

# VIEWPOINT

FRIDAY, FEB. 20, 2015 • NORTH BREVARD • WWW.HOMETOWNNEWSOL.COM • PAGE 6

## Navigating the elder care system for answers

Dear friends,

Having worked the Florida elder care system for the past 25 years, I recently conducted a self-test of the system. The disastrous results of that action prompted me to write this article, which I shall send to the authorities.

I believe we have responsibility. We all should be more concerned with what potential users of Florida's elder care services are actually being told, the problems they are encountering and the fact that, in my opinion, less than qualified people are trying to help some of the frailest elders in our state.

On Feb. 3, I called the Department of Elder Affairs in Tallahassee to inquire about the statewide Medicaid Managed Care Program, which consists of the Managed Medical Assistance Program and the Long-Term Care Program.

My call to Tallahassee resulted in a transfer to a state office in Orlando.

I talked to a person, was transferred to another office, and my name and phone number were requested.

The next day, having not heard back from my call, I again called the Orlando number.

**PRESIDENT HELPING SENIORS OF BREVARD**  
JOE STECKLER



After several minutes, I was connected to a counselor at Senior Resource Alliance and so started a most frustrating conversation.

It was only because I knew what to ask that I finally got some answers – none of which I liked.

However, since I was a frustrated senior inquiring about services supposedly provided my state, I knew that my frustrations needed conquering if I was to learn anything that might help others.

This is what I learned:

1. Information about elder services is there if you know where to look. I informed the counselor that the difficulty was in knowing where to look for help.

2. The counselors are not well informed about what the state offers.

3. Education and connection to resources are sadly lacking, as is a compassionate attitude toward seniors trying to navigate the system.

I then called the community-provider number given to me by the counselor and was asked to leave my name and phone number, which I did.

This is supposedly a source to help with Medicaid benefits.

The other question I had about daycare required that I call the Senior Resource Alliance number again at a later date.

When I asked about availability of information, the counselor mentioned Aging Matters, Joe's Club (which I started), and other local resources, but nothing about how to contact them.

All this reflects on the absolute need for seniors to be better informed and willing to fight for what matters to them.

We must do a better job of lobbying our elected leaders for a county aging-plan and localization of resource information so that we can minimize

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## Blast off!



Just before sunset at 6:03 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11, Space X Falcon 9 launched into space from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station with NASA's Deep Space Climate Observatory on board. The satellite will orbit between the sun at Lagrange point 1, which is approximately 1 million miles from Earth. This enables the satellite to give as much as a 60-minute warning for geomagnetic storms.

Photo courtesy of George Bell Photography

## Rants & Raves

### Got something to say?

Email the Hometown Rants & Raves at [brevnews@hometownnewsol.com](mailto:brevnews@hometownnewsol.com) or call (321) 242-1276.

Callers are asked to refrain from making slanderous statements. Statements of fact will be checked for accuracy.

### Defend someone and get suspended

My grandson defended his girlfriend. He is in high school. The other kid called my grandson's girlfriend ... and I won't spell it out ... I will just give you "who.." is what the child was called.

My grandson was suspended, and I don't believe anything was done or given to the boy, who called my grandson's girlfriend a (name).

I wonder if this will get into Hometown News.

I hope the other child was at least reprimanded, disciplined and I don't know where this kid is coming from, but he has no right to call my grandson's girlfriend, or anyone, a "who.."

Thank you.

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# Correction

The Feb. 13 article, titled 'High school students to host 'Street Fair'' lists incorrect information.

After press time, the event date of the Merritt Island High School's Academy of Hospitality, Entrepreneurship and Tourism's street fair was rescheduled to April 18.

# Seniors

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the frustration and stress of seniors who cannot navigate the system.

Effective senior advocacy can achieve a county government that will listen to perceived wrongs and take senior rights seriously.

After all, we do live in a rather aging county.

In fact, it is the 24th oldest of 3,067 counties in the United States.

Join us at Helping Seniors and become part of the senior advocacy effort. Call Kay at (321) 473-7770 or email her at kay@helpingseniorsofbrevard.org.

Joe Steckler is the president of Helping Seniors of Brevard, a nonprofit organization designed to advocate, educate and fundraise on behalf of Brevard's senior citizens.

Feel free to contact him at info@helpingseniorsofbrevard.org or by calling (321) 473-7770.



# Hometown News PET OF THE WEEK

A 3-year-old yellow Labrador retriever, 'Maggie May' is the athletic pup of Jill and Craig McCall of Melbourne Beach. Maggie loves swimming in the pool, long walks on the beach and making people smile as a certified therapy dog.

## Is your pet worthy of the spotlight?

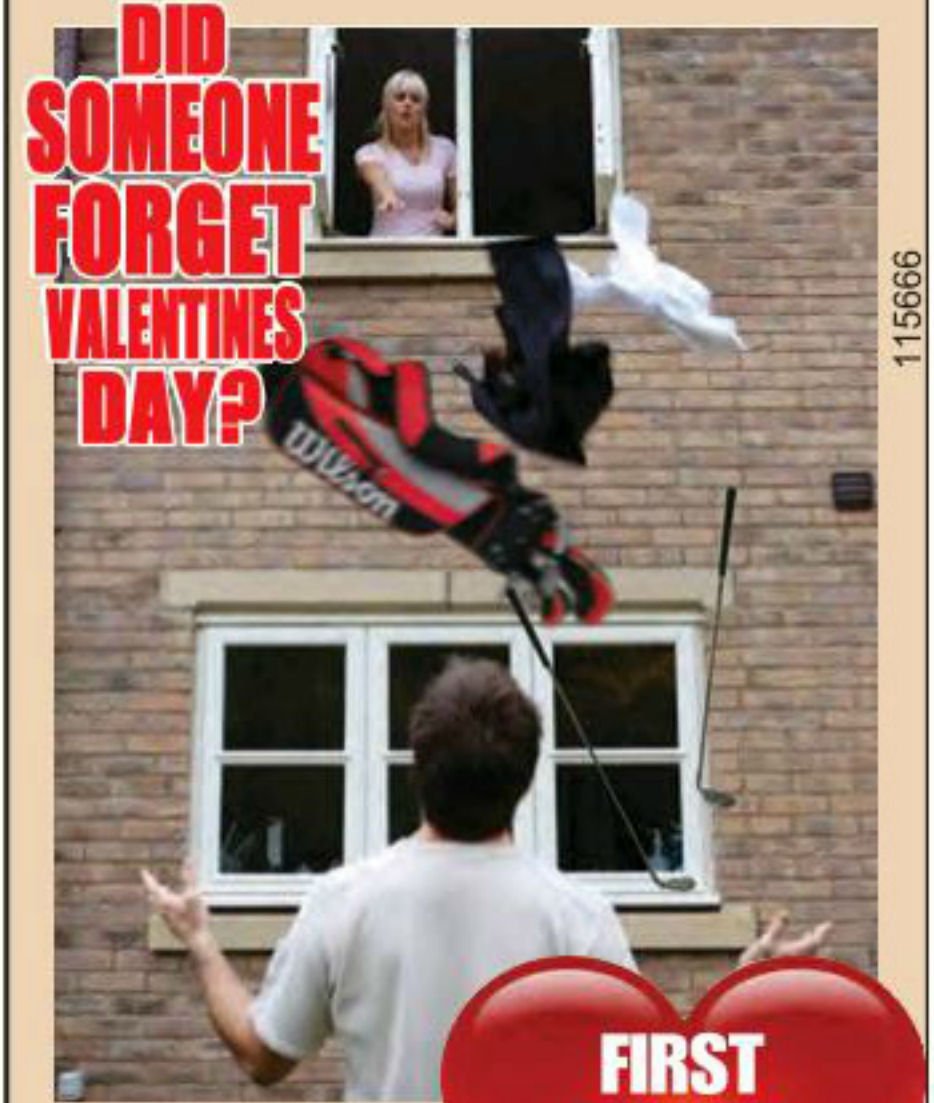
Hometown News will be the judge of that.

We are asking our readers to submit photos of their beloved pets, as part of our "Pet of the Week" Contest. The winner for the week will have his or her pet displayed in our newspaper, while also being qualified to become the Hometown News "Pet of the Year!" Email a photo of your pet (one entry per owner) that is at least 1 MB in size to [brevnews@hometownnewsol.com](mailto:brevnews@hometownnewsol.com). Write "PET OF THE WEEK CONTEST" in the subject line, and in the body of the email, please include the following information:

- Name of pet
- Age
- Breed
- Three of your pet's favorite things to do
- Pet owner's full name and hometown
- Phone number (in case we have questions)

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# Calendar

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or have any questions, contact Sarah Kraum at (321) 264-5185 or [sarah.kraum@brevardparks.com](mailto:sarah.kraum@brevardparks.com) by Feb. 20.

• **LEAD Brevard Leadership Awards reservation deadline:** LEAD Brevard has announced the "2015 LEAD Brevard Leadership Awards," featuring the 11th Annual 4 Under 40 Recognition, to be held on Friday, Feb. 27 at the Gleason Performing Arts Center at Florida Institute of Technology.

The 4 Under 40 Recognition showcases young professionals who are already making a positive impact in Brevard County through their leadership and commitment to community service.

Top 12 finalists for the 2015 4 under 40 recognition are:

The Rev. Glenn B. Dames, Jr., St. James AME Church; Natasha Duran, Candlelighters of Brevard; Sean Gregory, Health First Holmes Regional Medical Center; Laura Moody, Office of the State Attorney; Amar Patel, Brevard Achievement Center; Andrew Pickett, Alpizar Law, LLC; Laura Anne Pray, Berman Hopkins Wright & LaHam, CPAS and Associates, LLP; Tabitha Ramminger, Puzzle Box Academy; Tyler Sirois, Office of the State Attorney; Vinnie Taranto, Media-Over-Matter Productions; Aaron Thalwitzer, Wideman Malek, PL; and Courtney Wilkinson, Corpo-

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## Q. What is C-Reactive Protein?

A. C-Reactive Protein (CRP) is a substance produced in the liver in response to bacterial and viral infections. C-Reactive Protein is the SOS signal that the immune system has run amok attacking the artery walls causing inflammation. Current research shows that C-Reactive Protein is a good indicator of future heart attacks and may be a more important marker for cardiovascular health than cholesterol. Reduce inflammation, C-Reactive Protein levels with 50 to 100 mg of grape seed extract daily.

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