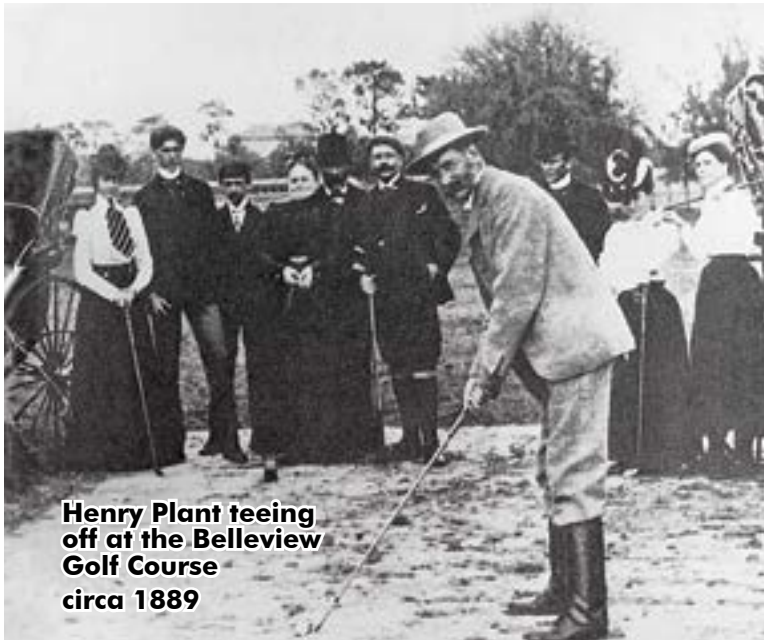


NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

www.beachnewsletters.com

Magazine



Henry Plant teeing off at the Belleview Golf Course circa 1889

HENRY PLANT Built Hotels and Cities

In our last issue, our feature article on Henry Plant began with Plant's teenage years, when he headed off to work on a steamship as a deckhand. He went on to become the owner of thousands of miles of railroads and numerous ships. When we left him, he was looking for a southwest coastal city to build a port that could connect his ships to Key West and Cuba. After a false start in Cedar Key, he targeted Tampa – a city of only 700.

In December of 1883, Henry Plant made his first personal appearance in Tampa, traveling on his own railroad from Kissimmee to Tampa in only 15 hours—the fastest time anyone had ever traveled 70 miles. Within a few months, he would have a 100-mile route from Tampa to Sanford that took only 12 hours.

Plant made Tampa the end of his southern railroad and the home port of his new line of steamships sailing to Havana. This helped

Tampa experience an influx of new workers and created a boom for the Tampa economy - its first ever. In a flurry of construction, boarding houses and new stores popped up. Farmers and others started spending their hard-earned wages, causing prices to start rising. The cost of beef rose to a record 10¢ per pound—unheard of at the time.

With train tracks in place, Plant proceeded to make his Key West connection a reality. He established the Plant Steamship Line to Key West and Havana. His two ships, the SS Mascotte and the SS Olivette, both built in Philadelphia, carried people, freight and the U.S. mail.

- **Continued on page 7**

Also in this Issue:

Everyone counts

America gets one chance every decade to count its population and it is almost time to do it again during the 2020 Census. The results determine how many seats each state has in the House of Representatives, and the distribution of Federal funds.

- **page 28**

Happy New Year!

Not only is it a new year, it is a new decade. What was life like the last time the year ended in 20? We took a look back to see and what has changed since 1920 - **page 19**



2020 is a Leap Year

Do you know why and what that means? - **page 29**

Meet Roger Dow

A St. Petersburg resident, he works in Washington, D.C as the CEO of U.S. Travel, a trade organization that encourages foreign visitors to visit the U.S. and works to increase travel to all 50 states.

- **page 30**

CREDITS



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MAYOR - Cookie Kennedy

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Diane Flagg • Phil Hanna • Nick Palomba

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Planning & Zoning: 517-0404

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PHONE (BUSINESS) 800-483-5000

WATER 464-4000

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IRB ROTARY, Bruce Sobut, 403-4060
Meets at Jimmy Guana's every Wed. 7:15AM

ACTION 2000 Julie Hoofnagle 400-6672
Meets 2nd Mon each month Beach Art Ctr

LITTLE LEAGUE 409-5024

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BEACH THRIFT STORE 596-8868
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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY

- New Year's Day 1
Outback Bowl 1
ROC Day Pinellas Weavers 4
Dunedin Art Show 4-5
Epiphany 6
Public School Reopens 7
Registration for Kindergarten Begins 7
Homeowner's Happy Hour 9
Beach Art Center "Save Our Cottages" Evening 11
History on the Rocks 13
City Commission Meeting 14
Florida's Arbor Day 17
McGough Park Nature Walk 18
East-West Shrine Game 18
Speaking Of History Heritage Village 19
Martin Luther King Jr Day 20
Public Schools Closed 20
A2K Service Day 25
Tampa Bay Home Show 25-26
Chinese New Year 25
Belleair Sunset 5k 25
Gasparilla Day 25
Backwater's Chilli Cookoff 26
GreenTown Kids Recycle Right Event 29
Blast Friday Clearwater 31

FEBRUARY

- Eckerd Connects Have a Heart 1
Annual Beachwalk Walk 1
Ground Hog Day 2
Super Bowl Sunday 2
Beach Art Center Gallery Show 3-21
Community Clean Up 3-5
Florida State Fair Opens 6
Beach Art Center Reception 7
McGough Park Nature Walk 8
Sunday Concert In Belleair 9
Action 2000 Social & Meeting 10
City Commission Meeting 11
Valentines Day 14
Beach Art Center Roaring 20s Gala 15
Chemical Recycling Seminole High 15
WinterFest on the Rocks 15
Speaking Of History Heritage Village 16
Florida State Fair Closes 17
Presidents Day Public Schools Closed 17
History on The Rocks 18
Homeowner's Happy Hour 20
Little League Opening Day 22
Sea Blues Festival 22-23
A2k Service Day 22
Ash Wednesday 26
On the Rocks Book Club Meets 28
Blast Friday Clearwater 28

INDIAN ROCKS BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER

Inside, you will find articles and local information about the nearby area. We call it a Neighborhood Newsletter because it is primarily about your neighborhood, Indian Rocks Beach. This newsletter is printed every other month and mailed to every occupied house in the city.

Do you need another copy? Ask for them at USA Grocers, CVS Drug Store, Beach Welcome Center, City Hall, Indian Rocks Beach Library.

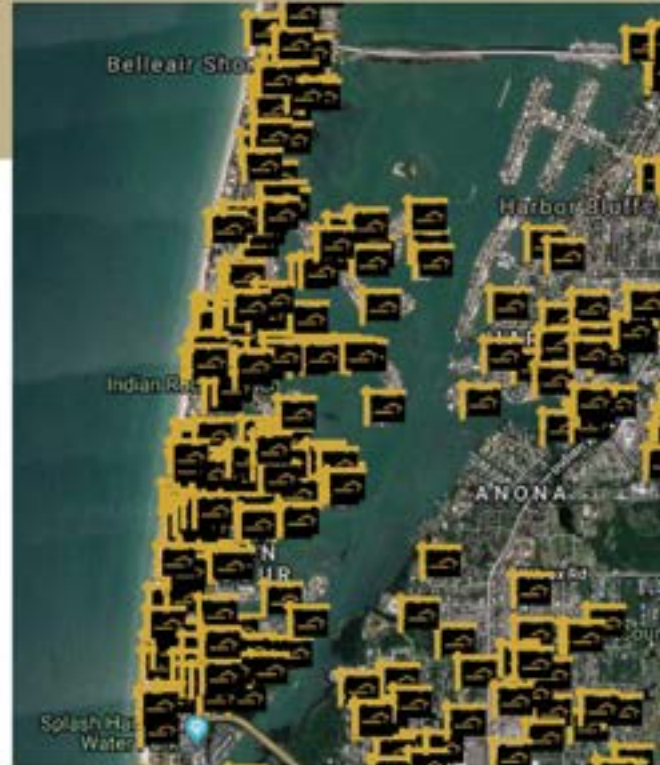
We hope you enjoyed our newsletter. We want your input. Did you like this issue? What suggestions do you have for future articles? Call or email us with your comments, or take our online survey at beachnewsletters.com.

Thank you for reading, Bob & Becky Griffin, 727-430-8300 bob@griffindirectories.com

SEE YOU AGAIN IN MARCH!



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Did You Know



PUBLISHER PARTICIPATES IN GREAT AMERICAN TEACH IN Once again, our Publisher Bob Griffin spoke at two nearby schools during November's Great American Teach In. He spoke at Seminole High School to 10th graders and at Anona Elementary to all the 5th graders. "Speaking to 5th graders and 10th graders requires a totally different presentation," says Griffin. "Basically, I discussed where ideas for the stories in our News Magazine come from and described our creative process. I emphasized the importance of leaning how to write well and with the older kids, not letting text habits creep into their writing."

MARCH ELECTIONS The City of Indian Rocks Beach will not be holding a City election as all qualified candidates ran unopposed. The candidates are as follows: Mayor-Commissioner Candidate- Joanne "Cookie" Kennedy, Commissioner Candidates - Edward Hoofnagle and Joe McCall. Vice Mayor/Commissioner Nick Palomba did not seek reelection. On March 17th, there will however still be a statewide Presidential Primary election.

WINTERFEST ON THE ROCKS Calvary Episcopal Church, at 1615 First Street, Indian Rocks Beach, will host "Winterfest On The Rocks 2020" on Saturday, February 15, from 10am - 4pm. The family friendly festival includes bagpipes, a pet parade, arts and crafts booths, interactive children's activities, a silent auction, bake sale, food vendors, beverage (beer and wine) concessions, and more. Live concerts with the "Paradies Brass Quintet" and Matt Burke, Music Director at Calvary on keyboards will be presented at 11am and 1pm in the Church Sanctuary. There is no charge, but a "Free Will Offering" will be accepted.

CAR CHARGING STATIONS The City received a grant from Duke Energy to install two electric car charging stations. One is located at City Hall and the other is at Chic-A-Si Park, across from the Post Office. There is a fee to the driver through an enabled smartphone or RFID card. Duke Energy provided the equipment, installation, warranty and the network connection service free of charge (through the year 2022) as a pilot program.



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and More...

TEACHER OF YEAR NOMINEE

Cheri Connelly an Anona Elementary art teacher, is one of ten nominees for "Teacher of the Year." There were 131 other nominees from many different backgrounds and class levels. "She is extremely talented and is able to bring out the artist in all the children," says Ann Welch, Anona's Principal. The winner will be announced January 29th at an event in St. Petersburg.



RAISING HOPE Eckerd Connects' Raising Hope will host its 7th annual "Have a Heart" event on Saturday, February 1 at 6:30 pm. This year's event will be a fun-filled casino night in Dunedin, the birthplace of the Raising Hope program 15 years ago. The event aims to raise money to continue to supply clothes, hygiene products, and school supplies to local foster children. Buy your tickets at eckerd.org/haveaheart.

VETERANS AND THE CGX As of January 1, the Department of Defense expanded in-store military exchange and commissary shopping privileges and MWR resale facility use to: Purple Heart recipients, former Prisoners of War, all Veterans with service-connected disabilities and caregivers registered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

There is a Coast Guard Exchange located in Sand Key and downtown St. Petersburg. For more information on this, go to MilitaryOneSource.MIL/Expanding-Access.

K-CUPS

Last year Keurig sold more than nine BILLION single-serve plastic coffee pods — or K-Cups. Placed end to end, they could circle the earth roughly 10 times. Zero could be easily recycled, so they generated substantial plastic waste.



While new K-Cups are advertised as recyclable, they are so small and light, they get caught or jammed in the recycling equipment, or slip through and are sorted as the wrong material. Because of this, no Pinellas County program accepts them. Where they are accepted, you have to peel off the aluminum foil top and toss it along with the grounds and paper filter, then recycle the plastic pod shell — it's not the easiest thing to do. Remember whether recycled or not, the production of each one requires energy, materials, chemicals, water, and transportation.

This doesn't mean you have to give up your Keurig - you can still use it to make a decent cup of coffee with reusable pods. And they can be filled with any coffee you want. It is cheaper and eco-friendly!

FOLK FESTIVAL CANCELED The popular Festival held every January in Heritage Village is again canceled. "We just do not have enough volunteers to host this major event," says the organizers. The Folk Festival is promoted and managed by the Pinellas County Historical Society who host meetings and other events at Heritage Village in Largo. For information on them, visit PinellasCounty.org/Heritage.

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

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HENRY PLANT, CONTINUED

By Bob Griffin

New shipping routes gave Tampa an added economic lift and encourage the cigar industry to move from Key West and Havana to Tampa/Ybor City. Shortly, two of the three largest cigar manufacturers moved their operations and employees to Tampa.

Plant knew having an hotel located at major rail stops encourage traveling and would be important for his company's growth. Around 1887, Plant built the Pico Hotel in Sanford, which had become a major Florida terminus for both his steamers and his trains. The Pico Hotel provided accommodations for his passengers as they traveled in Central Florida. It was so successful, he either built or purchased the Hotel Punta Gorda, Hotel Kissimmee, Seminole Hotel, The Ocala House, and the Ft. Myers Hotel.

In 1888, Tampa was hit with another Yellow Fever outbreak, earning it the nickname "Fever Town." No one knew the disease was caused by mosquitoes, and in fear, people began fleeing the small town.

Plant knew this was not good for his new jewel destination and announced he would spend over \$1 million dollars on a new port, wharf, and a bridge over the Hillsborough River. He also announced the project would include "the most luxurious hotel in the world." He single-handedly proceeded to create Port Tampa - then one of the most efficient harbor operations in the country.

The water at the port was too shallow for larger ships so he built a one-mile wharf extending to deeper water into Old Tampa Bay. On top of it, he built train tracks and the small Port Tampa Inn at the end. Guests could conceivably fish from their rooms.

Plant spent a million dollars in just six months and suddenly Tampa was back in boom times again with one of the most efficient harbor operations in the country, something Plant accomplished almost overnight. The Port of Tampa was fully operational by June of 1888. One month later, he started construction on his new Tampa Bay Hotel.

The Tampa Bay Hotel (now the University of Tampa campus) opened February 2, 1891. The massive hotel mixed Moorish and Victorian architecture at a cost of over \$3 million. Built on six acres facing the Hillsborough River, if you walked completely around the main building, you literally walked a mile

During construction, Plant hired hundreds of carpenters, masons, bricklayers, painters, plasterers, and plumbers, plus a new breed of workers - electricians. The hotel was completely electric, inside and out. Even the domes and minarets were illuminated at night. The hotel opened with 511 rooms, as well as thirteen domes and minarets. The interior was furnished with artwork, statuary, porcelain, and period furniture. Most of the furnishings were purchased in France by Henry's second wife, Margaret - at a cost of close to \$1 million

For the grand opening, Plant held a ball. People came from Boston, New York and Philadelphia. Every room was occupied. Guests arrived by passenger train - his, of course - that pulled up directly to the hotel. Plant invited Henry Flagler, his friend and competitor, to the opening. Flagler had a similar business and had been busy building railroads and hotels along the east coast of Florida. When Flagler received the invitation to attend the Grand Opening, he telegraphed back, "Where the hell is Tampa?" Plant responded, "Just follow the crowds."

The New York Times called the Tampa Bay Hotel "one of the grandest hotels in the country."

While the Tampa hotel was being built, Plant continued to expand his railroad system. His Southern Express Company added the Texas Express Company and several other smaller subsidiaries. By 1895, he employed over 12,600 people, owned over 24,000 miles of track in 15 states, 1,463 horses, and 886 wagons. The Plant Steamship Line stretched from Nova Scotia to Panama.



Belleview Biltmore under construction 1896

employees were brought to New York to help him celebrate.

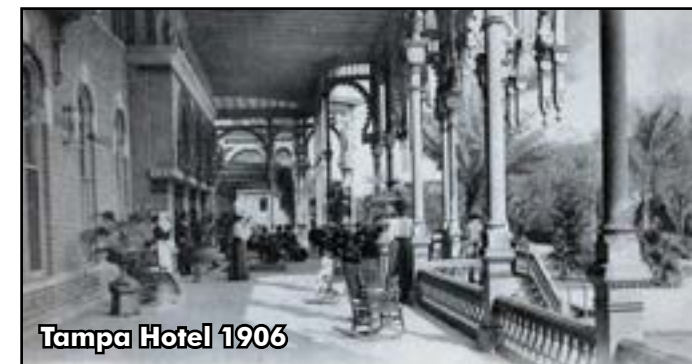
The Big Freeze of 1894 killed most of Pinellas County's citrus trees and that became Plant's catalyst to extending his empire into Pinellas County. Because there was hardly any citrus to ship north, Peter Demen, who had operated a railroad from Tarpon Springs to downtown St. Petersburg, went bankrupt. Plant bought Demen's fledgling railroad operation for pennies on the dollar.

A new town had recently formed between Tarpon Springs and St. Petersburg called "Clear Water" and he bought most of the land on the bluffs overlooking Clear Water Bay. Doing what he always did, he built a small hotel, but it was very different from the all-brick structures he had been building. This one was constructed mostly from Florida heart pine with a Swiss-style architecture.

A nine-hole golf course, Florida's first, was built on the grounds. The hotel had only 134 rooms (compared to Tampa's 511). Like Tampa, the hotel was all electric; each room came with two light bulbs. Because of the hotel's impressive water views, Plant called it The Belleview.


Henry Plant was 78 years old when the hotel officially opened on January 15, 1897, six years after the Tampa Bay Hotel. He died two and a half years later at the age of 80 on June 23, 1899.

His many legacies live on. In Tampa, much of the Amtrak and CSX rail lines were formerly Plant rail beds. The University of Tampa, once the Tampa Bay Hotel, is a National Historic Landmark. Its minarets are Tampa's architectural icons and the City of Tampa seal contains Plant's steamship the Mascotte. Tampa and Port Tampa streets bear Plant and business associates' names. H. B. Plant High School, opened in 1926, is still a school today. Cities Auburndale, Plant City, Port Tampa, Sanford, and Trilby all attribute their beginnings to Henry Plant.



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NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

by Ray Ferrara, ProVise Management Group

It is that time of year again, when we promise to turn over a new leaf. Generally, eat healthier, lose weight, start exercising, etc. We want to share ten financial resolutions you should be making and most importantly, keeping.



- 1) RESOLVE to check Social Security (www.ssa.gov) wage information to make sure it is correct. It is much easier to correct mistakes today than at retirement.
- 2) RESOLVE to get copies of all beneficiary designations on life insurance, annuities, retirement plans, etc. to make sure they are correct. At a minimum name primary and contingent beneficiaries. Do not name your estate.
- 3) RESOLVE to see your attorney regarding legal documents and estate plan, if it has been longer than five years since you last updated your documents. It is best to refresh Power of Attorney, Health Care Surrogate, and Living Will every 3-5 years even if there are no changes.
- 4) RESOLVE to make sure that your financial advisor is CFP® fiduciary advisor who must work in your best interest at all times when providing financial advice. You can find one in your area by going to www.cfpboard.net.
- 5) RESOLVE to save at least 10% of income this year. This will help you towards having adequate resources for your retirement that could last 25-30 years. Anything less is inadequate. Better something than nothing, however.
- 6) RESOLVE to increase your 401k contribution to at least receive the match from the employer and/or increase contribution by 10% in any event.
- 7) RESOLVE to reassess your risk tolerance towards investing, especially in light of your current time in life and the economic environment. Then make necessary changes to your asset allocation, if needed.
- 8) RESOLVE to do a written financial plan or to update your current financial plan. With a written plan, your odds of success increase.
- 9) RESOLVE to make sure you have the proper amount of life insurance – too much, too little. Do you still need it? Do you have the right kind of insurance? Term insurance is generally preferred unless the need is permanent.
- 10) RESOLVE to create an emergency and opportunity fund with a minimum of 3 months of household expenses. This safety net will provide comfort in a time of need.

While there are plenty of other potential resolutions to add to this basic list, these give you a place to start and to take a pause. One of the best ways to follow through on these resolutions is to take advantage of a complimentary one-hour consultation with one of our fiduciary financial advisors.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

V. Raymond Ferrara, CFP®, Chair and CEO
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LOCAL AUTHOR'S NEW NOVEL TOUCHES ON HIS CLEARWATER YOUTH

Fans of thought provoking and yet heartfelt stories will enjoy *Ages of Entanglement*, written by Dr. Robert Jackson. Robert was born in Clearwater and also grew up there before graduating from Clearwater High in 1994. His new book, *Ages of Entanglement*, is post-apocalyptic in nature, but is set in the southeast United States some time in the future. Through the tale of an individual's trek through a fallen world, the book explores the spiritual, psychological, and scientific entanglement between humans, and if we should and can truly escape it.

Robert's writing career had its beginnings in Mrs. Roby's English class at Clearwater High, where she entered his essay on sailing into a state wide writing competition. Although it did not win, it inspired him to continue writing through the years. His youth was spent sailing on the Intracoastal and the novel's final scene actually unfolds in a similar setting. The main character uses his sailing skills to survive and protect the ones he cares for. Robert's sailing interests started with lessons at the Clearwater Yacht Club, but he now sails mostly on landlocked Lake Martin in Alabama. Robert also competed on the CHS Swim Team and was an Eagle Scout of Troop 456. He remembers earning a sailing merit badge at Boy Scout Camp Soule in the heart of Clearwater. He also relishes memories of visiting Sandy's bookstore that used to reside in downtown Clearwater until sometime in the '80s.

In the novel, three decades have passed since a mysterious illness brought on by quantum entanglement suddenly decimated the human population. Quantum entanglement is a strange and counterintuitive phenomena, even though it is scientifically proven. This connection between two materials allows for instantaneous control regardless of the distance between the materials. By harnessing quantum

entanglement, mankind had tapped into a dangerous power able to alter the very matter of our existence. The story of the main character, Samson, explores the metaphorical relations between human connections and quantum entanglement.

Samson long ago gave up searching for his family and now wanders the earth with no purpose, while avoiding entanglement with other souls. But then he meets Selene—an orphaned, but strong and independent girl. She sees in him what he has forgotten. They journey together toward a utopian island merely rumored to exist. The only evidence is a brochure of the island's lighthouse and a handwritten message. Along the way they meet others also seeking to overcome the obstacles of the age, but in their own ways. This includes a village aiming to rebuild the world, a ghostly ferryman who carries his passengers across a glassy lake; a rock star without an audience, and gladiators of devolved sporting events.

Will Samson help Selene to make her way in this dangerous world, and will she help him to find his lost humanity? Or is Samson already too far gone, a relic of the previous age?

Ages of Entanglement is available on Amazon.com.

Robert L. Jackson is a professor of engineering at Auburn University, a researcher, and a poet. He has published many scientific papers and poems. His work often explores the boundaries between art and science. He grew up in Clearwater, graduated from Georgia Tech, and currently lives in Auburn, Alabama



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Real Estate News

2020 VISION FOR IRB'S HOUSING MARKET Indian Rocks real estate rewind and fast forward

By Gordon Obarski, Real Estate Broker Gordon Realty House



Time has come, once again, to swivel our heads around and look backwards at IRB real estate stats for 2019. While this year's celebration may be one bottle of champagne short, the year-end snapshot is certainly nothing to hyperventilate over either.

For the second year in a row, the total number of real estate sales in IRB declined. There were 11 fewer total sales of single family homes, condos and townhomes in 2019 than in 2018. While there were actually 14 MORE single-family transactions, there were 25 LESS condo/townhomes sold last year. Even in view of this 20% decrease in the number of

condo units sold, the median sale price of IRB condos increased another 2.1%.

However, that is not the case for the median sale price of single-family homes in 2019. While more sales were recorded, the median sale price declined 13.5%. This retraction need not create panic because the raw numbers don't show that the reason for the decline lies in the fact that there were fewer higher ticket, WATERFRONT sales as a percentage of total single-family home sales. In 2018, 63% of all single-family home sales were waterfront; this past year (2019), waterfront represented only 49%.

And just why is that? Two reasons: affordability and availability. Paying the freight for waterfront has become a bigger challenge for some buyers as the values of our waterfront properties have escalated so impressively over the past few years. Obviously, everyone wants to live on the water but when economics takes over, non-waterfront becomes the fallback position. This is the day when the sales of nicely renovated "near-the-water" properties will romp and stomp.

In some cases, it's not even about what a buyer can afford but more about what's available. The listing drought, especially in waterfront properties, is expected to extend well into the New Year and beyond. We will likely continue residing in a seller's market--a ways off from a balanced market in terms of supply and demand.

Properties are selling faster. Whoosh and they're gone. The average days a property stayed on the market in Florida last year was 125. In IRB, it was 82 days...three weeks less than in 2018. Single-family homes got snapped up in 68 days...down from 114 days the year before...again somewhat attributable to the lack of attractive inventory.

The longest historical period of real estate growth without a recession kept us looking over our shoulders all year, awaiting the proverbial shoe to drop. But, as 2019 came to a close, fewer economists were waving red flags and some are even forecasting a second wind in real estate sales for the New Year. Our 20-20 vision for 2020 sees the IRB real estate market not going gangbusters but continuing to be fairly robust. Another 2% rise in property values is projected next year so it's fairly safe to say the only "bursting bubble" will be the one in your champagne as you rang in the New Year.

Source: Stellar MLS

People in Our Community



TWO DEDICATED ANONA TEACHERS

By Bob Griffin, Publisher

People probably think teaching elementary school children is hard work because it is, but Becky Kirn and Kathryn Adikes, both teachers at Anona Elementary make it look easy. Both live in Belleair - Kirn in The Bluffs and Adikes in Harbor Oaks.

Ms. Adikes teaches 4th grade and has been with the Pinellas County School System (PCSB) for twelve years, the last eight at Anona. She has 24 children in her class and over the course of a day, she teaches them language arts, social studies, math, science and more. All of that can be challenging.

"I love my job," Kathryn says. "I love watching the kids learn things. When they get it, you can see a light bulb go off in their little heads. The parents of the Anona children are very supportive," Kathryn adds. "They are very engaged in what we are doing and want to be a part of their kids' learning process."

"Kathryn Adikes is a remarkable educator!" says Anne Welch, Anona's Principal. "Not only does she raise the bar for her students - she raises the bar for her peer colleagues and the education profession. Her passion, drive and enthusiasm is infectious!"

Ms. Kirn teaches Physical Education—from Pre-K to 5th grade. She has been with the PCSB for 20 years and at Anona for six. Her days are nonstop. When one class leaves, another class is waiting. She coaches 40-60 kids at a time and works with all 470 enrolled Anona students every day.

"What you do with a first-grader is very different from what you do with a fifth-grader," Becky explains. "We expose them to different sports. For most, PE is the only exercise they get all day. Many go home, sit on the couch and watch TV or play video games. Many of their neighborhoods are not conducive to after school play," she explains. "I love what I do here," she continues. "I love the outdoors, sports and children. This job combines all three.

"I do a lot more than just coach. We teach life-skills like how to socialize and get along with others. Yes, my job can be demanding, but it is also very enjoyable," Becky says.

"Anona also has a Running Club," Becky adds. "Our track is the forest on the north side of the campus. The kids go through Fitness Testing - they are weighed, do sit-ups and push-ups, just like at a nearby gym."

"Becky Kirn is the type of educator who takes time to get to know each and every child on campus," says Principal Welch. "She willingly goes the extra mile every day to do whatever it takes to make a positive difference in the lives of her students."

Anona's recent student gains in learning have catapulted the school into the top 2% of Florida's schools. This in large part is due to the quality of the faculty and staff. They continue to emphasize their own professional development and seek out methods to consistently tackle the needs of each and every student.

So as they like to say... "We Can't Hide Our Anona Pride".

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Restaurant News



HOOTERS GIVES-A-HOOT Hooters recently presented a check for \$45,955 to Moffitt Cancer Center. The donation is proceeds from their "Give A Hoot" program and supports a grant awarded through the V Foundation for Cancer Research. The check includes \$10,000 from Hooter's management to support the effort.

Give A Hoot is held annually in honor of Hooter's Kelly Jo Dowd, once a Palm Harbor store's General Manager. She succumbed to breast cancer in 2007. Fund-raisers in Hooters nationwide that include buying pink bracelets, a percentage of proceeds from specific drinks, rounding up your check, and \$1 from every Hooters Calendar sold, raised the money.

Hooters has raised more than \$5.8 million over time to support the fight against breast cancer, much of it through the Kelly Jo Dowd Breast Cancer Research Fund benefiting the V Foundation for Cancer Research.

NEW BREAKFAST SPOT Benedicts, now open in Largo, just east of Belleair Bluffs, is known for their breakfast and also serves a great lunch. This is their fourth Pinellas County location. They open at 7am, seven days a week.

Find them at 201 West Bay, just west of the railroad tracks or call 444-0371. See their menu at www.Benedicts.com.

BACKWATER'S CHILI COOK-OFF Plans are underway for their 15th Annual Chili Cook-off on January 26, 2020. About 25 local residents and snow birds will bring their chili concoctions to Backwaters to be judged. All are hopeful to be crowned in one of the top three places with prizes, awards and, most of all, bragging rights for the best chili in the area. The event is free and open to any non-professional cook in the area.

A half dozen judges will evaluate the different entries from 3 to 5pm, with winners announced about 5:30pm. During the waiting period, customers may taste all the chili and compare.

GREEK CITY John Pappas, the patriarch of the Pappas family came to America in 1975 with little money and spoke little English. But armed with his family's recipes he opened a very success Tarpon Springs restaurant. John's son Nicholas is carrying on his father's tradition and is opening Greek City Café in the Largo Mall using the family's recipes. The restaurant should open in early 2020.

ALOHA TO SEMINOLE Jennifer Byrd owner of the small Aloha To Go restaurant in Indian Shores opened a second store in the new Seminole Town Center. Both stores offer Hawaiian barbecue and other Hawaiian dishes. Find Indian Shores Aloha at 19711 Gulf Blvd, near the Dog & Parrot Pub.

GOLDEN SPOON AWARDS The Golden Spoon Awards, a listing by Florida Trend Magazine, is out with their 2019 list of Best Florida Restaurants. 21 of them (out of 100) are in the Tampa Bay area with three on the beaches. The three are Rusty's at the Sheraton Sand Key, Caretta's on the Gulf at Sandpearl, Clearwater Beach, and Salt Rock Grill, Indian Shores.

Restaurant News



WESTSHORE PIZZA STILL OPEN The owners of the Westshore Pizza in the Bonfish Plaza want you to know that they are open! With all the construction happening around their front door, many people assumed that Westshore Pizza was closed.

"It is not true," says Denise Gillis, one of the owners, "we are open. For a few months our front door was closed off. But that is over now and the contractor put up a temporary sign for us. It certainly hurt our sales this quarter, but we hope to make it back in the near future. And we certainly appreciate the support of our loyal customers."

Visit them at 2989 West Bay Drive or call for delivery at 585-6974.

ANECDOTE BREWING COMPANY "We have had some delays, but we are opening soon... 'very soon'," says Phillip Anderson, owner of the new craft brewery under construction in Indian Rocks. They plan to brew ales and lagers on site. "We plan a big announcement as soon as we have a firm date."

Find them at 321 Gulf Blvd, in the shopping center next to CVS and Beach Zone.

PICK-A-DELI A new deli, one mile east of Indian Rocks Beach, called Pick-A-Deli, opened in space formerly occupied by Subway Sandwiches, next to Starbucks. They call themselves a deli, but it is more of a sandwich shop, similar to Subway. They serve classic sandwiches with Boar's Head meats and cheeses and open at 7am with breakfast sandwiches. They serve soups and salads, too. Find them at 13664 Walsingham Road. Call ahead for pick up at 303-0056.

HEAD CHEF RETIRES The award-winning chef at the Sheraton Sand Key, John Harris, who has been there for 30 years, recently retired.



He is well known for his skills and has won several awards. In 2019, Chef Harris and his talented team were honored with the eighth consecutive Golden Spoon Award from Florida Trend Magazine for Rusty's Bistro. The Tampa Bay Times also recognized Rusty's Bistro as one of the top 50 restaurants in Tampa Bay.

"John has been a tremendous asset to our resort. His outstanding leadership, culinary skills and dedication to this team for 30 years is unprecedented," said Kimball.

"It was an honor to work with this talented team and create life long friendships. I will truly miss being at Sheraton Sand Key, it has become my second home for 30 years," said Chef Harris.

BAYSTAR SPONSORS CITY EVENT Our friends at Baystar Restaurant Group (Salt Rock Grill and Seaweed) will be catering the free reception at the Beach Art Center following the showing of the Documentary, *Save Our Cottages*, on January 11.

RESTAURANT NEWS WANTED If you have news or suggestions for this newsletter, let us know. Our email is Bob@GriffinDirectories.com or call us at 430-8300.

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2020 VISION

By Karen Seel, Pinellas County Commissioner

For most people, the New Year signals a fresh start. It does for me. My "fresh starts" include attending my annual health appointments, including a visit to my ophthalmologist to get my vision checked. Over the years, I found out that I have glaucoma. It's treatable and my vision is good, but it is a good reminder for all of you to have your vision tested each year.

Technically speaking, the measure of 20/20 visual acuity—the clarity or sharpness of vision—is being able to see clearly at 20 feet away from what should normally be seen at that distance. Another way to look at it—pun intended—is to understand what 20/100 vision is. When you have 20/100 vision you must be as close as 20 feet to see what a person with normal vision can see at 100 feet away. So, we want to be as close to 20/20 vision as possible.

Another type of vision relates to my role as a Pinellas County Commissioner. Every year in January, the Board and our administration revisits the county's strategic plan—the guiding principles that set the direction for the county through five strategic goals. They align with our values and help us fulfill our vision to be the standard for public service in America.

Much like the purpose of a vision test, we examine our plan to see if it continues to provide an accurate guide for the future. How do we know it is as accurate as possible? We ask you to be the lens that focuses our efforts through the annual Citizen Values Survey. This important tool provides valuable insight into how you view the quality of life in Pinellas County, what your priorities for future investment are and how much trust and confidence you have in Pinellas County Government.

We just completed this year's statically valid telephonic survey and it will help focus the Board's understanding of the priorities you reported. The results will be reviewed at our upcoming strategic planning session and, if recent years are an indicator, the survey has shown to be a good vision test of our efforts. We've had a consistent pattern of improvement over the years in meeting your expectations. You can view past Citizen Values Survey results by visiting www.pinellascounty.org/strategicplan.

Another important survey is also coming your way: the 2020 Census. America gets one chance each decade to count its entire population. The 2020 Census is your chance to make sure we get our fair share as a community. The census count determines both the size of our state's political representation and how billions of dollars are spent on federal and local programs, like public transit, affordable housing, school lunches, Medicaid and SNAP nutrition assistance, among many others. This spring, your home will get an invitation by mail to take the census online. Your response is secure, confidential and protected by law. This short survey is a civic duty laid out in the Constitution and it's also vitally important to our community's future. To learn more, visit www.pinellascounty.org/census2020.

I hope you will help make Pinellas County count in the 2020 Census and I hope that Pinellas County Government meet your expectations in 2020 with an accurate vision for our wonderful county. As always, I welcome your feedback and concerns. Please email me at kseel@pinellascounty.org.



WELCOME BACK, EARLY SNOWBIRDS

By Tom Smith Owner of GHD Construction Services

It's the 2020 tourist season, and with all the northerners that are visiting Florida this year, it's predicted to be a record year for many northern families to change their residency and move to Florida permanently. The Chamber of Commerce and myself believe that Florida has more to offer than most of the northern states, and that is why I moved here from the north many years ago. Better weather, lower cost of living, and lower taxes are spearheading the increased number of families migrating from the north each year.

What does that mean for housing opportunities for those that want to settle along a waterfront attractive beach community in Pinellas County? When families that consider relocating for either a permanent or second home in Florida, most do their due diligence and compare both cost and quality of life issues in different areas of Florida. Housing cost is always a main factor, and it's easy to see that Pinellas County is considerably less cost than the areas of Naples and Sarasota. In addition, Pinellas offers close proximity to America's best airport, Tampa International, a quick way to get back home to visit the grandkids. Although we have traffic concerns during the tourist season, they are far less than the east coast communities or very busy Naples and Sarasota. Pinellas is definitely worth considering.

As many families have realized this and purchased homes in our beach communities these past few years, it has led to a housing shortage of properly priced attractive homes. Most of the remaining listings of the realtors are either overpriced or just not attractive. Most were constructed in the 1950s and 1960s, and are not raised to FEMA standards, much less have 150mph windows and doors, are energy efficient,

or have today's desired amenities for room layout or in kitchens. That is why so many decide to construct a new home with everything they want when they decide to relocate. One family we are building for in desirable Indian Rocks Beach is constructing a beautiful new home on a non-waterfront lot for under \$700,000. Also, GHD has their furnished "Key West" model for customers that might want the lifestyle of a waterfront home with pool as well as a dock for boating to restaurants or fishing.

Choosing the right lot in the beach community of your choice is a main concern. There are a few vacant lots available, or maybe a very desirable lot that needs the 60 year home torn down. Site selection is what GHD Construction Services offers it's customers as part of their services for a new home. GHD has the only furnished model home along the beaches, so that customers can see the amenities offered in a new home today, as well as the quality of construction expected from families today. We offer "In-House" architecture included in the home price, so that families don't have to spend tens of thousands of dollars with outside architects and designers. GHD likes to consider itself a "One Stop Shop" for all your new home construction needs.

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. Meanwhile, look us up on our web site at www.GHDcoastalHomes.com.



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Business Briefs



BIG MAN'S MOVING CELEBRATES 3 YEARS In January 2017, we first introduced you to Josh and Brooke Anderson, newlyweds who used their wedding gifts to partially fund their first truck and to start Big Man's Moving Company. They had a terrible moving experience which prompted the idea to create a more customer-centric business. This month marks their 3rd anniversary. To celebrate, they bought another truck. That makes four trucks and over 1800 successful local and out-of-state moves. For estimates, visit www.Bigmansmoving.com or call (727) 772-3458

CONDOS ON THE GULF SIDE Four new townhomes are being built on the Northwest corner of Gulf Blvd at 21st Avenue. While not on the Gulf, they are close. The small project called "Hawks Bill Moon" is being built by Rob Ginski. The 3,000 square foot units are all concrete construction and will have three bedrooms. Two have a view of the Gulf. No pool is planned. Prices range from the mid-\$850,000 to lower \$900,000. Units are still available and should be completed in late spring or early summer of this year. Get more information at www.HawksBillMoon.com or call Rob direct at 572-6778.

NEW FLOORING STORE OPENS PTL Direct Source, the Florida distributor of top quality flooring products, recently opened a new showroom just across the Walsingham Bridge, near Shipwatch. Owner Patrick Rooney once lived in Indian Rocks and encourages all his old friends and neighbors to stop by. If you are looking for flooring this is your opportunity buy at wholesale prices. The locally owned and run factory direct flooring store offers engineered woods, laminate, porcelain tile, and luxury vinyl planks (LVP flooring) since 2004. Find them at 14680 118th Ave N #4, Largo, or call 727-458-5975. Visit ptldirectsource.com to view their products or to see their hot new style of the month.

SYMPOSIUM OPENS This new fine wine and craft beer destination recently opened in Indian Shores. They sell hundreds of types of fine wine and sake plus craft beers and cigars. While you shop, you can sample their wines in their tasting room. In addition, they sponsor wine tastings daily. Find Symposium at 19541 Gulf Blvd, next to the Tiki Gardens Parking lot, just 2 miles south of Indian Rocks Beach. ShopSymposium.com.



SOCIAL SECURITY ANSWERS

By Erin Emmett, Financial Planner at Rogan & Associates
 All our lives, we have been contributing to Social Security, but what do we really know about our benefits? As we approach retirement age, questions arise. When should I begin collecting my benefits. How much will I receive? Can I still work? How does this affect my taxes?

Here are seven most often asked Social Security questions.

1. When should I take my benefit? Are my options only age 62, or full retirement age? What most folks don't realize is that you can file at 63, 64, and beyond until you reach full retirement age. In fact, generally speaking, the longer you wait, the larger the benefit.
2. Do I have to take my benefit by full retirement age? Can I wait longer than that? You can wait until after you reach full retirement age. By doing so, your benefit will increase by a maximum of 8 percent per year for each year you delay between full retirement age and age 70.
3. Can I file and continue to work? You can, but there are income limits prior to full retirement age that may affect your benefit. Your benefit may be reduced dramatically so it is important to consider this prior to enrolling.
4. What if I decide to go back to work after reaching full retirement age? Will my benefit be reduced? Once you reach and surpass full retirement age, your benefit will not be reduced if you continue to work.
5. Must my spouse and I choose the same options/timing? No, there are several options you and your spouse can individually consider when choosing your benefits. It is important to come up with a strategy that makes the most sense for your situation.
6. Is my Social Security taxable? Two things are inevitable: death and taxes. Your benefit may be taxable, but it depends on your combined income. Discuss this with your tax professional before you enroll or file.
7. Shouldn't I just enroll as early as possible in case I pass away? While this is not something anyone wants to think, it is a factor to consider. Filing early means a lower benefit, and if you live to be 100, your benefit will always be based on that lower amount. If you file early and do pass away, your spouse may receive a lower death benefit than if had you waited longer to file. Too often we think of Social Security in terms of when instead of what. To have a successful retirement, it's important to think about what income you need vs. when you should file.

Social Security is likely very important to you—and we want to help you see the big picture as you prepare for retirement. Rogan & Associates will be hosting two **FREE Educational Happy Hour Social Security Workshops** - Wednesday, January 29 or Thursday, January 30 from 5:30 to 6:30 pm at our office, 200 Ninth Avenue North, Safety Harbor. Both are open to the public.

Michael Lynch, managing director of strategic markets for Hartford Funds, will be on hand to help you get the information you need. Mike, who has been quoted in prestigious publications such as Fox Business, Today.com, US News & World Report, and MarketWatch, will conduct an engaging yet educational workshop to help you anticipate and prepare for the long-term during your retirement.

Please call 727-712-3400 to reserve your seat.

All information provided here is for informational and educational purposes only and is not intended to provide investment, tax, accounting or legal advice. As with all matters of an investment, tax, or legal nature, you should consult with a qualified tax or legal professional regarding your specific situation, as applicable. The preceding is not intended to be a recommendation or advice.

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Business Briefs



GET FIT'S NEW OWNERS Meet the new owners of Get Fit Fitness in Largo, Cyndy & Mike Dube. Since taking over ownership, they have renovated the club and purchased lots of new equipment. Updates include new LED lighting, new flooring, interior painting, deep cleaning, new HVAC systems, and new exterior facade with signage. Additional renovations will include locker-room improvements with more new equipment arriving in the coming months too.

Recently, Cyndy took 1st place as the overall champion in master's bikini at the NPC ultimate muscle extravaganza, 1st place in over 45 bikini division, and 3rd at IFBB Tampa Pro bikini over 40 division. She and her team have a passion for health & fitness by helping others achieve their wellness goals.

Get Fitness will be hosting their Grand Re-Opening from January 2 through 5 with various FREE opportunities. Come see for yourself what they have to offer. Below is the schedule:

January 2- FREE Instructor Led Group Classes-one day trial for all guests. (Group Power, Yoga, Silver Sneakers Circuit, Zumba, etc.)

January 3- FREE HIIT Personal Training, one day trial for guests. (Fit Circuit, Get Strong, Fit HIIT, live DJ, group competitions & prizes)

January 4- Open House- open to everyone in the public. (Various Vendors, Free Give-A ways, Food Trucks, Free Workouts)

January 5- FREE One-on-One Personal Training Sessions- limit one per customer. (Open to customers not currently on a personal training contract)

Get Fitness offers basic month-to-month memberships starting at \$10.95, over 35 instructor led group classes each week, HIIT group personal training, and one-on-one personal training sessions. Their personal trainers have unique specializations in balance, stability, rehabilitation, endurance, strength building, and which help them meet the needs of every client.

THE FISH WITH ATTITUDE Who's behind those dark, mysterious shades, and wide toothy grins? Why it's Bob the Fish, Jim the Shark and John the Shark... the original fish with Attitude! Which one of these best fits the Bob, Jim or John in your life?



- If Bob ain't happy, ain't nobody happy
- S.O.B. sweet old Bob!
- Bob... the Man, the Myth, the Legend!
- Don't mess with Jim, he's got attitude
- Who's the man? John's the man
- You gotta love Jim
- It's all about John!

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www.BobtheFish.com with FREE SHIPPING! Check them out at [Facebook.com/bobthefish](https://www.facebook.com/bobthefish). If you need bulk discount pricing for a Bob, Jim or John party or group event, call 813-254-3636.

Live by their motto - "Attitude is Everything" and remember, if Bob ain't happy, ain't nobody happy!

BUSINESS NEWS WANTED If you have news for this newsletter, please e-mail Bob@GriffinDirectories.com or call 727-430-8300.

HAPPY NEW YEAR! AND HAPPY NEW DECADE!

A look Back to the Last '20s, 1920 - Oh What a Difference a Century Makes

By Bob Griffin, Publisher

Here it is, 2020—not only a new year, but a new decade. We thought it would be fun to look back 100 years to 1920 and see how far we have come.

The 1920s was nicknamed the Roaring Twenties because of the decade's exuberant, freewheeling, popular culture. Unfortunately, the decade that began with a roar, ended with the Stock Market Crash in 1929.

Also, known as "The Jazz Age," the 1920s began with the last of the American troops returning home after World War I. Most of the soldiers had never been far from home before and their experiences changed their perspective on life. After seeing Europe, they wanted the finer things for their families. Many were about to buy their first car, their first radio and their first telephone. This ushered in an energetic and stylishly higher standard of living, which kick-started a decade of change.

Jazz music and its dance styles were gaining nationwide popularity. Musicians like Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton were becoming household names. Young women who wore short skirts, short hair, and listened to jazz music were nicknamed "flappers."

The Art Deco style, which started to appear just before World War I, was becoming the rage. Its geometric forms and bright colors influenced the design of fashion, jewelry, buildings, furniture, cars, ocean liners, and everyday objects. It represented luxury and glamour.

The 1920 Census shows the U.S. population was 106,021,537. In Florida, Jacksonville was the most populous city with 91,558 people. It was the only Florida city in the top 100 U.S. cities. Pinellas would soon see people traveling to the area in droves. The first half of the decade led to a flurry of construction - roads, bridges, homes and buildings.

Specifically, the year 1920 saw many world-shaping events, including:

League of Nations Was Established: In 1919, shortly after WWI, and prior to the birth of the United Nations, President Woodrow Wilson proposed the idea of a worldwide organization of peaceful nations. On January 16, 1920, the League of Nations held its first executive council meeting. It consisted of 58 members, most of the major countries in existence at the time. Oddly, the United States was not among them.



Prohibition Begins: The year before, Congress had ratified the 18th Amendment, which prohibited the manufacturing, transportation and sale of alcohol within the United States; it went into effect January 1920. The National Prohibition Act, popularly known as the Volstead Act, was enacted to provide the means of enforcing Prohibition.

U.S. Essentially had a Female President: In 1920, President Woodrow Wilson suffered a blood clot that caused paralysis, partial blindness and brain damage. For the remaining one and a half years of his term, his wife, Edith Wilson, pretty much ran the country. She controlled access to her husband and guided his hand as he signed important documents. She also made policy decisions and was known by insiders as "Madam President."

We suffered the Worst Terrorist Attack in Our Then History: On a busy day in September 1920, a horse-drawn cart, carrying a massive number of explosives was detonated on Wall Street. Thirty-eight people were killed, and hundreds of others were injured. This was our worst terrorist attack until the 1995 Oklahoma City Bombing.

J Edgar Hoover Starts the Precursor to the FBI: After a series of bombings, the U.S. Attorney General Mitchell Palmer mounted a campaign to deport foreign radicals. Raids were organized by a young J. Edgar Hoover, head of the "Bureau of Investigations." The raids backfired and Mitchell Palmer was removed. Hoover went on to help form the FBI, which he ran until 1972.

Women Gain the Right to Vote: The Women's Suffrage Movement was born years before and by 1920 every state west of the Mississippi River

allowed women to vote. But, that was not the case for nine states to the east. One more state approval was needed for ratification of the amendment to make it law. On August 18, 1920, the Tennessee Legislature barely approved it —by a vote of 50-49 — but that was enough and the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified prohibiting the states and the federal government from denying the right to vote to U.S. citizens on the basis of sex.

The Lost Generation Transforms American Literature: A group of writers, mostly living in Europe following WWI, became a force in American literature. "The "Lost Generation," as they were called included Sinclair Lewis, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Ernest Hemingway.

The Ponzi Scheme Was Invented: Charles Ponzi, an Italian immigrant, discovered a way to buy and sell "international reply coupons" to foreign investors. Word spread about this method of making money fast, leading investors to bring in more investors, which was essentially to continue funding commissions. The system ultimately collapsed, but the name Ponzi lives on to describe similar schemes.

Media Was Born: No other event in 1920 would have more of an effect on the future than the birth of radio. In November 1920, the first commercially licensed radio broadcast was heard, from KDKA in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The popularity of "the talking box" exploded and only two years later, 100,000 radios were sold. Soon, radio became a family experience. Everyone would gather around the radio and listen to the news, comedy shows, and music. By 1926, over 700 licensed radio stations were broadcasting in the U.S. This was certainly the beginning of today's media.

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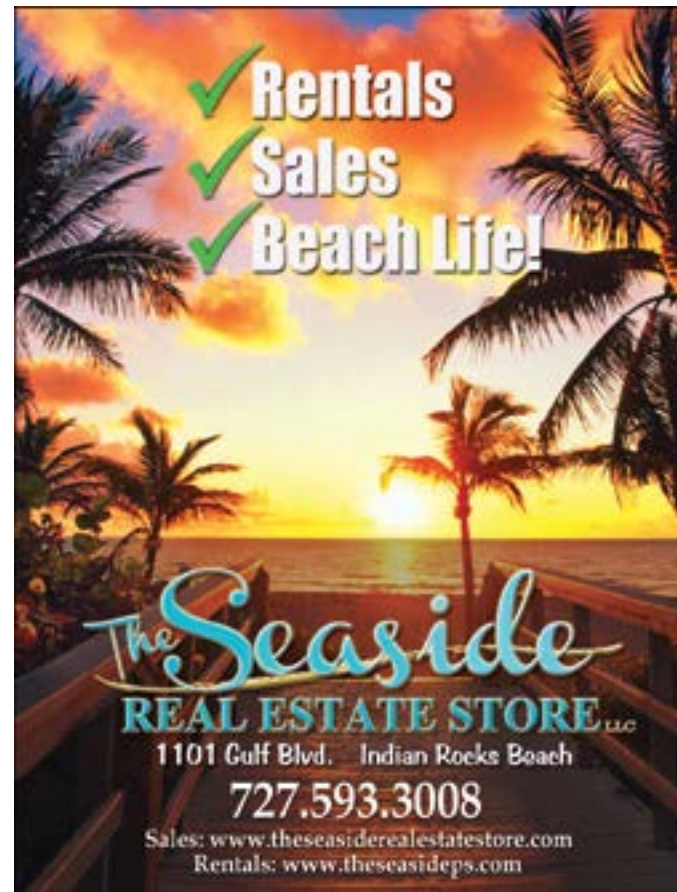


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Business Briefs

URGENT CARE HOUSECALLS

Over the past 20 years, you may have seen Peggy Cordle on a paddle board with her dogs, walking the beach, or biking in the neighborhood. But what you may not know is your neighbor is also a nationally board-certified Emergency Medicine Nurse Practitioner who recently opened her own House Calls practice, the only MOBILE urgent care in our area.



Urgent Care Housecalls provides convenient, personalized patient care utilizing her years of hospital and clinic experience. Cordle saw a big need in our community for locals and visitors to get affordable, convenient, and trusted care without having to sit in a busy urgent care or expensive ER for minor illnesses and injuries. Urgent Care Housecalls comes to your home or workplace and can even prescribe and leave you with any needed prescriptions, all of this at competitive prices.

Urgent Care Housecalls provides local, mobile, and complete care bringing back a simpler time with traditional house calls in your home or workplace. This saves you time and money with personalized care when and where YOU need it. Call 727-403-5380 or visit www.urgentcarehousecalls.net to schedule your House Call or Virtual Visit.

RYAN'S MEATS

A new meat market, Ryan's Meat Market and Deli, opened on Indian Rocks Road, in Largo, near Indian Rocks Beach. They offer typical meat market products including 100% Angus Beef, steaks, chicken, kabobs and more. They also offer shrimp, stuffed crab, seafood cakes, twice baked potatoes, and stuffed mushrooms. They are a deli, too and will deliver orders over \$40 with a \$10 delivery fee.



They are open Monday-Saturday 9am to 7pm. Sundays 11am to 6pm. Find them at 12788 Indian Rocks Road N. or call them at 210-3199. Visit www.RyansMeatMarket.com.

And as they say, "Compare their prices and quality to any supermarket."

NEW OWNER'S Richard's Foodporium next to Bonefish Grill has a new owner. Bulk Nation Foods of Florida, a large natural food store company, recently bought all the Richard's stores. The new owners plans to carry more local products.

Richard's was founded in 1979 and operated 12 stores in Florida. Their home base was in Bradenton. Find Richard's at 2927 W. Bay Drive. The Website RichardsFoodPorium.com is still the store's official site.

CLOSED AT THE BEACH BOUTIQUE - the small womens wear store in the 14th Avenue Plaza, closed in November. It was owned by Cynthia Clark.

Business Briefs



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS C&E

Tire and Auto Service, a family owned business, was established as a Goodyear Tire franchise in 1990 in the Barclay Square shopping center - 11901 Indian Rocks Rd. Largo. It is a full service

automotive facility providing mechanical repairs and tires to their customers.

Going the extra mile is something they have always been willing to strive for. Over the last 30 years, they have seen significant changes to the automotive repair industry. Thirty years ago, tires were smaller and came in fewer sizes; cars were more mechanical than electronic. Technology changes resulted in larger tires and rims that include sensors specifically designed for the vehicle. Cars are now controlled by computers that handle engines, transmissions, windows, lights, doors and include significant networking capabilities.

They look forward to serving your automotive repair and tire needs for many years to come and thank you for allowing them to provide your automotive repairs for the past thirty years. Call them at 595-9551.

ANCHORS AWAY This new travel agency is opening in Belleair Bluffs. Called Anchors Away Cruises and Tours, they already have three offices in Florida - Countryside area, The Villages and in Oxford. They advise on all types of travel and will book your cruise, tours, vacations, and more. Learn more about their services at AnchorsAwayCruises.com or call 1-800-951-2469. Find them at 402 Indian Rocks Road North, near JK Flowers.

CHLOE'S HAS NEW OWNER Terry Young, a longtime Chloe's vendor bought the business, located in Antique Alley, from Kay Davis. "I have known Kay and sold my stuff here for years," says Terry. "Kay told me she wanted to retire, so I bought the place." Chloe's is a home décor business specializing in re-imagined quality furniture and gifts. Find them in Antique Alley at 566 N. Indian Rocks Road.

TOWN HOUSE CONSTRUCTION The 32-townhome project long planned on Gulf Blvd. between 25 and 26 Avenues has finally begun. All necessary zoning changes have been completed and the site plan has been approved by the City. Site clearing has begun..

NEW HOTEL Under construction at 10125 Ulmerton Road, near Largo Mall, a new Home2 Suites hotel by Hilton is being built with two restaurants - a Five Guys Burgers and a Wingstop. The hotel will be five stories and have 118 rooms. This project, being developed by Belleair Development of Pinellas Park, is slated to open in the Summer of 2020.

PELICAN GOLF COURSE They have been playing golf on the new course for almost a year now, but the big club house is still under construction. The Ladies LPGA is scheduled there in May, so they expect it to be open before that. The golf course is private; you must be a member.

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Organizational News...

INDIAN ROCKS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Submitted by Terry Hamilton Wollin

The Indian Rocks Historical Society announces the second season of informative and educational programs to be held at the Indian Rocks Beach City Hall.

Monday, January 13 will feature Dr. Gary Mormino (Mr. Florida,) History Professor Emeritus, USF and Cofounder of the Florida Studies Program talking about "Sandspurs to Fast Food, a History of Food in Florida." The program is sponsored by Colonial Court Inn.

Tuesday, February 18, the second in the season will be presented by Bob Griffin, a local historian, Florida native, well-known bon vivant and publisher of this news magazine. His topic will be "The Life of Henry B. Plant—His Ships, Trains and Hotels," and is sponsored by Coastal Properties/ Christie's International, Julie Folden, Realtor. Society Partner The Original Crabby Bill's Family Brands will provide light refreshments.

All Historical Society programs are free and open to the public—your donations make them possible. Doors open at 2pm.

GREENTOWN KIDS

Submitted by Allie DeVore

Happy New Year!! 2020 will be our third year here in IRB! Thank you for your support. With over 130 members, our group continues to get bigger and better by making a positive impact on our community and creating a GREEN TOWN. We've got big plans for the year ahead. Here's what you can expect...

Gardening & Growing Initiative:

- Community Garden - School Garden Projects - Planting and
- Community Beautification Projects - Composting

Ocean Friendly Initiative:

- Three Beach Cleanups - Beach Toy Box Project - Ocean Friendly Restaurant Project
- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Initiative
- Holiday Toy Swap & Donation - Upcycled Art - Recycle Right Community Event

Animal of the Year - Manatees

Mark your Calendars: January 29th: Recycle Right Community Event - 6:30-7:30pm, IRB City Hall. Free to IRB residents, neighbors, and friends. Come learn about the state of IRB recycling and how to do it right from Jan Tracy of Pinellas County Dept. of Solid Waste.

Join now to become an official Greenie & get two months free with over 24 events in 2020! We offer Educational Field Trips, Outdoor Family Fun, and a place to Learn & Play while making friends and creating a Green Town Together!

Enjoy over 24 fun activities for the whole family throughout the year. Our young greenies are Elementary age and younger. We also welcome volunteers of all ages. www.greentownkids.org. Email: greentownkids@gmail.com. Follow us on Facebook @ GreenTown Kids.

NEWCOMER CLUB

This social club helps relocated residents, and others, develop new friends. The ladies meet monthly at different locations. Activities vary from card games to field trips and shows.

The January 7 luncheon meeting will be at Clearwater Country Club. A speaker from the Pinellas County Speakers Bureau will explain the impact of the 2020 census on Florida's political landscape. Reservations must be received by Tuesday, December 31. Enclose a \$20 check payable to Welcome Newcomer Club.

RSVP for the above to Diane McCune, 301-693-0219 or tucklove@brighthouse.com. WelcomeNewComerClub.com.

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Organizational News...

ACTION 2000 INDIAN ROCKS BEACH (A2K)

Submitted by Julie Hoofnagle

Happy New Year!

2020 marks the 21th anniversary of IRB Action 2000! Born out of City Visioning Sessions in the late 1990s, we have been working hard to preserve and beautify our quaint beach community. Gifts from our Oktoberfest sponsors, grants and collaborative efforts have enabled our successful projects. You can see changes across IRB – from the Kolb Park Gazebo Upgrade scheduled for completion by Oktoberfest 2020, the 10th Ave mini park, butterfly gardens, handsome pedestrian shelters, historical signage, preservation plaques and the IRB Historical Walking Tour due to be rolled out in early 2020.

Our work is not done. We plan to continue our major projects and the next steps in the City Visioning Sessions and the development of the Comprehensive Master Plan that will guide the City's future growth and development. We welcome you to join us at our monthly meetings the second Monday of the month at the Beach Arts Center at 6:30 pm and learn how you can be a part of making a difference in IRB.

Here are some short-term session highlights:

- January 13: monthly meeting, Beach Arts Center, 6:30 pm
- January 25: Service Saturday, 10th Ave mini park tree trimming and weeding, 9-11am
- February 10: monthly meeting, Beach Arts Center. 5:30pm social and 6:30 meeting
- February 22: Service Saturday, County Park weeding, trimming, mulch, 9-11am

For more information on Action 2000 IRB check out www.irbaction2000.com and Action2000IRB on Facebook.

INDIAN ROCKS BEACH LIBRARY

Submitted By Lee Miller, Librarian

Story time Extras! Story time with Ms. Lee and Play and Grow Music with Ms. Shalini continue with the support of the Friends of the IRB Library. These programs are for kids between 0-6 years old. Join us for a story, a song, finger plays, movement and music. It is scientifically proven that these activities are great for our kids' developing minds and bodies. See you on Fridays at 11 AM. These programs are FREE.

**On January 31st at 11 AM story time will a host a very special guest reader, Azora, the Mermaid will in the library sharing a couple of her favorite stories about her friends in the sea. Don't miss this swimmingly great time! Wear your mermaid tales!

On the Rocks Library Book Club- The January book club selection is "Ribbons of Scarlet" and copies are available at the Library. The Book Club will meet at the Library on January 28th, 2020 at 5 PM.

Ukulele Introduction with the Tampa Bay Ukulele Society - The library will offer an introduction to the ukulele for those interested starting in January. If you are interested in learning more about playing the ukulele please sign up at the library. Don't have a ukulele? Come anyway! You can check out ukuleles from the IRB library or Largo Public Library; please check with the libraries for more information. The ukulele classes will be on Tuesdays Jan. 14 and 28, Feb. 11 and 25 Mar. 10 and 24 at 6 PM. This is a FREE class and ages 10-99 are welcome.

Please contact the library for more information about these programs and classes, 1507 Bay Palm Blvd. IRB, 727-596-1822

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Organizational News...

ROTARY CLUB OF INDIAN ROCKS BEACH

Submitted by David Kline

The Rotary Club of Indian Rocks Beach concluded it's 17th annual "Big Game Raffle", on Sunday, December 8th by drawing the five winning tickets at 5:45 pm. Here are the winners from that drawing:

- Grand Prize: Christine Fedorowycz from Cinnaminson, NJ, won two tickets to the "Big Game" in Miami, as well as 4 nights lodging and \$1000 cash. Christine purchased the tickets from one of her coworkers, who happens to be a member of the Rotary E-club 7500 in NJ. Christine is not a big football fan but was just supporting her Rotary friend. She will not be attending the game, but she is now the "Most Loved Grandma" of her two grandsons who are huge football fans, and will be going in her place. She told me, even days later, her grandsons were still asking, "Are you joking with us Grandma? The Super Bowl? Really?"
- Second Prize: William Frech from Chicago, IL. won \$1000. The ticket was sold by our partner Rotary Club of Concord, IN
- Third Prize: Dave LeBlanc from Chelmsford, MA. won \$500. The ticket was sold by our partner Rotary Club of Merrimack Valley, MA
- Fourth Prize: Sherm Hansen from Elkhart, IN. won \$300. The ticket was sold by our Partner Club of Concord, IN
- Fifth Prize: Jim Pencola from northern MD. won \$200. The ticket was sold by IRB Rotary.

This year, over 15,000 tickets were sold throughout the country. About 10 years ago, with the rising cost of the Super Bowl tickets and lodging, we realized we had to increase our sales, but had maxed out our members ability to do so. That is when we started partnerships with other Rotary clubs. We offer them 50% of their gross tickets sales. This appealed to many clubs, since they do not have to create and administer the fundraiser - we all know fundraisers are a lot of work. An additional benefit is the partners 50% share of the proceeds is used to further the good works of their Rotary club—a win for Rotary on both fronts.

We sincerely appreciate our community's support in this, our largest fundraiser and the good works we do throughout the year.

Look for our next fundraisers, Rotary Runs the Beach and the Rotary Pancake Breakfast, both in April of 2020.

WEST PINELLAS LITTLE LEAGUE

They will be starting Spring Ball in February. Registration is now open, but you must register at www.WestPinellasLittleLeague.org.

Rick Valderrama is the new president and he says they are making a few changes in 2020.

"We are adding FREE T-Ball, sponsored by your Tampa Bay Rays," says Rick. "The T-Ball program, for kids ages 4-5, is specifically designed to provide a foundation and introduction to baseball that is grounded in fun, fitness and fundamentals."

Little League needs volunteers, coaches and always money. You can sponsor a team or buy a billboard in the outfield. Send an email to Info@WestPinellasLittleLeague.com to get the details. Through their 2019 sponsors, they were able to complete Phase One of their renovations and improvements.

Little League is for boys and girls, ages 4-16. Visit WestPinellasLittleLeague.org, or follow them on Facebook. Contact Rick Valderrama, President and Coach by email at RValderrama@Gmail.com.

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Organizational News...

THE BEACH ART CENTER (BAC)

Submitted by Barbara Parker

"Save Our Cottages" Evening of Art featuring the Plein Aire Cottage Artists! Saturday, January 11, 2020, with the Plein Aire Cottage Artists – Mary Rose Holmes Violetta Chandler and Helen Tilston.. Please JOIN Us - the Reception is FREE and open to the public – no ticket required.

The evening will start with the IRB debut of the *Save Our Cottages: Artists with a Cause* documentary at 7 pm. Tickets for this are already sold out, but the BAC invites you to the Opening Reception and Art Exhibit starting at 7:30 at the Center. Meet the artists and perhaps take home a piece of cottage history. A percentage of the proceeds will benefit the capital fundraising campaign.

Enjoy delicious hors d'oeuvres graciously provided by Bay Star Restaurant Group and drinks available for purchase. The Reception is free and open to the public. The Plein Aire Cottage Artists paintings will be available for viewing and purchase January 2 - 24. The BAC is also hosting special gallery days and extended hours for this exhibit. Please visit the website for details.

The Roaring 20's Gala! Saturday, February 15, 2020, 7:00-10pm. TICKETS ON SALE NOW!!!

Join the Flappers & Dappers for our 3rd Annual Fundraiser. Put on your glad rags and join IRB's largest theme party with great food, live music, dancing, socializing and some amazing costumes, (there will also be a Speakeasy out back-but that's a secret!... shhhhh). Tickets are \$65 per person and must be purchased in advance at www.beachartcenter.org or at the BAC.

The Beach Art Center is a 501c3 not-for-profit organization and this fundraiser provides a major source of funding in support of our mission to "inspire lifelong learning, empower the individual and engage the community of all ages in the creative arts". There will be a brief auction, offering both experiences and a few very special pieces of art.

Art Gallery Show: "Heart of My Heart." - February 3- February 21: Members and non-members are invited to enter their work. 2D and 3D Works accepted. Visit beachartcenter.org for show requirements. The Free Artist Reception is February 7th from 6-8pm and is open to the public. Ribbon awards will be presented.

Classes and Workshops: We have many exciting educational offerings coming up for our members and residents to try out.

On January 18 & 19, "Watercolor from the Heart" with Carol Carter nationally acclaimed watercolorist; January 25 is acrylic "Beginners Palette Knife" with local artist Kathy Thomas; February 21-23, Oil "Painting Alla Prima with Texas artist Chris Brantley; Photography February 22, "Florida Botanical Garden Photography Workshop" with instructor Mike Jensen.

Come check out our NEW ceramic class-"Sea Creature and More" with award winning Suzy Pease and Plein Aire and Pastels classes with Shawn Dell.

Art on the Rocks February 5 "Seashell and Seaglass Heart" and February 28 back by popular demand "Pet Portraits."

The Beach Art Center is located at 1515 Bay Palm Blvd, Indian Rocks Beach, www.beachartcenter.org.

PINELLAS WEAVERS GUILD

Their ROC Day will be January 4, 10am - 1pm at Heritage Village, Largo in the Daniel McMullen House. This is when all the holiday decorations are put away, until next year, and they bring their equipment back out and start working again. It is a lovely event for anyone interested in the fiber arts. All are invited to bring any fiber art they do and join them in "working".

They have been doing this for the last 10 years.

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Bob DiNicola was the Mayor of Indian Rocks Beach from March 14, 1993 – March 31, 2005 and prior was Commissioner from March of 1983 – March of 1991. As Mayor, some accomplishments include the development of the city's Nature Preserve, the implementation of the beach trolley and the first crosswalks on Gulf Blvd.

Bob passed away on November 29, 2019 while surrounded by family. He was a first generation Italian-American born in Alexandria, VA in 1933. He and his family moved to Indian Rocks Beach in 1978 from Alexandria, VA. He leaves behind family and his loving wife, Renie, of 66 years whom he cherished and adored.

THOSE WHO KNEW HIM:

RB Johnson, Past IRB Mayor:

By the time Bob DiNicola stepped down as mayor of Indian Rocks Beach halfway through his sixth two-year term, it was hard to imagine anyone else filling that office, he had occupied it for so long. But the process of becoming mayor had been anything but a breeze. After serving eight years as a city commissioner, Bob ran against the incumbent mayor, Jim Driscoll, and lost -- undoubtedly to his thinking an unexpected event. For the next two years he bided his time, and when Mayor Driscoll declined to run for a third term, Bob seized the opportunity and ran again, narrowly defeating Jim Palamara in one of the closest elections the city had ever seen. From then on Bob was never seriously challenged in an election, and left office only because he felt a greater responsibility in another direction: taking care of his ailing sister who lived in The Villages.

Bob loved being the mayor. It seemed like he was born to play the part. You got the sense that he knew not only everyone who lived in the city, but also everything there was to know about the city. And although he was the most genial and charming of politicians, he could also be unyieldingly firm when he felt his authority was being challenged. On more than one occasion he declared during a commission meeting that those assembled were following Robert's Rules of Order -- and he was Robert!

I served with Bob for five years on the city commission, and there were plenty of times when we had our differences of opinion. But he always treated me with politeness and respect, even when it was obvious that he thought I was a fool for disagreeing with him. In fact, it was a bit of a surprise to me when Bob played a major role priming the pump when my first opportunity arose to serve on a countywide board. Bob was a firm believer in making sure that the voice of IRB was heard not only up and down the beaches, but also across Pinellas County. To that end he himself served on the Pinellas Planning Council, and he advocated for other Indian Rocks commissioners and citizens to serve on any countywide boards which had openings. Thus, Commissioner Jean Scott served as the beach representative on the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority's

board of directors, but when stepped down, the seat was filled by Jim Lawrence from Indian Shores. That didn't sit well with Bob, because he wasn't from IRB!

A few years later Jim was looking to pass the seat on to a new occupant, the decision being made at a meeting of the Barrier Islands Governmental Council, or BIG-C. I had been an Indian Rocks commissioner for several years, and I regularly attended the BIG-C meetings. So there I was watching the proceedings from the rear of the room, when out of nowhere I heard my name being put forward for PSTA's beach representative by Bob and Mayor Harold Radcliffe of North Redington Beach. Before the council could vote I hurriedly shouted, "Whoa, whoa, let me think about this for a little while!" They delayed the vote until the next month, when I agreed. Previous to being appointed I had little or no interest in the details of how transit worked in Pinellas County, but it soon became a passion. Eventually, I serve four years as PSTA's chair, which would never have occurred if it hadn't been for Bob DiNicola's insistence that IRB have as much influence in the county as possible. I'll always be grateful to Bob for that unexpected push in the right direction, the kind of push he employed again and again to get the most out of people, and to achieve the most for the city he loved.

Mayor Joanne "Cookie" Kennedy: Mayor Bob was my mentor and friend. His wife Renie, children, and grandchildren are part of my extended family.

Bob possessed many gifts. He cherished IRB and our residents. He listened and was only a call away if a citizen wanted to speak to him. He shared his great empathy and love for those less fortunate and treated everyone equal regardless of sex, race, socioeconomic group, and culture. He used his attributes to the best of his abilities. Mayor Bob was one of a kind.

I give thanks for Bob DiNicola's vision for IRB. Bob and granddaughter Farrah developed the Biggest Beach Party Bash when she was the youth President of the YMCA for the beaches. The event got kids involved in the community.

Every idea and project I had, Mayor Bob was my #1 cheerleader. He yelled at me daily and made me work hard. But I knew he had my back. Bob was instrumental in IRB GALA 2000. A project to raise funds to begin beautification of Gulf Boulevard. The next time you travel along Gulf Boulevard focus on the Nature Preserve, the revitalization and beautification, crosswalks, and welcome center. Bob was involved with all these projects and more.

Mayor Bob was the truest definition of a PUBLIC SERVANT I have ever known. If I had one more minute with him, I would say Thank you for your friendship, kindness, loving, giving spirit, encouragement, all you gave our community, and the time you shared with all of us.



Three IRB Mayors - R.B. Johnson (left), Joanne "Cookie" Kennedy (center), and Mayor Bob DiNicola (right) taken in 2018

Deanne O'Reilly, City Clerk:

Mayor DiNicola was the first Mayor that I served in the position of City Clerk for in the City of Indian Rocks Beach. Mayor Bob provided on-going professional and profile-raising support to city clerks, constantly encouraging city clerks to continue developing their expertise and professionalism through education and continuing career training.

Mayor DiNicola developed strong relationships with all levels of local, county, state, and federal elected officials who he worked closely with. He promoted the City and accomplished multiple grants at all levels and lobbied for and obtained state and federal funding for the City. Many of today's successes of the City of Indian Rocks Beach reflect the effort and commitment of Mayor DiNicola.

He was always a man of his word and a dear friend to me both personally and professionally. He will be greatly missed.

Carol McGlaughlin, City Resident:

Bob was an IRB Civic Association board member for many years. He was involved with the Civic Association's signature project-to raise funds for the IRB Civic Association Scholarship Fund. It awarded over \$160,000 to qualifying students attending college or technical programs.

When the CA disbanded, the organization established the IRB Civic Association Scholarship Fund at St. Pete College. Our entire treasury funded the foundation now administered by SPC.

Karen Seel, County Commissioner:

I loved Mayor Bob DiNicola! He was passionate, kind, and had a wonderful personality. Mayor Bob was the best advocate for Indian Rocks Beach - he brought people together to enjoy this special town - and left a legacy. He worked with Pinellas County on many projects - including beach renourishment, beach access, Gulf Boulevard, as well as many other initiatives to improve Indian Rocks Beach for the future.

My sincere sympathies to Renie - his delightful wife - who was at his side for every moment.

Organizational News...

BEACH COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY (BCFP)

Submitted by David Kline BCFP Director

Happy New Year from BCFP! Since 2004, we have continued to service those in our community who are challenged with food insecurity and 2019 was another wonderful year! We provided a food products, including Thanksgiving and Christmas turkeys and Easter hams, for an average of 800 family members per month.

The community has shown a record amount of support for our mission throughout the year. BCFP is a mission of Calvary Episcopal Church and operates solely through the gracious donations of food, time and money from our wonderful community.

We wish to thank the amazing number of individuals who provide cash donations throughout the year. You made 2019 a record year. Although much of our food is donated, there are many items that we must purchase in large quantities. Every dollar makes a difference! We are also blessed by donations of food and money from the following organizations: Action 2000 • Beggins Century 21 Real Estate • Calvary Episcopal Church • City of N. Redington Beach • City of Indian Rocks Beach • City of Indian Shores • Country Day Schools • Crabby Bills Family of restaurants • Doubletree Beach Resort, N. Redington Beach • Feeding Tampa Bay • Florida Dream Center • Griffin Productions Neighborhood News Magazines • Indian Rocks Beach Homeowners Association • Indian Rocks Family Sailing Assoc. • IRB Women's Tea • Pinellas County Sheriff Office • Plumlee Realty • Publix • RCS • Richard O. Johnson Tech High • Rotary Club of Indian Rocks Beach • Seminole High School • Silly Sinatra's Singing Group • Slyce Pizza Bar • US Post Office, IRB • Walmart Neighborhood Market

Finally, we wish to thank all of you who donate your time to staff our pantry three times each week throughout the year. Without you, we would not exist.

We pray for the time that food pantries are no longer needed but until that time comes, we, as a community, must take care of those who have not been as fortunate as we have been.

We wish all of you the best that the new year has to offer.

CLEARWATER YACHT CLUB

Their Winter Membership program is continuing. It has no initiation fee and monthly dues are \$150, with no food minimum. Winter members can use day dockage, the pool, tiki bar, dining room and other amenities, including participating in weekly parties and host private parties. Best of all, you can meet new people. It is a great way to see for yourself how much fun it is, with no obligations. You can end your membership whenever you wish, or convert to a permanent member when the program ends March 31. Call Tom at 447-6000, or e-mail Office@ClearwaterYachtClub.org. or visit ClearwaterYachtClub.org.

ST. JEROME'S

The church is offering a program called Alpha, that is a series of sessions exploring the basics of the Christian faith. Each session looks at a different question people may have about faith and is designed to create conversation about life's big questions.

"It is just an open, informal and honest space to explore and discuss life's big questions together," says Madonna Jones, organizer. "There is no pressure and no cost."

Spanning eleven weeks, each week begins with dinner, a video, then a small group conversation. Everyone is invited, and you do not need to be part of the Catholic Church to participate.

The program is held on Wednesday nights, beginning January 15th. To participate, call Madonna Jones at 537-0143. St Jerome's Church is located at 10895 Hamlin Road, Largo.



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THE 2020 CENSUS COUNTS - TIME TO STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

By Nancy Obarski

The U.S. Constitution requires that “we, the people” be counted “decennially”—every 10 years. The promotional media campaign for the 2020 Census begins this month, leading up to the arrival of “participation letters” in mid-March. This shall be our country’s 24th “counting of the population”...a massive undertaking, executed according to a 220-page manual. The goal of this largest peacetime government project is to accurately count each and every individual—only once—and in the right place...where they live. The results will quantify America’s changing values and interests and literally define “who we are” as a nation.

Why is the Census so important? Our Constitution framers insisted our governmental representation be based on population as opposed to wealth or land ownership, making a “body count” crucial. Population changes over the last decade will determine each state’s number of seats in the House of Representatives as well as the number of Electoral College delegates for upcoming Presidential races. And, since the migration appears to be South and West, the Sunshine State stands to benefit.

The Census is also important to the future of our hospitals, education, roads, infrastructure and other vital resources because it dictates how \$675 billion per year in federal funds get spent at the state, county and local levels. It is even more crucial for our area as it affects recovery after natural disasters...namely hurricanes.

An increasingly diverse population has made the sampling trickier and more expensive through the years. In 1970, it cost \$16 to reach each household; in 2010 it was \$92, thanks

to a \$133 million advertising campaign designed to boost dwindling response rates. Even so, only 74% responded. Although citizens are required by law to participate, no one has been prosecuted in the last 40 years for failure to do so.

There have been many “technological tweaks” since the first Census in 1790. It was then called “the enumeration” and began shortly after Washington took office. Wouldn’t our forefathers be shocked that, for the first time in 2020, most respondents will be able to complete their questionnaire Online from anywhere at any time on any device in addition to mail or phone? Aerial imagery will reduce the number of workers needed to physically walk the streets verifying addresses, which is the first step in the census process. Another first: Census field workers will be equipped with iPhone 8s and mobile apps.

Most folks will be asked to complete the questionnaire electronically. But, 20-25%, in areas where demographics or limited Internet availability is an issue, will still get a paper survey. Your response is due on Census Day, April 1, after which two “nudge” post cards and a follow-up letter will be sent to non-responders before Census workers resort to an in-person, knock-on-the-door visit. The Census Bureau will count about 330 million folks in less than a year. And, on the last day of 2020, the final population counts, which are expected to be up by about 8%, get delivered to the President. The results of the first Census, some 230 years ago, were dispatched to George Washington on horseback. No cybersecurity concerns there!

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MAKING THE LEAP Why is 2020 a Leap Year?

This next year, 2020, is a Leap Year. That means this year, an extra day has been added to our calendar. While an ordinary year has 365 days, a leap year has 366 days. The added day, called Leap Day, is February 29th.

It takes the Earth approximately 6 hours longer than one calendar year to revolve around the Sun. The addition of Leap Day syncs the solar year of 365.242199 days with the 365-day Gregorian calendar year.

This added day occurs usually every four years, but it is complicated. It happens in most years that are divisible by 4: 2012, 2016, 2020, etc. But, years that are divisible by 100, but not by 400, are NOT leap years. Thus 1800, 1900, 2100 and 2200 are/were NOT leap years while 1600 and 2000 were.

The Romans were the first to discover this during Julius Caesar’s rule - in 45 BC. Their calendar, called the Julian calendar named February 24th as their leap day. Coincidentally, February was the last month of their year.

Pope Gregory XIII modified the Julian calendar, correcting problems that had caused a ten day shift over its many years, and introduced a new calendar in 1582. Called the Gregorian calendar many previous dates and months were changed. Leap day was established as February 29th in almost every fourth year. Initially accepted by the Catholic countries of Europe, it took three centuries for all of Europe to adopt it. Greece was the last European country to accept it - in 1923. During the 20th century, the calendar was adopted by most non-Western countries.

The calendar though close, is still not perfect. It is 27 seconds too long each year or adds one day every 3236 years.

A leap-year baby is a person born on February 29th. They are also referred to as a “leapling” or a “leaper.” In non-leap years, leaplings celebrate their birthdays on either February 28 or March 1—then some like to celebrate only every fourth year.

This has produced some interesting fictional story lines. In Gilbert & Sullivan’s The Pirates of Penzance, the title character, Frederic, must leave his beloved and return to a band of pirates he is apprenticed to until age 21. Because of his February 29th Leap Year birthday, he won’t hit 21 until he’s actually 88!

Defying the odds, a Utah woman has had three leapling babies, two boys and a girl. They were born February 29th 2004, 2008, and 2012.

In some traditions, Leap Day is also referred to as Bachelors’ Day. Custom dictates on this day, a woman may propose marriage to the bachelor of her choice. If the man refuses, he is obligated to give the woman money or buy her a dress. In upper class Europe, he must buy her 12 pairs of gloves – all used to hide the woman’s embarrassment of not having an engagement ring. In Greece, it is considered unlucky to marry on Leap Day.

After 2020, the next leap year will be 2024.

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All proceeds go to Religious Community Services (RCS) in their ongoing efforts to provide food and services to Pinellas County residents.
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MEET ROGER DOW - CEO OF U.S. TRAVEL

By Bob Griffin, Publisher

Roger Dow lives in Old Northeast, but he works in Washington, D.C. He is the President and CEO of U.S. Travel, the largest travel association in the United States—and possibly the world.

At 7am every Monday morning, you will find him at Tampa International Airport hopping on a jet to Washington or some other U.S. city. Then on Thursday afternoons, he flies back to Tampa, to spend the weekends in St. Petersburg with his wife, Linda, and friends.

U.S. Travel is not well known to people outside the industry. It is a trade organization for the entire United States whose mission is to foster and improve tourism from other countries and to increase domestic travel. They study the benefits and problems with travel, then lobby and communicate their findings to government officials and politicians. They work closely with thousands of U.S. hotels and tourism related businesses.

Dow helped create Brand USA, a marketing entity for the entire industry to use. The unique thing about Brand USA is that its \$200 million budget is funded by international visitors and the travel industry - not by taxpayers. They produce ads, TV commercials, billboards and more—seen all around the world—telling overseas tourists that the U.S. is still a great and cost efficient place to visit. "For every dollar spent on marketing, Brand USA adds \$25 to the U.S. Economy," Dow declares.

"Half of our job is lobbying," says Dow. "We are a trade organization and represent all related businesses in the U.S. Our mission is to increase travel to all 50 states."

"We also work closely with major tourism destinations," Dow adds. "Among the biggest are Tampa, Pinellas County, Orlando, Kissimmee, the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale area, really the entire state of Florida."

They work directly with the airport and airline industries. "We interact regularly with 15 major airports including Tampa's," says Dow. "We helped develop the TSA Pre-check and Global Entry systems now in effect."

"We were involved in improving and extending the Visa Waiver program for other countries, making it easier for tourists from other countries to come here with little more than a passport."

"We study the habits of foreign travelers and target our advertising to places where we get the most return for

our dollar," Dow explains. "We found travelers from South Korea, China, Israel and Brazil spend more per visit than other countries. On average, overseas tourists tend to stay 16 nights and spend \$4,300 per person per visit."

"As far as the amount spent, tourists from China are more attractive than Canadian tourists," Roger explains. "A Chinese traveler will spend approximately \$6,700 per person per visit while a Canadian spends about \$1,200."

U.S. Travel also puts on the IPW, a major world-wide trade show held yearly in different U.S. cities. Orlando (Disney/Universal) and Miami have hosted it many times. Next year it will be in Las Vegas. It has been held for over 60 years and is a big event to educate and sell foreign travel agents on the travel opportunities in the U.S. In 3 days, they book over \$5 billion in future travel to the U.S.

"Basically, my organization, U.S. Travel, helps generate \$2.4 trillion (that is with a T) in economic outputs and supports 15.6 million jobs - 1 in 9 American jobs."

In 2014, Dow and U.S. Travel launched Project: Time Off. The initiative aims to shift culture so using personal time off is not considered frivolous, but essential to strengthening families and improving personal health—a business investment with proven returns and an economic necessity.

The average worker in America uses about 17 days of vacation each year. Approximately 52% of American workers are not using all their vacation time. They are leaving a whopping 758 million unused, paid vacation days on the table.

"Time off is understood by many but not practiced enough," Roger explains. "Time off is essential to the personal well-being and professional success of individuals and their businesses. Plus, it benefits the travel industry."

"Unused days off translate to overworked Americans who are stressed, unhappy, and less productive at home and at work," says Dow. "Changing the mindset and behavior of our overwhelmed culture isn't just a boon for the economy; it's the right thing to do."

Dow has been in tourism from the beginning of his career. While in college, he was hired as a lifeguard at one of the Marriott properties in Saddlebrook, N.J. At the time, there were only six Marriott hotels in the U.S.



Today there are over 7,000.

Long story short, he got a job in sales management with Marriott International and stayed with Marriott for 34 years. He rose to be the Senior Vice President of Global and Field Sales.

In 2005 and approaching retirement, he was offered the job as CEO of U.S. Travel, an organization he knew well.

Roger and Linda were looking for a place to settle down, but not in Washington. As CEO, he travels all over the U.S. and can really live anywhere. They looked at many cities including several in Florida. "We attended the Super Bowl in Tampa in 2009," Roger explains, "and we were very impressed with the Tampa Bay area - especially St. Petersburg."

"We found a house and renovated it in Old Northeast - just north of the Vinoy. We love the weather, the parks, the restaurants, all the things to do around here and the people."

Where does the Dow family go for their vacation? "We enjoy Steamboat Springs, Colorado, where we have a second home. We like going there in December to enjoy a white Christmas every year."

Get more information about U.S. Travel at www.USTravel.org.

PAT PLUMLEE 1939 - 2019

Pat Plumlee was a fixture in the Indian Rocks Beach community from the day she moved here. In 1990 (30 years ago), she opened Plumlee Realty on Walsingham Road - that was the beginning of what would become a major realty company for Indian Rocks and the local beaches.

Patricia Ann Plumlee passed away suddenly on December 10 at the age of 80. Pat was a force of nature and a pillar of her community. She was a daughter, sister, mother, grandmother, broker, wife, partner, philanthropist, leader, manager, friend. She has been described as an elegant lady and a powerful woman.

Born in Brooklyn, NY, to Jack and Doris Collins, Pat grew up a city girl and got her first introduction to the business world at Ebbets Field in her father's office where he worked as the business manager for the Brooklyn Dodgers.

When she was 13, the family moved south to Clearwater, where they built the Sands Pointe Motel, this was the first taste of the real estate and vacation rental business for Pat. Over her life, Pat built quite a presence in the beach communities.

After college, Pat worked for the family real estate business with her parents. Soon she ventured off with her new husband, Ernest "Ernie" Plumlee (d.1994) and created a new industry in the publishing world. She continued to keep her real estate license active and obtained her broker's license in 1984. Not long after Pat and Ernie sold their publishing company, they founded Plumlee Gulf Beach Realty. Pat was proud of her 40+ years of real estate excellence and earned the Realtor Emeritus Designation by the Pinellas Realtors Organization.

Dedicated to her community, she received the Commitment to Excellence in Leadership Award from the Suncoast Firemen's Association. She was a proud member of the Clearwater Community Women's Club holding every office besides President over her 40 year membership, the Indian Shores Women's Club, the Belleair Women's Republican Club, La Sertoma - where she served as the President for four years, the Gulf Beach Chamber - where she served as President, and various condominium boards throughout the years.

She is preceded in death by husband of 32 years, Ernest Plumlee and survived by her love and partner Michael A. Petruccelli of 23 years, her brother John Collins (Gaye), her daughter Sandy Risberg (Rob) along with grandsons James and John, and her son Todd (Cris) along with grandson Tyson.

Donations in her name may be made to the Beach Community Food Pantry c/o Calvary Episcopal Church 1615 1st. St. Indian Rocks Beach, FL 33785 or to the Kimberly Home Pregnancy Resource Center, 1189 NE Cleveland Street, Clearwater FL 33755.

Plumlee Realty will continue to be operated by her son and daughter, Todd and Sandy.



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