CLEARWATER BEACH
NEIGHBORHOOD Newsletter
including Sand Key and Island Estates
MILE MARKER 20-25
OCTOBER / 2015 ISSUE 35

THE ROEBLING ALLIGATOR
A War Winning Machine

Donald Roebling age 39

September marked the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. A vehicle called the Alligator played a big part in helping to win WW II in both Europe and the Pacific. Clearwater's Donald Roebling, invented this land-sea hybrid vehicle.

Roebling was not in the military and had no interest in war machines. He was an inventor and businessman living on the bluffs of Clearwater Pass who invented a strange-looking vehicle in case of a deadly hurricane. But instead, his invention became a cornerstone of World War II, the Korean Conflict and later in the Vietnam War.

Roebling came from a wealthy family. His great-grandfather John August Roebling (1806-1869) had a love of bridge building. He designed the Niagara Suspension Bridge, the Roebling Suspension Bridge connecting Cincinnati, OH and Covington, KY, and New York's Brooklyn Bridge. He invented steel cable, which transformed transportation and construction practices, leading to suspension bridges, cable cars, the telegraph, electrical cables, elevators, logging, mining, cranes and shipping. Unfortunately, John A. died before his Brooklyn Bridge was completed and his son finished the project. It opened in 1883.

The family started the John A. Roebling's Sons Company, an engineering and construction company, that produced a wide variety of construction cable. Donald, merely a teenager at the time, began working for the company and stayed until the depression.

At 21, Roebling moved to Clearwater in 1929 in search of a better life. He bought a small house at 700 Orange Avenue. He quickly turned it into a sprawling mansion to fit his family's lifestyle. He did not need to work, but invested in a food processing-equipment plant, called Food Machinery Corporation.

Living in Florida, Roebling became aware of three devastating South Florida hurricanes (1926, 1928 and 1932). Many people were killed or left stranded by high water. Rescuers drowned trying to save victims as there was simply no way to reach them. Roebling's father challenged him to do something about it; motivated, Roebling agreed.

Roebling began to design a land-sea vehicle capable of negotiating swamps and flooded areas. He had a machine shop on his estate and hired a small staff of craftsmen to help produce a prototype. It was a strange looking, two tracked vehicle with a large open-compartment that could carry people and equipment. He called it his Alligator.

By 1936, Roebling completed the first design. Powered by a 92-horsepower Chrysler engine, it featured horizontal paddle-like cleats. The light weight vehicle had a water speed of about 2.5 mph, and could go 25 mph on land.

Although the United States was not at war at the time, Roebling also envisioned the Alligator as a military vehicle. He tried to sell the idea to the government, but they weren't interested.

Roebling kept refining his design. The second version was a lighter, four-ton version with revised cleats, which increased the water speed to 5.5 mph. By the third model, the hull was aluminum. It was much lighter with water speeds of 8.5 mpg. On October 4, 1937, ***Life Magazine*** published a cover story on Roebling and his Alligator.

continued inside

By Bob Griffin, Publisher

Or Current Resident

CREDITS

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We'd like to hear from you. Is there something you would like to see included in this newsletter? Tell us what you think at

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CLEARWATER BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER

Inside, you will find articles and local information about the nearby area inside. We call it a Neighborhood Newsletter because it is primarily about your neighborhood, Clearwater Beach. It is mailed to the entire 33767 zip code including Island Estates and Sand Key - a total of about 5,000 households - six times a year.

You can pick up another copy at the Beach Chamber Office, The Beach Rec Center, Island Estates Print Shack, Shorty's Gourmet Deli or the Island Estates UPS store.

We want your input. How did you like this issue? What suggestions do you have for future issues and articles?

We hope you enjoyed this issue. Call or email us with your comments,

Bob & Becky Griffin, 727-517-1997, bob@griffindirectories.com

Read this issue or others at beachnewsletters.com.

SEE YOU AGAIN IN DECEMBER!

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www.clearwater-fl.com

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LITTLE LEAGUE
John Murphy 813-486-4430
ROTARY, Clearwater Beach meets every Thursday, 12:15pm at Carlouel Yacht Club
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SAND KEY CIVIC ASSOCIATION
Meets first Wednesdays each month at the Clearwater Community Sailing Center
AL Zimmerman 727-593-7379
ISLAND ESTATES CIVIC ASSOCIATION
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David Jolly. 727-392-4100
9210 113th St, Seminole, Fl 33772
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CALENDAR OF LOCAL EVENTS

OCTOBER	
Stone Crab Season Begins	15
Clearwater Jazz Holiday	15-18
National Boss's Day	16
Coastal Clean Up	17
Public Schools Closed	19
Clearwater Stone Crab Festivals	22-25
Pirate Camp Sailing Center	22-25
Chalk Walk BeachWalk	24-25
Johns Pass Seafood Fest	24-25
Country Jubilee Heritage Village	24
Halloween Party Yacht Club	24
Art in the Park Station Square	24
Blast Downtown Halloween	30
Downtown Funk Masquerade Party	30
Halloween	31
Boo Bash Bright House Field	31
Sea Turtle Nesting Season Ends	31
Clearwater Challenge Regatta	31-1
NOVEMBER	
Property Tax Bills Mailed	1
Daylight Savings Time Ends	1
Historical Society Fish Fry	7
City Garage Sale Belleair Beach	7
Tri Rock Triathlon	8
Beach Chamber Golf Tournament	9
Veteran's Day	11
Pinellas County Fair	12-15
RibFest	13-15
Suncoast Dixieland Jazz Classic	13-15
Trash - Treasure Garden Club Sale	14
Pierce Street Market	14
Carlisle Classic Regatta	14-15
Visit Egmont Key Days	14-15
Christmas Under the Oaks	15
Manatee Protection Begins	15
America Recycles Day	15
Great American Teach	18
Beaujolas Day	19
Men's Day	19
Festival of Trees Long Center	20-22
Art in the Park Station Square	21
Public Schools Closed	23-27
Thanksgiving	26
Turkey Trot Run	26
Black Friday	27
Small Business Shopping Day	28
Heritage Village Trees/Traditions	28
Hurricane Season Ends	30

CLEARWATER BEACH NEWSLETTER

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Did You Know...

DANCING THRU THE DECADES The Abilities Guild invites you to show your support of our Veterans by joining their Dancing Thru the Decades celebration on Saturday, November 7, 1 Country Club Lane, Belleair. All proceeds benefit the Abilities Guild Veterans Mall. The evening begins at 6pm with a cocktail hour (cash bar), hors d'oeuvres, and silent auction. Dinner will follow and include complimentary wine. Dress is cocktail or costume attire. Reservations required, tickets are $100 per person. Seating is limited. For information or to make reservations, call Jodi Martino at 727-244-7971.

DISCOVER THE ISLAND Come to Egmont Key State Park Saturday, November 14th or Sunday, November 15th and enjoy one of Tampa Bay's gems! Stroll the island on a self-guided walk with interpretive sites including nature, wildlife, and Civil War re-enactors. There will be children's games, silent auctions and a viewing of the 157-year-old lighthouse that is still working to guide ships into Tampa Bay. See live birds of prey from Boyd Hill Nature preserve Saturday only. Enjoy live music by singers performing period music and sea shanties. Shuttle ferries leave Fort DeSoto Park from 9 am to 2pm. Visit www.EgmontKey.info or call 813-361-7563.

BED TAX, WHERE DOES IT COME FROM? There is a lot of discussion lately surrounding where the Bed Tax should go, but since the 2014 Bed Tax report has been released, we now know where it comes from. The tax is on hotels and vacation rentals. Overall, Pinellas County collected $3,257,052. The beaches contributed $2.192 million of that, or 67%. Clearwater Beach had the lion's share, $1.089 million, 49.6% of all the beaches combined. The bed tax is used for tourism advertising, beach renourishment and building attractions such as the Tropicana Dome.

DROP OFF YOUR DRAWERS Each October, Clothes To Kids has an underwear drive to collect much needed new underwear for low-income and in crisis Pinellas school children that shop at CTK (Pre-K4 -12th grade). Drop (off) Your Drawers is a drive designed to collect and "underwrite" underwear – a basic part of the CTK wardrobe. Sizes: Girls - 6 to 16, Junior Girls - 5 & up (bikinis); Boys 4 to 16 (briefs & boxers), Young Men 30-32 & up (boxers) Boxers are the most needed item they provide! New underwear and monetary donations can be dropped off at their Clearwater Store, 1059 North Hercules Avenue or call 727-441-5050 for information.

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS The students of St. Cecelia Interparochial Catholic School in Clearwater, celebrated the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi by bringing their pets to school for a blessing. St. Francis is the patron saint of animals. There were a variety of animals and all received a blessing. The students who did not own pets brought in their favorite stuffed animals to be blessed. The blessing of the animals is a yearly event, and one that is a favorite among all. In addition to having animals at the school the children were participating in "Crazy Hair Day." Shown with her pet snake is Emily Doyle from Largo.

NO NEED FOR TWO SPACES AFTER A PERIOD Those over 40 probably learned to type on a typewriter, not a computer. One rule from those typing classes has definitely expired - double spaces after periods. Unless you are typing on an actual typewriter, you don't need them, or even after question marks, exclamation points, or any end of sentence punctuation, actually. Computers use proportionally spaced fonts, which adjust spacing to the size of each letter including punctuation. In other words, the computer does it all for you.

SPECIAL HISTORY LECTURE SERIES Largo's Heritage Village at 11909 125th Street N., is offering these lectures.

Nov. 8: Expansion during the Early 1980s.
Jan. 17: Preserving Our Past in an Urbanized County.
Feb. 14: New Initiatives in the New Millennium.
Mar. 13: Images of Seminole, Pinellas's Youngest City.

They are always looking for volunteers, young and old to act as docents, craft demonstrators and a receptionist. They also need historic house caretakers and people to adopt historical structures by keeping them tidy. If you are interested, call 582-2125.

RETHINK BOTTLED WATER Nearly 90% of plastic water bottles are not recycled, instead taking thousands of years to decompose. Buy a reusable container and fill it with filtered tap water; it's a great choice for the environment, your wallet, and possibly your health. The EPA's standards for tap water are more stringent than the FDA's standards for bottled water. Plus, new studies suggest plastic bottles release small amounts of chemicals into the water over a period of time. The longer water is stored in plastic bottles, the higher the concentration of potentially harmful chemicals. Bottled water can costs up to 10,000 times more per gallon than filtered tap water and is much more convenient. Besides, who wants to lug those cases of water home? When you do need to have bottled of water, please recycle the bottle!.

OUR NEXT ISSUE IS IN DECEMBER Read this issue, as well as others, online at BeachNewsletters.com.

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ROEBLING, CONTINUED

Rear Admiral Edward C. Kalbfus, saw ***Life's*** article and showed it to his boss, Major General Louis Little. High-ranking department heads came to Clearwater to see the Alligator and talk to Roebling.

They saw its value in transporting troops from ships to beaches, but the Marine Corp did not have any money. That did not bother Roebling. He did the necessary research and built a new prototype at his own expense - $18,000. By May of 1940, he completed a model based on the military's suggested changes.

Within a few months, Roebling's newest design was approved. With the war worsening in Europe and Asia, Congress and the Navy approved a $20,000 contract to test the vehicle.

Roebling called this new vehicle Alligator 3. Completed in October 1940, it was powered by a 120 hp Lincoln-Zephyr engine with a welded steel hull design. They tested it first in Virginia and later in the Caribbean.

Once the Navy got involved, they no longer referred to them as Alligators. They were called LANDING VEHICLE TRACKED or LVTs. The first wave of LTVs rolled off the assembly line at Roebling's Food Machinery Corporation in July 1941. They were tested just off the coast of Dunedin. Soon, four factories were turning out thousands of these amphibious machines, which soon saw action.

The first LTVs were used as logistic support vehicles. They carried no armament, however, that soon changed. At the Battle of Tarawa, they bolted on armor plates and equipped them with four 30-caliber machine guns. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor fueled the need for more LTVs.

Roebling's amphibian tractor played a decisive role in many of the U.S. Marine Corps' amphibious victories in World War II. Marine Major General Roy Geiger called the amphibian tractors, "the work horses of the Marine Corps." Lt. General Alexander Vandegriff wrote, "Our success in the bitter fighting at Tarawa was due in considerable measure to the magnificent performance of the amphibian tractor invented by Mr. Roebling."

Roebling never made any money from his invention. He gave the invention to the government and refused all commissions and payments. He said his Alligator was his contribution to the war effort. He receive several commendations and awards for his invention and was personally decorated by President Truman.

In Dunedin, near Harbor View, just north of Cedar Creek where Roebling tested his Alligators, a plaque reads:

> *"In this area between Curlew and Cedar Creek, along St. Joseph Sound, during the month of August, 1941, the first Alligator, designed by Donald Roebling, and built in Dunedin, was received and launched by elements of the U.S. Marine Corps Fourth Amphibian Tractor Battalions."*

After the war, Roebling was a major contributor to institutions in and around Clearwater. He helped finance a new wing to Peace Memorial Church, additions to Morton Plant Hospital, and Capitol Theatre (where he had a special loveseat made large enough for his wider than normal body.) There is even a Belleair street named for Roebling.

Donald Roebling died in 1959; he was only 51.

MORE ABOUT DONALD ROEBLING

ABOUT ROEBLING'S HOUSE

In 1929, when Donald Roebling turned 21, he inherited $5 million from the Roebling Trust Fund. He used it to buy the Clearwater property at 700 Orange Avenue, where he built a luxurious house It was finished in 1931.

He named the estate Spottis Woode, after his first wife, Florence Spottis Woode Parker. The Tudor-style mansion on the bay overlooked Clearwater Pass. Originally, it was 17,000 sq. ft. with 40 rooms on seven acres and cost $600,000 in 1930's dollars.

The house, on the highest bluff in Florida, was designed by famous architect Roy Wakeling. It featured exterior tiles hand-painted with mammals, birds, fantasy characters and other subjects. In the large boathouse, nautical themes graced the tiles. Roebling had several large boats and enjoyed cruising the Harbor and the Intracoastal.

In 1980, twenty years after Roebling's death, the Roebling Trust, Inc. broke the property up into 11 smaller lots, which sold for between $95,000 and $140,000. The mansion has had a number of owners through the years. Most notably, Lowell "Bud" Paxson, co-founder of Home Shopping Network, who bought it in 1986. The current owner is Elliott Rubinson, CEO and owner of Dean Guitars, who bought it from Paxson for $3.1 million in 1995.

AS I REMEMBER HIM

By Bobby Ress, Clearwater Resident

Bobby Ress

I was 19 when he died, but I remember Donald Roebling, his second wife and her son. I remember the Alligators he built.

Roebling was a large, good-looking man. He was not really fat—although he did have an addiction to candy bars.

Everything Roebling built, he over built. From the Alligators to his houses—both of them, he wanted things done his way. This was a problem with designing the Alligators. Everett Daniels was the designer of the Alligators in Dunedin. He had two sets of plans. One to show Roebling, and one to show the military. His Dunedin plant was where the Holiday Inn is now.

Roebling's house was a fortress. The foundation and all the walls were reinforced with steel and rebar. Roebling liked boating and owned three boats. Their names were Hard Tack, The Plain and Arano.

A major contributor to the community, whatever Roebling supported he was onsite supervising. He donated money to build the addition to Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church and oversaw the construction. They named it Roebling Hall. He donated money to expand Morton Plant Hospital and was onsite every day with a tape measure, making sure the contractors did it right.

He donated money to Capital Theater, which was privately owned. They gave him a special double-wide love seat because of his oversized body. That seat was placed near the middle of the theater. For years, boys with girlfriends came early to get that seat for movies.

I knew the Roeblings' after he moved to the Town of Belleair on Bayview Avenue. Roebling's second wife was named Joy Gilmore. I remember she was real nice to us. I liked her a lot. I was friends with her son, Bill Gilmore—and still am to this day. I am 75 and he is now 78.

Donald Roebling was certainly a man to remember.

Restaurant News...

THANKSGIVING AT MAGGIE MAE'S Thanksgiving is just a little over a month away, and it is time to make your plans. If you don't want to cook, the people at Maggie Mae's will do it for you. For the first time, they are offering a prepared Thanksgiving meal for you to take home and serve for one, two or four people. The meal includes turkey and several sides. Costs vary, but start at $14. You must order in advance. Order by calling 724-4243. The restaurant has gone high tech with their new Text Messaging System which sends coupons, specials and news to your cell phone. TEXT the word Maggie to 95361. Then reply "Y" when prompted. You will get a coupon for $2 off just for signing up. If you text the word "EAT" to 95361 you will receive weekly special offers.

BONEFISH CHANGES The interior of the Bonefish Grill in Belleair has recently been remodeled. The new design offers a warm and elegant space that is sophisticated and inviting with new earthy tones, golden hardwood accents and embellished wood flooring. The main dining room showcases new bonefish sculpture made of stainless steel. Secondly, they have a new partner/manager, Niko Hales. Hales has been with Bonefish Grill for over seven years, most recently at the South Tampa Henderson store.

JAZZY'S BBQ This new restaurant opened on South Ft. Harrison at the former Three Oaks Restaurant location. Owned by former Buccaneer Johnny Smith and wife Pamela, it is their second location. Johnny, a cornerback for the Bucs in the 1980s, already has a Jazzy's BBQ is on Waters Avenue in Tampa. The menu is southern style food but it is more than just BBQ. The also cater. It is located at 1575 So. Ft Harrison. Get more information at JazzysBBQ.com or call 223-5955.

MARINA RESTAURANT CHANGES Frank Chivas and Baystar are moving full speed ahead and hope to open Marina Cantina by the end of the year. In the meantime, they are building a second restaurant on the ground level to replace the Marina Restaurant that was in the marina buildings. The new Marina Restaurant, on the west end, will have indoor and outdoor seating and be open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. It should be open about the same time the bigger Martina Cantina opens. Chivas is also building a fresh fish market on the east end of the building. It will not only supply his restaurant, it will be open to the public for them to buy fresh seafood items, such as grouper and Stone Crab Claws

TASTE OF ITALY While our last newsletter announced this new small restaurant near Gondolier Pizza was open, it has already closed.

CLEARWATER BEACH NEWSLETTER

More Restaurant News...

COMING DOWN Yes, the big Crabby Bill's restaurant next to the round-about is coming down, soon. The City, who owns the two-story building, plans to tear it down in 2016. Crabby Bill's has been awarded a lease on the property and will continue to operating a restaurant there. After demolition, Crabby's will build a 3-story building and lease it for 30-years. It is one of two Crabby Bill's on Clearwater Beach.

SHARKY'S COMING SOON A new restaurant and bar on the south end of the beach will be opening at 411 South Gulfview Blvd. any day now. Sharky's will serve beach food, including flat bread, pizza, tacos, and wings. It is owned by Martin Cole with the Magnuson Hotel.

COOTERS AND CANVAS Cooter's first Paint & Drink Night in September was such a big success, it sold out. Held in the sport bar area, it included food and drink specials with room for only 30 painters. "I am excited about this new fun event, says owner Carol Mears. "I hope to do this on a monthly basis." Get more information at www.Cooters.com or call them at 462-2668.

STONE CRAB FESTIVAL OCTOBER 22-25 Stone Crab Season is open and Cooter's and Frenchy's, are planning their annual Stone Crab Festivals. For the first time, the Palm Pavilion Restaurant is also holding a Stone Crab Festival with a tent on the beach, live music, festival t-shirts and special Stone Crab Claw prices all three days. Frenchy's Stone Crab Festival, that Friday & Saturday only, is 31 years old, while, Cooter's Stone Crab Festival being held all three days is 22 years old. All area restaurants should have claws on their menu now.

SALTY'S STILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION Located across the street from the new Opal Resort, construction continues. "We already have the menu done and are ready to cook," says the owners. They hope to be open by the time the resort opens.

FREE MEALS On September 21, Crabby Bill's invited Law Enforcement officers to stop in for a free sandwich whether they on or off duty. They served over 50 Law Enforcement, Fire and EMS personnel. "We recognize the men and women who put their lives on the line for us," says Greg Power's, CEO of Prime Cost Management Group, owners of the two stores. They routinely offer the Police, along with Fire and EMS personnel 25% off their meal everyday.

Business Briefs...

NEW LOOK FOR WINE SHOP Owners Brian and Cheryl Franzese remodeled Belleair Bluff's Bella Vino Wine Market. The new look includes a 12-bottle Cruvinet Wine system, a new wine and beer cooler, an expanded bar, a larger cheese case and seating area, custom cabinets, larger tables, lighting, trim, a designer accent wall...and more. They now offer 24 wines by the glass, so drop by Bella Vino's to see the changes first hand and enjoy a glass off wine or take home a bottle or two. Bella Vino Wine Market is located at 100 Indian Rocks Road North in The Plaza.

MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT Are you confused over which Medicare plan to is best for you or having trouble understanding the Medicare maze? Linda Bullerman is an Independent Agent representing most medical insurance companies. She offers complementary consults, listening to your needs and wants because she works for you, not the company. October 15 – Dec 7 is open enrollment time for Medicare, so call 727-501-1444 now for an appointment.

ISLAND ESTATES REALTY BECOMES COLDWELL BANKER Coldwell Banker Residential Real Estate has purchased the assets of Island Estates Realty, from Broker, Joanne Hiller. Hiller said, "We are delighted to now be affiliated with Coldwell Banker Residential Real Estate, the largest residential brokerage in Florida with $12.7 billion sales volume in 2014, and $212 billion U.S. This will enable our Agents to build valuable connections with their clients by providing them access to some of the industries best marketing resources, technology and education."

TURKEY OF A DEAL Once again this year, with each new order, Budget Blinds will donate a turkey to the Salvation Army who will distribute it to a needy family during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. This is part of their Giving Back promotion created by owner Carolyn Tricoli. "Our goal is to donate 100 turkeys," says Carolyn. "We also have a goal to donating 5,000 pounds of non-perishable food." You can drop off food items at their show room at 600 Mandalay on the north end of the beach. For information, call 400-6870 .

25 YEARS ON THE ISLAND Steve and Lee Collins have operated their Island Estates gas and service station for 25 years. "The cars in 1990 were a lot different than the ones of today," says Steve. "We have seen area kids grow up to have their own kids, who come here for service and gas." Over the years, we have been a Chevron, Texaco, Amoco, BP and now Mobil. "We look forward to the next quarter-century of service to you."

WE WANT YOUR NEWS Are you moving, expanding or planning an event at your business? We want to know. If you have news or story suggestions, email them to Bob@GriffinDirectories.com or call us at 727-517-1997

CLEARWATER BEACH NEWSLETTER

4TH ANNUAL CLEARWATER BEACH CHALK ART FESTIVAL

Presented by Sandpearl Resort

The Clearwater Beach Chamber of Commerce's 4th Annual Chalk Art Festival is October 23 through the 25th. The family-friendly community event will be on Clearwater Beach's Beach Walk on Friday and Saturday from 9am until 6pm and Sunday from 9am until 2pm.

During the three days, over 40 incredible local and regional artists, students and artist groups will transform the beach's sidewalks into spectacular bigger-than-life-canvases, allowing the public to get a rare glimpse into the way art is produced during all stages. The public will vote for their favorite artist and the "People's Choice Award" will be announced at 1:30pm on Sunday, October 25.

The festival also includes a kid's zone, arts & crafts vendors, music, a silent auction and more. Proceeds from the silent auction go toward the Visual Arts Scholarship, created in 2013, to benefit the Visual Arts Programs in the Pinellas County School System. The scholarship was created in honor of all of the artists who share their art with the community, and to encourage young artists to follow their dreams.

The Clearwater Beach Chalk Art Festival is free. For more information, call 447-7600 or visit beachchalkwalk.com

UPCOMING HOLIDAY EVENTS

It's almost that time of year. Here is a list of upcoming local holiday events.

NOVEMBER:	
Christmas Under the Oaks	15
Festival of Trees in the Long Center	20-22
Thanksgiving	26
Black Friday shopping day	27
Small Business Shopping Day	28
Heritage Village / Trees & Traditions opens	28
DECEMBER:	
Christmas Tree Lighting	4
Miracle on Cleveland Street	5
Post Office Toys for Tots Drive	5
Holiday Home Tour Heritage Village	5
CBA Holiday Party at the Rec Center	11
Island Estates Lighted Boat Parade	12
Indian Rocks Beach Lighted Boat Parade	19
Santa and Suds Run-Walk Cleveland St.	20
Public School Close for the Holidays	21
CBA Christmas Caroling	22
Christmas (Friday)	25
Kwanzaa begins	26
New Years Eve	31

Something Fun To Do Nearby

A VISIT TO THE MOREAN ARTS CENTER GLASS STUDIO AND HOT SHOP

by Bob Griffin, Publisher

Have you ever seen those one-of-a-kind glass dish or plate creations at a major art shows and wondered "how did they make that?" A trip to the Morean Hot Shop and Glass Studio can show you the answers to those questions.

The Morean Hot Shop and Glass Studio is a special production facility located on the northeast corner of the Morean Arts Center's block at 719 Central Avenue. The Hot Shop is behind the Glass Studio store and the entrance is off 1st Avenue North. They produce many types of art objects made with clear and colorful glass on site which are sold in their attached Glass Studio retail store. Their store is the largest retail glass store in the Tampa Bay region.

The Morean Hot Shop is called that for a reason. It is really a hot. Seven days a week, on-staff artisans Paulie Maiville, a glass artist for 30 years and David Spurgeon turn on the ovens and start the process to make glass art. But when you visit the Glass Studio store, you immediately see not all glass art is alike. Each piece is similar to a snowflake - each a little different even if you try to make them the same. Of course a snowflake would not survive within a mile of this place. It is that hot.

"I've been here since the beginning," says Spurgeon, one-half of the glass team. "We opened the Hot Shop the same week that Chihuly opened on Beach Drive. I helped them install and build all the equipment here."

Inside the open air Morean Hot Shop production facility, bleachers have been installed, where people can sit and watch the process of making glass art. While their two in-house artists move the glass through dozens of steps, in and out of a pair of ovens set at a temperature over 2,000 degrees, one of the artists narrates the process describing what is going on. Hot Shop shows are 30 minutes, 7 days a week (starting Sept. 28) at 1, 2, 3 and 4pm. June through September, they are closed on Mondays to allow their artists to create new inventory for the Glass Studio retail store.

To create one piece of their beautiful art takes between 30 and 45 minutes. Then the glass object is placed in a special 900 degree oven, to "cool." Because the glass is layered, if it was allowed to cool at room temperature, the different layers would cool at different times causing the piece to crack. Instead it is slowly cooled which can take up to two days. Once it is finished, each glass item is displayed in the Morean Glass Studio retail store for sale for $75 to $300.

"There is nothing like creating colorful, beautiful glass art," says Morean Hot Shop Manager Spurgeon, who became a full-time glass artist around six years ago, after dabbling in other types of art. ""I started working with glass as art over 15 years ago. I met some people in Gulfport who were doing it there. Then, I heard about this Hot Shop Morean when they were adding it to their Art Center. I work five days a week; I am off Thursdays and Fridays."

"I love doing our daily shows which both educate and entertain residents and visitors from around the world. The Morean Hot Shop and Glass Studio is a wonderful place to see glass art up close and personal. It is a great complement to our world-renowned Chihuly Collection on Beach Drive," Spurgeon explains.

The Morean Hot Shop offers a *Personal Glass Experience* for members and visitors. During the one-on-one class, they will create their own piece of glass art with the help of one of the professional glass artists. The *Personal Glass Experience* costs $75 for a 30-minute 1-on-1 session. Four Personal Glass Experiences are offered each day: Noon, 12:30pm, 5pm and 5:30pm. Pre-registration is required. *Personal Glass Experience* art can be picked up a day or two later after it cools.

Periodically, they offer a Ladies Night at the Hot Shop. Enrollment is limited to five and each person will create their own colorful piece of glass art, just like Dale Chihuly!

If creating glass is not your thing, but owning it is, you can buy their wonderful creations in The Morean Glass Studio retail store, which is full of art made on site. The store, open noon to 5pm daily is located at 700 1st Avenue N.

"Everything we make is for sale in the gift shop. I have the best of both worlds. I get to use all this great equipment, and I get to see people enjoy my products," Spurgeon concludes.

The Morean Arts Center, a community-based visual arts based organization, is almost one hundred years old. It has been a major component of the St Petersburg cultural landscape since 1917. The Center is comprised of The Morean Arts Center and Gallery, The Chihuly Collection on Beach Drive, The Glass Studio and Hot Shop, and the Morean Center for Clay at the historic Seaboard Train Station on 22nd Avenue South.

They currently have over 1,000 members. Their attractions are open 363 days a year.

Get information on the Morean Hot Shop and the Morean Arts Center by calling 727- 822-7872 or visit www.MoreanArtsCenter.org.

CLEARWATER BEACH NEWSLETTER

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DELIGHTFULLY PUZZLING DALI EXHIBIT

The Dali Museum will electrify audiences again with the new Escher at The Dali exhibit. The show highlights M.C. Escher, a renowned artist, whose visual illusions puzzle and delight audiences worldwide, and is best known for his "impossible constructions" and use of tessellation. Coming on the heels of exhibitions from famed artists including Picasso, Warhol and da Vinci, Escher at The Dali adds yet another inspiring perspective for visitors, and will run through Jan 3, 2016, just prior to the Museum's grand opening of Disney & Dali: Architects of the Imagination.

M.C.Escher's "Bond of Union" ©2015 The M.C. Escher Company–The Netherlands. All rights reserved. From the collection of Herakleidon Museum, Athens, Greece.

On loan from the Herakleidon Museum in Athens, Greece, this robust exhibition features 135 works covering Escher's entire artistic career. The show includes an array of the artist's most famous works such as "Drawing Hands," "Reptiles" and "Waterfall" alongside rarely exhibited early drawings of family members, panoramas of exotic landscapes and historic architecture of Italy and Spain, original preparatory sketches, mezzotints and more.

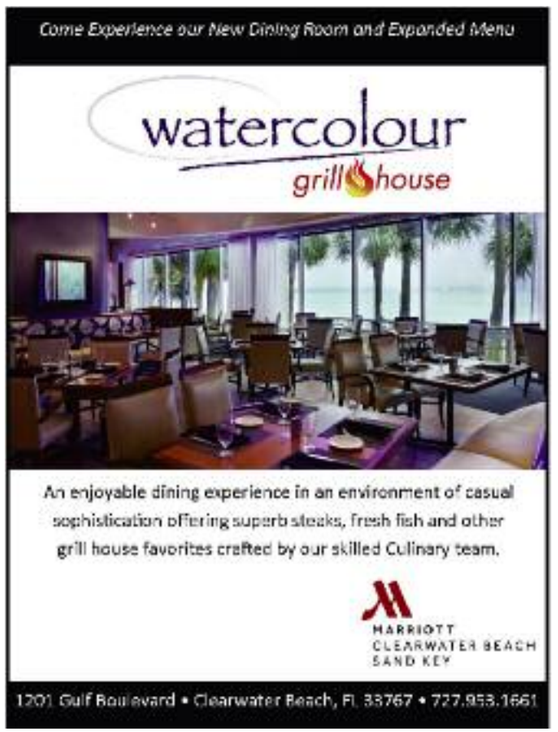
"Escher, like Dali, played in a serious way with that fundamental question of visual art – What is real? Is the world as it looks to be, or have I constructed an illusion in my mind? Escher delights every viewer with his visual sleights of hand," said Dr. Hank Hine, Dali Museum Executive Director.

Escher at The Dali features prints, drawings, a sculpture, wood blocks, a lithograph stone and posters drawn by the artist to explain his printing techniques. The exhibit delves into his exploration of infinity through tessellation, in which shapes fit together perfectly without overlapping, including an enormous woodcut "Metamorphosis" (1939-40) which spans 13-1/2 feet. "Escher's work is captivating on many levels," said Curator of the Collection, Joan Kropf. "His images are realistic but challenging, accessible but elusive, entertaining but serious. This Escher collection has only been shown at a handful of locations in the U.S. and never in Florida – this is a rare treat for our visitors."

Special exhibitions, including "Escher at The Dali," are included in the price of Museum admission along with complimentary audio guides; private, docent-led tours are available for a fee and upon advanced reservation. For advance-purchase tickets visit TheDali.org/tickets. To book a private tour, call (727) 628-4778.

The Dali Museum is located at One Dali Boulevard, St. Petersburg. For additional information contact 727-823-3767 or visit TheDali.org.

CLEARWATER BEACH NEWSLETTER



SUNCOAST JAZZ CLASSIC

Its the Silver Jubilee - November 20-22

Once again, the Suncoast Jazz Classic is presenting over 20 bands and artists from our area, as well as nationally, entertaining attendees from U.S. and international locations. The bands bring their professional and highly entertaining performances to Sand Key, where they will play traditional jazz, big band, swing, rockabilly, zydeco, blues and more, in 5 simultaneous venues at the Sheraton Sand Key (1160 Gulf Blvd.) and Marriott Sand Key (1201 Gulf Blvd.) allowing attendees to move from one venue to another to hear their favorite entertainers throughout the three-day weekend. The Suncoast Jazz Classic is well known as being fan friendly, operating from morning to late at night. The Grand Finale is Sunday at 4pm.

Dance floors are available near the musicians for those interested, and a large swing dance floor is dedicated Friday night from 6pm to midnight, which begins with an hour of instruction by the Swing Time Dancers.

The Suncoast Jazz Classic is again partnering with the City of Clearwater, celebrating the city's Centennial. Another 30+ companies also partner and contribute to the success of this festival. New sponsors are also welcome.

Day tickets are on sale starting at $36 or $112 for the 3-day. Student tickets are available for $10. For information visit SuncoastJazzClassic.com or call 727-248-9441.

Suncoast Classic Jazz, Inc. is a 501c3 organization which provides substantial scholarships and educational events benefiting young musicians and the community.

SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS OFFICE IS LOOKING FOR HELP!

By Deborah Clark

With a busy 2016 election year right around the corner – which includes three countywide elections – the Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections Office must rely on qualified election workers to assist in conducting fair, secure and accurate elections.

A countywide election in Pinellas County requires over 2,000 election workers spread across our three office locations, our five early voting sites and our 222 polling places throughout the county. Election work can take many forms:

- Poll Workers – Each poll worker is assigned to work at a specific polling location on Election Day. Poll workers must be available to set up their sites before the polls open and must remain at the polling place until after the polls close.
- Early Voting Workers – Before all state and federal elections, the Supervisor of Elections staffs 3-5 early voting sites for voters who wish to cast their ballots prior to Election Day. Early Voting can begin from 10-15 days before the election and last from 8-14 days. Early voting hours range from 8-12 hours each day.
- Other Election Work – The Elections Office relies on temporary election workers to help answer phones in a Call Center environment, open mail ballots, sort and count ballots for the post election audit, process petitions for future ballot contests and initiatives, and perform other clerical tasks in support of upcoming elections.

Our poll workers serve as the backbone to our operation, offering much-needed assistance for our voters on Election Day. From setting up the polling place, to checking in voters, to handing out ballots and distributing "I Voted" stickers, our poll worker family is a vital element in conducting a successful election.

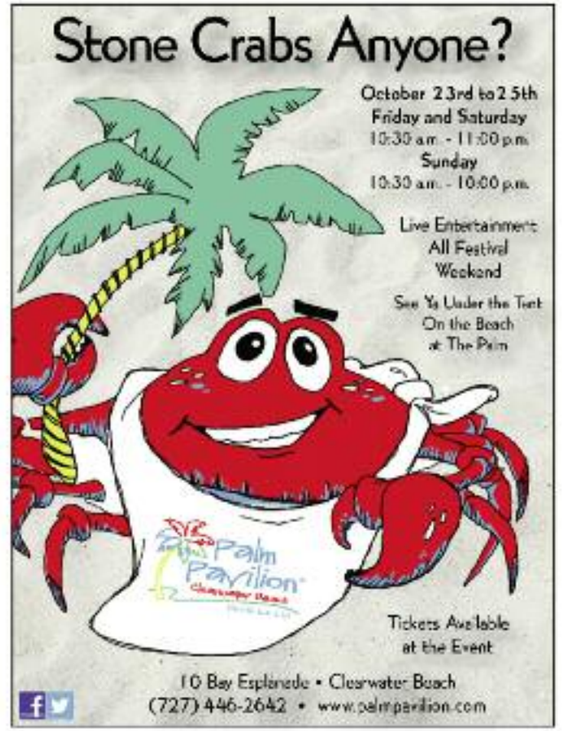
There are six poll worker positions – Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Machine Manager, Ballot Distribution Manager, Inspector and Precinct Deputy. Each role requires a different set of skills and experience.

Florida law requires the following to serve as a poll worker: Be a registered or pre-registered voter in Pinellas County, be able to read and write English, and attend the required poll worker training classes for the assigned position. And yes, Pinellas County Poll Workers are compensated for their training and for working an election. Depending on the assigned position and number of training classes, a Poll Worker can earn $265 on average in a countywide election.

Serving as an election worker at one of our three offices requires dedication, long hours and constant attention to duties. Our offices are busy throughout the year with a variety of tasks to complete – many by state-mandated deadlines, and election workers earn up to $400 a week.

To learn more about being an election worker or to apply, please visit our website – VotePinellas.com – and click on the 'Be a Poll Worker' tab on the top right-hand corner of the page, or call (727) 464-6110, or email PollWorker@VotePinellas.com.

We cannot conduct elections without quality election workers. We encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to fulfill a civic duty and make a difference in your community.



RAYS BROADCASTER'S NEW BOOK

With Stories about Harry Caray, George Steinbrenner and 18 seasons of Rays' History

Dewayne and wife Carla at the Quantum Leap Farm

Early in a new book by Dewayne Staats, the longtime play-by-play TV announcer for the Tampa Bay Rays, tells how - as a 10-year-old - he became entranced with the voices that brought baseball to life over the radio airwaves, leading him to write a fan letter to his idol, Houston broadcaster Gene Elston.

Elston typed a letter back to Staats later in that summer of 1962, starting a relationship that lasted through high school and college, as Staats quickly worked his way up from minor-league broadcast booths to landing a job as the Houston Astros' play-by-play TV announcer at just 23, sitting next to future Hall of Fame announcer Elston.

From there, Staats built one of the top broadcasting careers in baseball, a 40-year run that has included sharing the booth with Hall of Famers Harry Caray for Chicago Cubs games and Tony Kubek for New York Yankees games, followed by three years doing national broadcasts for ESPN before joining the then-Tampa Bay Devil Rays for their inaugural season in 1998.

In the new book, "Position to Win: A Look at Baseball and Life From the Best Seat in the House," (Advance Ink Publishing) Staats and co-author Dave Scheiber recount a variety of fascinating and humorous anecdotes from Staats' career:

• In a chapter about his years with the Cubs from 1985-89, Staats describes the friction that preceded him between Caray and fellow broadcasting giant Milo Hamilton. The tension between the two was palpable, spilling into verbal antics involving, wackily enough, the San Diego Chicken and Bozo the Clown.

• While working with Kubek as a Yankees broadcaster in 1990-94, Staats pranked Yankees manager Buck Showalter by doing a dead-on Harry Caray impression over the phone. (Showalter was not pleased, but later forgave him.)

• At one point, Yankees owner George Steinbrenner tried to get Kubek fired from the MSG Network team, but changed his mind, stressing that he liked "that Staats kid" - even though he hated how Kubek criticized the Boss' moves.

• When Staats went down to the field to throw out a ceremonial pitch at Tropicana Field in 2005, then-broadcast partner Joe Magrane told viewers it was "Jeopardy" host Alex Trebek, and ESPN ran with the story for a full 24 hours.

• The book spans the entire history of the Rays, giving vivid descriptions of their miracle Game 162 in 2011, along with the team's rags-to-riches 2008 run to the World Series. The reminiscence of the Series includes a riveting section about the terrible Philadelphia weather and the challenges faced by family and friends at Citizens Bank Park.

In calling almost 6,000 Major League games, Staats has witnessed nine no-hitters, including Nolan Ryan's record-breaking fifth and the inspirational no-hitter thrown by New York's Jim Abbott. He also saw Wade Boggs and Derek Jeter reach the 3,000-hit mark with home runs, the first two players in major league history ever to achieve that feat.

"Position to Win" includes high praise of Staats from such baseball luminaries as Ryan, Kubek, Caray, Joe Maddon, Don Mattingly and many others, along with an extensive photo gallery.

Throughout, Staats underscores a central message – putting oneself in a "position to win" with persistence, preparation and hard work in order to take advantage of opportunities that arise in life. The book is also a deeply personal story, addressing love, loss, resilience and faith – and a testament to the powerful bonds of family.

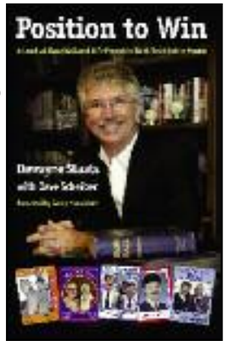
A portion of the proceeds from "Position to Win" is being donated to two noteworthy charitable organizations based in the Tampa Bay area:

• Quantum Leap Farm, an Odessa, Fla. facility, is a nationally recognized equine therapy program that helps injured and disabled adults and children – including many combat veterans and first responders dealing with PTSD – achieve therapeutic goals by engaging them with horses.

• The Poynter Institute's Write Field program in St. Petersburg, Fla., which receives support from the Rays, is designed to improve the academic performance and life skills of selected minority middle school boys in Pinellas County. The Write Field has had a significant positive impact on graduation rates for the boys in the program

Co-author Dave Scheiber is a veteran Florida-based author and national award-winning journalist. He is also the co-author of two critically acclaimed books, "Covert: My Years Infiltrating the Mob" and "Surviving the Shadows: A Journey of Hope Into Post-Traumatic Stress."

"Position to Win" is available on Amazon.com and other major outlets, including the Rays' gift shop at Tropicana Field and the team merchandise store in downtown Tampa located at 400 N. Tampa St.



Local Organizational News

SAND KEY CIVIC ASSOCIATION

They meet monthly, on the first Wednesday of the month at 7pm, in the Clearwater Community Sailing Center. The next meetings are November 4 and December 2.

They paid for the replacement of several bus benches along Gulf Blvd in Sand Key. They are proud to have been involved in the project as many of the benches were over 20 years old and the sun and salt air had caused the old metal benches to deteriorate. The new benches should provide attractive resting spots for many years to come. The old benches were donated to the Clearwater Sailing Center where they are being refurbished, for a second life.

All residents of Sand Key condominiums that are members of SKCA are automatically members of the association, too. This year, only 39% of all the individual condo units are members of SKCA." E-mail President Al Zimmerman at AL.Zimmerman2@Verizon.net.

ISLAND ESTATES WOMAN'S CLUB

Tuesday, October 20 – at Island Way Grill. The Eighth Annual "PINK IS BEAUTIFUL" Breast Cancer Fundraiser with speaker Sherri Fry from the Mammography Voucher Program. Everybody is encouraged to wear pink! Fun and frivolity abound with a Silent Auction, Money Tree, Give-Aways, Saleable Items, and everything in between. Total proceeds go to the Mammogram-Vouchers Program, for those in the community not able to afford one.

Tuesday, November 17 – at The Reef Steak & Seafood Co. The speaker is Hoyt Hamilton, Council Member, with updates on Clearwater Beach/Publix Development.

Wednesday, December 9 – Carlouel Yacht Club, with speaker Patti Hanks, Executive Director, Clothes to Kids. This is a rare luncheons not held on a Tuesday and is a Musical Holiday Celebration. All Holiday donations go to Clothes to Kids. Entertainment by Largo High Madrigals.

They meet monthly from September – May and socials always include lunch with guest speakers, entertainment, and fundraisers. The group encourages a spirit of goodwill and cooperation in affairs pertaining to the welfare and betterment of the community. Membership is open to all, on the Island and off – for Membership information, call Joan Landreth, at 727-812-8078. For more information, call President Lynn McCaskill at 430-1911. Reservations, call Wendy Bouffard, at 727-441-8211. Dues are $20.

CLEARWATER GARDEN CLUB

They are proud to announce, their new Community Garden has 36 plots and they already have over 25 plots reserved by area residents. It is in the East Gateway neighborhood, and was built with the help and donations of Lowe's Hardware Store. They held several fund raising events and dinners to help pay for this project. Nature's Food Patch and USAmeriBank were also sponsors.

Friday, November 13 (10am) - A Holiday Wreath Workshop let by Marcia Clark, who graduated from the National Garden Club's Flower Show School.

Their Annual Trash to Treasure Sale is November 14 from 8am to 4pm at the Clubhouse on Seminole Street. Donate now and plan to attend to buy clothes, jewelry, collectibles, furniture, plants and garden stuff.

They meet twice a month from October through May, at 405 Seminole Street, Clearwater. For information, contact President Alice Jarvis, bgjala@aol.com or call 391-3066. Get more information at www.ClearwaterGardenClub.org.

CLEARWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Annual Fall Fish Fry is Saturday, November 7 at the Plumb House Museum. The day begins at 11:30 am, with serving starting at noon. Adults $12

Thursday Tours are still held on the first and third Thursdays (all year) from 8:30 to 11:30am. Saturday Hours will resume in November.

They are still trying to finance their new Historical Museum inside the old South Ward Elementary School on South Ft Harrison, which was built in 1906.

Membership is $10 for individuals, $5 students, $20 family, $150 corporate, $250 life and $500 patron. Call Bill Wallace 446-2676 or Michael Sanders 434-1684. Visit www.ClearwaterHistoricalSociety.org for information.

ISLAND ESTATES CIVIC ASSN.

Their Second Annual Monster Mash Halloween Costume Parade for ALL ages and their pets is Saturday, October 31. Parade lineup will be on Dory north of Publix at 10:30am. Parade route is along Island Way. Refreshments will be offered at the end of the parade.

Unfortunately, their Fun Run was canceled due to lightning and drenching rain. The cheerful crowd enjoyed the party at the Island Way Grill anyway, and the event will be held again next year. If you did not receive your t-shirt and goody bag, pick it up at the Chapel by the Sea office during business hours.

This community organization is comprised of Island Estates residents and business owners, with a mission to promote the safety, welfare, spirit and unique lifestyle of the Island Estates community. They promote community interests while assisting and support members. They meet the second Monday of each month in the new Classroom Building in the Clearwater Aquarium. The next meetings are November 9 and December 14. Contact President Mary Lau at 813-335-6770.

CLEARWATER COMMUNITY WOMAN'S CLUB

November 12, 12:30pm - Annual Afternoon with the Author at the Wildflower Café on South Ft Harrison. Sherry Gore, featured author and food editor of the Sarasota / Pinecraft will speak. She recently published a beautiful cookbook called, ***Me, Myself and Pie***. There will be a pie tasting and a chance to buy her autographed book. Lunch is $25. Reservations are required.

They are looking for Daisy Grant nominations. Selected local charities will receive up to $2000 in grants issued at their annual Daisy Grants Fashion Show on March 13, 2016. The Club has been awarding these grants for eight years to charities demonstrating a need for specific fund uses. Interested Charities can apply on line at www.ClearwaterCWC.org. Applications must be postmarked by January 6th.

The Club is a member club of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), one of the world's largest and oldest volunteer service organizations. They meet monthly on the third Tuesday of the month at 11 am, at the Clearwater Main Library, 100 N, Cleveland Street. For information about any meeting, call Kay Estock at 536-7737 or contact Martha Hickey at 813-765-6219. Visit www.ClearwaterCWC.org.

CLEARWATER BEACH NEWSLETTER

CLEARWATER BEACH NEWSLETTER

MEET MIKE CONNOR

The Developer of the new North Beach Parking Plaza

Developer Mike Connor likes to build big things, but he did not always plan to be a builder. Growing up in West Palm Beach and Broward County, Connor wanted to be a lawyer and graduated from Stetson Law School, specializing in Real Estate Law.

After graduation, Connor interned with two real estate developers - including Charles Rutenburg, working in Retail Development. After three years, he broke off on his own, and in 1988, formed Paradise Ventures a multi-dimensional Construction Management company offering Development Management, Dispositions, Acquisitions, Advisory Services and Leasing.

When he was 28, one of his first projects was to build a Publix Grocery Store. Since then, he has built nearly 60 more and over 100 Walgreens in eight states. Paradise Ventures has built more Publix and Walgreen stores than any other developer in the U.S.

Connor's company specialized in building "Power Centers," an industry term used to describe a large shopping center containing a major anchor (usually a national hardware, retail or grocery store and/or a movie theater). Paradise Ventures built the Home Depot Center on Ulmerton Rd. across from Largo Mall.

Connor usually self-develops, but at times works with partners. His company has expanded to urban and beach community re-development. Currently, half his business is freestanding tenants such as Starbucks, Walgreen's, and Circle K and half are multi-tenant retail centers.

Recently, Paradise Ventures bought the land and developed Clearwater Beach's two-story Walgreens at the roundabout. The builder was Joe Kokolakis.

"Mike Connors has been a close personal friend and business partner for quite some time. Throughout our relationship, I have been amazed at his enthusiasm and attention to detail. His daily input led to the unique, non-typical Walgreens we developed on Clearwater Beach," says Joe Kokolakis, President of Kokolakis Contracting Co.

Connor's newest project is the North Beach Parking Plaza, a seven-story parking garage on the north end of Clearwater Beach, behind the Pelican Plaza Shopping Center.

"It is more than just a parking garage," says Connor. "It will be a state of the art parking and mixed use facility with retail and two new restaurants on the ground level.

Parking will be on the ground level, rooftop and on 7th floor. Of the 702 parking spaces, 450 belong to the city; 252 are ours," he adds.

"Mike's commitment to aesthetics will again be evident with the new North Beach Parking Garage, Kokolakis, continues. "With metal decorative elements, glass elevator and LED lighting, this six-floor precast structure will be fully integrated into the surrounding community. Mike is great family man first, a great friend second, and a great businessman third. He has proven to be successful with all three."

The garage's parking area will be open 24 / 7 with full security, an attendant, emergency aid boxes, security cameras everywhere and a license plate recognition system. A state-of-the-art pay method will be installed allowing you to pay with a phone app.

"I have had the pleasure of knowing Mike since he worked with Charles Rutenberg's development company," Bill Fisher with AIA Fisher and

Mike & Roxanne Connor with their son.

Associates, LLC says. "Since then, we at Fisher Architects have worked with Mike's ventures, to develop hundreds of Walgreens, Shopping Centers and now Clearwater Beach's North Beach Parking Garage. In large part due to Mike's perseverance, the much needed garage is becoming a reality when others were unable to make it happen. While some try to get away with the minimum, Mike Connor's insistence on quality and detail, set him apart from the rest, as is case with the parking garage, a contributing factor in making this portion of the City of Clearwater's Beach-By-Design vision a reality," Fisher concludes.

"This project could never have been done without the help and cooperation of The City of Clearwater," Connor reveals. "I want to thank City Manager Bill Horne, City Attorney Pam Atkin, Assistant City Manager Rod Irwin, Michael Delk, Director of Planning and Development, the City Commission and Mayor George Cretekos."

"The garage at Pelican Walk is a public-private partnership to provide parking for businesses and employees in the Mandalay commercial corridor. Additional parking in this area was outlined in Beach by Design and although there have been many delays over the years, this garage has remained a priority," explains George Cretekos, Mayor of Clearwater.

While Connor used to build projects around Florida and beyond, now he focuses only on Florida, primarily the Pinellas Beaches. He lives in Safety Harbor with his wife, Roxanne. They have one son. Connor says he loves the beach area and although he lives in Safety Harbor, he has been a longtime weekend resident of Clearwater Beach.

The parking garage has broken ground and should take 9-10 months to complete, including the retail stores.

CLEARWATER BEACH CHAMBER 20 YEARS LATER

The Clearwater Beach Chamber of Commerce is celebrating their 20th Anniversary, having been created November 28 1995. Prior to that, beach businesses were represented by the Greater Clearwater Chamber, located on the mainland. But, some beach business owners felt they were not getting enough representation from a group whose focus was the whole city, and decided to form their own Chamber.

Local real estate broker David Little, Clearwater Beach Civic Association President John Doran, and beach motel owner Dr. Ken Rosenow were the primary organizers. They hammered out a mission statement, filed the Article of Incorporation and then scheduled their first meeting.

The first organizational meeting was held a week after the official Incorporation inside the Beach Diner, a popular restaurant that no longer exists. "This was not a popular thing to do," remembers David Little, one of the founders. "I served as a consultant on the Greater Clearwater Chamber's Advisory Board. "I learned the mainland Chamber did not care about the beach's business. The City did not either."

Paul Kelly, a local contractor, was elected the first Chamber President. Kelly owned the Show Queen Dinner boat and a few local vacation rentals. "David, John and Dr. Rosenow had done most of the leg work," remembers Kelly. "Chuck Pollick, of the Clearwater Beach Gazette, nominated me for President. I served for the first two years."

"We all went out and recruited others to join. I think we had 100 that first year," says Kelly. "The Regional Chamber was not happy with us."

The new charter stated that it would not be a political group. "Our focus was to be on nothing but tourism and redevelopment," said David Little. "But when competing for tourism tax dollars—and city and county support—it is hard to remain nonpolitical."

"Back then, Al and I lived in Island Estates and owned The Sea Cloud on Bayway, a small Ma & Pa motel," says the first Executive Director, Sheila Cole. "I was asked to attend a meeting at the Beach Diner and told to bring my checkbook. There were only 19 people there; the rest is history."

Sheila was elected Program Chairman, then President, then Membership Chairman, and then Executive Director. "It was a dream job," Sheila adds. "It was never work. I am amazed by the number of wonderful relationships I made there."

"It was an honor for me when Sheila Cole was retiringand I was asked to take the reins," says Darlene Kole, the Chamber's current CEO. "It was also a big responsibility. The founders had worked very hard and I was determined to fulfil their expectations and continue on with their mission. That was 5 ½ years ago and today we have over 275 members, a website that is in 91 languages visited by over 15,000 people each month and an outstanding Social Media campaign. We have succeeded in carrying on the mission of this Chamber

Today the Beach Chamber is a healthy, nonprofit organization with members representing over 100 beach accommodations in addition to other area businesses and the residents of Clearwater Beach. With a budget of $300,000 a year, they have 3 full time employees, operate a tourism kiosk inside the Beachwalk Surf Styles and an office. They sponsor the popular Clearwater Restaurant Week, The Chalk Walk, a golf tournament, host the annual New Year's Eve Fireworks show and other annual events. For more of what they do or to get involved, visit BeachChamber.com.

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MEET THE NEW SAND KEY COAST GUARD STATION COMMANDER

Larry Zeruth, standing next to a Life Ring, from his last command, 'The Cypress', a 225' ocean-going buoy tender

Larry Zeruth (43) became the new Commanding Officer of the Sand Key Coast Guard Station on June 18th. He is a Chief Warrant Officer whose specialty is as a Boatswain, which is someone in charge of equipment such as rigging, anchors, cables, etc. Zeruth replaced CO Steven McDonnell who retired from the Coast Guard after 28 years.

Zeruth has been with the Coast Guard 25 years. His father was in the Navy for 8 years, followed by 12 years in the Coast Guard. Zeruth enlisted in the Coast Guard at age 17, directly out of high school. He has served on five Coast Guard cutters and six small boat stations. His last unit was the 225-foot ocean-going buoy tender, USCGC CYPRESS, whose home port was in Pensacola. Zeruth has served in numerous command cadre positions. This is his second command billet.

Station Sand Key works directly for U.S. Coast Guard Sector St Petersburg which is head-quartered in downtown St Petersburg. Sand Key is responsible for 80 miles of coast line from Pasco County's Aripeka to Johns Pass.

Station Sand Key is involved in about 200 search and rescues each year. Zeruth says the number would be much higher if it were not for the other agencies in the area. Zeruth's group interacts daily with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, the Clearwater Police Department, Pasco and Pinellas County Fire and Rescue Departments and the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Zeruth is responsible for 75 people including both active duty and reservists, as well as close to 400 Coast Guard Auxiliarists. "I cannot say enough good stuff about the Coast Guard Auxiliary," he adds. "Those guys are only volunteers but they do everything. There are nearly 400 of them backing us up daily. They do inspections and help with rescues. Recently, the Auxiliary has been learning our communications/dispatch center and we have four Auxiliary chefs helping in our dining facility."

Zeruth words of safety? "Take a safe boating class, file float plans, know your boat including what's in it, and always wear your life jacket."

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20 YEARS OF SUNSETS

Jean Hagan, the person behind Sunsets at Pier 60

Sunsets at Pier 60 is a daily festival held on the Clearwater Beach Pier seven days a week, 365 days a year. These things don't just happen, someone has to be the organizer. That someone is Jean Hagan. She has been running it since 2000.

The first Sunset Festival started in March of 1995. Gerri Raymond, a member of the Regional Chamber first conceived the idea of The Sunsets at Pier 60. She formed a group that included John Doran, Julie Nichols, Steve Chandler, Jay Keyes and Gerri Huskins. The not-for-profit business manages the activities at the Sunset Festival, collects booth fees and pays someone to be there seven days a week.

In the beginning, Jean was just a vendor selling her wares. Several other people were the coordinators, but she soon found herself filling in on days they could not be there. In June of 2000, Jean was offered the role of full time coordinator. She is at the pier five nights a week, ever since.

"Jean has been with the festival since its humble beginnings, twenty years ago. Much of the festival's success has been a result of her dedication and her understanding of the importance of being an ambassador to those visiting Clearwater Beach. She is like family to my husband Steve and I," explains Lisa Chandler, Barefoot Beach House and Concessions.

Dallas Saupe, The Fire Guy

On a normal evening, there can be anywhere from 25 to 45 vendors. It varies with the time of the year and the day of the week. All vendors are pre-approved by Jean and a small committee. Products must be original and hand-made. Vendors must submit samples of their work. "They must be selling things they actually make," says Jean. "We want this to be a craft show with everything locally made. Sometimes we actually go to their house or shop and verify they are making the products," Jean adds.

"I cannot imagine a more challenging position than to be amongst that many talented and temperamental artists, and trying to manage those who showed up for the nightly event. Jean is a rare gem, and done an incredible job over all these years," says Gerri Raymond, founder of the Pier 60 Sunset Festival.

The Sunset Festival happens seven days a week. "Our biggest challenge is the weather - rain and wind," says Jean. "Sometimes we do not know if the festival is a go until set-up time. I am constantly watching the weather on my smart-phone."

The time of the set-up and length of the festival varies throughout the year. Daylight savings time has a lot to do with it. In the summer, set-up might begin at 5:30pm and the festival lasts until 10pm. later in the year, it changes and begins at 4pm and is over by 8pm.

There are three types of vendors, based on seniority. Vendors are not always in the same location. They hold a lottery every day before set-up begins. No one is permanently stuck with a bad location, not that there really is was one. Vendors are not allowed to bring a generator. There are plenty of power outlets on the pier.

"Jean and I have been working together for 20 years. She is wonderful to work with. Her dedication to the event is greatly appreciated by all the performers," exclaimed Dallas Saupe, The Fire Guy performer.

Jean and Larry at their booth

Jean is still a vendor today. She sells pewter jewelry, fan pulls and aluminum beaded jewelry. Larry, her other half, is right there by her side all the time, helping to manage every show.

When Darlene Kole, CEO of the Clearwater Beach Chamber of Commerce was asked about Jean, she said, "Jean Hagen is a true treasure, like a sparkling bright light in the sand. She has been such an integral part of the Sunsets at Pier 60 for 20 years. Not only is she one of the crafters that participates, she has managed the event for many years. Jean's commitment to our beach and our visitors' enjoyment of it, has been remarkable. She has been a Director of the Clearwater Beach Chamber of Commerce. She really cares about our guests' experience, and about the crafters and artisans that entertain. Congratulations Jean on 20 years of making history."

So the next time you visit the Clearwater Beach Sunset Festival, think of Jean, because she is probably working.

Photos courtesy of BellearImages.com

CLEARWATER BEACH NEWSLETTER

SOCIAL SECURITY: AARP STUDY SHOWS NEED FOR ADVICE

by Ray Ferrara, ProVise Management Group

AARP and the Financial Planning Association (FPA) recently conducted a study regarding the financial literacy about Social Security benefits which are a significant part of retirement income for many individuals. Only 9% of those surveyed said they were "very knowledgeable" and only 50% said they were "somewhat knowledgeable" about how Social Security benefits are determined. Yet 39% said that Social Security would represent a majority of their income in retirement. In reality, the percentage is closer to 50% for young retirees and over 60% for those that reach age 80. (Source: AARP) This is a major disconnect.

39% didn't know that they could claim Social Security as early as age 62. 88% intend to wait until full retirement age (66 or 67 depending on your birth date). Prior to this age, the benefit is reduced and a recipient may only earn a limited amount of money before they are penalized by losing part or all of their Social Security benefit.

Only 13% intend to wait until age 70 when the maximum benefit is available. For those recipients that have divorced, they may be able to make a claim on the ex-spouse's benefit if 50% of his/her benefit is greater than the one's own. Unfortunately, 34% thought you had to be married for only five years to claim the benefit under this provision, while 74% didn't know that you have to be married for a minimum of 10 years.

So where do people go to get advice regarding Social Security benefits? While you might think Social Security itself, only 45% seek their advice. The number one source is family and friends at 46%. This doesn't leave much room for professional advice. This is especially disconcerting given the importance of the decision. When asked to estimate the benefit amount, 67% overestimated and 16% underestimated, meaning a whopping 83% are uninformed.

By some estimates, there may be up to thousands of ways to claim Social Security for a married couple. Making this decision without the help of a professional means you could be leaving tens of thousands of income on the table. Why would you want to do this when we can use sophisticated computer software to help you make a good decision?

Just call our office and we will provide you with specific information to help you plan for your Social Security benefits. And the best part? We will do so at no cost or obligation to you. Please call Evelyn Sheridan in our office at 727-441-9022 to receive you complimentary report.

Investment Advisory Services may be offered through ProVise Management Group, LLC.

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More Organizational News

CLEARWATER BEACH ROTARY

Help them raise funds by parking in the Rotary lot during the Clearwater Jazz Holiday. It is on the northwest corner of Drew St. and Oscelola Ave., 2 blocks north of Cleveland St.

The club will celebrate their 62nd birthday on November 2. They hold weekly meetings at the Carlouel Yacht Club every Thursday at noon. Nick Ekonomides, President, can be reached at 447-1075. ClearwaterBeachRotary.com

PINELLAS REPUBLICAN PARTY

The Pinellas County Republican Party meets once a month on the second Monday of each month. The next meeting is November 10th at 7pm. All meetings are held at Banquet Masters, 13344 49th Street North, Clearwater. New members are invited at 6pm for orientation. Call Charlotte Smith, at 539-6009 for more information or visit www.PinellasRepublicans.com.

SUNCOAST CAMERA CLUB

Make friends with people who share your interests, improve your photography and share your work. The next meeting is October 27th at The Hospice of Florida, 5771 Roosevelt Blvd at 7pm. Visit SuncoastCameraClub.org or call Veronica Serra at 512-4878.

MILITARY ORDER OF THE WORLD WARS

The Clearwater Chapter of the Military Order of the World Wars meets for lunch on the first Tuesday of each month at the Belleair Country Club. Social hour begins at 11:30am followed by lunch and a short program. Next meetings are November 3 and December 1. Members are retired active duty Military Officers and their spouses or widows. They welcome new members. To RSVP for lunch or to consider joining, call LTC. George Smith at 786-5578.

DAUGHTERS OF AMERICAN REVOLUTION (DAR)

They meet on the third Friday of every month at the Belleair Country Club for a luncheon beginning at 11:30am. To join, please call Linda Mintz at 488-1068

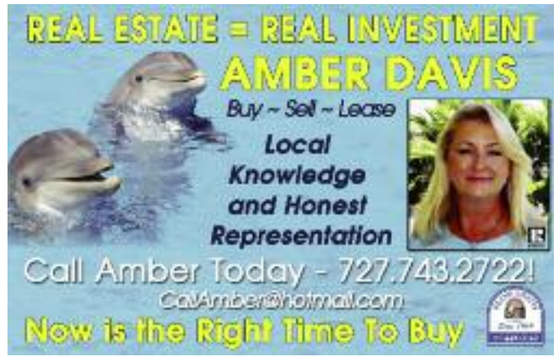
FRIENDS OF THE BEACH REC CENTER & LIBRARY

The Rec Center will be closed from mid-December to the end of February due to remodeling. The Fitness Center and The Library will remain open. Please check with your activity director to see if your function has been cancelled or moved elsewhere

They work to support and encourage use of the library and recreation center, located at 69 Bay Esplanade Street. Membership is FREE. Donations, which help provide opportunities for recreation, learning and entertainment, are still welcome. They meet for lunch at Noon on the third Monday of each month at the Beach Recreation Center. The next meetings are October 19, November 16 and December 21. Guests are welcome. Call Donna Elilason, 727-442-4184 or Linda Owens 260-894-0270.

BELLEAIR GARDEN CLUB

The club features a monthly tea & general meeting on the first Wednesday of the month at 1pm, as well as horticulture programs on the second Wednesday of the month at 9:30 am at the Belleair Garden Club at 903 Ponce de Leon Blvd., in the Town of Belleair. Upcoming events include a field trip to the Sunken Gardens, Orchid Extravaganzas. Club membership is $50 per year, couples are $55 and seasonal members $25. Guests are welcome. For information, contact new President, Laura Katz, 581-4153 or email Gbycwm@Yahoo.com for more information. Next month's meetings are November 4 and 19.



More Organizational News

CLEARWATER BEACH ASSOCIATION

They now meet the second Tuesday of each month at the Chapel by the Sea Church. The next meetings are Tuesday, November 3 and December 1 at 6:30 pm. All members, or those wishing to join, are welcome to attend.

Their Annual Holiday Party will be Friday, December 11, at the Chapel by the Sea. Even if you are not a member, plan to attend and bring a neighbor.

The Annual Christmas Caroling night is Tuesday, December 22nd. Everyone is welcome. Meet at the Mandalay Park beside the Fire Station at 7pm. Bring a chair or blanket. Refreshments will be served

Membership is only $25 per household. Make checks payable to CBA, and mail to PO Box 3295, Clearwater Beach, FL 33767. Contact President Chip Abrahamsen, ChipAbrahamsen@Gmail.com or board member Elizabeth Prast at 859-802-6110, ESPHOME@Yahoo.com, for information. Visit www.ClearwaterFlBeachAssociation.com.

CLEARWATER YACHT CLUB

Even if you don't have a boat, you can join the Clearwater Yacht Club in Clearwater Beach as a social member and enjoy their great parties and social events. Many members don't have a boat. Most of their social activities center around regular parties held at their in-house restaurant or waterfront Tiki-Bar.

Their Cruiser's group had ten boats spend the weekend at Bradenton's Riviera Dunes Marina in September. They took a side trip to tour the Motorworks Brewery in Bradenton and had a lot of fun and great beer.

Reading Club for Kids - This new group is open to the public. Contact the Yacht Club for dates and details.

Halloween Parade - Open to the public, when accompanied by a member, the parade is for children.

To learn more visit www. Clwyc.org, email Office@CLWYC.org or call 447-6000.

ISLAND ESTATES YACHT CLUB

Their Holiday Lighted Boat Parade, one of the largest, oldest and most popular lighted boat parades in the Tampa Bay area, is December 12th beginning around 6:30pm. There is no entry fee and the many prizes are donated by area businesses. The Captain's meeting is Thursday, December 10th at the Clearwater Yacht Club. Call Capt Scott Sanders at 215-5730 or email him at ScottSanders62@Gmail.com to participate.

The Island Estates Yacht Club holds monthly meetings, events and parties as well as the December Annual Memorial Boat Parade. Memberships are available and owning a boat is not required. Contact Commodore Paul Lightfoot 727-744-1728 or Rear Commodore Mary O'Connor 727-595-5952 for information.

NEWCOMER'S CLUB

Are you new to our area and just have not been able to meet anyone? Joining this new, organization which is really a social club to help relocated residents develop new friends and acquaintances. You do not really have to be a newcomer to join; many existing members already live in the immediate area. The ladies meet monthly at local restaurants for lunch with guest speakers Afterwards, many stay and play cards or visit. Call Marie Micheel at 530-5194 or visit www.WelcomeNewComerClub.com.

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