

# NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

including Sand Key and Island Estates

Magazine

## ED WRIGHT ONCE OWNED SAND KEY



**Sand Key  
1969**  
The year  
Wright  
died.

**S**ome people called Ed Wright a real estate developer, but he preferred the term "speculator." A frugal bachelor, he parlayed hundreds of abandoned parcels of land all over Florida, by purchasing land when other speculators were ignoring it.

During the 1950s and '60s, Wright owned almost all of Sand Key. While he officially lived in St. Petersburg, Wright had a beach house on Sand Key where he frequently stayed to escape his work and to relax.

*Continued on page 7*

### Too much recycling is being discarded as contaminated



Plastic grocery bags, Styrofoam and food waste are the three biggest culprits.

*- page 14*

### A Red Tide bloom affects more than just our beach days

*It may be gone, but our businesses are still feeling the Red Tide - page 35*

### More than 2100 area children are in Foster Care

*Learn how you can help - page 21*

### When will St. Pete's New Pier Open?

*Find out on - page 20*



**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 FEBRUARY!**

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<b>BUILDING PERMITS</b>	562-4567
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<b>BEACH AQUATIC FACILITY</b>	462-6020
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<b>NEIGHBORHOOD LIAISON</b>	562-4554

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249 Windward Passage, Island Estates	
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<b>COMMISSION OFFICES</b>	464-3377
Dave Eggers, Beach/Island Estates 464-3276	
Karen Seel Sand Key 464-3278	

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Vacant 727-793-2797	
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Charlie Crist . . . . . 202-225-5961	
696 1st Ave N., Suite #203, St. Pete	
www.Crist.House.Gov	

**CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS**

**DECEMBER**

Winter Solstice	21
Santa And Suds Run-Walk	23
Public Schools Closed	24
Christmas Eve	24
Christmas	25
Kwanzaa	26
Boxing Day	26
Outback Bowl on the Beach	28
Blast Friday Downtown	28
New Years Eve	31
Fireworks Sand Key Park	31

**JANUARY 2019**

New Year's Day	1
Outback Bowl	1
Dunedin Art Show	5-6
Epiphany	6
Public School Open	8
National Chocolate Day	12
Martin Luther King Jr Day	14
Public Schools Closed	14
Florida's Arbor Day	18

Martinis & Matisse	19
East-West Shrine Game	19
Blast Friday Downtown	25
Tampa Bay Home Show	25-27
Beach Walk Walk	26
Belleair Sunset 5k	26
Gasparilla Invasion	26
Heritage Village Folk Festival	26
Backwater's Chili Cook-Off	27

**FEBRUARY**

Ground Hog Day	2
Super Bowl	3
Chinese New Year	5-19
Florida State Fair	7-18
National Pizza Day	9
Tampa Bay Rays Fan Fest	9
Belleair Sunday Concert In The Park	10
Valentine's Day	14
Island Estates Community Yard Sale	16
Yard Sale St Brendan's Catholic	16-17
PresidentsDayPublicSchoolsClosed	18
Blast Friday	22
Causeway Clean Up By IECA	23

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## Did You Know



**CHANGE OF WATCH** Clearwater Yacht Club, founded in 1911, installed its 75th slate of officers during its Change of Watch ceremony on Dec. 1. The 2019 officers are, (left to right), Immediate Past Commodore Collin Heimensen, Commodore Phil Beauchamp, Vice Commodore Greg Garner, Rear Commodore Mary Kay Delk, Treasurer Dennis Sheehan, Fleet Chaplain Fr. Bob Wagenseil, Fleet Surgeon Dr. Donald Collins, and Fleet Captain Todd Crosby. Not present were incoming Secretary Curtis Wold and incoming Fleet Captain Dick Nordman.

**STOP HOLIDAY WASTE** The holidays are full of good food and fun, however, it does come at a cost. Americans throw away 25% more trash between Thanksgiving and New Year than at any other time of year. That amounts to 25 million extra tons of garbage, or about 1 million extra tons per week! Here are some ideas to curb the waste: When planning large meals, buy only what you need. Use reusable utensils –plates, forks, etc. Give reusable items as gifts – consider to-go containers, reusable food storage containers, water bottles, and shopping bags. These gifts help reducing waste. Encourage your guests to take leftovers so food doesn't go to waste. An alternative is to freeze them and eat them later.

**INCREASED COSTS TO MAIL A LETTER** The United States Postal Service is increasing the cost of a stamp in January. What used to be 50¢ will go up 5¢ to 55¢. They tell you that you can beat the increase by buying Forever stamps now, at the old price.

**CLEARWATER BEACH NEWS 10 YEARS LATER** This is the 10th Anniversary of the Clearwater Beach Neighborhood News Magazine (formerly Newsletter). We started this community newspaper in December of 2008.

We want to thank our advertisers who have supported us and made this possible. We also want to thank you, our readers. Without you there would be no reason to publish our News Magazine.

We are still amazed at the response we receive from our readers, organizations and our advertisers. We produce similar newsletters in three other area: Belleair (area), Indian Rocks Beach and Downtown St. Petersburg. You can read all the prior issues on our web site at BeachNewsletters.com.

Send your comments or story ideas to [Bob@GriffinDirectories.com](mailto:Bob@GriffinDirectories.com).



**50th Anniversary**

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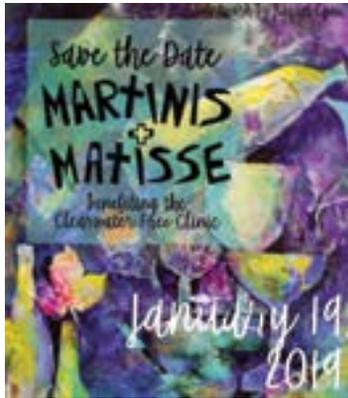
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**CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE** The City Charter requires a Charter Review Committee of at least 10 Clearwater residents be appointed at least every five years. Appointed by the City Council, the committee examines the city's charter and determines what changes, if any, should be proposed and brought to voters.

Appointments are effective Jan. 17, 2019, and the committee will meet regularly through September. The committee's proposed charter changes will be submitted to the City Council for consideration and placement on the March 2020 ballot. Interested residents may apply at [www.edocuments.myclearwater.com/Forms/AdvisoryBoardApplication](http://www.edocuments.myclearwater.com/Forms/AdvisoryBoardApplication). Select Charter Review Committee.

**SPEAKING OF HISTORY** This popular Sunday series on historical topics continues at Heritage Village. January 20 at 2pm, author Gail MacDonald will discuss Morton Plant: Business Man and Philanthropist. Call 582-2123.

**COLLEGE FOOTBALL BOWL MOVES** The annual St. Pete Bowl and later known as the Gasparilla Bowl, has moved. Now called the Bad Boy Mowers Gasparilla Bowl, it is being played in Tampa in Raymond James Stadium on December 20th at 8pm. It will match USF from the ACC and Marshall of the American Athletic Conference. Get information at [GasparillaBowl.com](http://GasparillaBowl.com).

**HONORING VETERANS** The students of St. Cecelia Catholic School of Clearwater, gathered by the school's flagpole where they honored the courageous of our country, the veterans. A prayer service and flag raising to God Bless America was a very touching sight to behold. The students were asked the question, "Who are veterans?" Among the answers that were given by the students was that veterans are people who selflessly lay down their lives for freedom, liberty and ultimately peace in the world. Thank you veterans for all your sacrifices.



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

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# ED WRIGHT, WAS ONCE PINELLAS COUNTY'S RICHEST MAN

In the late 1800s, Ed Wright was born in Georgia; his family moved to St. Petersburg at the turn of the century, in 1900.

While attending St. Pete High, Wright was a retail clerk at the Lewis Central Avenue Grocery, owned by Ed Lewis, a St. Petersburg pioneer and later city councilman. Lewis saw Wright's potential and soon had him keeping the store's books and looking after Lewis's personal investments.

During WWI, Wright served as a personnel officer clerk in a Washington D.C. war production bureau, where he entered Army Officer Candidate School. After the war, he worked for General Motors in export and installment sales financing.

When he returned to St. Petersburg, he found himself in the middle of the 1924-26 Florida's Real Estate Boom. From 1923-1930, he was primarily a real estate broker and began to amass his fortune. The boom ended with the Great Depression. People were rich one day and poor the next.

Wright never lost faith in Florida, and it certainly paid off. When the banks failed in the '30s, he bought entire portfolios. He also was able to help many bankrupt municipalities. Eventually, he founded Ed C. Wright & Company, a securities house specializing in Florida Municipal Bonds.

By the 1950s, those municipalities and banks were repaying their large debts to his securities company. With the influx of money, Wright began buying large tracks of land - many from private owners - but some at public auctions, too.

Wright also bought tax deeds, which are sold when an owner cannot pay their property taxes. Wright's tax deeds paid the taxes and became a lien on the property. After a year or so, he would be repaid with interest, or eventually acquire the property for a dime-on-the-dollar. That is how he acquired on Sand Key.

In the early 1900s, Sand Key was called Dan's Island since Dan Anderson was the only one that lived there. Anderson owned 100-acres at the northeast end of the island where the Marriott Waterside sits today.

When Anderson died in 1928, he willed the property to his two sons. But after World War II, they could not afford the taxes and the property was acquired by Ed Wright through a tax deed.

Wright found the north end of Sand Key a place of solitude. He built a beach house on the Gulf side in the middle of his two miles of private beach. In front of the beach house, he built three fishing piers (shown in the photo on the front page). They were available to anyone who wanted to fish.

"I met Ed Wright in the 1960s," says Kathy Mortensen, former Mayor of Belleair Beach. "My girlfriends and I used to go to Sand Key to enjoy the beach. There was only one house located near the middle. Mr. Wright owned it."

"One day he showed up driving his jeep," Kathy recalls. "He was very nice to us girls. He even gave us the key to his house and told us it was okay for us to use it to shower and change clothes, as long as we kept it clean and locked it up."

At one point, Wright also owned the Belleview Biltmore Hotel and its Sand Key Cabana Club. He acquired them in 1944 when owner Arnold Kirkeby died. Wright never opened the hotel and sold it to Bernie and Mary Powell in 1946, immediately after WWII.

Wright kept the Belleview Biltmore's Cabana Club property though, which at the time was nothing more than a beach area with a couple of shacks for storing chairs and umbrellas in the middle of Sand Key, near Wright's beach house.

In addition to Sand Key, Wright owned land all over the county including - Tarpon Springs, St. Pete's Gateway area, half of Weedon Island, and most of Feather Sound.

From the Panhandle to the Florida Keys, Wright bought property: land in Coral Gables, a mile of oceanfront property in Key Largo, a mile of Gulf front in Cape Sand Blas, several large tracks of land in Central and North Florida. It was available at a good price, he bought it.

In addition to land, Wright was the largest stockholder in the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad holding 51,133 shares valued at one time to be \$2.2 million.



*Ed Wright with longtime assistant / girlfriend Ruby Kirby*

A lifelong bachelor, Wright lived with his sister, Willie Pearl, in a modest St. Petersburg home in a middle-class neighborhood at 2620 2nd Street North. He lived a simple life and shunned publicity, though his name appeared regularly in newspapers, because of his large land purchases.

Shortly after his 77th birthday, Wright fell down a flight of stairs and hit his head; was hospitalized at St. Anthony's Hospital. He also had a bleeding ulcer and died on February 1, 1969 when he suffered a heart attack. He was survived by his two sisters Willie Pearl, and Ruby Belcher, and brother Alvah G. Wright.

He had a longtime assistant and girlfriend Ruby Kirby, who was 21 years his minor. For years, they had planned to marry, but never did. The liquidation of the estate including all his land holdings, which would take years, was her responsibility.

When he died, Ed Wright held an estimated 71,000 acres of Florida land. 58,000 of those acres were right here in Pinellas County. He was one of the richest men in Pinellas—maybe even Florida. According to reports, he had amassed over \$50-million in real estate, municipal bonds, and railroad stock.

The terms of his estate stipulated that for the rest of their lives, Willie Pearl would receive \$1,000 per month; his other sister and brother received \$750 a month. Other relatives received smaller monthly payments.

The bulk of the estate was left to his longtime friend, Ruby Kirby...but we will save that for Part 2 of the story, next issue.

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**OCEAN ALLIES**

By David Yates, CMA

Every morning during sea turtle nesting season, my Clearwater Marine Aquarium team patrols much of our area beaches in search of new nests. During these early morning trips, we are able to see the impact of our beach-going friends the day before. We continue to be amazed at the debris and litter left on the beaches. We all know our beaches are the primary reason tourists show up in our area and spend their hard-earned money. Tourism is our number one supplier of local and statewide jobs, however, unbridled tourism can wreak havoc on our beaches, marine life and eco-systems. This is where a new grassroots movement, Ocean Allies, comes in. Founded by a number of Clearwater-based community leaders, Ocean Allies is a coalition with its sights set on educating how tourism and conservation can work hand-in-hand (yes, it does work.)



4th of July garbage left on the beach

A plethora of studies make it clear that there is a definite trend in tourism that centers on the desire to travel to areas that have a sustainable conservation mindset and tourist plan. A recent study shows that 57% of travelers make eco-friendly travel decisions. This is a trend, not a fad. Accordingly, tourist destinations that see this trend and fit themselves into it will lock in long-term tourism benefits, while those that don't will lose market share. If we can develop a strategy that increases tourism while protecting our marine life and sensitive Gulf ecosystems, why would we not? Well, we should.

The Ocean Allies goal is to provide the local business community with tools and advice that lower the impact on our beach environment while at the same time enhancing the guest experience. Amongst other things, Ocean Allies works with restaurants and hotels to educate on how they can minimize plastic use and begin easy recycling and even composting. Further, the businesses learn how they can actually decrease operational costs and draw new customers by participation. Everyone wins. This small but strategic shift in the Clearwater Beach brand will be seen and experienced by tourists who will appreciate and respect our responsible approach to tourism, building our brand equity deeper with them, creating incremental repeat tourism. Organizations like Bob Heilman's Beachcomber, Beach Fire Beach Bar & Grill, the Wyndham Grand, and the Sandpearl Resort are on board, with more in progress. The time is now and the benefits are clear. Let's all jump on board and build a long-term plan for Clearwater Beach. E-mail me at [Dyates@cmaquarium.org](mailto:Dyates@cmaquarium.org), for more information.

**CLOTHES TO KIDS NEEDS JACKETS**

Clothes To Kids needs new or gently used kids jackets, especially elementary school boys and girl's jackets sizes 6-12. Each year Clothes To Kids provides more than 11,000 low-income and in crisis PreK-4 to 12th grade children with clothes including a jacket. Families who qualify for free or reduced priced lunch or that are in crisis can come shop at one of their stores.

Donations may be dropped off from 9 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday at: Clearwater: 1059 N. Hercules Avenue and St. Pete: 2168 34th Street S. Monetary donations are also needed to buy new socks and underwear. For information or to schedule an appointment to shop, please call 441-5050 or visit [www.clothestokids.org](http://www.clothestokids.org).

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## SANTA AND SUDS 5K RUN AND STREET PARTY

Santa and Suds 5K, .5K and street party, now on its 5th year, returns December 23rd at 4PM. Sean Belanger and friends Rob Powers and Bladar (Tony) Stravrov started the race in 2013 as a way to encourage people to see the changes in downtown Clearwater and to help sponsor the deaf community through the Deaf Literacy Center.



The three of them have a great passion for downtown Clearwater and hope to see it become a smaller version of St Petersburg or more like our neighbor Dunedin. As the years have gone by, there have been great changes which include Capitol Theater, Clear Sky Restaurant, multiple other restaurants, two coffee shops including Starbucks, a new wine bar, and two breweries.

From the beginning, they wanted the race to be fun and filled with the colors and sounds of the holidays. Race Awards include best costumes and best Santa. You will see Elves and Santas running as well as other creative costumes making a race that is certainly about fun and the Holiday season. The Mayor of Clearwater typically kicks off the race.

This family fun race features a .5K as well as a 5K. Yes, that's not a typo that's a .5K or 1/2 of a kilometer. Of course the .5K race emphasizes the fun part. The race will start in front of Clear Sky and Tony's Pizza. There will be a crowd, so get there early! The 5K is quite fun as it travels the wide bike path over the causeway bridge so strollers and kids are welcome. Many families have made this part of their Christmas tradition much the same as the Turkey Trot is part of so many Thanksgiving days.

The street is closed during the race. There will be a complimentary beer, Santa race shirts and jingle bells for participants. Both Clear Sky and Tony's Pizza will offer specials.

Please come join the fun. Register at RaceHawk.com, just look for Santa and Suds. Sign up early and save. Spread the word, bring your friends and come have fun.

Thanks go to the Run for Brews organization for supporting and participating in the race as well many individual sponsors, including Clear Sky restaurant and Tony's Pizza. This year's proceeds will go to the Saint Vincent DePaul Soup Kitchen of Clearwater and tickets sold through the Deaf Literacy Center will support that great organization.

## MISS BENNET: CHRISTMAS AT PEMBERLEY

Presented by American Stage

This Christmas, join American Stage and cozy up with your favorite Pride and Prejudice characters at Pemberley. This perfectly constructed romantic holiday comedy takes you to 1815 England in the grand estate of newlyweds, Mr. and Mrs. Darcy. MISS BENNET will enchant Jane Austen fans and new-comers alike, November 28- December 30. Call 727.823.PLAY (7529) or visit AmericanStage.org.

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**LONGEVITY RISK IN RETIREMENT**

by Ray Ferrara, ProVise Management Group

One of the greatest fears expressed by many is the concern of outliving their money in retirement. After all who wants to move in with the kids, go back to work, or decrease their standard of living? With improved medical science and with better life styles, many are easily living into the 90s and age 100 is not out of the question.



If you retire at age 65, then how long must your savings last? The most common answer is "maybe to age 85." According to Social Security the median age to which a male age 65 will live is age 84, and for women it is even higher. When we write a financial plan, we usually project at least to the youngest spouse's age at 95.

What are ways to protect against out living assets? First, continue working. Each additional year of work, is one more year of potential savings, one less year of spending from the nest egg and one more year of potential growth. For couples, having the larger earning spouse wait to begin Social Security at age 70 (maximum benefit) can make a lot of sense.

Next, pay off all debt before retiring. Assuming that goal has been accomplished, then plow as much money as you can into retirement plans and general savings, especially the last five years leading into retirement.

If you no longer have a need for cash value life insurance consider cashing in the policies and reinvesting into other more productive investments, or possibly do a tax free exchange to a low cost annuity. Choices range from those which pay immediately, those which are deferred to a time in the future (20 years from now), and/or those which are investment oriented. Before doing so, however, consider your current state of health, surrender charges, potential taxes and other factors.

Health care and long term care costs are often underestimated. Fidelity currently estimates that the average retired couple will spend over \$250,000 on health care. Either due to mental or physical issues, many will spend some amount of time in a long term care facility. Very few people think about this issue in the retirement planning process. Long term care insurance is not inexpensive, but neither is the cost of a long term care facility.

Please call to take advantage of a complimentary discussion regarding longevity risk and other retirement planning matters.

V. Raymond Ferrara, CFP®, Chair and CEO  
ProVise Management Group, LLC  
611 Druid Rd E, Suite 105, Clearwater, FL 33756  
727-441-9022, info@provisemgmt.com

*The information herein is general and educational in nature and should not be considered legal or tax advice. Tax laws and regulations are complex and are subject to change.*

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## WEATHER & WATER IN FLORIDA

By Rebecca Geiger

Well, we have finally hit fall! Comfortable days and cooler nights are a rarity in Florida, but when they come we welcome the break from the stifling heat. However, this does pose some dangers when it comes to water. Children, and sometimes adults, don't realize how quickly water temperatures change. This can lead to some risky situations.

When the temperatures drop at night, water gets cold faster than we would expect, especially water in pools. This is mostly caused by the pool filtration system. We are all aware that warm things rise and cooler things sink. In the case of pools, this means that the warmer water rises to the top where it rapidly cools and drops lower. The cooler water is pulled through the drain and redistributed through the jets at the top of the pool, cooling the water even more. Keep in mind that most of your pool thermometers only go three to four inches into the water, meaning your reading will be from the warmest water in the pool.

Cold water saps children's energy faster than anything else. This disrupts their coordination and causes them to tighten up faster. Just because the air is warm doesn't indicate that the water in the pool will be warm enough to swim in. When they do swim under these conditions, keep an eye on their mouths for indicators that it is time to get out. Their lips will be one of the first places the body pulls blood from to stay warm, so when lips turn blue, combined with the chattering of teeth (meaning that they are losing control of their small muscle movements), it is time to end the swim session. Make sure if they choose to attempt swimming in cold water, that they acclimate themselves to it prior to submerging themselves!

If anyone falls into cold water unexpectedly, it is worth a quick trip to the doctor to eliminate the possibility of dry drowning. Dry drowning is something we all hear about that mostly comes from the shock of cold water. When the body is submerged in a pool or other body of cold water unexpectedly, the initial response to a shock of that magnitude is a quick intake of breath. If the head or face is submerged when this occurs, the individual will intake water instead of air. The body's natural response to an overwhelming jolt of this kind is to shut down for a couple of seconds while it assesses the situation and determines the best course of action. If this happens, the water taken in will settle deep in the lungs. Therefore, even if the person is retrieved or gets themselves out almost immediately, the water still cannot get out of the lungs. It is worth having the lungs checked by a doctor in this case prior to going to sleep and risking the danger of the fluid restricting breathing.

*I am known as Miss Becca to my students, specializing in "Drowning Prevention Education" for children and adults for more than 20 years through private lessons and presentations. Please call (813)363-9133 with any questions.*

## SEABIRDS NEED HELP, TOO

The Seaside Seabird Sanctuary had a busy summer, taking care of our native land and seabirds along the Gulf of Mexico. Then it got much worse with the Red Tide.

"We saw an increase in birds suffering from Red Tide exposure," says a representative of the Seaside Sanctuary. "Red Tide's effect on seabirds differ between the species. They show symptoms including neurological conditions resulting in their inability to walk or hunt. They also have gastrointestinal symptoms or internal bleeding."

Red Tide caused a double problem for the Sanctuary. While the Fall is always a slow time for tourists, the Red Tide has chased away the few who normally visit this time of year, causing donations to be way down. They have been operating at a deficit each month.

On average, 3,000 sick and injured birds are admitted to their hospital every year. Call 391-6211 to help.

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Winter holidays are a time for families and friends to get together. But that also means a greater risk for fire.

Remember: More than a third of home decoration fires are started by candles. Forty-two percent of decoration fires happen because decorations are placed too close to a heat source.

Following are a few simple tips that will ensure a happy and fire-safe holiday season

#### **Holiday decorating**

- **WATER LIVE CHRISTMAS TREES** daily to avoid drying out
- Be careful with holiday decorations. Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.
- Keep lit candles away from decorations and other things that can burn.
- Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both. Use them as instructed.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands to connect.
- Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.
- Keep decorations away from windows and doors.

#### **Holiday Entertaining**

- Never leave holiday cooking unattended
- Test your smoke alarms and tell guests about your home fire escape plan.
- Keep children and pets away from lit candles.
- Keep matches and lighters up high in a locked cabinet.
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking on the stovetop.
- Ask smokers to smoke outside. Remind smokers to keep their smoking materials with them so young children do not touch them.
- Provide large, deep ashtrays for smokers. Wet cigarette butts with water before discarding.

#### **Before Heading out or to Bed**

- Blow out lit candles when you leave the room or go to bed.
- Turn off all light strings and decorations.

#### **New Year's Resolution**

Check your smoke alarm batteries. Better yet, invest in a 10 year battery powered smoke alarm, so you never have to change the batteries. They make great Christmas gifts for your all your loved ones.

To find out more about Largo Fire Rescue's Smoke Alarm Program, contact Summer Mahr, Public Educator, at [smahr@gmail.com](mailto:smahr@gmail.com).

NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION The leading information and knowledge resource on fire, electrical and related hazards

## THE TRAVEL TRIBE - PART THREE

### From Europe to Asia

By Cassie Berger, Belleair resident

It's been four months of full time travel with our two little children and things are still going great! We left Italy (country 9) and headed north to a country you never really hear about, Estonia. Imagine stepping back in time to the Renaissance Era and you are in Old Town Tallinn, Estonia. Ferrying over to Finland, we visited the International Grand Market. Vendors from around the world set up booths to sell their goods in the main open square. Russia was next on our bucket list where we experienced the vibrant color and detailed architecture of the most beautiful church's in the world. They really aren't comparable to anything I've ever seen.

Cold weather in the last 3 countries sent us flying south towards warmer weather. Palma de Mallorca, Spain a beach island with mountains!! If the views weren't incredible enough, fresh paella was a daily staple. Our family came to visit us and we had a relaxing family vacation in the Belgian countryside. Cows roaming in our backyard and green land as far as you could see. Goodbye to our family and we were off to Asia!

Turkey was our first stop and what a welcoming we received. Turkish people overwhelmingly loved the children. Everywhere we went we would get smiles, a lot of people would stop just to play with Penelope a bit. Of course since we were there we had to see the world famous Hagia Sofia.

From Turkey to the United Arab Emirates or U.A.E. We visited our dear family friends in Dubai. Now one thing I can say is Dubai does everything bigger and better than anywhere else in the world. We saw the Burj Khalifa the tallest building in the world standing at a whopping 829 m, walked along the tree shaped Palm Jumeirah Island, and went sand bashing through the vast desert while rocking out to music.

Two weeks later we headed to India. Mumbai to be exact. Elephant Island is what drew me here. A UNESCO world heritage sight, there are numerous cave temples on the island. These cave temples are very large and are mainly dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva with many sculptures of Shiva inside.

We are getting into very new and exciting territory in Asia.

Where are we off to next?? Keep up with us real time on Instagram and Facebook at traveltribefamily

Happy Traveling! Cassandra Tyler Preston Penelope



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#19-2181827

# TRASH TALK...RECYCLING NEEDS OUR HELP

By Dan L. Hummel

Recycled materials and trash should look very different from each other, but for years they have been converging.

That's the observation of the National Recycling Coalition (NRC), a non-profit organization that is focused on the promotion and enhancement of recycling in the United States. Up to 20 percent of materials collected for recycling are not recyclables. Combine that variable with the fact that much of what is collected now is contaminated. These factors have caused China, the world's leading recyclables buyer, to launch an embargo on U.S. recycling imports. So, in most cases, what used to be sold to China and other processors as a revenue generator for most cities and counties, has now turned into a cost.

Sarah Herzig, a Solid Waste Technician for Pinellas County, explained, "Recycling in Pinellas County is collected by municipalities and private haulers. The materials are taken to local Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) for sorting. After sorting, recyclable materials are sold to processors and manufacturers. However, the value of these materials fluctuate and there is a significant cost for the collection of the material, staff, and equipment to sort the materials. Recycling would not be sustainable for the companies that collect it without charging a fee to customers."

Pinellas County is proactive on education relative to recycling. Stephanie Watson, Program Supervisor of Recycling Outreach and Programs, stated that Pinellas County has been providing education to county residents on proper recycling for many years, including the explanation of what contamination is.

The city of Clearwater values recycling, but like many other municipalities, is struggling with what is called the "single stream" process. This particular way of recycling began in 2013 and allows all recyclables to be collected together, and then sorted later at a central location. Before that, each type of recycled materials like paper,

cardboard, metal, plastic, and glass were separated by the consumer, and then taken to a sorting facility.

Sheridan Boyle, Recycling Specialist for Clearwater, said, "While the materials sent to the sorting facility were much cleaner prior to the single stream process being introduced, there was not a lot of recycling participation because it was more labor intensive for consumers. Once all recyclables were permitted to be placed in a single box, consumer participation greatly increased. However, so did the contamination, and the number of

greatly contributes to the problem, and eventually increases contamination and costs for local governments.

In Indian Rocks Beach, recycling is voluntary, but the City encourages everyone to do so. Public Services Director Dean Scharmen states, "We are in the process of trying to make it easier to recycle by introducing new 65 gallon 'recycle carts on wheels.' The carts will be available in early 2019 and will include specific information on proper recycling." Scharmen says that a direct mail program will precede the rollout of the new recycle carts.

"We are hopeful to make this voluntary program as easy as possible so that residents will participate and do it correctly," Scharmen continued. In Indian Rocks Beach, recycling carts are picked up weekly by an outside contractor, and the cost for this service is included in each residents' monthly garbage fee.

In the city of St. Petersburg, recycling contamination is not as widespread as it is in other municipalities. Jeff Donnel, Special Projects Manager for St. Petersburg, attributes this to two things. First, their program was introduced just three years ago with a significant amount of education. Secondly, St. Petersburg does their own collection rather than hiring a third party to do so. Donnel noted that, "If our drivers see a lot of contamination in the recyclable materials, they tag the bin so that the consumer has an opportunity to remedy the problem. Once they do, we have a truck stop back again for pickup." The driver

also has the option of requesting that an inspector visit with the homeowner to help them better understand the recycling process.

Like other, St. Petersburg continues to focus on education. Besides using traditional marketing like direct mail, the city also attends many area events to build awareness for proper recycling. It is the city's goal to strive for continuous improvement in their recycle program.

It is everyone's responsibility to recycle. Separate your trash from the recyclables and take the time to do it correctly. Be more than a trash talker... recycle!

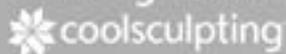


non-recyclables in the box."

Boyle hopes that education can change that. The city has launched a comprehensive marketing plan with direct mail and posters to teach consumers the best way to prepare their recyclables for pickup. She continued, "A lot of people want to talk about recycling and that is a good thing. The key is to help them prepare it better for us prior to pick up."

Boyle goes on to say that plastic grocery bags, Styrofoam and food waste are the three biggest culprits when it comes to recycling. Placing any of these three items into the recycle carts

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# Bar & Restaurant News

## 2018 RESTAURANT WEEK WINNERS

Held September 14-23, 2018, Clearwater Restaurant Week offered an incredible array of different cuisines. During the ten days, diners voted for their favorites. The winners were:

### 2018 "Best Overall Dining Experience"

#### Blinkers Beachside Steakhouse & Lounge

"Thank you for voting us Best Overall Experience Clearwater Beach's Restaurant Week. This was such a surprise and honor since we opened our second location here only one and a half years ago. We are so happy that the hotels and residents of Clearwater Beach have discovered our great Steakhouse on Mandalay Avenue and have welcomed us to the north of the beach. We hope you will come to visit so we can meet you and serve you the best in steaks, seafood and pastas on the beach!" Owners Gary Ginn and Sandy Meyer (above) & Blinkers Beachside Steakhouse & Lounge Staff



### 2018 "Best Server"

#### Martin Colbert – Rusty's Bistro Sheraton Sand Key Resort



Martin is from Ireland—something you soon discover when you first meet him. He studied restaurant management in college and his first job was at London's five-star Calaradiges Hotel. Later he taught restaurateurs in Ireland. He has worked in Chicago, Paris, and Maui.

In 1991, he gave up management, moved to Clearwater Beach, and took a server job at the once famous Clearwater Beach Hotel. "I did not want to be in management anymore," Martin says. "I enjoy serving." When the hotel closed in 2004, I was recruited by Russ Kimball to join the Sheraton Sand Key. I have been here 14 years and love it." As Head Server and Trainer, Martin has a special section in the middle of the restaurant with his regulars, who routinely ask for him.

"Rusty's is one of the finest restaurants in the area, not only because of the food, but because of the staff. Martin, especially, has been one reason my wife Carolyn and I enjoy dining at Rusty's — his attentiveness, congeniality, and personality make dining there special, no matter what the occasion," say Clearwater Mayor George Cretokos

"Martin's fan club began years ago and consists of a large following of locals as well as resort guests from all over the world. His Irish charm wins them over the first time, and his to-notch service keeps them coming back. Martin truly deserves this award as he is not only the best server, but also a true friend in hospitality," explains Sheraton Sand Key Manager Russ Kimball.

### 2018 "Best Bartender"

#### Kristina Miller – Salty's Island Bar & Grille

Kristina is a newcomer to Clearwater Beach, having moved here a year ago. She first worked at Shepard's Restaurants and Bar before starting at Salty's Island Grill in August, just in time for September Restaurant Week. "I love the customers I meet here at Salty's and want to thank them for Voting me the "Best Beach Bartender." Salty's Island Bar and Grille is located at 437 South Gulfview Blvd., across from Opal Sands.



# Bar & Restaurant News

## CELEBRATING THREE YEARS ON MANDALAY

Extreme Pizza, centrally located on Clearwater Beach, has been the standard and a staple for Gourmet Pizza, garden fresh salads and monster subs now for the last three Years.



They offer a wide selection of signature gourmet pizzas including both gluten free and vegan options. You are always welcome to create your own pizza from a vast selection of freshly-made toppings. If you are not in the mood for pizza, they also offer a wide selection of hot or cold monster subs. Add a garden fresh salad that is guaranteed to please to round out your meal.

Of course pizza needs a beer to go with it, and Extreme Pizza has that covered. They have a selection of 20 rotating draft beers from local breweries, in addition to their full liquor and wine bar. Enjoy great pricing and two happy hours a day: Noon to 4pm and 8pm to Midnight. If you miss happy hour they offer two-for-one well drinks from 4 to 8pm or indulge in one of their signature extreme drinks. Visit them at 407 Mandalay Ave Clearwater Beach, call 727-223-9100 or visit [Clearwater.ExtremePizza.com](http://Clearwater.ExtremePizza.com).

**THE GREAT DINE-OUT GIVEAWAY** Infinity, the League to Aid Abused Children and Adults, has created the new charity fund-raiser - "The Great Dine-Out Tampa Bay Giveaway". It is an opportunity for three lucky winners, drawn at random, to win a gift certificate package to many of Tampa Bay's best restaurants.

Prize packages are valued at either \$1500, \$1000 or \$500. Tickets, \$25 or five for \$100 are on sale now. The drawing is January 30th. Proceeds benefit CASA, Suncoast Center and Brookwood Florida. To purchase tickets (and to see a complete list of participants), visit [www.InfinityStPete.org](http://www.InfinityStPete.org) or call Rebecca Nakiwany at 593-4699.

**CHILI COOK-OFF** The 14th Annual Backwater's Chilli Cook-off will be January 27th, the Sunday before Super Bowl, beginning at 3pm. Limited to the first 30, it is chance for chili amateurs to be judged by skilled judges. If you are not a cook—you can come and eat some chili. For more information, visit [BackwateronSandKey.com](http://BackwateronSandKey.com) or call 517-7383. They are located in the Shoppes of Sand Key.

## CLEAR SKY REMODEL

Clear Sky Beach Café completely gutted its Mandalay café. The footprint didn't change, but there will be new windows, doors, walls, and flooring. They closed November 27 and recently reopened with an updated menu, which has an additional focus on aged, prime steaks and new seafood specials.



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# Bar & Restaurant News

## FEAST ON THE BEACH A BIG SUCCESS

The first ever Feast on the Beach Wine and Seafood Festival, held the first weekend in December, was a sold out fundraiser, according to organizer Frank Chivas. The event featured food and drinks from many Clearwater Beach area restaurants. Friday was the Cheers for Charity at Wyndham Grand. Saturday was a "Wine & Seafood Festival" in Pier 60 Park, and Sunday was the "Craft Beer & Grouper Smackdown" at Pier 60 Park



Benefiting the Richard Jacobson Foundation, some of the \$20 million raised was distributed to Moffit Hospital and Pinellas Tech (PTEC) among others. The primary sponsors were Duke Energy, Visit St Pete/Clearwater and Baystar Restaurant Group. Frank Chivas and Chicago Cubs Coach Joe Madden were the main organizers. There were too many participation restaurants to list. See the complete list at [www.FeastontheBeach.com](http://www.FeastontheBeach.com).

**SPEGGTACULAR FINISHES ITS FIRST YEAR** They are celebrating one year on Clearwater Beach and would like to thank all their guest for their continued support. They serve breakfast and lunch, which includes Benedicts, Crepes, Waffles, Omelets, a lot of fresh fruits and don't forget Mimosas and Bloody Mary. Kids eat FREE on Saturdays. Visit [speggtacular.com](http://speggtacular.com) for their full menu and addresses of both locations. They wish everyone Happy Holidays, a Merry Christmas and a great New Year, and hope to see you soon.

## CORK-N-BREW SOLD & CLOSED FOR REMODELING

Cork-N-Brew on the north end of the beach has been sold again and the new owner is making significant changes. They have gutted the interior and offices and doubled the square footage and seating. It will reopen as a noodle bar serving sushi and dumplings with the new name of SEKUSHI. Look for it to open next year—maybe as early as February.



**NOW OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK** Ryan's Café, located on the north end of the beach, is now open on Mondays. This great breakfast spot also features a huge half-pound cheeseburger for only \$5 after 2pm. Find them at 432 Poinsettia Avenue.

**FREE GROUPEER** At BayStar Restaurant Group your birthday is Grouper Day - all year. Eat at any BayStar restaurants on your birthday, and get a FREE grouper entrée. You must show a valid drivers license and purchase a second adult entrée of equal or greater value. Tax and gratuity still apply. This includes Seaweed, Salt Rock Grill, Marina Cantina, Salt Cracker, Rumba and Island Way Grill

**EGGNOG TOAST** Mark your calendar, Backwater's Annual Egnog Toast is Christmas Eve from 5 to 7pm. This complimentary event is to say thank you for your patronage, friendship and fun times over the past year.

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## WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE NEW ST. PETERSBURG PIER?

Construction continues on the new St. Pete Pier™ with all the pilings over water in place, and over 70% of the deck surface poured. Construction work is underway on the tilted lawn, the foundations for the pavilion building, the piles for Doc Fords and the Education Center columns and walls.

While piles are being driven and the upland is being graded and prepared for additional construction, another project – that of tenant selection – has also made significant progress.

All major tenants have been selected, including:

- Tampa Bay Watch – this local non-profit will operate the Education Center and will provide Educational programs for Tampa Bay area schools, summer camp programming, and afternoon and evening programs for families and visitors
- Teak, Inc. – Owned and operated by Chuck Prather, owner of The Birchwood on Beach Drive, they will offer three concepts at the Pier Head including an upscale restaurant (Teak) a rooftop bar (Teaki) and a café (Driftwood Café.)
- Doc Ford's Rum Bar & Grille - With three locations just south of Tampa Bay, Doc Ford's has already established a reputation as a highly successful destination restaurant, with a name and Florida theme, based on the novels by New York Times best-selling author Randy Wayne White
- United Park Services, Inc. (UPS) for a Counter Order Casual Concession at the Pavilion Building and Retail Sundry/Gift Shop and Bait Shop at the Pier Head Building.

Additionally, artwork for the Pier has been selected, including:

- Nick Ervinck – Belgium: TBD Pier Head. Fostering a cross-pollination between the digital and the physical, Nick Ervinck explores the boundaries between various media, including sculpture, 3D prints installation, architecture and design.



- Nathan Mabry – Los Angeles, CA: a coated steel, origami-inspired pelican to be installed in the Entry Plaza area. He is known for sculptures in bright primary colors that often reference modern sculpture of the 20th century as well as diverse cultures and birds significant to the local site.

- Xenobia Bailey, New York City: a tile mosaic within the Pier District. Bailey translates the vibrant patterns and colors derived from her fiber art, into mosaics for public projects.

A signature work of art by world-renowned artist, Janet Echelman, will also be located in the Pier District. Supported by private donations, this will be a floating sculpture within the Family Park area on the Pier Approach.

Soon, the Pier deck will be completed, as will the Pier Head building. Pier Approach construction will continue, with the addition of the Kids Play Area, Splash Pad and other exciting elements. By late 2019, residents and visitors alike will be able to enjoy the new St. Pete Pier. To learn more sign up for occasional Pier updates, please visit [www.newstpetepier.com](http://www.newstpetepier.com)

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## IF YOU WANT TO ADOPT, THERE'S HELP. IF NOT, LEND A HAND TO THOSE WHO DO

By Mariela Ollsen, 6th Judicial Circuit Guardian ad Litem Director, serving Pasco & Pinellas counties

Given the increased rates of abused and neglected children coming into out-of-home care, Americans are rightly concerned. It is leading us to learn to be more thoughtful and creative in helping vulnerable children find safe, loving, permanent families.

It is especially crucial in the 6th Judicial Circuit, which includes Pasco and Pinellas counties, where as of Sept. 30, 2,166 abused and neglected children are in out-of-home care – the second-highest of all 20 Florida circuits. Neighboring Hillsborough County, which comprises the 13th Judicial Circuit, has the most statewide at 2,437.

These numbers make finding good homes for at-risk children a challenge here and everywhere. That is part of why we at the Guardian ad Litem Program – who advocate in court for so many of these children – are so grateful for your support.

We are seeing a rise in new volunteers, along with moral and practical help and we couldn't do what we do otherwise. Our recent Pinellas graduating class had 27 new volunteers. One wrote in the review that it was the best decision she ever made. Another said she learned in the training that volunteering really does make a difference.

Besides, it is truly in every citizen's interest to step up. Here's why: There are more than 400,000 American children in foster care, 25,000 of them in Florida. Their average length of stay is 25.3 months, according to the Ackerman Institute for the Family – and they have rates of post traumatic stress disorder similar to veterans of war. What is more, children who age out of foster care without a family are four times

likelier to enter the criminal justice system as adults and 17 times likelier to be homeless at age 21.

That's why we support families who want to foster or adopt. While not everyone can take in a child, everyone can help reduce the number of children without families.

Mary K. Wimsett, an attorney in northeast Florida who has finalized more than 3,000 adoptions says thanks to social media, there are now groups all over the state that support foster parents – like Gator Strong Families at the University of Florida and Foster Florida – posts families' needs online, from car seats to cribs to meals to a night off.

"You can do something as simple as make dinner for a foster family," says Wimsett. "There's a family that just took placement of five siblings, can someone bring them dinner tonight?" Wimsett says. "A foster mom recently donated a kidney to one of the children in her foster home. The community came together and provided their meals for months."

Of course, you can also support abused and neglected children by volunteering as a Guardian ad Litem. Children with an advocate are twice as likely to be adopted as those without – and likely to spend less time in foster care.

To support foster and adoptive families, please visit [fosterflorida.org](http://fosterflorida.org). To become a Pinellas or Pasco foster family visit, [eckerd.org/i-would-like-to/foster-a-child/get-started-first-steps-in-fostering](http://eckerd.org/i-would-like-to/foster-a-child/get-started-first-steps-in-fostering). You can also donate to non-profits that support children in foster care with everything from school supplies to scholarships.

To learn more about Guardian ad Litem of the 6th Circuit, please call (727) 464-6528 in Pinellas or (727) 834-3493 in Pasco, or visit [www.herotoachild.org](http://www.herotoachild.org).

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## Business Briefs

### INTERIORS BY SHARMAN

Through the years, Sharman Eicher has seen the inside of a lot of houses and condos, and offices, and lobbies—and much more. That is because for almost 45 years



Sharman has owned Interiors by Sharman located in Belleair Bluffs. She has been in Belleair Bluffs since 1992.

Sharman, her real name, is originally from Findlay, Ohio. She moved to Florida as a child with her parents. She attended The Ringling School of Art in Sarasota, majoring in Fine Arts, with a specialty in Interior Design. "Ringling is one of the few schools in Florida that teaches interior design," Sharman says.

As a member of ASID and licensed by the State of Florida, Sharman worked for 19 years as an interior designer with a design firm. In 1992, she leased a space in Belleair Bluffs (long before there was a Bonefish Grill) to work for herself. Interiors by Sharman is one of the original tenants in that shopping center, as is Belleair Jewelers.

Sharman specializes in residences, houses, condos, offices and retirement facilities. She employs seven people with two designers on site. Their trucks are frequently seen in the area.

"The day after the No Name Storm of 1993," Sharman recalls, "a very nice lady came in and asked for my help. She had lost everything, so I helped her remodel her condo."

"I get a lot of referrals and repeat business," Sharman explains. "Many of our clients buy second homes—in other states—and we do them, too. That is because we do not just purchase items and hire subcontractors. We are very 'hands on' and personally supervise our jobs from start to finish."

Find Interiors by Sharman at 2949 West Bay Drive, next to Bonefish Grill. Call 581-1400 or visit InteriorsBySharman.com.

**MARINEMAX CLEARWATER NAMES NEW SALES MANAGER** Mo Struder was recently named as the new Sales Manager at MarineMax Clearwater.

"I am honored to take on this new role at MarineMax and look forward to assisting my team in reaching their goals," stated Mo Struder, MarineMax Sales Manager.

Mo has vast executive experience managing large sales teams completing complicated and large volume deals. His work history includes work for IBM and over 17 years with Teradata in various roles of increasing responsibility. As Area Vice President he was responsible for the direction of 25 sales professionals across a diverse customer base and geographic mix spanning 12 states, including six of the company's top 50 accounts. Mo is joining MarineMax Clearwater in the role of Sales Manager and will be responsible for the management of the Sales and Brokerage Teams. Mo has also been a long-time boat enthusiast and a long-term repeat service and sales customer of MarineMax

**BUSINESS NEWS WANTED** If you have news for this newsletter, please contact us. E-mail news to [Bob@GriffinDirectories.com](mailto:Bob@GriffinDirectories.com) or call 727-430-8300.



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# Business Briefs



**LIBRARY AT THE MARKET** The Market At Island Estates (formerly ABM Mini Mart) added Island Estates' first "Little Free Library." The concept is simple: Take a book; leave a book. There are no due dates, late fees or library cards. It is

fully stocked; donations are accepted and encouraged but not required.

"Little Free Libraries" originated in Madison, Wisconsin in 2010. Today, there more than 75,000 registered book exchanges around the world, scattered in all 50 states and 88 countries. Libraries are mapped on Google so users can easily find them. The market's "Little Free Library" will be registered soon on this world map.

Owner Catherine Bleakley says, "my goal is to contribute to the already strong sense of community that exists on Island Estates. I believe this little doll house for books can do that in a couple of ways. First, I hope residents will take ownership of this library. People support what they own, and I think a strong sense of communal pride can develop in caring for this library as a community. Second, I hope our reading nook will become a little gathering area where people can come by, grab a cup of coffee, browse, take a book if they'd like or leave a book they have enjoyed."

Pictured is Patti Morrison, reviewing the selection of books during a recent visit. Residents and visitors are encouraged to visit the library at 280 Windward Passage across from the Clearwater Aquarium.



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**STARLITE IN JOHN'S PASS** Starlite Cruises is adding a new dinner cruise ship in John's Pass Village called *The Calypso Breeze*. Starlite Cruises owner Phil Henderson, a resident of Belleair Beach, already operates dinner cruises originating in the Clearwater Beach Marina and St Pete Beach's Corey Causeway.



**PUBLIX CELEBRATES 45 YEARS** Clearwater Beach's only Publix originally opened in Island Estates 45 years ago this month. The new building opened one year ago this month. Manager Steve Hedgecock (shown here in the center) has been at the store since it re-opened. Former Store Manager Louie, moved to a Palm Harbor store, which is much closer to his home.

# Business Briefs



**BELLEAIR MARKET OFFERS CATERING**

Belleair Market offers that extra unique touch to all your holiday party needs. From wine and beer to platters to full service catering, they can do it all. For customized holiday catering for your office, family or friends, call them at 727-584-3697 or visit [belleairmarket.com](http://belleairmarket.com) for menu ideas.

**GALLERIA MISTO OPENS SECOND LOCATION**

Owners Louise and Luigi Del Basso are expanding

their gallery by adding a new location in downtown St. Petersburg. In addition to the art gallery located in The Plaza, next door to E&E Stakeout, they are opening a small gallery inside of The Mahaffey Theatre, on the second floor. The exhibits will normally only be open during Mahaffey events including Florida Orchestra concerts. The Grand Opening *Inception of Creation* exhibit and a reception is on December 5, from 5:30 to 7:30pm. To attend the reception, RSVP by call 559-7767. Get more info on this at [www.GalleriaMisto.com](http://www.GalleriaMisto.com).

**BIG MAN CELEBRATES 1000 MOVES**

In early 2017, we introduced you to Big Man's Moving Company owned by then newlyweds Josh and Brooke Anderson, whose wedding gifts partially funded their first 26 foot moving truck. Today we highlight another exciting milestone: 1000 successfully completed local and out of state moves!

The couple would like to thank their employees, whose good attitudes and superior work ethic have resulted in over 300 perfect 5-star reviews, strategic referral partners who consistently recommend Big Man's Moving to their clients, and the community for supporting their neighborhood, family-owned moving company. For a free estimate, visit [www.Bigmansmoving.com](http://www.Bigmansmoving.com) or call 727-772-3458.



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### GHD COASTAL HOMES, CHRISTMAS MESSAGE....



By Tom Smith  
Owner of GHD Construction Services

The holidays are here, and it's time to enjoy our families and friends and remember what "gifts" we have as Americans. Aside from the opportunity that we have as Americans for a First Class education for our children, we are blessed with what I consider one of the most important necessities in society, that is, safe and sanitary housing for our families.

I certainly enjoy working with customers to build beautiful "upper end" homes along the Pinellas beaches, but few know that our company business plan established in 1971, was to construct truly affordable housing for all income levels in Florida. For my 48 years in construction, we have built over 6,500 homes, a great percentage of which were for middle income Americans. Even more important to us, GHD Construction Services, Inc. has constructed thousands of apartments for those who can't afford homeownership. Then too, not known by many, GHD is one of Florida's leading providers of affordable rental housing for our Veterans and homeless populations. We are presently building affordable apartment projects in Sebring, De Funiak Springs, and Okeechobee, to help as best we can, provide our Veterans and lower income Floridians the affordable housing that they deserve. Proper shelter is paramount for stability for families in order for them to better their lives. Without that housing foundation, it's hard to progress in life.

It's sad to see the horrendous pictures of Mexico Beach after Florida's last hurricane. It's been 97 years since a direct impact Hurricane has hit Pinellas County, but it is certainly going to happen sometime in the future. If you are considering building

a home, my holiday recommendation is to build new and not spend your savings on extensive remodeling of grade level waterfront homes. Find an experienced builder that you can trust, and invest properly for your residential needs for your future. GHD Coastal Homes (a division of GHD Construction Services, Inc.) can help you find the right lot and price point for your budget. We have townhouses in Madeira Beach, just one block from the beach from less than \$500,000, and have our single family homes for those that want to live on the water. And a promise to as many Floridians as we can serve, GHD will continue to provide affordable housing for our much deserving Vets and lesser income families. Giving back is not something we do just during the holiday season.

The goal of providing affordable housing in all residential price ranges is becoming ever more challenging. Land prices have escalated sharply over the years, new government regulations and impact fees greatly increase home costs, and then the "Supply/Demand" equation of construction costs is very evident. FEMA has now issues new restrictions which greatly impact all housing. That is the reality of housing costs that have historically increased greatly over the decades. If you are considering a new home, you might want to meet with the builder of your choice now to avoid tomorrows higher housing costs.

All of us at GHD Coastal Homes wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

GHD Construction Services, Inc. has constructed 6,500 homes since 1971, and announces our GHD Coastal Homes for the Pinellas Beaches. Come visit our "Key West" Home at 239 144th Ave. N, Madeira Beach. If you have any questions pertaining to new home construction, feel free to come by the GHD model, call at (727) 954-8345, 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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# Business Briefs



**BELLEVIEW INN AT BELLEVIEW PLACE OPENS** This month JMC Communities' moved and restored the original lobby of the historic Belleview Biltmore Hotel (once the largest occupied wooden structure in the country) and 35 of the original guest rooms and reopened it as a boutique Inn.

The original Belleview Biltmore hosted celebrities including Babe Ruth, Marilyn Monroe, Bobby Jones, VanderBilt, Duke of Windsor, Edison, Edsel, Margaret Thatcher, Tony Bennet, Bob Dylan, many U.S. presidents. Mr. Rogers was the swim instructor at the Belleview Biltmore pool.

During the restoration, the Tiffany era glass ceiling was carefully evaluated and restored by local craftsmen/women and has been installed in the Tiffany room. The Historic realism painting by Tarpon Springs-based artist Christopher Still in the hotel's history room represents the original hotel through visual elements that each tell part of the hotel's celebrated 120-year history.

Located at 25 Belleview Blvd. in Belleair, The Belleview Inn will be open to guests and serve as an amenity for the surrounding 132-residence real estate development, Belleview Place.

**BEACH ISLAND GROUP OPENS**

The Coldwell Banker building, located on Island Estates near Publix, is open. "Finally! We are open", says Michelle Chenault, broker/ owner. It is called Beach Island Group because there are lots of co-partners in the project. The building has a meeting room that is open to local groups to use at no charge. Call Michelle direct at 481-5700.



**OCEAN ALLIES WINS 2018 BEAUTIFICATION AWARD**

The Clearwater Beach Chamber's Beautification Award was awarded to a group that did not exist a year ago. Ocean Allies is a unique new group of Clearwater businesses organized to save the planet - and our beaches. It was initiated by Sheri Heilman and the Beachcomber Restaurants, the first business or restaurant in Clearwater Beach to become certified Green by taking steps to get rid of plastics, Styrofoam and other non-recyclable products in their business. With the help of David Yates and the Clearwater Marine Aquarium, they created Ocean Allies and are inviting all Clearwater Beach businesses to join

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## Organizational News...

### SAND KEY CIVIC ASSOCIATION

They are a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving 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/state departments impacting Sand Key.

Meetings are (normally) held on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm, Clearwater Community Sailing Center and are open to all residents of member condominiums and businesses. Next meetings are January 9 and February 6. 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.

It is time to renew your membership and pay your dues for 2019. The cost is \$50 per year, and with that you get discounts at dozens of nearby businesses and free admission to the Spring and Winter Socials. Please pay now.

To join or renew online visit [MyslandEstates.org/Membership](http://MyslandEstates.org/Membership) and pay with a credit card. New members must create a new account. Bring your membership card to the Beach Print Shop and they will issue you a new membership card. You can pay by check to 294 Windward Passage #100, CWB, 33767.

Save these dates:

- Community Yard Sale - February 16th, held on the entire island.
- Causeway Cleanup - February 23rd at 8am. Report to the entrance of Island Way near Island Way Grill.

For information, contact President Mike Anderson 777-2787, [President@MyslandEstates.org](mailto:President@MyslandEstates.org), or visit [myslandestates.org](http://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.

For more than 40 years, they have been awarding grants to local charities at their Annual Spring Daisy Grants Fashion Show where local charities receive up to \$2,000. In order to receive a grant, the Charity must be a local Pinellas County non-profit organization and funds must be ear-marked for a specific use. Deadline to apply is January 7th. Rules and applications are online at [GFWCClearwaterCommunityWomansClub.org](http://GFWCClearwaterCommunityWomansClub.org).

### CLEARWATER BEACH ASSOCIATION

They meet the first Tuesday of the month at the Chapel By-The-Sea, except during the summer. The next meeting is Tuesday, January 2 at 6:30pm at Chapel-by-the-Sea

This neighborhood association promotes projects of a civic, recreational and entertainment nature and be a voice to City Government on issues that affect our community. Membership is \$25 per household. Checks made payable to CBA should be mailed to 294 Windward Passage, Suite 408, Clearwater, FL 33767 or visit their website to pay by PayPal.

Contact Board Member Sam Hutkin at [Hutloan@AOL.com](mailto:Hutloan@AOL.com), or visit [ClearwaterBeachAssoc.com](http://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](mailto:JPhillips1936@icloud.com).

### CLEARWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Their Annual Fall Fish Fry was a big hit.

They are working hard to get the new, South Ward School museum open and hope to host a spring grand opening. They are still having many volunteer work days. Volunteers are busy sorting and organizing materials for display when the museum opens. Others are busy repairing and maintaining the 1896 Plumb House, which is still open on the first and third Thursdays of each month, and on Saturdays

For information on tours, call 709-5540 or email Bill Wallace at [WallaceWD@Juno.com](mailto:WallaceWD@Juno.com). Membership is \$10 for individuals, \$5 students, \$20 family, \$150 corporate, \$250 life and \$500 patron. For information, visit [ClearwaterHistoricalSociety.org](http://ClearwaterHistoricalSociety.org) or email them at [clearwaterhistory@gmail.com](mailto:clearwaterhistory@gmail.com).

### DAUGHTERS OF AMERICAN REVOLUTION

DAR is celebrating their 128th Anniversary this year. 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](mailto:BradSkate@AOL.com). Contact Cathy Athanson at 510-7135 or [Dubinww41@Gmail.com](mailto:Dubinww41@Gmail.com) for more information.

### CLEARWATER BEACH ROTARY

Chartered in chartered November 2, 1953, the just celebrated their 65th anniversary last month. They meet at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium. Please visit [ClearwaterBeachRotary.com](http://ClearwaterBeachRotary.com) for more information and dates. To join, please call Sharon Skinner at 515-1532.

### 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.

A message from the Scott Moncrieff, 2019 Commodore:  
*When my wife, Sue, and I moved to Island Estates I heard that there was an Island Estates Yacht Club. We looked for a nonexistent website, checked out the boat condo at the end of Windward (of that same name) and finally gave up.*

*We later discovered through friends that the IEYC is a club without a clubhouse. We heard about the Boat Parade, the annual Progressive Dinner and monthly gatherings.*

*We wanted to make new friends so we joined -- and what a blessing that turned out to be! Because there is no clubhouse we meet at the Clearwater Yacht Club, the Belleair Country Club and restaurants for our monthly outings. Because there is no clubhouse there is a small annual fee which supplements the cost of the monthly "doings" for members.*

*Among the possibilities for 2019 are: the Sunset Catamaran Cruise, the Cross Bay Ferry St. Pete to Tampa with walk and dinner, Bus trip to Hard Rock Casino, Murder Mystery Night and a Country Western Party. If we are not doing one of those, we will be eating in a great restaurant, having our New Year's Day Brunch, a Wine and Cheese party and The Change of Watch.*

New members are always welcome. To join or for more information, please contact Rear Commodore Barbara Loubier at 224-3163 or email [BLoubier@InnisBrookResort.com](mailto:BLoubier@InnisBrookResort.com).

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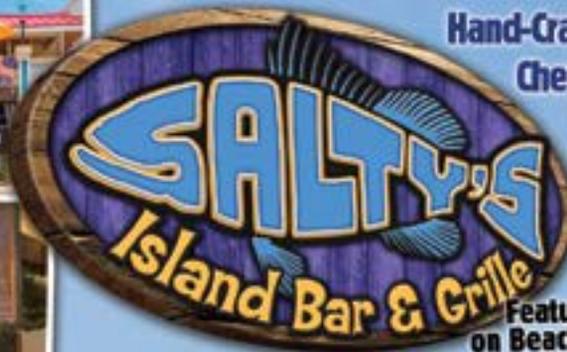
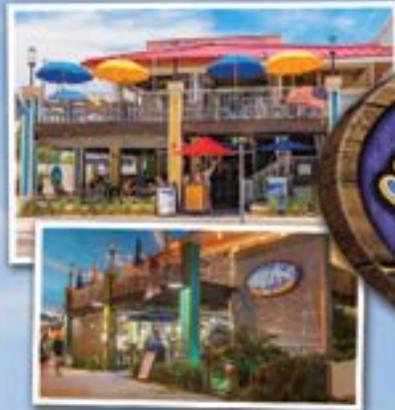
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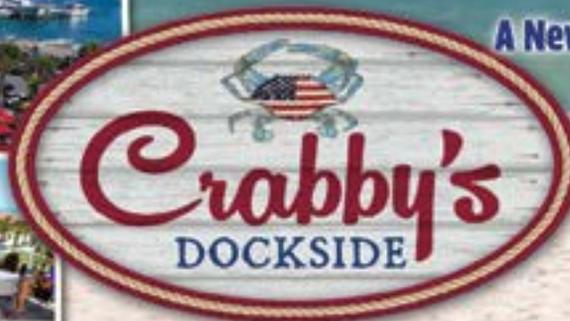
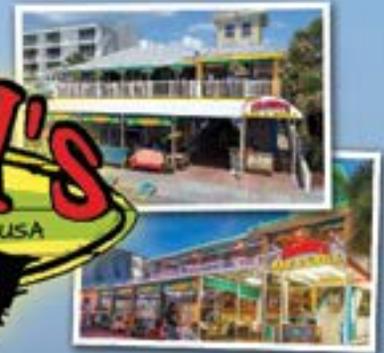
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## Organizational News...

### ISLAND ESTATES WOMAN'S CLUB

They meet monthly from September-May. Socials include lunch with guest speakers, entertainment, fund-raisers, field trips and happy hours. Lunch reservations are required

Their 11th Annual Pink is Beautiful Breast Cancer Awareness October fund-raiser raised over \$11,000.

The January 15th Luncheon will be held at the Dunedin Country Club. Arielle Giordana will speak about her journey of transformation through stories, dance and writing.

Cooperation, Congeniality and Companionship are the goals of this organization. Membership is \$21 per year. To join, visit [www.islandstateswomensclub.org](http://www.islandstateswomensclub.org) and or call Membership Chairperson, Joan Landreth, at 812-8078. For additional information and questions, feel free to call Club president, Lynne McCaskill, at 430-1911. [www.islandstateswomensclub.com](http://www.islandstateswomensclub.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 join, call LTC. George Smith at 786-5578.

### FRIENDS OF THE BEACH REC CENTER & LIBRARY

They sponsor monthly presentations on the area's history. These presentations will be on the second Wednesday of the month. They begin at 5:30pm. The next one is January 9th.

Friends of Clearwater Beach Library, Recreation Center and Pool meet the third Tuesdays at the Rec Center. Contact President Linda Owens at 260-894-0270 or the Library at 562-4970, or email [FriendsOfClearwaterBeach@gmail.com](mailto:FriendsOfClearwaterBeach@gmail.com).

### NEWCOMER CLUB

You do not have to be new to the area to join this club. But if you are—this club is for you. 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. Leisure activities include two book clubs, card groups, dining out, lunch groups, craft groups and trips to various venues and activities.

Mary Petrovich is the current President. Please RSVP with Ginny by calling 365-3493 or Mary Jane at 352-263-5518. Visit [WelcomeNewComerClub.com](http://WelcomeNewComerClub.com).

### BELLEAIR BEACH LADIES LUNCHEON CLUB

The first luncheon of the new year will be Tuesday, January 8th at Bon Appetite Restaurant in Dunedin, followed by a program on The Beach Art Center. Guests are always welcome and for reservations and information about the Club please call Sue Edmunds, Treasurer at 727-596-5710 or Lois O'Donnell at 727-595-1349.

They meet on the second Tuesday of the month, October to May, at area restaurants. You do not have to live in Belleair Beach to join. Membership is open to area residents at \$15 a year. RSVP for lunch with Sue Edmunds at 596-5710.

### CLEARWATER GARDEN CLUB

The meet on the third Saturday of each month at 10:30am, at their Club House on Seminole Street

Meetings are \$5 for members; \$8 for non-members. They meet twice a month in Clearwater at 405 Seminole Street. Meetings cost \$5 for members, \$8 non-members. They hold demonstrations on the third Saturday each month. Call 316-5504 email [ClearwaterGardenClub@Gmail.com](mailto:ClearwaterGardenClub@Gmail.com) or visit [www.ClearwaterGardenClub.com](http://www.ClearwaterGardenClub.com), for information.

### CLEARWATER YACHT CLUB

They are wrapping up another fun year and looking forward to 2019. Collin Heimensen has led the Club for the past year. Phil Beauchamp was inducted as the new Commodore at the Change of Watch December 1.

Chartered in 1911, Clearwater Yacht Club is one of the oldest Yacht Clubs in the country, continuing the long-standing tradition of yachtsmen the world over. It has a reputation of being the friendliest club in the area.

Even if you don't have a boat, you can join the Clearwater Yacht Club. Half of their members don't have a boat. Most social activities are regular parties in their restaurant or at the waterfront Tiki-Bar and patio. Email [office@clearwateryachtclub.org](mailto:office@clearwateryachtclub.org) or call 727-447-6000 for information.

### ST BRENDAN'S COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN

This group of women meet the first Tuesday of each month at the church and other places. Annual dues are \$15. To learn more about this faith based organization, contact Mary Ellen Kilbane at [MEKilbane@aol.com](mailto:MEKilbane@aol.com) or call 727-443-5485.

### BELLEAIR SOCIAL CLUB

They meet at 9am every Tuesday in the back of Panera Bread for coffee and socializing. They also meet for dinner at different restaurants on the first and third Sundays, and for lunch on the second and fourth Wednesdays each month.

This organization is open to all seniors, living in the greater Belleair area. There are no dues and couples are encouraged to join the fun. Call Marilyn Daminato, 585-9633.

### BELLEAIR GARDEN CLUB

They meet at the Belleair Garden Club at 903 Ponce de Leon Blvd in the Town of Belleair on the first and second Wednesdays of each month. The first Wednesday meeting is a tea and general meeting. There will also be field trips planned throughout the year.

January 16 they will meet at 10:30am at the Belleair Beach Community Center. The program will focus on Rock Painting with a Share-A-Dish luncheon.

Annual membership is \$50 per year per person. Couples pay \$75. Seasonal members \$30. Guests are welcome. Email [Kathleen\\_Hardwick@MSN.com](mailto:Kathleen_Hardwick@MSN.com) or visit [BelleairGardenClub.com](http://BelleairGardenClub.com).

### BELLEAIR BEACH ISLAND GARDEN CLUB

They meet once a month at various locations. Membership is \$20 per year and guests are welcome. Contact Marjorie Rose at 238-8691 or email at [RoseMarjorie38@Yahoo.com](mailto:RoseMarjorie38@Yahoo.com) President Mary Carey, can be reached at 596-5981 or email at [MLCKC@aol.com](mailto:MLCKC@aol.com) for more information about the Club.

### THE NAVIGATORS

A mens club at St Brendan's Catholic Church of Clearwater Beach, they have numerous fund-raising events to gift to charities. Their Annual Yard Sale is Saturday, February 16th from 8am to 6pm and Sunday February 17th from 8am to Noon. St Brendan's is located at 245 Dory Passage, Clearwater. Behind Publix on Island Estates.

Contact Dennis Murphy (313) 590-3754, the organization's President, for more information or to donate.

### CARLOUEL HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

There is no neighborhood Christmas caroling this year.

If you are new to the Carlouel Neighborhood, please contact President Sue Williams, [SueWilliams5@Me.com](mailto:SueWilliams5@Me.com), to be added to the Neighborhood Directory. [MyCarlouel.com](http://MyCarlouel.com) will give you most of the information you need to live in the neighborhood.

2nd Annual Gala Fundraiser  
**Venetian Carnival**  
 February 16, 2019



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## NEW YEAR'S EVE FIREWORKS WHERE TO FIND THEM

Everyone loves fireworks. This year, there are four nearby places to see them on New Year's Eve. Here is a short summary:

**SAND KEY** - Once again, the Clearwater Beach Chamber of Commerce is hosting a fireworks show for Clearwater Beach. They will be launched from the Sand Key County Park at midnight. The best place to see the show is on the beach anywhere south of Pier 60, at one of the hotels facing southwest, or anywhere on Sand Key. The \$1,000 per minute fireworks show is sponsored by Shephard's Beach Resort, Clearwater GAS and many other area businesses. Get more information at [www.LightItUpClearwater.com](http://www.LightItUpClearwater.com).

**DOWNTOWN ST PETERSBURG'S FIRST NIGHT** - About 25 miles away, downtown St. Petersburg is host to the 26th FIRST NIGHT celebration, complete with not one but two fireworks displays. The first is at 8pm for the children and the second is at midnight for the older folks. The complete evening of entertainment is free to attend, but to participate in the many games, music venues and attractions, you must buy an admission button. It also helps support the non-profit event. Get more information at [www.FirstNightStPete.com](http://www.FirstNightStPete.com).

**DOWNTOWN TAMPA** - Tampa has moved their fireworks show away from the Channelside area to the Ft. Brooke area, across from Tampa General Hospital, along the River Walk area. A good place to watch the show is on Harbor Island near Jackson's Bistro. The Florida Aquarium has a special Splash in the New Year watch party for \$110 a ticket that includes food and drink. The Tampa Bay Lightning is having an outdoor Watch Party that night with a bar outside. You can see the fireworks from their west patio.

**TAMPA'S BUSCH GARDENS** - Busch Gardens invites you to ring in the new year with music, fireworks and thrill rides. Jam out to music throughout the park and ring in the new year with a park-wide countdown and spectacular fireworks show in Gwazi Park. And with the park open until 1 am, you can make the first hour in 2019 a thrilling one!. They have a crowd on that day. The special day event is included with your regular admission.

## FIRST NIGHT ST. PETE 2019

This year's First Night team has put together an amazing program with eight hours of music, interactive exhibits, puppetry, aerial arts, fire jugglers, street performers, scavenger hunts and a NEW take on this traditional community driven arts event with the addition of the Interactive Art Park! This year even "Elvis" with Cottondale Swamp will be in the building.

Join the celebration in downtown St. Petersburg on December 31, 2018 for another art filled New Year's Eve! The ticket for entry into 10 different venues requires the purchase of a custom designed First Night St. Pete button. During the night of the event, First Night go'ers wear their flashing buttons and meander around downtown to visit both the indoor and outdoor venues which will be showcasing a wide variety of artistic performances.

Fireworks will fill the night's sky again at 8pm and midnight and are presented by 400 Beach Seafood and Tap House, Parkshore Grille and the Annex.

Advance price button purchases can be made by visiting [FirstNightStPete.com](http://FirstNightStPete.com), Adults are \$12, Child \$5 and under 5 FREE. December 31, the day of event, prices are Adult \$15, Child \$10, and under 5 FREE.

First Night St. Pete is held from 4pm until midnight and is fun for all ages.

**Happy Holidays!**



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**HAPPY HOLIDAYS**



**WISHING YOU A PROSPEROUS AND JOYOUS NEW YEAR  
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photo courtesy of Luigi Barbano

John's contact info - Email: [john@weworkweekends.us](mailto:john@weworkweekends.us) Phone/Text: 727-599-3864



# THE BEACH ISLAND GROUP

## THANKS YOU FOR A SUCCESSFUL GRAND OPENING...



Our thanks to the many friends who joined in the celebration!



Michelle Chenault  
Joanne Hiller  
Marlene Brown  
Marc Friedman

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## THE 2018 RED TIDE 'S AFFECT ON CLEARWATER BEACH BUSINESSES

Red Tide is unpleasant, we all know that. Pinellas County and its municipal partners worked hard to reduce its affect. They employed a variety of methods, including boats and bulldozers, to collect the dead sea life floating in the Intracoastal and washing up on the beaches. The Environmental Management team oversaw the removal of more than 1,800 tons of debris and worked with NOAA to create a tool that predicts respiratory irritation. The Economic Development team helped businesses apply for disaster assistance loans through the Small Business Administration. Visit St. Petersburg Clearwater, created BeachesUpdate.com to provide daily beach conditions. Overall, their response minimized the impact to residents and visitors.

Karen Seel, Chairman of the County Commission explained, "This has been the first time Pinellas County has procured contractual and monitoring services for removing fish from the Gulf of Mexico, thus preventing debris on our beautiful beaches. The County Commission approved an Emergency Grant Funding Agreement with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for total funding of \$6,300,748.70 for Red Tide management. The expiration date has been extended to March 31, 2019."

We had only a slight increase in animal rescues from Red Tide, many fish were killed but no major changes in dolphins, sea turtles and manatees," says David Yates, Ex. Director **CLEARWATER MARINE AQUARIUM**. "It is clear Red Tide hurt local tourism, and we saw a slight downturn in attendance," he concludes.

Chad Haggert with **DOUBLE EAGLE FISHING** had no Red Tide cancellations that he is aware of. Although as he explains, "it's hard to tell as it is our slow time. We did alter our locations and bottom fished 15-25 miles NNW of Clearwater once the tide moved to Clearwater Beach.

Steve and Heather Hunsucker, owners of **REEL DEAL FISHING CHARTERS** say the bloom definitely affected their business. "Last year the phone calls began with 'How has Hurricane Irma affected you?' Now it's 'What about that Red Tide?' We still ran about the same amount of charters in September, October, and November as last year," Hunsucker says. "Red Tide did not affect the actual fishing. Clearwater Beach and north remained clear and offshore fishing wasn't a problem. We feel more fortunate than friends running charters south. They have had a hard time catching fish. Unfortunately, the media lumps us all together."

Tommy Shook, Manager of **FRENCHY'S FISH MARKET** feels they dodged a bullet as

the Red Tide didn't affected their business. They have had a normal year with plenty of stone crabs, snook, trout and other catches. However, they sent crab boats to Pasco County. Shook says "The Red Tide really hurt crabbers and fishing fleets from south of Egmont Key to Key West. It was bad. I think crabs are smart. Many moved away from the Red Tide."

Phil Henderson owner of the **STARLITE CRUISES**, feels that the Red Tide impact has not been as bad as some may believe thanks primarily to the efforts of the Pinellas County Environmental Management. "They used Federal Grants to proactively remove dead fish with skimmers and trawlers. By netting the dead fish before they reached the beach, I feel they reduced the impact on waterways by as much as 75% when compared to our past Red Tide episodes," he says. "Business was slightly off in October, but we were also greatly affected by Hurricane Irma last October, so it's hard to say how much."



**A fish skimmer preparing to launch at the Belleair Causeway to collect dead fish in the Intracoastal Waterway**

Lisa Chandler who manages the **PIER 60 EVENTS** and **BAREFOOT BEACH HOUSE** feels they have been very fortunate over the past six months compared to the severe impacts our southern neighbors endured. Chandler says, "This Summer, we saw visitors who had canceled their South Florida vacations. When the bloom made its way to Clearwater Beach, we did see a decrease in visitors and sales. The County and City had an aggressive plan in place to minimize impacts and we recovered quickly.

**SHEPHARDS** was not directly affected by Red Tide but they did see a drop in daily business starting in mid-October. Manger Paul Andrews, explains, "Earlier in the summer, we had new reservations from visitors planning to go to Bradenton and Sarasota. We are fortunate Clearwater Beach took it seriously and attacked the

problem off shore and along the coast. Our visitors did not experience anything close to the what cities south of us did."

**EDGE HOTEL** had a few cancellations and the restaurant was slower than usual. J.R. Patel says, "Employees understood, but the guests were not happy with their ruined vacation. We provided guest vouchers and discounts for future use, so they can come back and truly appreciate our beautiful beach."

Ken Hamilton owner of the **PALM PAVILION** says, "As one of the northernmost beaches, we were one of the last to experience Red Tide and certainly not to the extent of our southern neighbors. With more time to plan, the City of Clearwater did a yeoman's job to minimize the challenges. The city understood how important it was for Clearwater Beach to maintain its reputation as America's #1 Best Beach. Hats off to the CVB for keeping the hospitality industry informed daily."

Carlo Venditto owner of **CESARE'S AT THE BEACH** noticed a slowdown in October sales. He says, "Most tourist are aware of the harmful effects that the Red Tide has on the environment and the human health. Consequently, people that could cancel or postpone their trips, did so."

Jay Thomas, owner of three **BROWN BOXER** and **TAP & TOKEN** on the beaches says sales at all four are down. "The Red Tide really effected sales at our Madeira beach location."

Ryan Vogel, owner of **RYAN'S ISLAND GRILL**, noticed a big decrease in customers. "As the owner of a new business, I find myself financial stressed," he says. "Unfortunately, I had to cut employee's hours just to pay the bills. Some kitchen staff only worked one or two days a week, which isn't a living wage. I understood this was the slow season, but my sales were almost cut in half. There is no doubt Red Tide contributed."

Larry Edger, owner of **BACKWATERS SAND KEY** says, "We were fortunate to see a slight increase in our sales, despite the Red Tide media coverage. We got a lot of inquiries from annual visitors concerned about the Red Tide's severity. As a result, we started placing accurate Red Tide reports in our newsletter that goes to 14,000 people all over the country.

Avi owner of **SHORTY'S GOURMET DELI** on Sand Key said "Our customers complained a lot about the smell. We have seating overlooking the intracoastal, but nobody wanted to sit there. It smelled and made people cough. October was the worst sales since we bought the store. Even worse than last September with Hurricane Irma.



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- Savings for individuals/families, with or without insurance
- Coverage to begin as early as Jan. 1, 2019
- Applications are available at [www.pinellascounty.org/firstcare](http://www.pinellascounty.org/firstcare)

Help is available to pay for out-of-pocket expenses associated with ambulance transportation costs. Enrollment applications are now available for the 2019 membership period.

The Sunstar FirstCare Membership is not an insurance plan, it is a Pinellas County Government program that works with insurance companies to cover 100 percent of expenses associated with deductibles and co-payments. Membership will also cover 50 percent of the cost of any ambulance transport

## 2019 BEACH WALK/WALK

A Clearwater Beach tradition is ready to launch. Chapel-by-the-Sea and Religious Community Services (RCS) will kick off the 10th Annual Beach Walk/Walk on Sat. February 2, 2019. Chapel-by-the-Sea and RCS partner to raise funds to provide food and services for the less fortunate residents in Pinellas County. Last year the RCS Food Bank and The Haven for Domestic Violence served over 165,000 needy people. Since its inception in 2010, the Beach Walk/Walk has raised over \$100,000 in support of RCS's activities.

The Palm Pavilion launches the event with registration at 7:30 am and the starting lineup at 8:30 am. A sumptuous pancake breakfast provided by Clear Sky Café follows the race back at the Chapel. Many local merchants and residents contribute to the event as sponsors as well as donating to the Walk's Super Silent Auction.

The cost is \$30 for pre-registered walkers, \$10 for those ages 6-18. The family maximum is \$75. You may pre-register online at Chapel by the Sea or pick up a form from the church.

Contact Chapel-By-The-Sea, 727.446.0430 for information, or visit [chapelbythesea.net](http://chapelbythesea.net) for Registration Forms.

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Lauren Caruso, a local Beach Mom and licensed Zumbini instructor, gave demonstration classes in December in Chapel Hall at the Chapel By-The-Sea. Regular classes begin in January.

An 8-week session will be offered beginning January 15 that includes a CD of original music, a story book (the class is geared for the children to encourage daily movement), for a total cost of \$135. Call Lauren at 914-329-0324 . Lots more information at [zumbini.com](http://zumbini.com).

denied by the insurance company. Uninsured members will receive a 20-percent discount on ambulance transportation services which averages to \$81.20 savings for the first transport (after membership fee). The average cost of a transport is \$746 Annual membership fees are \$68 for an individual and \$103 for a family. Family memberships cover those related by blood, marriage, or adoption who reside in the same household.

"We continue to provide services to ensure a safe and secure community," said Jodie Sechler, Division Director of Ambulance Billing and Financial Services at Safety and Emergency Services. "This membership helps our residents avoid unexpected costs associated with ambulance transports."

For more information, call Sunstar at (727) 582-2008 or visit [www.pinellascounty.org/firstcare](http://www.pinellascounty.org/firstcare).

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**HERE'S TO THE HOLIDAYS AND A GREAT PAST YEAR**

*By Karen Williams Seel, Pinellas County Commissioner*

The holiday season is upon us again, with all its hustle and bustle. In the midst of shopping, decorating and cooking, I hope you take time to slow down and really enjoy the season with your family and friends.

The season also marks the end of another year and I hope it's been a good one for you and your family. I know, as a county commissioner, I can say that it's been a good one for Pinellas County. We've gotten a lot done in 2018.

We, again, adopted a balanced budget, with no increase in the General Fund and Emergency Medical Services countywide millage rates. In addition to normal government services, the budget also supports community needs, such as expansion of the Meals on Wheels service for an additional 170 seniors, reclaimed water system studies to address service gaps and enhanced 911 call center staffing for increased call volume.

Pinellas County continues to maintain the lowest per capita debt among Florida counties. This is the result of a strong focus on maximizing tax dollars and using a pay-as-you-go approach to fund capital projects.

We achieved a new record for total employment in Pinellas County. Pinellas has 485,188 employed residents (July 2018), with 92,049 more people with jobs than at the trough of the Great Recession in 2009.

Progress is underway on the 118th Avenue North Gateway Expressway project. The new elevated roadway, expected to be complete in 2021, will speed the commute from I-275 to U.S. 19 and the Bayside Bridge.

Pinellas County once again is leading the state in recycling efforts with an 82 percent recycling rate. For the last three years, Pinellas County has led the state of Florida in recycling.

Several major beach nourishment and stabilization projects are either underway or forthcoming for segments of our coastline, protecting our shores against erosion.

The St. Pete/Clearwater area continues to be the number one tourism destination on the Gulf of Mexico for leisure, meetings, film production and sports tourism.

Tourism remains the largest employer in Pinellas County today, supporting an estimated 102,500 jobs that are directly and indirectly related to tourism.

St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport saw a 14 percent increase in passengers this past July compared with the previous year, the second biggest month in its history. So far this year, the airport has served more than 1.4 million passengers.

More affordable housing options are also on the way. The County partnered with the Housing Finance Authority and Pinellas Affordable Living, Inc. to assemble land for development of housing that's affordable and accessible.

Pinellas County Public Works department earned the prestigious American Public Works Association (APWA) accreditation designation. APWA accreditation formally recognizes that a public works department complies with national standards of excellence. Pinellas County is only the 12th agency in Florida and 140th in North America to achieve the status.

All of these accomplishments are a testament to our dedicated employees and the strong foundation of our strategic plan. I encourage you to read the other achievements of the past year in our 2018 accomplishments report, which will be available in late January in print and online at [pinellascounty.org](http://pinellascounty.org).

Here's to another great year in Pinellas County. May you have a happy and healthy holiday season.

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**MIDNIGHT FIREWORKS**  
**NEW YEAR'S EVE**  
**CLEARWATER BEACH**  
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