from the previous movie. I thought the special effects were very good.

Since Dumbo is an animal who doesn't talk, he can't really express himself in the film. CGI allows Dumbo to reveal facial expressions that show his feelings. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. In the 1941 film, the story is conveyed from the point of view of the animals. I think this film might have been more interesting if the animals had speaking parts.

I think the movie is told from the children's perspective because they discover that Dumbo can fly and help him throughout the film. The basic argument of the film is that you shouldn't try to capture something special and use it for money. Some people in the film care more about money than Dumbo's feelings. Most people believe that Dumbo is special, and they care about him.

Another theme is that it is OK to be different.

Mrs. Jumbo is important because Dumbo misses her when she gets sold away and the children have to figure out how to get her back. Milly and Joe Farrier help Dumbo because they also lost their mother.

Dumbo wants to be reunited with his mother, so Milly and Joey tell him that if he makes enough money with his flying, they could buy her back. He elicits a lot of empathy.

V.A. Vandevere, the owner of Dreamland, hires Dumbo and the rest of the troupe for his circus. He is fascinated by Dumbo's flight. When he was introduced, I had mixed feelings about him.

The film addresses some social issues. Milly doesn't want to be in a circus act because she says she wants people to recognize her for her mind. She is interested in science and does many experiments in the movie.

The previous film featured characters that appear to promote racial stereotypes. It has caused controversy and debate. In the new film, Burton addressed that problem by including African-American circus performer Rongo the Strongo (DeObia Oparei) — a strongman as well as an accountant and one-man band. On the other hand, the circus also features Roshan Seth as Pramesh Singh, an Indian snake charmer — which is itself a stereotype, though circuses from that time period often included such acts in the midway.

Dreamland looked a lot like Walt Disney World. I think Tim Burton might be suggesting that even "the most magical place on earth" might not be perfect.

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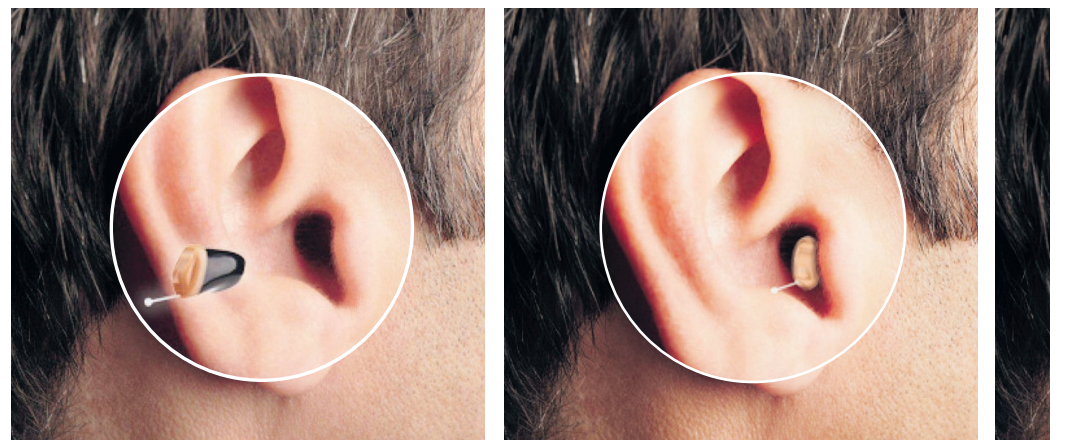
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