

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 **IB** little-known Aid and Attendance pension, 1B.

Stores carve into holiday tradition

for weight loss usage

By Doreen Christensen

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. 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 Rori Greenspan, 36, of Boynton Beach, isn't thrilled about having to went out at 7:30 for 10 p.m.

See SHOPPING, 23A

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Making the move for reform

Immigration activists buoyed by chances after the election

BY WILLIAM E. GIBSON

WASHINGTON - In the wake of the 2012 elections, most of Florida's 825,000 undocumented immigrants suddenly have

brighter prospects for becoming legal resi-dents — 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 His-panic voters in Florida and other key states, President Barack Obama said last week he was "very confident we can get immigra-

tion reform done." More significantly, some Republicans in Congress - fearing Hispanic voters may

See OVERHAUL, 23A

All I want for Christmas is ... plastic surgery

BY JOHNNY DIAZ

Santa is leaving attractive gifts in some South Florida stockings this season: Gift certificates for botox and collagen inctions, breast implants and tummy tucks Plastic surgery procedures and cos-netic 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 **HOPE OR HYPE?**

HCG not approved Doctors, clinicians divided on diet effects



Dr. Bart Gershenbaum, co-owner of HCG Waist Management, holds a vial of HCG, a substance u: two years I've been associated with this office, I've seen unbelievable results with an unbelievabl

BY AMY SHIPLEY lose weight

"People

because

eating.

That's

what it medically

comes

down to."

they're not

South Florida's latest weight-loss craze and the booming business it's spawned are based on a pricey hor-mone 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



Sentinel found: Physicians and counselor will help patients obtain

weight-loss results without fects, hunger pangs or the exercise, claims that the U.S. Drug Administration and a body of medical research dis Many of the facilities a staffed by entrepreneurs with no medical training, doctors or medical assistants disciplined by state medical boards, or self-described "nutrition counseloes" without medical lineares

Some don't follow

Coming Tuesday

Your complete guide

to early sales on Thanksgiving Day

and Black Friday

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



Black Friday plan: Relax and save

BY MICAELA HOOD

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If holiday shopping on Thanksgiving makes you feel like a Grinch, we have a Black Friday In that will let you sleep in and

Sentinel.com Sun Sentinel 23A

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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."

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

Bloomingdale'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 core at sales ot only are some South Flori-

Lex Cafe will be open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. in Aventura, 305-792-1000. lepartment stores opening at a lized hour, they also are of-ng ways to relax on the busiest pping day of the year. Many restaurants, bars and spa Dillard's: Find plenty of the steals l beauty services in salons. It doesn't have to be a frenzy at this trendy department from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. in Fort Lauderdale, perience. Go in, shop and then re a nice ladies' lunch," says ger Reeder, spokeswoman for 954-565-5245, and Plantation, 954-370-8182.

H&M: The on-trend stores are ofiman Marcus, which has res in Fort Laudredale and fering \$5 sweaters and \$10 pants and other deals from 8 a.m. to 9

> 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."

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



crispy chicken frites.

Saks Fifth Avenue: Open 8 a.m.

to 9 p.m., this high-end depart-ment store will offer specials and complimentary makeovers at

Town Center at Boca Raton,

Doreen Christensen contributed

561-620-5555.

561-393-9100

to this report.

This year, stores are opening earlier than usual.

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. "Every-thing 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

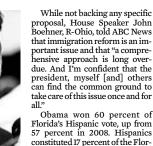
feel the dine-and-dash retail trend has altered the spirit of the holiday and are sticking to their traditions.

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

no, 50, of Davie. "I'm not going out until Sat-urday. 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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Obama won 60 percent of Florida's Hispanic vote, up from 57 percent in 2008. Hispanics constituted 17 percent of the Flor-ida electorate this year, up from 14 percent in 2008, according to the Pew Hispanic Center. Nationally, Obama won 71 percent of the His-Obama won 71 percent of the His-

panic vote. Those pressing for reform also include Haitians and other large

"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 not give her last name to protect her employer — legal sta-tus would fulfill a long-held

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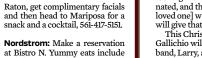
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an-Ryan, a top caterer and chef, as much as pos-



crab bisque, steak au poivre and Hours are 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. at Town Center at Boca Raton,

johnnydiaz@tribune.com or 954-356-4939

Cloud. He disthat Republicans would be very good for Florida, because farmers and others here amnesty while Hispanics and rs. "There is no in the service industry would benefit from hiring affordable lathe election.] The borers. For Maria – a nanny and house cleaner in Miami, who d the same as it

TH BENNETT/STAFF

Rubio, R-Miami

67. a retired fac-

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dream and provide a refuge from fear. She and her husband, who n is one of the owns a remodeling company with three employees, overstayed their visas after fleeing an ecois issues we could S. Rep. Dan Webarden. "I'm hopith the economy

nomic crisis in Argentina in 2001. "I have waited for this for 12 years," she said. "We are scared all ulfill a campaign back to 2008, feels least try to over-on law. And the 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 botton for all of use? nce of Hispanic erwhelmingly fabetter for all of us." mpted some Rers to reconsider

wgibson@tribune.com or 202-824-8256

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Press clip courtesy of

