

VIEWPOINT

FRIDAY, JULY 17, 2015 • MELBOURNE • WWW.HOMETOWNNEWSOL.COM • PAGE 6

Seniors on the Space Coast need help, too!

Dear Friends,

As most of you know from reading my columns and from your own life experiences, getting older is not always fun or easy.

Many of us worry about having enough money after retirement to live with some semblance of dignity.

Set the work "dignity" aside for the time being, and let's just talk about getting older and having others understand what that means.

Elders represent 22 percent of Brevard County's population, whereas children represent 19 percent. Of my taxes, 44 percent goes to children's education, while 0 percent goes to seniors.

In addition to taxpayer money, Brevard County and its municipalities receive federal funds through the Community Block Grant program. The program was established by Congress in 1974 to improve the quality of life in low- and moderate-income areas.

So, why am I talking about this in my column?

Helping Seniors asked for CDBG funds to help pay for our information specialist, who directs elderly clients to needed services.

One way to qualify for CDBG funding is to provide a low/moderate



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

limited clientele activity that benefits a specific group of people automatically presumed by HUD to be principally low/moderate income persons.

Helping Seniors fulfills this requirement by serving elders. In the past nine months, we have managed nearly 450 individual cases.

Unfortunately, due to government over-management and a plethora of paperwork that must be signed by those receiving service, we have been prohibited from receiving CDBG funds. Since most of our clients are served via the phone, they circumvent the office visit, precluding us getting their financial data, age, race, etc., i.e., a signed piece of paper.

I understand the need to qualify for federal funding, but are we making the qualifications too difficult? Isn't it enough that people are being helped: dentures are provided, hungry people are directed to food sources and people existing on \$800 a month and food stamps suddenly learn about VA Aid and Attendance?

Information and education are the keys to empowerment, and that is what Helping Seniors and similar organizations do to help people.

The result of over-management is that seniors do not get the funding they need. We have to follow rules, but, at times, the rules need changing. Does it make any difference whether or not the 89-year-old needing help is wealthy, of average income, poor or low income, Caucasian, black, Hispanic, single, etc.? It shouldn't make any difference! We need to simplify. We need to develop better ways of directing information and/or funding to the elderly.

A Brevard County Aging Plan will help equalize the funding field and ensure that seniors and juniors are both treated well. It is great that

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Ride with the wind



By Alex Schierholtz/staff photographer
Aaron Niazi, 12, Thomas Nargi, 11, both of Merritt Island, and Jack Zhao, 11, of Melbourne, race during the 'USA Jr. Olympic Windsurfing Festival' Saturday, July 11 at Calema Windsurf and Watersports on Merritt Island.

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.

Religion responses

Once again, we do recite the full Pledge of Allegiance in Brevard County Public Schools.

I submitted this fact to Hometown News before but continue to see the same rant about how we don't. Please ask one of the thousands of employees who work for our school system or call the school and ask. Never go on hearsay.

Maybe you should be more con-

cerned about the many families who now decide to homeschool their kids or virtual school them and if they are saying the pledge.

About your religious references in your rant: There are approximately 313 religions and denominations in the United States, so when you refer to God, please try to understand that many people have different gods, some have several gods, some have none. It's not only about YOUR God and what

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Rants

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you believe.

You make references to Jesus. This country was never founded on beliefs based on Jesus. Jesus' Middle Eastern ethnicity would likely have given him a darker complexion, probably different than you and I, though Jesus loved all people of all colors and cared for the sick and the poor. Jesus did not judge others.

I really have to question your Christianity from the wording of your rant. You claim a pastor told you he could not mention Jesus during a public prayer? Well, I can understand that when we need to be inclusive of everyone. We have a large Jewish population to consider, and (what) about the gays in the military? When a soldier fights for your freedom and loses a leg or dies,

does it really matter to you if he was gay? I look at the glass half full and see our evolved world as better than it was in many ways. One can always look at the glass half empty and find something to complain about. A person who does not say, "God bless you" in no way means they don't care. That makes no sense.

First Friday at the Bay

I would like to thank Palm Bay and the Chamber and all vendors who put on The First Friday at the Bay.

May's was great, but Palm Bay has really done June's right - better food vendors, sales vendors and such a good time to be had by all.

It will get better each time, I am sure. The bands, so far, are great. Keep up the great work, Palm Bay. I hope others will come and enjoy. If you missed it, come see what fun is in Palm Bay. It's free to get in.

Seniors

From page 6

United Way will help feed 2,000 children this summer, but how about the 245,000 seniors in Brevard: thousands of whom need the help described in this article?

We need a community effort to help seniors and juniors, not one at the expense of the other. Seniors get hungry, lonely and depressed, too.

By the way, if you would like to help Helping Seniors of Brevard, we are, in

fact, a 501c(3) nonprofit organization that could benefit by donations and volunteers. We want to continue to help our callers who are desperately looking for help, and every penny and volunteer hour counts!

Call (321) 473-7770.

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 Helping Seniors of Brevard at info@helpingseniorsofbrevard.org or (321) 473-7770.



Hometown News PET OF THE WEEK

A 13-year-old feline, 'Grace' is the royal pet of Trish Dugan of Indialantic. Grace is the kitty-cat queen of her beach house and loves to have company and be outside among the neighbors.

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. 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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