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Low: 67
Forecast, 8D

LIFESTYLE
Bridging the miles on video
More South Florida seniors are using Skype to connect with family. **1G**

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SPORTS
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Canes dominate the Bulls. **1C, 4C**

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Team president just wants more wins. **1C**

NASCAR rolls out in Homestead
Get a good look at the drivers, the scoring and today's starting lineup. **7C**

SAVE UP TO \$502 IN COUPONS

Veteran pensions sit unused
Ailing combat veterans and their dependents may be footing large bills for health care while thousands of dollars in benefits go unused. Those who know about the pension can be daunted by the paperwork it takes to obtain the money. And a "parasitic industry" of pension poachers has sprung up in the vacuum of official assistance. What vets need to know about the little-known Aid and Attendance pension, **1B**.

Stores carve into holiday tradition
BY DOREEN CHRISTENSEN
Staff writer
The push to move Black Friday into Thanksgiving Day is prompting South Florida shoppers with a taste for bargains to alter their Thanksgiving plans. Some are making meals early, turning Thanksgiving into lunch, while others are ordering prepared meals. Rori Greenspan, 36, of Boynton Beach, isn't thrilled about having to choose between the dining and shopping traditions. "It's girl's night out for us, and I really look forward to it," she said. "Last year, we went out at 7:30 for 10 p.m."
See **SHOPPING, 23A**

Making the move for reform
Immigration activists buoyed by chances after the election
BY WILLIAM E. GIBSON
Washington Bureau
WASHINGTON — In the wake of the 2012 elections, most of Florida's 825,000 undocumented immigrants suddenly have brighter prospects for becoming legal residents — and maybe, someday, U.S. citizens. "This is a huge relief. If this reform passes, it completely changes everything," said Julio Calderón, a 23-year-old student in Miami whose family remains in legal limbo after fleeing hurricane-ravaged Honduras more than a decade ago. "Not only students but our parents could live without the fear of being deported. We are hoping for relief for the whole community." Strongly backed for re-election by Hispanic voters in Florida and other key states, President Barack Obama said last week he was "very confident we can get immigration reform done." More significantly, some Republicans in Congress — fearing Hispanic voters may
See **OVERHAUL, 23A**

HOPE OR HYPE?

■ HCG not approved for weight loss usage ■ Doctors, clinicians divided on diet effects ■ Some don't follow pati



Dr. Bart Gershenbaum, co-owner of HCG Waist Management, holds a vial of HCG, a substance used for weight loss. In two years I've been associated with this office, I've seen unbelievable results with an unbelievable

BY AMY SHIPLEY
Staff writer
South Florida's latest weight-loss craze and the booming business it's spawned are based on a pricey hormone that many doctors say is useless as a diet aid and may carry serious health risks. The U.S. government has refused for decades to approve the substance known as HCG for weight loss, and two states ban its prescription for that purpose. But a Sun Sentinel investigation found South Florida clinics charging hundreds of dollars for diet plans that employ the hormone produced by pregnant women, and facing virtually no regulation, inspection or oversight. In its probe of 50 Florida clinics and HCG providers, more than two dozen of which are in Broward, Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties, the Sun
See **HCG, 15A**

All I want for Christmas is ... plastic surgery
BY JOHNNY DIAZ
Staff writer
Santa is leaving attractive gifts in some South Florida stockings this season: Gift certificates for botox and collagen injections, breast implants and tummy tucks. Plastic surgery procedures and cosmetic treatments are topping holiday lists, making this a busy time not just for Old Saint Nick but for local plastic surgeons. "The holidays are a time when people want to give gifts, and people are looking to make each other happy," said Dr. Jacob Steiger, a Boca Raton plastic surgeon. "The cosmetic medicine and surgical market is so large these days that people enjoy
See **GIFTS, 23A**

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Black Friday plan: Relax and save

BY MICHAELA HOOD
Staff writer

If holiday shopping on Thanksgiving makes you feel like a Grinch, we have a Black Friday plan that will let you sleep in and still score at sales.

Not only are some South Florida department stores opening at a civilized hour, they also are offering ways to relax on the busiest shopping day of the year. Many offer restaurants, bars and spa and beauty services in salons.

"It doesn't have to be a frenzy experience. Go in, shop and then have a nice ladies' lunch," says Ginger Reeder, spokeswoman for Timan Marcus, which has stores in Fort Lauderdale and Boca Raton.

Here's a rundown of stores, hours and Black Friday specials and events.

Bloomington's: Shop and then wine and dine at Petrossian Rendez-vous Cafe and Forty Carrots from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. in Boca Raton, 561-394-2000; 59th and Lex Cafe will be open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. in Aventura, 305-792-1000.

Dillard's: Find plenty of the steals at this trendy department from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. in Fort Lauderdale, 954-565-5245, and Plantation, 954-370-8182.

H&M: The on-trend stores are offering \$5 sweaters and \$10 pants and other deals from 8 a.m. to 9

p.m., so you can buy something for everyone on your list. 3101 PGA Blvd., Palm Beach Gardens, 561-626-9445, and 541 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach, 855-466-7467.

JC Penney: JCP is holding its "One Big Sale of the Year" from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. and giving away 80 million buttons that can be redeemed for a chance to win prizes, including vacations, merchandise and gift cards.

Neiman Marcus Grab a friend, shop from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., and then gossip over a glass (or two) of wine at the Little Mermaid Bar at the Galleria in Fort Lauderdale, 954-566-6666. From 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. in Boca

Raton, get complimentary facials and then head to Mariposa for a snack and a cocktail, 561-417-5151.

Nordstrom: Make a reservation at Bistro N. Yummy eats include crab bisque, steak au poivre and crispy chicken frites. Hours are 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. at Town Center at Boca Raton, 561-620-5555.

Saks Fifth Avenue: Open 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., this high-end department store will offer specials and complimentary makeovers at Town Center at Boca Raton, 561-393-9100.

Doreen Christensen contributed to this report.

GIFTS

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looking their best and rejuvenated, and their friend [or loved one] will know that. They will give that as a gift."

This Christmas, Carolyn Gallichio will leave her husband, Larry, a wrapped box under their tree with a \$500 gift certificate for botox injections and laser hair removal.

"Instead of buying a bunch of little things. I can buy one big gift," said Gallichio, a psychotherapist in Fort Lauderdale. "It's a nice gift, one piece of paper, one little bow, one little box, and that's it, you're done, and the person is very happy."

"And there's a benefit — you don't have to look at their wrinkled, shriveled face," she said, jokingly.

She thinks men are more willing to be on the receiving end of cosmetic procedures if it's a gift from a wife, girlfriend or significant other.

"There is a lot of shame and ego attached to a male going in and stopping at an aesthetic institute," she said. "It's not something that they would buy for themselves. If he got the gift certificate, it's like, 'My wife got this for me. She wants me to look better.'"

That thinking works the other way around, too. Gallichio, who received breast enhancement surgery as a gift from her husband 10 years ago, has hinted to him that she would like any holiday gift money to go toward a breast lift.

"That's what I want in my stocking," said Gallichio, 51.

Some people like to receive their gift early to be ready for Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas and New Year's Eve festivities. Others typically schedule vacation or time off from work during these months, which provides enough time to recuperate.

"I am set to go, I am ready for the holidays, and I feel great," said Sarah Love, of Sunrise, who received Perlane fillers last weekend courtesy of her husband. His card to her read: "Happy Birthday, Merry Christmas and go have fun!"

The procedure, done at Dr. Shashi Kusuma's office in Plantation, evened out lines around the side of her nose and plumped up her lips.

"People like to get a little freshened up," said Kusuma, whose business goes up by 30 percent during the holidays.

Love, 52, says she's happy with the youthful face that stares back in the mirror. "My first gathering is Thanksgiving, so I wanted to make sure I had it done before," she said. "If you receive it as a gift for Christmas, it's almost better to get it done a couple weeks before."

Doctors and gift-givers say people are more willing to lavishly spend on a gift during the holidays than for a birthday or Mother's or Father's days. Prices can run anywhere from \$500 to a few thousand, depending on whether the gift involves injectable treatments or invasive surgical ones.

While such gifts are certainly generous, The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery and some local doctors strongly suggest that people who accept these procedures as holiday presents are truly having them done for themselves and not because they were paid for by a loved one or friend.

"Make sure that the idea for plastic surgery came from the person who intends to have it, and not from a well-meaning spouse, relative or friend," says ASAPS website, which also lists qualified plastic surgeons.

"The gift has to be self-motivated and not because the partner is interested," said Dr. Paul Wigoda, a plastic surgeon in Fort Lauderdale.

It's also important that the recipient have real expectations about the results of the procedure and potential for complications.

"It's not like a piece of clothing that you can throw away. It's something that you do to your body," Kusuma said. "It has to be given with a lot of thought and hindsight and research. You have to make sure that there is a conversation to determine what the patient actually needs."

Sheila Manners already knows what her husband, Harry, will buy her for Hanukkah: Botox!

"When you look good, you feel good," said the Weston wife, 76, who asks for the treatment to smooth out lines around her forehead every year. "He is so happy that he doesn't have to wonder what to get me."

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RACHEL MUMMEY/THE PALM BEACH POST FILE PHOTO
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sible early in the week including roasting the turkey on Wednesday or even Tuesday.

"Set the table and make the side dishes the day before and reheat them," she said. "Everything tastes better when the flavors have time to marry anyway."

Others are pre-ordering feasts from Publix or neighborhood spots like Doris' Italian Market & Bakery in Sunrise. Both report brisk business.

"In the last couple of days it's been nonstop," said Kopel Smilovics, deli manager at the Sunrise store.

Still, some South Floridians feel the dine-and-dash retail trend has altered the spirit of the holiday and are sticking to their traditions.

"Thanksgiving should be about family, not shopping. It's soured me to the whole idea of Black Friday," said Ivy Lynn Defino, 50, of Davie.

"I'm not going out until Saturday. Thanksgiving should be about family. We always eat at 6 p.m. At 8 p.m. we're sitting around having pie, not shopping."

Arlene Satchell contributed to this report.

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While not backing any specific proposal, House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, told ABC News that immigration reform is an important issue and that "a comprehensive approach is long overdue. And I'm confident that the president, myself [and] others can find the common ground to take care of this issue once and for all."

Obama won 60 percent of Florida's Hispanic vote, up from 57 percent in 2008. Hispanics constituted 17 percent of the Florida electorate this year, up from 14 percent in 2008, according to the Pew Hispanic Center. Nationally, Obama won 71 percent of the Hispanic vote.

Those pressing for reform also include Haitians and other large immigrant communities.

"Now that Congress is talking about working together, we are hoping that immigration will be one of the issues that bring them together," said Aude Sicard, a health-care analyst in Pembroke Pines who came legally to this country from Haiti in 1977. "It would be very good for Florida, because farmers and others here in the service industry would benefit from hiring affordable laborers."

For Maria — a nanny and house cleaner in Miami, who would not give her last name to protect her employer — legal status would fulfill a long-held dream and provide a refuge from fear. She and her husband, who owns a remodeling company with three employees, overstayed their visas after fleeing an economic crisis in Argentina in 2001.

"I have waited for this for 12 years," she said. "We are scared all the time. We are driving without a license. If I see something, I am never going to call the police. Now I think it is going to be much better for all of us."

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