



Print Page

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Progress at Hammond Square

By Joan Davis

The big red bullet is drawing a bead on Hammond.

Team leaders (that's store management to us ordinary people) at Target have a week planned for their grand opening celebration, and it starts in just 10 days.

Very important guests (mayor, city council, parish president, teachers, fireman, policemen — you'll know you're important if you get an invitation in the mail) will be included in a gala party and ribbon-cutting ceremony at the store the evening of Tuesday, July 21. Shiela Gunderson, HR team leader, and Michael Foster, store team leader, have live entertainment, children's activities and other surprises on tap, including a snowball truck parked outside to dispense cold, colorful treats for guests.

The public can begin shopping the next morning, the "soft opening," (as opposed to the "grand opening") and throughout the week as a build up to the bally-hoo of the actual grand opening July 26.

Target folks tell me they're still looking for that last 60 part-time employees, and it's definitely not too late to apply. Go online at target.com/careers and apply. They received more than 2,000 applications, which means the North Shore has the work force these new businesses require.

The next big opening will be in early Aug. 2 when T.J. Maxx opens its doors.

The last of four restaurants near the Palace Theatre has signed with Palace Properties/Stirling but is not quite ready to announce, Beezie Landry with Stirling tells me. Meanwhile, Albasha is open for business, and several friends and co-workers tell me the food is wonderful. East of Italy and Phil's Grill will be opening before you know it.

More news on the Main Street stores (and that store space between Target and T.J. Maxx) as I find out. Stay tuned.

Does anyone know a good remedy for benign migratory glossitis?

Huh, you say. Well, you might know it as geographic tongue. Still not a clue?

It's psoriasis, actually. All the research I've turned up on the Internet, and there's not much in recent years, indicates it's inherited and may be triggered by stress, acidic or sour foods, sleeping crooked, a solar eclipse, low tides, moose migrations or... You get my drift. Doctors and scientists don't know.

How did I find out about this psoriasis on my tongue? Well, that took four months and lots of tests before the right one, which required taking a chunk out of my tongue. The fourth doctor was the charm, a dermatologist. Who knew a dermatologist would know about a disease of the tongue?

It all started with a tiny red spot on the tip of my tongue, which I ignored for a while, until one morning my tongue had acquired stars and stripes, or really Xs and Os, like tic tac toe. There were blisters, fissures and pustules and dozens of white circles. If it didn't hurt, it would have been a fashion statement.

Of course, I had to see a doctor then, who pronounced it thrush, a fungal infection. So, I took the medication that works for thrush, which didn't work. He then sent me to an ear, nose and throat doctor who looked inside my mouth, stepped back, a little shocked, and told me he genuinely didn't know what I had. It wasn't thrush.

See THIS AND THAT, 5A

What followed after him isn't very funny, lots of needle sticks and blood letting, a camera inside my stomach, yucky creams, expensive pills and mouthwashes. Nothing worked.

Of course, I spent all my free time investigating my unknown tongue ailment on the internet. The photos that people put online are amazing. My tic tac toe tongue didn't look as bad as some of those. Remember back in high school hygiene class, photos of poor souls with pellagra, rickets and scurvy? These tongues looked like chopped liver.

So, I started looking for a home remedy. Folks with geographic tongue put their inventive suggestions online, so I gave some of them a try.

There was the Sunday I sat around all day with raw garlic in my mouth.

And the day I tried gentian violet. It's herb derived and harmless. My tongue — and teeth — were purple for a week.

I still haven't tried nettle tea. I guess that's safe.

All along, I was hoping that whatever it was it would just go away as suddenly as it came, but a biopsy by the fourth doctor proved the diagnosis of psoriasis. There's no magic pill, unfortunately.

It turns out about 1 in 33 people has this condition, so there's some comfort I guess in knowing I'm not alone. It's undignified to stick one's tongue out in polite society anyway, so it's not like anyone is going to notice.

But if anyone has a tried-and-true remedy for this condition, and it doesn't involve a biopsy of any body part, or an insanely expensive mouth wash or throwing a dead cat over my shoulder at midnight in a cemetery, e-mail me at news@hammondstar.com.