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THE TAMPA TRIBUNE

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NOEL COLE

Inspiration from Harvey, Retton, etc.

ST. PETERSBURG — Wonder if a full-page advertisement in Sunday's and Monday's Tampa Tribune caught the eyes of the city council and Bay Plaza executives. Probably. The advertised event could be very tempting to people desperate enough to try most anything to break out of their business blues. Even if it might promise more than it can deliver.

In case you missed it, the ad was about "Florida's most popular business seminar" coming to the ThunderDome on Dec. 13.

"Attend this dynamic seminar and learn the latest strategies for business and personal success," the ad said.

Seven people — including one unnamed very special guest speaker — will share their secrets of getting to the top. Participation cost is \$40 if you register now, \$225 if you don't.

(Maybe that's their secret barometer the country and charge people to hear how you get successful.)

The darndest thing: Most of the six confirmed speakers are famous for something other than business. Included are a radio yaker, a former athlete, an ex-colorist and a nutritionist. That's right: a nutritionist. But no CEO.

And the second darndest thing: Some of their stuff has been tried here before without any appreciable results.

The lineup

Now for a look at the speakers.

There's Paul Harvey. You've heard him on AM radio. Says "Good day" even when it isn't. According to the ad, Harvey will share humorous anecdotes and give his unique perspective on today's stories.

Yeah?

Just for almost five years, I've been sharing humorous anecdotes and giving my unique perspective on breaking stories. A lot of good it's done my life. Or yours.

Ernieville Olympian Mary Lou Retton is supposed to pep you up with "Why winners consistently explore above and beyond their comfort zone."

Mary Lou? Hello! Please be advised that winners aren't the only ones who do that sort of thing.

St. Petersburg ventured well outside its comfort zone when it gambled the future on downtown redevelopment and the ThunderDome. Now it's trying to make up for years of neglecting the less glamorous aspects of running a city. Got a lot of catching up to do, and it won't be cheap.

Then there's Dr. Ted Brewer. He's described as America's health and fitness expert. And I thought that was Richard Simmons.

Brewer is the nutritionist, but in the photo he looks as if he's on a hunger strike. Among what he'll lecture about: "three foods you should never eat." Just what you want to hear at a business seminar.

He sounds like one of those health-food fascists who badgered movie theaters into serving popcorn that tastes like warmed-over pencil shavings. Be wary of Brewer if Bay Plaza and AMC really do open those 24 theaters. Someone ought to forcefeed him a Cuban sandwich and hunk of cheese cake.

Zig Ziglar also is supposed to move you. He's supposedly the world's top motivational speaker. Write "See You at the Top." Explains how you can get everything money can buy as well as all that can't.

Punny, but the Bay Plaza people have been trying to explain that for years. Trouble is, they've yet to find a tenant willing to sell anything in their South Core building.

Peter Lowe must be a boot. He's "America's top success salesman" and offers a 15-minute bonus session on the biblical secrets of success.

Maybe he'll learn that St. Petersburg is proof the needs don't inherit much of anything.

Last but not least is none other than Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf. He reveals his two fail-proof rules for leadership.

Sounds impressive, but you've got to remember he's a general. His two fail-proof rules must be: kill enemy soldiers and break things. Worked in Iraq. But around here?

Isn't that special?

If those six celebrities aren't inspiring enough, there's also the very special guest speaker. Supposed to be one of the five most famous people in the world.

By my thinking, that narrows it down to: Bill Clinton, Ronald Reagan, Michael Jackson, the Pope and Madonna. Once again, not a CEO among them.

Needless to say, interesting to at least a couple of the above would be a one-way trip to trouble. But at least it would make the seminar's admission worth the price.

And maybe even fill up the Dome while the hockey players are on strike.

Ex-officer plans to sue city over remarks to media

By NOAM M. M. NEUSNER
Tribune Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — A former city police officer has told city officials he intends to sue the city over comments made about him by Police Chief Darrel Stephens and other police officers.

The officer, John Geoghegan, was fired after he shot and killed a burglary suspect on March 23, 1992.

Earlier this month, Geoghegan's attorney wrote a letter to Mayor David Fracher saying Stephens and other police officers slandered and libeled his client, violated

his civil rights and caused him mental distress in their remarks to the media.

State law requires Geoghegan to wait six months before filing a lawsuit after notifying the city. He will seek \$1 million in damages for himself, his wife and his two children.

In a letter dated Monday, City Attorney Mike Davis told Geoghegan's attorney the officer's claim did not include enough information on what Stephens or anyone else may have said after the shooting.

Geoghegan, who was off-duty at the time, shot Donald Hart, a 23-year-old convict, after a brief foot chase that started

when police say Hart stole a television from the officer's neighbor. The shooting, the eighth involving Geoghegan, occurred at 52nd Street and 21st Avenue North.

"We did not feel he was acting in a situation that required the use of a firearm," Stephens said on April 12, 1993, after a shooting review board voted to fire Geoghegan.

A grand jury later cleared the officer, as did a state police standards board, and he was back on the job.

"I was a little surprised," the chief said on Dec. 20, 1993, after Geoghegan was returned to the force. "My expectation was

that the termination would be upheld. I think the shooting was not consistent with our policy. I thought it then and continue to think it. But there's always room for a lot of different points of view on it."

Geoghegan's attorney, Joseph Caracciolo, said Stephens' comments not only damaged his client but the legal position of the city.

The shooting victim's family filed a civil rights lawsuit against the city over the incident. Last week, following an extraordinary private strategy meeting of the city council,

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MARK GUTS/Tribune photo

Ready for baseball year-round

Mike Daubel, a city maintenance worker, stands in front of the stadium under construction at Al Lang Stadium in St. Petersburg. Preparations for Major League Baseball

spring training, which start in November, have not yet been put on hold, he says. The stadium also is host to a few senior league games.

Figure in Chandler trial is arrested

Man charged with stealing a car; was rejected as witness in murder case.

By JANET LEISER
Tribune Staff Writer

LARGO — An Ohio parolee — who had traveled to Florida to testify in murder defendant Oba Chandler's behalf — was arrested Tuesday and charged with stealing a car.

Gary Donald Adkinson, 33, was booked into the Pinellas County Jail about 4 a.m., more than five hours after he was taken into custody at Indian Shores' Friendly Tavern.

It took police several hours to book Ad-

kinson into jail because "he pulled a little shenanigan," said Indian Shores Police Chief E.D. Williams.

Adkinson told officers he was diabetic and needed to go to a hospital for insulin, Williams said. Hours later, physicians told officers it didn't appear the man had diabetes and could be taken to jail.

Defense attorneys for triple-murder suspect Chandler had planned to have Adkinson testify that a relative of the three victims implicated himself in the crimes.

But Circuit Judge Susan Schaeffer refused to allow Adkinson to testify at Chandler's trial, which began last week. She said Adkinson's information was hearsay.

Chandler is on trial for the murders of Ohio tourists Joan Rogers and her daughters Christie and Michelle. The woman and her daughters disappeared June 1, 1989, and were later found tied to concrete blocks in Tampa Bay.

In Tuesday's arrest, Adkinson is accused of failing to return a rented 1984 Nissan Pathfinder to Enterprise car rental in Mansfield, Ohio.

The car was to be returned Sept. 6, according to a rental agreement. It also was not supposed to be taken out of Ohio.

Adkinson is expected to remain jailed in Pinellas until Ohio authorities extradite him for prosecution, Williams said. Enterprise officials plan to pick up the Nissan, which is valued at \$20,000.

Staff writer William Yelverton contributed to this report.

Board queries bus plan

Members table chief's proposal

By LESLEY COLLINS
Tribune Staff Writer

LARGO — School board members tabled School Superintendent Howard Hinesley's desegregation proposal Tuesday, but not before asking a host of questions.

Their queries ranged from how the proposal will affect students in Clearwater's Greenwood area to how to interpret color-coded zoning maps in the back of the document.

Hinesley is proposing significant changes to the school district's court-ordered desegregation plan, which has remained relatively the same for 23 years.

The new plan is designed to relieve the burden of forced busing, particularly on black children, he said, and increase district accountability for ensuring student success.

It would return about 1,000 black students and 1,000 white students to their neighborhood schools.

The plan would allow south-county schools to be within 15 percent points above or below that area's average black student enrollment.

Based on last year's average, that would mean a south Pinellas school could have anywhere from 10 percent to 40 percent black enrollment. The court order currently prohibits any Pinellas school from exceeding 30 percent.

Minimum black quotas for north-county elementary schools would be eliminated, pushing already low black enrollments down further — seven of them potentially to 0 percent or below. Middle and high school students based in north county could apply for special attendance permits to closer schools — as long as they didn't push black enrollments above 25 percent.

The plan also guarantees that south-county students living closer to their neighborhood schools won't be bused elsewhere.

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BRUCE HOSKING/Tribune photo

Lawsuit claims cover-up over toxins at Dome

By NOAM M. M. NEUSNER
Tribune Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — Heavy machinery operators who have used the city and the companies that built the ThunderDome, added charges of a cover-up Tuesday.

The workers, represented by Tampa attorney Douglas Gruse, allege in an amendment to their personal-injury lawsuit that city officials and construction companies conspired to keep quiet any concerns over contaminated soil at the Dome site.

The allegation that city officials were involved in a cover-up and a conspiracy is not new — similar allegations were made in 1991.

"There's never been any evidence of a conspiracy," said City Attorney Mike Davis, who had not yet seen Gruse's court filing. "It'd be surprised if they could prove that in court."

But Tuesday, Gruse made public documents — mostly from the construction companies — indicating city officials knew there were problems with hazardous chemicals at the construction site prior to any cleanup effort.

For nearly a century, the Dome site was home to a gas plant, gas storage tanks and an unregulated landfill.

City officials declined to look into the concerns, voiced by workers and by construction companies, because they did not want to hold up the Dome project, the documents show.

The owner [city officials] had been reluctant to even get the material tested because of the potential over-reaction if it became known that these were potentially hazardous materials," wrote Ray Chandler, in a memo dated March 2, 1987.

Chandler, one of many defendants in the lawsuit, was an official with Helmut, Obata & Kasanahara Inc., one of the companies involved in building the Dome.

In January 1987, one of the contractors asked city administrator and baseball booster Rick Dodge about concerns over a "black tar-like substance" seeping near Booker Creek, which runs through the Dome site.

It is not clear whether Dodge asked to have the material tested, but shortly after, a group of contractors had access of the stadium site inspected by an environmental testing engineer. Those tests, performed on Jan. 26, 1987, showed oil and diesel in a layer of the soil marked by large amounts of trash.

According to typed notes from a Feb. 10, 1987, meeting about stadium construction, a group of construction staffers — including three city officials — discussed getting rid of "unsuitable soil" in the stadium's parking area.

In June 1987, after a television report showed contaminants flowing off the Dome site into Booker Creek, city officials denied the site needed testing or cleaning up.

Not until that August, in response to state environmental agency concerns, did city officials acknowledge finding toxic, cancer-causing chemicals at the stadium site.

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