

# THE FRIDAY TAMPA TRIBUNE

and The Tampa Times



## Restaurant Week starts today

Chow down on affordable fare from area eateries.

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JEFF HOUK/STAFF

## Hundreds face layoffs at 2 Tampa firms

Business, inside metro

## 'Exploding Chicken' won't return for RNC

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WEATHER

HIGH 91, LOW 77 Chance of thunderstorms.

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# Tampa is No. 1 in tax fraud

### Nationwide, IRS issued more than \$5 billion in potentially fraudulent refunds last year

BY ELAINE SILVESTRINI  
The Tampa Tribune

TAMPA — Tampa leads the nation in income tax-refund fraud, racking up more than the next three cities combined, according to a new report by a federal watchdog agency.

The study by the Internal Revenue Service's inspector general examined tax filings from 2011 and concluded that the IRS fails to catch billions of dollars in fraudulent tax returns.

"Undetected tax refund fraud results in significant unintended federal outlays and erodes tax-

payer confidence in our nation's tax system," the report says.

The IRS failed to detect more than \$5.2 billion in potentially fraudulent tax refunds last year and could end up issuing \$21 billion more in fraudulent refunds nationwide if it fails to make changes, the report says.

The potential fraud estimate, described by the report as conservative, doesn't count the \$6.5 billion the IRS says it managed

to detect and stop.

The report identified the five cities with the highest number of potentially fraudulent tax returns, led by Tampa with more than nearly 89,000 returns amounting to \$468 million.

U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, a Florida Democrat, chaired subcommittee hearings on the crime and requested the audit to help gauge the scope of the fraud. "I

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### Tops in tax fraud

Potentially fraudulent income-tax return filings (refunds in millions of dollars):

	Returns	Refunds
Tampa	88,724	\$468.38
Miami	74,496	\$280.51
Atlanta	29,787	\$77.11
Detroit	23,870	\$74.93
Houston	22,754	\$72.1

Source: Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration audit report

## Guavaween loses its parade

### Signature event canceled after city turns down co-sponsorship request

BY KATHY STEELE  
The Tampa Tribune

TAMPA — The traditional Mama Guava Stumble Parade that sets off a night of revelry and fantasy along Ybor City's famed Seventh Avenue will be missing this year from Guavaween.

For more than a quarter-century Guavaween has been a signature Tampa event, a largely adults-only party where sexually explicit costumes and wild behavior are expected.

Tampa officials recently notified the Ybor City Chamber of Commerce that the city cannot afford the more than \$45,000 the chamber estimates it would cost to co-sponsor the parade.

The chamber requested financial help from the city's Office of Special Events, specifically seeking support for security from Tampa police, installation of parade barriers and cleanup.

"We're not taking on additional large sponsorships," said city spokeswoman Ali Glisson.

Chamber officials said they were disappointed but would find other ways to keep the more than 25-year tradition alive.

"We'll still have Guavaween," said Tom Keating, the chamber's president. "We'll go ahead with a strong event with hopefully Mama Guava."

Mama Guava, replete with a head-dress adorned with feathers and baubles, traditionally has presided at the parade.

Details of this year's version of Guavaween are expected to be announced next week.

The new plan is a revision of an earlier one announced in May that featured the now-canceled motorized parade, a costume contest and an indoor music festival.

The costume contest and concert still will happen. A new addition might be a pub crawl leading into the costume contest, Keating said.

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## America's 'next Mary Lou'



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. gymnast Gabrielle Douglas acknowledges the crowd Thursday after receiving her gold medal for the artistic gymnastics women's individual all-around competition at the London Olympics. It was her second gold of the competition.

# Gymnast has few equals

BY NANCY ARMOUR  
The Associated Press



GETTY IMAGES

Douglas performs on the beam during the artistic gymnastics women's individual all-around final. She left home at 14 to train with a coach to reach the Olympics.

LONDON — Just 14, Gabby Douglas pleaded with her mother to let her move cross country, certain a new coach could help her get to the Olympics.

Not two years after setting out on her own, Douglas beat Russia's Viktoria Komova for the all-around title Thursday night, becoming the third straight U.S. athlete to win gymnastics' biggest prize and the first African-American to do so.

It was her second gold medal of the London Games, coming two nights after she and her "Fierce Five" teammates gave the United

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Target's support for gays and lesbians became public after the chain started selling "Pride" brand T-shirts.

## Activism drives a new approach to branding

### More companies are embracing political stands to encourage customer loyalty

BY RICHARD MULLINS  
The Tampa Tribune

TAMPA — Customers at Chick-fil-A today can expect to see a bit of same-sex smooching around their chicken sandwiches and waffle-cut fries, as gay-rights groups protest the company CEO's comments about marriage.

Although Chick-fil-A officials are now working to leave the debate behind, business and marketing experts say social controversy is something companies can hardly avoid in the world of instant social media and hyper-partisan debate.

It seems the days of the non-partisan chicken sandwich or politically moderate washing machine may be fading fast.

In fact, some companies are willing participants. Big brands such as Ikea, Target, General Mills and Amazon have jumped into some of the most controversial modern issues: gay marriage, cli-

mate change and economic policy.

"What you're seeing are companies catching on to what is essentially the utopia of branding," said Americus Reed II, a marketing professor at the Wharton School of Business.

"If a brand can transcend the functional attributes of the product itself and resonate with who people think they are or want to be, that creates a deeper sense of loyalty, and when they perceive an attack on the brand, that person responds in defense," Reed said.

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