

VIEWPOINT

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2016 • MELBOURNE • WWW.HOMETOWNNEWSOL.COM • PAGE 6

Senior funds are in need of our support

With the recent election results, I am quite confident that many in Brevard will find 2017 full of new living challenges and uncertainties.

These unknowns will change the role of nonprofit organizations, especially those that serve seniors.

For many years, we have depended on government dollars to provide the majority of low-income and Alzheimer's assistance. Medicaid has become a lifeline to those living on fixed incomes. However, when such funding is in flux, nonprofits must do a better job of building other sources of income.

The two main providers of assistance to low-income seniors in Brevard currently rely on state and federal funds for much of their budget. One of these providers is the primary recipient of Older American Act monies for Brevard. What would happen if these dollars were suddenly reduced, as was the case two years ago when a local agency lost \$2 million in managed care assistance? United Way is another important local funder, although their dollars continue to decline and no longer attach the same importance to senior issues as before.

Consider also the paucity of Brevard County funds to support senior concerns. We do have senior centers, but a place for recreation does not address the more critical needs for food, shelter and



HELPING SENIORS OF BREVARD
JOE STECKLER

assistance with daily living.

In a county of more than 500,000 people, half of whom are senior citizens, our county budget provides about \$200,000 for nonprofits helping seniors. I can assure you that if the primary senior care agencies in Brevard lost another \$2 million in funding, it would be a disaster.

However, with proper leadership and development of an aging plan, much of this could be prevented.

A year ago, Helping Seniors of Brevard presented the need for a county aging plan to our county commissioners. No answer to the document was made. While I understand the reluctance to face such an undertaking, ignoring the fact that we have a serious and rapidly growing aging problem will not make said problem go away.

My 27 years of working for seniors makes me appreciate the need for action to develop a local agency that can address these issues.

We have a Community Foundation that awards grants to a number of agencies across many needs, few of which are seniors. Sadly, seniors are ignored, a statement that is substantiated by the inadequacy of county funds, the current use of United Way dollars and a likely reduction of government funding in the near future.

Who will take responsibility when the calamity hits? I asked the same question of a government-funded agency years ago, and the director of the agency said they simply would not provide services for which they were not funded.

Tell that to recipients of Older American Act and state-funded services, in particular those requiring help meeting the activities of daily living and Alzheimer's care and respite.

We must plan now to be able to assist those who will need our help.

See FUNDS, page 7

Congratulations, grad!



Gina Faniola of Melbourne shakes the hand of Eastern Florida State College President James H. Richey as she receives an Associate of Arts diploma Thursday, Dec. 15 at the Maxwell C. King Center in Melbourne.

Alex Schierholtz/
staff photographer

Rants & Raves

Got something to say?

Email the Hometown Rants & Raves at

brevnews@hometownnewsol.com
or call (321) 242-1276.

Contributors are asked to refrain from making slanderous or libelous statements.

Happy 74th

I would like to send kudos and love to my dear parents, Richard and Mary del Gallego, as they celebrate their 74th Wedding Anniversary in December.

They are so in love and devoted to each other, it is truly amazing.

I am truly blessed to have both of my parents here with me in my life in this lovely city of Melbourne.

Love and congratulations to you both. Your daughter, Linda.

Publicity in Palm Bay

I've been thinking of ways to promote Palm Bay and have decided lots of publicity is the best and cheapest way.

To this end, I have been reading about various people making a name for themselves and where they are from by swimming quickly, the Olympics, for example, or for a long distance, Cuba to Key West, for example. I recently read about a fellow planning to swim from Africa to South America.

In the last two cases, they were or will be accompanied by boats and food and beds.

This sounded so good as a way to earn publicity, that I have decided to See RANTS, page 7

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MELBOURNE

Rants

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swim across Turkey Creek in as much as I have never heard of anyone else attempting this, much less successfully.

For my safety, I will arrange for two boats to accompany me. One with food, drink and medicine if needed and the second to be equipped with clubs and rifles in case of alligators or snakes or the occasional bull shark.

Another unresolved concern may be the current. If I get caught up in it and end up in the Indian River, I don't think my efforts will count for anything.

The date of my departure has not been set; so, if Hometown News readers have any suggestions, I will be pleased to read of them.

Along that line, donations to help with food and drink and possible medical expenses will be appreciated.

The publicity will do us all a world of good.

Elections are over

Last week, a rant about "Thank God elections are over."

Well, I don't think appointing presidents and elections coming to an end has anything to do with God, but I, too, am glad it is over.

However, what is not over are the opinions, the lies, the reality show entertainment - all of which this rant said is over.

We will have four years of it, probably worse than one might think. We are only two weeks into this, and many tell tale signs of what is ahead.

A president who is a compulsive twit-ter during all hours of the night, has conflicts of interest with his businesses, already talking to foreign leaders on a private insecure cell phone line, broken campaign promises. There's so much more that is just wrong.

Every president has been great material for all the talk show hosts, and (Donald) Trump is no different, although he does not seem like a good sport.

Let's be prepared for the entertainment; there will be a lot.

Maybe we do need God here, God help us all.

Funds

From page 6

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 calling (321) 473-7770.

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