

Editorial Opinion

Naples Daily News

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Kudos & Kicks

Reviewing the good, the bad and the questionable

Kudos: Some shout about merchandise they'll give you if you buy from them. Others talk about the cash you'll get back with a purchase. Some even say if you buy one of their cars, you'll get one free.

The gimmicks to get customers in the door are widespread. Auto dealers come to mind, but it's not limited to them. It's rare, however, to hear a company touting that its customers can help the homeless and those vulnerable in society.

Such is the case with St. Matthew's House, a Collier County shelter that could be the beneficiary of up to \$400,000 in 2016 in a drive put together with Naples Nissan.

For starters, the dealership on Pine Ridge Road, just west of Interstate 75, set up a café for employees and customers. It's staffed as an adjunct of SMH catering, a St. Matthew's House-related food operation. So it helps support job opportunities for the nonprofit's residents.

Proceeds from food sales go to St. Matthew's House. The dealership also pledged to donate to the shelter \$200 for every vehicle sold and \$20 per test drive.

"Our partnership is a bold statement that says who we are as Americans when the free-enterprise system works like this to help the lives of the less fortunate," St. Matthew's House CEO Vann Ellison said in a statement. "It is one thing to run blaring commercials promising free stuff when buying a car, and quite another to make a promise to your community."

Kudos: Each January, the wine pours and the money flows in the name of Collier County children's charities.

A dedicated board of Naples Children & Education Foundation trustees behind the annual Naples Winter Wine Festival lures the wealthier set here for a weekend menu of fine wine, dining, travel and entertainment packages, mixed with art and jewelry. Months later, nonprofits take center stage when the donations from lavish dinners and money raised by dozens of festival auction lots are transformed into charitable checks.

Quietly behind the public face of the wine festival are several hundred volunteers. They help guide guests, do setup and preparatory work, direct traffic and anything else that makes the event the resounding success it's been for 15 years.

Every year, NCEF thanks its dedicated volunteers at a luncheon, attended recently by about 100 volunteers.

The Jan. 29-31, 2016, event is approaching. More than \$135 million has been raised since 2001. Last year, the wine festival raised more than \$12 million to benefit about 35 children's charities.

As with many Southwest Florida nonprofits, volunteers make it possible. If the January event piques your interest, the NCEF's website will tell you how to get involved in future years by submitting an application to be a volunteer. There's a section about volunteers and opportunities at www.napleswinefestival.com.

Kick: The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission released updated data showing more black bears were killed than previously thought in the first bear hunt in the state in more than 20 years.

The new count was 304 killed, not the 298 as originally reported.

A disturbing part of the updated data shows 60 percent of the bears killed were females, and 21 percent of those were lactating with young cubs.

FWC called off the weeklong hunt, capped at 320 bears, after two days.

Kudos: Credit goes to a Southwest Florida nonprofit taking part in Prosperity Together, a national push to collect \$100 million in the next five years to increase economic security for low-income women and their families.

The Women's Foundation of Southwest Florida's goal is to raise \$500,000 or more during the next five years as one of nearly 30 women's foundations participating.

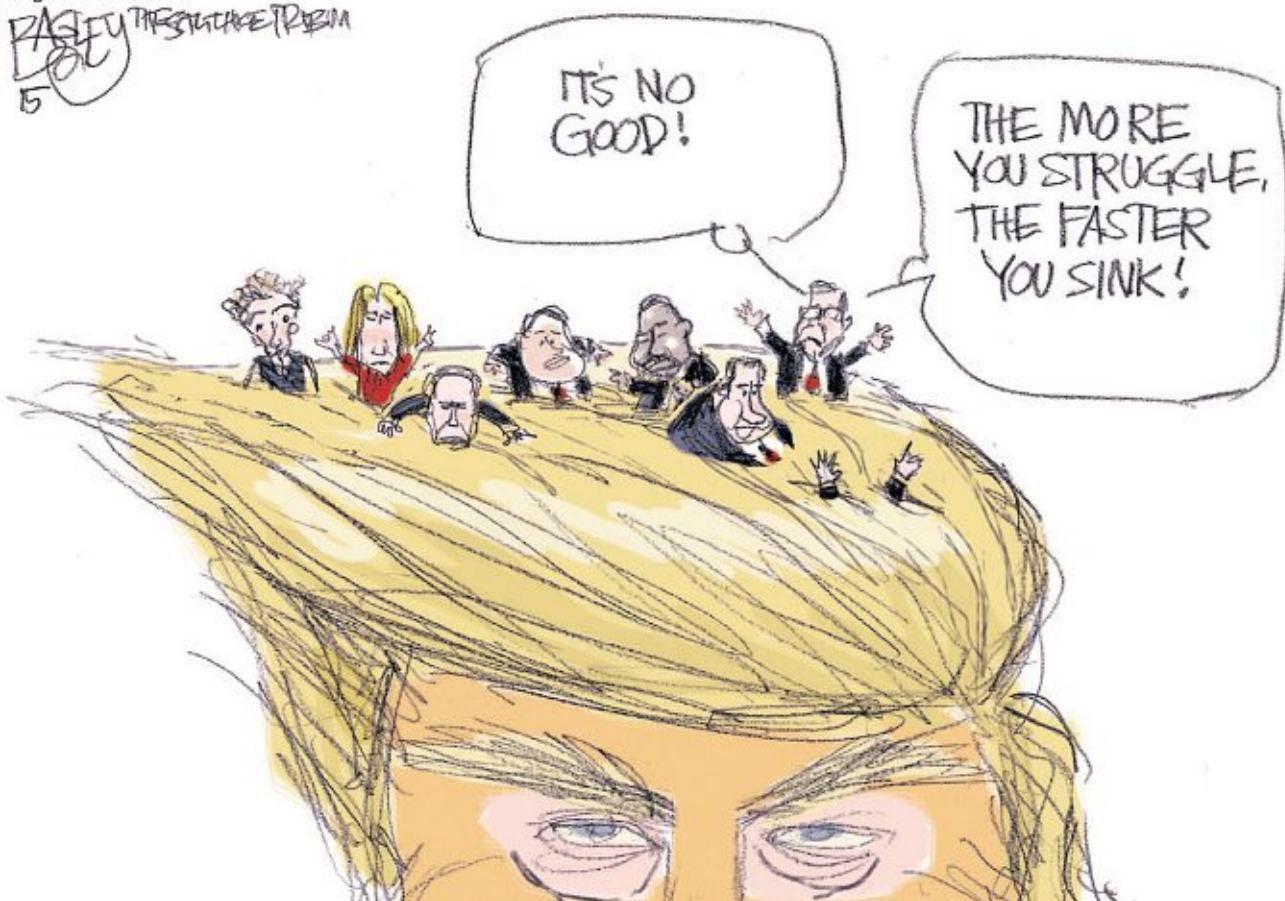
The types of programs Prosperity Together will target include job training, improving access to high-quality child care so women can be successful at work and give kids a strong academic start, and research into best practices for creating economic security.

More information on The Women's Foundation: www.womensfundflorida.org

More information on Prosperity Together: www.womensfundingnetwork.org/initiatives/prosperity-together

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RASHLY PRESERVE TREASURES



LETTERS

Noah Parsons, North Naples

Impact fee

The goal of the impact fees implemented or reduced by Collier County commissioners depends upon whether your infrastructure project qualifies as "a goose or a gander."

Often, it has a direct relationship to the volatile swings in the Naples economy during the past 15 years. Recently, members of the building industry voiced their opposition to an increase in impact fees requested by the School Board, urging commissioners to reduce the proposed fee increase over a three-year period.

That bit of political jockeying did the job for the builders, to the dismay of the School Board. But the victory by the infrastructure community is due in large part to protecting the high impact fees for roads, jails, public facilities, etc., which revenues the commissioners spend on favored projects and distance themselves from voter dissatisfaction about public services.

The School Board, on the other hand, needs its fees restored to the previously established maximum of \$11,000 per single-family home.

Paying for already built educational facilities to accommodate increased enrollment in this new growth period — and beyond — is even accepted by the county's own impact fee consultant.

This cavalier attitude of commissioners should be brought to task by questioning voters as the time to elect a new slate of responsible county officials approaches.

Robert Campbell, Naples

Questionable review

Possibly, Chris Silk didn't see the same theater production of "Boeing-Boeing" as I, along with several hundred others, did at the Gulfshore Playhouse on opening night, Nov. 7.

Silk's review in the Daily News was far off the mark in his critique of the acting quality and genuine humor generated by the Playhouse actors in the production of this delightful comedy. The Playhouse audience roared with laughter and the production was given standing ovations.

Mr. Silk seems preoccupied with writing negative-tilted reviews of Gulfshore Playhouse productions. It is an acting company that brings to Naples genuinely superb actors from New York's Broadway and other acting centers at considerable expense, and its productions deserve far better objective reviews from the Daily News than those of recent past.

Diane Corcelli, Bonita Springs

Sanctuary cities

When I first learned of sanctuary cities, I could not fathom why a government would use taxpayer money to protect anyone here illegally who has been convicted of crimes.

Letter of the Day

Fred Hayes, Naples

Traffic

A main topic of conversation around Naples is the amount of traffic.

My answer is: "Wait till next year." Look at all the building going on.

To name just two areas, Rattlesnake Hammock Road and Collier Boulevard, and Livingston Road and Golden Gate Parkway.

I estimate from these two areas alone we will have at least another 1,000 cars on the road.

Welcome to Fort Lauderdale!

I asked several people if they knew of a reason why we need sanctuary cities. So far, no one has come up with a logical reason for this illogical activity.

It turns out that San Francisco isn't the only haven for these criminals. Arizona must be a breeding ground for them. Judicial Watch filed a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit against the Department of Homeland Security in 2014 to obtain the following shocking information:

In 2013, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Arizona office released 36,007 convicted criminal aliens, all of whom had been subjects of deportation hearings. This included 193 homicide convictions, 426 sexual assault convictions, 303 kidnapping convictions and 9,187 dangerous drug convictions, according to Judicial Watch's report.

The New York Times reported in July that 87 percent of all criminal aliens in the United States will not be subject to deportation under President Barack Obama's sanctuary policies. He has even threatened to veto any legislation that would withhold federal money from states or localities that have sanctuary policies.

Once again, I ask why? Can anyone explain?

Fred Jodice, Naples

Comedy begins

In the opera "Pagliacci," the ending line is "The comedy is finished." In the Republican debate, the comedy seems to be just beginning.

One player is ranting about building something akin to the Berlin Wall and rounding up millions of innocent people and dumping them over that wall, while a Florida senator sounds like a windup toy. You wind it up and out spews the same stump speech about humble beginnings and his grand accomplishments.

A woman's only focus is on an alleged lie by Hillary Clinton, which has been totally refuted by members of the woman's own party.

There's a doctor who instead of doing no harm claimed to have stabbed someone and hit a relative on the head with a hammer.

And there's a cowboy from Texas, behaving like a sycophant while stealthily conniving to usurp votes from those other two or three players he is ostensibly praising.

The rest, while not exactly prime cuts, at least display a modicum of sense and some willingness to listen to more than just themselves talking.

What else can we expect from a crowd that elected you-know-who not only once by default, but a second time by choice?

Bill Kearney, East Naples

Median landscaping

In response to Dick Harris and his letter to the editor headlined "In the weeds," we residents in the communities along Radio Road from Santa Barbara Boulevard to Davis Boulevard had a similar problem.

We agreed by community votes to accept a millage increase to pay for the beautification of our medians since county money was not available to do the work.

This has recently been completed, although needed repair and replacement is now in the works.

Harris may want to explore the same option. Of course, we want to be sure that other areas of the county are treated the same. Yes, it is costing us a few extra dollars, but is well worth it.

Bob Vetera, Ave Maria

Senior cheer

Most seniors dating from the 1960s to 1980s revere music from that era.

Reminiscing about former icons like John Denver; Peter, Paul & Mary; The Kingston Trio; The Seekers; Eddy Arnold; Burl Ives, and the like bring back many fond memories, especially with those in assisted living homes.

If you either play a nonelectronic instrument (i.e., a Spanish guitar, etc.) or love to sing, we are looking for you.

It is our hope that we can find some seniors to form a group to play mini-concerts — sitting down on stools and with music stands — at local assisted living homes and other not-for-profits throughout greater Naples.

Weekly practices (we may need to find a practice location) and either one or two concerts weekly would include both a Christmas repertoire and another secular, folk/pop repertoire.

If you enjoy celebrating and playing your instrument and/or singing, please let us hear from you. Perhaps you also desire to add fulfillment into your lives, as well as pay back yet in your lifetime.

Hopefully there is still time yet for this Christmas. Please email me today at: bobvetera@centurylink.net with your phone number so we can get acquainted.

We started with two people and we hope to grow with more!