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Crowds line up for Sen. Marco Rubio's book signing. 3B

Tampa Bay Times

LOCAL

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tampabay.com | Monday, July 2, 2012 | 1B

things to do

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Independence Day: Let freedom (and our ears!) ring at the many fireworks displays Wednesday, including the Channel District, Gulfport and the Pier. See **tampabay.com/things-to-do** for a list.

Parties: Who says July 4 has to be a bore when it happens midweek? Cobra Starship singer Gabe Saporta will bring pop-punk-glam goodness at 1 p.m. Wednesday to Shephard's Beach Resort on Clearwater Beach. $5 and up.

Thanks, soldiers: Today through Saturday, members of the military and up to three dependents get in free at Red, White and Zoo Week at Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo.

Run Thru Hell: It's July in Florida and you will be running a 5K at 8 a.m. Sunday through the mud and the bushes of Al Lopez Park in Tampa. Now do you see how this race got its name? $25 advance, $30 race day at active.com.

DATE NIGHT

Let's Glow: There's no work Wednesday, so why not try Push Ultra Lounge's Rooftop Full Moon Glow Party with body paint and LED dancers? Wear white clothing (bikinis encouraged). 9 p.m. Tuesday at Push Ultra Lounge in St. Petersburg. No cover.

Get Fresh: The first show for the newly renovated Sun Dome in Tampa is the Fresh Music Festival on Saturday with hip-hop artists Keith Sweat, Doug E. Fresh, SWV, Guy and K-Ci and JoJo. $39.50-$75.

Summer shows: FreeFall Theater in St. Petersburg brings a summer Tandem Series of cabaret acts to lighten our sweaty moods. On Sunday, local favorite Michael Raabe teams up with singer Sara DelBeato for a Florida-friendly Too Darn Hot! putting a retro spin on everything from the Beach Boys and Cole Porter to Nelly and Sir Mix-a-Lot. $15 per show, or $50.

KIDS AND FAMILY

Go with the flow: Edgewater Park will be juicy with the Dunedin Orange Festival on Saturday, an old-fashioned town festival at 51 Main St. A $10 tasting ticket includes all restaurants. See dunedinorangefestival.com.

Museum deal: It's the first of the month, so that means it's $2 for Target Tuesday at the Glazer Children's Musem. And for July 4, it's only $4 to visit all the interactive exhibits at the Tampa museum.

Beach bash: A free Treasure Island Teen Beach Bash on Thursday for grades 6 to 12 will have live music, rock climbing, water slides, a bungee bounce and more. Free from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Treasure Island Municipal Beach, 11260 Gulf Blvd.

MORE TO EXPLORE

You have until Tuesday to enter our Minion Madness contest for a chance to win a trip to Universal Studios. Go to **tampabay.com/things-to-do**.

Here's the deal,
today we celebrate one year of savings

... And many more ...

BY CHRIS TISCH | *Times Staff Writer*

One year ago, we decided to begin using the front page of the Monday metro section to bring you ideas on how to save money in a tough economy. Our Here's the Deal feature has been popular with readers. Our staff writers have provided a load of ideas for saving on groceries, cars, electric bills, cable TV, dental care — you name it. Here's a look back at some of our favorites over the past year. You can read the full reports — and even more money-saving tips — at tampabay.com/heresthedeal.

Flexing online power to get a good car deal

This was our first feature, written by Stephanie Hayes, who had just gotten a great deal on a car by harnessing the power of the Internet. Her first lines: "Last time, I did that thing people do. Go to dealership. Point to nearest passable automobile. Grunt. Agree to pay 437 percent interest." This time, Stephanie contacted dealerships via email, then played salespeople against each other. Even then, she still had to get tough when sales staff got weaselly when she arrived to make the buy. In the end, it worked out: She saved thousands.

Couponing as a second job

One of the best examples of the power of saved money was a January piece by Loretta Rieman about how she used a year of coupon savings — more than $3,700 — to fund a dream vacation to the Vatican and other historic sites. "It was a trip of a lifetime," Loretta wrote. "It was so much fun preparing for the trip knowing that I was paying for it through my couponing efforts — which turned out to be better than a second job." Loretta shared her couponing tactics — everything from matching coupons to buy-one-get-one-free deals to using online couponing sites to find more deals to getting in good with store managers.

» See DEAL, 6B

DIRK SHADD | Times

Teen dies of Russian roulette head wound

Deaths from the thrill-seeking game, usually to young men, are not unheard of in Florida.

BY KEYONNA SUMMERS
Times Staff Writer

LARGO — Surrounded by teenage friends on the back porch of his house, Thorin Montgomery was first up in a contest of Russian roulette.

Right away, the .38-caliber revolver fired its round. Badly wounded, the 17-year old was rushed to the hospital Friday night. Keeping vigil, friends wrote wishes online that he might summon some sort of inner strength and pull through.

But he died around 3 a.m. Sunday at Bayfront Medical Center. And friends who now dedicated Web posts to his memory struggled to reconcile how the teen with a bright smile and happy demeanor could be dead.

"Truly blessed to have been such amazing friends with you Thorin ... rest your soul in paradise," wrote one.

Deaths and injuries from the act of bravado — putting a bullet in the chamber, spinning it, pointing it at your head and pulling the trigger to see if it goes off — are uncommon in Florida, but not unheard of. An expert who has studied the phenomenon suggests it is one of the ways that young men — and the victims are almost always young men — seek the rush of a thrill.

This incident began about 7:45 p.m. Friday. Pinellas County Sheriff's Office deputies had been called to the home at 11133 111th Way for a reported shooting.

» See SHOOTING, 5B

Privatizing inmate care handcuffed

So are legislated savings from the medical services contract.

BY STEVE BOUSQUET
Times/Herald Tallahassee Bureau

TALLAHASSEE — Change never comes easily to Florida's prison system.

It has been more than a year since the Legislature ordered the agency to privatize inmate health care to save money, the largest project of its kind ever attempted in the United States.

It still hasn't happened, leaving unfulfilled Gov. Rick Scott's campaign promise to "competitively bid health care contracts."

In the past year, Scott ousted the corrections secretary who initiated the project, and two unions filed suit to derail it.

Florida's new fiscal year began Sunday with state employees still dispensing drugs, giving checkups and tending to the aches and pains of the 100,000 men and women in the nation's third-largest prison system.

Inside
The corrections agency quietly ramps up a plan to privatize all 20 of its work release centers. **Story, 3B**

Treating the health needs of inmates is costly. Some prisoners are HIV-positive, others have mental health needs that require psychotropic medications and the inmate population is aging.

After months of red tape, Corrections Secretary Ken Tucker approved hiring two for-profit companies to provide health care for the next five years. The first-year cost: $359 million.

Corizon Health would treat inmates in North and Central Florida; Wexford Health Sources would manage inmate medical care in South Florida.

The firms can't start work until the action is

» See PRISONS, 3B

Shortsighted measures could devalue university degrees

ERNEST HOOPER
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People joke that USF stands for "U Stay Forever" and UCF stands for "U Can't Finish."

Yet the state Legislature seems to be buying into the insinuation that students take nonsense classes and hang around campus instead of employing a focused, four-year march.

We don't need career students, but a number of troubling measures are being implemented. Among them: reducing requirements for an associate arts degree, penalizing students who take more than four years and punishing universities that don't graduate students in four years. It may save money in the short term, but could devalue the state universities' degrees.

Ultimately, penny-pinching approaches can't make up for underfunding the university system. Sooner or later, the Legislature must compensate for years of budget cuts. It's not going to be able to cost-cut its way to quality. ...

The attempt to reinstate term limits for Pinellas County commissioners shouldn't be made in an election year. I know allowing the four commissioners in question to run is counter to the spirit of term limits, but let voters decide elections, not judges. ...

Seen on a bumper sticker: I'll Start Exercising As Soon As I Get Into Shape. ...

Miami Zombie? It sure was nice when zombies existed only in movies. Sigh. ...

Some Rays fans remain upset about the team's recent struggles, but I'm glad they're angry. I still remember when no one cared how they played. ...

My wife will see *Magic Mike* only because producers filmed parts of it in Tampa Bay and she wants to compare and contrast. Well, that's what she said. ...

That's all I'm saying.

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