

Clearwater extends drinking hours City's action coincides with other cities' ... Page 7A.

LARGO LEADER



COUNTY Helping hands

Gary Schwach is a Pinellas County volunteer. He arrives at the small-engine maintenance shed on Bonnie Fortune Key every weekday morning around 8 a.m. and is greeted by a sizable congregation of weathered hand and gas-powered tools.

"Just about any tool they bring in that they can't get to run or run correctly, I'll work on it for them," Schwach said.

Every tool plays an important role in keeping Fort De Soto Park, a world-class tourist destination, operating at peak condition. And Schwach plays an important role as well. He keeps those tools operating at their best for the 28 full-time county employees that depend on them.

... Page 6A.

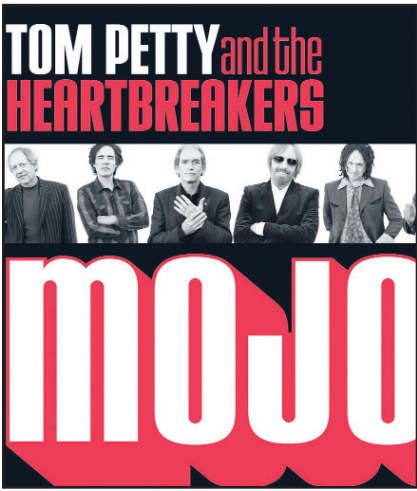
ENTERTAINMENT Tom Petty brings 'Mojo' to Forum

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers will perform Thursday, Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m., at the St. Pete Times Forum, 401 Channelside Drive, Tampa.

The tour was originally set to visit Tampa earlier this year but was rescheduled to accommodate the delayed arrival of the band's highly anticipated new album, "Mojo." The album, recorded between April 2009 and January 2010, was officially released June 15. It's the band's first studio album since 2002's "The Last DJ."

The new album showcases a wide variety of American music, including rock and roll, country and both electric and acoustic blues. Petty's characteristic imagery is at work in the lyrics, synching up smoothing with the melodies.

... Page 3B.



LARGO Recycling contest to be held online

Eco-innovators are challenged to construct useful creations from the contents of their trash can for the city of Largo's second annual Recycled Innovations Contest, beginning Sept. 1.

... Page 2A.

VIEWPOINTS He's Free-wheelin' on a two-wheeler

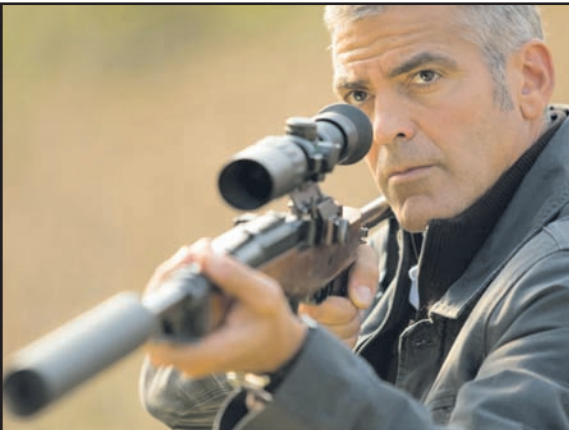
Columnist Bob McClure enjoyed riding bicycles as a kid and will never forget that shiny, red J.C. Higgins model he got for Christmas when he was about 8.

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'The American' stars George Clooney as an assassin on the move

Also opening this week is 'Going the Distance,' a comedy starring Drew Barrymore ... Page 1B.



Be careful out there Deputies to be out in full force on land, sea this holiday weekend

By SUZETTE PORTER

Pinellas County sheriff's deputies will be on roads and waterways this Labor Day weekend, making sure everyone has a safe and happy holiday.

Cecilia Barreda with the sheriff's public information office said deputies would be out in full force to help create extra awareness to be safe during the last summer holiday.

Safety on the county's waterways will be one area of focus. Barreda also reminded residents to be careful around water of all kinds, including backyard pools.

Drowning and near-drowning accidents are not uncommon. Most can be prevented, she said.

The Center for Disease Control recommends designating a responsible adult to watch young children who are swimming or playing around water. When young children are involved, an adult should be within arm's reach at all times. Adults should take care not to become distracted by activities, such as reading, playing cards, talking on the phone or texting.

Boat injuries also increase during the summer months and holiday weekends. The sheriff's marine unit takes advantage of the increase in boater traffic to

conduct its boating safety awareness campaign and Operation Kid Float.

Deputies will be stopping vessels to conduct safety inspections, and kids "caught" wearing their life jackets will get an Operation Kid Float T-shirt. Deputies also will be looking for boat operators who are impaired by drugs or alcohol.

According to 2009 statistics from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, 18.5 percent of boating fatalities were caused by alcohol or drug use. In

See WEEKEND, page 4A



Photo by BRANDEN BELL

Up and over Destiny Foster, 4, of Clearwater hones her basketball skills at a block party at the Highlands Recreation Complex Aug. 28. Free demonstrations, trial classes, hot dogs and popcorn were offered.

Packers prevail



Photo by JIM LAYFIELD

Largo quarterback Juwan Brown finds some running room on a keeper play in the preseason game against the Clearwater Tornadoes Aug. 26. With stingy defense and a steady offense the varsity Packers defeated the Tornadoes 13-0 in three quarters. The junior varsity added 14 more points in the fourth.

City rejects fire union's offers on vacation, wages

By TOM GERMOND

LARGO - City commissioners, saying they want to be fair to other employees, sided with city officials in an impasse hearing Aug. 31 on a labor agreement with the city's firefighters' union.

Among the issues are whether a step pay plan in effect for fire-rescue workers should be replaced with a pay range plan.

Assistant City Manager Henry Schubert said that firefighters traditionally receive two increases annually through a step pay plan that's in effect. The step pay plan, he said, is "no longer fiscally sound or fair compared to other city employees, including our police officers."

"We cannot do business as usual because it worked in the past," Schubert said. "Economic realities dictate otherwise."

The average firefighter-paramedic within the city makes \$57,300 annually. His or her total cash pay including overtime and special pay is nearly \$62,000 per year, Schubert said. The total cost to the city of the average firefighter-paramedic is slightly more than \$103,000 annually.

Raises are frozen for city employees under the proposed city budget for next year.

Commissioner Curtis Holmes didn't mince words on his position on union negotiations.

See CITY, page 4A

Paramedics train for SWAT team scenarios

By JULIANA A. TORRES

CLEARWATER - A man with a sniper rifle, the scope of his firearm and his sunglasses peaking from below the railing of a loading ramp, takes aim at an approaching armed rescue vehicle as it rolls into the parking lot. A group of four other "bad guys," their own weapons drawn against the incoming law enforcement, guard the door of the abandoned warehouse where they're holding hostages.

Gunshots snap like firecrackers as five paramedics unload from the

Pinellas County Sheriff's Office armored vehicle, called a Peacekeeper. Two Pinellas Park police officers raise tall shields against the bullets as two of the medics approach a body left lying on the asphalt and start checking for vital signs.

"That's a downed officer!" a trainer in a red T-shirt shouts down to the group. "He's got no obvious injuries, you just need to get him in there! Get him in the vehicle!"

They take the mannequin by the arm and start to drag it out of harm's way, one tripping in his hurry to pull the "officer" backward

toward the vehicle.

Paramedics working with police SWAT teams in a scenario like the one set up for them on Aug. 26 have to stay focused on several different objectives, Clearwater Fire and Rescue Lt. Chris Hoyne, who led the training, later explained. The patients with gunshot wounds need attention one at a time while the paramedics try to stay clear of bullets and deal with the trauma of the high-stress situation itself.

"Obviously it's more dangerous.

See SWAT, page 4A



Photo by JULIANA A. TORRES

"Injured" Officer Matthew Hevel of Pinellas Park Police Department is helped by Paramedics Kevin Mannion of Largo Fire Rescue, left, and Robert Schleif of Pinellas County Sheriff's Office during a SWAT training scenario.

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# Review: ‘The Last Exorcism’

While it doesn't come close to inducing the kind of fear generated by 1973's "The Exorcist," "The Last Exorcism" is a compelling and chilling late summer surprise featuring some first-rate performances and unexpected plot twists.

That is, except for the last 10 minutes – more on that in a moment.

At first glance, "The Last Exorcism" may seem a bit cliché, particularly to veteran horror fans. It repeats and reworks many elements present in most films sharing similar subject matter, ingredients introduced in the original genre juggernaut "The Exorcist." The formulaic building blocks include a young woman whose behavior suggests demonic possession, a holy man who is struggling with his faith, freaky contortions accompanied by crunching bones and, of course, some vomit – though not of the projectile pea soup variety.

What on Earth could have possessed filmmakers to conjure up all of these worn-out horror movie conventions?

Most likely, it was the opportunity to tell the tale in a new-fangled way: namely, the trendy docu-drama.

Ever since "The Blair Witch Project" introduced mainstream moviegoers to the concept of horror in the form of simulated non-fiction in 1999, faux fright



## Reel Time

Lee Clark Zumpe

documentaries have become excruciatingly commonplace. More often than not, these derivative films don't live up to the hype surrounding them, failing to deliver a persuasive premise and offering little or no content horror aficionados would deem truly fear-provoking.

"The Last Exorcism," directed by Daniel Stamm and co-produced by Eli Roth, pulls off an uncanny coup. The characters are well developed and the conditions driving their motivations and intentions are convincing. The film also manages to bring some disturbing images to the screen, though it mainly generates dread through building tension.

The film follows skeptic priest Cotton Marcus (Patrick Fabian) whose preacher father groomed him to deliver sermons from the pulpit when he was still a child. Early in the film, Cotton describes his disillusionment with the only profession he has ever known and admits that though he has performed numerous exorcisms, he doesn't believe in demonic possession.

To expose the practice as a

sham, Cotton has a documentary film crew accompany him on his last exorcism.

Cotton and the crew travel to the remote Sweetzer farm and meet teenager Nell (Ashley Bell). Her father (Louis Herthum), a widower with a drinking problem and a very traditionalist view of religion, claims Nell has been slaughtering his livestock and that she's possessed by the devil.

A mock exorcism follows and then all proverbial hell breaks loose.

Fabian manages to make a mocking, self-disparaging character both likable and sympathetic. As Cotton recounts personal challenges and incidents that led to his decision to turn his back on his faith, Fabian infuses the role with traces of humility and humanity that testify to the character's integrity. Had Fabian not emphasized Cotton's compassion, his persistence in trying to protect Nell would not have been credible.

Bell shifts gears from an innocent and troubled young victim to an alarmingly terrifying demon-puppet surprisingly smoothly. Playing the devil's rag-doll must be demanding and a little unsettling, but Bell handles the dichotomy effectively, oozing rural charm in early scenes and showcasing her unsettling contortionist skills as the film progresses.

And progress it does, taking



Photo by PATTI PERRET

When Nell Sweetzer (Ashley Bell, front) is said to be possessed by a demon, Cotton Marcus (Patrick Fabian, left), Louis Sweetzer (Louis Herthum, center) and Caleb Sweetzer (Caleb Landry Jones, right) participate in a ritual to purge the evil entity in the Lionsgate film "The Last Exorcism."

some unanticipated turns along the way, right up until the last 10 minutes. It doesn't fall apart, exactly: It simply fails to deliver a conclusion that suits the material presented up to that point. Ex-

plaining how it disappoints would spoil all of the fun leading up to the disappointment, though, and that fun is worth the price of admission.

Just be prepared.

Despite its Achilles' heel, "The Last Exorcism" is smart, riveting and creepy. If only someone could exorcise the regrettable meltdown encapsulated in the last 10 minutes of the film ...

# Tom Petty finally brings ‘Mojo’ to St. Pete Times Forum

By LEE CLARK ZUMPE

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers will perform Thursday, Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m., at the St. Pete Times Forum, 401 Channelside Drive, Tampa.

Tickets range from \$29.50 to \$125. Special reserved seat four-packs are now available for \$99. The four-packs are available only in advance and supply is limited. To purchase tickets, call 813-301-2500 or visit [www.sptimesforum.com](http://www.sptimesforum.com).

The tour was originally set to visit Tampa earlier this year but was rescheduled to accommodate the delayed arrival of the band's highly anticipated new album, "Mojo." The album, recorded between April 2009 and January 2010, was officially released June 15. It's the band's first studio album since 2002's "The Last DJ."

The new album showcases a wide variety of American music, including rock and roll, country and both electric and acoustic blues. Petty's characteristic imagery is at work in the lyrics, synching up smoothing with the melodies.

Petty kept busy during the band's interim from recording new music. Along with a number of other projects, he reunited his first band, Mudcrutch, and cut the album they never got the opportunity to make back in the early 1970s.

Petty brings some of the raw spirit of the Mudcrutch sessions back to the Heartbreakers. "Mojo" doesn't rely on studio trickery: It's all about the band playing the music they love and it shows.

"With this album, I want to show other people what I hear with the band," Petty said in a press release issued by Big Hassle Media. "Mojo" is where the band lives when it's playing for itself."

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers were Inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2002, their first year of eligibility. Since the band's debut album in 1976, Petty and the Heartbreakers have generated a string of familiar classics and chart-topping hits such as "Breakdown," "American Girl," "Don't Do Me Like That," "Refugee," "The Waiting," "You Got Lucky," "Don't Come Around Here No More" and "Runnin' Down a Dream."

In recent years, the band has continued to build on that success. The band's sold-out 2008 tour was the biggest of their career and came right after the band's acclaimed Super Bowl XLII half-time performance with a worldwide audience of nearly a billion people. The 2009 release of Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers' career spanning "Live Anthology" earned glowing reviews from critics.

# TOM PETTY and the HEARTBREAKERS

# mojo

Image courtesy of BIG HASSLE PUBLICITY

"Mojo," released June 15, is the first studio album from Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers since 2002. The group will play at the St. Pete Times Forum Sept. 16, along with ZZ Top.

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WE WILL HAVE THE FOLLOWING EARLY DEADLINES:

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