

In the know

**CLEARWATER
TEEN RUNAWAYS,
GONE 20 DAYS,
FOUND ON BEACH**

Two teenage runaways were found on Clearwater Beach this week after a story about them was published in regional editions of the *St. Petersburg Times*. Gabriel Fernandez, 16, returned to the Palm Harbor home of his father, David Fernandez, on Monday morning. Gabriel's 17-year-old girlfriend, whose name is being withheld, also returned to her Pasco County home. The two were gone for 20 days. While away, Gabriel said the two lived in an abandoned hotel on Clearwater Beach. They also slept on the beach and at one time found refuge with a stranger.

Holiday bazaar at church Saturday

First Lutheran Church, 1644 Nursery Road, Clearwater, will hold a holiday bazaar from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. The festivities include local crafters and demonstrators, a bake sale, door prizes and lunch. A \$1 donation is requested to go to the Homeless Emergency Project in Clearwater. For more information, call (727) 461-3444.

**SAFETY HARBOR
An event you can raise a glass to**

The eighth annual Safety Harbor Wine Festival will be held from 5 to 11 p.m. on Saturday. The event, which is centered at the Gazebo, 401 Main St., will stretch between Bayshore Boulevard and Eighth Avenue. Wine and food samples from area restaurants, live entertainment on three stages and arts and crafts vendors will be available. Admission and parking are free. Wines will range from \$3 to \$5. For information, call Joe Cooper, (727) 724-1572.

**TARPON SPRINGS
Body found near park's boat ramp**

A man's body was found Wednesday morning at Anderson Park after a caller reported a sound similar to a gunshot, Tarpon Springs police said. The body was found on a bench near the boat ramp after a boater called authorities at 9:20 a.m. to report the sound, police said. Tarpon Springs detectives are investigating but said it was too early to speculate what happened to the man. His name was withheld pending notification of family members.

Riders hit the road for Cops N Kids

A motorcyle ride to raise funds for the Cops N Kids Christmas program, which serves needy families in Tarpon Springs, will be held on Sunday. It will begin at the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and Walton Avenue. Registration is \$5 plus an unwrapped toy. Kickstands will go up at 12:30 p.m.; registration starts at 10 a.m. For more information, call Judie Lawson, (727) 709-4723 or (727) 944-5729.

Correction

An Evening with the Author, a fundraiser for the Clearwater Library Foundation featuring Andrew Huse, will be held on Nov. 20 at the Clearwater Main Library, 100 N Osceola Ave. A different day was listed in the Clearwater and North Pinellas sections on Wednesday.

In Sports

State golf, regional volleyball quarterfinals, **6C**

Inside

- Good for you **4**
- History **5**
- Out & About **3**
- Puzzle **2**

North Pinellas Times

pinellas.tampabay.com

Thursday, November 5, 2009 | NPN

Experts flatten Dunedin plan

They puncture claims about the savings from filling city vehicle tires with nitrogen.

BY DREW HARWELL
Times Staff Writer

DUNEDIN — With the promise of nearly \$150,000 in energy-efficiency stimulus funds, city staff agreed that an 80-gallon nitrogen generator would be a smart buy.

The generator, they wrote in their federal grant application, would replace the air pump at the city's public works facility, where Dunedin's nearly 300 cars, trucks and heavy-duty vehicles are serviced.

Filling tires with nitrogen, they said, would save 6 percent in fuel, extend tire life by 25 percent and "promote energy efficiency through public demonstration." The city budgeted \$21,000 for the project.

Those savings would be huge — if they were true.

But experts say results like that are unrealistic. The benefits — slight, if any — of inflating with pure nitrogen are outweighed by the generator's high price, a cost made unnecessary by the cheap

and easy alternative of monthly air checks.

"I can't see any reason why there would be a useful difference between nitrogen and air inside the tire," said John Heywood, director of MIT's Sloan Automotive Laboratory. "I'm not saying there's zero difference. I'm just saying it's not going to show up."

Nitrogen's strong point is the size of its molecules — they're larger than oxygen's and leak from tires slower, according to the National Highway Traf-

fic Safety Administration. Supporters say nitrogen keeps tires inflated longer, meaning lower friction with the roadway, less fuel usage and less worn treads.

But even supporters, like the Get Nitrogen Institute, an organization sponsored in part by corporations selling nitrogen generators, say vehicles with well-maintained, air-filled tires would get a 2 percent boost in fuel from a switch to nitrogen — a third of the city's claim.

Institute representative Chris

Lein estimated passenger vehicles could get about a 30 percent extension in tire life with nitrogen, and that the gas would also prevent oxidation and water vapor from deteriorating rubber over time.

But that estimate reflects the impact of constantly driving with under-inflated tires. With proper tire changes and monthly maintenance, air, which is 78 percent nitrogen anyway, can work just as well at a small fraction of the

» See NITROGEN, 4

She's a veteran's veteran



Rose Gorga, 107, laughs with caretaker Nelly Melville. Gorga was in the Women's Army Corps in WWII as a staff sergeant.

Rose Gorga, now 107, served as a WAC during World War II.



Gorga holds her rosary after lunch at Loving Care assisted living facility.

BY TERRI BRYCE REEVES
Times Correspondent

ONE of America's oldest veterans will be acknowledged Saturday.

Rose Gorga, who recently turned 107 and lives in the Loving Care Assisted Living Facility in Largo, is a World War II veteran who served in the Women's Army Corps as a staff sergeant.

Barring any unforeseen

health problems, she will be taken to Bright House Field, where the fifth annual Clearwater Veterans Appreciation Day promises an afternoon of pomp, pageantry and patriotism.

The free event is Saturday from 2 to 6 p.m. It's sponsored by the city of Clearwater and organized by the nonprofit Clearwater Veterans Alliance.

"It's a day in which veter-» See VETERAN, 6



Courtesy of Rose Gorga

Rose Gorga received a World War II Victory Medal for her service.

Familiar name fills Oldsmar vacancy

Former council member Ed Manny will hold Eric Seidel's seat for four months.

BY RODNEY THRASH
Times Staff Writer

OLDSMAR — The City Council wasted no time filling the seat vacated by Eric Seidel.

Tuesday, a its first meeting since his resignation, the council appointed Ed Manny to complete the remaining four months of Seidel's term. The vote was unanimous.

"He was the first name that came to mind," said Mayor Jim Ronecker, who nominated Manny. "Every single person that I asked about Ed, nothing came back bad."

Manny, 81, has lived in Oldsmar for more than 45 years. He was elected to the council twice, in 1997 and 1999. He ran for mayor in 2001 against Jerry Beverland and lost. Though he has not held elected office since, he said Oldsmar is such a small town, he won't have trouble sliding back into his old role.

"I still have a lot of connections with the people who are on the council, code enforcement board, all the other boards," said Manny, who is vice president of the Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinell-» See OLDSMAR, 4



Ed Manny, 81, was on the Oldsmar council in 1997 and '99.

Beyond the gridiron | Tarpon Springs

MUSIC TELLS THE STORY

THE TRILOGY IS AN ORIGINAL TALE.

About this series

BY DEMORRIS A. LEE
Times Staff Writer

This is the ninth story in the "Beyond the gridiron" series, in which Tarpon Springs reporter Demorris A. Lee takes a look at the Spongers football program from different perspectives.

This week, the Spongers have a bye, so we're looking at the award-winning marching band.

To see previous installments, visit tampabay.com/hometeam.

TARPON SPRINGS It comes together like the fine-tuned production that it is. With about four minutes remaining in the first half, the xylophones, the timpani drums, the electronic ensemble and the wooden stage elements are moved into place just beyond the gridiron.

The woodwinds are in one corner and the brass are in another warming up. The color guard is stretching.

When the clock hits zero and the football players trot off the field for halftime, the Tarpon Springs High School marching band goes into the action.

Within minutes, the field's stage is set and *The Trilogy*, the nationally acclaimed marching band's 2009 show, comes to life.

"It's a story of a person waking up and not knowing their identity or where they are but having extraordinary talents," said Kevin Ford, director of Tarpon Springs band program, who along with Frank Sullivan, conceptualized and wrote the show. They also wrote original music for the show.

» See SPONGERS, 6



Before an image of the Taj Mahal, Tarpon Springs High band members prepare for their halftime show during a recent game.

Sunshine Law flap over Biltmore fine

At issue: a delay in repairing the historic hotel's dilapidated roof.

BY LORRI HELFAND
Times Staff Writer

BELLEAIR — Questions are swirling about the way Belleair's code enforcement board handled an issue involving the historic Belleview Biltmore Resort & Spa.

The resort owner's attorney, George Rahdert, has already cried foul about the board's decision Monday to fine the owner \$250 a day if it doesn't fix the hotel's dilapidated roof.

And Mayor Gary Katica joined the fray at Tuesday's town commission meeting, saying he saw evidence that some board members may have violated the state's Sunshine Law, an assertion that board members denied.

Katica also was disturbed that, during the meeting, a new board member asked if the hotel would provide certain benefits for the Belleair Country Club and neighbors if the town rescinded the fine.

Latitude Management Real Estate Investors, formerly known as Legg Mason Real Estate Investors, bought the 112-year-old hotel in 2007 with plans for a \$100 million full-scale makeover.

"If there was any indication that they violated» See BILTMORE, 4