

Lunch debt

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costs \$2.05. In middle and high schools, it's a quarter more. At least 60 percent of the county's students are poor enough to qualify for a discounted or free meal through the federal school lunch program.

In the world of fluctuating debts, the sum owed by the county's students is down about \$3,000 from the mark set in February, when a New York woman's suggestion in the Twitterverse sent good Samaritans across the country on a mission to chip away at the lunch bill children accrue.

One Palm Beach County donor wiped out \$250 in lunch debt at Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary that month. The donor paid up; district administrators picked the school that would benefit — and that didn't cover all that was owed there: \$100 remains on the books.

So what does the rest of the student lunch debt look like? For more than 90 of the district's nearly 200 traditional and charter schools, the amount owed totals at least \$100.

Ten schools report their cafeterias are owed more than \$300 — all of the public schools in the Top 10 are schools where more than 80 percent of the students are poor enough to qualify for a federally subsidized lunch.

Most of the debt at Palm



The children from this classroom might be at lunch, where some are unable to pay for their meal. CONTRIBUTED

10 SCHOOLS WITH HIGHEST LUNCH DEBT

- Latest estimates on school lunch debt. Percentage figure is students on free and reduced-price lunch.
C.O. Taylor/Kirklane Elementary (90%) — \$545
Seminole Trails Elementary (64%) — \$307
Barton Elementary (99%) — \$307
Cherokee Lake Elementary (93%) — \$348
Bright Futures Academy (60%) — \$345
Chancellor Charter (60%) — \$342
Bennot Farms Elementary (93%) — \$317
Palm Beach Lakes High (91%) — \$313
Berkshire Elementary (66%) — \$305
Total — \$2,305.5

Beach Lakes followed students from elementary and middle school, said Principal David Alfonso.

Alfonso said he does not count that as part of their "obligation" debt, meaning it isn't money owed that can't be taken from graduating. That type of decision rests with each principal.

Alfonso also notes that high schoolers are typically less inclined to sign up for the lunch program. By that age, students can feel it's stigmatizing, though schools have

removed practices, like separate lunch lines or meals, that make it easy to spot who is not paying for the meals. At more than \$545, the lunch debt is highest at C.O. Taylor/Kirklane Elementary in Palm Springs, with 1,281 students. 1,038 of them eating a free lunch and dozens more paying less than full price.

How is it that, even with so few students — about 130 — left to pay full freight, they've run up the most debt in the district? Well, some of them

'We send out negative balance phone calls twice a week.'

Allison Mombileau Director of food services

ran up the debt before they enrolled in the meal program, Principal Patti Lucas said. Her tally indicates \$167 of the debt can be traced to this situation.

The application is online and her parents often aren't. So Lucas tackled that problem by having office staff walk parents through the application at a terminal at school.

"You can't expect parents, especially those who don't speak English, to have a home computer and you can't do this on the phone. You really have to have someone walk you through," Lucas said.

The good news, Lucas said, is that all students across the district are offered a free breakfast and at some schools, including hers, the district also dishes out a late-day snack during aftercare.

Kirklane is among those that also send children home with backpacks full of food for the weekend. The next task for Lucas is finding the best way to help over the summer. The school opens the county's free meal sites. For anyone in the neighborhood who can get there, a handout. "But some can't get here," Lucas said.

sigar@ppost.com Twitter: @sonsigar

An ophthalmologist who testified for the prosecution Monday said he did so for free out of a sense of outrage.

Washington, D.C., also testified that the firm had been paid \$5 million to represent Melgen in his decade-long dispute with federal health regulators about his billing practices. It is unclear how much of that overlapped with the money set aside for his criminal defense.

And a medical expert hired by Melgen's defense team testified he has been paid \$135,000 but it included work he did to help Melgen combat regulators' allegations that he overbilled Medicare. Melgen has paid back \$8.9 million, but the federal insurer says he still owes about \$32 million.

The expert, Clearwater ophthalmologist Dr. Dana Deupree, said he was paid \$750 an hour. "There is a bargain compared with the amount charged by many top medical specialists," some former federal prosecutors said. "There's no government rate," said one who asked not to be named.

Leading doctors can command charges in New Jersey where he and his long-time friend, Democrat powerhouse U.S. Sen. Robert Menendez of New Jersey, are accused of operating a mutually beneficial bribery scheme.

During the trial that began in West Palm Beach this past month, one of Ogrosky's partners at the prestigious Arnold & Porter law firm in

Ophthalmology, and retired New Jersey retinal specialist Dr. Robert Bergen.

Fine and Haller testified for days. All three also spent hours outside court telling Melgen's patient charts to help the jury decide whether what Melgen did met the standard of care.

On the last day of the trial, one ophthalmologist invoked that legal phrase to explain why he agreed to testify against Melgen for free. At the request of prosecutors, Dr. Adam Berger said he took the day off from his practice in Winter Haven because he was offended by statements that Melgen's medical experts made in court and appalled by the quality of the tests Melgen used to make diagnoses.

"I found some of it disturbing and frankly outrageous," he said, referring to testimony by Deupree and Dr. Michael Tolentino, who until a month ago was among Berger's partners. "Some of the things that were said were not consistent with the standard of care of retinal specialists in my community. ... I thought it was my responsibility to clear the record."

He was summoned to rebut Melgen's claims that Melgen was an innovative physician who used multiple techniques to help patients who were told there was nothing that could be done to

stop the steady march of the disease that robs elderly people of their sight. Prosecutors insisted Melgen used a lucrative cookie-cutter approach, giving the same tests, treatment and diagnoses to scores of patients to drive up his Medicare billings.

Berger, like other retinal specialists paid by the prosecution, testified that painful and damaging laser treatments haven't been used since about 2005 when drugs were discovered to treat the disease. Melgen claimed that Melgen used a combination therapy — drugs and less powerful, less damaging lasers — to treat patients, arguing that studies have shown the double whammy can be effective.

Berger disagreed. "As a practicing clinician, during this time there is no role for sub-threshold lasers for the treatment of wet macular degeneration," Berger said, referring to the less powerful lasers.

Berger said, some of the eye photos Melgen took to diagnose patients with wet macular degeneration were unreadable. Referring to the theme of his defense, Melgen indicated prosecutors gave him the worst cases to review. Further, he said, even if the images were less than perfect, they could be used in combination with an exam to reach the correct diagnosis.

"If you had to," Berger reluctantly agreed, adding that most ophthalmologists use other more reliable tests. "If you had nothing else,"

jtusugave@ppost.com

NOTICE OF PROPOSED ANNEXATION

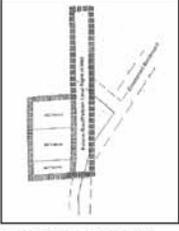
The Town Council of the Town of Loxahatchee Groves will consider the following: Cramer and Spector Folsom Road proposed Annexation ANNEX 2017-01.

ORDINANCE NO. 2017-05 CRAMER AND SPECTOR FOLSOM ROAD ANNEXATION

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES, FLORIDA, ANNEXING THE FOLLOWING CONTIGUOUS PARCEL OF LAND: THE 0.75 ACRE MORE OR LESS PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED AT 347 FOLSOM ROAD, THE 1.55 ACRE MORE OR LESS PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED AT 397 FOLSOM ROAD, THE 1.55 ACRE MORE OR LESS PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED AT 455 FOLSOM ROAD, AND THE 140 FOOT WIDE, MORE OR LESS ADJACENT FOLSOM ROAD AND FOLSOM CANAL RIGHTS-OF-WAY, LOXAHATCHEE, FLORIDA 33470 BEING MORE FULLY DESCRIBED IN EXHIBIT "A" HERETO; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The Town Council of the Town of Loxahatchee Groves will conduct a public hearing on Tuesday, May 2, 2017 commencing at 7:00 p.m. to discuss Second Reading of Ordinance 2017-05. The Public Hearing of the Town Council shall be held at the Loxahatchee Groves Town Hall 155 "F" Road Loxahatchee Groves, FL 33470.

Interested parties may appear at the public hearing and be heard with respect to the proposed Annexation. A complete legal description by metes and bounds and Ordinance 2017-05 and related materials may be inspected by the public at the Loxahatchee Groves Town Hall, located at 155 "F" Road, Loxahatchee Groves, Florida 33470, 561-793-2418, Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



Publish: April 18, 2017 and April 25, 2017.

Melgen

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With closing arguments set for today, officials at the U.S. Attorney's Office in Miami declined to comment on how that amount stacks up against other cases. But former federal prosecutors said unusual cases require unusual measures.

"There aren't many cases like this, obviously," said defense attorney Bruce Zimet, a former federal prosecutor.

"There is a lot of science and medicine involved. If you're going to get quality people, it's going to be expensive. Further, the amount the government spent for experts pales in comparison to how much Melgen has spent on his defense.

While it wasn't shared with the jury, court records show Melgen set aside \$1.5 million to pay attorneys Matthew Menchel and Kirk Ogrosky to clear him of the Medicare fraud charges related to his clinics in West Palm Beach, Wellington, Delray Beach and Port St. Lucie.

The money is also to pay them to represent him on criminal charges in New Jersey where he and his long-time friend, Democrat powerhouse U.S. Sen. Robert Menendez of New Jersey, are accused of operating a mutually beneficial bribery scheme.

During the trial that began in West Palm Beach this past month, one of Ogrosky's partners at the prestigious Arnold & Porter law firm in

be in later that afternoon, and a reporter left a phone number listed for the club is disconnected.

Neither Travis Rudolph nor his family could be reached Monday.

The West Palm Beach native and Cardinal Newman high school graduate drew national praise this past summer when, as he and his Seminole teammates visited a Tallahassee middle school, he spotted an autistic student who was eating alone, and sat down and dined with her boy.

As a junior in 2016, Rudolph led the Seminoles in receptions (56), receiving yards (840) and receiving touchdowns (seven). He left Florida State a year early but still managed to sneak into the university's all-time Top 10 in receptions (153) and receiving yards (2,311).

A law-enforcement source said the weapon was a rifle. At midday Monday, a man who was cleaning the interior said managers would

England Patriots and the Miami Dolphins.

Rudolph's sports agents confirmed to The Palm Beach Post on Monday that they sent NFL teams an email saying, "Travis has spoken to his family and he has decided that he wants all 32 teams to know he's available for any draft-related questions or any questions that any team may have for him, and he is looking ahead to the draft in light of this tragedy that has struck the Rudolph family."

Most draft analysts projected Rudolph to be picked near the end of the draft. Andruszewski, a former Cardinal Newman football and basketball teammate, called the death "a real tragedy" for the Cardinal Newman family. It's a week where (Travis) is probably going to have the biggest day of his life, and it's something his dad worked so hard to see happen, too." And Harry Howell, Rudolph's track coach at Newman, said Monday, "I just can't believe that such a thing would happen to such a good kid."

A spokesman for the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration could not immediately say Monday if the agency is investigating the incident. OSHA did say that from 2011 to 2015, the most recent years for which figures are available, 49 people nationwide were accidentally fatally shot by someone in the workplace.

Rudolph is not the first football player with a tragic connection to Sugar Daddy's. Greg Bryant, the former standout football player at American Heritage, spent his final hours alive at Sugar Daddy's nearly a year ago.

The 21-year-old was fatally shot May 7 on Interstate 95 as he drove home to Delray Beach after a night watching musician friends perform. No one has been arrested in his slaying.

Staff writers Jodie Wagner and Mark Bradley contributed to this story. ohtchcock@ppost.com Twitter: @ohtchcock sigar@ppost.com Twitter: @sigarjcp

Shooting

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of Southern Boulevard, was killed Friday night, according to the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office.

Authorities say Rudolph was working in the back storage room of the club at about 9:30 p.m. when a co-worker in an adjacent room moved a firearm off a shelf and it went off, sending a bullet through a wall and into Rudolph's neck or back. Rudolph was rushed to St. Mary's Medical Center where he died Saturday afternoon, the sheriff's office said.

Spokesmen did not say who owned the gun or who fired it, and whether they are the same person. The spokesman said the initial conclusion is that the death was accidental but that investigators will be at work on it for a while.

A law-enforcement source said the weapon was a rifle. At midday Monday, a man who was cleaning the interior said managers would



VILLAGE OF WELLINGTON NOTICE OF LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY AND WELLINGTON COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARINGS ON PROPOSED ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT

AN ORDINANCE OF WELLINGTON, FLORIDA'S COUNCIL, APPROVING A ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT (PROPOSAL NUMBER 17-37) (2017-35 ZONING TO AMEND THE VILLAGE OF WELLINGTON LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, ARTICLE 4, CHAPTER 4 SECTION 4.4.3.2 CONSIGNMENT (DRUG FACILITY) BEING TO THE SUBORDINATE REGULATIONS FOR TYPE 2B, C10 TO ALLOW A MAXIMUM OF FOUR (4) PER 200 SQ FEET OF AREA (1/200 HRS) HRS SIZES, PROVIDING A CONFLICTS CLAUSE, PROVIDING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE, AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Local public hearings will be held on: PLANNING, ZONING AND ASSISTANCE BOARD Date: May 23, 2017 at 7:00 PM, or as soon thereafter as may be heard in the orderly course of business. The hearing of the request may be continued from time to time as may be heard necessary.

Notice is hereby given that members of the Wellington Council may attend and participate in the board proceedings. WELLINGTON COUNCIL Date: June 13, 2017 at 7:00 PM, or as soon thereafter as may be heard in the orderly course of business.

The hearing of the request may be continued from time to time as may be heard necessary. All interested parties are invited to attend and be heard with respect to the proposed ordinance. Copies of all documents pertaining to the proposed ordinance are available at the Planning and Zoning Division of the Village of Wellington at 1551 PVI 4000 or may be viewed online at the Wellington website.

Planning & Zoning Division 12300 Forest Hill Boulevard Wellington, Florida 33414 (888) 797-7979

Approved: If a person decides to appeal any decision with respect to any matter considered at such hearing, he/she will need a record of the proceeding and such person may need to appear that a valid record of the proceeding is made which includes the testimony and evidence upon which the request is to be heard. All requests must be filed in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Wellington Land Development Regulations.

Passed to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person who is unable to participate in the hearing, because of a disability or physical impairment, should contact the Wellington Manager's Office at (888) 797-7979 or have his/her representative attend the hearing. Date: April 18, 2017. Published: The Palm Beach Post April 25, 2017.