



# Sand Key's

# Early Days



While producing this newsletter for the past nine-plus years, the subject of Sand Key during the late 1960s and early '70s regularly pops up. Folks frequently talk about the big beach parties held there when they were in their late teens and early twenties. That was before there were any hotels or condos—almost 60 years ago.

Before its building boom, Sand Key (shown above in 1950), was nothing but sand dunes, Australian pines and sandspurs. Lots and lots of sandspurs. The first bridge, a drawbridge, connecting Sand Key to Clearwater Beach opened in 1963. Before that, people had to come by boat or drive through Belleair Beach.

The road through Sand Key, now Gulf Boulevard, was not paved, or even straight. The constant flow of cars, trucks and jeeps created a sandy dirt path that ran between the Gulf and the intracoastal from Belleair Beach's northern city limits, where there were gates that were never locked, to the edge of Clearwater Pass. Often, you could find a car stuck in the deep sand on either side.

Ed Wright, a wealthy landowner, owned almost all of Sand Key. His house was situated in the middle of the island on the Gulf and had its own pier. He spent time there when he wanted to get away from "the city" (St. Petersburg)

"Ed Wright gave us the keys to his beach house," says Kathy Mortensen, former Mayor of Belleair Beach. "He trusted us with his personal house. All he asked was for us to lock it up and keep it clean."

Hundreds of kids in the 1960s claimed Sand Key as their private "party island."

During the day, families pitched their chairs on the beach and on cooler days, started bonfires. At sunset, however, the adults would pack up and leave. As day turned to night, young people from Clearwater, Largo and Seminole High Schools streamed in. Amid sand dunes on the left and a field of trees on the right, guys in their cars and trucks returned, like nesting birds, to their "usual" parking places.

They brought firewood, and possibly some beverages and their dates. Their bonfires weren't the only things smoldering between the dunes as they romanced the night away.

On any given weekend, there would be hundreds of cars creeping their way north to their "desired" parking space after sunset. After a night of fun and romance, they headed home, unless they were stuck in the sand, that is. Hey...it wasn't called Sand Key for nothing !

"Belleair Beach only had one policeman—Sam Whitman, slightly reminiscent of Mayberry RFD. If anyone was going to catch you drinking on Sand Key, it was Officer Sam. But he did not bother us. He would actually help when we got our cars stuck," said Gordon Geissler, a longtime resident of Belleair Beach.

Everything changed when Ed Wright died in 1969. In his will, he left most of his land holdings, including Sand Key, to his longtime personal secretary Ruth Kirby. She promptly sold the property to various developers and left the state. US Steel bought 157 acres.

Over the next decade, the playground for hundreds of families and young people disappeared. The pristine area called Sand Key was slowly converted into condo after condo, with a few large hotels. Today there are two dozen high rise buildings, with approximately 3,000 units that are home to over 5,000 people living on Sand Key. Only Sand Key Park at the northwest end of the island resembles the area's earlier party times.

*Continued on page 11*

Story by Bob Griffin, Publisher

Photos courtesy of Heritage Village Archives & Library

**CREDITS**



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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, Sand Key Realty or the Island Estates UPS.

We hope you enjoyed our newsletter. We want your input. Did you like this issue? What suggestions do you have for future articles? Call or email us with your comments, or take our online survey at beachnewsletters.com.

Thank you for reading, Bob & Becky Griffin, 727-517-1997 bob@griffindirectories.com

**SEE YOU AGAIN IN AUGUST!**

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**CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS**

<b>JUNE</b>			
St Pete Pride Parade			22
Flag Day	14	Simmer And Sift Museum Fine Art	27
National Garbage Man Day	17	Dolphin Tale Actors CMA	21-26
Father's Day	17	Parents' Day	22
Summer Begins	21	Grouper Week	23-30
Family Fun Nights Beach Pool	22	Sunset Run At S & Key Park	27
Sunset Run At Sand Key Park	22	National Chicken Wing Day	28
<b>JULY</b>		<b>AUGUST</b>	
Independence Day	4	Beach Book Club Beaches Library	1
Fire Works Clearwater Harbor	4	Family Fun Nights Beach Pool	3
Family Fun Nights Beach Pool	6	Back-To-School Tax Free Day	3-5
World Chocolate Day	7	Beaches Aquatic Center Closes	12
All Star Game MLB	10	Beach Pool Closes	12
Sunset Run at Sand Key Park	13	Public School Begins	13
Dinghy Poker Run Clearwater Yacht Club	14	Property Tax Notices Mailed	13
Civic Assoc. Causeway Clean Up	14	Cool Art Show Coliseum	14-15
Family Fun Nights Beach Pool	20	Backwater's 17th Anniversary Party	22
Pitch-For-Pink,	20	Chamber Night Spectrum Field	24
Mahjong & Games Beaches Library	21	Primary Elections	28

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## Did You Know

**THE POOL IS OPEN** The Beach Aquatic Center is open daily, Mon-Fri - 10am to 7pm, Sat & Sun - 10am to 5pm, through August 12.



Once again, they are hosting Family Night Pool Parties, from 7pm to 10pm, June 22, July 6 and 20 and August 3. The cost is normal admission.

Here are your Clearwater Beach pool guards this season: Hannah Heier, Katie Cauthen, Justin Rodriguez, Luke Maloney, Morgan LaTerza, Jarrett Moore.

**PITCH FOR PINK** The Threshers and Morton Plant Health Care Foundation invite you to the 13th Annual "Pitch for Pink" at Spectrum Field, Friday, July 20th. Before the game, breast cancer survivors will walk the bases and the first 1,000 women will receive a commemorative "Pitch For Pink" ladies identity safe wallet, courtesy of Banquet Masters. An auction will be held featuring autographed pink game jerseys worn by Thresher players, autographed pink bats, gift certificates, spa packages and more. Enjoy the fireworks show after the game. Ticket are \$6, \$8, and \$10. Proceeds will benefit breast health services and programs at both Morton Plant and Morton Plant Mease Hospitals. To purchase tickets, visit ThreshersBaseball.com or call 467-4457.

**BEACH RENOURISHMENT BEGINS** In late April, the renourishment project began in Treasure Island, south of John's Pass. Unfortunately, Tropical Storm Alberto suspended work and the dredge was moved from the Egmont Shoal Area to safe harbors, as were the unloader barge and associated equipment.

They lost more than a weeks work, but still hope to move up to Sand Key in late June or July. At that point, they will work their way south to Redington over the next six months—barring any additional weather delays.

**NEW WALKOVER**

The Wetlands Walkway and Wildlife Overlook, a new section of The Florida Botanical Gardens, is now open. It completes a loop in the gardens' trails that will provide visitors a closer look at the native plants and animals that live there.



The walkway includes a boardwalk, viewing areas and new native plantings to attract wildlife by providing additional habitat. It leads guests through part of The Gardens' wetland area and opens into an overlook to give a broader view of the nature and wildlife that reside there including numerous bird species, mammals and reptiles.

The project was primarily funded by donations the Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation collects during the annual Holiday Lights event.

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**GIVING BACK**

As part of their commitment to the community, the Bank Of Tampa made a \$4,000 contribution to Clothes To Kids, a Clearwater based charity helping supply school clothes for low-income or in crisis school-aged children. In 2017, CTK provided 10,600 school wardrobes to children in Pinellas County. Find out more at [clothestokids.org](http://clothestokids.org).



**PELICAN GOLF COURSE** Behind the fences, work is continuing on the Pelican Golf Course, formerly known as the Belleview Golf & Country Club. "We have completed the grassing," says Johnny Patronis, Supervisor for Triton Building Group LLC. "We will be completing punch work and allowing it to grow in throughout the summer. Construction on The Grill and Pro Shop building is ongoing and construction of the main club house is awaiting permits." The Pelican Golf Course is projected to open in the Spring of 2019.

**TAX FREE DAYS** Florida's annual Tax Free School Supplies Shopping Days is August 3-6 Just in time for the first day of public school, August 13th.

**PLEASE HELP US IMPROVE**

We want to know what you think about our Newsletter. What do you like? What would you like us to include? Would you like to see changes? The online survey is posted at [BeachNewsletters.com](http://BeachNewsletters.com).



**RECYCLE ALUMINUM**

Used aluminum beverage cans are the most recycled item in the U.S., but other types of aluminum, such as siding, gutters, car components, storm window frames and lawn furniture can also be recycled. There is no limit to the amount of times



aluminum can be recycled. We consume the contents of over 80 trillion aluminum cans every year and over 100,000 aluminum cans are recycled each minute. In 2010 that amounted to 53 billion cans, not even 1%. A used aluminum can can be recycled and back on the grocery shelf as a new can in as little as 60 days. That's closed loop recycling at its finest! Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a TV for three hours or the equivalent of a half a gallon of gas.

**OUR NEXT ISSUE IS IN AUGUST** Read this issue, as well as others, online at [BeachNewsletters.com](http://BeachNewsletters.com).

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## Bar & Restaurant News

### CLEARWATER BEACH TASTE FEST BEST AWARDS

Over 2,500 people enjoyed tastes from 29 participating restaurants while listening to live music and watching fireworks during the Taste Fest hosted by the Clearwater Beach Chamber of Commerce. The winners of the night were as follows:



#### "Best of the Taste" at Taste Fest: Judge by People's Choice

- 1st Place – Sea-Guini – Opal Sands Resort (shown above)
- 2nd Place – Caretta on the Gulf – Sandpearl Resort
- 3rd Place – Island Way Grill – BayStar Group

#### "Best Booth" at Taste Fest: Judged by five judges

- 1st – Caretta on the Gulf – Sandpearl Resort
- 2nd – Evy's Terrace Bar & Bistro – Hampton Inn & Suites
- 3rd – Island Way Grill – BayStar Group

**SALAD SHOP** This new guilt-free restaurant, open on the north end, of the beach serves chopped salads, smoothies and juice drinks. Find them at 476 Poinsettia, on the east side of the new parking garage.

**RYAN'S ISLAND CAFE** Still under construction on Papaya Street, this small cafe will serve breakfast and lunch only in the space formerly occupied by Island Café and then Detroit Coney Island—next to Tan's Chinese. They are currently advertising for servers and cooks.

**FREE GROUPEUR** BayStar Restaurant Group wants to help you celebrate your birthday. Dine at any of their many restaurants (Salt Rock, Island Way, Marina Cantina, Rumba and others) on your birthday, and receive a free grouper entrée. You must show a valid driver's license and purchase a second adult entrée of equal or greater value. Tax and gratuity still apply.

### A SEAHORSE FOR THEIR BIRTHDAY

To celebrate Crabby's Dockside's first birthday, the restaurant commissioned this piece of art from Pinellas artist, Clayton



Swartz. Crabby's and the City of Clearwater had a ribbon cutting May 24th celebrating the installation of the colorful eight foot tall seahorse.

**STONE CRAB SEASON ENDS** Stone Crab season closed May 15th. The season got off to a slow start with Hurricane Irma and warmer temperatures in the beginning of the season and never really recovered. "On a scale of 1 to 10, I give it a five," says Tommy Shook, of Frenchy's Seafood Company. For now it is impossible to get fresh stone crab claws at your favorite restaurant. Don't worry, they will be back in the fall when the season reopens October 15th.

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**www.TheBrownBoxer.com**

# Bar & Restaurant News

## VENUS RESTAURANT GIVES BACK

Mark Norberg owner of the Venus Restaurant for the last two years, has stepped into previous owner Nick Mitsides shoe, who each May fed hundreds of kids



from The ARC (previously called UPARC) at the Clearwater Yacht Club. The Yacht Club hosts the annual Fun Day inviting about 200 ARC clients to the Yacht Club for the time of their lives. They had a cookout and danced to live music, then they searched for dolphins on boats supplied by the Clearwater Marine Aquarium. Norberg donated everyone's hamburgers and hot dogs.

**CHEZ COLETTE REMODELS** The dining area of the small French restaurant located at 796 Indian Rocks Rd N, Belleair Bluffs has received a total makeover including new dining tables. France's Bastille Day (their Independence Day) is Saturday, July 14th, but owner Collette says, "Every day is Independence Day here." She bought the restaurant, previously called Le Bouchon, three years ago.

**NEW BAR ON NORTH MANDALAY** The site of the former Mandalay Surf Shop, vacant for a few years, has been under construction for a few months. The owners are being very quiet about the planned opening, amenities, the owners or even its name. Look for the bar/restaurant to open at 499 Mandalay Avenue.

**CRABBY'S BEACH WALK NOW 10 YEARS OLD** One of three Beachside Hospitality Group operated restaurants, Crabby's Bar & Grill on BeachWalk opened in August 2008. Since then, they have served a lot of grouper sandwiches and beer to many, many tourists and locals. Congratulations to the Crabby's BeachWalk crew. Get more information at BeachSideHospitalityGroup.com.

**BURGER IM** This new burger place, next door to The Taco Bus, which is also located at the new Edge Hotel, is still under construction.

**GROUPEE WEEK RETURNS** A few years ago, Visit St Pete/Clearwater, the people who market Pinellas County's tourism, invented "Grouper Week." While a tongue and cheek nod to Shark Week, it helps to draw attention to Pinellas County's role as the grouper capital of the world. Hundreds of Pinellas restaurants serve grouper since many chefs consider it to be one of the best fish to prepare because of its cloud-like texture. During Grouper Week, July 23-29, many will feature grouper specials.

## CLOSED

**KIKU JAPANESE RESTAURANT** - in Pelican Plaza on the second floor. They won St. Pete Times Best Restaurant of the Year, 15 years ago.

**DETROIT / ISLAND CAFE** - they relocated to the alley between Mandalay and Poinsettia Avenues, near South Trust Bank, and merged with Island Café a year ago. Both are now out of business.

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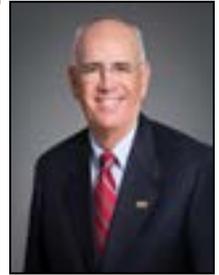
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## WHO CARES ABOUT SEQUENCE OF RETURNS? YOU SHOULD!

by Ray Ferrara, ProVise Management Group



Equity markets are near all-time highs and bond prices are too. For those getting ready to retire, a bear market may have a significant negative impact on the planned retirement lifestyle.

Suppose you are retiring with \$1 million in savings. Most financial planners feel a "safe" withdrawal rate is 4%, or \$40,000 per year. If the investments grow then all is likely fine. But if the value goes below \$1 million; you need to take a smaller amount. Who likes that idea?

However, there is a bigger issue. You need to wait until the portfolio returns to the \$1 million level before returning to your expected lifestyle. If a portfolio declines by 15% in a bear market and you withdraw 4%, the value of the portfolio is now \$810,000 and it takes a return of 23.4% to get back to even.

Bear markets generally occur once every four years, but we have not had one since March 9, 2009. Therefore, the likelihood of a bear market sometime over the next few years is high. So what can you do to potentially protect your cash flow over time?

Here are two strategies among many. First, keep about 18 months of living expenses in cash equivalents. You will not earn a lot of interest, but that is not the point. The cash equivalents and the income you earn from the portfolio should provide enough cash flow for approximately 24 months. When the downturn occurs, you draw against the cash reserves, giving the portfolio an opportunity to potentially recover.

A second option is the bucket approach. Here you segment your investments into buckets of generally five year increments. Each of the buckets starts with \$200,000 which is designed to provide \$40,000 per year. The first bucket is invested in cash equivalents/short term bonds, the second bucket in intermediate bonds, the third bucket is split 50/50 between stocks and bonds, the fourth bucket is divided 75% equities/25% bonds. The final bucket would be invested 100% in equities. As each bucket is needed, it is converted to cash/short term bonds.

If you are within five years of retirement, or already retired, it is important to have a written cash flow plan. Please take advantage of our complimentary introductory meeting to discuss your retirement cash flow plan by calling 727-441-9022.

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## FERTILIZERS: AN ENVIRONMENTAL THREAT

In the quest for the perfect lawn, people apply fertilizers and pesticides to their yards each year, priming their grasses for potentially serious ecological and human health consequences. These chemicals run off lawns into local springs, streams, lakes and rivers every time it rains, eventually washing in the



Gulf of Mexico. The resulting process causes more than half of our water pollution, thus harming our waterways and the plants and animals that thrive in aquatic habitats.

Pinellas County's fertilizer ordinance prohibits residents from fertilizing lawns during the rainy season. From June 1 to Sept. 30, fertilizers containing nitrogen and/or phosphorus cannot be applied to lawns or landscape plants. Fertilizers are not plant food. They sometimes can be used to supplement sugars that plants make through photosynthesis.

If you decide to use a fertilizer, use it properly. It's easy:

- Make fertilizer selections based on need. Decide which nutrients will give you the result that you want for your lawn, and then buy only those.
- Use fertilizers sparingly to reduce nitrate levels. More is not necessarily better. Read and follow all instructions of the package.
- Do not fertilize when storm events are forecast. This will help reduce the level of nutrients washing into water systems during and after the storm.
- Select slow-release fertilizers. They are kinder to the environment and are usually more cost effective. Look for terms like "time-released," "slow-release", or "water insoluble nitrogen" on the fertilizer's package.
- Remember to fertilize only when needed. Do not apply more than one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of grass.

Do your part to preserve our water, coastlines, and wildlife – the very things that help make our area so wonderful. For more information about fertilizers or how to protect our waterways, visit [watermatters.org](http://watermatters.org) or [bfloridian.com](http://bfloridian.com).

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## SUMMER SOLSTICE

Those of us that live in Florida think summer started several months ago, or at least Memorial Day weekend was the official start of summer. But, the Summer Solstice, this year June 21, is the official start of summer.

The Summer Solstice marks the beginning of the Northern Hemisphere's summer. It corresponds with the moment the sun has reached its northern-most point above the equator. In the Southern Hemisphere it is their Winter Solstice - the beginning of their winter.

The word solstice is derived from the Latin term solstitium, a combination of the words Sun and Stitium, literally meaning sun and to stop, respectively.

On this day, the northern hemisphere receives sunlight for the maximum hours, creating what we call The Longest Day of the

Year. You may wonder why, if it is the longest day of the year, and gets the most sunlight, why temperatures usually do not reach their annual peak until a month or two later. It is because water, which makes up most of the Earth's surface, takes a while to both heat up and cool down. Because of that, the Earth's temperature takes about six weeks to catch up to the sun.

Each year on the summer solstice, the Alaska Goldpanners of Fairbanks, the most northerly baseball team on the planet, play a game that starts at 10:30pm and stretches into the following morning, without artificial light. Known as the Midnight Sun Game, the tradition originated in 1906.

The Summer Solstice occurs between June 20 and June 22. In the southern hemisphere, their summer solstice (our winter solstice) occurs between December 20 and the 23. This year and next, our Summer Solstice will be on June 21.



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# SAND KEY - AS THEY REMEMBER IT

In the 1950s, we used to go fishing on Sand Key. We would put our boats in at the Belleair Beach Causeway ramp and travel across the Intracoastal. What I remember most were the mosquitoes. They were so bad they would carry you away. Many times we had to jump in the water just to get the bugs off of us.

**Charlie Harper, President, Largo Historical Society.**

About 1961, when my girlfriends and I were 16 or 17 years old, Ed Wright had a big beach house on the Gulf side of

the island. It was a typical old-style Florida house with a big porch facing the beach. The inside was all cedar planks. We met Mr. Wright one day while he was home. He was a tall man, to us, in his mid-60s and a very nice guy for being so rich.

He said we could use his house for showers and bathrooms. All we had to do was lock it up and keep it clean. What I remember most about Sand Key was the sound the wind made as it passed through the Australian pines. **Kathy Mortensen, former Mayor of Belleair Beach**

As a youngster, we went up there with the Boy Scouts. Our parents used to drop us off at the north end of Belleair Beach with our troop leader. We would hike along the beach, about a mile north to our designated campsite for the night. One of the parents would drive up the dirt road and drop off our tents and lumber for our camp fire. If the weather got

bad, our parents would come and pick us up on the sandy road. **Gordon Geissler, longtime resident of Belleair Beach**

I moved to Clearwater Beach in 1971 and rented a house across from the Adams Mark Hotel. I remember going across the old, rickety wooden bridge to Sand Key to party on weekends. It cost a nickel back then. There was not a building anywhere to be seen. Even the Sheraton was not built yet. It was very dark at night. I was very young so my friends and I would congregate on weekends and party all night. There were bonfires, beer, booze, maybe some drugs and lots of fun. Occasionally the police would come and break up the fun—but we just came back next week.

**Sharon James, VIP Realty 1**

As kids in high school, we used to go to Sand Key, which was nothing but white sand and Australian pine trees. We used to hang out day and night. Some of my more adventuresome buddies could afford four-wheel drive vehicles. They would hang out and wait for someone to get stuck. Then, for whatever cash the victim had, they would pull them out of the sand. Some of those guys made quite a bit of money. If you were late getting home for curfew, you could just tell your parents you got stuck out at Sand Key.

**Jerry Newton, Indian Rocks Beach resident**

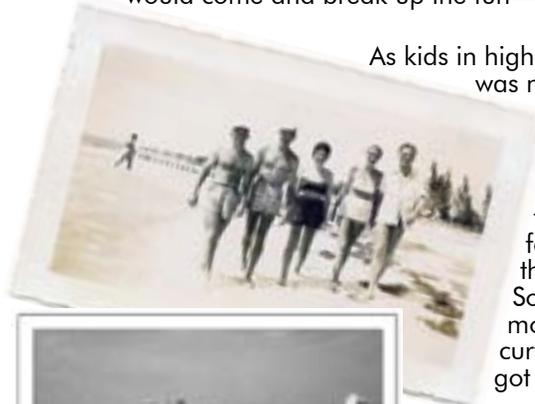
When I first arrived in the area, my fondest memory was playing Frisbee all day with my boyfriend on the beach at what is now Sand Key Park. You could park for free in the sandy lot amongst the beautiful pine trees. You could walk out on the sand to the water's edge or sit under the pine trees for shade. Occasionally, a car would get stuck in the sand and we'd all help to get it out. There was something magical about seeing all those pine trees, sand and water."

**Lynn Ewonaitis, longtime resident**

I grew up on Island Estates and still live there. When we were in our teens, we would go exploring in our jeeps and trucks on Sand Key in and among the dunes. Sometimes, we would take our 16-foot Wellcraft and get to the island on the Intracoastal side. Sometimes we even swam across the pass. Occasionally, we would spend the night camping. We normally had a large camp fire directly on the beach. Who was going to stop us? **Al Leon, Island Estates resident**

In about 1978, I started working at the Sheraton Sand Key. There was almost nothing there, development-wise. The land to the north (now Sand Key Park) and to the south was totally undeveloped. On the weekends, around midnight a party goer would regularly stumble into the Sheraton and ask if we knew who to call to get a tow truck. They were stuck in the sand.

**Charlie Creel, Head Concierge, Sheraton Sand Key**



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## COMMISSIONER MORRONI'S LEGACY: He put Pinellas County citizens first

By Pinellas County Commissioner Charlie Justice

Pinellas County lost a dedicated public servant and remarkable man on May 20 when longtime County Commissioner John Morroni lost his courageous battle with cancer.

I first met John back in the '90s after he was elected to the Florida House of Representatives out of a newly created mid-county district. At the time, I was a legislative aide to Representative Lars Hafner, and because John was part of the Pinellas Legislative Delegation, we got to interact some. I can picture him with former Rep. Mark Ogles up in the front left corner by the speaker. One, they seemed to enjoy themselves, but two, their votes weren't always along the party line, and they would sometimes take a little grief from their colleagues. Even back then, John didn't put partisan politics ahead of doing the right thing.

John was first elected to the County Commission in 2000, and I came aboard in 2012 after spending about 10 years in the Legislature. We were colleagues on the Pinellas County Commission for about a half-dozen years, and I will always treasure that time. John was a friend and someone I admired.

We didn't socialize a lot because our jobs made that difficult, but we saw each other at community events and had an occasional lunch. Still, and always within the constraints of the Sunshine Law, John wasn't above calling and yelling at me about something if he thought it was appropriate. As he was going in and out of his illnesses, I could tell he was feeling better if he called and yelled at me. And it was in a friendly way. He wanted me to do well, and he wanted me to succeed, and sometimes he would deliver that tough love.

What I'll remember most is that John always put the citizens first. People who watched him conduct business on the dais saw that he cared about what effect the policy we were discussing had on the people who would actually be impacted. He would say we should be doing everything we could to make sure our actions had a positive impact on people's lives. On the flip side of that, John really cared about the institution. He was such a history guy that he wanted to treat the institution with the reverence it deserved, whether it was the Legislature or the Commission. And I believe that, too – that our government institutions have to be treated with proper respect. So do the other commissioners, and that's why this group has worked so well together over the last several years.

John lived in Feather Sound for many years and cared a great deal about that community. Although a lot of what he accomplished happened before I joined the Commission, I know he was instrumental in addressing the airport noise and other issues. Just recently, we had a presentation from the Feather Sound Community Services District. Commissioner Morroni wasn't able to attend, but every one of the commissioners wanted to know if the presenter could tell us what Commissioner Morroni thought about the issue. After John moved out to Treasure Island, he took pride in ownership for the folks in the South Beaches and Tierra Verde and wanted to be involved in anything that was going on in those communities.

As I mentioned earlier, John loved history. He was planning to retire at the end of this year, and as that time got closer, he started sharing some of the little relics he had collected through the years. He didn't just hand them out, he put a lot of thought into who he would give a particular item to. For me, he saved a Carter-Mondale button from the 1976-80 presidential election. That was very meaningful to me.

We didn't merely lose an elected official when Commissioner Morroni passed away. We lost a man who truly cared about making this a better place to live and had a very positive impact.

## SWIM INSTRUCTOR SWIM TIPS: DANGERS OF WATER WINGS

By Rebecca Geiger

Living in Florida there are some things that are inherent to the area, water is one of them. With over 20 years as a swimming instructor there are some things I have noticed are issues that are often not mentioned or even thought of until it is too late. If you have any questions, comments, or other suggestions please don't hesitate to contact me!

Water wings have been around for generations. Many times that makes us think they must be safe and useful. Reality is quite the opposite. We continue to grow, learn, and develop. Water wings have done none of these things and are detrimental to children in the following ways:

1. They do not allow the child's arms to move.
2. If a child's arm slips out of one or if one deflates, the other will do more damage than good.
3. They prevent the child from getting forward momentum.

In order to effectively swim a person must use their arms. Water wings prevent this from occurring at all. When we put children in them, it creates a habit of thinking they can swim by only pumping their legs but never using their arms. If they fall in the water without their wings, they will not even attempt to move their arms which would be the only way they could get their head above water. In a pool this is obviously horrible, but if they are in the ocean or a retention pond it is even worse: They cannot break the surface to let you know where they are.

With water wings on, their buoyancy is on both arms with their body simply along for the ride. There is no way they can plane themselves out to get a forward motion. This motion

is what allows them to get anywhere. While in the wings, they are effectively bobs with little control over where they are going. If they fell in, even a foot or two from the side, they would not be able to get themselves back.

If you want to get something for your child to play with to give both them and yourself some freedom, a much better investment is a good life vest or a "bubble." A puddle jumper is even worse than the water wings. Puddle jumpers are what I refer to as water wings on steroids. They are a wonderful personal flotation device if you are going out on a boat, lake, or ocean. They are designed specifically to ensure that your child's head is kept above the surface of the water and they can breathe at all times. As a swim trainer they do all the negative things that water wings do, but intensified due to the fact the arms are literally strapped to the waist.

My name is Rebecca Geiger (Miss Becca to most of my students). My passion is "Drown Proofing" children and adults. I specialize in private lessons at individual's homes where people feel the safest and where incidents are most likely to occur. Please do not hesitate to call or text me at 813-363-9133 to schedule or ask me anything.



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## PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY

### Artist Mike Elwell Creates Art in Public Places

If you walk along downtown St. Petersburg's Beach Drive, between Bella Brava Restaurant and 3rd Avenue N., you cannot help but notice the large bronze animals sitting on benches and dozens of people taking their pictures with them.

This art in public spaces was created by eight-year downtown St. Petersburg resident Mike Elwell, at no charge. He has been creating satirical bronze sculptures for public display for 40 years.

Elwell (76) was born and raised in Wichita, Kansas. He has a BA in Political Science from the University of Kansas and became a lawyer, followed by six years as a District Attorney and then for 13 years, he was a District Judge.

In the 1970s, while working as a district judge, Elwell met a wood carver with the beginning stages of Parkinson's disease. He stepped in to help him and together they began creating molds that when filled with melted bronze, became sculptures. That led Elwell to open his own small foundry in Lawrence, Kansas - the Ox Bow Foundry and Gallery, a commercial casting business he owned until 2010.

Over the years, Elwell developed his personal style and became the President of Lawrence Art Center, a Member of International Sculpture Center, and the director of the Kansas Sculptors Association. During his time in Kansas, he created many pieces of art and won many awards, while working with and teaching many up and coming artists and students.

In 2010, Elwell left Kansas and moved to St. Petersburg. Seeing the traffic on Beach Drive, he had an idea - create a series of large bronze animals in satirical poses on benches where people can sit and touch them and have their photos taken with them.

Elwell set about producing his vision at his own expense. He first created The Alligator (Let's Talk) and wanted to install it in front of The Red Cloud Gallery. He talked to the store's owners Steve and Harriet Rambeux, who said they did not own the sidewalk--but wanted to give it a try.

With that decision made, the first of what would eventually be half a dozen originals, was dropped into place, and what a hit it was! "In one day, I counted 125 people wanting to sit next to that Alligator and have their photo snapped on their cell phone," Elwell recalls. "Many took selfies."

So why stop at just one? Elwell went on to design, create and place many more along Beach Drive, including: "The Elephant: Money Talks", "The Alligator: Let's Talk", "The Pelican: Catching Some Rays", and "The Frog: The Prince". People go from one to the next to take a photo with each one.

The Frog is unique because it has a speaker inside the bronze structure. The microphone that controls it is inside the Agora store. Sometimes, Elwell hiding inside the store, talks to kids who sit on the oversized frog. "They are always surprised."

This goes to the heart of Elwell's philosophy about art. "Don't take life too seriously," he says. "Try to find the humor in things." If you look closely, you will find tiny messages and images built into his works.

Another bench, not on Beach Drive, is "Salvador Seahorse", at the entrance to the Signature building where Elwell lives.

From beginning to end, it takes about six months to create each piece. First, a small clay model is created, followed by a clay enlargement. That alone is about three months of the process. Next a mold is created, and waxes are cast followed by ten ceramic shell coatings and a burnout of the wax at 2000 degrees. Finally, it is cast into metal, welded together and lastly the patina is added. The bench is created separately from each character, which is welded to the bench.

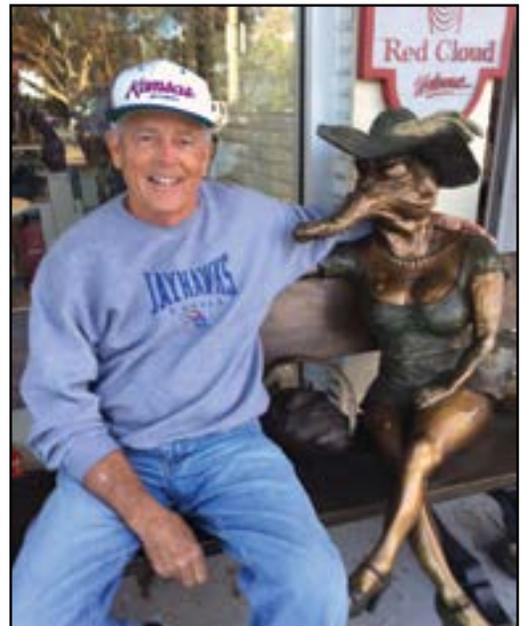
While the benches are for sale, Elwell does not actively try to sell his art. Probably, most people don't even know he sells them. Instead, he prefers to produce his art for others to enjoy—in public places.

If you stroll the sidewalk in front of the Museum of Fine Arts, you will see them lining Beach Drive. You cannot miss them. Feel free to stop and take a selfie. Elwell will appreciate that.

See Mike Elwell's other work, online, at [www.ElwellBronzeArt.com](http://www.ElwellBronzeArt.com).



Mike Elwell posing with two of his creations: "The Frog" & "The Alligator"



Enjoying a hug from a pelican

## NEW CONSTRUCTION "FLIPPERS" - CAN YOU DO THAT??

By Tom Smith Owner of GHD Construction Services

With the higher price points and inflationary increases of a new Florida home on the Intracoastal, some of our customers are purchasing a new home from GHD Construction Services, only to "Flip" the home at a nice profit by the time the home is complete in 10-12 months. This is especially profitable to existing homeowners that own on outdated waterfront home, and have the opportunity to not only get the highest profit possible for their existing lot, but also make additional profit by selling a "Package" with the new home and lot included on their existing site. This has proven to be very profitable for these clients. There simply are almost no newly constructed homes for sale, raised to FEMA standards, on the market for buyers today. Almost all buyers today want newly constructed homes, with exciting Florida designs, energy efficient, built to FEMA standards. This housing product is almost non-existent today along the Pinellas beaches!

While doing my homework studying proposed home sales prices in MLS, I've noticed a quite large disparity in home pricing, from what a lot will sell for in a neighborhood, and what GHD charges for a beautiful new home. GHD has a furnished model of 5400sf under roof (30421a) that sells for only \$629,000, and by the time you place a value of the water front property at \$450,000 - \$500,000, add a pool, dock, new seawall, etc., the entire new package would cost about \$1,200,000. However, I'm seeing listings for new homes of this size at about \$1,600,000 asking price. Will they get that? I don't know, but I do know that there is a nice potential profit for an investor to "Flip" a new home package at possibly a very nice profit. Also, some homeowners on interior lots opt to construct a much smaller home priced from the mid to high \$200's to increase their overall property value. That is a definite opportunity for homeowners that own older homes on interior lots.

So many of our customers are searching for a way to invest funds from their lifetime savings, in what has historically been a very safe and profitable venture, Florida real estate. One of our customers remarked that even if the replacement home that they purchased on their lot doesn't sell for his anticipated \$250,000 increased value, at least they have a beautiful new home to enjoy until Florida's inflationary spiral continues to increase in future years.



As another alternative to purchasing a new home for a potential nice profit, some homeowners allow us to advertise their lot in MLS, with a picture and price of a newly constructed home on that lot. They list their lot as a "Coming Soon" package, complete with site sign and color rendering. GHD places the sign and markets the package with customers that come through our model daily, looking at various neighborhoods along the Pinellas beaches. We place the MLS listing which also gets published in Zillow and other social media, along with every real estate office looking for new housing product for their clients. It actually works quite well, and doesn't involve the cash investment of purchasing the new home yourself. Of course, that homeowner does not have the opportunity for the "Up-Side Potential" of selling both the lot and home, but that is an alternative option available today for existing homeowners

GHD Construction Services, Inc. has constructed 6,500 homes since 1971, and has the new 2018 "Key West" home at 239 144th Ave. N, Madeira Beach. If you have any questions pertaining to new home construction, call (727) 800-6600, or email to: [tweisser@ghdcsi.com](mailto:tweisser@ghdcsi.com). Meanwhile, look us up on our web site at [www.GHDcoastalHomes.com](http://www.GHDcoastalHomes.com).



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## “FRIENDS” MAKING A DIFFERENCE

by Anne McKay Garris

When in 2007, the Clearwater City Council proposed to save money by closing the Beach Library, Rec Center and Pool, community supporters mounted opposition. Under the leadership of Beach Realtor Pat Power, they formed the Friends Of The Clearwater Beach Recreation Center, Library and Pool.

First, Friends noted the city pools closed as school reopened in August, even though the weather was still warm. They collected sufficient funds to keep the Beach Pool open longer.

Next, the Friends sought a way to bring the popular game of Pickleball to the Beach Rec Center. Soon courts were crowded as Pickleball players took turns using the basketball courts after Pickleball lines were added. Eventually, the city remodeled the courts, adding permanent lines for both games.

Noticing the Bocce Ball courts on the west side of McKay Field were seldom used, the Friends purchased sets of Bocce Balls.

In 2011, long-term Beach resident, Sara Henkel, offered to lead a shell craft program. The Shell Crafters Club has grown, providing shelling field trips as well as shell craft classes. In 2013, their shell Christmas ornaments won an award in the annual Festival of Trees celebration.

Because the Beach Library budget cannot afford full time operation, members have worked with the Librarian to adjust the hours to suit the needs of the community. Wednesday evening hours were added for a series of programs, including histories of the Memorial Causeway and the Clearwater Marine Aquarium. Upcoming programs include the history of the Clearwater Marina and Honeymoon Island, plus hurricane safety. New programs include a Mahjong club, cooking programs, and a writer’s group.

The Friends welcome new members to join and to help plan activities. Ask at the Clearwater Beach Library desk for membership to join the Friends in their quest for more interesting activities at our community center on Clearwater Bay.

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### LIGHTS OUT TO PROTECT SEA TURTLES

Beach residents and visitors reminded to take precautions to protect nests now through until October 31

Sea turtle nesting season is underway, and in order to practice superior environmental stewardship, Pinellas County reminds beach residents and visitors to keep conditions safe for sea turtles to thrive.

The Tampa Bay area averages about 120 nests each season, and each nest can contain an average of about 100 eggs. Females generally nest from early May through August; eggs typically taking about 60 days to hatch.

Citizens are asked to not pick up hatchlings heading toward the water, shine lights or use flash photography. Hatchlings use starlight and moonlight reflecting off the water to find their way to the sea, and if they become misled by artificial light, they can become disoriented and die.

Marine Turtle Permit holders monitor about 26 miles of coastline and report on sea turtle nesting activity. They engage in early morning patrols to locate and mark new nesting sites to prevent human disturbance.

Most Pinellas County beach

communities have ordinances prohibiting lighting that casts glare onto the beach during the May 1 to October 31 turtle nesting season. During nesting season, residents and beach visitors should do the following:

- Shield any artificial lighting that might shine toward the beach. Turn off outside lights, draw drapes and avoid using flashlights or fishing lamps on the beach.
- Remove obstacles such as sand castles or sand pits that may impede turtles or hatchlings making their way to the shoreline. Flatten sand castles and fill in holes.
- Keep the beach clean. Eliminate trash items that may entangle hatchlings and adult turtles. Take all personal belongings from the beach at the end of the day so no obstacles exist on the way to or from the water.
- Stay off dunes and use the designated walkovers for crossing
- Do not approach or harass adult turtles as they make their way back to sea. As a threatened species, loggerhead turtles are protected under federal and state law; disturbing them, their nest or hatchlings, or causing



disorientation from artificial lights, is illegal.

If you are lucky enough to find a turtle nest on the beach, don't disturb it. To report the disturbance of turtles, an unmarked nest, or turtles or hatchlings lost, stranded or wandering in the street, call the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) at 888-404-FWCC (3922).

By obeying the law and following these simple guidelines, residents and visitors can greatly improve the chances of sea turtle survival.

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## REMEMBERING A MURAL ARTIST

**Matthew Callahan (1978-2018)**



St Petersburg lost one of its great mural artists last month, Matt Callahan who painted several local well-known murals. Callahan specialized in large format paintings. The introduction of wall murals in St Petersburg's Shine Project was the perfect format for Matt. A building's wall was his ideal canvas. Locally, he was known as one of the best in his trade.

In he beginnings, Callahan had a Tallahassee company called Callahan Card Company and his early works were signed with the initials "CCC". He eventually became a Tampa resident and owner of St. Petersburg's Man Made Murals.

"He was one of the most skilled painters out there," says friend and fellow artist Bask Hostomsky, also a local muralist. "His skill level and artistic ability was razor sharp."

Callahan's work includes the St. Tampasburg art covering the north wall of The Lure Restaurant at 661 Central Avenue.



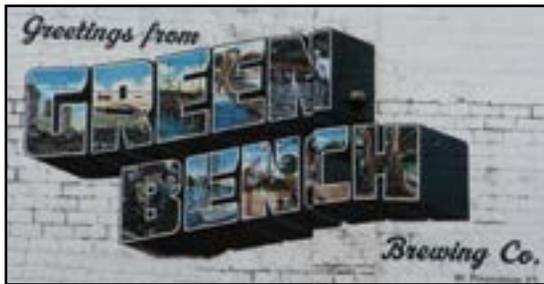
In March he painted a mural on Tampa's Morgan Street announcing the NCAA Women's Final Four in 2019.

His attitude toward life was as big as his art.

"He always just wanted to make people happy," said his dad, Michael Callahan.

"He was like Ernest Hemingway to me," says fellow muralist Johnny Vitale, "a creative soul wrapped in a big burly body. We had children the same age and we used to hang out together, so the kids could get to know each other," Vitale continues, "he had a very extensive portfolio."

Callahan painted other wall murals in St Petersburg, including: The Hamburger at The Avenue, Urban



BBQ, and The Green Bench Brewing Company sign. He also did a lot of work for Harley Davidson.

Matthew Callahan was assaulted outside a Tampa bar in April. Only 40 years old, he died from a massive brain injury a short time later, leaving his wife Erika and five-year old son, Logan. His ashes were spread off the coast of Cedar Key.

In lieu of flowers, the family asked friends to donate to LeMoyné Arts, to honor Matt Callahan's legacy. Currently, more than \$10,000 has been raised to support the "Matt Callahan High School Art Show Scholarship." Donations are still accepted by check at: LeMoyné Art Gallery, 125 N. Gadsden St., Tallahassee FL. 32301, or call 850-222-8800, with a credit card. Please mention Matt Callahan & The Scholarship fund.

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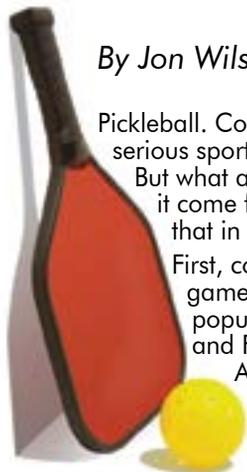
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By Jon Wilson

# FOR THE LOVE OF PICKLEBALL

## Florida Seniors are playing in ever-greater numbers



Pickleball. Come on, is that a serious sport? In a word: Very. But what a name. Where did it come from? More on that in a minute.

First, consider the game's prodigious popularity. The Sports and Fitness Industry Association, a trade organization, estimates up to 2.8-million

people play nationwide. In the Villages, a central Florida retirement community, thousands play. Pickleball is a genuine hometown sport there.

The game's governing body, the USA Pickleball Association (USAPA), conducted its annual national championships in November 2017. Nearly 1,400 from 42 states competed.

"Until you start playing, you don't appreciate how addictive it can be," says USAPA spokesman Drew Wathey. Pickleball has flourished in Florida, from the Panhandle to Palm Beach and beyond. USAPA lists more than 30 major centers.

The Villages of Florida is a stronghold. That's no surprise. The central Florida retirement community, with an estimated population of 115,000, is renowned for its athletes and the variety of sports open to them. Think softball, golf, swimming, track and field, archery, tennis, and polo, for starters. There are many more.

"We even have cheerleaders," said Glenn Kaye, a resident recently inducted into the Broward County Sports Hall of Fame, honoring his 50 years as a swim coach. For two of those years, he coached The Villages Aquatic Swim Team.

John Rohan, The Villages recreation director, agrees. "We offer endless lifestyle opportunities," he said. "With our weather, residents get to play their favorite sport all year long."

And then there's pickleball. "Thousands" of the community's residents play it, Rohan said. "We have over 180 courts and its growing."

Villages resident Dennis Sarlo has been playing about 10 years, which coincides with the length of his residency in The Villages.

"I never heard of the game until I game down here. I just started like anyone else, more curious than anything else," said Sarlo, who is 70 and plays every day. "It just became so exciting, it's just a fantastic sport!" he said.

Pickleball originated a half-century ago on Bainbridge Island, Washington. Three dads, including United States congressman Joel Pritchard, devised the game. The trio wanted to play badminton, but couldn't find the equipment. So they improvised with Ping-pong paddles and a perforated plastic sphere known to generations of Americans as a Wiffle Ball. And whack! The game was afoot.

It caught on fast. Friends and neighbors of the original three started making their own paddles, using jigsaws and plywood. They set up courts in their driveways and backyards.

Anybody could play. Grandmas took on their 9-year-old grandsons. Middle aged cousins four times removed got reacquainted on the courts. Which, by the way, are about half the size of a tennis playing area.

Word of mouth spread the news. USAPA organized in 1984 to advance the game nationally. By 1990, it was being played in all 50 states. Curious aerobics devotees and hardcore badminton players saw this upstart sport in community centers, the local YMCAs, and even in phys-ed classes.

They watched the bright yellow orb, three inches in diameter, an ounce in weight, and still looking like the old-school Wiffle Ball. It wasn't long before they wanted to smack it.

"The play is pretty mesmerizing at times," Wathey said.

According to the USAPA website, the sport is exploding worldwide. International clubs are sprouting, and national governing bodies have been established in Canada and India. There is movement to introduce youngsters to what has been viewed as a retiree's pastime.

The game is regarded as not as fast or strenuous as tennis, but quick enough to keep you moving and requiring laser-like focus. You don't have to be a great athlete to play. Good hand-eye coordination and decent footwork are helpful. And it doesn't

take long before a newcomer can play comfortably.

"I can take a beginner and in 30 minutes they are hitting the ball back and forth, sustaining a rally," says Villages' Pickleball instructor Steve Richter.

It's also relatively inexpensive to get started. You can get a serviceable, new paddle for \$30 or less (although the best models can cost \$100 or more). A three ball pack might run you 10 bucks.

Oh yes, we were going to discuss the pickleball name's origins. Two narratives compete. The most widespread story, it was named Pickles, a cocker spaniel belonging to one of the game's founders. But family members said Pickles did not arrive until two years after Joel Pritchard and friends started the game. Joan Pritchard, founder Joel's wife, wrote a newspaper story some years ago in which she suggested the name came from an aquatic term: the pickle boat.

In the sport of rowing, or crew, that boat is usually the slowest in a race. Mrs. Pritchard, in humorous fashion, thought the early players were reminiscent of such a craft.

Whatever the truth, pickleball is great name – and those who play today love their great game.

### WANT TO GIVE IT A TRY?

The Clearwater Beach Recreation Department offers Pickleball. There are three sets of lines painted on the basketball courts just for Pickleball. The Rec department issues equipment, if needed, and you can play anytime, but the designated play times are Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 9am until noon. Call the Rec Department for more information at 462-6020.



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## ROSEMARIE SWISSHELM CELEBRATES 50 YEARS IN REAL ESTATE

By Bob Griffin, Publisher

Rosemarie Swisshelm has been selling Florida real estate for over 50 years. Now 86, she may even hold the record as Florida's longest-working active Realtor. She acquired her real estate license in 1968, fifty years ago. "When you get to be my age, you are happy to talk about your age," Rosemarie says with a laugh.

Rosemarie and her real estate company, Swisshelm Realty, is well known to area long-timers. She and her late husband Jim opened the office on the north end of the beach in 1982, 36 years ago.

In 1931, Rosemarie was born in Hamburg, Germany. After World War II, her family moved to Chile. When she eventually came to America, she settled in the Clearwater area and met Jim Swisshelm a successful Ohio real estate broker with a large agency who one day had decided to close shop and move to Clearwater.



When Rosemarie married Jim, he was a partner in Hogan Realty. Jim recommended she get her real estate license, too. They worked together at Hogan Realty until 1982.

Eventually, Jim and Rosemarie decided to start their own firm. "We leased the space on North Mandalay where we still are today," says Rosemarie. "Just like today, we only had a few associates. Jim always wanted to keep it small. He thought a large firm may make more money, but it has more problems, too."

Jim passed away in 1991 and Rosemarie remarried in 2002. Her second husband, Doug Bonnington was retired and was never in the real estate business, but encouraged her to continue operating as Swisshelm Realty with its well-established name. Doug has since died, also.

"I have out lived two husbands and most of my older competing Realtors. I now work with the grandchildren of some of my original real estate clients," Rosemarie explains.

With an office on Mandalay, Rosemarie specializes in the north end, especially the Carlouel area. "The first house I ever sold was in Carlouel," Rosemarie remembers. "It sold for \$16,000—a house and the lot, and people were amazed we got that much for it. Then, you could buy a lot on the gulf for \$10,000. Now, there are no open lots on the north end of the beach or Carlouel. If there were one, it would be in the millions. Carouel is relatively small – with only about 200 homes. I have sold some of those homes many, many times, and watched the prices soar."

In the early 1970s, the main north-south roads on the north end were paved, but the east-west side roads were layered shell. "One day the city said they were going to raise our taxes to add a sewer system," she recalls. "We argued we wanted paved roads instead. Eventually we got both."

"I have seen many changes in both the area, and the real estate business," Swisshelm declares. "Mainly, I have seen the rise of franchise real estate firms with lots of associates - some with hundreds of associates. With the help of MLS, all offices, whether large or small, can offer the same properties. But, they do not know the properties history like we do."

"I have seen many small properties converted into small and

large condominiums.

I have seen Mandalay develop into a significant commercial district with hotels, restaurants and small businesses."

"There used to be a trailer park where the Hilton is. People used to stop at our office, in their RVs, and ask where they could park. We sent them back to the area next to the Pier."

"I watched the 880 building being built. It started as a government subsidized apartment building. After it was done, the developer disappeared, and HUD operated it as rental units. Jim and I rented an apartment there for only \$150 amonth. What a deal! Now it is The Regatta Beach Club condo."

"Living and working here, we had many friends. Howard and Jean Hamilton who owned the Palm Pavilion, Dagwood Cartoonist Dean Young, Bob Heilman and his wife owners of The Beachcomber Restaurant, and others."

Rosemarie has been a longtime member of the Clearwater Beach Chamber of Commerce. In 2006, she was selected Citizen of the Year.

"As a founding member of the Beaches Chamber of Commerce, Rosemarie was instrumental in the rebirth of Clearwater Beach as a worldwide destination," says Sheila Cole, former President of the Beaches Chamber. "Her knowledge of international travel was key for businesses and tourists."

Also, Rosemarie is a longtime member of the Clearwater Beach Rotary. She was one of its first female members over 20 years ago.

In 2012, Rosemarie was honored by the National Association of Realtors as a Realtor Emeritus, for her then 40 years of service.

"Rosemarie has been a good friend to both Clearwater Beach homeowners and would-be buyers. Her knowledge of real estate helps a lot of future homeowners. She is also a great help to visitors who only speak German, her native language," Anne Garris, longtime resident.

Congratulations Rosemarie Swisshelm on your 50 years in the business. Swisshelm Realty is located at 641 Mandalay Avenue. Call her at 446-0137. [www.SwisshelmRealty.com](http://www.SwisshelmRealty.com).



# Business Briefs



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## AERIE LANE OPENS IN LARGO

This new store, that doubles as a gathering place, opened in the Plaza at 1901 West Bay. It is a DIY studio with a new craft bar and work space, next to MIMI, MYLO and ME, also a new store. A craft bar is a place to work in an environment of other crafters and use their products and

supplies. Aerie Lane offers workshops, Girl's Night Outs, Birthday Parties and more. Imagine your child's next birthday party with art projects and NO clean up.

Aerie Lane, at the west end of the shopping center, is owned by Belleair Beach resident Renee Lee. In June, Aerie Lane has many great ideas for Father's Day gifts. Stop by the shop and see what they have for Dad.

Find both stores at 1901 West Bay Drive.

**MARINEMAX NOW IN ITS 20TH YEAR** The roots of MarineMax date back over 45 years, but the story started when Chairman and CEO Bill McGill moved his family to Florida to turn his lifelong passion into what would become the world's largest boat retailer. Later he, along with a group of America's leading boat retailers, decided the boating industry needed to change. By uniting companies, they could maximize efficiency of operations while sharing best practices on everything from insurance to mobile boat-servicing and allow team members to focus on what's important: getting customers out on the water.

Part of the MarineMax commitment includes offering top-notch brands, but MarineMax is more than a dealer, they are a resource. In addition to boats and yachts, they offer world-class service, financing and insurance, educational programs, and access to Getaways and other boating events. They offer everything that is needed to help you enjoy the boating lifestyle.

"We are constantly focusing on new experiences for you. Our passionate team will continue to focus on your needs, welcome your feedback and the opportunity to continue working to exceed your expectations," stated MarineMax Chairman and CEO, Bill McGill.

In celebration of their 20th Anniversary, MarineMax is planning a plethora of activities. For information on what's to come visit <http://bit.ly/20YearsTogether>.

**SEAHORSE GALLERY** This new, small art gallery opened on the north end of the beach at 61 Baymont Street. It is owned by Mila Ivanoska, a veteran of the art world who for the past 13 years, has worked directly with Grammy Award winner Jim Warren. She has established local connections in the area's art scene, and the gallery features Warren and portrait artist Dick Zimmerman, plus several local artists. Ivanoska plans to hold many 'Meet-The-Artist' type events, as well as poetry readings and mini-concerts. The gallery is located a few doors east of Frenchy's Off the Hook.

# Business Briefs

**BANK OF TAMPA OPENS IN CLEARWATER**

The new South Ft. Harrison branch is a bit of a homecoming for founder Jerry Driver. Driver, now 80, grew up in Clearwater, attended Clearwater High School, and his first banking job was as a trainee at the Bank of Clearwater. After working for other banks, he started the Bank of Tampa in 1985.



The Bank of Tampa's newest branch is located at 900 South Ft Harrison, just south of Publix. Craig West, the branch's Market Director is a longtime resident and was the President of the Beaches Chamber of Commerce.

When the branch opened with a ribbon cutting in early May, Driver was there to help. Get more information on Bank of Tampa at [www.BankofTampa.com](http://www.BankofTampa.com). Call West at 502-8423.

**NEW NAIL SALON** Noire, The Nail Bar, just opened a new location at 478 Poinsettia Avenue, on the east side of the new parking garage. They have quite a nice salon, with all new equipment and pride themselves in creating a relaxing, fun, and pampering environment. They want you to sit back in serenity and sip a glass of wine while their exceptional nail artists work their magic. Call 953-8831 and ask for Lee. Walk ins are welcome.

**FOR SALE** In May, the most recognizable stretch of John's Pass Village, the southwest end containing Bubba Gump, Hooter's, the Friendly Fisherman Restaurant, and more, was listed for sale at \$18.5 million. The 138,000 square feet of mixed use property still has 1,100 square feet of vacant space still available for further development. It includes a 325-space parking garage



**BELLA VINO APPEARS ON HOUSEHUNTERS**

A portion of a recent episode of HGTV's House Hunters was filmed inside Bella Vino Wine Bar in Belleair Bluff's The Plaza.

A father was helping his daughter find

a home Clearwater. The two were filmed sitting at Bella Vino's wine bar, enjoying a glass of wine while they discussed the three homes she was contemplating purchasing. The show aired on May 4th.

**SPIRAHZ CREAMERY** This is a new ice cream and dessert store coming to the north end of the beach. They sell hand crafted ice cream rolls, like a wrap—and other unique desserts. It is still under construction but they hope to open any day at 474 Poinsettia Avenue, on the east side of the new parking garage.

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# Business Briefs



**ICE CREAM SHOP CHANGES** Recently, the Kohr family purchased Ryan's Ice Cream in middle of the Shoppes of Sand Key. Nothing except the name has changed. They are still open seven days a week.

**OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE** With the conversion of the Coldwell Banker office on Island Estates, near Publix, Michelle Chenault has redesigned the building to be used by other, non-real estate businesses and community groups. The area on the left is being reconfigured into six independent suites, with a common receptionist, and other amenities. There will be a conference room to be used by the tenants, and even groups, such as the Island Estates Civic Association. Spaces cost \$600/ month plus CAM charges. Two of the six spaces are still available. If you want information, call Michelle directly, 727-481-5700

**2018 ANNUAL BUSINESS AWARD WINNERS**

These awards were presented by the Clearwater Beach Chamber of Commerce on June 5



- Best Attraction of the Year - The Tropics Boat Tours
- Best Shopping of the Year - Surf Style
- Best Beach Transportation of the Year - Clearwater Ferry
- Best Wedding Venue of the Year - Opal Sands Resort
- Best Hotel/Motel/Inn of the Year - Hampton Inn & Suites Clearwater Beach
- Best Resort & Spa of the Year - Sandpearl Resort
- Best Vacation Rental of the Year - East Shore Resort
- Best Waterfront Dining of the Year - Crabby's Dockside
- Best Family Dining of the Year - Cooters Restaurant & Bar
- Best Fine Dining of the Year - Island Way Grill
- Best Pub/Bar/Nightclub of the Year - Shephard's Tiki Bar & Wave Nightclub
- Outstanding Services Award - Belleair Images
- Outstanding Real Estate Services Award - Emi Veltre, RPH Keller Williams Gulfside Realty
- Outstanding Performance Award - CMSA Advertising & Public Relations
- Tourism Person of the Year Award - Gary Hidu - Head Concierge at the Hyatt Regency Clearwater Beach Resort & Spa

**CLOSED**

**PACIFICA** - A ladies' beachwear store at 490 Mandalay, near Clear Sky Café, closed. Call 687-9464 to lease this space.  
**CONVENIENCE STORE** - The minute market located across from Dream View Hotel and Surf-Style that recently opened has closed. The Subway Sandwich Shop located inside however is still open.



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# Business Briefs

## ESCAPE, IF YOU CAN

This new business, opening next month, just east of Belleair Bluffs, reflects a national trend in escape rooms. Both fun and serious, Escape Rooms are a new type of entertainment venue springing up around the country.



Escape Rooms are actually a game room. Teams of two to ten people enter unique themed room with puzzles, clues, codes and riddles that must be deciphered within 60 minutes. One clue leads to another, a way out or a secret surprise, always under pressure of the clock.

Local owners, Gil and Jodi Bakshi, have designed three unique scenarios. The Black and White Room, The Mad Hatter Room and The Zombie Apocalypse Room are each perfect for a birthday party, company team building, group event or special occasion. Escape If You Can also offers food and drink.

The first ten people who come to Escape If You Can and mention this Newsletter story, will receive a voucher for a free admission. Find them at 514 1st Avenue SW, Largo. Book through their web site, [EscapeRoomSaintPetersburg.net](http://EscapeRoomSaintPetersburg.net)

**DREAM VIEW NOT CLOSED YET** the Dream View Hotel is not closed, yet. Uday Lele says he is still moving forward with plans to demolish the hotel and build a new, modern resort hotel called JW Marriott. "It is now in the hands of Marriott, who is reviewing paperwork and contracts. The City of Clearwater has given us the green light. Look for work to begin now in the fall or before the end of the year," says Lele says.

## COLDWELL ON ISLAND

**ESTATES** Joanne Hiller has now joined more than hands with Michelle Chenault in running the Coldwell Banker office on Island Estates—they have joined offices. The small office located at the south end of the Publix Shopping Center has been totally gutted and remodeled. Chenault built her business reputation operating as the Chenault Realty Group. Hiller has run her realty company on Island Estates for over 40 years. Check them out online at [www.BeachIslandGroup.com](http://www.BeachIslandGroup.com)



Michelle Chenault

**NEWS WANTED** If you have news or suggestions for this newsletter, please contact us. E-mail news to [Bob@GriffinDirectories.com](mailto:Bob@GriffinDirectories.com) or call 727-517-1997.

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## Organizational News...

### SAND KEY CIVIC ASSOCIATION

They are a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life on Sand Key by researching issues, distributing information and representing members' views and positions. They participate in The Barrier Island Government Council, The Florida Shore and Beach Preservation Assn., and maintains contact with city and state departments impacting Sand Key. They do not meet again until September. E-mail President Brian Pelfrey at skcainc@aol.com for information.

### ISLAND ESTATES CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Members are Island Estates residents and business owners, with a mission to promote the safety, welfare, spirit, and unique lifestyle of the Island Estates community. They meet monthly on the second Monday.

They held their big Annual Block Party in May. Everyone one the island was invited, with over a 1,000 people attending, it seems most of the island was there. The planning committee, with over a dozen volunteers, worked on it since January.

For information, contact President Mike Anderson 777-2787, President@MyslandEstates.org, or visit myslandestates.org.

### CLEARWATER COMMUNITY WOMAN'S CLUB

The Clearwater Woman's Club is part of the General Federation of Women's Clubs. The volunteer service club was established more than 40 years ago. General Meetings are held the third Tuesdays of each month, at 11am, at the Clearwater Downtown Library. For more information about the club, contact Martha Hickey at 813-765-6219.

### CLEARWATER BEACH ASSOCIATION

They meet the first Tuesday of the month at the Chapel By-The-Sea, except during the summer. Meetings resume in September. Contact Beth Prast at esphome@yahoo.com or David MacNamee DMacNav@TampaBay.RR.com, or visit ClearwaterBeachAssoc.com for information.

### SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The Clearwater Chapter meets monthly on the third Wednesday at the Dunedin Golf Club, 1050 Palm Avenue at 11:30 to socialize. Lunch begins at noon. Their programs normally pertain to the Constitution or Revolutionary history. New members and guests are always welcome. Call Jim Phillips at 447-1616 or email to JPhillips1936@icloud.com.

### CLEARWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Plumb House will be closed to the public over the summer. They are working hard to get the new museum at South Ward School open. If you want to help with the renovation process or be on one of many committees, please call Bill Wallace 446-2676. Visit ClearwaterHistoricalSociety.org.

### DAUGHTERS OF AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The Clearwater Chapter meets monthly on varying dates at the Belleair Country Club. Social hour begins at 11am followed by lunch at 11:30am. Everyone is invited to join.

RSVP for meetings with Diane Richardson at 871-9773 or BradSkate@AOL.com. Contact Cathy Athanson at 510-7135 or Dubinwv41@Gmail.com for more information.

### ISLAND ESTATES WOMAN'S CLUB

They meet monthly but are on break during the summer. Socials include lunch with guest speakers, entertainment, fund-raisers, field trips and monthly happy hours.

For membership information, call the Membership Chairperson, Joan Landreth, at 812-8078 or visit islandestateswomensclub.org. Reach Club President, Lynne McCaskill at 430-1911.

### ISLAND ESTATES YACHT CLUB

The Island Estates Yacht Club is a social club on Island Estates. They have various social events throughout the year. New members are always welcome. Contact Jean Sanders, Commodore 2018, to join or for more information. Call her at 461-3949 or email at EmmaJean.Sanders@Gmail.com.

### 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. Members are retired active duty Military Officers, their spouses or widows. To RSVP, or to consider joining, call LTC. George Smith at 786-5578.

### FRIENDS OF THE BEACH REC CENTER & LIBRARY

Their Fall programs including stories about Florida's barrier island state parks, the Belleview Biltmore Hotel, the Clearwater Community Sailing Center, the local Coast Guard Auxiliary will be on the second Wednesday of the month beginning in September.

The Friends of Clearwater Beach, Library, Recreation Center and Pool meet the third Tuesdays at the Rec Center. The President for the next year is Linda Owens. Contact her at 260-894-0270 or the Library at 562-4970, or email them at FriendsOfClearwaterBeach@Gmail.com.

### CLEARWATER YACHT CLUB

They hosted their annual ARC Fun Day, May 12. "It is our way of giving back to the community," says Tom Brusini, Club Manager. They close the club to members while ARC clients have a fun day of swimming, games, music, dancing, and boat rides. Venus Restaurant of Belleair Bluff's supplied the food. The kids enjoyed Shirley Temple drinks and lots of ice cream. It is one the best days of the year - for both the kids and the club's volunteers.

They are offering a Summer 2018 Membership program, through Sept. 30. There is no initiation fee and dues are \$150 a month, with no monthly food & beverage minimums. This is for use at Clearwater Yacht Club exclusively and includes daytime dockage at the Club. At the end of the summer, you may join in a class of your choice (Full, Social, or Junior) at the then current rates for dues and initiation, but you are not obligated to join. Call or email the office for details, 727-447-6000 or office@clearwateryachtclub.org

### CLEARWATER GARDEN CLUB

The Club meets twice a month (October through May) in Clearwater at 405 Seminole Street. There are no more meetings through the end of September. They also hold demonstrations on the third Saturdays of the month. Jun 16 at 10:30: Speaker Series "Dirty Garden Secrets they don't want you to know" and Sales with Jai McFall of Organic Living.

Call 316-5504, email ClearwaterGardenClub@Gmail.com or visit ClearwaterGardenClub.org.

### CLEARWATER BEACH ROTARY

Chartered November 2, 1953, this year they will celebrate their 65th birthday. Beginning July 19th, they will start meeting at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium. Please visit ClearwaterBeachRotary.com for more information and dates. To join, please call Sharon Skinner at 515-15321.

### NEWCOMER CLUB

This is a social club to help relocated residents, and others in the area, develop new friends. The ladies meet monthly at different locations for lunch with guest speakers. July 3rd, they will meet at the Clearwater Country Club. It is lunch with live music. Stay afterwards for cards. RSVP to Ginny, 365-3493 or Mary Jane, 352-263-5518. Visit WelcomeNewComerClub.com.

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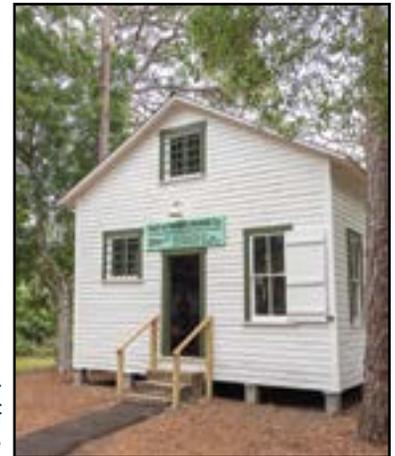
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## GULF OF MEXICO SPONGE WAREHOUSE AT HERITAGE VILLAGE

Heritage Village recently celebrated the opening of the Gulf of Mexico Sponge Warehouse. The building arrived at Heritage Village in 2004 as a donation from the Kousaleos family, bringing with it decades of history and culture. Heritage Village staff and volunteers have worked for months to stabilize and restore the interior of the 1930s structure.

Throughout the summer and fall of 2017, a lot of activity surrounded the Gulf of Mexico Sponge Warehouse. Led by Heritage Village staff, preservation volunteers completed the restoration of the structure. In addition to stabilizing the interior of the building, volunteers performed a deep cleaning of the warehouse. This removed several decades of mold, mildew, and grime from the interior walls. Next, all the wood surfaces in the building were treated with a historically appropriate wood preservative. The mixture of linseed oil and turpentine sealed the wood and created a water-resistant barrier that aides in the prevention of rot.



The Curator of Collections at Heritage Village created an exhibit showcasing artifacts from the museum collection that discusses the sponge industry in Tarpon Springs. In addition, Heritage Village partnered with the City of Tarpon Springs to utilize

images and exhibit panels to create a cohesive sponging history. Recently, the Curator of Education at Heritage Village added an engaging interactive activity for all ages. Visitors can use historic images to create their own postcard of Tarpon Springs.

The Sponge Warehouse made its opening debut at the 2017 Country Jubilee along with a celebration a few weeks ago sponsored by the Pinellas County Historical Society. The building is a visitor favorite! Heritage Village is a Pinellas County Government program and free to the public. It is open Wednesday-Saturday, 10am-4pm, and Sunday, 1-4pm.

## FLORIDA STORIES, DOWNLOAD THE APP

If you like to to research Florida cities before you visit, there is now an app for that.

“Florida Stories” is a free app created by the Florida Heritage Council. It offers free stories and walking tours that will take visitors through the past and the present—step by step. It is packed with photos and intriguing details. Florida Stories will open your eyes to many of Florida’s cities and towns in a way you’ve never experienced before including downtown St Petersburg, Tarpon Springs, Ybor City, St Augustine, Key West and more.

Download the “Florida Stories” app through iTunes or the Google Play stores. You can also visit [www.FLStories.org](http://www.FLStories.org) for information and to download it there.



## FENCING PROVIDES PRIVACY AND MORE

By Randy Lee

Privacy is one of the biggest trends in landscaping today. Our neighbors may be great but we do not want to see them all the time. Barriers such as walls, fences and hedges make great neighbors. One of the first questions I ask a client is: do they have privacy concerns and where on the property are these? Safety and security are important factors as well. Do you have a pool, pets or small children? Barriers keep people out and people in all at the same time. Fencing is less expensive than walls and will be the topic of this discussion.

Fences create a secure retreat while containing children and pets. Fencing also reduces noise levels. The first question when adding fencing should be - what is the purpose and function of the fence. A pool, pets, children, and screening of neighbors are a few reasons to install a fence. A second question about fencing relates to size and the type of fence needed. Most zoning caps fences at six feet in height and must taper down to four feet on the street or water. Check your local ordinances. A fence may or may not need to be permitted as well.

There are several types of fences: wood, vinyl, iron, aluminum and chain link. Personal preference is key here, as well as cost. Wood is the least expensive and aluminum or iron the most expensive. Wood and vinyl allow the least amount of air movement. Chain link, which is available in green and black, allows air movement and is very easy to cover with flowering vines. I like to use chain link because

it is durable and easy to cover- in one or two years it will disappear. The gate is another choice. Each type of fencing has a corresponding type of gate. Gates can be detailed and expensive using iron and aluminum. Wood and chain link gates need to be large enough to accommodate mowers, pedestrian traffic or larger items- where a double gate may be needed.

After the fence is installed, it needs landscaping around it. If you have fenced in a small area, I would add plants or use stepping stones, instead of sod, which may be hard to maintain. I like to layer the fence with taller plants in the background and shorter in the foreground. Vines can be used on fences as well and they cover quickly. Flowering vines that I like include honeysuckle, confederate jasmine, passion vine, queen's wreath, allamanda and bleeding heart. The fence may need landscaping on both sides- I like to have taller trees and palms on the inside and then shorter shrubs on the outside for a multi layered effect.

Remember these points when fencing: the purpose, type of fence desired, check local ordinances about height and permits and hire a licensed contractor.

### June/July checklist:

- Fertilizer ban is in effect
- Turn irrigation system off during periods of heavy rain
- Time to plant summer annuals and perennials
- Great time to have trees trimmed
- Great time to plant palm trees

*Landscapes By Randy Lee, Inc. is a full service landscape design company here to help you with all of your landscape needs. Call us direct at 727-421-2715 or visit online at [www.landscapesbyrl.com](http://www.landscapesbyrl.com).*



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**THE CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE THE USE OF PLASTIC STRAWS**



Our area's biggest attractions is the water – the Gulf, Bay, ponds and rivers. Plastics in the water are one of the biggest environmental problems facing our community and the world today. Look at any shore line and you will find plastic washed up on the sand and in the weeds. And it is below the surface.

It is estimated that Americans use over 500 million plastic straws every day. The average person probably uses over 35,000 plastic straws in their lifetime.

The best-case scenario for a plastic single-use straw is it will end up in a land fill and take centuries to decompose. Worst case, they end up in our waterways where they can be swallowed by marine life. That happens to about one third of them.

The City of Clearwater recognizes the detrimental effects disposable plastics can have on beaches and marine life. Not only is plastic waste unsightly, but the Environmental Protection Agency has found plastic to be responsible for the death of roughly 100,000 marine mammals and 1 million sea birds every year.

In an effort to reduce the effect of plastic straws on the environment, the Solid Waste/Recycling Department of Clearwater has created a voluntary Strawless Summer Challenge for city restaurants, bars and cafés. For a three month period, June, July and August, participating businesses are abstaining from dispensing plastic straws unless requested by a customer.

**WHAT CAN CONSUMERS DO?** Refuse plastic straws when offered. Drink your beverages without them. Tell the business owner or manager you support providing straws only when requested. Encourage businesses to provide wooden "stirrers" instead of plastic. Talk about this to your friends and family. And remember besides helping keep our water clean, less sucking on straws produces less wrinkles!

**WHAT CAN RESTAURANT AND BAR OWNERS DO?** Do not routinely provide plastic straws. Only offer them when requested or change to paper straws as a substitute. Be creative - one bar is using uncooked pasta in place of straws! Provide wooden coffee stirrers. In addition to saving money, your reputation as a responsible business owner will be enhanced. The following Clearwater Beach restaurants, have signed on to Go Strawless:

- |                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Badfins                      | Crabby's Dockside          |
| Island Way Grill             | Cooters Restaurant & Bar   |
| Marina Cantina               | Frenchy's Rockaway Grill   |
| Salt Cracker Fish Camp       | Frenchy's Original         |
| Rumba's                      | Frenchy's Saltwater Café   |
| Bob Heilman's                | Frenchy's South Beach Cafe |
| Beachcomber                  | Jimmy's Crow's Nest        |
| Bobby's Bistro Wine Bar      | Jimmy's Fish House         |
| Brown Boxer Mandalay         | Jimmy's at the Edge        |
| Brown Boxer S. Gulfview      | Rusty's Bistro             |
| Cesare's at the Beach        | Salty's Island Bar & Grill |
| Clear Sky Beachside Café     | Samgelo's Pizza            |
| Clearwater Wine Bar & Bistro | Shor at the Hyatt Regency  |
| Cork N Brew                  | Speggtagular               |
| Crabby Bill's Beach Walk     |                            |

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## EXPLORING WINES OF MONTSANT, SPAIN

By Jean Cox CSW, CSP, WSET3, FWS Certified Sommelier, CMS Napa Valley Wine Academy

As a wine educator I had the opportunity to join other professional wine educators on a trip to Spain to explore the wine region of Monstant. Though I have been in the wine business for over thirteen years and have several certifications, I wasn't familiar with the Monstant region, so I was anxious and excited to visit and learn about their wines.

Though vines have been cultivated since the Roman times, Monstant is one of the newest wine appellations granted Designation of Origin (DO) status. A DO is given when the wines show specific characteristics and qualities of the region. Monstant is located about 1-1/2 hours from Barcelona in Catalonia, near the famous regions of Penedes, where Cava is produced and Priorat. The region varies from rolling hills to very mountainous with many soil types. The mountains and the close proximity to the Mediterranean Sea influence the climate. The winters are cold and the summers are hot and dry. They focus on two main red grapes which comprise 94% of the production: Grenache (Garnatxa in Catalan) and Carignan (Carinyena in Catalan). Only 6% of the region's wine production is white. The main focus is Garnacha Blanc (Garnatxa Blanca in Catalan). All three of these varietals are well suited for summer's sunny, hot, dry climate. Generally reds are very aromatic, deep colored, complex, and well structured with aromas and flavors of black fruit, Mediterranean herbs and spice. The Grenache Blanc wine are generally aromatic, with good acidity and balance, they may be oaked or not and have aromas and flavors of apple, honey and stone fruit.

We visited 14 of the 61 wineries in the Montsant DO in three days. We were able to walk the vineyards, see the production

facilities, ask all our geeky questions and hear the passion of the winemakers and owners regarding the wines from this region. All the wineries left a positive impression on me but I found one particular winery and tasting very interesting. At Cellar de Capacanes we tasted four wines, all Garnacha, same vintage, same barrel regiment, and same winemaker. The only difference - they were grown in different soil types: slate, sand, limestone, and clay. What a difference in the wines, they showed a true expression of what soil imparts on the wines. Slate produces wines that are rich and have mineral notes. Sand produces wines that are fruity and easy to drink. Vines grown in limestone are fresh with floral notes and nice acidity. Wines that come from vines grown in clay have softer tannins but with an edge. Cellar De Capacanes also produces high-quality Kosher wine. During the production of Kosher wines every step of the process must be performed by a Rabbi or Jewish person. The Rabbi follows the instructions given by the winemaker and once the wine is bottled it can be approved as Kosher wine.

The Monstant DO is making a name for itself on the international front, with high quality wines. There is true commitment and passion of winemakers and owners to produce unique wines that show the characteristics of this region and they are eager their wines with the world.

You can reach Jean Cox, a long time St. Petersburg resident at (855)-513-WSET or email her at [j\\_cox@napavalleywineacademy.com](mailto:j_cox@napavalleywineacademy.com).



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## ARE YOU CRAVING SOME AUTHENTIC ITALIAN FOOD?

by Dan L. Hummel

Great Italian food is plentiful in our area. We have dozens of traditional Italian restaurants, each offering their own special appeal. Most are family owned. Many have such knowledgeable staff, that there is no need to ask for a menu because they will most definitely steer you towards their favorites. My wife Vanessa and I decided to visit a few nearby, to see if we could pick a favorite.

Our first stop was **Cesare's at the Beach** located in Clearwater Beach. Their menu is extensive with over fifteen appetizers, soups and salads alone. For dinner, try their Veal Frank Sinatra, a tender prime veal with chopped scallops, shrimp and crab meat sautéed in a light lemon butter sauce and topped with capers. This is just one of over three dozen delicious entrées offered at Cesare's, in addition to their daily features. If after dinner, there is a craving for something sweet, you won't be disappointed with any of their homemade desserts including their signature Crème Brule. Offering a vast wine and beer selection, and an early menu, Cesare's is a must try. [www.cesareatthebeach.com](http://www.cesareatthebeach.com)

Our next stop was **Villa Gallace Ristorante**, in Indian Rocks Beach. Translated, Villa Gallace means the Gallace home. It is appropriate, because when you dine there, they want you to feel like a part of the Gallace family. Select your favorite beer or wine and enjoy their prepared to order cuisine. A couple of my favorites dishes are the Pollo Marsala and their Veal Parmigiana. For starters, you will never regret ordering their Insalada Caprese or generous Caesar Salad for two or any one of their four delicious homemade soups. With an extensive selection of pasta entrées, and so many beef, chicken, veal and fish features, you will have



Dan and Vanessa Hummel

a hard time choosing just one. Villa Gallace, also offers some great daily Chef specials, as well. This is another must visit Italian restaurant on the beach. [www.villagallace.com](http://www.villagallace.com)

Not far from Villa Gallace is **TJ's Italian Café**, an Indian Rocks Beach landmark restaurant for over 29 years. Their dishes are carefully crafted and prepared the classic Italian way with everything made from scratch. Whether it is their juicy hand-rolled 4-ounce meatballs, the brick oven baked bread and pizzas, or the homemade sauces and soups, TJ's menu is comprised of classic Italian dishes that are sure to please even the most particular Italian food fanatic. One of my favorite dishes here is their mouthwatering Chicken Parmigiana served with pasta in their wonderful homemade sauce. TJ's offers an extensive wine list that allows you to pair the right wine with your favorite entrée. TJ's allows you to dine inside, or to enjoy the beautiful weather on their outdoor palm-laden deck. By the way, you can drop in early and order from their early bird special dinner menu. T.J.'s is a remarkable Italian restaurant choice in Indian Rocks Beach. [www.tjsitaliancafe.com](http://www.tjsitaliancafe.com)

For great Italian food and a water view, too, try **Al & Stella's** located on Gulf Boulevard at the Shoppes of Sand Key. Both Al & Stella came to this area from Rimini, Italy, near Bologna, bringing with them many authentic recipes including their fresh, homemade Italian Pasta made from scratch, home baked breads, and fresh caught fish cooked to perfection. Begin your meal with their delicious Bruschetta or the scrumptious Mozzarella Caprese. From there, you will need to take your time in choosing from one of their many featured entrées including the Gnocchi alla Romana or their scrumptious Fettuccine Terra Mare. Al & Stella's menu has no shortage of remarkable dishes. In keeping with Italian tradition, this restaurant offers a wonderful selection of white and red Italian wines by the glass or by the bottle. Dine inside or on their deck which offers a panoramic view of the Intracoastal Waterway. Add Al & Stella's to your list of Italian restaurants to visit soon. [www.alandstella.com](http://www.alandstella.com)

Our final stop for amazing Italian cuisine was in the Belleair Bluffs/Largo area on West Bay Drive at



**Amici's**. Chef and owner Carmelo has more than 40 years of experience preparing Italian, regional and nouvelle cuisines. Upon arrival, you are warmly welcomed, but before being seated, you are shown beautiful photos of his daily specials. Then, browse through Amici's wide-ranging menu and choose from one of their many enticing options. A favorite of mine is the Veal Sorrentina, which is thinly sliced veal topped with fried eggplant and a touch of marinara sauce and mozzarella. You may also enjoy one of Amici's authentic Italian wood fired pizzas made with freshest ingredients and toppings, then baked to perfection. Dine inside, or out on their recently added porch which creates the feeling of an old Italian garden. Offering a well fashioned wine list, served by a very talented wait staff, you will enjoy your outing at Amici's. [www.amiciitalianeatery.com](http://www.amiciitalianeatery.com) Since there are so many wonderful Italian choices in our area, it may be necessary for us to visit a few more in some later issues. But today, I urge you to do your homework and visit their websites. In my opinion, it's not which one of these restaurants you should choose, but in what order you decide to visit them because they are all wonderful.

Buon Appetito!

# Eat Drink Play



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## SELLING SEASHELLS BY THE SEASHORE

Local Realtor Julie Drolshagen's book, "All I Ever Needed to Know About Business, I Learned From Selling Rocks," is the essence of Florida beach childhood memories. Since the early 1970s, her family took the pilgrimage from up north down to our shores. Shell by shell and year by year Julie kept her box full of Florida memories in her grandmother's house in Wisconsin. Little did she know that one day she would come full circle and sell those seashells by our seashores.



Julie resides in Clearwater Beach and is a Realtor with Century 21 Coast to Coast in Sand Key. However, prior to arriving in Florida, she worked in the media and film industries in advertising public relation roles. Always a story teller, her writing stems from creative, corporate communications and even a few screenplays she hopes to develop one day.

Julie created her fictional memoir based on her family trips to Florida and the love of her grandmother's everlasting advice. "Years ago, when I was with clients or on interviews, I would tell this story of selling painted shells when I was seven to break the ice. Many told me I should write a book. Well I finally did. And hopefully everyone will enjoy this fun witty story with the message of fearless motivation. All of us can relate to memories from our childhood and simple ideas provide constant inspiration in our adult lives. Here's the irony: The Florida seashells are the backdrop of the book and now here I am as a Realtor, 40 years later actually selling seashells by the seashore. Perhaps we unconsciously do listen to our inner child throughout our life!"

Julie hopes to use her book for motivational speaking engagements and is a current member of Toastmasters International and the Island Estates Women's Organization & Civic Association. As a Clearwater Beach Chamber member she also has her book available at the office on Pointsetta and for purchase at the Post Office gift shop in Island Estates. It is also on Amazon.com.

Julie Drolshagen can be reached at 727.902.9233 or Julie@beachhomesflorida.com

"Only do what you love, work hard and stay brave. And stop to pick up a few shells along the way."

**SUNSETS**  
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Clearwater, Florida

June 8th • June 22nd • July 13th • July 27th

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<b>SERIES</b> \$50 <small>START INCLUDED</small>	

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### JUNE

- 8: LILO & STITCH (PG-13)
- 9: BLACK PANTHER (PG-13)
- 15: LION KING (G)
- 16: DADDY'S HOME 2 (PG)
- 22: PETER RABBIT (PG)
- 23: MOANA (PG)
- 29: MAX 2: WHITE HOUSE HERO (PG)
- 30: APOLLO 13 (PG-13)



### JULY

- 6: THE LITTLE MERMAID (G)
- 7: JAWS (PG)
- 13: FINDING DORY (PG)
- 14: TOMB RAIDER (PG-13)
- 20: A WRINKLE IN TIME (PG)
- 21: STAR WARS: THE LAST JEDI (PG)
- 27: CARS 3 (PG)
- 28: FOREVER MY GIRL (PG)



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## HURRICANE SEASON IS HERE ARE YOU PREPARED?

Jevon A. Graham, Emergency Manager City of Clearwater

The 2017 hurricane season ranked among the ten worst seasons on record. The most devastating 2017 storms were Harvey, Irma and Maria. Irma made landfall on the Florida Keys as a Category 4 hurricane with a storm tide of 4 to 8 ft above ground. It did more than \$50 billion worth of damage in the U.S. and was the fifth costliest hurricane behind 2005 Katrina – \$161 billion, 2017 Harvey – \$125 billion, 2017 Maria – \$90 billion and 2012 Sandy – \$71 billion.

The 2018 hurricane season's activity is expected to be near or slightly above normal. The National Weather Service is predicting 12-15 tropical storms, 6-8 hurricanes, and 3-5 major hurricanes with 3-4 U.S. impacts.

Are you prepared? Everyone needs to have a disaster plan in place for their homes and family that prepares for the worst-case scenario. Create a plan now, not when an event is knocking at the door. We encourage everyone to understand the Three Big Knows: Know your Zone, Know your Plan, and Know your Role.

To make a disaster plan, you need to know what you will do before, during and after a disaster and what could affect your home, work and school. Planning is important for everyone, but essential for individuals with access and functional needs. Part of your plan should include a communication. Your family may not be together when a disaster strikes. Know how to contact and reconnect with each other if separated. Establish a meeting place.

Install the FEMA mobile app. It provides severe weather alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations. Also, the Pinellas County Alert Pinellas app gives you Pinellas County Emergency Management notifications on mandatory evacuations, gas leaks, boil water orders, utility notices, flooding events, hazards events, and local emergency information. Keep a NOAA Weather Radio on, monitor TV and radio. Follow mobile alerts and warnings about severe weather.

Have an evacuation plan. Evacuation orders can come with little notice. Planning is vital to evacuating safely. Florida Division of Emergency Management's website FloridaDisaster.org has information on what to do before, during and after a disaster.

Plan how to leave and where to go. Fill vehicles with gas if an evacuation seems likely. Wear sturdy shoes and clothes. Those without cars should plan how you will leave. Leave when told to do so or early to avoid being trapped by severe weather. A list of nearby open shelters is on the FEMA mobile app. Tell an out-of-state contact about your plans.

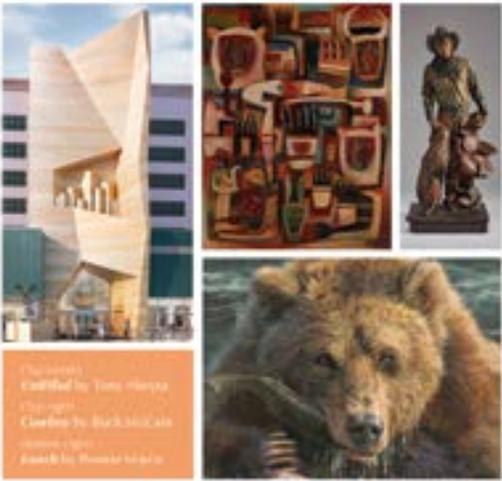
When you leave, unplug electronics and small appliances and lock your doors and windows. Leave a note telling others your plans. If your home is already damaged, shut off water, gas and electricity. Take your pets but be aware some shelters or hotels only accept service animals. If stranded when driving, stay in the vehicle, put on flashers, call for help and wait until it arrives.

The final component of your disaster plan should be your Disaster Kits. Have disaster supply kits always ready in your home, work and vehicles. A disaster kit is a collection of basic items needed in the event of an emergency. Include enough food, water, medications for at least 72 hours and other necessities. www.Ready.gov has a list of recommended emergency supplies. MySafeFlorida.org is another source for suggested items. Individuals with disabilities, children, seniors or pets, may need unique items. Insect repellent and sunscreen should be in all kits, as well as rainproof gear for everyone.

2018 is predicting a very active season and we want to ensure all our citizens are prepared and ready.



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