

Presbyterians present musical reader’s theater journey through Acts

SPECIAL TO THE HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN
Provided by Lake Placid First Presbyterian Church

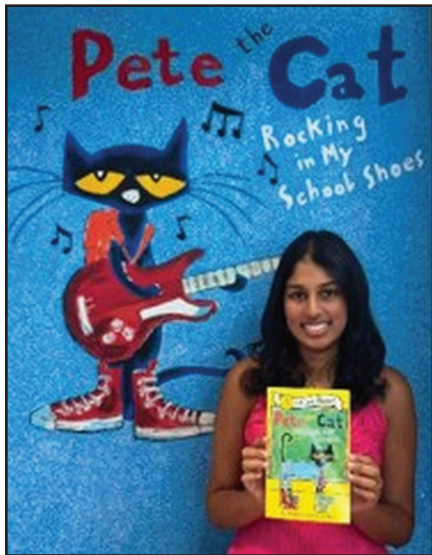
Lake Placid First Presbyterian Church will present “Witnesses to Me,” a special program combining music, congregational singing, and a dramatic, reader’s theater journey through the New Testament book of Acts in the church’s sanctuary at 4 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 18. The program will feature a broad cross-section of the church’s members from youth to seniors among its actors, singers and members of the church orchestra as they bring to life the amazing story of the Christian church’s spread from Jerusalem to Asia Minor, Greece, and even Rome itself. The original outline for “Witness-

es to Me” was drawn up in 1962 by Charles McBurney, a professor at Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, who also served as a lieutenant in the Navy during the Second World War. McBurney’s intention was to create a dramatization which would be drawn entirely from the words of Scripture in much the same manner as the more famous Jesus film produced in 1979. The dramatization focuses specifically on the events of the book of Acts in keeping with Jesus’ words to His disciples recorded at the beginning of the book, “You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). “We’re very excited to be able to

share this unique program with our community,” music director Joshua Klatt said. “It has been performed all over the United States, and was really well-received when we presented it here in 2014. The book of Acts is one of the most exciting narratives in the Bible and continues to play a crucial role in guiding the Christian church today through its vivid descriptions and direct instructions. “Since Charles McBurney was a college instructor for 25 years and then a camp worker at the White Lake Camp in the Catskills for a decade in his retirement, I think that he’d be really pleased to see all of the young people we’re involving in the program as readers and

musicians.” “Witnesses to Me,” a dramatic reader’s theater presentation featuring special music and congregational singing, will be presented at First Presbyterian Church, Lake Placid, at 4 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 18, in the church’s historic sanctuary. The program will last a little over an hour and is offered to everyone in the community in celebration of the church’s completion of a year-long preaching series through the book of Acts. The First Presbyterian Church of Lake Placid is at 117 N. Oak Ave. between Dal Hall Boulevard and Interlake Boulevard. Questions about the program can be directed to the church office at 863-465-2742.

My Very Own Book Initiative



COURTESY/BELIEVENBOOKS
Founder Natasha Agarwal enjoys “Pete the Cat” at the Guadalupe Center library in Immokalee.

BelieveNBooks reaches 6,800 children across Florida

SPECIAL TO THE HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN
Provided by BelieveNBooks

ESTERO — BelieveNBooks, a Florida-based nonprofit dedicated to expanding children’s access to books, is launching its My Very Own Book initiative. The program will provide more than 6,800 young children across eight Florida counties with a book of their own to take home and access to a corresponding read-aloud video. Through partnerships with the Early Learning Coalition of Florida’s Heartland and the Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida, more than 150 early learning centers will receive books through the initiative, reaching Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) students across Highlands, Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry and Lee counties. Each participating child will receive a copy of “Pete the Cat Too Cool for School,” to take home and keep, along with access to a YouTube read-aloud video of the same book. “Early literacy grows stronger when the learning that begins in the classroom can continue at home,” said Dr. Melanie M. Stefanowicz, CEO of the Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida. “The My Very Own Book initiative gives children something tangible that belongs to them, while the read-aloud component gives families another way to share in that experience. We are grateful to BelieveNBooks for helping make reading more accessible, engaging and meaningful for young children and their families.” The initiative extends reading beyond the classroom by pairing each book with a companion read-



COURTESY/BELIEVENBOOKS
A VPK student enjoys “Pete the Cat” at Kid City Early Learning Academy in LaBelle.

aloud video. Children can follow along with the physical book at home, including when a caregiver is unavailable to read aloud or faces English-language barriers. This approach helps children build home libraries while supporting early literacy, English-language development and kindergarten readiness. “There is something powerful about being able to say, ‘This book is mine,’” said Natasha Agarwal, founder and CEO of BelieveNBooks. “Every child deserves the opportunity to build a home library and experience the excitement of having a reading buddy. We can make that experience possible for thousands of children and give them a story they can enjoy long after they leave the classroom.” The launch represents one of BelieveNBooks’ largest coordinated early-childhood book distributions to date and significantly expands the organization’s work with early learning communities across Florida. BelieveNBooks is grateful to the Wildcat Run Charitable Foundation and Galeana Foundation for

BOOKS | 3D

We value your trust

There are some things in life we can afford to put off. Hearing loss isn’t one of them.



ROSEANN KIEFER
B.A., BC-HIS
HEARING MATTERS

Hearing loss usually doesn’t happen overnight. It happens quietly. You turn the television up a little louder. You begin asking people to repeat themselves. Restaurants become frustrating. You miss part of a conversation and smile because you don’t want to ask, “What did you say?” one more time. But what else are you

missing? Maybe it’s your spouse talking to you from across the room. The punchline of a joke. A grandchild telling you about their day. Laughter around the dinner table. The sound of birds outside your window. These may seem like little things — until you realize they are the moments that make up your life. Hearing loss doesn’t affect only the person experiencing it. It affects the entire family. Spouses become tired of repeating themselves. I am told that weekly, “my wife is tired of me not hearing” or “turning up the TV.” Or, “my husband is so sweet, but he knows I just can’t understand what he is saying.” Children worry. Misunderstandings create frustration. Eventually, some people begin withdrawing from conversations and social activities because listening has become too difficult. Another important reason not to wait is your health. Research has associated untreated hearing loss with social isolation, depression, increased risk of falls, and cognitive decline. While hearing aids cannot prevent every health problem, addressing hearing loss can help you stay engaged, communicating, and connected to the people and world around you. Wearing hearing aids can decrease Alzheimer’s risk by up to 76%. New studies show that treating mild hearing loss with premium hearing technology (which provides the most stimulus to the brain) can actually reduce mild cognitive issues. That alone should make people seek hearing help. I know for sure that I will do everything humanly possible to deter dementia and Alzheimer’s. Wearing hearing instruments is the number one lifestyle change you can make to keep your brain healthy.

TRUST | 3D

Is your hair bleaching itself from the inside?

Have you ever found a new gray hair and wondered, where did you come from? We usually blame age, genetics or stress. And all three can matter. But there’s another fascinating piece of the gray-hair puzzle involving hydrogen peroxide and an antioxidant enzyme called catalase. Yes, hydrogen peroxide (the same chemical many of us once poured on scraped knees) is naturally produced inside your body. And our hair follicles appear to have an interesting relationship with it. Our body makes hydrogen peroxide. Most people don’t know that. Hydrogen peroxide is produced during normal cellular metabolism. In appropriate amounts, it even participates in cellular signaling. But too



SUZY COHEN
DEAR PHARMACIST

much (like any good thing) can contribute to oxidative stress. Fortunately, the human body makes catalase, an antioxidant enzyme that rapidly converts the harmful hydrogen peroxide into harmless water and oxygen. It’s part of our cellular cleanup crew. Catalase is fast and can break down millions of hydrogen peroxide molecules per second under ideal conditions. It’s basically the body’s microscopic peroxide patrol, working around-the-clock shifts. Here’s where this gets really interesting and relates to hair color. In

a landmark study published in The FASEB Journal, researchers studying gray and white human hair found an accumulation of hydrogen peroxide along with substantially reduced catalase enzymatic activity. The researchers proposed that this oxidative environment interferes with normal melanin production. Melanin, of course, is the pigment that gives our hair its color. As melanin production falters, strands gradually emerge gray, silver, or white. Anyway, their research led to the catchy idea that hair may essentially be “bleaching itself from the inside.” Keep in mind, genetics plays a major role, along with aging of pigment-producing cells and their stem cells. Smoking and certain nutritional deficiencies as well as other

health factors may contribute to your hair color. In other words, finding one gray hair (or hundreds) does not mean you’re “catalase deficient.” Catalase is sold as a dietary supplement, which naturally raises the question: If catalase breaks down hydrogen peroxide, could taking more of it keep your hair from turning gray? We don’t have convincing human clinical evidence showing that oral supplements of catalase reach the hair follicles in sufficient amounts to reliably prevent or reverse gray hair. In addition to catalase research, scientists have also associated premature graying with factors such as B vitamin status, mineral levels,

HAIR | 3D

FSU Health Communication expert finds GLP-1 face stigma within their social circles

SPECIAL TO THE HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN
Provided by Florida State University

TALLAHASSEE — People taking popular GLP-1 medications such as Ozempic, Wegovy and Zepbound may face stigma from those closest to them, according to a new study by a Florida State University professor.

Braidyn Lazenby, an assistant professor at FSU's College of Communication & Information, led the study "They Call Us Cheaters: Exploring Stigma Management Communication Strategies During GLP-1 Medication Use." The findings were published last week in Health Communication.

Lazenby and her fellow researchers conducted open-ended, one-on-one interviews with 34 adults who were taking GLP-1 medications for weight management, metabolic disorders and other health conditions. Researchers used the reflexive thematic analysis method to identify recurring patterns in partici-



LAZENBY

pants' experiences. The findings showed that many participants felt stigmatized within their own social networks, sometimes because they heard friends or romantic partners criticize other people for using GLP-1 medications.

"There is a tension between people's closest social networks and stigmatizing conversations," Lazenby said. "Many of our participants would say, 'My best friend doesn't know I'm on a GLP-1 because I've heard them talk poorly about someone else on a GLP-1,' or 'I was dating a romantic partner, and they made a comment about someone who had lost rapid weight, and they said that they're obviously on the 'jab.'"

That stigma affected how participants talked about their medication use. Some said they were reluctant to express interest in a

GLP-1 to their health-care providers, concealed it from friends and family, downplayed its weight-loss effects or felt compelled to justify taking the medication because of an underlying health condition.

"These comments were deeply stigmatizing to people," Lazenby said. "I think the general public should know that these comments make a difference. When in doubt, if you don't have anything nice to say, don't

say anything at all, because we need our social networks in our lives, and we know that social networks are a huge part of human well-being."

Lazenby's research focuses on interpersonal health communication, including how people navigate difficult conversations about health with healthcare providers, friends, family members and romantic partners.

The study also highlights what researchers

call the "weight bias paradox." People can face stigma because of their weight while also being judged for how they choose to lose weight.

"What's really fascinating about this research is even when participants were not taking the medication for weight loss, and strictly for medical purposes, they still felt the weight bias paradox," Lazenby said. "We saw them engaging in stigma management in

very similar ways to people who were taking the medications for weight loss."

Lazenby, whose idea for the study came after GLP-1 discussions within her own social network, focuses on translating health communication scholarship into practical information for the public. Reporters interested in interviewing her about social stigmas surrounding GLP-1 use may reach out to her via email at bl24k@fsu.

TRUST

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If your family has been telling you that you're not hearing well, please listen to them.

A professional hearing evaluation is simple and painless. If hearing loss is found, today's advanced hearing technology can provide remarkable improvements in clarity, comfort and understanding — even in challenging listening situations.

Don't wait until you realize how much you have already missed.

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Roseann B. Kiefer, B.A., BC-HIS, is owner of Lampe and Kiefer Hearing Aid Center, Sebring. This information is not intended to prevent, diagnose, treat or cure your condition. Always talk to your doctor before following any medical advice or starting a diet or exercise program.

HAIR

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and even thyroid status in some cases. The bottom line is gray (and white) hair follicles have been shown to contain increased hydrogen peroxide along with decreased catalase activity. That's legitimate science. No one can argue with that.

What hasn't been established is that taking a catalase supplement reliably prevents gray hair or turns existing gray hair back to its original color. Some people think it does, others don't, and most are

curiously googling this out of curiosity.

If you want to read the full article and take a deeper dive into catalase, hydrogen peroxide, gray hair, and what specific nutrient deficiencies lead to early graying, visit suzycohen.com.

Suzy Cohen is a registered pharmacist and the author of 'The 24-Hour Pharmacist' and 'Real Solutions.' For more information, visit www.suzycohen.com. This information is not intended to prevent, treat, diagnose or cure your condition. Always check with your doctor before following any medical advice.

BOOKS

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their support in making the initiative possible.

Following the initial distribution, BelieveN-Books plans to expand the program to additional Early Learning Coali-

tion regions across Florida, with a longer-term goal of bringing the model to children enrolled in subsidized early learning and pre-school programs nationwide. To date, BelieveN-Books has distributed over 250,000 books to 50,000 children in need.

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