

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

including Sand Key and Island Estates

Magazine

JAY KEYES REMEMBERS CLEARWATER BEACH

The Hilton Hotel



Hilton's owners Garinani and Stan Musial along side Jay Keyes

Interviewed by Bob Griffin, Publisher

Jay Keyes was the manager of the first Clearwater Beach Hilton hotel - and later the biggest restaurant on the south end of the beach.

Keyes was born in Warrick, NY in 1929. That is where he got his start in the hospitality industry when at the age of 14 he was hired as a part-time cook at a campus restaurant. He worked up to busboy and became a waiter at the Warrick Dude Ranch.

From 1948-51, Keyes served in the Navy on a submarine.

Keyes' first hotel management position was in 1958 at the Hotel North Hampton. He then managed the Port-O-Call in Tierra Verde (1965-68) and the Hilton in Williamsburg (1969-71).

In the late 1960s, Martin Field opened the Statler Hotel on the south end of Clearwater Beach, at the foot of the Clearwater Pass Bridge. Field, a major Philadelphia developer, also developed Clearwater Pointe - the condos to

the east of the Sand Key bridge.

Field converted The Statler into to the Clearwater Beach Statler Hilton. Many years later, after becoming a Holiday Inn, the hotel was demolished and is now a vacant lot.

Field hired Jay Keyes to manage the hotel in 1971.

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Also in this Issue:

Working the Polls

See what is involved in being a poll worker during a major Presidential Election. Maybe you will want to give it a try next time.

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Bella Vino 15 years later

What does it take to start a successful wine business from scratch? Owners Brian and Cheryl Franzeses know, they did it.

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Janna's Consignment Boutique

What is the difference between a thrift store and a consignment shop? Lisa Hammock, owner of Janna's, explains.

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"Let's Eat" - New Clearwater Historical Society Museum exhibit

A Celebration of Clearwater's restaurants, past and present.

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CREDITS



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Did You Know



REPURPOSE YOUR HOLIDAY TREE Recycling your holiday tree in Clearwater is easy. Simply remove all decorations including hooks, garland, tinsel and lights. Then, leave the tree at the curb on your regular collection day. It is important to leave trees loose for pick up, rather than placing them in a bag or trash can. Collected holiday trees will be converted into mulch that is available free to residents at the Clearwater Recycling Drop-off Center, 1701 N. Hercules Ave. in Clearwater.

REDS WHITES & BITES Save the date, Friday March 5, 2021. This year's event will be virtual with an exciting online lottery. All proceeds benefit the Community Dental Clinic. They were expecting almost 400 guests for their 2020 Reds, Whites & Bites Fundraiser. Unfortunately, with the pandemic, the uncertainty of the future, and their genuine concern for the welfare of the guests, they were forced to cancel just days before the event. They truly appreciate the flexibility and commitment to safety of all involved.

Through donations and community support, the clinic provides the low income, uninsured adults access to urgent dental care for improved health. Almost 25% of the people in our area do not receive the dental care they need due to a lack of dental insurance or ability to pay. During the first half of the year, even with Covid-19, they treated 267 acute patients who would have otherwise gone to the ER or urgent care to escape their pain.

MARINA TO UNDERGO REMODEL The City is planning a major remodel of the Clearwater Marina. The docks and boat slips, have not been upgraded in many years. "We are planning to add floating docks like the ones across the way at the Clearwater Harborage," says Mike McDonald, Director of Operations for the Marina. The design work is just getting started. Look for the work to begin late next year.

GARDENS ARE OPEN Even though there are no lights this year, The Florida Botanical Gardens are still open from 7am to 5pm, daily. There are 100-acres of gardens and flowers to look at and plenty of room to spread out and social distance. This is their 20th Anniversary. Admittance is free. Find them in Largo, on Walsingham Rd. www.FLBG.org.

LIGHTED BOAT PARADES With the pandemic, will there be Lighted Boat Parades this year? Some cities are continuing the tradition, while others have been canceled. Here is a short list.

Clearwater Beach/ Island Estates -

Canceled
Treasure Island -

December 5

Madeira Beach -

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Indian Rocks Beach -

December 19

Indian Shores/Redington -

December 20



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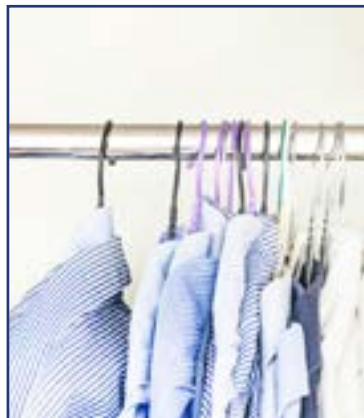
COME SEE SANTA Heritage Village is celebrating the holidays featuring Santa Claus on the McMullen Log Cabin's porch, December 12th and 19th. Santa's job is never done! Even during a pandemic, we must get our holiday wishes and gift request through!

Meet with Santa, safely, socially-distanced as he sits on the porch of the McMullen Log Cabin. Kids can approach the steps and tell Santa their hopes and dreams for the Holiday Season, 6-ft distanced and safe.

Enjoy holiday music as well as hot cocoa, coffee, and pastries from the Coffee Mill. View the decorations on the historic homes and participate in the holiday-themed scavenger hunt. Heritage Village, located at 11909 125th Avenue N., Largo is free and open to the public. Donations to the Pinellas County Historical Society are always welcome, www.pinellascountyhistoricalsociety.org.

SEAFOOD FESTIVAL MOVES For more than 30 years, the John's Pass Seafood Festival was held the last week of October. The planners moved the 2020 festival to January 22-24. "We are thrilled that the tradition of the Seafood Festival will continue," says Bob Daniels, City Manager of Madeira Beach. "The City is ready to help the merchants of John's Pass Village and the hundreds of volunteers who make this event safe, fun and very successful in January."

RECYCLE YOUR WIRE HANGERS What do you do with all the wire coat hangers the dry cleaner so nicely hangs your clean clothes on? People mistakenly believe they can be put them in their recycle bin because they are metal, however, recycling companies will not accept wire hangers. They get stuck in the recycling machine in a big tangle. Even more, recycling companies cannot handle their shape and material.



In the spirit of reduce, REUSE or recycle, here are two best options. You can return them to your dry cleaner to be reused by another customer or you can donate them to thrift stores who need them to display donated clothing for sale. Either way, do NOT put them in the recycle bin.

OUR NEXT ISSUE IS IN FEBRUARY Read this issue, and others, online at BeachNewsletters.com and follow us on Facebook at Neighborhood News Magazine - for ongoing local news.

You can pick up additional copies of this magazine at the Beach Chamber Office, The Beach Rec Center, Shorty's Gourmet Deli, Sand Key Realty or the Island Estates UPS.

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**Morton Plant
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JAY KEYES, continued

"I worked in a lot of different cities, but I always liked Florida," Keyes says. "When I got a chance to manage the Hilton in Clearwater Beach, I jumped at it."

Shortly after Keyes was hired, Field sold the hotel to two well-known people. One was Jack Garagnani a.k.a. "Little Biggie" because his dad owned a popular St. Louis restaurant called "Biggies." The other owner was the hall of fame baseball player, Stan "The Man" Musial.

Like many baseball greats, when Stan Musial retired in 1963, he moved to Florida to invest in business and chose the Clearwater Beach Hilton.

Between 1941 and 1963, (he missed the 1945 season while serving in the Navy during WW II) Musial was one of baseball's greatest players. In his 22 seasons with the St. Louis Cardinals, Musial held records for most:

- Career hits (3,630)
- Runs batted in (1,951)
- Games played (3,026)
- At bats (10,972)
- Runs scored (1,949)

He had 475 career home runs and was the MLB batting champion. He was named the National League's Most Valuable Player three times, led St. Louis to three World Series championships and played in 24 All-Star Games. In 1969, he was inducted into the Baseball's Hall of Fame and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2011

Keyes managed the Hilton from 1971 to 1973. Both the hotels restaurants, the Frog Pond and the Glass Frog, needed remodeling. Keyes wanted to use an 1890s motif but Garagnani and Musial did not like it. Keyes saved that idea for later.

When Keyes left the Hilton in 1973, he approached the owner of *The Lagoon Hotel* (now *Shephard's Beach Resort*). "The south end of the beach had not yet developed into what you see today," says Keyes. "In the early '70s, *The Lagoon* was the oldest hotel in that area and one of only two large hotels south of the marina. It had about 50 rooms," Keyes remembers. He leased the restaurant and using his 1890s design concept, redesigned what he named *The Bank 1890s Restaurant*.

Bill Shephard bought *The Lagoon Resort* in 1977. Keyes lost his lease in 1988 and the restaurant became *Shephard's* in 1991. After 15 years of managing *The Bank*, it was time to move on and

that same year, he opened *Sweaty Eddies*, a bar on Gulf to Bay across from Hooters.

"Jay Keyes joined us on the beach as the General Manager of the original Hilton. From the start and though his *Bank Restaurant* years, he was involved in making Clearwater Beach the great resort destination it is today," says Russ Kimball, General Manager of the Sand Key Sheraton. "From the beginning and continuing into his retirement, he donates his time for charities like the homeless and feeding those experiencing tough times, no matter their age. We can never say no to Jay when he stops by asking for help for a charity."

While managing his restaurant on the beach, Keyes was also very active in the Clearwater's community, sitting on several community boards including: Director of Tampa Bay Harvest, Jolley Trolley Board, Sunsets at Pier 60 Board, Clearwater's Code Enforcement Planning and Development Board, and the Tourism Development Council. He was President of the Tourism and Convention Bureau of Clearwater and active in the Clearwater Beach Association, the Clearwater Beach Blue Ribbon Task Force, Clearwater Chamber of Commerce, The Inn Keepers Association and even involved in establishing the Clearwater Jazz Holiday. If that wasn't enough, in his free time, he sold real estate.

"We have always enjoyed Jay's eclectic sense of humor and willingness to be a part of so many community organizations over the years," says Lisa Chandler, Sunsets Pier 60. Steve and I had the pleasure of serving with him on the Sunsets Board of Directors."

"Living on the beach, Jay knows most everyone and has always been willing to share the stories of how we became the Number One Beach," says Sheila Cole, Past Executive Director of the Beach Chamber. He was a founding member of the Clearwater Beach Chamber of Commerce."

In the mid-'60s, Keyes met his wife, Jan, on a blind date while managing the



The Bank Restaurant



Jay and Jan Keyes at the restaurant

Tierra Verde hotel "The Port-O-Call." The hotel was owned by Guy Lombardi who organized a performance by big band leader Von Monroe at The St. Petersburg Coliseum. A friend arranged a blind date for Keyes at the show. It was Jan.

Jay Keyes, now 91, still lives in Clearwater Beach on Devon Drive. His house, overlooking the Clearwater Beach Marina, was built in the early 1940s. He and Jan, now married 53 years, have owned the house since 1972, shortly after he started working at the Hilton. ■



Jay and Jan Keyes at home in Clearwater Beach



OFFER WHAT THE MARKET WANTS

By Tom Smith, Owner of GHD Construction Services

GHD Construction Services, Inc has been highly successful with its model home program serving the beach communities. We are the only builder along the beaches that has a showroom office open 7 days each week for our customers. Surprisingly, the market is telling us that “Bigger Isn’t Better”, so we are now in conceptual process with our latest model home, with 2742sf of living area. In addition to the smaller size, this new 4 Bedroom/3 Bath home is very unique, in that it has 2 Master Bedrooms and Baths, both overlooking the water for our customers that are replacing their 50-year-old waterfront homes with a new home raised above FEMA elevations. This new home will have more bells & whistles also, with even more glass for the water views on both the 2nd and 3rd floors, as well as a larger kitchen, pantry, an additional bathroom, and more decorative molding treatments to accent the interior. Of course, it will also have an elevator serving all 3 floors. The final challenge that we have addressed is that even though this new model will have a much smaller living area square footage it will feature a more usable veranda; it has been designed at a width to fit most of the narrow lots on the water. And yes, we make any custom changes that our customers desire for their new home.

Although we are working with our architect for a few different front designs to add to our popular “Key West” look, we are introducing today’s newest home design concept. This well-designed exterior is now the bestselling exterior home design

for the million-dollar homes in the Florida panhandle in the communities of Santa Rosa Beach, Watercolor, etc. This trend began in the panhandle in the community of Seaside and has become extremely popular with all of the communities in that area. GHD has decided to offer this design to our new home customers here in Pinellas, something that has not been available previously. We will still be offering our “Key West” design as well as a “Marathon/Mediterranean” design for those families that favor that look.

...“Bigger Isn’t Better” it is all about your use of space.

We hope to have the conceptual plans of our new home complete sometime in November, so that the “snowbirds” that have decided to have a beautiful new Florida home for next year can see this home and get a feel for the layout. Our existing showroom will remain open to showcase our interior finishes as they will appear in our “Coastal Homes” lineup.

GHD Construction Services, Inc. has constructed 6,000 homes since 1971, and has a new Showroom at 14995 Gulf Blvd., Suite C, Madeira Beach. If you have any questions pertaining to new home construction, feel free to email me directly at: Tnegoshian@ghdcsi.com, or call and request a walk-thru meeting at one of our homes in-progress (727)954-8345.

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CLEARWATER JAZZ HOLIDAY WANDERLUST SERIES CONTINUES

Clearwater Jazz Holiday's tradition continued in its 41st year with its Wanderlust Series, a creative, live music series of small-scale, socially-distanced, and mostly open-air events that began in October. And like the larger scale annual festival, the lineup offered has been fun, festive, and diverse with some wonderful gems.

The Wanderlust Series proved so popular, all the shows immediately sold out. As a result, new Shows were recently added

The CJH Backstage Bistro Experience will be a dynamic, downtown live music experience, with an outside, socially distanced Bistro Vibe! This re-imagined music series takes place at the open-air Station Square Park in Downtown, Clearwater and features an exciting lineup. Come experience these new Saturday Backstage Bistro sessions.

December 12 - Joe Marcinek Band with two Sets

December 19 - Holiday Jam with Allon Sams & Friends with two Sets

Self-Parking is available at the Garden Avenue Garage along with various other locations throughout Downtown, Clearwater

The just added Tommy's Tiki Tuesday Concert Series offers you the chance to kick back with your toes in the sand at the Hilton Clearwater Beach Resort & Spa. Next to Pier 60 against the backdrop of beautiful sunsets, this is an intimate and socially distanced music experience to remember – cabaret style seating in the sand with that one-of-a-kind CJH style!

December 8 - Moonflower "The Spirit of Santana" with Rob Stoney & Angelo Colura

December 19 - The Applebutter Express , Shaun Hopper Duo

One complimentary appetizer per table of two or two complimentary appetizer for table of four. Food and beverages will be available for purchase through table service. \$10 Self-Parking is available at the Hilton Clearwater Beach Resort.

At both locations, an advanced purchased ticket is required to attend each show, no day of show tickets, single or standing admission will not be available. Tables are socially distanced from each other.

To learn more about Clearwater Jazz Holiday and the Foundation's outreach, donate, or buy CJH Presents Wanderlust tickets, visit www.clearwaterjazz.com.

DON'T WASTE GOOD RECYCLING

With the holidays upon us, this is the time of year people produce the most waste - at least 25 percent more than usual from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day. That's about 1 million extra tons of garbage! To reduce the size of your trash load, be sure to place all clean and dry empty plastic bottles, metal cans, glass, cardboard and paper in your blue recycling bin.

You can recycle some types of wrapping paper if it is paper-based, able to be torn, and containing no glitter or plastic components. Please place the wrapping paper in the garbage if it is foil-based, cannot be torn easily, or contains glitter or shiny plastic details. Tissue paper, bows, and ribbon should be placed in the trash, too. Save gift bags to reuse for next year.

It's also important to break down cardboard boxes before putting them in the recycle bin. They can get stuck in your bin when recycling crews empty your bin if the boxes are not broken down. All recyclables should be loose in the container. Plastic bags should never be placed in your blue recycling bin; take them back to the grocery store instead.

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WHAT NOW MR. BIDEN?

by Ray Ferrara, ProVise Management Group



The election for President is finally over. Regardless of how you voted, now is the time for the country to come together and move forward. What lies ahead in a President Biden White House?

Much will depend on the outcome of the Senatorial elections in Georgia. The Democrats need to win both seats to control the Senate. It is likely that at least one of the Republicans will advance. Gridlock is something that the markets like and are counting on. If things work in the Democrats favor, there will be major changes over the next two years. If not, then it is unlikely that much will change.

Mr. Biden campaigned on raising taxes for those with more than \$400,000 of income by increasing the top rate to 39.6%. He would also eliminate the tax break for capital gains and dividends for those making over \$1 million. On the corporate side he would raise the tax rate from 21% to 28%. This is still below the 35% bracket that existed before the December 2017 tax act. Finally, he would roll back the estate tax rules to those that existed prior to the 2017 act, but this is set to happen in 2026 anyway.

Together these tax increases are expected to raise \$3.5 trillion dollars over the next ten years. Regardless of your views on these increases, tax increases are generally bad for the economy and the markets.

We expect a President Biden to be almost as tough on China as President Trump has been. His tone might be different, but he views China as a threat to the US both as a trading "partner" and for stealing our technology. The tariffs are likely going to stay in place for some time. His negotiations with the European Union will be much more conciliatory. Both developments should be a positive for our economy.

Expect significant investments into alternative energy sources, infrastructure, 5G everywhere, especially in rural areas, healthcare, an emphasis on made in America, and science and technology. Each of these areas will provide opportunity for investors, but clearly not without risk. There will be winners and losers.

The coming new year is the time to review your financial and investment plan. Take advantage of our one-hour complimentary appointment to help set the stage for the next four years.

V. Raymond Ferrara, CFP®, Chair and CEO
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The information herein is general and educational in nature and should not be considered legal or tax advice. Tax laws and regulations are complex and are subject to change.

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

HERE'S TO A HAPPY, HEALTHY AND COVID-SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON

By Karen Williams Seel, Pinellas County Commissioner

The holidays are here and I'm looking forward to some quiet time celebrating, but I'm also looking forward to 2021. As we all know, 2020 has been a year for the record books—and not the kind of records we want to ever set again. Between an active hurricane season, the pandemic and everything in between, we've been challenged to keep our spirits up and our bodies healthy.

Looking forward to 2021, there are many things we can do to make the new year a better one, especially concerning COVID-19. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the best way to prevent the illness is to avoid being exposed. I know how worried everyone is. We appreciate the thousands of e-mails and citizens calling in to our Zoom meetings. I've read every e-mail. We are all weary from COVID-19 and the constant drum of the associated health and safety rules, but they are worth repeating and keeping.

To stay safe from possibly contracting the virus, avoid being exposed by maintaining a 6-foot social distance from others, wash your hands with soap and water frequently, routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, and by cover your nose and mouth with a mask when around others.

We understand that masks are uncomfortable, but everyone should wear a mask in public settings and when around people who don't live with you. Wearing a mask is especially important when you can't use proper social distancing measures, or social distancing is difficult to maintain. The goal is to protect the people around you and our most vulnerable populations: the elderly and people who may be immune-compromised.

I also want to remind you about Pinellas CARES emergency

financial relief programs. Thousands of individuals and local business owners have already received emergency financial relief through the Pinellas CARES program, but even more help is now available. Individuals can get financial assistance for overdue rent, mortgage and utility bills for those who lost a job or significant income due to COVID-19.



The Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners approved expanded grant funding for Pinellas-based businesses most affected by the pandemic. In general, this includes businesses that were required to shut down or whose customers were required to shut down or stop doing business. Eligible business categories include food and beverage manufacturing, durable and nondurable goods wholesalers, retail businesses, transportation services, recreation and many more.

For more information about the Pinellas CARES programs and access to the application portals, visit <https://covid19.pinellascounty.org/pinellas-cares-financial-assistance>. To read County ordinances and state orders and access a wide array of up-to-date COVID-19 information, visit covid19.pinellascounty.org/.

I hope, if you need it, you will take advantage of these programs to get you back on your feet. I also hope you'll keep wearing your mask and thinking of others during this special time.

May your holidays be blessed with happiness, love and properly social-distanced celebrations with family and friends.

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[PalmPavilion.com/Offer2020](https://www.palmpavilion.com/Offer2020)

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Bar & Restaurant News

WE THE PEOPLE The newest pizza restaurant opened December 1st below the Hyatt Regency, on the beach side. Called "We The Pizza," owner Dimitri Sioutis also owns Gondolier Pizza.



This is the fourth store in a new franchise that began in 2010 on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC.

"We, The Pizza" is an Italian-American culinary experience featuring over 17 pies (full or by the slice), home-made sodas, hand-tossed wings and Italian gelato shakes. The menu also includes subs, salads, garlic knots, chicken wings, beer and wine.

"Our pizzas are all New York style," says Dimitri. "All our ingredients are fresh and mostly made right here in this store, including the soda syrup. We hope to hire up to 25 employees when this place gets rolling," adds Sioutis

The Clearwater Beach location is directly on BeachWalk, facing the beach. "We, The Pizza" is a beach lovers destination serving pizza by the slice, ice cold beer, fresh salads and the best wings in town with a boardwalk view.

"We offer delivery to this zip code by our employees. That includes Island Estates, Sand Key and Belleair Beach," adds Dimitri. They will also work with Uber Eats and Door Dash. Find them online at www.WeThePizza.com or call them, 437-4040.

GOOD STUFF EATERY Good Stuff is coming to Clearwater Beach and is also owned by Dimitri Sioutis at "We The Pizza." It will feature custom made hamburgers and milkshakes. They will have some seating but mostly take-out.

This new eatery is under construction on the back side of the Hyatt Regency, facing BeachWalk with plans for an open by Spring Break, 2021.

FRESH SEAFOOD DELIVERED TO YOUR HOME

Mark Rose entered the seafood wholesale business over 30 years ago with a couple of trucks, a little office, and a small processing plant. Over the years, with a lot of hard work, he achieved success



in providing quality seafood to his wholesale customers in the Tampa Bay area. Now, after the encouragement of many family, friends and clients, Mark with the help of his wife, Aileen and longtime friend, David Cornell, decided to expand into home delivery of his quality seafood products with his new Seafood Direct. They hope in these trying times, the convenience of ordering online and having quality seafood delivered right to your front door will allow you to feel more at ease, while enjoying delicious seafood that puts a smile on your face.

Visit www.seafooddirectflorida.com to place your order. Free delivery on orders over \$50.

WATER WISE

By Julie Hoofnagle

I love working in my garden. I find great peace working there and my focus has been on planting native plants and attracting pollinators. I became a Master Gardener in 2015 and have applied those skills to benefit the community as well. In a June Master Gardener UF/IFAS Pinellas County Update, I learned about the Community Water Wise Awards Program for 2020. I cleaned out my six rain barrels and started to water all my plants in my yard exclusively from the collected rain water. Having no grass in my yard it requires less water and very little pesticides and herbicides. Since June I have been looking at my water bill and I have reduced my water consumption by half from the year before.



The Community Water Wise Awards Program is sponsored by Tampa Bay Water and was created to recognize individuals and businesses committed to conserving water resources and protecting the environment by implementing the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ principles. The deadline to apply was August 31st. If you are interested in more information or applying for next year check out awards.tampabaywaterwise.org.

Everyone has a role to play in conserving our drinking water resources. To help our region conserve water, Tampa Bay Water is partnering with our member governments and the Southwest Florida Water Management District on Tampa Bay Water Wise, a regional water conservation program that offers rebates to residents, commercial property owners, contractors and builders who take proactive steps to reduce water use and demand on the region's water supply. The Tampa Bay Water Wise Regional Rebate Program is a year-round program. See if you can qualify for a rebate here: tampabaywater.org/Conservation/Tampa-Bay-Water-Wise.

PROPERLY DISPOSE OF COOKING FATS, OILS AND GREASE

Prevent unnecessary holiday headaches for everyone

Fats, oils and grease (FOG) from holiday cooking can cause clogs in household plumbing and public wastewater systems, so it is important to dispose of FOG properly: in the trash.

When FOG is poured down the drain it can cause clogs in household plumbing and public wastewater systems, resulting in expensive holiday call outs of plumbers for homeowners and expensive holiday call outs of utility crews for customers.

The best way to prevent these headaches year-round is to properly dispose of cooled fats, oils and grease by placing them in disposable containers and putting the containers in the trash. If you would like to recycle your FOG, they can visit www.pinellascounty.org/solidwaste/getridofit for information about disposal sites and other options.

Even the smallest amount of FOG builds up over time causing problems and can create wastewater back-ups into homes and sanitary sewer overflows in the community. Another tip to reduce the possibility of clogs is to scrape solid food waste from cooking with fats, oils and grease into the trash.

By taking the extra step of properly disposing of fats, oils and grease in the trash, you can have a happier holiday while protecting your home, their wallet and our environment.

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MOVING OUT-OF-STATE?

By Brooke Anderson

It's no secret: the local housing market is booming and homes are under contract in 7 days or less. Inventory is flying off the shelves faster than toilet paper during Covid! Our state welcomes 950 new inhabitants DAILY; many of whom are escaping high taxes and strict Covid protocols in the northeast.

What isn't being reported: this influx of north easterners has caused new trends among longtime local homeowners. Big Man's Moving Company explains, "Since Covid started, we have had a tremendous increase in out-of-state moves; locals moving to the mountains of North Carolina, Tennessee, northern Georgia, and South Carolina for less traffic and more space to social distance. The most popular destination is Asheville, NC," explains Josh Anderson, owner of Big Man's. "Homes in the mountains are selling just as quickly as homes here in Pinellas County."



You've found a home, now what? Big Man's Moving explains there are several options for interstate moving, and the options vary in terms of pricing, quality, and investment of "sweat equity."

The most affordable way to move is the "do it yourself" option—rent a truck, load/unload it yourself (or hire a mover), and drive the truck yourself.

PODS are another option. But, if more than one container is needed, the price adds up quickly.

"We acquire business from people who used van lines before, and don't want to use them again. Most semi companies give a 14-21 day delivery window, resulting in costly hotel stays (or sleeping on the floor). Also, semis move multiple homes simultaneously and don't necessarily deliver in the order the household belongings were picked up. This causes overhandling of furniture and breakage or lost items." Another consideration: many are brokers and contract the individual parts of your move to outside companies. For example, one company may load, another drive, and a third party unload (and there could even be another company involved if your items go to a warehouse in the interim)! Who is responsible if something gets damaged or lost?

The final option is hiring a family-owned business. Big Man's Moving Company, for example, has the same employees (covered by workers comp) load, drive, and unload. Moving is considered 1 of the top 5 most stressful life events, so familiar faces from start to finish is comforting. Big Man's uses one truck per household so items do not get lost or broken. They also provide an exact arrival time to load and unload. This option may be a little more costly, but it saves aggravation and headaches.

It is not uncommon for movers to claim they are licensed to move out-of-state, but truly they are not. How does a potential customer verify? Simply Google "FMCSA snapshot" and search the company's name. There should be a checkmark next to "interstate" and "authorized." Failure to hire a licensed interstate mover could result in the truck being stopped and the customer's items being stuck until a licensed mover can go claim them.

Big Man's Moving Company, a contributor to this article, was voted the #1 Mover in Tampa Bay for local, statewide, and out-of-state moving, 727-772-3458. Bigmansmoving.com

ADDRESSING HOMELESS FAMILIES' NEEDS IN 2021

Government contract ending impacts funding, but Hope Villages of America vows not to let the Grace House shelter close.

President and CEO Kirk Ray Smith of Hope Villages of America (HVA), formerly RCS Pinellas, announced today that the nonprofit is ramping up fundraising efforts in the community to address a potential funding gap caused by the end of significant government funding. "We believe housing is a right, not a privilege," said Smith. "To eradicate homelessness, it will take a Village."

After several years, the contract between the Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County (JWB) and HVA will end on February 28, 2021. The end of the contract leaves Grace House with a potential funding shortfall, which Smith hopes the community can help meet. "We're calling on individuals, groups, churches, business owners and corporations to join us in ensuring these vulnerable members of our community are protected and feel valued in these already unsettling days. We also want to say thank you to the City of Clearwater, City of Largo and City of St. Pete for their continued support of the Grace House."

Each year six Grace House staff and numerous volunteers serve homeless individuals and families with care and compassion. "Homeless families are one of the fastest-growing demographics we serve," Smith reported. "There are only 180 beds for homeless families in Pinellas County, which has a population of more than 1 million. Hope Villages provides nearly half of those beds, and Grace House offers dignified apartment-style emergency shelter to homeless families with children for up to three months. We touch more than 300 lives each year through Grace House—60 percent of whom are children.

"We certainly will not let the shelter close, pushing those families onto the streets—and neither will we lay off the Grace House case managers and other employees who serve them. All of these families need us now more than ever due to the pandemic."

Food, clothing and household goods are available to residents, and Grace House staff work one-on-one with families, providing case management, education, job readiness and helping guests save money to secure stable housing. When it comes to changing lives and ending homelessness, Grace House is a resounding success: "We are proud that 90 percent of families who complete the program move to stable housing."

"We're grateful for our longstanding and very positive relationship with JWB. We knew the contract was coming to an end, and we've been planning and working for this. Government funding, in our eyes, is always meant to get a program off the ground but not for long-term support—that's where we engage the community," Smith said. "In fact, we're pleased to announce that our longstanding community partner and major corporate donor Siracusa Staffing & Leasing have already committed significant financial support to meet this funding gap."

But that's just a small percent of the total annual Grace House operating budget of \$700,000. "We still urgently need our neighbors' help," concluded Smith.

Learn how you can support homeless families on their journey from Grace House to self-sufficiency at www.rcspinellas.org

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“LET’S EAT”

The Clearwater Historical Society Museum’s exhibit, “Let’s Eat” is a celebration of eating out in Clearwater. The exhibit highlights some favorite restaurants from the past and some that have made it through the changing times to the present. Chief Charley’s is one of the featured restaurants. The restaurant was on the north side of Gulf to Bay between Old Coachman Road and U.S.19, just about where Chick-fil-A is today.

Back in 1965 it was originally a Seven Steers franchise run by Charles Haag. Mr. Haag was an Army Veteran which is where he got his experience in food service. About 1970, the franchise closed and Charles decided he would start his own restaurant in the same location - Chief Charley’s - named for himself.

Chief Charley’s logo said, “Famous for Steaks” but could have said, “Famous for Salad Bar.” You may remember them for their steaks but the salad bar was a treat as well. They had everything you could imagine, including items you don’t hear much of today like pickled herring and pickled watermelon. If it’s the cocktails you remember, then you can’t forget the little plastic steer on the edge of the glass.

Imagine prices like \$4.50 for shrimp and steak or better yet a porterhouse for \$6.95. Add the salad bar for less than a dollar more. What a great deal. It was the place to go for a date or anniversary. Families would wait in line to celebrate any occasion.

Some may remember their first job bussing tables or working as a hostess or a dishwasher there. Many people have fond memories of this great place to work and an even better place to eat.



Seven Steers Restaurant



Other highlighted restaurants include:

- Bob Heilman’s Beachcomber
- Capogna’s Dugout
- The Original Frenchy’s
- Hooter’s
- Kapok Tree
- Lenny’s
- The Pelican
- Palm Pavilion
- Siple’s Garden Seat
- Tio Pepe’s
- Young’s Pit Bar-B-Que

Come join the Clearwater Historical Society for “Let’s Eat”. At this time the museum is open by appointment only. Please email clearwaterhistoricalsociety@gmail.com or call 727-754-8019 to schedule your visit.

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MILLIE WARD, FOUNDER OF WARD'S SEAFOOD DIES

We interviewed Millie Ward in June of 2016. Below is part of the interview.

Since 1955, Ward's Seafood has supplied the area with locally caught fresh seafood. Few people remember the folks who started it, Johnie and Millie Ward.

Johnie Ward grew up in Clearwater in a fishing family. His three brothers and later his son were all fishermen.

Early on, most people caught mullet. At certain times of year, thousands of mullet would school around Clearwater Harbor and Sand Key. Fishermen used gill nets to round them up and pull them into their specially designed boats. The boat's engines were in the middle of the boats so as not to interfere with the nets in the back. Johnie would catch a boatload and sell them—usually to the Anderson brothers, who owned two area fish markets.

In 1954, Johnie met Millie. He was a young guy in his 30s; Millie in her 20 had recently moved to Clearwater from Indiana. She liked his dark tanned look, and he liked the way she smiled. Johnie loved to fish. Millie soon loved to fish, too. They got married in 1954.

At first, they sold the fish Johnie caught out of ice chests and buckets in front of their home. In 1955, after they built a house on the southwest corner of MLK South and Belleair Road, they decided to start a proper fish market like the Andersons. In 1956, Johnie added a 20'x20' building just to the north of their house and called it Ward's Seafood Market. Johnie and Millie ran the small fish house seven days a week.

"We sold fish - both retail and wholesale," remembered Millie Ward. "Johnie fished all day and sold the fish at the store. We got seafood from other area fishermen, too. I would help filet, display, and sell the fish, crabs, scallops and other seafood. Johnie used his truck to deliver seafood to area restaurants and bait shops. In the early days, we even supplied Publix."

"We delivered to so many restaurants that no longer exist today," Millie recalled. "I remember selling to Leon's, The Pelican, Fisherman's Wharf, The Garden Seat, The Palm Garden, Morrison's, and even the Safety Harbor Resort."

Word quickly spread that the Wards had the "freshest fish in town" and their business just got bigger and bigger. They made five additions to the initial building, but only had the one location. "We had all we could do," said Millie, "between fishing, delivering, and selling, we could not even think of expanding."

The Wards had ten employees-three were girls. Millie paid the bills, the employees, suppliers and billed the customers. "We owned a few trucks and kept them busy every day."

They sold grouper, snapper, mackerel, and of course mullet. "Mullet was very popular in those days - especially smoked mullet," Millie said. "We sold a lot of smoked fish - Johnie was a great smoker," Millie added. "We also sold shrimp, crabs and lobster, flown in from Maine."

In 1975, after 20 years, the Wards sold their business to Wayne Widmark, who sold it to present owners Rob and Michelle Cameron in 1990.

"Johnie kept on fishing, because that is what he did," Millie said with a smile. "I used to go fishing with him a lot. I loved fishing almost as much as he did."

Johnie died in 2007. Millie, 88, died on Thanksgiving Day.



Happy Holidays!
Wishing you and your family a happy & healthy New Year

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SAND KEY REALTY

Community News...

CLEARWATER YACHT CLUB

Chartered in 1911, CYC is a private Club and for those members that prefer eating outdoors, they added a large outdoor tent on the Tiki Deck providing additional sun protection. In addition, they have now added Friday evening live music for members on the Tiki Deck and on Sunday afternoon. Their Sunday breakfast is back. Following guidelines, they will bring it to you instead of serving yourself at the brunch table. Come out for a scheduled tour or call for more information 447-6000. Learn more at ClearwaterYachtClub.org, or e-mail Office@ClearwaterYachtClub.org.

SAND KEY CIVIC ASSOCIATION

The Sand Key Civic Association is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life on Sand Key. Founded in 1991, current membership includes eighteen condo associations and nine businesses researching issues, distributing information and representing the views of residents at city, county and state levels. Our association participates in The Barrier Island Government Council and The Florida Shore and Beach Preservation Association and also holds a corporate membership with the Clearwater Community Sailing Center.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the board continues to meet via "Zoom" video conferencing; however, interested members may now also attend as observers. Look for a registration link in the e-mail announcing each month's agenda, or obtain the link at sandkeycivicassociation.org. Contact the secretary at skcainc@aol.com, with questions.

The Association continues to seek volunteers for two Board vacancies that must be filled in January, 2021. Any resident of a member condominium association is eligible. To apply, visit our web site or contact the association secretary directly.

BELLEAIR WOMEN'S REPUBLICAN CLUB

The New Year's first monthly meeting will be held on Friday, January 8, 2021, from 11:30-2 pm at Belleair Country Club, One Country Club Lane, Belleair, FL 33756. The speaker will be Pinellas County Board of Commissioners member Kathleen Peters, who represents District 6. Commissioner Peters is also a former member of the Florida House of Representatives.

For the meetings, no walk-ins will be permitted. A check payable to BWRC confirms a reservation and should be sent to arrive one week in advance. Mail checks to: Linda Wade, 729 Creekside Lane, Palm Harbor, FL 34683.

Attendees must practice social distancing and observe all CDC-recommended practices, including wearing masks when not seated, to keep everyone safe and healthy.

CLEARWATER BEACH LIBRARY & RECREATION

Pool is closed for the season and will re-open in March.

Pickleball - Mon.,Wed., Fri., 8 am to noon. Free

Beginner Pickleball Lessons with Dan, \$15 per half hour or \$25 per hour. Call Dan at 462-6138 to schedule.

Tai Chi - Coming soon!

Cardio BEST - Mon., 9:15 a.m.

Private Tennis Lessons with Rich. Basic tennis instruction includes singles and doubles play. \$50/hour private lesson. \$25/hour semi-private lesson, call 462-6138 to schedule.

Yoga - Tue. & Thu., 9:15 a.m.

Personal Training with Kim, 45 minutes sessions 462-6138.

THE BELLEAIR LADIES LUNCHEON CLUB

The January 12th luncheon is scheduled for Bon Appetit Restaurant and hopefully, more members will be allowed to attend. Only 40 were allowed at the December meeting.

Their charitable project for the 2020-2021 season is Clothes for Kids, a nonprofit established in 2002, whose purpose is to provide a cheerful environment where families and children can shop with dignity and respect and receive school clothing free of charge. Members are requested to send donation checks to Treasurer, Deborah Hendricks, if they cannot attend the luncheon. Contact her at 737-453-2193, for further information about the Club.

GFWC CLEARWATER COMMUNITY WOMAN'S CLUB

They are accepting applications for Daisy Grants of up to \$2000 to be awarded May 20, 2021 at the Daisy Grants and 50th Anniversary Celebration Luncheon at Sheraton Sand Key. The event will feature award winning author, Ashley Rhodes-Courter, a DJ, and more.

The \$2000 grants are awarded annually to local worthy charities who have a presence in Pinellas County and prove a specific need for the funds.

Grant applications, guidelines and rules are on their Web site. Applications must be postmarked no later than January 30, 2021 and received no later than February 4, 2021.

The 2020 Grants were awarded to The College Fund of Pinellas County, Inc.; Eckerd Youth Alternatives, Inc. dba Eckerd Connects; Starting Right, Now; and Voices of Hope for Aphasia. Due to the pandemic, rather than awarding the grants in person, the grant checks were mailed to the charities.

The GFWC Clearwater Community Woman's Club is a non-profit organization, whose members live the volunteer spirit. It is a member club of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), one of the world's largest and oldest volunteer service organizations. For information, visit GFWCClearwatercommunitywomansclub.org, or on Facebook: GFWC Clearwater Community Woman's Club, or E-mail MoreCCWCinfo@gmail.com.

WELCOME NEWCOMER CLUB

They will not be meeting in December or January. Various groups with the club are meeting but not the entire membership. Dues paid for this year will be extended through June 2021.

DOWNTOWN CLEARWATER HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA

Downtown Clearwater will celebrate the holiday season with the third annual Holiday Extravaganza, happening through Dec. 23. Experience outdoor movies, virtual events, crafting activities, music, family fun, decorations and much more during this festive celebration. Downtown Clearwater will be transformed into a holiday destination with colorful lights, festive decorations, music and activities.

This year's celebrations will look a little different, as the city of Clearwater will follow new requirements and policies due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including, but not limited to, requiring event attendees to wear masks and adhere to safe distancing. Events bringing holiday cheer downtown will be held as federal, state and local regulations permit.

Park for free all day on weekends and after 6 p.m. on weekdays at city parking garages and on-street parking. For parking information, visit myclearwater.com/parking, or call 727-562-4704 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. For the full calendar of events and more information visit, www.downtownclearwater.com/holiday-extravaganza.

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RISE AGAINST HUNGER FUND RAISER

Every year, Chapel by the Sea partners with the good people at Rise Against Hunger to assemble meals for communities in need of food assistance. This year, the coordinators were afraid that this very popular (and typically crowded) fundraiser wasn't going to be able to happen. But just because we're in a pandemic doesn't mean the need for assistance goes away, so the determined team got to work reinventing this event.

What they came up with and what they were able to achieve was nothing short of incredible. In past years, the meals were put together in an assembly line type fashion by a hundred people or more. This year, they organized two groups of thirteen volunteers, all of whom had to be socially distant, wear gloves, masks, and hairnets. These small teams were each able to produce five thousand meals, with a grand total of ten thousand between the two, in a matter of ninety minutes! \$3,500 was also raised to pay for transport and raw materials. The meals will be added to a shipping container holding 285,000 meals in total headed to a Country or location in the U.S. that is in need. The destination is yet, unknown.

2020 has been a long year of challenges and problems to solve but The Chapel by the Sea and Rise Against Hunger teams were able to keep the momentum going by their determination, ingenuity, and desire to make a difference.

FRANCIS WILSON PLAYHOUSE

The theatre seats may be empty, but the lights are still on. Anxious Actors & Production Crews are at the ready.

Once the situation permits the ever popular historical & charming Francis Wilson Playhouse is optimistically enthusiastic about the joy its 91st Broadway Season lineup will bring.

So for now, to satisfy your present angst for Musical enjoyment, FWP is currently offering FREE Online virtual concerts. Check out them out on their website: FrancisWilsonPlayhouse.Org.

WE CARE FUND

A sudden illness, loss of a job or other difficulties can cause financial setbacks – especially for folks just trying to make ends meet. Each day Clearwater's Utility Customer Service employees meet residents who have encountered hardships that make paying for basic utilities a challenge. That's where the Clearwater Utilities We Care Fund comes in.

Since 1992, Clearwater and its utility customers have helped hundreds of neighbors by contributing to the We Care Fund. Contributions are administered by the local branch of the Salvation Army to provide temporary assistance to eligible city utility customers.

Consider contributing to your community through the We Care Fund. To give a gift, fill out the We Care Fund insert with your utility bill and return with your payment.

DALÍ FEATURES VAN GOGH ALIVE November 21, 2020- April 11, 2021

Experience Vincent van Gogh's works in an immersive art installation that opens a new window into the celebrated painter's artistic genius. From his famous "Starry Night" to his radiant "Sunflowers," Van Gogh's vibrant work invites viewers to revel in color, light and sound. Visitors will feel the sensation of walking right into Van Gogh's paintings – an experience that is both educational and inspiring. The exhibition features more than 3,000 Van Gogh images at enormous scale, viewed through high-definition projectors and synchronized to a powerful classical score.

Advanced timed-tickets are required for ALL visitors. This exhibit is included in the price of a General Admission ticket.

30 YEARS OF THE PINELLAS TRAIL

Before there was a Pinellas Trail, walkers, runners, bikers, and skaters took their chances on our streets. It took the death of a young man on the Belleair Causeway to create the Pinellas Trail.

In 1983, Indian Rocks residents Bert and Patti Valery's son, Albert Valery Jr. was hit and killed on the bridge while bicycling coming home from his part-time job. The accident led his parents to create the Bicycle Advisory Committee and to lobby the Metropolitan Planning Organization for safer roads and pathways.

It took five years of relentless petitioning and campaigning, visiting and presenting to dozens of local municipalities, and twisting the arms of politicians and county department heads before the concept of a linear park, a recreational trail, a green ribbon running through the county—took form. In the late 1980s, it was suggested that it be paid for by Penny For Pinellas and The Pinellas Trail was born.

On December 1, 1990, the first five miles of the trail opened at Taylor Park in Largo (at 8th Avenue) and stretched south to Seminole City Park. It would eventually become today's 54 miles of connected roadway, reserved exclusively walkers, bicyclists, and skaters.

In 2003, the Pinellas Trail was designated as part of a National Recreational Trail within the National Trails System by the United States Department of the Interior and the National Parks Service and has twice received the "Best Trail of Florida" award from the State Office of Greenways and Trails.

Although the original trail was started with money from Penny For Pinellas, County, State and Federal agencies have invested more than \$63 million in expanding and improving the trail over the past 30 years. In 2022, when the San Martin Bridge/Trail is finished, connecting Roosevelt Blvd and 4th Street, the full loop will be complete.

In the last five years, there have been many improvements including:

1. Pedestrian bridge over Orange Street and Alt US 19
2. Tri County trail connection – trail spur completion of Pinellas County gap to Coast to Coast Trail
3. Clearwater Trail connection at Druid
4. Pedestrian bridge replacement over Alligator Creek at Northeast Coachman Park
5. NE Coachman Rd trail completion
6. Trail completion between US 19 pedestrian overpass to Sunset Point Rd
7. Trail completion between Sunset Point Rd and NE Coachman Rd
8. Trail completion along Belleair Rd and US 19 to Haines Bayshore
9. Reconstruction in Tarpon Springs near Live Oak St
10. Trail resurfacing in Dunedin and Ozona
11. Construction beginning for North Loop Gap between Enterprise Rd and John Chesnut Park. When done, this 6.8 miles will complete the northern gap.
12. Trail completion along Roosevelt Blvd
13. Installation of drinking fountains and benches

In the beginning, only three other places had any form of a community trail. Today, over 1,000 cities have them. Almost all have asked Pinellas County for input or visited to see our now famous Pinellas Trail.

Get more information about the trail and see a map of it at www.PinellasTrails.org.

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WORKING THE POLLS IN THE 2020 ELECTION

By Bob Griffin, Publisher

On November 3rd, I did something I had never done before - I volunteered to be an Election Day poll worker. I really didn't know what I was getting into, but with so many prior workers "sitting this one out" due to COVID-19, I wanted to help.

First of all - not all the people you see at your polling place are volunteers. I got paid. I was assigned to be an "Assistant Clerk," which is basically middle management.

Training was required. I attended a 5-hour class two weeks before the election to learn the procedures and how to operate the polling equipment. Prior to the class, I was instructed to watch a series of online training videos.

The main piece of equipment is called an "EVID" (Electronic Voter Identification Device). When you vote in person, it scans your driver's license. The title of the person operating it is called an "Inspector."

The process is straightforward--when your license is scanned, the EVID tells the poll worker if you are in the system (database) and at the correct precinct. Once that checks out, voters are directed to the person issuing ballots. Ballot in hand, voters then move to a nearby privacy booth to vote.

Once completed, the voter then feeds his/her ballot into the scanner themselves. If fed successfully, the scanner announces "You Voted" and you then get an "I Voted" peel-off sticker.

At my assigned location, the entire process took anywhere from 5-15 minutes per person - it depending on the voter's readiness and ability to read.

After working 12 hours (7am - 7pm), our precinct had 606 actual in-person voters. That translates to about 50 people per hour. We had a rush from 7:30am to 9am, and another one again in the afternoon from 4-6pm. A very few people voted from 6 to 7pm. Our line never went outside the building as it did at other precincts.

Part of our group - four of us - reported to the polling place the day before to setup the equipment and make sure everything was working. That took us about two hours. As we left, we were instructed to be on site by 5:15 am the next day, Election Day, as we had to be ready for the first voter at 7 am. Two people called 'deputies' controlled the lines, inside and out.

A team of twelve people were assigned to our polling place. There were two EVID operators, a ballot issuer, a machine manager who oversaw the two

scanners, myself (Assistant Clerk) and the Clerk (Site Manager).

A regional manager from the Office of Elections was on site 50 percent of the time. Two "Poll Watchers" from the two primary parties were also present to observe and keep an eye on things.

I helped check people in with the EVIDs and processed people that had a problem. We only turned people away if they were not registered in Pinellas County or were at the wrong polling site.

Of the 606 successful voters, less than a dozen were turned away.

I was amazed to see how many people either had the wrong address on their driver's license or had not notified the Supervisor of Elections office that they had moved. In most cases, if they had a valid photo-ID, we updated them in the database and let them vote. However, if they had moved, they were sent to their new polling place to vote and the EVID provided the address and directions to the new site. Most people understood and were grateful for the help. A few, however, were frustrated and stormed out.

I personally assisted four people needing special help. One was an elderly person that brought a relative to assist them. Another only spoke Vietnamese and needed a the help of a translator via phone.

Throughout the day, all our information was sent to headquarters, the Supervisor of Elections office - electronically. Thus, our results are basically known within minutes of the polls closing.

At 7pm we had no line and closed the doors. At 7:01, we started to break down the equipment and the tables. All the electronic equipment, EVIDs and scanners produce back-up tapes to record all the day's activity. That is used as reference in the event there is a problem calculating the vote.

We were packed up and out of there by 8pm - the end of a 15-hour day. It was interesting, that before we left the building, our precinct's results were being broadcast on television and available on the Internet.

As I said - I was paid. I received \$210 for my service. Considering my three days of service, that translates to about \$10 per hour. Some of my fellow workers were employed by local governments, which encourages participation (three were from the City of Largo). They received time off with pay from their jobs while they worked at the poll.

All in all, I was impressed by the checks and balances put in place. I saw virtually



no way for the wrong person to vote or to vote "twice."

Keeping the voter database current is a shared responsibility between the voter and the Board of Elections. If a registered voter moves without notice or does not vote for many years, they may not be in the County's database. That is why it is important to keep voter registrations updated so that voting in the proper precinct is possible.

I was also impressed with the attention to the health and safety of the staff and the voters. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were issued face shields and masks. There was hand sanitizer everywhere. Voters used a disposable Q-Tip-like swab to electronically sign, which was then thrown away.

For me, working the polls was a good experience, thanks to my great team.

If you would like to learn more or volunteer for the next election, visit www.VotePinellas.com and click on the link on the Front Page "Become an Election Worker" or send an email to PollWorker@VotePinellas.com.

NOTE:

Pinellas had 166 polling places serving 301 precincts. (Some were combined.)

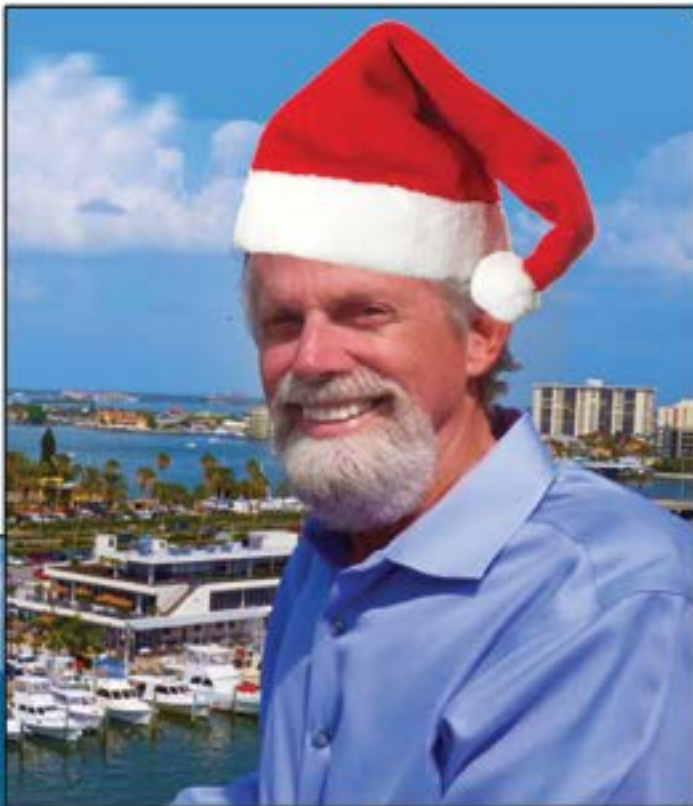
Nearly 80% of registered voters voted in advance—in person, by mail or other means. That means only 20% voted at their precinct on election day.

According to VotePinellas.com, of 716,747 registered voters, 563,804 people voted in the November 2020 election. That is a 79% turnout.

Of Pinellas County's 563,804 voters, 49.2% voted for President Trump and 49.4% voted for Vice President Biden. While Biden had 1,241 more Pinellas County votes, President Trump won the statewide count.



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IS 2021 THE YEAR TO CREATE OR UPDATE YOUR ESTATE PLAN?

If you've experienced:

- A marriage or divorce
- The birth of a child or grandchild
- A move out of state
- A change in your financial situation

Then 2021 might be the perfect time to update your estate planning.

This is a wonderful time of year, especially when so many of us will be spending it with friends and family even if the way we spend our holidays together may look a little different this year. With our loved ones around us and as we look forward to the coming year, thoughts of helping those closest to us are more prevalent than ever. If you worry about caring for a family member with special needs, or easing the financial burden of higher education for children or grandchildren, then 2021 is the year to update your current estate plan or even to create one for the first time.

Whether you're looking to enjoy retirement on the beach or welcoming a new member into the family, there's nothing more vital than making sure your wishes are clear. If you have a will that's over ten years old or from another state, your estate planning documents could be outdated and in need of change. Marriages, divorces, and even grandchildren can impact your estate planning and leave room for uncertainty and division in your estate.

Our firm has seen a number of cases where outdated or inaccurate wills only serve to draw out the probate process, which could mean undue stress and possibly even significant additional expenses for your estate and family. In this modern world, your family might be a mixed one with children from both previous and current marriages, wouldn't you like to be sure that your assets go exactly where you want them?

Call Castagna Law Firm to arrange a complimentary half-hour estate plan review, where an attorney will look at your documents with you. We offer both in-person and virtual meetings as our client's health and safety are always our number one priority. Whether you're updating an old Will or drafting one for the first time, our legal team will guide you through the process every step of the way. Edward Castagna Jr. Esquire is a former estate and gift tax attorney with the IRS with 20 years of experience as assistant general counsel for Shriners Hospital. There are many estate planning tools available to you such as a Living Trust or Special Needs Trust. Let us explain how these tools may be used to carry out your intentions.

Find Castagna Law Firm, P.A., at 611 Druid Road E, Suite 717 Clearwater, FL 33756 | 727-446-6699 or online at castagnalegalteam.com.

BELLA VINO CELEBRATES 15 YEARS

As of December 22nd, Brian and Cheryl Franzese will have been providing wine in Belleair Bluffs for 15 years.

Brian is from Hollywood, Florida. When he was young, his family moved to Pinellas County, where he attended school. That is where he first met Cheryl. 15 years later, Cheryl and Brian reconnected at a wedding in Weeki Wachi. 24 years later, Brian and Cheryl have 3 children and 2 grandchildren.

For almost 20 years, Brian worked for a major wine distributor, managing its fine wine division from Naples to Tampa. Cheryl sold her technology business and became a Realtor - now with 17 years experience. In 2005, Brian and Cheryl decided to venture out and start their own business, putting their passion for wine to work. They quickly decided Belleair Bluffs' Plaza 100 was the location with the best demographics. They also liked being next door to E & E Stakeout Grill; as a bonus it is also close to home.

"We gutted the place back to the bare walls," Brian recalls. "We replaced the drywall, floors, ceiling, electrical wiring and lighting, plus we added custom Napa wood wine shelving and a temperature controlled cellar."

The wine business, unlike others, is filled with an interest for knowledge and taste from new wine lovers to connoisseurs.

"We started Bella Vino from grass-roots. We did not buy an existing wine business," Brian continues. "Because we did not have an ready-made customer base we had to quickly learn the needs of the local wine community. We are thankful that our local residents discovered us and seemed to like us."

"Up front, we originally had a small service area for wine sampling and to sell a little bit of cheese. We also sold gelato and espresso drinks," Brian says.

"About ten years ago, we redesigned our upfront area to expand the wine bar, add seating, more cheese display space, and enlarged our gourmet food & cigar selections."

Bella Vino has something for everyone. "We have wine selections from one end of the price range to the other.

We have a wide variety of cheeses. You can sit at our bar and enjoy any wine, with cheese or a charcuterie plate."

"We see well over 1,000 customers a month and most are repeat customers. You can not imagine how many cases our little store goes through - several hundred - per week! "We sell a lot of wine online, too. We ship to nearly 40 states."

We typically have many special events, such as Wine Tastings and Wine Dinners, but due to the pandemic, we've had none since February. We hope to resume them soon, depending on the conditions. We were forced to postponed our 2020 Annual Tiny Bubbles & Big Reds event, which is one of the largest and best wine tasting events in Pinellas County. When we bring it back, it will be better than ever!

Bella Vino Wine Market is located in The Plaza at 100 N. Indian Rocks Road, next to E&E Stakeout. Find them online at BellaVinoWineMarket.com or call Brian at 584-5552.



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JANNA'S CONSIGNMENT BOUTIQUE - HOW DO THEY DO THAT?

By Bob Griffin, Publisher

Janna's Consignment Boutique is not anything like a thrift store at all. It is truly a boutique shopping experience.

What is the difference between a thrift store and a consignment shop? Thrift stores accept donated items that are subject to less scrutiny. You may find treasures, but the stores are usually overloaded and disorderly, making shopping overwhelming. Consignment shops handpick their items. Each gently used item undergoes a complete inspection for damage or missing items. If it is not perfect, it will not be accepted.

Consignment stores have been around since the 19th Century and are a popular way of buying current fashions at a discounted price.

We visited with Lisa Hammock, owner of Janna's Fine Consigner in Belleair Bluffs to find out how a consignment shop actually works and what makes it a boutique.

Her store, Janna's has been open in Belleair Bluffs for 27 years, and Lisa has owned it for the past three. It is not the only clothing consignment shop in the area, but it is definitely the most upscale. The store only handles fine women's fashions - and the clothing and accessories must be in near perfect condition. It offers a great opportunity to buy designer brands at affordable prices.

"We are a small boutique consignment shop selling fashionable clothes," says Lisa. We consign an average of 1,200



**Owner of Janna's Fine Consigner
Lisa Hammock**



items per month with about 1,800 'active' consigners on record. Most of our consigners (vendors) are also our best shoppers."

Janna's carries a full line of accessories, too, such as handbags, jewelry, sunglasses, and miscellaneous women's accessories.

"Many of the products we get have never even been worn or used," says Lisa about her inventory.

Products come to her from people in the area—some from as far away as Tampa. "When the snowbirds arrive, we get a lot of their things. Then, they shop here too. During the pandemic, many people have used their time at home to clean out their closets.

People have discovered it is a great way to keep your closet under control and to make a little extra money to buy more. From the formal dress you only wore once to those must-have shoes that are unbearably uncomfortable, you have the makings of your first sale.

So, how does it all work?

Putting your clothes on consignment at Janna's means you are allowing Lisa to sell your items for you, and you will be paid a percentage of the profit. That percentage is determined up front.

The first step is to make an appointment. They do not accept walk in consignments. It is time consuming and they need the proper number of staff available. They accept clothing and other items on Monday through Thursdays only. "It takes time," Lisa adds. "We go over all the items in detail checking for missing buttons, stains, tears and remove all pins."

The clothing MUST come on a hanger and be laundered, wrinkle free. It has to

be in excellent condition, or Lisa will not accept it. You are limited to 15 items per appointment. Accepted clothes needs to correspond to the upcoming season or selling period, meaning the store does not carry winter clothing in the summer. It must also be of current styles.

The store's seasons are just like the big box stores - Winter: September 15 through January 1st, Spring/ Summer: January 15 through July, and Fall: August 1 through September 15th.

Shoes and handbags must be scuff free, dusted, and removed from their boxes.

Jewelry cannot be broken or have any missing stones. Sterling must be polished.

Janna's prices the items accordingly and they are dated upon check-in. If it does not sell in 30 days, the price is lowered. After 60 days, it is offered back to the owner. If the owner does not want it back, Janna's donates the item to nearby charities, primarily Suncoast Hospice.

"Janna's Consignment and Lisa have been great to us," says Joan Spies with Suncoast Hospice. "Whatever she does not sell, she gives to us and those items are always top quality. We sell those recycled items in our shops and the money is used in the community at Hospice. Lisa is a wonderful person, and it is great that she thinks of the community as well as her own business."

"It is important to point out that we get new inventory daily," says Lisa. "If you don't see something that you want this week—come back next week."

Janna's is in Belleair Bluffs at 268 Indian Rocks Road North, next to Robert Young Jewelers. Call Lisa at 584-9222 for an appointment.

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Business Briefs



COASTAL AIRE DESIGN OPENS

Jenni Martin and Chelsea Allison are bringing their vision of a beautifully curated furniture and home décor store to Antique Alley.

Coastal Aire Design will offer uniquely local home furnishings and design essentials for your home. They will be joined by the Potted Pair florist to continue the traditions of the space.

Jenni is the owner of Marcotte’s Design in Largo, a store known for coastal decor and custom-built furniture for the past eight years. Chelsea joined the Marcotte’s team in May just as the mandatory shut down was lifted. Her background started in art and evolved into business ownership in the Clearwater area. It wasn’t long after Chelsea joined the Marcotte’s team that the opportunity for the two to start a new store came about, “the location spoke to us, we knew we had to carry on something special in this space.” Both are thrilled to be a part of Belleair Bluffs and the Belleair community.

Opened in the building where Petals and Vine used to be, they hope to become a fast favorite for area. Find them at 596 Indian Rocks Road North. Call 286-8686.

AAA TRAVEL IN THE PLAZA CLOSING AAA closed their Belleair Bluffs location December 4th. They still have other Pinellas County locations including Clearwater, Seminole and Countryside. The owner of the Plaza are hoping to replace AAA with a restaurant.

ATTENTION TO DETAILS

Mat Vasilenko, owner of MJ Detailing & Cleaning, specializes in detailing boats. He first decided to start his business after his family had a bad experience with a detailing company in Sarasota that provided unacceptable work using poor quality products for an inflated price.

Since the beginning, his current customers are thrilled with his pro-customer, high quality work. He has quite a few high-end yachts that he services and not only does he provide topside detailing and teak restoration, he will also clean and paint your engines.

While he admits his high-quality work is a little bit more expensive, the superiority of his efforts and top of the line products shows; his customers would not change a thing. While he specializes in boats, he also does cars and campers. You can reach Mat at 941-241-7687 or e-mail him at mjdcllc8@gmail.com. He also is on Facebook at MJ Detailing Cleaning.



YOLAND LOREN OPENS IN THE PLAZA

Yoland Loren, a ladies’ boutique in The Plaza, Belleair Bluffs, opened in November. The store is named after its owner Yoland who is from France and was a FIT/Parsons student. She also was a personal stylist for many years.

“What makes Yoland’s special is our experience,” Yoland says. “Women come to my store not just for clothes, but for our personal styling.” She has a variety of styles from casual every day chic to evening attire that caters to any event. “I can also fit any body type,” she adds. The holidays are a good time to discover this store. Find her in The Plaza, next to Bella Vino Wines and E&E.

HER SCAN This new Breast Screening Ultrasound business opened in Belleair Bluffs in November.

Ultrasound screenings are capable of detecting cancers that cannot be found by mammography and physical exams alone. HER SCAN will hold testing events in the area for women and takes merely 15 minutes. Visit www.HerScan.com for an event.

Find HER SCAN at 404 Indian Rocks Road.

HORSEBACK RIDING IN FLORIDA In The Breeze Ranch is a large, operating horse ranch that has been in business since the 1970s. They specialize in horseback riding but also anything horses - ranch style parties, hayrides, bonfires, lessons, leasing, equine sales, boarding and horsemanship camp for children. They are open 7 days a week and would love to show you & your family how to really have some ranch style fun

Located just 5 miles North of the Tampa International Airport, In The Breeze offers horseback riding would like you to come saddle up with them and let their Professional Trail Guides show you what it’s like to experience a true adventure on horseback.

Their horses are exceptionally trained, well-mannered and experienced in navigating the trails that are breathtakingly beautiful. Visit www.inthebreezeranch.com or call (813)264-1919 for more information.

CHRISTMAS DISPLAY

This year, Clearwater Paddleboard’s Christmas display is a 1959 MG convertible pulling Santa and his helper Bonita the elf through the front wall of the shop with reindeer inside and out. They had fun designing the display and hope you enjoy it too.

They have a large selection of local crafted products including candles, canned goods, clothing, surfboards from theFoil surfboard Co., and locally made skateboards from Tim at Phoenix skateboard company. Stop in to see Santa and their Christmas ideas at 439 Poinsettia Avenue, Clearwater Beach, or call 727-444-0441





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WHAT DO WE NEED?

- Kids clothes (Sizes 4 - 16)
- Adult size clothes (think pre-teens & teens)
 - Young women - sizes 0 to 22
 - Young men - sizes 18 to 46
- New underwear and socks
- Shoes Children's size 9 to adult
- Bras, belts, purses, hats, jewelry, backpacks

WHAT DO WE ESPECIALLY LOVE?

- Shoes
- Girls clothes
 - tops - sizes 5 to XL
 - bottoms - sizes 6 to 16
- Boys clothes
 - tops - size 5 to XL
 - bottoms - size 6 to 16
- Young women's pants - size 13 to 22
- Young men's clothes
 - tops - size 5 to XL
 - bottoms - size 18 to 46

WHAT WE DO NOT NEED ...

- Used underwear and socks
- Athletic uniforms or equipment
- Toys or books
- Used pajamas or swimsuits
- Excessively worn clothing
- Baby/toddler clothing
- Hangers

WHERE TO BRING?

Clearwater Store 1038 N Hercules Ave Clearwater, FL 32765 727-441-9282	St. Pete Store 2368 34th Street, S St. Pete, FL 32765 727-441-9282	Tampa Store 301-H W Hillsborough Ave Tampa, FL 33634 813-619-8420
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Enrollment applications are now available for the 2021 Sunstar FirstCare Membership. The membership plan provides financial help for individual patients or families on out-of-pocket expenses for ambulance transportation.

The estimated average cost of a single ambulance transport is \$780. Annual membership fees for the Sunstar FirstCare Ambulance Membership plan are \$75 for a single membership and \$114 for a family membership. Savings for a single membership, including the initial cost of the plan, range between \$81 and \$705 for the first transport, depending on individual insurance coverage and co-pay schedules. Additional ambulance transports during the coverage period receive additional savings.

The family membership covers individuals who reside in the same household related by blood, adoption, marriage, or registered domestic partnership.

The Sunstar FirstCare Ambulance Membership is not an insurance plan. It is a Pinellas County Government program that works with an individual's insurance company to minimize out-of-pocket ambulance expenses.

Individuals should enroll as soon as possible to receive additional coverage. New enrollees, paid in full prior to March 31, 2021, will receive more than 12 months of coverage for the cost of the one-year plan. For more information and detailed plan coverage, call 727-582-2008 or visit www.pinellascounty.org/firstcare.

ST PETE COLLEGE FOOD PACKAGES

The Pinellas community has experienced many economic setbacks in the past year, given the number of jobs lost in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the holidays approaching, money woes are even more exacerbated, and many may find themselves wondering how they will feed and provide for their families. In response, St. Petersburg College has partnered with Hope Villages of America, formerly RCS Pinellas, to offer food packages for SPC students, staff and the surrounding community

Funded by the Pinellas Cares grant, the program provided food for SPC's participating campus provosts, Student Life and Leadership teams and volunteers to work together to create packages that include non-perishable items including canned fruits, vegetables and meats, along with pasta and sauce. The boxes will also contain community resource flyers, including information for mental health care.

Each of the eight campuses chosen for distribution will have 150 boxes of food for pickup. According to Misty Kemp, SPC's Executive Director of Retention Services, anyone can sign up for a box, whether it be for themselves or someone else, though distribution is limited to one box per household



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