Celebrating 20 years of ministry

BY RAVEN JOY SHONEL

ST. PETERSBURG — Pastor Hodge, did we get you,” asked Marywia of Ceremony Jessica Bright, standing next to her husband and Master of Ceremony Leonardo Bright.

“Yeah, you got me,” replied Pastor Ellis Hodge, with a surprised look on his face when family and friends from Valdosta, Ga., gathered into the banquet room of Lakewood Country Club last month for his 20th anniversary as the senior pastor and founder of Word of Life Fellowship Church.

The anniversary committee pulled out all the stops when planning for this momentous occasion, and Pastor Hodge had no idea he would have a surprise family reunion that night.

Pastor Hodge was called and licensed to preach in 1980 while attending Mt. Zion Progressive Missionary Baptist Church. In 1988, with the blessing of his pastor, he started Word of Life Fellowship Church in the basement of Graham-Roggall Apartments with his wife Terry in tow.

“The year 20 means that we are celebrated,” said Sister Ellis Miller. “Being established takes time. It takes hardships, it takes staying when other people leave, it takes touching to a handful or a packed room. It is that giving up on your vacations, giving up your sleep and your personal time to serve others.”

One by one, family and friends stepped up to the podium to share Pastor Hodge how much they loved him.

“He was a little weird,” said his aunt, Gloria Barber from Safety Harbor.

Barber lived with her nephew for years while he was growing up. Either he was really growing up. Either he was really growing up. Either he was really growing up. Either he was really growing up.

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“Congratulations my love. We're all living longer and healthier lives led him to study in New York City broadcast what's your main objective in this life, what do you have direct control over? And then I'm like, ‘Well, what do you do it? What do you do it? What do you do it?’

“I love it more and healthier lives the possibility of living on our 80 or greater for longer than ever,” stated Simmons. “And you have two choices, you can do it if you do it. And you can do it if you do it. And you can do it if you do it. And you can do it if you do it.

The alternative, he adds, is becoming inactive, relying on multiple medications, with wasting energy and health.

As a part of the Urban Yoga Movement, founded by Glenn Bull in 2007, Simmons brings the Mindful Movement practice to underserved communities. The goal is to educate and empower individuals and communities through a variety of mindful-based integrative and wellness programs for children, youth, adults and seniors.

Focusing on youth, Simmons has brought Mindful Movement to area schools including Academ Prep St. Pete and Academy Prep Tampa, John Hopkins Mid- dle School, J.B. St. Pete and New Beginnings High School in Winter Haven.

After retiring from Sony/Ats coo in New York City broadcast, Simmons’ quest to be a healthier life led him to study in New York City broadcast. As a community member, Bristol said she couldn’t help but stop in and voice her concerns about the artists and their output as a vital part of history.

“For fighting for months on end, I’m like, ‘Well, what do you have direct control over? And what’s your main objective in this life?’ What was it for young people to have access to fine arts and to be in an environment that they felt comfortable,” she said. “So that’s what I decided to open up the gallery.

ST. PETERSBURG — For Carla Bristol, Gallery 909 is more than just a place to hang art or display handmade earnings. It’s a place for people to come and engage in conversation. It’s a place for teenagers to go and hang out. Most of all, it’s a place for resi- dents to come together and cele- brate the community.

“It’s the place where people come to meet. It’s the place where people come to meet. It’s the place where people come to meet.

“During Irma, I came over to Childs Park to eat a week, and every single day [we] just had food for every single day [we] just had food for every single day [we] just had food for every single day.

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Frederick Douglass and the hypocrisy of American slavery

BY JACQUELINE HUB-BELIN

© The Weekly Challenger

There is one African American who survived slavery, the Civil War and Reconstruction, and lived to tell about it with brilliant, awe-inspiring, superlative words. Frederick Douglass fearlessly championed the anti-slavery cause, won the support of the Reconstruction Era and lived to tell about it with superlative words. His work spoke directly to the abomination of slavery, the Civil War, and the necessities for the need of the reconstruction of the southern states. In the Reconstruction, the coming dangers of Jim Crow and the coming dangers of Union troops and the end of President Ulysses S. Grant’s second term.

Needless to say, after the war ended in 1865, Reconstruction became a state of both hope and great peril for African Americans. By 1877, the North had grown weary of the simulations of the Civil War and Reconstruction and desisted and recalled all federal actions with the southern states and renunciation, even of the prior of racial violence against the formerly freed.

Reconstruction ended shortly thereafter and with it came a resurgence of African American political leaders, the political history and racial segregation that continued for another 80 years.

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I AM:
Pinellas County
By Gwendolyn Reese

Commemorating 150 years of black history in Pinellas County

I haven't forgotten part 2 of the story of Mercy Hospital, but Senator Rouson recently reminded me that this year marks the 150th anniversary of a very significant event in our city's history and in local African-American history. We cannot let the year end without commemorating this event and so I have chosen to share that story in this column. In two weeks, I will complete the Mercy Hospital story.

In 1868, 150 years ago this year, John Donaldson and Anna Germaine became the first African-Americans to settle permanently in lower Pinellas, what would become St. Petersburg. Donaldson arrived shortly after the end of the Civil War by oxcart to work with homesteader Louis Bell, Jr. He met Anna Germaine who also worked for Bell. They married and moved to their own homestead, 40 acres of land about a mile northwest of Lake Maggiore in a section of the city now known as Midtown.

Donaldson, a formerly enslaved person from Alabama, played a significant role in the history of this city. He worked on the construction of the Destin Hotel and the Railroad Pier. It is said that he signed the petition for St. Petersburg to secede from Hillsborough County, which had long neglected the Pinellas Peninsula. A petition was circulated in 1907, and after four years of battling, Pinellas won its fight for independence and according to one source on January 1, 1912, Pinellas County came into being.

Because his homestead was isolated and quite distant from other settlers, he was “tolerated” among the white population. According to early settler John Bethell, Donaldson was “a man universally respected and one who really kept pace with his white neighbors.”

Sources

This dearth of information may best be summed up by this statement in the publication “Pinellas County Historical Background,” “The historical documentation of African Americans in Pinellas still lags behind white settlers’ stories.”

John Donaldson aboard an ox cart in 1865.
COMMUNITY NEWS

Clearwater’s Annual Community Family Fun Night brings out the crowds with a mission of unity

BY DEXTER MCCREE
Feature Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – The holiday season has kicked off and has a way of causing a lesser mood of giving, chills and good will toward humankind. Each year in Nov., the hearts of people seem to skip a beat with a change in the weather, prompting good Will and jolly spirits.

The St. Petersburg’s Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity along with members of the Kappa League Male Leadership Institute gave back to the community and brought a measure of holiday cheer to 12 families by distributing Thanksgiving turkeys at their 13th Annual Turkey Basket Giveaway.

Said Terry Jones, executive director of the Clearwater Neighborhood Family Center, “We are focused on building and strengthening our relationships with the families in our community. We believe that a strong and healthy community is essential to the success of our young people.”

The Thanksgiving turkey giveaway is an annual event that has brought joy to families for over 13 years. The Kappa League is a group of college students who are dedicated to service and community involvement.

The Kappa League is a group of college students who are dedicated to service and community involvement. The group organized the turkey giveaway to help families in need during the holiday season. The turkeys were distributed at the Clearwater Neighborhood Family Center.

The event was held on Thanksgiving Day, and it was a huge success. Many families were able to receive a turkey and were grateful for the support. The Kappa League has been serving the Clearwater community for over 10 years, and they continue to give back in meaningful ways.

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The decision came from Bristol’s love of the arts and her desire to step away from corporate America. She said that from the initial decision to opening the doors of Gallerie 909, she had a little less than two weeks to get everything in order.

The gallery was next door to Clary’s Creole Cafe, 913 22nd St. S, which inspired her to give the gallery’s name a French twist.

Between its Midtown location and its parent home in Chubs’s, the gallery was also housed in the Skyway Marina District, as well as operating with-out a storefront on for a few months.

"I like that I’ve been able to share the vision in different places. It excites me, and anytime you’re able to share the vision in different places. It excites me, and anytime you’re able to make something available to more people, it’s a good thing," she said.

“Twenty years later, Bristol still considers herself a hobbyist and elects to go by that title rather than artist. "The art displayed in Gallerie 909 specializes in black and Caribbean art. From the Caribbean, naturally, all things from the African diaspora have a strong interest for me," Bristol said.

"That initial desire had to do with what my own kids are exposed to and the question of ‘What if I were able to expose other kids to the same stuff that my kids are exposed to?’" Bristol also said that it’s important to her that her children, who are 13 and 22, are exposed to imagery that look like them at home.

In addition to the 30 artists who have on display with pieces ranging from paintings and photographs to sculptures and ceramics, she also displays work from her cluth and clothing line Jamii, which means community in Swahili. But at the end of the day, the art that covers the walls and the tables isn’t what keeps community members coming back, according to Bristol.

"It would be easy if it was like, ‘Oh, yeah, we’re selling art.’ But that’s not what we’re really striving for," she said. "We’re selling community, and conversation, and dialogue about growing together.”

If you go:

Located at 559 49th St. S, Gallerie 909 hosts its grand opening Dec. 15. Hours of operations are Tuesday through Friday 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. and Sunday 10-5 p.m. For more info, call (727) 565-3930, or visit galerie909.com.

Wesley Elfron is a student reporter in the Neighborhood News Bureau of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg. Visit wesley909.com for more info.
Mindful Movement in underserved communities

Yoga, from front page

As a former fellow and inaugural president of the National Institute for Media Studies here in Dead, Peake has addressed the need for education and awareness throughout her career.

When it was time to re–

MOTE,
Students Tyrone Johnson Jr., Aidan Anderson and Mitchell Schauerman were intrigued while reading about the program in the paper and say he loves the program so much, he would like to have access to high-quality, accessible and affordable child care for young children in the community.

Happy Workers has provided affordable child care to the community since 1952. During that time, financial issues became prevalent for Happy Workers. People conditions caused by aging buildings along with other issues such as missing background checks on employees put Happy Workers at risk of losing both the Early Learning Childcare ELCC contracts and United Way funds.

"Maria Scroggs was the one who started it all out," said Arthur O'Hara, executive director of R'Club Child Care Inc.

"We have a bachelor’s degree in social science and sociology from the University of South Florida, and a master’s degree in social science from Florida State University. Happy Workers was founded in the 1970s. It was started by my grandparents, John and Virginia O'Hara."

"That's what led to the start of the school in Happy Workers. We have always seen the education of our children as the key to success, and we believe education is the key to success," said O'Hara.

"We have always been taught how to handle ourselves and to deal with people. That's why we're always there to help our community," said O'Hara.

"As a nonprofit agency, we've been interested because I'm interested in it," said O'Hara.

"Our goal is to give them the tools they need to succeed in life," said O'Hara.

"I love being hands-on, and I love being outdoors, really interested in it," said O'Hara.

"I actually really enjoy it; being hands-on, and I love it a lot."

"Before I was in welding so I was already familiar with the tools, but it's my first time doing anything with measurements," said O'Hara.

"I was interested in the Surveyor's programs for delinquent children. I have secured training programs at the university for Happy Workers.

"I think it's a learning experience for me. I'm already familiar with the measuring, but it's my first time doing anything with measurements," said O'Hara.

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Remembering a mom’s love, giving and care

ST. PETERSBURG — Christmas shines a light on faith and hope, family and memories of those we’ve loved and lost.

Tania Olofs is a mother of two young boys and works as a family navigator in St. Petersburg. She remembers her mom Phyllis Savage Woodard, a gals of friendship, love and togetherness on Christmas mornings. For about 10 years, they shared a breakfast for 100 or more guests in their home full of Christmas spirit.

"Christmas was her favorite holiday. She would cook a big Christmas breakfast at our house. People from all over, school and all the community would come. We had a big tree, our house was decorated and we played music. It was beautiful," Olofs shared.

St. Petersburg was home to Woodard. She was a lifelong resident, a member of the Greater Mount Zion AME Church and a longtime Bay VHA VA hospital employee. She passed away in 2003 after battling cancer.

"My mom was the glue that brought us all together. She was big motivation. We always had extra clothes and household items in our garage to give to people who needed them. She was a kind person," said Olofs, Woodard’s oldest daughter.

"People knew that if they needed something they could ask and she would help them. She was passionate about her faith as well. She helped with medication and radiation. We had a nurse in the house and she was really good with my mom. There was a nurse there when she died. The team was excellent," Olofs said.

On the eve of Woodard’s death, Olofs and her family held hands as they said goodbye to their mom.

Today, Olofs follows in her mom’s footsteps and keeps her memory alive.

"My kids have never met my mom but they know her spirit. I tell them stories. On her birthday, we get a cake and give them presents. At Christmas, I try to keep it special for my kids because my mom always kept it special for us."

At Suncoast Hospice, your loved one is our priority. For more than 40 years, we’ve provided compassionate life-changing care to patients and their families. Our nonprofit, community-based hospice is the only Pinellas County hospice.

• With freestanding specialized care centers providing continuous medical care if your loved one has uncontrolled pain and symptoms — improving their quality of life and your peace of mind.

• Where expert staff are supported by nearly 2,200 community volunteers, helping us provide the best possible care for your loved one.

• With a local foundation that supports services and care not paid for by insurance. This means your donations and support of our hospice stay in your community.

• That’s part of the larger Empath Health network.

The dangers of energy drinks

By Dr. Ramona Valentine

Energy drinks are a phenomenon that began almost 20 years ago but have increased in popularity over the last 10 years. The problem is they claim to be healthy, but that is far from the truth.

They contain harmful chemicals andificial sweeteners that damage your health.

Eye are tired, there is reason for it. One must get to the root cause of one’s fatigue and handle what is causing it instead of masking it with Red Bull, Monster Energy Drinks, 5 Hour Energy, Rockstar, Zipfizz just to name a few.

These few energy drinks contain large amounts of caffeine, which can cause other health issues such as heart damage, kidney problems and insomnia.

The large dosage of caffeine in these drinks can also lead to caffeine overdose symptoms:

• Heart palpitations and rapid heart rate
• Tremors or shaking
• Agitation
• Restlessness
• Nervousness
• Inability to deal with even mild stress
• Amenity
• Panic attacks
• Increased urination
• Gastrointestinal complaints
• Hypertension
• Headaches
• Cold sweats
• Nausea
• Diarrhea
• Insomnia
• Tinnitus
• Sexual dysfunction
• Spleens. Other symptoms from sucralose include gastrointestinal symp- toms, weight gain, bloating, bladder inflammation, blurred vision, allergies, increase in blood sugar and weight gain.

There are many reasons for tiredness other than fatigue. Some are nutri- ent deficiencies such as potassium, protein deficiencies, lack of fiber, lack of antioxidants, lack of coenzyme Q10, too much caffeine consumption, which damages the adrenal glands, de- pression, metal toxins and other minerals and certain disease processes.

The intelligent thing to do is to ob- tain a blood test, or better yet, a hair mineral analysis. A variety of factors can cause instead of masking the symptom with an energy drink that could destroy your health or even worse, could cause your death.

If the cause of the fatigue is heavy metals, this can be handled with local chelation, and if the cause is a mineral deficiency you can get the correct dosage of minerals to relieve the fatigue.

Hope this helps. And if there are any questions you can email me at doc- torvalentine@suncoast.org.

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2nd Annual Ruthie Jones Ritchie Americana Holiday Breakfast

SANTA WILL BE IN ATTENDANCE

TODAY GIVEAWAY TO REGISTERED FAMILIES!

10:00AM to 12:00PM December 22, 2018
Enoch Davis Center
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SERVING FREE BREAKFAST TO FIRST 100 PEOPLE!

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HEALTHY LIVING NATURALLY

By Dr. Ramona Valentine

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Twenty years of teaching and preaching God’s word—what a blessing!”

Maye Ann Gloria kept the family secrets hid- den, but her best friend John Simon from Valdosta, Ga., wasn’t so tight-lipped.

Simon told Pastor Hodge, or Jack as he calls him, when they were in the third grade. He told stories of how they would look at cheerleaders through a lens that separated their elementary school from the high school, or how they staged a walkout when a tobacco farmer didn’t make good on his prom- ise of bringing them sodas make-up through the day.

“The reason we were persistence, it wasn’t about the salary, it was about the sodas,” Simon said. “Back in the 60s, a soda was a lot. Simon said. “That’s truly what we thought it, he should say it,” she laughed.

He has grown to be such a seasoned saint, a minister, a teacher and such a loving little hus- band.”

The Bryant family, Patricia Carter, said when Pastor Hodge was over the Single’s Ministry at Mt. Zion, he would break down all of the ignorance and stu- pidity that comes along with dating.

“He’s a man that has changed.”

The Bryant family over from Mt. Zion. Helen Ramsey recalls the early days of Word of Life. “When the pas- tor could be seen crossing Main street with a Winn Dixie, he won’t hesitate.”

Word of Life is a vessel,” he said. “Over time, I remember this man standing in the yard, and he had on those baseball shorts, and they were real, real short,” she recalled.

“Every time there’s a catastrophe, go to Pastor Hodge, he won’t hesitate.”

Pastor Hodge ended the evening thanking all those who have helped him become the man he is today, singling out his wife by calling her “the best gift God has ever given me,” and his late mother and grandmother for instilling the Word of God in him. He has no plans to rest on his laurels. He told his congregation that they are just now ready to do what God calls on them to do.

“All the teaching and all the training is just prepar- ing us and laying a founda- tion. Now it’s time to start laying some blocks. For those of you who have been with us, you should be preparing yourself now to be a block layer,” fin- ished Pastor Hodge.
Valentine’s old AC unit was nicknamed “the beast” before it was replaced. “Our AC just stopped working in the middle of summer. SELF was our answer!”

**Getting the home repairs you need at a price you can afford. SELF is your personal home improvement lender.**

Sylvia’s family loves their new wood and water-resistant roof installed by Spangler Roofing.

**Bad credit? We can work with that. SELF is here to help.**

Call 727-315-3223 to learn more. Call before December 5, and use the code CHALLENGER and we’ll waive the loan application fee.

Join us for the annual exhibit of work by multimedia journalism scholars from Melrose Elementary, John Hopkins Middle and Lakewood High schools at Studio@620, 620 First Ave. S, St. Petersburg

Opening night: Friday, Jan. 11 from 5-8 p.m.
Poetry Slam and Second Saturday Artwalk: Saturday, Jan. 12 from 5-8 p.m.
Taste of Midtown and Beyond: Wednesday, Jan. 16 from 5-8 p.m.

**Free Admission**

The program immerses students K-12 in multimedia journalism training and results in this wonderful annual student exhibition. There will be an opportunity to get an actual taste of Midtown highlighting area restaurants in the Midtown community in addition to the visual and multi-media journalistic exhibition.

Presented in partnership with the Centers for Journalism and Multimedia at Melrose Elementary, John Hopkins Middle and Lakewood High, Pinellas County Schools.

**GET INVOLVED! Volunteer to serve in a local project on MLK Day of Service January 21, 2019**

**MLK Day of Service A DAY ON, NOT A DAY OFF**

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MLK DAY OF SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**Mercy Keepers**
**All Kidney Patient Support Group**
**Delta Sigma Theta Sorority**
**Legacy 56**
**ANSO**
**Phoenix Uplift**
**Gulfport Little League**
**Kidzonomics**
**Caring for Girls Academy**
**Pinnacle Financial**
**High Profile Motivational Services, Inc.**
**Hair by Ashile**
**Shihan School of Survival**
**Youth Development Foundation of Pinellas County**
**The Harvest is Ripe**
**Knights of Knowledge**
**ETA RHO**
**Habitat for Humanity**
**Babies Lives Matter**
**Alpha Kappa Alpha**
**Community EFX**
**CASA**
**Cross and Anvil**
**Midtown Miracles, Fists of Faith, LLC**
**The Bartlett Park Community Garden**
**Holisting Coaching**
**Lakeview Presbyterian Church**
**EMPATH Health**
**9-11 Angels**
**The Gathering of Women, Inc.**
**Midtown Celebrity Club, Inc.**

**Epsilon Beta Sigma - Sigma Gamma Rho, Inc.**
**Belle B LLC**
**GFWC North Pinellas Woman’s Club & GFWC St. Pete Junior Woman’s Club**
**Paulette’s Place**
**Mae Mae and Katie Rescue Angels**
**A Plus Alliance Home Care Agency**
**Next Stepp Life Center**
**Florida Dream Center**
**Workforce Solutions**
**Mt. Zion College Prep**
**Pinellas County Urban League**
**Boys & Girls Club of the Suncoast**
**Keep Hope Alive**
**HIV AIDS Action Committee**
**NCNW and Friends**

Check out our website for places you can volunteer.

www.spcollege.edu/MLKService  727-341-4601 or 727-341-4602