



Snowbirds Discover IRB

The Indian Rocks Inn pictured above was expanded in the 1920s to accommodate the booming business from the snowbirds and early tourists. The Inn was located in the narrows near the old bridge

By Wayne Ayers,
Indian Rocks
Historical Society

"For a great part of our country, Florida is the one winter resort," reads the first sentence of a book promoting the state's wonders, published in 1912.

Yet, swaying palm trees and warm sunshine were an impossible dream for the vast majority of Americans until two entrepreneurs opened the door to winter tourism in the late 1800s, at least for those who could afford it.

The two Henrys, Plant and Flagler, built an infrastructure that would provide accessibility and bring the comforts of home to the remote Florida wilderness. Henry Plant chose Tampa as the termination point of his railway system in 1884, later extending the line down the west coast as far as Naples. On the route, he built the Tampa Bay Hotel, a fantastical Moorish castle, on the banks of the Hillsborough River, and the fashionable Swiss Chalet-styled Belleview on Clearwater Bay.

The rich and famous would now share the warmth and sunny days with the few adventurous sportsmen and determined invalids who had roughed it in previous decades to reach paradise on earth.

The Belleview, later Belleview Biltmore, would play host to heads of state, including three U.S. presidents, the Duke of Windsor, sports superstars from Babe Ruth to Arnold Palmer and industry titans Henry Ford and Thomas Edison. Edison and Ford would come up from the winter residences in Fort Myers. The Tampa Bay Hotel in

its glory years would become headquarters for the Spanish-American War campaign led by Rough Rider Teddy Roosevelt.

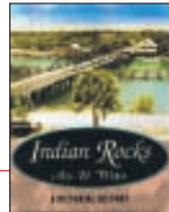
Winter enjoyment of Florida was not exclusively limited to the well-to-do or the ritzy hotels. The automobile age brought middle class "adventurers" from up north who were willing to brave less than first-class roads in rickety, breakdown-prone vehicles. "Tin can tourists" even arrived with their winter homes (trailers) in tow.

City residents in Tampa and St. Pete constructed cottages along the shore for both winter and summer enjoyment, and real estate sales boomed along the beaches in the early 1900s. A number of those cottages in Indian Rocks Beach have been preserved and passed along through the generations.

A series of hurricanes in the 1920s and the Great Depression wiped out many Florida dreams. But a great tourism revival blew in following World War II on the cool winds of a miraculous new invention: air conditioning.

Indoor comfort, the allure of refreshing gulf breezes and a first class federal highway system brought thousands of baby boom families southward to enjoy an extended family vacation... in the summer.

The era saw Florida's coming of age as a year round tourist destination.



Find more stories like this in *Indian Rocks As It Was*, available at the Historical Museum. \$20 each, proceeds benefit the Historical Society.

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CREDITS



This newsletter is published by GRIFFIN PRODUCTIONS, Inc. and is mailed to every occupied residence and business in Indian Rocks Beach. We are not officially associated with the City of Indian Rocks Beach.

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Residents of Indian Rocks Beach

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SALES

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IRBNewsletter.com

Is there something you would like to see included in this newsletter? Please send all comments to bob@griffindirectories.com

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NEXT ISSUE MARCH

This newsletter is printed every other month and survives on local advertising. Please support the people advertising here. If you are an IRB resident wanting to advertise, you get a discount. We also offer discounts for advertising in our other issues, Madeira Beach and Belleair Area.

Call me for the next issue. For more information, or to read our other issues online, visit BeachNewsletters.com



CITY NUMBERS

CITY HALL 595-2517
1507 Bay Palm Blvd
www.Indian-Rocks-Beach.com

CITY MANAGER - Vacant
MAYOR/CITY COMMISSION . 517-0204

MAYOR - Bill Ockunzzi
COMMISSIONERS —
R.B. Johnson Vice Mayor • Bert Valery
Jose Coppen • Terry Wollin-Hamilton
City Manager, 595-2517

Building Department: 517-0404
John Mortellite, Dir
Planning & Zoning: 517-0404
Danny Taylor, Dir
Public Services: 595-6889
Dean Scharmen, Dir.

IRB LIBRARY 596-1822
Next to City Hall
M-F 10A-4P; Tu-Th 7P-8:30P, Sat 10A-1PM;
Closed Sunday

IRB HISTORICAL MUSEUM . . . 593-3861
Across from the Post Office

IRB HOMEOWNER ASSOC. . . . 517-0525
Phil Wrobel, President - IRBHome.com

BEACH ART CENTER 596-4331
Next to City Hall, 1515 Bay Palm Blvd
M-Th 8:30A-4PM, Fri 9AM-Noon.

POST OFFICE / IRB 596-2894
204 4th Avenue 33785, Near Crabby Bill's
Mon-Fri 8:30A-4:30P; Sat 9A-12:00P

IRB ROTARY
www.Indian-Rocks-Rotary.org
Meets at Jimmy Guana's every Wed. 7:15AM
David Kline, Past President 593-2605

ACTION 2000
John Todia 595-2369
Meets 2nd Monday Each Month Beach Art Ctr

EMERGENCIES: 9-1-1
SHERIFF NON-EMERGENCIES 582-6200
SHERIFF DISPATCH 582-6177
PINELLAS COUNTY INFO 464-3000
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Clearwater Beach 447-7600
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ELECTRICITY 443-2641
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PHONE (Business) 800-483-5000
WATER 464-4000
CABLE (Bright House) 329-5020
SEWER / IRB 595-6889
TRASH / IRB / Pick Up 595-6889

COUNTY INFORMATION 464-3000
COMMISSION OFFICES 464-3377
Karen Seel 464-3278

STATE:
Senator Dennis Jones 727-549-6411
Republican, District 13
8940 Seminole Blvd, Seminole 33772
Jones.Dennis.web@flsenate.gov
Representative Jim Frishe . 727-480-5901
Republican, District 54
125 Indian Rocks Rd, Belleair Bluffs
Jim.Frishe@MyFloridaHouse.gov
Governor Charlie Crist
Charlie.Crist@myflorida.com

FLORIDA UNITED STATES SENATORS:
Mel Martinez 202-224-3041
www.Martinez.Senate.gov
Bill Nelson 202-224-5274
www.BillNelson.Senate.gov

AREA UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE:
Rep Bill Young 727-394-6950
9210 113th St, Seminole, FL 33772
www.house.gov/young

2008 CALENDAR OF LOCAL EVENTS

JANUARY 2008:		MARCH:	
New Years Day (Tues)	1	Historical Society Spring Luncheon	1
Beach Parking Permits Issued	1	3rd Annual Fashion Show Tea	2
Beach Art Center Reception (Sat)	5	Calvary Episcopal Church	
Homeowner's Happy Hour	10	Meet the Candidates	3
Little League Tryouts		Monte Carlo Night Beach Art Center	8
Community Concert / Brass Roots	13	Daylight Savings Time Begins	9
Calvary Episcopal Church		Election Day (Tuesday)	11
Martin Luther King Day	14	Homeowner's Happy Hour	13
Presidential Primary	29	Great American Clean Up	15
FEBRUARY:		St Patrick's Day (Monday)	17
Blood Mobile at the Post Office	1	Good Friday	21
Beach Art Center Water Color Show	1	Easter Egg Hunt / Nature's Park	22
Valentine's Dance (Sat) by A2K	9	Easter Sunday	23
Art Center / Dance Lessons	13	Historical Museum Tour of Homes	29
Valentine's Day (Thurs)	14	APRIL:	
Winterfest on the Rocks (Sat)	16	Blood Mobile at the Post Office	4
Presidents Day (Monday)	18	Gulfside Gallop 5K Run	5
Community Clean Up	18-20	Beauty and The Beach Art Show	5
Homeowner's Happy Hour	21	Homeowner's Happy Hour	10
First Little League in IRB (Sat)	23	IRB Garage Sale (Sat / Sun)	19-20
Heritage Village, Folk Festival	26	Biggest Beach Party Ever (Sat)	26
Leap Year Day (Friday)	29		

IRB HOLIDAY BOAT PARADE



27 boats were registered, however due to small craft warnings, there were 17 boats in the parade. Randy Schwab, captain of THE HUSTLER lead the parade in and out of the fingers. Grace and Jim Dimm along with Lilian Johnston were judges. The winners were:

- 31 FT AND OVER**
#14 RUNNING BARE
Bill Snyder, Indian Rocks Beach
#22 DREAM MAKER
Jeff Braaten, Bradenton
#20 DONE DEAL
Dave Holden, Seminole
- JUDGE'S CHOICE** - GYPSY II, Jacqueline Basar & Gene Large
ELF AWARD - SEA HUNTER, Tom Tafelski, Largo
- The judges for the Lighted Waterfront homes were Mike McLaughlin & Tony Johnstone on the lead boat. The winners were:
1st PLACE - Elizabeth & James George, 304 Harbor Dr
2nd PLACE - Carol & James Sampey, 434 Harbor Dr N
3rd PLACE - Becky & Bob Griffin, 375 La Hacienda Dr
- 23 FT & UNDER**
1 GYPSY II
Jacqueline Basar & Gene Large, Largo,
#23 EVERGLADES 230cc
James Kasper & Gary Hummer, IRB
#15 POWER HOUSE MOVING
Jason Wainscot, Clearwater
- 24 FT - 30 FT.**
#13 NORTH SOUTH EAST WESTERN
RJ Schwab, IRB
5 TK'S ISLAND
W. Todd & Kim Fornshell, Clearwater
8 GRIFFIN BOAT
Bob & Becky Griffin, IRB



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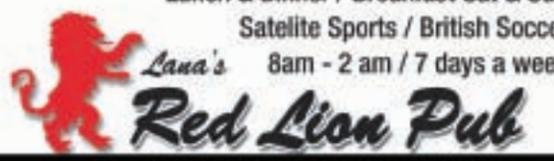
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Did You Know...



SKIMMERS CLEAN THE BEACH Nov. 17th, members of the IRB Surf Shop's Skim Board Club helped clean the beach. Afterwards they enjoyed a cook-out sponsored by the Surf Shop, in front of the store. The Pinellas Sheriff's office also pitched in. Good job skimmers.

STAMPS AT USA GROCERS: They are now selling US Postage Stamps. Now you can get stamps at night and on weekends, too. Plus, there is a mail drop box there, too. USA Grocers is located at 12th Avenue.

MAYOR/COMMISSION RACE: Commissioner R.B. Johnson picked up an application to run for Mayor in the March municipal election. There may be several others by deadline. This will leave at least one seat open on the City Commission.

FIRST ANNUAL TASTE OF IRB

was a huge success. Over 1500 people turned out to enjoy a great evening of food, music and fun. Visit IRBHome.com to see more photos taken during the event. Look forward to an even bigger event next year - Nov. 8, 2008 presented by the IRB Homeowners Association.



ARTISTS GO ITALIAN: The Plein Aire Cottage Artists were invited to show their Indian Rocks Beach paintings in the Florence Biennale, Fortezza da Basso, in Florence Italy December 1-9. They also have an entire series of painting done in Italy last year. Artists Helen Tilston, Mary Rose Holmes, and Violetta Shtumeyzen will be showing their work Jan. 11th at Guppy's on the Beach.

IRRIGATION RESTRICTIONS: We are in a drought, so SWFWMD has extended watering restrictions to one day a week until June 30th. The continued lack of rain created the need to leave the once-a-week schedule in place. If you use "reclaimed water" this does not apply to you. To see what else you can do visit swfwmd.state.fl.us/drought.

POLL WORKER VOLUNTEERS are needed. Over 3,500 poll workers in Pinellas County ensure fair and accurate elections and have fun doing it. You must be a registered voter in Pinellas, read/write English, and agree to be at the polls by 5:45AM on the day of an election. You do get paid (between \$100 and \$130 dollars) on the day of the service. Call 464-6110

LEARN TO DANCE: The Beach Art Center is offering Dance Lessons thru the Francis Wilson Playhouse. Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks. This is a Beach Art Center Fundraiser. Call 596-4331 to register and get more info.



POST OFFICE TOYS FOR TOTS: Our postal workers and the US Marines thanks to all IRB residents who

donated to the Toys For Tots drive Dec. 1st. Reports show IRB donations in 2007 were up 16% over 2006. Last year upper Pinellas donated over 50,000 toys that were delivered to 1,250 families. The families came from local agencies, Pinellas School System and their guidance counselors. Good job IRB and the postmen and women.

FIRE DEPARTMENT LOSES AGAIN The Pinellas Suncoast Fire District lost a another attempt at a rate increase. Only only 273 people in IRB voted. The referendum asked voters to approve a \$70 increase, from \$190 to \$260 per house each year. They will try one more time. If not, the county will provide fire service. Estimated costs of county provided fire service is about 2 mills per property. That means ONLY properties valued less than \$130,000 will save money. Everyone else pays more. Fire costs for a house valued at \$400,000 would be \$800 - a 300% tax increase over needed PSFD fees.

NUDE MODELS NEEDED: The Beach Art Center is offering "Open Figure Drawing Sessions" in special classes January thru March. They will be learning to draw undraped male and female models. Classes start January 12. Call 596-4331 to participate and or to volunteer.

HOA ANNOUNCES 2008 SCHEDULE: The first year of Happy Hours was so much fun, they decided to do it again. Twelve more have been set up for 2008. The first is, Jan. 10th, at the new Crabby Bill's Loading Dock. See the complete list on the enclosed flyer or at irbhome.com.

LITTLE LEAGUE is looking for Spring 2008 sponsors, coaches, umpires, volunteers and players. Try outs start around the second week of January, with the first games February 23. If you'd like to get involved, call Tracy Jeffries at 727-586-1533 or Jan Monson at 581-7646.

TOY DRIVE: The IRB Homeowners Association had their annual Christmas Social and Toy Drive, Dec. 13th. Classic Christmas stories were on the big screen, and there was a surprise visit from Santa. Toys were distributed to a local battered women's shelter and Shirley Steele who works with the Rainbow Village



A surprise visit from Santa

HISTORICAL SOCIETY The Annual Tour of Homes is March 29. This is a really fun event. The pot luck, Spring Luncheon is Sat., March 1 at noon. To be a member, or a volunteer a few hours per month, call Patti Muneio, President at 727-517-8076.

ONLINE: Read this issue (as well as others) online at www.IRBNewsletter.com.

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PROPERTY TAX AMENDMENT

As you are aware, on January 29, every registered voter in Florida will be given the opportunity to vote on a constitutional amendment dealing with property tax reform.

The constitutional amendment allows for portability of accumulated Save Our Homes (SOH) benefits for homeowners who move from one homestead to another. Homeowners will be allowed to transfer their SOH benefit to a new homestead anywhere in Florida within 2 years of leaving their former homesteads.

In addition, the amendment creates an additional homestead exemption worth \$25,000 applied to values above \$50,000. A new tangible personal property exemption of \$25,000 is also created.

There is an assessment growth limitation of 10% for all non-homestead properties. This exemption would expire in ten years. At that time, voters will decide whether to reauthorize this limitation. Residential properties of nine units or less would surrender accumulated protection at change of ownership or control, as defined by general law. All other properties must be defined by the Legislature by general law on how the property will surrender protections when there is a "qualifying improvement" to the property.

The plan is merely a first step in a multi-step process. It does not go nearly far enough but it is a starting point. For this reason I am encouraging each and every citizen

to support it even though I believe much more needs to be done. For example, I have submitted House Bill 33 for the 2008 Legislative Session.

House Bill 33 revises the criteria for a presumption of correctness of a property appraiser's assessment of ad valorem tax value. It requires that such a presumption for an assessment for income-producing property be based on the income approach to value. At the present time, the Property Appraiser's assessment is presumed to be correct. With my proposed legislation, the property owner will be given the ability to better challenge the assessment on a level playing field. With this proposed legislation, if the Property Appraiser's assessment for all income-producing, including commercial, industrial and multifamily rentals, is not based on the income approach to value, the Property Appraiser will then lose the presumption of correctness and the owner will be put on equal footing with the property appraiser in challenging their assessment and in attempting to get it reduced.

As legislators, we MUST address the crushing costs of unfair property taxes. We have a long way to go and I pledge that I will do everything I possibly can to continue to work on this problem facing the citizens of my district and of the State of Florida as a whole.

I extend my best wishes to each and everyone for a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.



FISHING NEWS!

The fall fishing for inshore grouper was great. Almost like the old days before the big red tide outbreaks. If old man winter gives us a break, this fishery could last till spring.

Stone crabs benefited from improved water conditions & have returned in good quantities. Be sure to take advantage of this gulf coast delicacy, especially as the market price is lower than in past poor seasons. Restaurants, like Crabby Bills, always have a fresh supply.



Stone crab claws are big and plentiful this year

It is winter so it's time for a change. Fish & fishermen are a little slower when the cold arrives. Don't retrieve your lures as fast; use more cut baits instead of live. Don't be discouraged, there is dependable fishing even when it's cold.

Inshore fishing can be exceptional as several species actually like the cooler water. Sheepshead are in their prime in the winter. Their bigger, they're everywhere, and eat any bait that has a shell, including shrimp, crabs, oysters, etc... Sheepshead fight hard and taste great. Other winter favorites include silver trout just off the beaches and speckled trout in the bays and creeks. Red and black drum should be plentiful and are not affected much by the cold.



Grace Johnson with large inshore grouper

These inshore fish are schooling fish so if you catch one, you may catch a lot more.

Offshore fishing for grouper, snapper, and amberjack can be great in winter but will depend on the weather. Mild water temps will keep the reef dwellers nearer to shore

but if it gets too cold expect a migration offshore to temperatures more to their liking. On calm days, it will be well worth the run to where they're biting.

Note: Be sure to keep the latest recreational regulations with you on your fishing trips (they are available at most tackle locations and at www.MyFWC.com). Last year grouper in federal waters was closed from Feb 15th to March 15th but changes can occur at the last minute so be prepared. Spotted seatrout opens for the south region (our area) on Jan 1st.

See you on the water,
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PINELLAS SUNCOAST FIRE & RESCUE DISTRICT NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

by Chief Russel Livernois

Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue has been providing service to your community for over 55 years, yet again we have been defeated at the polls when asking for your support. For the fourth time we have asked our citizens to help us with the escalating expenses we face by voting for an increase in our assessments. We must again go to the polls, this time on March 11, 2008, to ask for an increase to the rate we have been working with since 2003. If successful in gaining your support, the increase will not be realized until the assessments are billed in November of 2009, over 1 1/2 years after the election.

The Board of Fire Commissioners and the Administration have made every possible adjustment to meet the needs of the Department and its personnel, while working with 2003 dollars to pay 2007-2008 costs. We ask that our residents please go to the polls on March 11, 2008, to support Pinellas Suncoast, your local fire department.

IRB ROTARY'S FOOTBALL RAFFLE HUGE SUCCESS!

Congratulations to Scott Grutchfield of Palm Harbor, this year's winner of IRB Rotary's Grand Prize Drawing.

Scott and one of his 'quickly growing' group of friends and relatives will be attending the 42nd edition of the NFL's biggest game of the year, in Phoenix Feb. 3. 2008.

Scott's winning ticket was drawn at a very well attended Grand Prize Party held at the Blue Marlin Sports Bar on Dec. 9th. Scott has participated in our raffle every year since it started 5 years ago. Congratulations and thank you, Scott for your loyalty and patience. Bring back some pictures from Phoenix!

Although Scott was the big winner, everyone who participated is a winner! Your participation made this our most successful individual Fund-raiser ever! Proceeds will be used for projects of Rotary International.

Your support of events such as this and Oktoberfest allow us to further the ideals of Rotary. We sincerely appreciate your participation! To find out more about the good things Rotary does, please visit www.rotary.org. If you would like to experience Rotary or serve the community by joining Rotary, we encourage you to visit us any Wednesday at Jimmy Guana's Restaurant (at the Holiday Inn at Hamlin's Landing Indian Rocks Beach). We meet from 7:15am to 8:15am. Rotary Club of Indian Rocks Beach, 727-593-2605



Recent 3-alarm fire at Harbor House townhomes



Emily Schulz drawing the winning ticket

SUPPORT TOURISM AND YOU SUPPORT US ALL.
 from the Pinellas County CVB

Tourism is the our number one industry, and it is absolutely vital to the success of our businesses and communities. St. Petersburg/Clearwater is the leading Florida's Gulf Coast destination, drawing 13.8 million visitors in 2006.

Tourism, a clean industry has a direct economic impact of over \$6 billion in Pinellas county, employing approximately 84,000 residents directly or indirectly. We live in the coastal area for the very reason tourists visit, to take advantage of the eye-catching stretches of powder-white beaches and flawless weather. 98% of guests said visiting the beach was the reason for choosing our destination.

What doesn't meet the eye as readily is the extent to which tourism supports our communities and daily lives. Here are a few facts illustrating the significant role tourism plays:

- If a quarter of our visitors stopped vacationing in Pinellas County, an estimated 300 restaurants could close. Resulting in 21,000 jobs lost, the combined populations of Indian Rocks Beach, Madeira Beach and the Belleaire Area.
- Picture 1000 of hotel rooms on the beach occupied by two visitors. Since the average area visitor stays about 6 days and spends about \$100 a day total, this translates to roughly \$200,000 a day spent in your community.

Consider the number of restaurants in IRB, and the employees' wages that are dependent on tourists. Those employees spend the tourist's money as they go about their daily lives on doctors, beauty salons, housing, landscaping, groceries, transportation, child care, you name it. That's tourist dollars filtering directly into our local economy, showing exactly how tourism impacts everyone. So perhaps now it's easier to understand why supporting tourism, you supports us all.

LOVE WILL BE IN THE AIR ONCE AGAIN

The 2nd Annual "Love is in the Air" Valentine's Party is Feb. 9th at the IRB City Hall from 7-11 pm. Presented by the non-profit organization, IRB Action 2000, Inc. (A2K), the event is intended to bring the community together to have some fun.

The Party features music and dancing as well as a delicious, fully catered buffet meal and special holiday desert station. There will be contests, including a Dancing with the Stars event, so get your dancing shoes ready! Door prizes from local businesses will be presented throughout the evening. Once again, our local award-winning The Plein Aire Artists have generously offered a magical painting for auction.

Tickets are \$35 per person and can be purchased at City Hall, The Cookie Cutter and The Welcome Center or contact A2K at IRBA2K@hotmail.com. Get your tickets early quantities are limited and it was sold-out event last year.



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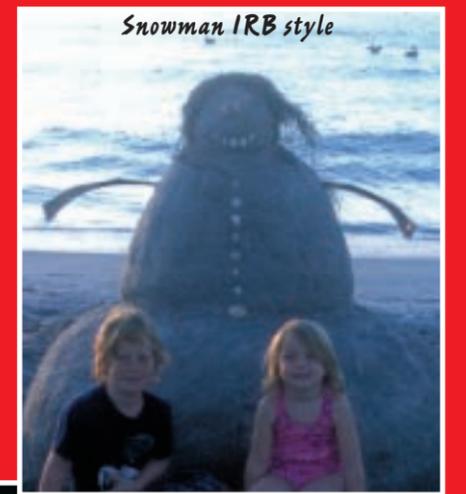
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Holidays on the Rocks

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Snowman IRB style

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner
City Employees Joan Johnstone,
Dean Schamen, and Deanne O'Reilly



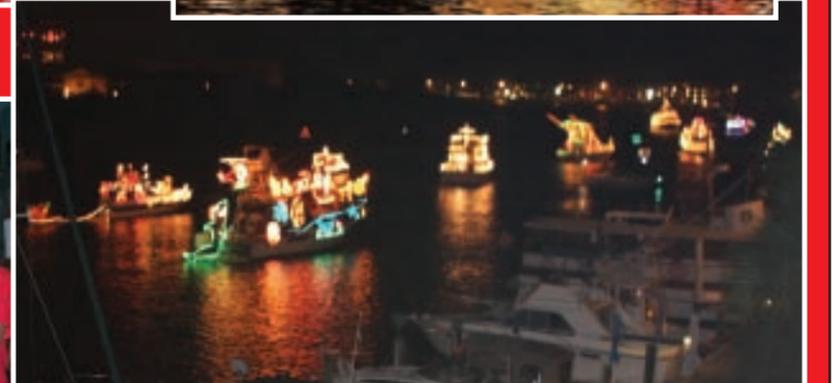
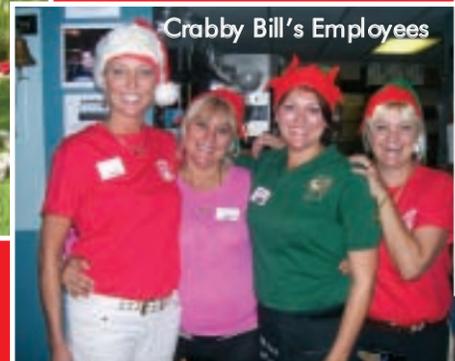
Homeowner's Toy Drive



Boat parade participants



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BELLEVIEW BILTMORE RESTORATION PLANS

The Belleview Biltmore was recently purchased by Legg Mason Real Estate, a California based company. The Belleview Golf Club on Indian Rocks Road and the Cabana Grille Restaurant in Sand Key were also included.

"We know the Biltmore has been an integral piece of the community's history. We look forward to working with the city on a plan to preserve it for future generations," says Joseph Penner, Managing Director, Legg Mason Investors. "It's always nice to have a project that is creative & historical," says Penner. "It will be a positive, fulfilling experience."

A restoration project will cost over \$100 million dollars, and begins in the spring of 2009. It will close the resort for 2 years. Roof repairs are already underway. It was heavily damaged during Hurricane Jeanne in 2004 and never completely repaired. The new roofing will be done with the trademark green shingles from the Biltmore's glory days.

Martin Smith, Vice President and Managing Partner of the Belleview Biltmore, is the manager as well. "We want to emphasize this is a 'restoration project', not a remodel," he says. "One of our major problems is parking. We have none. With the new design we hope to solve that". In the new plan, there will be 660 total parking places.

Features include a new 10,000 sq. foot ballroom, larger guest rooms (some with cathedral ceilings), and retail shops including an ice cream shop and jeweler. A spa will be built over underground parking, where the tennis courts are today. Actually, the underground parking is not really underground; with the slope of the Bluffs, "All parking will be hidden from view, creating a very nice park-like setting," says Mr. Smith.

The roadway leading to the hotel will include a grand new entrance, lined with large queen palms, that leads to a roundabout on the east side. The main entrance will move to the northeast corner, where it was originally. Today's "pagoda" entrance is not be part of the new design. All the aluminum will be removed from the outside walls. They will be restored to wood as Henry Plant originally built it in 1898.

On the upper levels, the flooring and walls between the rooms will be removed allowing rooms to be made larger. There will be 3 major ball rooms. The 'Starlight' room may revert back to the 'original' 1898 plan. The new ballroom will have floating walls allowing for smaller events.

On the the site of the original 'dormitories', where the staff lived, an additional annex is being built to include 160 new rooms. It will look similar to the main building.

"The current pool is being removed and a new Olympic sized, lap-like pool installed, aligning with the center of the building to emphasize the symmetry of the original design," Smith says. There will also be a new kids pool. A major "event lawn" is planned next to the newly designed main pool to be available for weddings, business socials and many other outdoor events. "Many outdoor 'Green Zones' and walking trails are in the new design to maintain the 'park-like' feel", says Martin Smith.

WINTERFEST ON THE ROCKS

Calvary Episcopal Church is holding its 4th Annual Winterfest on the Rocks Saturday February 16, 2008.

The event kicks off at 10:00 AM with the patriotic children's parade. It ends at 4:00 PM with the grand prize drawing of \$1000. There will be a pet parade, silent auction, benefit drawing, craft vendors, and on-going live entertainment. The kids zone will have inflatables, a clown for face painting, and arts & crafts. There will be lots of food and drinks. The proceeds go towards The Beach Food Pantry, Habitat For Humanity, and Episcopal Relief and Development in the Dominican Republic.



Volunteers at last year's Winterfest

GRAND MARSHAL

The 2007 Christmas Parade's Grand Marshal, was Betsy Schoepf. She has been a resident of the City of Indian Rocks Beach for 31 years when she and husband Burton came to the city to spend the summer and never went back to Tampa.



Betsy after the parade, enjoying the children's Christmas party

They both love this City. Betsy and Burton have been married for 51 years, have three daughters and two grandchildren.

Betsy has been a part of the Beach Art Center since 1978 when she began taking classes. 1996 she became the Assistant Director working with

Joanne King. Upon the Joanne's retirement, Betsy became the Director of the Beach Art Center. She retired from her position with the Beach Art Center this past summer.

She was chosen as Grand Marshal because of the many hours she has given to the City, always available to help with any project on a moments notice.

Betsy says retirement is wonderful. She keeps busy with her home and her painting. Adding to her list of fun things, she is teaching beginner oil painting at Michael's.

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COMMUNITY. MISSION. ROCK TO BUILD ON.



CRUNCHY MAMA'S There's a new place to buy natural foods. Crunchy Mama's (formerly Sweet Pea Organics) is now open at 12788 Indian Rocks Road South. Christy Ward and IRB resident Andrea Harms have opened this all natural food supply store. They are two Moms that understand the importance of organic farming for your family's

health and the health of our environment

UPCOMING MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

March 11, is the next IRB municipal election. There are 3 available seats - two commissioners and one mayor/commissioner. All are 2 year terms.

Mayor/Commissioner Bill Ockunzzi, and Commissioners Jose Coppen and R.B. Johnson's terms are up. They may run again, if they desire.

To qualify to run for one of these positions you must:

- 1) Pick up and complete a packet at city hall
- 2) Get 30 people to sign your running card,
- 3) Appoint a campaign treasurer
- 4) Open a campaign bank account.
- 5) Return your completed packet during the week of January 7th through the 11th.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION

GULF BOULEVARD Just when you thought it was safe to drive on Gulf Blvd, they do it again. Construction has begun south of Walsingham and continues through Indian Shores to Park Blvd. The project will involve installing new shoulders with bike and walking paths, a 16-inch reclaimed water transmission main, reclaimed distribution lines, water line upgrades, sanitary sewer



Artists rendering of completed Gulf Blvd project

upgrades and other improvements. Pinellas county is in charge of the joint project with the FDOT, and the City of IRB. The project is expected to take 22 months and be completed August '09



Back-ups on the causeway

THE BELLEAIR CAUSEWAY

The new bridge is on schedule to be completed September '09.

GULF BLVD. BEAUTIFICATION

Pinellas County & barrier island municipal officials, including IRB, are discussing a plan to use \$35 million in anticipated Penny For Pinellas sales tax revenue for beautifying Gulf Blvd, all 22.6 miles of it. This may include undergrounding utilities. The money is expected to be generated from 2010 to 2020. No plan has been established yet. The discussion and planning meetings will continue. Work is expected in 2010

BUSINESS BRIEFS



Steve Wesphal and Carol, show off the newly remodeled restaurant

THE PUB has undergone a major remodel the last few months. They are done and have new furniture inside and out, are ready for business. The great looking new bar has big flat screen TV's. They also added breakfast everyday. The PUB can provide banquet service up to 200 people. The Homeowners Feb. 21st Happy Hour will be there to help show it off.

THE SHAG HAIR SALON opened next to Yellow Banks, across from Sassy's. It is in the old Yellow Banks Salon location, Owned by Dejah Gandy, a long time resident of IRB, they are looking for new customers. Walk-ins are welcome but reservations are desired.



BONHAM MAKES 30 UNDER 30! In a November issue of the Tampa Bay Business Journal, both Carey Bonham and his wife, Amy, made the list of 30 area up and coming Tampa Bay professionals. Carey and Amy met in college at USF. Both dentists they practice with Carey's dad in Largo at Bonham Dental Arts.

FOR SALE:

- The GTE Building on Walsingham Rd
- Munce Marketing near Plumlee Century21 (\$8 Million)
- The Old Gas Station on Gulf Blvd (2.2 Million)
- Brewmaster Steakhouse
- Sand Key Realty Building
- Al and Stella's Building only, the Restaurant will stay.

SHELL STATION SOLD as of November 20th, Nazir and his family are the new owners of the Shell Gas station at Gulf Blvd and Walsingham. His plans include adding a deli counter with sandwiches.



CLOSED / OUT OF BUSINESS:

- Beach Florals, the only florist in IRB closed the first of November. It was located just south of TJ's Italian Restaurant, next to Century 21/ Beggins
- RBD Realty & Roger's Development, the people developing the old Portofino Restaurant is apparently out of business or reorganizing. They closed their Clearwater Beach office and appear to be another victim of the real estate collapse of the past two years.
- The Visitor Center at 2215 Gulf Blvd, owned by a company Escapes Vacations closed. Mayor Bill Ockunzzi, who owns the building and lives next door doesn't know where they went or why they left.

BIKES FOR RENT: A bike rental company is now open next to Cookie Cutter Salon

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NEW LIBRARIAN

Jane Mitchell is the new director of our IRB LIBRARY. For the last 4 1/2 years, she was the reference and adult services librarian at the St. Pete Beach Library. Her position was eliminated during the recent budget cuts. She has worked in public libraries since the mid-'70s. Jane received her Master's of Library and Information Studies from the University of Alabama in 2002. In addition to being a librarian, she is also a published writer of three works of fiction: And Grace Will Lead Me Home (2001), Trees with Angel Hair (2005) and Beat of my Heart (2007). The first and third books are crime novels, while the second is a collection of short stories focusing on Christmas. Copies of all three books are in various libraries in Alabama and Florida. She is the mother of two daughters, living in Gainesville and the grandmother of two. She is delighted to have been selected as the IRB Library's first director and looks forward to working with volunteers and patrons to make it even more of an asset to our community.



TV KEEPS US CONNECTED

By Karen Williams Seel, District 5 Pinellas County Commissioner



Bright House Networks made major changes to its television channel lineup in Tampa Bay. All government and education channels in the seven county area are impacted, including your city, county and School Board.

Pinellas County government's channel moved up to Bright House Networks Channel 622. To continue receiving the this channel, those with basic cable service (with no cable box) must contact their provider. Knology customers will continue to view the government programming on Channel 18. Verizon will soon be using Channel 44 for the government channel.

With these changes come a new name and logo reflecting the service bring to our citizens. The channel name is Pinellas County Connection Television - or PCCtv.

One thing that will not change is our gavel-to-gavel coverage of the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) and other public meetings, as well as our special programming. The meetings and the programs are accessible on, pinellascounty.org. Click on "Streaming Video" to watch commission meetings from your computer.

Pinellas County Connection Television is a broadcast of your local government in action. Watching regularly can give you valuable insight into how government works and who is leading those efforts. Each Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners meeting is broadcast live and repeated to communicate important decisions and discussions taking place that impact all of us. There are also BCC work sessions, monthly BCC public hearings and monthly Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) public hearings and Tourist Development Council (TDC) meetings. PCCtv is a critical part of our commitment to transparent government and open communication with the public.

Other highlights include a weekly program, Inside Pinellas, featuring balanced, in-depth reports on Pinellas County government news, programs and events. Good Business Pinellas spotlights area business news. Progressive Pinellas takes a look at current issues people are discussing. You can gather the children around to watch the Pick-A-Pet program and consider the lovable pets available for adoption at Pinellas County Animal Services.

Perhaps the most important feature of our programming is the station's critical role during a hurricane or other disaster in Pinellas County. It is vital that the up-to-date, essential information released from our country-wide emergency management staff is broadcast to our residents. This station has a tradition of providing complete coverage of storms with valuable information on surviving the storm and recovery efforts. We're capable of 24/7 coverage.

To keep connected on Bright House Networks, cable customers must have a digital cable box or television with a QAM digital receiver. You can order a box from Bright House Networks at (727) 329-5020. Charges will apply.

For more information about this process, visit www.pinellascounty.org. Direct questions about PCCtv to Eric Hulsizer, station manager, hulsizer@pinellascounty.org.

Your Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners looks forward to seeing you on PCCtv on Bright House Networks Channel 622, Knology Channel 18 & Verizon Channel 44.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL

I would like to thank everyone for helping make 2007 a great year to be the IRB Homeowners President. Our monthly Happy Hours were a great success: Thanks to Bob & Becky Griffin for coming up with the idea and setting them up with the local establishments. Our calendar is already set for the 2008 Happy Hours starting with Crabby Bill's Loading Dock on January 10th, hope see everyone there.

The "Guppy's Gulfside Gallop" had a great turnout on one of the coldest & windiest April mornings I can remember. We had more than twice as many runners as the year before. 2008's race will be bigger and warmer, I hope.

The "Biggest Beach Party Ever" was a huge success and we look forward to joining forces with the Rotary again this year for an even bigger "Biggest Beach Party Ever" the last Saturday in April.

The event that I am the proudest of was the first annual "Taste of IRB". I felt this was a huge success for our local restaurants and an event that was enjoyed by all that attended. Next years "Taste of IRB" will be held on Nov. 8th in the improved Chic-A-Si Park.

The final event of the year was the Toy Drive on Dec. 13th. All the toys that were collected were split between Shirley Steele, who works with the underprivileged families in Pinellas County, and the Abused Women's Shelter in Clearwater. Thank you to everyone that came out and joined us that night or dropped off toys in our collection box. Also, at the Toy Drive, we did a practice run with our "Movies in The Park" set up and enjoyed the old time Christmas Specials. The set up worked great and we will be doing "Movies in The Park" at the Nature Preserve soon.

Once again, Thank You to all that made 2007 a great year for the IRB Homeowners Assoc. Let's have a great 2008 and please go to irbhome.com for more information or to email any suggestions or comments.

Happy New Year,
Phil Wrobel, President - IRB Homeowners Assoc

REAL ESTATE - A YEAR IN REVIEW

In the past 12 months (ending December 1st) there were only 64 homes and condos sold in IRB. That averages five per month. Coincidentally, there was an equal number of homes (32) and condos (32) sold.

HOMES:
Of the 32 single-family homes sold, 23 were waterfront. The highest sales price was \$980,000 (waterfront on 12th Ave). It sold after only 36 days on the market. The least expensive home sold for \$210,000, (located on 1st Street) was on the market for 36 days. The quickest home sale was 7 days; a 2 Bd/2 Ba on 12th Ave- \$395,000.

CONDOS:
Of the 32 condos and/or townhomes sold ALL were waterfront. The most expensive was \$620,000; 2Bd/2.5 Bath at Scopello on Gulf Blvd. The least expensive townhome sold in Hidden Harbor for \$230,000. A unit at 50 Gulfside sold in only 6 days at the full asking price of \$299,900.

This information was supplied by Century 21 / Plumlee Realty in Indian Rocks Beach

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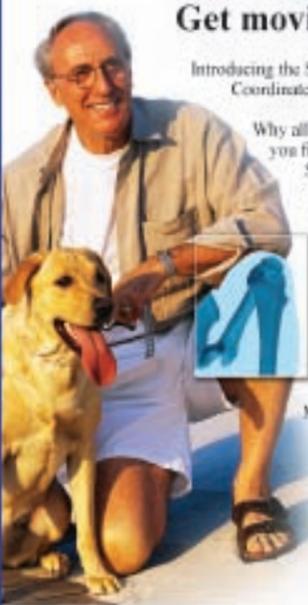
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News Channel 8 **Health Connections**

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You're Invited

While Bella Capri luxury beachfront residences are under construction, you are invited to visit our Indian Rocks Beach Sales & Design Gallery located just six blocks North at **604 Gulf Boulevard**. For further, detailed information, call us at **727.346.4134**, visit us at www.BellaCapriFlorida.com, or e-mail us at BellaCapri@SendingNow.com.

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