

VIEWPOINT

FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 2015 • MELBOURNE • WWW.HOMETOWNNEWSOL.COM • PAGE 6

'Seniors and the Dark Ages'

The title seems ominous, does it not? Many years ago, when I was a midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy, the time after we returned from Christmas leave was called the "Dark Ages."

Nothing much was happening, there was nothing to brag about, nothing to look forward to. Some seniors may feel the same way, but don't let this terminology apply to your life!

Recently, I met with a board member of Helping Seniors who said, "Joe, we need to do more to let people know how we help seniors."

Those were golden words to me, for I have had the same thought for many years. In fact, we started the radio show in 2000, the television show in 2007 and the newspaper column in 2007 to inform, educate and connect seniors to resources.

For this reason, "Senior Scene Magazine," "Spotlight Magazine," Hometown News and "Ebony News Today" feature our columns and newsletters. We also have several television shows on Channel 199 and 49, or you can go to www.helpingseniorsofbrevard.org to access all of our media programs and more resources online.

Unfortunately, all of this information is worthless if it is not talked about, made known to others and publicized by word of mouth.

I recently talked to three people who had made calls to government or nonprofit organizations (agencies



**PRESIDENT,
HELPING SENIORS
OF BREVARD**
JOE STECKLER

receiving taxpayer dollars) and did not receive a call back. I tried to discuss these failings with a member of the Florida Elder Helpline, but was talked to in a rude and condescending way. This is not right ... it is time we all spoke up to correct these shortcomings!

In Florida, we have a state-sponsored system to help eligible people acquire Medicaid cards. There are rules about eligibility, and those can be ascertained by calling the Elder Helpline at (800) 963-5337.

Believe it or not, there is no cost to acquire this card. However, there are many who will prey on those who need care. Financial advisors may seek as much as \$8,000 to start a process, while others work the system to get a client onto the Medicaid lists.

One method is to get a client into a nursing home so that he/she may then be worked into the Medicaid system and ultimately transferred to an assisted living facility.

Are these methods necessary? Absolutely not if the system worked as it was designed.

By that, I mean the initial call to the Elder Helpline that starts the process at no financial cost to you.

There also is a local office located at 1600 Sarno Road, Suite 117, Melbourne. Its phone number is (321) 373-0824 to assist you in this process. You meet and talk to a live person, not a difficult-to-reach phone answerer at the Elder Helpline.

Regardless of the process you elect, neither should cost you more than a little time or a phone call.

For many, it is wise to start the Medicaid Card acquisition process as early as possible so that wait times are reduced or eliminated. Otherwise, you may find yourself waiting two to six months to acquire a card when you already need one.

One of the reasons Helping Seniors exists is to help elders access the system. There are many different

See **SENIORS**, page 8

Butterfly beauties



Alex Schierholtz/staff photographer
Madison Duckworth, 11, and Emma Warlikowski, 5, of Melbourne enjoy the 'Butterfly Kingdom' event at Brevard Zoo in Viera Tuesday, June 9. The event runs May 23 to Aug. 2 and is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Access to the Butterfly Kingdom is included with zoo admission.

Rants & Raves

Got something to say?

Email the Hometown Rants & Raves at 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.

Drug dealers are laughing

This is about the 17-year-old and this stupid drug that the drug dealers are dealing out there.

This is for stupid people on illegal drugs. You are making the drug dealer rich, and they are laughing at you while they count your money. Wake up. Parents need to know where their kids are and what they are doing and who they are hanging out with.

Wake up before you die from the drugs that the drug dealers are getting rich off of you.

I don't understand why people

would want to take street drugs. Get a job, stay busy and stay off the poison. Wake up.

I go crazy

Every time I see the TV and hear something that this president says, I go crazy.

Other things are more important

Today, I heard part of the com- See **RANTS**, page 12

This Week's Prize **WIN \$300**
THIS WEEK'S LUCKY BUMPER STICKER VEHICLE
 THERE WAS NO WINNER FOR LAST WEEK. THIS WEEK'S PRIZE IS WORTH \$300!

 Is this your license plate number? Go to the nearest HTN Office to verify by noon Tuesday.
 GET YOUR BUMPER STICKER TODAY! STOP BY ANY OFFICE OR CALL!!!
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MELBOURNE

Is your weight an issue? Are you taking multiple medications? Tired of diets that don't work? If the answer is yes to any of these questions, you may be a candidate for weight loss surgery. For many patients who are significantly overweight, bariatric surgery may be the most effective way to achieve substantial weight loss. Join us for a free, informative seminar presented by Diego Velarde, M.D., on the different weight loss surgery options that are available.

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Tattoo

From page 1

"We'll be opening our doors and giving a virtual hug to the community," Mr. Ripoll said. "The public is invited to come in and look around."

Ink Master

Exactly one year ago, Mr. Ripoll was in New York filming episodes for "Ink Master Rivals."

"They got a hold of my brother and myself and brought both of us on," he said. "It was an interesting time, really tough. Unfortunately it is TV, and it didn't fix anything with me and my brother."

The rivalry between Mr. Ripoll and his brother, Jayvo Scott, couldn't have been more real, and the difficulties of their past continue now, even after the show has aired.

"It was kind of like a war zone of the mind and heart," Mr. Ripoll said. "We're all so proud of the work we do, and we put everything into our work."

During the month of filming, it was also an emotional challenge to be away from his wife, Erika, and 14-year-old son Jaiden, he said.

Out of 15 episodes, Mr. Ripoll appeared on six before being sent home.

"It was probably one of the hardest things I've done," he said. "I wasn't around to take care of the studio and everything fell on my wife."

But he'd do it again if given the opportunity.

Season five aired last fall, and it wasn't until Mr. Ripoll was invited back to New York for the finale in December that he felt the impact the show had had on his career.

"It gave me a new sense of confidence," he said. "It was good exposure."

A colorful past

Mr. Ripoll said a popular trend right now is watercolor tattoos.

And he should know. He's followed the trends in tattooing since his early teens.

When he was in elementary school, his father began tattooing and Robbie became a fixture in the shop. At age 12, he became an informal tattoo apprentice.



While still in his teens, Robbie gave a friend his first tattoo. By the time he was 16, he was tattooing professionally. A school program allowed him to work full time and take classes part time, so he was able to devote a full eight-hour day to learning and cleaning around his father's shop.

Before Robbie was out of high school, he was tattooing at his family's studio, Ink Doctors, and remained there for 15 years, eventually running the place.

Chapel of Love is Mr. Ripoll's dream studio, fully inclusive of a piercing room and art gallery.

"The studio is thriving," Mr. Ripoll said. "We made a move to a much larger spot and get a ton of drive-up traffic."

Next up

The fame of being on "Ink Master Rivals" has opened many doors for Mr. Ripoll.

"I've been doing lots of traveling – Oregon, New York, Minnesota, Philadelphia and a bunch of places in between," he said. "Conventions get the masses, and I've made connections that have allowed me to work in other studios as a guest artist."

And he's dipping his toes into inspirational speaking.

"I'm always looking for ways to keep going as a tattoo artist," he said. "It's my journey, and it's the journey I'm living. It gives me a platform to be a better human being."

For more information, call (321) 210-9078 or visit www.chapeloflovetattoo.com.

Seniors

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obstacles in the way of aging with dignity, but why part of the "Dark Ages?" Be informed about the many wonderful resources that can assist you.

Call us at (321) 473-7770 if you have a question. This, too, is a free call and

will prove helpful to you. Be a member of the Enlightened Age, not the Dark Age.

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 us at info@helpingseniorsofbrevard.org or by calling (321) 473-7770.

Calendar

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ticket can be child or adult admission as applicable.) For dads to receive the free ticket offer, the paid ticket must be

purchased on June 21 only.

Celebrate the day with dad and experience Butterfly Kingdom. Further, meet some of the Zoo's newest residents.

Plus, there is the new expanded
See **CALENDAR**, page 9