



INSIDE



HOW WEIRD IS THAT?!
SEAN MCCARTHY

Spend any time surfing the Web and you are bound to find stories that are just too bizarre to be true. Here's a sampling, edited for length. Remember, just because it's online doesn't mean it's true!

From *blog.sfgate.com*:
Apple's "Find My Friends" app might have uncovered a cheating spouse

Apple released a new app that lets you keep up with the whereabouts of your friends. This has ominous implications when used in a hostile relationship.

The "Find My Friends" app has been employed by a suspicious husband to check up on his wife, and he may have caught her red handed.

Kashmir Hill reports at Forbes about a posting to MacRumors' forums in which someone going by the name of ThomasMetz says he caught his wife in a lie thanks to the app: "I got

See **WEIRD, A4**

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FOOTBALL B7

SPECIAL NIGHT

Former player Ashton Richards and Travares Copeland watch coin toss

WEEKEND WEATHER

Friday: Scattered thunderstorms; high: 82; low: 68; high tide: 10:09 a.m.; low tide: 4:03 p.m.
Saturday: Few showers; high: 79; low: 67; high tide: 11:00 a.m.; low tide: 4:55 p.m.
Sunday: Scattered showers; high: 76; low: 68; high tide: 11:53 a.m.; low tide: 5:50 p.m.
Weather courtesy of www.weather.com

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City tables solicitation ban

By Dawn Krebs
dkrebs@hometownnewsol.com

PORT ST. LUCIE — After a brief discussion, the Port St. Lucie City Council stepped back from making a decision supporting a proposed solicitation ban.

The city council unanimously gave its support to the ordinance, which

prohibits solicitors from standing in or alongside roads.

The item came up again for discussion after it was tabled for a month at a September meeting.

Soliciting has been a common practice for groups, ranging from veterans to football teams to firefighters collecting for

See **BAN, A10**

Lawsuit says man is victim of false allegations

By Jay Meisel
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PORT ST. LUCIE — Numerous St. Lucie County deputies and SWAT team members surrounded the Port St. Lucie residence of a man who was accused of calling in a bomb threat to a mortgage

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company employee in January.

See **LAWSUIT, A10**

Homecoming queen, king



Denise Rodriguez, Treasure Coast High School principal, crowns Erica Fraguere as homecoming queen, while Stephen Hardiman reacts while hearing his name announced as homecoming king during the annual halftime ceremonies Friday, Oct. 21.

Mitch Kloorfain/chief photographer

National children's organization tours county



By Dawn Krebs
dkrebs@hometownnewsol.com

PORT ST. LUCIE — For once, the "Tunnel of Hope" was for them.

On Oct. 14, a large white bus carrying Rick Miller, the founder of the national Kids at Hope program and

20 board members traveled to St. Lucie County to visit elementary schools and meet the principals, teachers, students and parents who helped make St. Lucie County the first Kids at Hope county in the United States.

As the board members got off the

bus at Windmill Point Elementary in Port St. Lucie, they found first graders and kindergartners had formed their own "Tunnel of Hope" to greet them.

The tunnel of hope is used at the

See **TOURS, A3**

Event raises awareness of domestic abuse

By Jay Meisel
jmeisel@hometownnewsol.com

ST. LUCIE COUNTY — Even working within the highest echelons of law enforcement doesn't mean a person will avoid being the victim of domestic abuse.

Such was the case with Rose Smith, who said last week, that when she was the victim of abuse, she was

also secretary to former Fort Pierce Police Chief Eugene Savage and currently holds that position with Police Chief Sean Baldwin.

Ms. Smith recalled the traumatic period during her life at a seminar at Indian River State College last week to bring awareness about the continuing problem of domestic violence. It was sponsored by the 19th Judicial Circuit Victims' Rights Coalition.

Speaking during Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Ms. Smith said her former husband became "more controlling and more physically abusive," toward the end.

But unlike a woman featured in a film called "Telling Amy's Story," shown during the event, Ms. Smith lived to begin a new life.

See **ABUSE, A12**

New wound care center opens

By Dawn Krebs
dkrebs@hometownnewsol.com

PORT ST. LUCIE — In an effort to integrate ongoing health care with additional treatment options, the Martin Memorial Health system began offering wound care services at its Port St. Lucie location.

This pleases Anita Commette, 99, who comes every other week.

"I love it," she said. "It's so much closer, and the staff is very nice."

Ms. Commette started wound-care treatment in 2007 on the recommendation of her doctor.

Now, she sits patiently on an examination table, while

See **CARE, A3**

Group uses science to sort fact, fiction

By Dawn Krebs
dkrebs@hometownnewsol.com

ST. LUCIE COUNTY — As Halloween approaches, people embrace the spooky, and people explain and things that go bump in the night.

But there's a group based in St. Lucie County that does that all year long.

The G.R.I.M. Society is a small team of researchers who scientifically explore claims of the paranormal.

"G.R.I.M. stands for Ghostly Research and Investigation into the Metaphysical," said founder and lead investigator James Dourney. He and his wife, Tamara, head up a team of 11 others who investigate unexplained claims.

The group has done research all over the Treasure Coast, and has even traveled to Georgia and Indiana on investigations. What sets them apart is their use of science to separate fact from fiction.

"We, as a community, have handed down tales, personal experiences or urban legends

See **SCIENCE, A4**

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Weird

From page A1

my wife a new 4s and loaded up find my friends without her knowing. She told me she was at her friend's house in the east village. I've had suspicions about her meeting this guy who live uptown. Lo and behold, Find my Friends has her right there."

If the ThomasMetz case is real, it will be interesting to see if this evidence holds up in divorce court. Hill points out that a New Jersey court

case earlier this year resulted in a ruling that it's OK to track a cheating spouse via GPS.

From *TheJacksonChannel.Com*: **Deputies: Woman accidentally calls cop for drug deal**

Hinds County deputies said a 61-year-old Pearl woman is accused of accidentally calling a detective to make a drug deal.

The Sheriff's Department said Judy Weible accidentally called the cell phone of a detective on their Street Crimes Task Force. At first,

he thought it was a joke and ignored her follow-up calls.

"In initial calls, she wanted to sell some pills. He blew her off, and evidently she didn't like being ignored, so she started sending a series of text messages," Lt. Jeffrey Scott said. "That's when we kind of took it seriously."

Deputies said they were able to set up a time to meet her and make an arrest.

The Sheriff's Department said Weible was carrying 30 hydrocodone tablets. Weible has been charged with See **WEIRD, A10**



Photo courtesy of Tamara Dourney

Tamara and James Dourney, founders of the G.R.I.M. Society, a St. Lucie County-based team of researchers that scientifically explores claims of the paranormal, outside the Indrio Road School House in Fort Pierce.

Science

From page A1

from one generation to the next, with each generation adding its own version and variety," he said. "In order to determine the truth within the stories, the only possible approach is through science."

The group not only uses recording equipment, such as cameras, video devices and audio recorders, they also use environmental-data collection equipment, such as temperature and barometric pressure gauges.

"During our more scientific experiments, we have used generators and xylophones," Mr. Dourney said. "We follow the scientific process to analyze reports and generate theories."

He told of one investigation that took place at a cabin in

the woods, where there were reports of footsteps at night. After spending a few hours investigating, the group discovered the ambient temperature, along with the construction design of the porch, was causing the wooden planks to expand and contract.

"Together, these noises really did sound like footsteps," he said.

They have currently completed one investigation and are actively collecting data on four more. Locally, the group has gathered data at the St. Lucie County Historical Museum, the Platts-Backus House, the Governor's House and Old Fort Park.

"Because history plays such a prominent role in many of the tales and legends we encounter, it is imperative that we have factual information or events surrounding a

location or an individual," he said.

"Naturally, we are strong proponents of historic preservation and of education and outreach within the community."

Currently, the group is part of a two-year study of battery drainage at reportedly haunted locations.

"Working with scientists across the country, we have become part of a larger group dedicated to finding a cause for the mysterious depletion of power in electronic devices when exposed to these locations," he said.

But while the group takes its work seriously, they understand why people question their sanity.

"Our group works in an area that is colored by the perceptions established over time by television and movies," Mr. Dourney said.

"But while we believe that tales of hauntings or paranormal activity are too numerous to be dismissed, we do not believe that a viable explanation can be found without turning to the standards of science."

The G.R.I.M. Society can be contacted through its website, www.thegrimsociety.com, by email info@thegrimsociety.com or by calling (772) 801-0177.

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Lawsuit

From page A1

ary 2010.

The resident, John Portik, said last week, almost two years later, the problem with the scenario was that he never made such a threat and that no one could provide independent proof that he did.

"I flatly denied it then and I have denied it ever since," Mr. Portik said.

Mr. Portik has filed a lawsuit in the 19th Judicial District Circuit Court against American Home Mortgage Servicing Corp., and one of its employees, Samara Mal-

oney, for defamation, abuse of process and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

He contends American Home fabricated the allegation against him because he threatened to file a complaint against the corporation.

Through a spokeswoman, American Home Mortgaging declined comment. Ms. Maloney could not be reached for comment.

Mr. Portik, who was charged with making an attempted threat to a project, place or discharge a destructive device, said he ended up pleading "no contest," to a charge of attempt

to commit threat to project a destructive device, because he didn't want to risk a much worse penalty than what he received and to end the matter.

He said as a result of the plea, he was placed on probation for four years and ordered to pay \$30,000 to help American Home Mortgage increase its security.

Before that he was required to live nine months essentially under home arrest, he said.

It all started, Mr. Portik said, when a friend who faced eviction from his house, asked for his help because he had 24 years experience in the collection business.

Mr. Portik said he made several calls before reaching Ms. Maloney, who worked at American Home Mortgage's Jacksonville office.

Within three hours of that conversation, he was con-



John Portik

tacted by American Home Mortgage, which agreed to modify the mortgage for his friend, giving him a 30-year mortgage at a 3 percent interest rate.

Figuring the whole matter was resolved, he said, he was surprised when police showed up at his house.

According to an arrest affidavit for Mr. Portik, 58, a Jacksonville detective told the St. Lucie County Sher-

iff's Office it was reported Mr. Portik "had been calling the mortgage offices in Jacksonville, Fla., and Irving, Texas, and was threatening the staff with coming and bombing the building and also threatening to shoot individuals and also finding information for the employees and taking care of their children."

But Mr. Portik said he never made such threats and that with more than 20 years experience in bill collections he knows the legal line.

He said no tape recording has been produced of his telephone conversation with Ms. Maloney. He also noted the evidence showed the alleged threat to Ms. Maloney was not reported for more than an hour.

"I think it is very strange that every other conversation I had with AHMSI was recorded except for the one in which I supposedly made

the threat (that led to his arrest)," he said.

However, the arrest affidavit said recordings of other conversations stated Mr. Maloney told an operator in India that "he would hire someone to put a bullet in her head," and that he would shoot a mortgage negotiator in Texas.

His attorney in the civil lawsuit, Alex Barak, said people often get frustrated in dealing with people in call centers in other countries.

It was unrealistic to think that Mr. Portik had the means to carry out such a threat, he said.

As a result of the whole situation, Mr. Portik said he lost his civil liberties for almost a year and he also believes the stress resulted in him needing open heart surgery.

"I was just trying to help my friend get a fair shake," he said.

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Ban

From page A1

their annual boot drive.

The ordinance states those distributing materials or goods to, or soliciting business or charitable contributions from, motor vehicle occupants is hazardous to public safety and impedes the normal flow of traffic.

But those in opposition to the ordinance, mainly the Muscular Dystrophy Association and newspaper street hawkers, spoke on how the ban could not only impact

charitable contributions to the county, but also cause people to lose their jobs.

"I don't think anyone wants to hurt employment," said Vice Mayor Linda Bartz.

Mayor JoAnn Faiella said there was no factual proof the solicitations were causing accidents, and also said that as far as giving to a charity, "residents should educate themselves on whom to donate to."

"I don't feel the government should be interfering with that," she said.

Councilwomen Michelle Berger and Shannon Martin agreed.

"When it comes to polic-

ing people on the street, people have to make their own decision on who to give their money to," Councilwoman Martin said.

"There's a lot of information out there about what charitable organizations are good or not."

The St. Lucie County Commission is also looking at a similar ban on roadside solicitations, and tabled the issue until a November meeting. Initial discussion showed the county officials were looking at the option of banning solicitations every day except for Sunday.

But the city council did not want to discuss that, cit-

ing safety to residents.

"If it's for safety, that's safety seven day a week, not six days a week," Mayor Faiella said.

If the ordinance had passed both readings, it would have been illegal for anyone to solicit from or distribute anything to motor vehicle occupants on Port St. Lucie roads.

The council directed Port St. Lucie Police Chief Brain Reuther to keep an eye on the activity.

"I prefer the chief monitor this, and if there's a problem, bring it back before council," Mayor Faiella said.

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Weird

From page A4

possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute.

From news.yahoo.com: Sotheby's to sell real drawing by fake artist

Auctioneer Sotheby's has sold work by artists great and mediocre, famous and obscure — and now, by an artist who never existed.

The London auction house said it is offering a drawing by the talented but fictional American abstract expressionist Nat Tate.

Tate is the creation of British novelist William Boyd, who wrote a fictional biography that included reproductions of the artist's drawings. It was published in 1998 complete with endorsements from David Bowie and Gore Vidal, who were in on the joke.

The work, "Bridge No.

114," has an estimate of \$4,700 to \$7,900. Proceeds will go to the Artist's Benevolent Institution.

From huffingtonpost.com: **Group angered over Ben & Jerry's 'SNL' flavor**

The conservative group One Million Moms, an offshoot of the American Family Association, is none too pleased with Ben & Jerry's.

The organization is calling for a boycott of the ice-cream maker's new flavor, the "Saturday Night Live" skit-inspired Schweddy Balls. In a public letter sent to its members, the organization acknowledges the origin of the flavor, describing the Alec Baldwin-starring NPR spoof.

Ben & Jerry's chose to go with fudge-covered rum and malt balls for their flavor. The ice cream is being released in a limited batch, which means it will be distributed nationwide for three or four months.

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