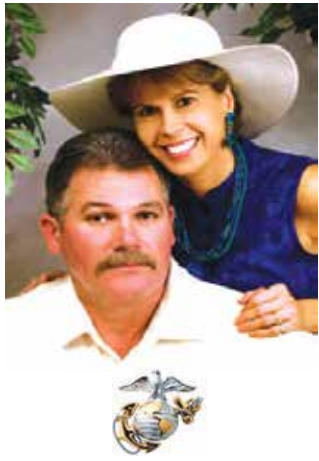


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Joe Steckler



Isnardi-Tobia Town Hall Meeting

Join me on April 4th at 6 p.m. at the Palm Bay City Hall for the Isnardi/Tobia town hall meeting. It is time for seniors to unite and let county commissioners know our concerns, especially the lack of funding for nonprofit agencies that help seniors. In a county of 545,000 people, with about 245,000 meeting senior citizen qualifications according to AARP, it is unconscionable that less than one-tenth of one percent of the county budget funds services of county-based nonprofit organizations. I could make the words stronger but I think you get the point.

In the early 2000s the amount funded for these programs was \$500,000. We managed to get that increased to one million, but it fell back to \$500,000 with lack of attention. Roads, public services and retirement income for our county staff are important, as are all services, but we reach a point where decisions have to be made. Seniors, according to the Governor's office, are one of the highest contributing elements to state and county budgets; they pay a more than fair share of the monies for roads, children's services, schools, etc.

It is time that seniors held all public officials accountable for the use of tax payer dollars. Just as schools and meals are important to children, so too are senior centers, Meals on Wheels and other elder care services important to senior citizens. Each year, local nonprofit organizations are forced to compete for already scarce dollars. Most organizations can make a good case for need and a small increase in county funds would make it possible for these organizations to do a better job serving our community.

Helping Seniors is committed to informing, educating and connecting

seniors and those who care for them to the many wonderful resources in Brevard. We recently had a caller who was limited to bologna sandwiches because he had no other food – he was not aware of the Meals on Wheels program. Currently, Brevard has no Aging Plan. To remedy this, Helping Seniors formed an Advocacy Council, conducted a senior needs assessment survey and developed a paper that was submitted to our commissioners. No comment was ever received.

Seniors will continue to be treated in such a manner until we convince county officials that senior needs are equal to other stated needs. My most recent column addressed senior leadership. Until we make known our desires and current funding inadequacies, the status quo will continue. I ask you to join me at the April 4th town hall meeting and let our elected representatives know we want to be recognized as a major contributor to county revenue and that senior needs are as important as all others. This is a matter of concern for all seniors and those who support senior programs. I realize that this information is being sent to you on a short notice but it is important that all seniors are aware of actions being taken in their interests and how they can be involved in future Town Hall meetings.

Joe Steckler is the President of Helping Seniors of Brevard, a non profit 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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Independent Living Skills for Low Vision and Blind Persons

Independent Living Skills classes are offered for low vision and blind persons in the Sebastian area. Independent living skills are presented in the areas of personal management, home management, communication skills, mobility skills, community resources, technology, and social skills. Caregivers can attend if they choose.

Classes are conducted in a series of six weeks, on Mondays. The next session classes are: April 17th and 24th; May 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd from 10 am to 2 pm in St. William's Hall. This is located at St. Sebastian Church, 13075 US Hwy. 1, Sebastian, FL 32985. Please contact the Lighthouse for the Blind of the Palm Beaches for more information and to register for these free classes: 561-586-5600 www.lighthousepalmbeaches.org or call Jeanne Diehl, 617-515-3495 if you live in Micco.

HE IS RISEN

JOIN US FOR EASTER | 10:30 AM

Come early for Refreshments & Fellowship @ 9:30 AM

@ Barefoot Bay Community Center, 625 Barefoot Blvd., Bldg. A

River of Life Church Pastor Tom Kempf