

Three-peat time

Improving Orlando City goes for 3rd win in row at New York



Millage hike

Apopka commissioners approve tax rate. **Local & State, Page 3**

Colorful foliage

MacCubbin: Joseph's Coat hues understated. **Style & Home, Page 1**

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Hamas to disarm if Israel ends strikes

Trump post points to 'structured phases' to carry out latest deal

By **Samy Magdy, Sam Mednick, Jonathan J. Cooper and Matthew Lee**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAIRO — Hamas said Friday that it will begin disarming as part of a deal announced by President Donald Trump that also requires Israel to end its strikes and with-

draw from Gaza. It marks a potential breakthrough in ending the war, but implementation faces major challenges.

Hamas also said that laying down its heavy weapons, which would come later in the process, was contingent on the creation of a Palestinian state, something Israel's current government rejects.

Israel has not officially commented on the deal, which is part of a U.S.-brokered ceasefire announced last October. That agreement called for Hamas to disarm and hand over power to an independent Palestinian administration. Israel was to withdraw, and an International Stabilization Force was to deploy. But progress stalled, with Israel saying everything hinged on Hamas disarming, and Hamas accusing Israel of violating the pact by continuing to carry out regular strikes on Gaza.

Disarming would represent a sea change for Hamas, whose founding charter calls for armed resistance against Israel, and which sees its arsenal, including rockets, anti-tank missiles and explosives, as lying at the heart of its identity.

Israel, meanwhile, appears unlikely to pull back significant forces or make other concessions ahead of its October elections.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces a tough reelection battle, with opponents accusing him of failing to prevent the Oct. 7, 2023,

attack that triggered the war.

Neil Quilliam, a Middle East expert at London's Chatham House think tank, said expectations are low that Hamas will disarm or that Israel will withdraw from Gaza. "I think that Netanyahu's silence speaks volumes," Quilliam said. "This is a massive decision that he has to make."

"But with the prospect of the elections hanging over his head, with several Cabinet ministers and

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Orange County mayoral candidates, from left, Chris Messina, Stephanie Murphy, Tiffany Moore Russell and Mayra Uribe participate in a debate hosted by the Tiger Bay Club of Central Florida on Friday at the Orlando Regional Realtor Association headquarters in Orlando.

RICH POPE/ORLANDO SENTINEL

Four Orange mayor candidates spar at Tiger Bay Club debate

Salaries and spending among topics of discussion

By **Ryan Gillespie**
ORLANDO SENTINEL

The four candidates vying to be Orange County's next mayor grappled Friday with topics ranging from the elected officials' salaries to how they'd try to curb spending

in a county with a \$9 annual billion budget, as they sought to make distinctions in their race for one of the region's most powerful jobs.

The candidates debated for more than an hour in front of the region's political movers and shakers at an Orlando event held by Tiger Bay Club of Central Florida, moderated by WESH-2's Greg Fox and Nancy Alvarez.

The non-partisan race features three Democrats — Clerk of Courts Tiffany Moore Russell,

former Congresswoman Stephanie Murphy and County Commissioner Mayra Uribe — as well as one Republican, entrepreneur Chris Messina.

While their exchanges were mostly cordial, an argument broke out on a question about the county's growing budget which in recent years has included spikes in salary for the mayor and Board of County Commissioners.

"What I find kind of curious is that the commission, despite the

tremendous growth in the budget, when it comes to finding money for roads, schools or housing, there's never enough money," Murphy said. "And yet, in that period of time... they've found money to give themselves pay raises. So as somebody who is running for Orange County Mayor, I'll commit to not accepting a pay raise as mayor."

In 2023, the board voted to switch from a county formula to

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Former Orlando nightclub owner, husband sentenced

Both men will spend at least a decade in federal prison

By **Cristóbal Reyes**
ORLANDO SENTINEL

The former owner of two gay nightclubs in Orlando's Milk District and his husband were each sentenced to at least a decade in federal prison Friday after pleading guilty earlier this year to exchanging sexually explicit texts with a 15-year-old boy in 2020.

Richard Kowalczyk will spend 14 years in federal custody while Eric Patrick, Kowalczyk's husband, was sentenced to 10 years for attempted coercion of a minor. Both prison sentences will be followed by 10 years of supervised release, District Judge Carlos Mendoza announced in federal court in Orlando.

In court, both men, dressed in red Seminole County Jail jumpsuits, expressed remorse and apologized to their families and to their victim for their actions.

"These are the consequences of my own moral failings. ... I am deserving of punishment," Patrick said. Kowalczyk, speaking to his mother, added, "You and dad raised me to be better than this, and I'm sorry for disappointing you."

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Donalds wants NASA headquarters in Florida

Plan would create more high-wage jobs

By **Sara-James Ranta**
ORLANDO SENTINEL

U.S. Rep. Byron Donalds, the Republican front-runner for governor, unveiled his plans for the state's space industry Friday, pledging that if elected he would fast-track permitting for aerospace projects, expand training in space-related trades and lobby the federal government to move NASA's headquarters to Florida.

Donalds, 47, of Naples, has led the GOP primary field by double

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Florida Republican gubernatorial candidate U.S. Rep. Byron Donalds delivers remarks on the future of Florida's space industry during a visit to the Florida Space Institute Exolith Lab in Oviedo on Friday.

JOE BURBANK/ORLANDO SENTINEL

Judge: SPCA blameless in sunburn of Waddles the pig

By **Lane DeGregory**
TAMPA BAY TIMES

You can lead a pig to shelter, but you can't make him go into the shade.

That's basically what Pinellas County Court Judge Kathleen Hessinger said Wednesday when she ruled that the SPCA of Tampa Bay did not neglect a 350-pound pig named Waddles.

"This pig got sunburned," the judge said. "Somebody has to be taken down. So the county decides the SPCA did. But sometimes bad things happen in life. No one here has done anything wrong."

People who packed the courtroom demanding "Justice for Waddles" disagreed. More than 80 filled the wooden pews. Another 20 watched from a separate courtroom.

The judge said that was the

largest crowd she had ever seen.

In the last year, Waddles' story has gone viral on social media. Millions of supporters from as far away as Australia have sent messages to the pig. He's inspired T-shirts and TV appearances, petitions and protests, a cryptocurrency coin and a video game.

Waddles, his supporters said, had been left in the summer sun at the SPCA for two weeks. There was a barn in his pasture, but he couldn't get inside. By the time a rescuer came to get him, his body was covered in oozing blisters.

Someone saw the pig inside that barn, said Alec Waid, the SPCA's lawyer. Outside, Waddles had shade from the building and mud pits to cool off in. "The SPCA did what it could," Waid said. "We're left with some sort of skin

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