

St. Lucie News Tribune

TREASURE COAST NEWSPAPERS

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EXPLOITED

A child walks along a sidewalk near a makeshift hut in Mumbai, India, on June 29, 2017. The India Ministry of Women and Child Development estimated in 2014 that more than 3 million women and children are trafficked each year inside the country. MYKAL MCELLOWNEY/INDYSTAR

Inside the dark world of child trafficking

Who buys a child for sex?
Otherwise ordinary men

Tim Swarens
Indianapolis Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

IndyStar columnist Tim Swarens spent a year investigating the commercial sex trade of children, a lucrative business where more than 1 million kids a year are abused.

On the day she met Marcus Thompson, the girl later told the FBI, she had been ready to leap from a bridge to end her life.

She was only 15, pregnant and alone on the streets.

And in this wounded child, Thompson saw a means to make money. He promised that if she left her small Illinois town with him, he would make her a model. Grasping for hope, she climbed into his truck.

But the promise was a lie.

Instead, in the summer of 2015, Thompson and his wife Robin forced the girl on a nightmarish six-week trek across the southern United States. Photographed in suggestive poses and marketed online, she was sold out of hotel rooms and truck stops to any man with the money and the desire to buy sex.

In this case, the victim was rescued and provided with treatment. The traffickers who exploited her pleaded guilty and were sent to prison.

But what of the men who paid to rape this child? What consequences did they suffer?

Not a single one was ever charged.

That same breach of justice is the norm in thousands of trafficking cases. About 10,000 children a year suffer the horrors of commercial sexual exploitation in the United States. Globally, according to the International Labour Organization, buyers pay to abuse more than 1 million chil-

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Columnist Tim Swarens reported on child trafficking in eight countries on five continents in 2017. In this photo, children identified as at risk of being exploited in the sex trade play at a shelter outside Nairobi, Kenya. TIM SWARENS/INDYSTAR

What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking, as defined by the United Nations, involves the recruitment, transportation or harboring of a person who has been forced, coerced or deceived into performing commercial sex acts or labor services.

Under U.S. federal law, anyone younger than 18 who engages in commercial sex is considered a human trafficking victim.

The National Human Trafficking Hotline reports that sex trafficking victims in the United States have been found working in residential brothels, escort services, massage parlors, strip clubs and on the streets. Labor trafficking victims have been rescued from factories, farms, domestic services and small businesses.

How many people are victims of trafficking?

The International Labour Organization estimated in September that 40.3 million people were held in modern slavery on any given day in 2016. The ILO reported that 25 percent of those human trafficking victims were children.

The majority of victims — 24.9 million people — were held in forced labor. And 15.4 million were forced into marriage. An estimated 4.8 million people, mainly women and children, were trafficked in the commercial sex trade in 2016. More than 1 million children are victims of commercial sexual exploitation each year.

How to report suspected human trafficking

To report a possible human trafficking case, call 1-888-373-7888 (TTY: 711). Or send a text to 233733.

Do fertilizer bans help Indian River Lagoon?

Tyler Treadway
Treasure Coast Newspapers
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

Fertilizer bans are doing a good job keeping nutrients out of the Indian River Lagoon, but not the type of nutrients that feed algae blooms.

That's the result of research to be presented Thursday during the Indian River Lagoon Symposium at Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, a branch of Florida Atlantic University at Fort Pierce.

Between 2010 and 2015, nearly every municipality along the Indian River Lagoon approved laws designed to keep nutrients in fer-

See **FERTILIZER BAN**, Page 4A



Greenscapes employees Francisco Tum, left, and Jaimie Garcia prepare to fertilize lawns in the Lely Resort neighborhood July 5, 2012, in Naples. DAVID ALBERS / NAPLES DAILY NEWS

2 die as Amtrak cars hit parked freight train

Oren Dorell
USA TODAY

An Amtrak train apparently traveling on the wrong track struck a CSX freight train early Sunday in South Carolina, killing two Amtrak employees and injuring more than 100 people, Gov. Henry McMaster said.

It was the third deadly wreck involving Amtrak in less than two months.

"They weren't supposed to be meeting like that, clearly," McMaster said. "It appears that Amtrak was on the wrong track." He said the CSX train seemed to be on its assigned track.

The wreck involving Amtrak Train 91, heading from New York to Miami, occurred at 2:35 a.m. in

See **AMTRAK CRASH**, Page 4A

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Authorities investigate a fatal Amtrak train crash in Cayce, S.C., on Sunday. At least two people died and more than 100 were injured when the passenger train struck the parked CSX freight train. TIM DOMINICK/THE STATE VIA AP

Amtrak crash

Continued from Page 1A

Cayce, South Carolina, about 10 miles south of Columbia, according to Derrec Becker of South Carolina Emergency Management.

The CSX train was parked on what appeared to be a side track when the Amtrak train slammed into it going about 59 mph, McMaster said. Of the 139 people on the Amtrak train, 116 were taken to hospitals, he said. Eight were Amtrak employees.

"Our information – and this is subject to correction – is that this was not the main (train) line," McMaster said. "This was a loading track for a side-track where the collision took place."

He described the freight train engines as "all torn up" and the Amtrak engine as "barely recognizable" from the impact.

One of the injured was in critical condition, and two were listed as serious, with the rest having minor injuries like cuts and bruises, said Steve Shelton, Palmetto health director of emergency preparedness.

"We know that they are shaken up quite a bit, and this is unlike anything else they've ever been through before," Capt. Adam Myrick with the Lexington County Sheriff's Department told The State newspaper in Columbia. "We wanted to get them out of the cold, get them out of the weather."

Temperatures were in the upper 30s at the time of the collision.

Myrick told USA TODAY that the crash happened in a mostly industrial area near the intersection of Interstate 26 and I-77.

Amtrak said in a statement that it was "deeply saddened" by the deaths and was cooperating with the National Transportation Safety Board.

In a conference call with reporters, Amtrak CEO Richard Anderson said a signal system was not operational, and the train's movements were being managed by a CSX dispatcher when it rear-ended the freight train. Although the train was behind schedule, it was not speeding to make up time, Anderson said.

Lexington County Coroner Margaret Fisher identified those killed as Michael Kempf, 54, of Savannah, Georgia, and Michael Cella, 36, of Orange Park, Florida. Kempf was the Amtrak engineer, and Cella was the conductor, she said.

NTSB Chairman Robert Sumwalt said a team of investigators was dispatched to Sunday's crash.

About 5,000 gallons of diesel fuel spilled at the scene, Becker said. Hazmat crews were dispatched, and the spill was being contained. There was no threat to the public, he said.

Contributing: Nikie Mayo, Anderson Independent Mail; Tim Smith, Greenville News; Trevor Hughes, USA TODAY

Fertilizer ban

Continued from Page 1A

tilizer from running off lawns and into the St. Lucie River and the lagoon.

Most of the laws ban use of fertilizers with nitrogen and phosphorus during Florida's rainy season from June through September, when excess nutrients can feed algae blooms that shade and kill sea grass, as well as marine animals that depend on sea grass beds.

"The bans are reducing nutrient levels, particularly nitrogen, in the lagoon," said Brian Lapointe, a Harbor Branch researcher and co-author of the study.

Citing a report by Tetra Tech, an environmental consulting firm, Lapointe's study states the amount of nitrogen sold in fertilizer along the lagoon dropped 45,896 pounds between fiscal year 2013-14 and 2014-15.

"There may be less nitrogen in the water from fertilizer," Lapointe said, "but the effect isn't evident. That's because the nitrogen we're finding in the lagoon isn't the type you find in fertilizers, but it is the type that feeds algae blooms."

Algae blooms, Lapointe said, are bolstered by ammonia, "the reactive forms of nitrogen. To support an algae bloom, that's what you want."

That echoes a statement by Edie Widder, founder and lead scientist at Ocean Research & Conservation Association, who said ammonia "is like a Big Mac" to algae blooms.

The dominant source of ammonia in the lagoon, Lapointe said, is sewage.

Even with fertilizer bans, sewage runoff has caused an increase in nitrogen levels in the northern lagoon, especially in Brevard County, Lapointe said.

"Looking at all the data in the northern lagoon," Lapointe said, "we concluded that wastewater, in the form of septic leakage and antiquated sewage treatment facilities, is the big problem."

Ed Philips, an algae expert at the University of Florida, agreed all kinds of algae "feed" on ammonia — and the brown algae that blooms in the northern lagoon "feeds" almost exclusively on it.

But other algae species, Philips said, including the blue-green algae that blanketed the St. Lucie River in 2016, grow on the nitrogen found in fertilizer.

"Keeping all kinds of nutrients out of the lagoon is always a good thing," he said.

"I think we need to focus on pollution in the lagoon as a whole, and not get hung up on one thing, whether it's septic tanks or fertilizer," said Alexis Peralta, Indian River County's stormwater educator and fertilizer enforcement officer.

"We need to keep all the nutrients out," Peralta said, "and I think that in the four years our ordinance has been in place, we've made a real impact."

Citing sewage

Lapointe has reached similar conclusions about the impact of sewage in the lagoon before.

In a study published in the December issue of the journal "Harmful Algae," he stated septic tank runoff was a major contributor to the toxic blue-green algae blooms that festered in the St. Lucie River during the summer of 2016.

Like other scientists, Lapointe agreed the bloom was caused by algae in the water discharged from Lake Okeechobee to the river.

"But once the algae in the lake water got to the (St. Lucie) estuary, it exploded because of all the nitrogen, particularly ammonia, from septic systems," Lapointe said.



Brian Lapointe, a research professor at Florida Atlantic University's Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, speaks at the Everglades Coalition's annual conference in January 2014, in Naples.

SAM WOLFE/TCPALM

If you go

■ **What:** Indian River Lagoon Symposium

■ **When:** 8:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday

■ **Where:** Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, 5600 N. U.S. 1, Fort Pierce

■ **Registration:** Online or by calling Jill in the Johnson Education Center, 772-462-2506.

Lagoon symposium

Restoration will be the theme of the Indian River Lagoon Symposium on Thursday and Friday at Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute at Fort Pierce.

Thursday will be geared toward scientists, as dozens of researchers will give presentations on their work to study and preserve the lagoon.

How wonky will it be? One presentation is titled "Integrating Flow: Cytometric and Molecular Tools to Characterize Bloom Dynamics of Nano- and Picoplanktonic Algae in the Indian River Lagoon."

Friday's sessions are open to the public, with numerous organizations giving presentations and leading discussions about their work in the lagoon and how they need the public's help.

A group from the University of Central Florida will conduct a focus group to learn about public perceptions of the lagoon as part of a larger National Science Foundation project on lagoon restoration.



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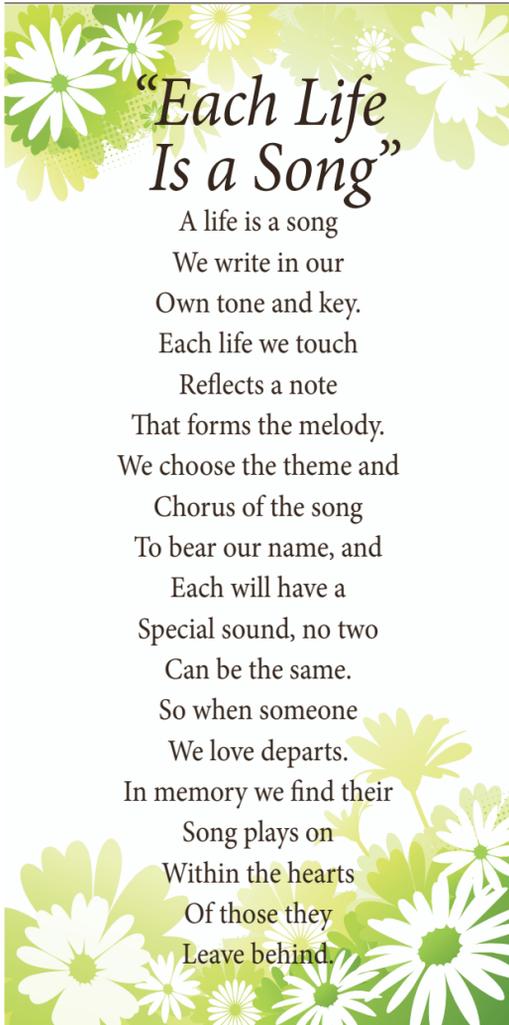

OBITUARIES

to place an obituary please call 772-692-8954 or email to TCNpaidobits@tcpalm.com

Death Notices St Lucie

Nancy Rhodes Mathison

Age 55, of Jensen Beach, FL, passed away on February 1, 2018. All County Funeral Home - Stuart.



"Each Life Is a Song"

A life is a song
We write in our
Own tone and key.
Each life we touch
Reflects a note
That forms the melody.
We choose the theme and
Chorus of the song
To bear our name, and
Each will have a
Special sound, no two
Can be the same.
So when someone
We love departs.
In memory we find their
Song plays on
Within the hearts
Of those they
Leave behind.

Obits Martin

Bobby J. Armstrong

PALM CITY, FL

Bobby J. Armstrong was taken to Heaven January 25, following a brave battle with brain tumors. Born January 26, 1948 in Greenville, Alabama, to Kendrick and Opie Armstrong.

Bob served in the United States Army during the Vietnam War (1967-1970). After college, his career consisted mainly in commercial construction management, until retirement when he formed BAMA Management.

Bob excelled in martial arts, obtaining multiple black belts in several styles of "karate". Most recently he practiced the Okinawan style, UechiRyu, reaching a 4 Dan (4th degree) black belt. Bob also enjoyed showing off his breaking skills in exhibitions, by breaking boards and concrete with a hand or palm strike.

Bob was a member and Deacon at Palm City Presbyterian Church, where he enjoyed mission work.

An Alabama boy, he was very loyal to his beloved Alabama Crimson Tide. Roll Tide!

Bob loved God, the USA, his family, his church family, animals, Harley motorcycles, and Nascar (the Earnhardts). Bob was a true friend, and man of his word and honor. He was a "jack of all trades", and did all to perfection.

He leaves behind his wife, Jody, son, Rhynne (Jenny), and grandchildren, Hollis, Anna, Tanner and Emma. He also leaves his Mother in Law, Polly (Victor) Forestier. Sisters, Betty Reynolds, Frances Shirley, Virginia Armstrong, and Alice Falgout. Brother Eddy Armstrong. Bob was predeceased by his parents, and brothers Ernest, Jimmy, Jack, George, and Billy.

Donations are appreciated in Bob's memory to Palm City Presbyterian Church, 2700 SW Martin Highway, Palm City, FL 34990, or the no-kill shelter, Domino's Rescue League, 4546 SW Honey Terrace, Palm City, FL 34990.

A celebration service is planned at Palm City Presbyterian Church, 11:00 a.m., Saturday, February 10.

Arrangements are under the direction of the Forest Hills Funeral Home, Palm City.
www.foresthillspalmcityflorida.com



Death Notice Martin

Hazel Irene Germain Hannaford

Age 52, of Palm City, FL, passed away on January 31, 2018. Treasure Coast Seawinds - Stuart.

The road not taken

By Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.