

TO HAITI WITH LOVE

WORLD NEWS

Read more pg. 6



The Presidential Palace of Haiti — Photo by Brad Kugler



A Volunteer Minister assists a Haitian child —Photo by Felix Kunze

GLOBAL

By Heidi Lux

On January 12th, at approximately 5:00 in the afternoon, the impoverished island nation of Haiti was rocked by an unexpected and severe tragedy. Although earthquakes are not uncommon in the Caribbean, quakes of that magnitude are. While there have been five major earthquakes reported in Haiti's history, the last was in 1860, and January's 7.0 earthquake was the worst they have seen in 200 years.

The Red Cross has estimated nearly three million people were affected by the earthquake. Haiti lost its Presidential Palace, and its parliament building, with parliament in session. Many lives were lost. The U.S. Geological Survey documents that the earthquake was felt as far away as Tampa – and perhaps it has been in more ways than one. Many

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WORLD NEWS



John Travolta and Kelly Preston with a Haitian child — Photo by Brad Kugler

MARTINIS & MATISSE WINNERS

CLEARWATER

by Heidi Lux

Martinis and Matisse is possibly one of Clearwater's most "cosmopolitan" fundraisers. On January 30th, for the seventh consecutive year, guests sipped on martinis courtesy of Bonefish Grill and sampled delicious entrees from restaurants like Carrabas and the Baystar Restaurant Group while slipping tickets into over-sized martini glasses to bid on the work of local artists, filling the lobby of the Frank Crum building. Early in the evening, these glasses contained a ticket or two, enticing attendees with the hope of taking home the pieces they coveted. By the end of the event, they were brimming to the top with bids, each ticket representing a donation to the Clearwater Free Clinic.

While Martinis and Matisse provides stiff drinks and even stiffer competition for artwork, sometimes it takes only one raffle ticket to win.

"I was just telling someone, I never win anything!" an astonished Cyndi Cantonis Heller gushed as she claimed her prize, a stunning and lifelike Ernest C. Simmons painting of a native green heron. As sponsor of the event, Heller and her husband Steve received one ticket to bid on the Simmons painting. "The piece is spectacular," said Cyndi, adding that she and her husband have, "admired the painting for years."

As luck would have it, the Heller's one ticket was the winner, and Cyndi and Steve took home the Simmons original. "It just goes to show," said Cyndi, "you can have just one ticket in there and win."

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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Frank Crum and wife Brenda with painter Ernest C. Simmons and winners Cyndi and Steve Heller — Photo by Simean Skolfeld

COMMUNITY

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Photo by Chris Connell

Parents Walk the Plank

by Heidi Lux

The Children's Gasparilla Extravaganza on January 23rd allowed kids and families to let out their inner pirate – in a safe, family friendly and alcohol-free environment. . . .

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MARINE LIFE

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JoJo Survives Cold Stun

by Heidi Lux

During the cold-snap that hit Florida in early January, the Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA) took in and treated nearly 100 sea turtles suffering from a condition known as "cold stun." ...

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COMMUNITY

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A Raisin in The Sun ...

by Heidi Lux

On February 6th, Harlem Nights Productions, the Mt. Carmel Community Development Corporation of Clearwater, Inc. and the North Greenwood Community Coalition came together to...

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ALL-STARS SPEND DAY WITH SHRINERS CHILDREN

By Jamie Parker

TAMPA

On January 17th, more than 100 of the nation's finest college football players spent several hours visiting with kids who receive care at Shriners Hospitals for Children Tampa. The athletes joined the children in enjoying various games and sports, face painting, music, dancing and autographing East-West Shrine Game jerseys and footballs.

"Today has been a great experience," said University of Central Florida Defensive Tackle Torell Troup. "There are kids here who have suffered a lot, but they wake up in the morning with smiles on their faces. It's good to be able to brighten up their day."

The all-stars played in the Asset Protect East-West Shrine Game on January 23rd in Orlando, which is the longest-running college all-star football game in the country and features some of the finest NCAA athletes. While the teams are divided by East and West, the players come together for the beneficiary of the event: Shriners Hospitals for Children. This international pediatric specialty health care system provides care without financial obligation to the patients or their families.



All Stars from the Asset Protect East-West Shrine Game visit with children at the Shriners Hospital in Tampa

For information about Shriners Hospitals for Children, visit: www.shrinershospitals.org ♦



All Stars from the Asset Protect East-West Shrine Game visit with children at the Shriners Hospital in Tampa



The Clearwater City Council Candidates during a recent election forum — Photo by Joshua T. Gillion

MEET THE CANDIDATES FOR SEAT 4 & 5

By Heidi Lux

CLEARWATER

This will be a year of many elections. We will be deciding on a new US senator and a new governor, among other offices. But perhaps the most influential in our daily lives will be the elections for city council. The Clearwater races have been drawing a lot of attention recently, with four candidates for Seat 4, where Carlen Peterson has termed out, and two for Seat 5, where incumbent Paul Gibson is seeking re-election. Having met for their first debate on February 1st, here are the candidates:

SEAT 4:

WAYNE CAROTHERS – "I want to give back to a city that has treated me well," says the Vietnam Veteran and owner of a local A/C company. Carothers, who grew up in the East Gateway neighborhood, says operating a small business has taught him to spend carefully and listen to employees. His biggest challenge has been government intrusion, and he is in favor of less regulation and wasteful spending, and more support to create jobs. "Let businesses do what they do best and that's generate business," he says.

BILL JONSON – A City Council veteran, served from 2001 – 2007. While in office, he developed a reputation for asking tough questions. He says the biggest issue facing Clearwater is budget cuts, and wants to bring back the budget task force and increase government transparency. He believes improving Downtown Clearwater requires dealing with landlords, whose demands on occupants can make it difficult for small businesses to thrive, and attracting new types of businesses. "Clearwater cannot thrive on just retirement and tourism," he says.

JOE PAIGE – A 29 year Florida resident, is "a small business owner with small town values." Paige believes Clearwater's biggest problem is over-regulation, which "smothers the entrepreneurial spirit," he says, making it tough on small businesses in the city. He advocates lower taxes, smaller government, and private property rights. He says the city should invest in projects benefitting the city as a whole, believing current policy spends money

to appease individual neighborhoods. Paige also proposes cutting the \$19,800 annual salary for council members by 10%.

HERB QUINTERO – is best known for the lengthy court battle over his mural on The Complete Angler, which the city claimed violated the sign ordinance. The city settled out of court. Quintero says the case, "Shows the public what the tone is in the management of the city." But he's moved on. "I'm not running as a vendetta," he says, "I'm running because I want to change the way the city is perceived," noting the city's reputation as unfriendly to small businesses. "The wants and needs of the public should come before the wants and needs of the bureaucracy."

SEAT 5:

PAUL GIBSON – the sitting Vice Mayor, is running for re-election. He supports fiscal responsibility. "The City must live within its means, just as city taxpayers must do everyday," says Gibson, who advocates a freeze on new project spending unless those projects are self-funding. He supports private-sector partnerships, notably the beach parking garage. Gibson commissioned the Matrix efficiency study of the Clearwater Police Department, and wants efficiency studies done of every city department. "It's not true we can't do things better," he reasons.

MIKE RIORDON – a local business owner, has innovative ideas for the city. While some – like converting city properties to solar or wind energy – have been called pie-in-the-sky, Riordon says, "I'd rather have pie-in-the-sky than pie-in-the-face." Focusing on water scarcity, he says drilling has more risks than benefits, advocating desalinization. Riordon says the city involves itself in unnecessary litigation costing taxpayers money (e.g., Quintero's case) and should stop harassing small businesses with stifling codes and regulations. He also wants the citizens to choose the city administrator by vote.

The Clearwater City Council Elections are on March 9th. A candidate's forum is scheduled for February 27th at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers. ♦

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Angela LeMay

TAMPA BAY INFORMER'S PURPOSE

"To improve the community by raising awareness and responsibility and providing solutions to community issues.

We are achieving this purpose by publishing informative articles related to issues in the community which include community activities sponsored by non-profit and civic groups. Our articles invite members of the community to get involved and take action to help improve our community.

Our advertisers help fund our purpose, and in turn, our marketing department is continuously expanding our circulation and increasing the exposure of our advertisers, resulting in expansion of their businesses."

FROM THE DESK OF SHERIFF JIM COATS

CLEARWATER

Cleaning up graffiti and cleaning up their records. This is the aim of a new community service program for youth launched by the Sheriff's Office. The new "Graffiti Response Program" uses the volunteer hours of kids who have committed minor crimes in an effort to stop the flood of graffiti that is plaguing areas of Pinellas County.

The kids volunteer to perform the service hours through the Sheriff's Office Diversion Program, providing them with a way to perform community service to avoid criminal prosecution. In addition, the program helps alleviate the burden on the court system from minor first time offenses, while offering kids a second chance.

Graffiti is a growing problem in several areas in Pinellas County and is in some cases gang related. The Sheriff's Office has formed a partnership with the community organization Faith and Action for Strength Together (F.A.S.T.) to address this issue through the Graffiti Response Program.

The volunteers to the Graffiti Response Program will work off community service hours as determined by the diversion program by cleaning and/or painting structures which have been damaged and defaced by graffiti. Most property owners are quick to fix the damage themselves; however there are those abandoned properties that are eye sores in the rest of the community. While these are the properties that the program hopes to target, the program is also available to help some homeowners who request the assistance. In a recent case, a homeowner provided the paint and supplies and the youth provided the labor. The hope is that the program will deter kids from committing crimes or joining gangs, while at the same time provide a service to the community; and that the community will be able to see results.

The program currently has ten volunteers, and the teens who have been assigned to perform this community service in lieu of prosecution for minor offenses have already been hard at work wiping out graffiti on various occasions since November. Their duties have included locations both privately and publicly owned, as far north as Dunedin and as far south as Lealman.

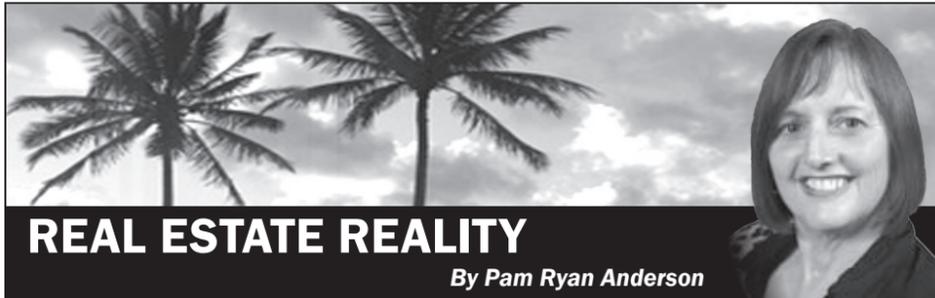
The Community Education and Programs

Unit which coordinates the schedule of the Graffiti Response Program plans to have the group out about twice a month.

It is important to remember that graffiti is a crime. The Sheriff's Office asks citizens to report graffiti when they see it so that it can be investigated. Later, it may come to be tackled by the Graffiti Response Program.

Our deputies are already hearing from the volunteers about how the program is causing them to re-examine themselves and their actions, raising their awareness, providing a positive influence while improving the look of the community. While it may be just a fresh coat of paint for some, for the kids it means an opportunity at a fresh start.

For more information about the Graffiti Response Program contact the Sheriff's Office Community Services Section/Community Education and Programs Unit at (727) 582-6200. ♦



REAL ESTATE REALITY

By Pam Ryan Anderson

FEDERAL HOUSING AUTHORITY (FHA) MAKES SOME BIG CHANGES

The FHA has typically been a good avenue for first-time home buyers, allowing buyers that have less than perfect credit, very little money down, gift money from family members, explanations about credit problems that other lenders would balk at, or a high ratio of debt compared to their income, be able to purchase a home. However, the FHA announced at the end of January that they are making changes to their program in order to lessen the number of FHA foreclosures.

In 2007, FHA loans were only about 3% of the loans being written. With the changes in the economy and tighter lending practices, that number flew up to about 30% of the current loans for homebuyers.

Here are some of the changes buyers can expect to come up against when applying for FHA financing:

1. In order to qualify for the 3.5% down payment, borrowers will have to have a minimum credit score of 580.
2. Borrowers with a lower credit score will be required to put 10% down in order to purchase a home.
3. Up to now, seller's have been able to pay up to 6% of the buyer's costs to close a loan, and the FHA is saying

that encouraged inflated appraisals. So now seller's are only allowed to give a concession of 3% to buyers, meaning that buyers will have to come up with about another 3% of the price, in addition to their down payment money. On a \$150,000 purchase, this means the buyer will have to come to the closing table with an additional \$4,500.

4. Currently, buyers pay an upfront, one time fee for mortgage insurance of 1.75%. That number is being increased to 2.25%. As an example, for someone purchasing a home for \$150,000, that would be an additional \$750.

These changes are geared toward strengthening FHA's and FHA officials are predicting that this should not affect too many homebuyers.

However, for those buyers that were planning on obtaining FHA financing in the near future, they may have to save up their pennies before being able to come up with the additional funds needed.

For more information, or to see if you qualify for an FHA mortgage, call Pam Ryan Anderson, Ryan Realty, 727-442-2822, or you can send an e-mail to: Pam@ryanrealty.org. ♦

Simaen Skolfield, Staff Photographer

With a passion for the arts, Simaen Skolfield has won the prestigious Grammy Award with his keen ears for capturing the realism of music and sound. In photography, he brings his uncanny skills to the visual world by framing life in its fullest senses. In photographic moments of all kinds; weddings to family, to portraits, Simaen possesses certain, rare abilities with which to capture our private world. As Simaen puts it, "I want to capture the full beauty of every special moment so our lives will be cherished again and again, the world over."

Mr. Skolfield is an independent professional digital-image-capture photographer, 'writing with light', at home here in Clearwater, Florida.

You can contact him at 727-557-6407



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CLEARWATER

CHIEF HOLLOWAY BEST FIT

By Heidi Lux

1986. During his 22 years in the Clearwater Police Department, Holloway served in nearly every division other than the Office of Professional Standards, and worked as a narcotics detective. He has 19 years of experience in community policing.

In 2007, Holloway retired from the Clearwater Police Department as a Captain, taking his current job as Chief of Police of Somerville, a city outside Boston with a population of 77,000.

"Tony Holloway emerged as the best fit from my perspective due to many facets. Since leaving Clearwater to be the Chief in Somerville, Tony has gained more experience in labor relations and implemented successful changes." said City Manager Bill Horne. "It has been a consistent observation that Tony is approachable but can make difficult decisions when required."

Police Chief Sid Klein will retire on February 26th after 29 years of service, and Holloway will take over as head of the department at that time. ♦

The search for Clearwater's next Chief of Police came to an end on January 11th. Beating out over 100 other applicants for the position, Anthony "Tony" Holloway has been named as Clearwater's next Chief of Police and retiring Chief Sid Klein's successor.

Holloway is currently the Chief of Police of Somerville, MA. A native of Tampa Bay, Holloway began his law enforcement career as a Clearwater patrol officer in

WHAT IS SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)?

TAMPA BAY

By MrWebWiz.com

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a term used to describe various methods of getting a website seen by search engines. Search engines targeted by SEO include Yahoo!, MSN, AOL, Ask.com, etc. But most important of these is Google, the largest and most used search engine, comprising over half the search engine market (source: Nielsen NetRatings).

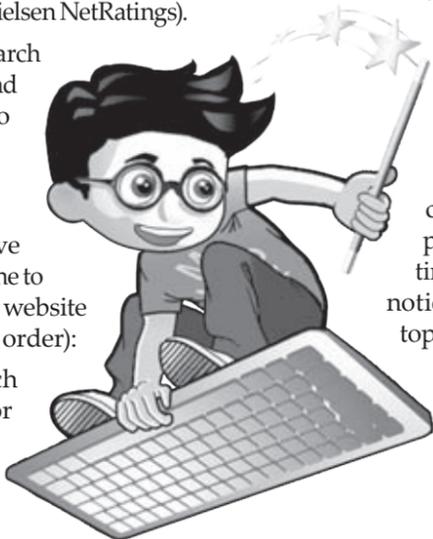
So what is this thing, "Search Engine Optimization", and what does it have to do with you?

The Basics

Generally, there are five common ways for someone to find, and get onto, your website (not necessarily in this order):

1. Clicking on a search result on Google or another search engine
2. Clicking on a link on an electronic newsletter or mass email
3. Clicking on a link on another website or a paid banner ad
4. Physical promotion (fliers, postcards, posters, letters, telemarketing, print ads, etc.)
5. Word of mouth

If you haven't made it big yet, one can assume there isn't much by way of word of mouth for your product or website, so we can scratch #5 off of the list. If you're not sending out bulk mailings or promotion, you can scratch out #4 as well. If you haven't invested in a dependable



and often times expensive email marketing campaign or banner advertising campaign, then #2 and #3 can go as well. So what does that leave? Numero uno, old-fashioned search engine results.

How does a search engine find your site? By finding what is on it. As simple as that may seem, there are a few, scratch that, many things that search engines take into consideration. In fact, Google scans through a list of over 50 criteria for each website page, a list which is continually growing without notice. So if you're not on top of SEO and its intricacies, your competitors who are will have the upper hand – and quite possibly leave you in the dust.

What We Can Do For You

There are over 18 BILLION web pages listed on Google, so getting the most out of your site in terms of being Search-Engine-Friendly is a must, as competition is plentiful.

At Mr. Web Wiz, we can explain to you one-on-one how search engines operate, and we can work with you on how to present your product and company in search engine terms so you can benefit from greater search engine results and page views.

So call us today at (727) 230-9691 to schedule a FREE website consultation. ♦

THE FIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

by Katherine Eckelberry

ST PETE



In recognition of National Human Trafficking awareness day, on January 11th, St. Petersburg College hosted a "Stop Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking" event at their Seminole campus. With

speakers including Marc Klaas, founder of the KlaasKids Foundation – dedicated to protecting our children, and former adult film actress Diana, aka "Desi Foxx," who spoke about the correlations between pornography and sex trafficking, and ending with a candlelight vigil, it was moving to see people and groups passionate about the issue working together to rid society of this evil.

The facts were astounding: human trafficking rakes in an estimated \$32 billion each year, with approximately two million victims being trafficked in the United States and over twenty-seven million victims worldwide. Eighty percent of them are women and children.

The other astounding thing is the extent of criminality in the adult industry. Watching people like Tila Tiquila, and shows like "The Girls Next Door," pornography begins to seem normal. But according to Diana, vulnerable young girls are recruited into the adult film business,

then, in her own words, "Once they get the girl to the city she's been recruited to, they have already started a tab, a debt roll, which she has to pay off before she can leave – or so they tell her. Everything they've spent to get her there, they put on this tab that she's unaware of." Paying this "debt" may involve prostitution, even being trafficked across state and international borders.

In view of all this, the question becomes: what can we do to help? There are many answers, beginning with being aware of and reporting certain signs: the presence of an overly controlling or abusive male figure, heavy traffic in and out of hotel rooms, fear or inability to make eye contact, young girls with excessive amounts of cash, among others, may be signs of prostitution or trafficking.

You can also get involved in your local community. Donate time or money to groups such as the Florida Coalition Against Human Trafficking, the Klaas-Kids Foundation, and Youth for Human Rights Florida. You can start by spreading awareness of the issue among your friends and family.

To learn more about this issue, visit www.stophumantrafficking.org. For more information about Diana and her experiences in the adult industry, visit www.desidivine.com. To learn more about your Human Rights, visit www.youthforhumanrights.org. ♦

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PARENTS WALK THE PLANK

TAMPA

Continued from page 1

The Children's Gasparilla Extravaganza on January 23rd allowed kids and families to let out their inner pirate – in a safe, family friendly and alcohol-free environment.

Held the weekend before the Gasparilla Pirate Parade, the Children's Gasparilla Extravaganza also celebrated Tampa Bay's rich and interesting pirate history and commemorated the invasion of Tampa by the terrible Spanish pirate Jose Gaspar – otherwise known as Gasparilla.

The Extravaganza included family friendly activities, like the bicycle safety rodeo which taught younger children about bike safety and provided free helmets to young riders while supplies lasted.

Young pirates decked out in fake eye patches and drawn-up mustaches made for an adorable procession up the street during the Preschooler Stroll. These tiny tikes under the age of five looked more cute than terrifying as they held up faux vintage guns, accompanied by signs that read, "Parents Must Walk Plank."

The Children's Gasparilla Extravaganza included the Children's Gasparilla Parade, complete with all the floats, beads and krewes of the grown-up Parade – minus the alcohol, of course. The Children's Parade has been a part of the Gasparilla experience since 1947, following the same parade route along Bayshore Boulevard as the Gasparilla Parade of the Pirates.

Rounding out the festivities was the Gasparilla Piratetechnic Extravaganza, one of the largest fireworks displays in the country. The Piratetechnic Extravaganza is a spectacle to behold – the invasion of Tampa by Gasparilla and his men is reenacted in fireworks and a magnificent light display. The pirates won, as they do every year.

The Children's Gasparilla Extravaganza is an excellent way to celebrate and share Tampa Bay's unique heritage and history, not to mention the fun and alcohol-free entertainment for children (and adults) of all ages.

To learn more about Gasparilla, visit www.gasparillaextravaganza.com. ♦



Swashbucklers in training — Photo by Chris Connell



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CMA staff release Loggerhead Turtle JoJo on Clearwater Beach — Photo by Heidi Lux

JOJO SURVIVES COLD STUN

By Heidi Lux

CLEARWATER

During the cold-snap that hit Florida in early January, the Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA) took in and treated nearly 100 sea turtles suffering from a condition known as "cold stun." In the course of two weeks, the CMA rescued more turtles than they had in the previous year.

Cold stun occurs when the water temperature reaches 55 degrees or lower, and is similar to hypothermia in humans. When the water drops below the normal body temperature of the cold-blooded sea turtles, their metabolic rate (the amount of energy expended in a given period) consequently drops, and the turtles will stop swimming and eating. The turtles are left helplessly floating, and sometimes wash ashore.

Once the waters had warmed, the sea turtles were released near where they were found. A total of 48 sea turtles have been released locally so far, and nine more turtles were rehabilitated by the CMA and have been released off Juno Beach on Florida's East Coast.

On January 21st, 47 sea turtles (46 green turtles and one hawksbill) were released off Honeymoon Island. The released turtles quickly and robustly took to the open water. With so many turtles to

be released, CMA staff and volunteers formed a human chain from the CMA van down into the water. 48 sea turtles had been scheduled for release, but one was seen to be floundering, and was held back to ensure a full rehabilitation.

One week later, a 120 pound Loggerhead named JoJo was released on Clearwater Beach, where she had been found. JoJo's release came later than the others because the protected waters off Honeymoon Island warmed faster than the gulf waters off Clearwater Beach.

Named after CMA's Director of Education Joe Malo and Joe Widlansky, the sea turtle biologist who found her, JoJo recovered quickly under CMA care. The CMA does not normally name animals after their staff, but in this case they could not resist. Both Joes were on hand to help release JoJo. "She promised to write every month, but you know how they are," joked Joe Malo.

The rehabilitation process for turtles is similar to human hypothermia, and includes placing the turtles in cool showers to gradually raise their body temperature, which can take about twenty-four hours.

For more information, visit: www.seewinter.com. ♦



John Travolta and Kelly Preston with Volunteer Ministers and the US Army — Photo by Brad Kugler



The streets of Haiti after the earthquake — Photo by Felix Kunze



An example of the damage done by Haiti's 7.0 earthquake — Photo by Brad Kugler



Volunteer Ministers search for survivors among the rubble of the city — Photo by Brad Kugler



A Volunteer Minister gives medicine to a Haitian child — Photo by Felix Kunze.

TO HAITI WITH LOVE

Continued from page 1

Tampa Bay area residents and groups heard the call for help from Haiti and answered it.

One of the most prominent campaigns locally and nationally has been the easy donation line provided by the Red Cross. Texting "Haiti" to 90999 donates \$10 to Haitian relief efforts – enough to provide a family with two water cans for clean drinking water, basic first aid supplies, and a blanket. This campaign has been enormously successful, with donations collected at an astounding rate of \$200,000/hour. The Red Cross has spent or committed more than \$67 million to "meet the most urgent needs of earthquake survivors."

Many faith-based groups have also rushed to Haiti's aid, including the Church of Scientology, whose Volunteer Ministers have received national media attention, with official acknowledgements from the Haitian Embassy and the Georgia State Senate. "No matter how bad things

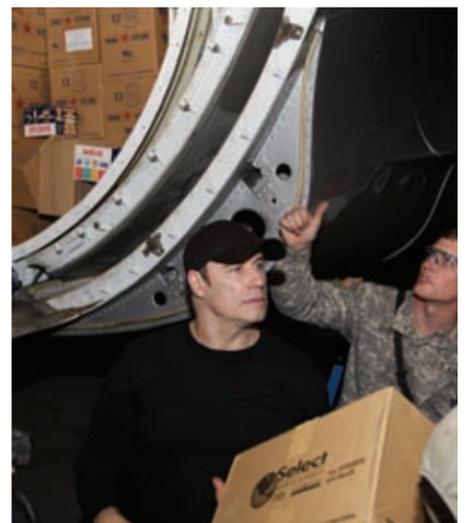
become, something can be done about it," is the motto of the Volunteer Ministers, "an embrace program of the Church of Scientology to provide community service, disaster relief and emergency response," according to their website.

Volunteer Ministers were quick to respond in Haiti, as they were at Ground Zero after 9/11, in Southeast Asia after the tsunami, and in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. The Church of Scientology chartered two flights to Haiti, carrying 132 Volunteer Ministers, 10 tons of food, water and medical supplies, and 250 doctors and medical personnel who needed a lift – including members of the Association for Haitian Physicians Abroad, the Bed-Sty Volunteer Ambulance Corps, a group of Mormon doctors, and the Health Minister for the Nation of Islam, who is also a licensed general surgeon. On the scene in Haiti, Volunteer Ministers are assisting medical personnel and distributing food and supplies.

Cary Goulston, Clearwater resident and founder of Global Pioneers, a group that has been working in Haiti since before the quake, was among the first to respond. He and his staff organized the chartered flights for the Volunteer Ministers, and he was on the ground himself with the first flight. His group has been dedicatedly raising funds and support for Haiti. "From the moment the earthquake hit, I was flat out getting help for Haiti," Goulston said.

Actor and Florida resident John Travolta also donated his own airplane and time flying doctors, supplies and Volunteer Ministers to Haiti. "We have the ability to actually help make a difference in the situation," Travolta said, "I just can't see not using this plane to help." Travolta and his wife, actress Kelly Preston, helped volunteers and U.S. military personnel unload their cargo of six tons of food and medical supplies.

Many local schools are also helping. Delphi Academy is holding a toy drive for a Haitian orphanage, and Clearwater Academy International partnered with



John Travolta helps deliver supplies to Haiti — Photo by Brad Kugler

Bless the Child to donate "boxes of hope" to Haiti, and accepted tuition-free the children of a temporarily relocated Haitian family.

Haiti will be recovering and rebuilding for quite some time, but it is good to know local people are assisting the relief efforts every way they can. ♦

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“A RAISIN IN THE SUN”

Celebrates Black History Month at the Fort Harrison

CLEARWATER

On February 6th, Harlem Nights Productions, the Mt. Carmel Community Development Corporation of Clearwater, Inc. and the North Greenwood Community Coalition came together to celebrate Black History Month with *A Raisin in The Sun*, the classic Lorraine Hansberry play depicting an African American family about to receive an insurance check, and their struggle to agree how best to use this gift to improve their situation.

A Raisin in The Sun was performed by RL Productions, a local acting troupe which “enables local aspiring actors and actresses to display their craft before live audiences.” The play was performed in the auditorium of the historic Fort Harrison, recently restored to its pre-World War II splendor by the Church of Scientology. Director Rory Lawrence has directed several plays in the Tampa Bay area, with two more on the way, *Between Calls and Neighbors*.

The purpose of Harlem Nights Productions is, “to provide resources of funding to the North Greenwood Community here in Clearwater, as well as other communities in the Tampa Bay Area,” Executive Producer, Maurice Mickens and Sherry Van Hootegem, the Director of Organization concurred “And, we do this by providing high quality entertainment in incredible venues.”

The actors of RL Productions, Harlem Nights Productions, and The Fort Harrison did a spectacular job of providing and entertaining evening for all!

For more information: visit www.northgreenwoodcc.com. ♦



Signer Jameil Walls opens with “A Change is Going to Come” — Sam Cook



Guests arrive at the Fort Harrison to enjoy the play “A Raisin in The Sun”



Rory Lawrence, Director of RL Productions; Maurice Mickens, Executive Producer of Harlem Nights; Bill Horn, Clearwater City Manager; Pat Harney, Director of Public Affairs for the Church of Scientology.



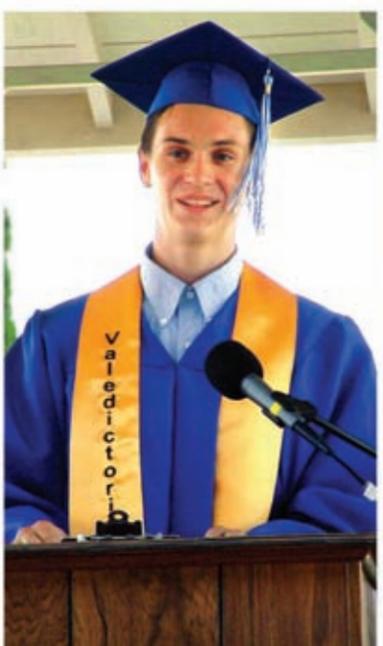
Performers Marquis D. Wharton and Lakiesha Moore humor the audience with their sibling rivalry.

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MARTINIS & MATISSE WINNERS

Continued from page 1



Happy winners go home with their paintings — Photo by Simaen Skolfeld



Another happy winner — Photo by Simaen Skolfeld

Cyndi is also on the board for the Clearwater Free Clinic, which, she reminds us, “is a worthwhile cause.”

Ernest C. Simmons was the night’s featured artist – an apropos honor, Simmons having been a patient of the Clearwater Free Clinic when he was a young, struggling artist living in Downtown Clearwater. Stricken with a health condition, but unable to afford care, Simmons turned to the Clearwater Free Clinic, and received the treatment he needed. Now successful in his craft, Simmons says, “it has come full circle, where I can give a \$4,800 painting, and help other up-and-coming artists,” who might need the Clinic’s help. An avid wildlife painter, Simmons is active in wildlife fundraisers, but, “this is one of the few I had personal interest in because they helped me when I was in need,” he says, “It would be only right to give back.”

The Clearwater Free Clinic, operating since 1977, provides health care for low-income and uninsured individuals, filling the need for quality treatment for those who aren’t unfortunate enough to qualify for government assistance, yet can’t afford health insurance. The non-profit clinic operates independently, without government funding. It is run by volunteers and funded entirely through donations, and is a remarkable example of the generosity of the private sector.

The Clearwater Free Clinic is located at 707 Ft. Harrison Ave, Downtown Clearwater, and is open Monday – Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m., or later if necessary.

For more information, or to make a donation to the Clearwater Free Clinic, visit www.clearwaterfreeclinic.org. ♦

“A PEOPLES’ HOLIDAY”

By Heidi Lux

CLEARWATER

On January 18th, a Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration March was held in Clearwater to honor the late Dr. King’s nonviolent message of human rights and equality. The event was marked by the spirit of the day, with people of different races, cultures and faiths coming together to pay their respects to the man and his legacy.

Beginning at the North Greenwood Recreation Center, the march headed south along MLK Avenue, crossed through Downtown Clearwater via Cleveland Street, and ended up in Coachman Park, where it was followed by a stirring rally.

In 1983, President Ronald Regan signed a bill designating the third Monday in January as a federal holiday celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday, which was January 15th.

“The Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday celebrates the life and legacy of a man who brought hope and healing to America,” says Dr. King’s widow, Coretta Scott King, on the official Martin Luther King, Jr. website.

“We commemorate as well the timeless values he taught us through his example – the values of courage, truth, justice, compassion, dignity, humility and service that so radiantly defined Dr. King’s character and empowered his leadership. On this holiday, we commemorate the universal, unconditional love, forgiveness and nonviolence that empowered his revolutionary spirit.

“It is a day of interracial and intercultural cooperation and sharing. No other day of the year brings so many peoples from different cultural backgrounds together in such a vibrant spirit of brother and sisterhood. Whether you are African-American, Hispanic or Native American, whether you are Caucasian or Asian-American, you are part of the great dream Martin Luther King, Jr. had for America. This is not a black holiday; it is a peoples’ holiday.”

For more information on Martin Luther King, Jr., visit www.thekingcenter.org. ♦



The Martin Luther King Jr. Parade brought together people of all races, cultures and faiths — Photo by David Ziff

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UPCOMING EVENTS

February 14th, Match Making Festival Tea Dance: Casino Ballroom, 5500 Shore Blvd. S., Gulfport. 1 – 5 p.m., ages 50 plus. Speed dating, dance lessons and dance. Tickets \$25 at www.matchmakingfest.com or \$35 at the door.

February 14th, Steve Lawrence: Ruth Eckerd Hall. 2:00 p.m. www.rutheckerdhall.com.

February 15th, Le Grand Cirque: Ruth Eckerd Hall 7:00 p.m. www.rutheckerdhall.com.

February 16th and 17th, Vitamin Sale Day: 20% off all vitamins (except those already discounted) at Nature's Food Patch. www.naturesfoodpatch.com

February 16th, Pier Community Forum: 7:00 p.m. at 5801 22nd Ave. N., St. Pete. Participants can hear from the Pier Advisory Task Force and provide input on alternatives as St. Pete continues its community discussion about future possibilities for The Pier. Visit www.stpete.org or call 727-892-5779 for more info.

February 17th, Irish Rovers: Ruth Eckerd Hall 1:00 p.m. www.rutheckerdhall.com

February 18th, City of Gulfport Election Meet the Candidates Forum: Learn about important Gulfport issues and how the candidates stand on them. Gulfport City Hall. 7:00 p.m.

February 18th - 20th, A Chorus Line: The Broadway Play comes to Ruth Eckerd Hall. www.rutheckerdhall.com.

February 18th, Brandi Carlile: The Columbia Records recording artists performs at The Captiol Theatre, Downtown Clearwater. www.rutheckerdhall.com.

February 19th, Mindi Abair: Saxophonist singer/songwriter. The Captiol Theatre. www.rutheckerdhall.com.

February 20th, NUHS Campus Visit Day: Learn about the Doctor of Chiropractic

Medicine degree program at SPC, tour facilities, learn about admissions criteria, and preview what its like to study in a state-of-the-art gross anatomy laboratory. 9:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. SPC Caruth Health Education Center, 7200 66th Street N., Pinellas Park. Call 800-826-6285 to register or for more info.

February 20th, Christian Battle of the Bands: Hosted by Our Savior Lutheran Church and School, The free concert will take place from 2-6 pm on Our Savior's East Bay Campus, 4825 East Bay Drive in Largo. Featured acts will include headliners Kadesh and Concord. Food and refreshments will be provided by St. Pete's infamous Ferg's Sports Bar and Grill. For additional information, please contact Tina Herrell at 727-251-6630 or oslctina@tampabay.rr.com

February 21st, Engelbert Humperdink: Ruth Eckerd Hall. 2:00 p.m. www.rutheckerdhall.com.

February 21st: Arts Alive Open Mic: Pangea Café, Clearwater: 6:00 to 8:30 p.m.

February 21st and 22nd, 18th Annual Downtown Dunedin Craft Festival: Main Street in Downtown Dunedin will be transformed into an outdoor craft showcase with a unique blend of contemporary and original works at affordable prices. For more information, go to www.artfestival.com.

February 27th, Michael Flatley's Lord of the Dance: Ruth Eckerd Hall. 2:00 and 8:00 p.m. www.rutheckerdhall.com.

February 28th, Celtic Crossroads: Ruth Eckerd Hall. 1:00 p.m. www.rutheckerdhall.com.

If you would like to submit your event to our list, please email editor@tampabayinformer.com

To view the complete listing of upcoming events, visit www.tampabayinformer.com. ♦

IT'S YOUR BODY. UNDERSTAND IT!™



Peter Gillham's at 533 Cleveland Street.

by Shelley Jaffe

NATURAL HEALTH

Peter Gillham's philosophy has always been to educate people about their bodies and empower them to live long, healthy lives. Peter and I share this philosophy, and that is why we will be running monthly articles – to help educate and empower you, the reader.

So, you have a brain. It's your computer. You are the operator sitting there entering commands into the computer. But what about all of the things your body does without you constantly telling it to do so? Simple, the computer is programmed to do a number of things automatically so you only enter a command once, and it keeps doing it over and over. Many of these commands are carried out by the endocrine system, so this is where we are going to begin.

When most people think of hormones they think of the things that drive you crazy in your teens and for many their entire lives. But that's really giving these guys a bad rap and doesn't really tell you what they are all about. These little guys are the messengers. Different hormones carry different messages all over the body.

The endocrine system consists of different glands. Glands produce and release things, both inside and outside the body. Each gland in the endocrine system has a different job. The "master" is the pituitary gland. It is the size of a pea and has several key jobs. It helps to control nervous function, controls the rest of the endocrine system and controls a few things directly having to do with childbirth and milk production. It's definitely the boss.

Then you have the thyroid which regulates the metabolism of every single cell in your body. Yes, your cells eat, but more on that another time. In other words, it determines how well your entire body breaks down and uses what you put in it. It is butterfly-shaped and located at

the lower part of your throat just north of where your collar bones attach.

Next is the parathyroid. You have four of them. They are about the size of a grain of rice and they are located behind the thyroid. Their only job is to regulate calcium levels in your body. Other than their location, they don't have much to do with the thyroid.

Then there are the adrenal glands. These guys do more than most people know. They are located on top of your kidneys, which are located just under the last few ribs in your back, or just slightly below in some people. They control adrenaline, but they also produce other hormones necessary for fluid and electrolyte (salt) balance in the body, as well as making sex hormones.

Now we get into the pancreas, another misunderstood gland. Though it is true that the pancreas produces insulin which helps to regulate the blood sugar levels, it also helps to regulate salt balances as well as regulating water absorption and secretion in the intestines. And one other little known fact: over 90 percent of pancreatic cells are devoted to the production of digestive enzymes. That's right. Your pancreas is responsible for a lot of your digestion.

The thymus is located in the upper middle part of your chest. Its job is to produce a hormone called thymosin which plays an important role in your body's immune system. Healthy endocrine function requires proper nutrition.

Shelley Jaffe is a Certified Nutritional Consultant and the Executive Director of Peter Gillham's Nutrition Center in Downtown Clearwater. 533 Cleveland Street • (727) 462-5770 Call the store and mention this article to receive a free introductory nutritional consultation. We welcome your comments and questions.. ♦

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On December 29, 2009 I received an accepted offer for one of my clients. The client had previously asked me to help her close a sale before the end of the year for tax purposes, if there was any way possible to do that. By the 29th, when we finally got a contract on a condo for her, she had given up on that possibility. But I knew how important this was for her, so figured I'd give it a try. There was a lot to do – home inspection, termite inspection, association approval, a letter from the Property Management company, approval from an attorney, and of course, the cooperation of the listing agent and the Title Company, plus lots of work on my clients' part – and all in two days! Well it was a real miracle, but we closed on Dec. 31, thanks to the hard work and commitment from every person along the way! Right after the New Year, I received a huge, beautiful bouquet of flowers from my client. When I called to thank her, she was still blown away that we pulled off the closing before the year's end! She explained that she told the florist to make the flowers magnificent because I was spectacular!! WOW! What a way to start off the New Year!!

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