



The Broken Process

Joe Steckler, President

Dear Friends,

You may have noticed that my columns lately have dealt with the continued assault on funding for

senior care programs. In 2016, Brevard's population was 579,000, with 23% being senior citizens. Although census data shows that our senior population is rising steadily while the under 18 population is declining slightly, major funding streams persist in favoring youth programs. Our two main sources of taxpayer-supported funding for nonprofits are the Community Based Organizations (CBO) program and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Then there is United Way of Brevard, which is heavily supported by workplace campaigns at local businesses such as Harris and Publix.

In June, the CDBG program awarded 60% of its limited funding to youth services, primarily funding for charter school busing when such services are already funded in the public school budget. Three months later, the CBO program froze out Aging Matters, the largest source of senior services in our County. In my 29 years of watching the process, this was a first and possibly sets a trend regarding support of senior programs. United Way has already signaled its intent to devote more assets to children's causes; perhaps if they did fund new senior causes, it would help their falling contribution levels. At this point, Helping Seniors directed a letter to the County Commissioners citing a broken process in the

CDBG and CBO funding award process. The letter found its way to the Director of Brevard's Housing and Human Services, who defended the grant making process without acknowledging its main problem – namely, that funds are being poorly allocated without due consideration of the scope and source of local needs. His response clearly demonstrated the unwillingness of County staff to change their modus operandi.

In closing the letter stated, "We have determined that the RFP process is the best avenue for getting the most impact from our limited funding. Additionally, we will not support changing the CBO process since there will only be 4 more funding cycles (with a 20% reduction each cycle) until it is discontinued." This assumes that the Commissioners, current and future, will no longer support the use of any general revenue funds to help the homeless, elderly, hungry, disabled, etc.

How do you feel that County staff members, who receive their pay from our tax dollars, have such little concern for doing their jobs, which I believe should include making a case for County funding of local social service organization? Surely in a budget of one billion plus we can find some funding to help those in our community in need. Perhaps the County should review the tasking of the Housing and Human Services staff. Belt tightening, not staff pay increases, should be the norm, especially when some of us think the system is broken.

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. **SS**

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actor in Sam Peckinpah's films such as "The Wild Bunch."

"Sam was a genius and I loved him, but he was a basket case. He drove everybody nuts."

That was evident during the production of "Major Dundee" with Charlton Heston.

"Heston was using a real saber for one scene. Sam made him so mad, Chuck came within an eyelash of cutting Sam in two – and it scared Chuck because he damn near did it. Sam found a way to get under your skin to get what he wanted out of you."

Jones calls "The Wild Bunch" a "hell of a movie," but believes Peckinpah's "Ride the High Country" was the best Sam ever made, just gorgeous to watch, although I cry like a baby at the ending." He says it's "one of the best Saturday afternoon westerns you could ever sit and watch over a bowl of popcorn."

And while he had a few lead roles in films, Jones was content as a supporting actor.

"I suppose I could have worked my way up the acting food chain, but character work was very rewarding and great fun. I loved playing the heavies because I could do what I wanted and got to work with the best in the business, so I consider myself very lucky."

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery, Ala, and has written features, columns, and interviews for over 650 newspapers and magazines. **SS**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mission Inn Luncheon and Winery

Tour - RESCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY JANUARY 17TH - \$62 - enjoy a fabulous lunch at the Hacienda Restaurant at the Mission Inn, Howey in the Hills before going on tour of the Lakeridge Winery. Sign up by December 15th, minimum of 35 needed for this trip.

Mt Dora Craft Fair - Saturday, October 28th - \$40 - enjoy the day exploring the Mt Dora Craft Fair. Have lunch on your own with local vendors or restaurants. Deadline to sign up is October 16th, minimum of 35 needed for this trip

The Singing Christmas Tree -

Saturday, December 9th - \$87 - From its beginning over three decades ago, The Trees have become one of Central Florida's most loved and spectacular traditions. Featuring a huge choir, full orchestra, worshipful dance, powerful drama and a beautiful display of 250,000 lights, The Singing Christmas Trees is an exciting presentation of Christmas classics and the pageantry of our two 40-foot-tall Christmas Trees. Deadline to sign up is October 24th, minimum of 35 for this trip.

Globus Presentation - Saturday October 7th from 11a-2pm - join Jean as she escorts groups to South Africa in August and China in October 2018. RSVP by October 5th

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