

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

www.beachnewsletters.com

Magazine

THE BELLEAIR BEE'S BEGINNINGS



Their office in the Belleair Bazaar shopping center



The Bee's Founder, Myra Chandler

By Wayne Ayers

A major voice for community news began in a little one room office in Belleair Bluffs over 40 years ago. That's where founder Myra Chandler fulfilled her dream of opening a weekly newspaper to serve the Belleair communities, along with co-founders Bob and Wilsie Carr.

The production facilities were a typewriter, telephone and a notepad.

In a 2005 interview with the Bee, Chandler said her original concept for the Belleair Bee was simply "fun." She said, "We were all very altruistic at the time. We just wanted to do it."

- Continued on page 7



Caladesi Island Nature Center

The Caladesi Discovery Center is expected to be completed in the next few months.

- page 3

Also in this Issue:

Silver Springs

One of Florida's first tourist attractions, nearby Silver Springs still offers glass bottom boats rides in a beautiful "old Florida" setting.

- page 24

Duffy's Golf Studio

Duffy's Golf Studio celebrated its tenth anniversary with a new owner - Nick Becerra . But what happens at a Golf Studio anyway? It probably isn't what you think it is

- page 28



Teaching Challenges During Covid

Ann Welsh is Anona Elementary School's Principal. She was charged with keeping the entire school safely operating in a pandemic. How did she do it?

- page 26

CREDITS



This newsletter is published by GRIFFIN PRODUCTIONS, Inc. and is mailed to every occupied residence in Indian Rocks Beach's zip code 33785. We are not associated with the City of Indian Rocks Beach.

PUBLISHER

Bob & Becky Griffin

ART DIRECTION

Becky Griffin

SALES

727-430-8300

CONTACT INFO

P.O. Box 1314

Indian Rocks Beach, FL 33785

727-430-8300

BeachNewsletters.com

If you are interested in advertising, we offer multi-city and annual discounts. Ads need to be reserved one month in advance.

E-mail: bob@griffindirectories.com or visit beachnewsletters.com for more information.

© 2021 Griffin Productions, Inc.



CITY NUMBERS

CITY HALL 595-2517

Mon - Fri, 7:30am to 4pm
1507 Bay Palm Blvd
www.Indian-Rocks-Beach.com

CITY MANAGER Gregg Mims 595-2517

MAYOR - Cookie Kennedy

COMMISSIONERS —

Phil Hanna Vice Mayor

Ed Hoofnagle • Denise Houseberg • Joe McCall

Planning & Zoning: 517-0404

Public Works: Dean Scharmen 595-6889

Mon - Fri, 7am to 3:30pm

Solid Waste/Trash Pickup 595-6889

ELECTRICITY 443-2641

PHONE (RESIDENTIAL) 800-483-4000

PHONE (BUSINESS) 800-483-5000

WATER 464-4000

CABLE (SPECTRUM) 329-5020

EMERGENCIES: 9-1-1

SHERIFF NON-EMERGENCIES 582-6200

SHERIFF DISPATCH 582-6177

IRB FIRE STATION 595-1117

AA & AL-ANON MEETINGS 595-1038

POST OFFICE 596-2894

204 4th Ave. Mon-Fri 8:30-4:30; Sat 9a-12p

IRB LIBRARY 596-1822

Mon-Fri 10-5pm, Sat 10-1pm

IRB HISTORICAL MUSEUM 593-3861

Wed - Sat, 10am to 2pm

IRB HOMEOWNER ASSOC.

Mary Beth Dunn, President - IRBHome.com

BEACH ART CENTER 596-4331

1515 Bay Palm Blvd., Mon-Fri 8:45am to 4pm

IRB ROTARY, Bruce Sobut, 403-4060

Meets at Jimmy Guana's every Wed. 7:15AM

ACTION 2000 John Ashby, President

Meets 2nd Mon each month Beach Art Ctr

LITTLE LEAGUE 409-5024

IRB WELCOME CENTER 595-4575

BEACH FOOD PANTRY 282-4085

1615 First St.

BEACH THRIFT STORE 444-0339

Tue, Wed, & Sat, 10am to 2pm, Thu 4 to 7pm

PINELLAS COUNTY INFO 464-3000

COMMISSION OFFICES 464-3377

Karen Seel 464-3278

STATE:

Senator Jeff Brandes 727-395-2512

Republican, Dist. 24

3637 Fourth St. N., Ste 101 St. Pete

Brandes.Jeff.web@flsenate.gov

Representative Nick DiCeglie 727-588-7090

Republican, District 66

1940 West Bay Drive, Ste 4, Largo

nick.diceglie@myfloridahouse.gov

Governor Ron DeSantis

Ron.DeSantis@myflorida.com

FLORIDA UNITED STATES SENATORS:

Marco Rubio 202-224-3041

www.Rubio.Senate.gov

Rick Scott 202-224-5274

www.RickScott.Senate.gov

AREA UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE:

Charlie Crist 202-225-5961

696 1st Ave N., Suite #203, St. Pete

www.Crist.House.Gov

INDIAN ROCKS BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER

Inside, you will find articles and local information about the nearby area. We call it Neighborhood News because it is primarily about our 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 magazine. We want your input. Did you like this issue? What suggestions do you have for future articles? Call or email us or take our online survey at beachnewsletters.com.

Keep up to date with your local news; follow us on Facebook at Neighborhood News Magazine.

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

SEE YOU AGAIN IN JULY!

NOW IN ITS 17TH YEAR

Reserve **YOUR Spot NOW**

Everybody Reads It!

Indian Rocks Beach Neighborhood News
www.beachnewsletters.com

NATURE CENTER TAKING SHAPE

By Tom Germond, TBN Correspondent

Call it a labor of love. Construction of a nature center is underway on Caladesi Island after years of planning and fundraising efforts. It is expected to be completed by late spring or early summer 2021, said Alexandra Kuchta, Florida Department of Environmental Protection deputy press secretary.

The project is expected to cost approximately \$1.6 million with about \$724,000 of that coming from DEP. Friends of the Island Parks President George Skalkeas said the nonprofit organization has raised more than \$900,000 for the Caladesi Discovery Center since about 2010.

The center will be an open-air facility at the old observation tower site at Caladesi Island State Park. A new observation deck at a height of approximately 25 feet above ground level will provide visitors a panoramic view of the undeveloped barrier island. The center will provide hands-on exhibits.

"We've got some ideas," Skalkeas said. "The concept of the project — why are we building this — we want to show the history of the people who live there. We want to talk about the habitat, the wildlife, all that kind of stuff, in general. The final exhibits, if you will, will be determined by the park manager," he said.

The 600-member organization had created a capital campaign over the years and designated proceeds from events such as Island Earth Days for the Discovery Center.

"The facility has to be ADA compliant and the most common way to accomplish that is to build a ramp. But we didn't want to do a ramp. It would have been as big as the structure and unsightly. Nobody uses ramps anyway," Skalkeas said.

So the organization came up with the concept of an elevator, which drove costs up.

"We think it's vital to the project, and we think that it's going to be greatly appreciated by the park visitors," Skalkeas said. The Friends were fortunate to have a benefactor, the Francis and Gertrude Levett Foundation of St. Petersburg, he said.

"They have given us close to \$300,000, and that will be duly noted in the building itself. We certainly plan to make the world aware of that fortunate occurrence for us," Skalkeas said.

Admission fees are not expected to be charged for entrance alone to the center, said Skalkeas, who loves visiting Honeymoon Island and has been volunteering at the parks since 2004.

Bill Francisco, who is on the board of directors for the Friends, said the organization was glad that about a year ago the DEP said the Discovery Center met the criteria for being a state project and is supervising construction.

"We are really a citizens service organization," he said.

As a state agency, DEP does not solicit donations for construction projects, Kuchta said. "However, we work closely with partner organizations, such as the Friends of the Island Parks, to advance our missions." Caladesi Island is one of the few undeveloped barrier islands on Florida's Gulf Coast, Kuchta said.

"The new Caladesi Island Discovery Center will provide visitors with an opportunity to connect with one of Florida's most unique natural resources," she said. The project will preserve and restore the original observation tower site at Caladesi Island State Park. While some aspects of that site were updated or modernized, others — such as the original perimeter wall — were preserved, Kuchta said.

Skalkeas said the Friends will continue to raise money for the exhibits and displays, yet to be determined, and will continue to help with elevator maintenance costs for the next ten years.

"We will be very proud when this thing gets done," he said.

**Celebrating 35 Years
an Indian Rocks Beach Favorite**



Great Kid's Menu **Lunch & Dinner**
11am - 10pm
(11pm Fri & Sat)

Check Out Our Daily Fish Specials!

**Always Wild - Always Fresh
and Hand Cut**

Delicious BBQ Ribs & Beachburgers Too!

**Take Out
Always
Available**

16th Ave. & Gulf Blvd.
727-596-2477
www.KeegansSeafood.com





Voted Best Breakfast
by the IRB Neighborhood Newsletter Readers

CAFE DE PARIS
French Bakery since 2002

ENJOY Coffee & Pastries

SERVING Sandwiches, Soups, Pastries, Crepes, Salads, Pies, Cakes, Cookies & Special Coffee

Tue - Sat 7:30am - 6pm
Sun 7:30am - 4pm
Mon closed

2300 GULF BLVD
INDIAN ROCKS BEACH
593-0277

www.CafeDeParisBakery.com




Did You Know



MERMAIDS RETURN The Weeki Wachee Springs State Park, closed for a year, recently reopened with daily mermaid shows and swimming. The beach areas are open daily, but the water park is only open on weekends through May 29 when it will return to its normal summer schedule.

Visitors wanting to see the Mermaid Show are encouraged to arrive when the park opens at 9am as seating in the underwater theater is limited.

The park is open from 9am to 5:30pm daily and costs \$13 for adults/\$8 for children ages 6-12. It is located at 6131 Commercial Way, Weeki Wachee, 352-592-5656, weekiwachee.com

WORLD OF WHALES The Clearwater Marine Aquarium's new 20,000 square foot exhibit "Whales: Living with Giants" is a virtual experience with multi-media exhibits, an underwater virtual reality experience, a walk-through life-sized whale gallery and an interactive kid's zone.

This is not a permanent exhibit and will only be available at through August 31. Get information at www.SeeWinter.com.

LIFEGUARDS NEEDED Seasonal lifeguards are needed in Pinellas County at Pinellas County beach parks. Lifeguards will be stationed on county beaches at Fort De Soto, Sand Key and Fred Howard parks from April to September. Individuals who enjoy helping the public in a fast-paced, detail-oriented role are encouraged to apply.

Positions are available for full-time or part-time seasonal employment, with pay starting at \$13.95 per hour for new lifeguards and \$14.58 per hour for senior-level lifeguards. Lifeguards may work 10-hour shifts. Applicants must be at least 18 years old. To apply and see other necessary qualification, visit: www.pinellascounty.org/careers.

CHANGES IN THE WAY STORMS ARE NAMED The World Meteorological Organization has decided to no longer use the Greek alphabet as a way of identifying tropical storms when the normal list of 21 storms is exhausted. The alphabet has only been used twice – last year when nine letter names were used and in 2005, another busy year.

The alphabet names proved to be confusing to the public and made it difficult for people to track the storms. Many confused the sound of the letters. More attention was focused on the alphabet itself than on the possible danger of the storm.

"Zeta, Eta, Theta" said Kenneth Graham, the director of the National Hurricane Center, pointing to three Greek letters used to name three of the last storms of the season. "People were mixing the storms up."

The World Meteorological Organization's Hurricane Committee has developed a backup list of 21 names that will be used in place of the Greek letters if needed.



NATURAL & PROPANE GAS PROVIDER

Residential & Commercial

(727) 562-4980

<http://www.clearwatergas.com>



 Clearwater Gas System
Live Greener with Gas

and More...

ALERT PINELLAS

Receive alerts about emergencies and other important community news by signing up for Alert Pinellas, an emergency notification service for Pinellas County, Local Municipalities, and the Sheriff's Office. This service is FREE. Choose up to five different Pinellas County



locations you want to receive alerts about. You choose how to receive your alerts - cell phone, landline, text, email - and you can enter multiple methods. Stay informed regarding local emergencies. Sign up at pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas.

DISPOSE OF OLD GENERATOR FUEL Hurricane season starts on June 1st and now is the time to dispose of old generator fuel. The shelf-life of gasoline is three to six months and up to one year for diesel fuel. Residents are encouraged to add this task to their annual hurricane preparations.

Pinellas County's Household Electronics and Chemical Collection Center (HEC3) will accept old fuel Monday through Saturday, from 7 am until 5 pm and is located at 2855 109th Ave. N., in St. Petersburg.

You can also drop off electronics such as cell phones, computers, TVs, power supplies, and monitors. Chemical items accepted include automotive fluids, rechargeable batteries, fuel, paint, cleaning supplies, pesticides and fluorescent bulbs, along with other mercury-containing devices

CARRY YOUR CUPS One small way to do your part to eliminate garbage is to carry a reusable travel cup. As just one example, Starbucks uses 8,000 paper cups a minute - that is more than 4 billion cups a year in our landfills (not to mention the dead trees!) If you carried your own travel cup it would make a big difference and save you money. By bringing in any personal cup to Starbucks, you qualify for a \$.10 off discount regardless of the size of the beverage. Other coffee retailers do the same thing.

SOCK IT TO US Clothes To Kids Clothes needs socks - than 80,000 pairs of socks. That is how many they give out each year to Hillsborough and Pinellas County school children. Join them in their "Sock It To Us" drive and donate girls no show sock sizes small, medium and large and boys and young men socks.



You can drop off packaged socks at any of their locations or the easiest way is to shop on the Clothes To Kids' Amazon Wish List. After check-out the socks will ship directly to Clothes To Kids. For more information visit our website at clothestokids.org or call 727-441-5050.

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

LARGO (WALSINGHAM) 14219 W. WALSINGHAM #V WALSINGHAM VILLAGE PLAZA (727) 596-1400 LUNCH DAILY	SEMINOLE 6609 SEMINOLE BLVD. 1 LIGHT SOUTH OF PARK BLVD. (727) 392-2288 LUNCH DAILY	ST. PETE 6570 CENTRAL AVE. & 66TH ST. ACROSS FROM STARBUCKS (727) 345-2020 LUNCH DAILY
--	--	---

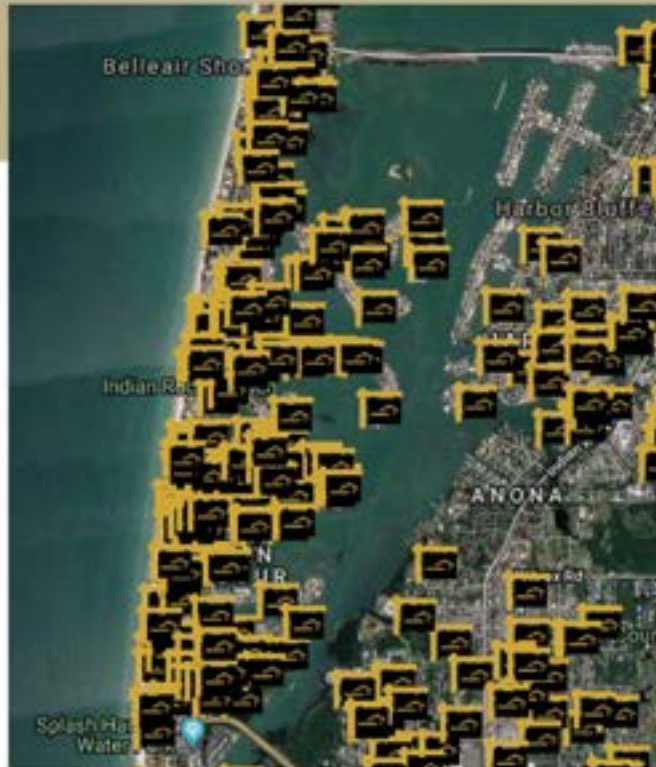
**Come visit us!
We're just a short
walk from the beach...**

**The Seaside
REAL ESTATE STORE LLC**
1101 Gulf Blvd. Indian Rocks Beach
727.593.3008
• Sales • Rentals • Property Management

Sales: www.theseasiderealestatedstore.com Rentals: www.theseasideps.com

CENTURY 21®

Thank YOU
IRB!



CENTURY 21.
Beggins Enterprises



Proudly Serving Indian Rocks Beach for 21 years!

- Taste of Indian Rocks Beach
- Biggest Beach Party
- Holiday Toy Drive

With YOUR help we have become:

- #1 Century 21 in Volume & Units Sold in the entire Southeast USA
- Top Century 21 in the World (out of 7,600 offices)
- 55,000 plus Transactions
- 21 Billion in Sales
- Several hundred of the Coolest Agents anywhere

Have Fun! Make Money!
Thought about becoming an Agent?
Call and ask for Jeff Beggins
(727 596-3343 www.c21beggins.com)





Myra Chandler Founder of The Bee.

Chandler had previous newspaper experience. She had owned a group of seven papers in Michigan. The name Bee was inspired by the newspaper in California with that name, and was a perfect fit for the Belleair communities.

Chandler said the three partners owned the Bee. Co-owners Bob and Wilsie Carr "had the money and I had the knowhow," she said. "We put it all together." And they all had a role to play at the Bee.

"Bob (Carr) was business manager, Wilsie was the idea person, and I was the writer," Chandler said.

Her resources were sparse. "I had a typewriter, telephone and a notepad. That was about it," Chandler recalled.

The Bee headquarters was on the second floor of the building on the west end of the Belleair Bazaar shopping center, where Maggie Mae's restaurant is now.

Asked about her priorities for the paper's content, Chandler said the classified ads were the most important.

"My philosophy has always been, if you have strong classifieds, you've got a paper," Chandler said in a 2005 interview with the Bee. Social news was also very important, she said.

"We covered politics on the cover, and the inside was all social. I was at the parties, all the ladies' clubs. It was very important to get them all in," said Chandler.

Local politics was a big part of the Bee's makeup from the beginning. "I covered all the meetings," Chandler said.

Putting out a paper that cared about the community was a prime goal for the Bee. "It is most important to care, and we did care. We were very into the community and we really wanted to do a good job."

Chandler's schedule was exhausting, but fulfilling. In addition to the Bee, for a time she also ran a basket shop called Wicker World which was on the ground floor of the building.

"We really did work hard," she said. "I was exhausted and jubilant. I would sit up there in my apartment at 4 in the morning and see the sun come up."

And the Bee concept worked. Asked how the communities (Belleair, Belleair Bluffs, Belleair Beach and Belleair Shore) responded to the Bee, Chandler said, "Beautifully. They responded immediately. It caught on right away."

The paper's livelihood depended on ad revenue as it was distributed free, and the Bee hired Helene Sabala, who Chandler described as "a real go-getter," to sell ads. As a result, she said the paper's income "shot up like a bullet." Chandler said she took pride that the Bee "never lost one dime from the day of conception."

In addition to launching the Belleair Bee, Chandler expanded to include other papers such as the Largo Leader which are now part of the Tampa Bay Newspapers chain.

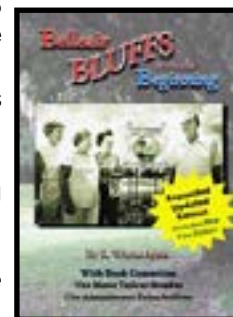
In the mid-1980s she sold the papers to help her son-in-law start a business, and planned to "just retire." But that's not what happened. She continued her leadership role at the newspaper until the late 1990s. She also was actively involved with many arts organizations and was a strong supporter of Ruth Eckerd Hall.

The Bee later merged with the Beach Beacon located further south on the beach, and moved to larger quarters on Seminole Boulevard. Today, it is part of Tampa Bay Newspapers, one of the largest groups of weekly community papers in the country.

Throughout her journalism career, Chandler was actively involved as a participant in the papers she founded and ran. She died on January 12, 2013 at the age of 93.

In her obituary, Chandler's daughter Cindy Curls said of her mother, "She was always involved. She was always out there taking pictures, attending meetings." The Bee reflected her strong community spirit through the years, which continues to the present day. ■

The story of Myra Chandler and the Bee is included in the book "Belleair Bluffs from the Beginning, The city's history in words and pictures," available at Belleair Bluffs City Hall and the Heritage Village gift shop.



plumlee
gulf beach realty

Relax
We've got you covered.

Local experts for over 30 Years

- Real Estate Sales
- Vacation Property Management
- Highest Occupancy Rates

888-507-5732
Call to learn more!

PlumleeProperties.com
417 First Street
Indian Rocks Beach, FL 33785

IS IT TIME TO RIDE THE GREEN WAVE?

by Ray Ferrara, ProVise Management Group



While 2020 had its fair share of buzz words, arguably none were bigger for the investment world than ESG. The acronym stands for Environmental, Social, and Governance and broadly refers to sustainably focused investing that considers the ESG impact of corporations. ESG investing is widely regarded as a “once in a generation” investment theme while we believe it will ultimately grow from a thematic afterthought into a core consideration.

Many are jockeying for position to ride this massive green wave, but investors must be aware of “greenwashing” in which some aim to slap an ESG sticker on everything, in what can be characterized as misleading at best. The well-informed, discerning investor can successfully navigate this fast-growing segment while having a positive impact on the environment and society as a whole.

So, what exactly qualifies as ESG? All ESG is not created equal and there are several different categories. Some ESG investing simply excludes certain industries such as businesses that deal in firearms, fossil fuels, or tobacco. Others fully integrate ESG criteria into all facets of the investment process and simply select the best-in-class operators in each industry. As mentioned, investors must be wary of false or misleading information about a company’s products or processes used to portray them in an environmentally or socially friendly light. The truth is that there is no regulatory body that verifies a corporation’s ESG claims nor are there standard disclosures required. This lack of transparency and accountability can cause confusion for investors. Positively, there are now a handful of third party (unbiased) data providers that are publishing ESG scores for public companies in an effort to bring more transparency to the market.

So, why invest in ESG now? Environmental and social advocates have long been on the fringes of the investment community and ESG investing has been popularized for at least 10 years now, but 2020 was a transformative year. In one of the most volatile years in recent history, it was really the first time the investing public saw ESG go through a bear market and it proved to be more than just a bull market luxury. In fact, ESG outperformed the traditional stock market last year.

At ProVise, we provide our clients with transparent, comprehensive ESG investments that are tailored to meet their financial goals. Call for a complimentary consultation.

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

Financial planning for your life and your lifestyle



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.

**24 Hour
Emergency
Service**

SLAUGHTER
PLUMBING
RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL
727-596-5663
Family Owned since 1958

All Plumbing Repairs
Water Heater Repair & Replacement
Faucet and Fixture Repair & Installation
Water & Sewer Line Replacement
Sewer & Drain Cleaning

\$10 OFF Any Service!
not combined with other offers

Licensed • Bonded • Insured • Senior Discounts • Estimates

RF11067209
C9501

Serving All of Pinellas County
for 50 years

12920 Walsingham Rd Largo

IS YOUR ESTATE PLAN READY?

By Edward Castagna Jr. Esquire

This is a wonderful time of year; spring is here and with it comes opening the house and some spring cleaning. While you are refreshing your home, it might be a good time to refresh your legal documents too.



2020 brought many challenges. Did you experience any life changes recently? Maybe you have been blessed with the birth of a child or new grandchild. Did you recently marry or regrettably divorce? Maybe you have retired, or your financial situation changed due to a new job or the loss of an old one. Do you have a blended family with children from both previous and current marriages? All these are reasons to reexamine your Estate Planning Documents

With the recent Pandemic, thoughts of helping those closest to us are more prevalent than ever. If you were to get sick, do you worry about caring for a family member with special needs or easing the financial burden of higher education for your children or grandchildren? If so, then now is the time to update your estate plan or to create one if you do not already have one.

Do you have a designated health care surrogate? Now more than ever, this is vital. Part of your estate planning, this legal document gives a person the legal right to talk to your doctors and manage your medical care. They can make medical decisions for you if you cannot do so. According to AARP, "less than 40 percent of Americans have a health care surrogate. That means 60 percent of us are rolling the dice on what would happen if the unexpected occurred."

Whether you are looking forward to enjoying retirement or welcoming a new member into the family, there is nothing more important than making sure your wishes are clear. If your will is over ten years old or was written in another state, your estate documents may be outdated and need changes. Marriages, divorces, and even grandchildren impact your estate planning.

Don't leave room for uncertainty or division in your estate. Our firm has seen cases where outdated or inaccurate Wills drew out the probate process, causing additional stress and significant additional expenses for your estate and family. You need to make sure 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 - our client's health and safety are always our priority. Whether you are 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.

SIGN OF THE DOLPHIN

Internationally recognized, locally owned, AWARD WINNING Florida Lifestyle Gallery

featuring a collection of tropical home furnishings, clothing, wall art, sculpture, art glass, handmade jewelry, rugs and lamps.

12999 Park Blvd. Seminole | 727-393-1400
1 mi. E of Park Blvd Bridge | www.SignoftheDolphin.com

R&A FINANCIAL PLANNERS

TODAY'S MARKETS ARE WHY WE PLAN

Worried about your investments?
A good financial plan takes the uncertainty out of tomorrow and lets you live your life today. It is never too late to begin, but the sooner the better. Please call me to find out more.

✓ Investment Planning
✓ Education Planning
✓ Retirement Planning
✓ Life Planning

Erin Emmett
Financial Planner
erin@roganfinancial.com

www.RoganFinancial.com

CALL 727.712.3400

Member SIPC



**OUR BUYERS
NEED
SELLERS
...NOW!**



www.gordonrealty.house



**GORDON
OBARSKI**

Licensed Real Estate Broker

727.480.4665

gordon@gordonrealty.house



**PAUL
ZAGAMI**

Sales Associate

727.458.2618

paul@gordonrealty.house

Real Estate News

INDIAN ROCKS REAL ESTATE DELI Take a Number and Stand in Line

By Gordon Obarski, Real Estate Broker Gordon Realty House



Want a pound of Tavern Ham? Tear off a number and wait your turn. Want a house or condo in IRB? Same thing. Line forms at the rear. Nationwide, there are 1/3 the number of real estate listings there used to be. Sobering thought: At the close of Q1 this year, there were more real estate agents in the U.S. than properties for sale.

In IRB as of mid-April, there were only 17 active listings: 7 single-family homes and 10 condos, 5 of which are new construction at the north end of town. Last year, 1/1-1/14/20, IRB properties sold for 97% of asking price and were on the market a median of 26 days. This year during the same period, properties sold at an average of 99% of full list price and the median number of days on the market was only 7! Some buyers, unable to find the single-family home they initially set their sights on, are buying condos. That partially explains why condos stayed listed only a median of 7 days this year, as opposed to the 34 days it took last year for a condo to go to contract.

A total of 40 properties were sold in IRB by this time last year B.C.—BEFORE COVID. This year, there have been a total of 62 sales. That's 22 more units sold AFTER being hit by a worldwide pandemic. Talk about a resilient market! This year's sales had other bonuses, too: fewer days from listing to contract, closings at a higher percentage of list price AND with another 20% increase in the average sale price of homes/condos combined (\$602,513 to \$723,710)!

As Florida moved up from 13th to 10th in U.S. News & World Report's "Best States," we are seeing more buyers from California and New York, who are no strangers to higher-priced real estate. If interest rates and monthly expenses rise and prices stay elevated, affordability for some prospective IRB luxury buyers could tap the brakes on the high end of the market...which might not be a bad thing. The lowest priced IRB single-family, a non-waterfront 2BR/1BA, 936 sq. ft. home is listed for \$525,000.

It doesn't help that today's buyers are in a frenzied hurry and sellers are as patient as Job or that record-setting refis have lowered mortgage payments to where it makes less financial sense for some owners to move. Americans used \$152.7 billion in cash-out refis last year for remodeling makeovers, making some once-hot-to-trot sellers more satisfied with their current homes...at least in the short run. Just ask Home Depot who saw their Q4 2020 profits double over 2019.

Yet, reasons for optimism are aplenty. More sellers are expected to surface in the last half of the year, as the COVID situation improves and more folks are fully vaccinated. There is absolutely no fear whatsoever of a bursting bubble as long as there is a high demand, low inventory and folks with tons of equity—of which our market has all three. If 2020 taught us anything, it's that everything can change in an instant. But, as long as the economy remains strong, our real estate market, which came out healthier on the backside of a pandemic, is likely to follow suit.

Source: Stellar MLS (1/1/20-4/14/20 compared to 1/1/21-4/14/21)

PINELLAS COUNTY'S YEAR-ROUND BUDGET PROCESS

By Karen Williams Seel, Pinellas County Commissioner

Pinellas County's annual budget development is virtually a year-round process. The County's fiscal year starts on October 1. The following January, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) reviews its strategic plan—the guiding document that aligns service delivery to five defined principles: delivering first class services to the public and our customers, ensuring public health, safety and welfare, practicing superior environmental stewardship, fostering continual economic growth and vitality and creating a quality workforce in a positive and supportive organization.



The Office of Management and Budget works on updating the economic forecast during the same timeframe. The forecast is built upon an individual assessment of ten of the County's major funds: the General Fund, the Tourist Development Fund, the Transportation Trust Fund, the Capital Projects Fund, the Emergency Medical Services Fund, the Airport Fund and the Water, Sewer, Solid Waste and Surface Water Funds.

The targets or budget guidelines are developed by County Administration based on the financial forecast. These are communicated to the County's departments and agencies for use during their budget development. All instructions and resources for preparing budget requests are also distributed.

County departments and agencies submit their completed budget submissions by mid-March, except for the Constitutional Officers who have a due date of May 1. The budget submissions are analyzed by the Office of Management and Budget in preparation for budget work sessions with the BCC.

In April, May and June, various budget work sessions are held to obtain Board feedback necessary to develop the proposed budget such as millage rate policy, proposed program enhancements or reductions, and revenue adjustments.

In July, the proposed budget is prepared by the County Administrator based on various budget work sessions and the County's strategic plan priorities. The proposed budget presents a balanced budget for the coming year.

Once the proposed budget is distributed, additional budget work sessions may be held to provide further guidance to the County Administrator.

Public hearings are conducted in September. All changes to the proposed budget are finalized and announced at each of the public hearings. The public hearings represent an opportunity for citizens to provide input to the BCC regarding the budget process. At the first public hearing, the BCC approves the tentative millage rates and budgets. At the second public hearing, the BCC approves the adopted millage rates and budgets.

You have the opportunity to participate throughout the process, as well.

Beginning in May, there are multiple budget information sessions scheduled. I encourage you to attend these sessions and the budget hearings in September. You can also view the meetings online or watch these meetings on PCC-TV.

I also encourage you to review our strategic plan, budget process and forecasts by visiting www.pinellascounty.org/budget. If you have comments or suggestions about the county's budget, please feel free to contact me at kseel@pinellascounty.org.

All my best to you and your family.

Steady As She Goes Mate 

INDIAN ROCKS BEACH BOAT RENTALS

We rent all kinds of boats for fishing, skiing, cruising, relaxing

10% DISCOUNT to all IRB RESIDENTS
mention this ad

727-517-1122 BOAT RENTAL
www.IRBboatRentals.com



Located at the HOLIDAY INN HARBORSIDE

nektion 
SURF SHOP • IRB

IRB Strong 

APPAREL • RENTALS • BEACH GOODS

From humble beginnings on IRB, to world class professionals, Nekton surf shop is proud to celebrate a family owned and operated surf legacy. Whether you're a beach bum, occasional ocean goer, or surf enthusiast, don't worry, we've got you covered.

 KEEP IT LOCAL

(727) 593-8292 • 1313 GULF BLVD
INDIAN ROCKS BEACH, FL 33785
NEKTONSURF.COM

GOODYEAR TIRE CENTER
OWNED AND OPERATE BY

 TIRE AND AUTO SERVICE INCORPORATED

11901 Indian Rocks Rd.
Corner of Walsingham & Indian Rocks Rd.

596-9551
Complete Auto Service



Urgent Care Housecalls
727-403-5380

Affordable, Trusted, In-Home Urgent Care

URGENT CARE HOUSECALLS COMES TO YOU!

BOOK YOUR HOUSECALL TODAY FOR:

⊗ Cough / Colds & Flu	⊗ Hangover / Dehydration
⊗ Prescriptions / Refills	⊗ Sore Throat / Earache / Pink Eye
⊗ Sunburn / Heat Exhaustion	⊗ Vomiting & Diarrhea
⊗ Sprains / Strains / Back Pain	⊗ Sinusitis / Migraine
⊗ Allergies / Asthma	⊗ Lacerations / Cuts & Scrapes
⊗ Fishhooks / Splinters	⊗ Urinary Infections

Peggy Cordle, MS, APRN-C Nurse Practitioner

Same Day Visits Available
www.urgentcarehousecalls.net
727-403-5380

Business Briefs



ISLAND PEST CONTROL CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

Owners Tammy and Dana McCutchan have been chasing all kinds of bugs for 25 years.

They have lived in Indian Rocks since 1987 and started their pest control business in 1996; prior to that Tammy worked for a pest company for ten years.

"Bugs never take a day off in Florida," Tammy says. "I want to thank you for allowing us to service your bug problems."

Island Pest Control Services serves most of Pinellas County, including Indian Rocks Beach. Call 727-596-7715 for your bug problems. Lic# JB8237.

RICHARD'S MOVES Richards Foodporium, the local health food and vitamin store, left Belleair Bluffs. Previously located next to Bonefish Grill, they moved to Largo Mall, 10500 Ulmerton. They also have a new phone number—727-240-1324.

WILLIAM DEAN'S SECOND LOCATION Bill Brown, owner of William Dean Chocolates, is opening a second location in Tampa at the intersection of I-275 and N. Dale Mabry. He plans to make this location into more than just chocolates. It will be a Parisian inspired café serving breakfast and lunch items including quiche, baguettes, sandwiches, salads and fresh breads.

Brown hopes to open in June or July. The exterior is almost done and they are finalizing the interior finishes now. Sean Ragan from the Wyndham Grand's Ocean Hai, will head the baking and savory program

The café will seat 14 people indoors with shady outdoor patio seating as well. Of course, there will be a well stocked display case for his signature chocolates.

Changes are in store for the Belleair location too. They will soon be offering all of the baked goods there, too. Eventually, the kitchen space will be redesigned into additional seating with more savory items on the menu.



LALA'S EXPANDS

Laura Katz, owner of Lala's, located in Belleair Bluff's The Plaza, doubled her store's size when she acquired the space to the store's south. She has expanded her already large inventory of furniture, bed coverings, liners, draperies and more.

Find Lala's at the same address, 100 Indian Rocks Road Call 240-1200 or visit LalasHome.com.

Best Kept Secret in Largo!



Thank You to Our Customers For Your Support

We Are Open During the Shut Down for To-Go Orders Only

And We Will Get Through This TOGETHER!



Best Pizza in the area

Tuesday - Sunday
Noon to 9pm
To-Go Orders Only

Family Owned and Operated for 38 years!

11963 Indian Rocks Road, Largo 727.596.6780
www.PizzaShackItalianGrille.com

Business Briefs



RADIANCE MED SPA CELEBRATES 15 YEARS They opened in 2006 and to celebrate, they are offering 15% off EVERYTHING (for a limited time). Eliminate smile lines, erase unwanted fat, contour your cheeks, smooth your wrinkles, tighten your skin, erase age spots, and give yourself the glowing radiant look you deserve and save some money too! Some exclusions apply and this offer expires May 15, 2021.

BLUFFS TACKLE AND MARINE COMING SOON Located on West Bay directly across from Publix, the store will offer bait and fishing tackle. Still under construction, they hope to open in a month or two.

NEW OWNERS AT MUNCHIES

Lisa & Giovanni Senafe bought Munchies, the pet products store in the Belleair Shopping Center.

Lisa says, "We have owned natural pet food stores since 2008 because pets have been my passion since I was a very young girl." She adds, "We do not plan many changes, but want to add more variety of toys, chews, beds and other things customers need and want. We are big believers in being a part of the community and we look forward to being a part of the events and working with local rescues."

Find them at 2896 West Bay, next to Cody's or call 581-1000. Visit MunchiesNaturalPetFoods.com.



PATCHINGTON 35 YEARS

Belleair Bluffs was the first store in the Patchington company and has been open 35 years this month. It first opened in Clearwater in 1986 and later was moved to Belleair Bluffs. Besides selling ladies clothing and accessories, Patchington also contributes to many local charities, such as CASA and The American Heart Association.

Find them at 280 Indian Rocks Road North or call 586-6196. Pictured here is Emily Pavlinic, General Manager.

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

THE PLACE FOR YOUR FUR BABIES...

The Dog Nanny

Daycare, Boarding, Petsitting & More
Call For More Information on My Services
727.430.9729
1511 Gulf Blvd., Indian Rocks - Next to Sun & Surf Animal Hospital

✓ Rentals
✓ Sales
✓ Beach Life!

The Seaside
REAL ESTATE STORE, LLC

1101 Gulf Blvd. Indian Rocks Beach
727.593.3008
Sales: www.theseasiderealestatestore.com
Rentals: www.theseasideps.com

IRB CROSSFIT
A BETTER KIND OF FITNESS

Amazing facility, fun workouts,
with world class coaching!

(727) 403-0466
321 Gulf Blvd., Indian Rocks Beach
www.irbcrossfit.com
"Coach Mel"
Melanie LeBlanc, Owner

Business Briefs



MORE THAN FRESH VEGGIES Surfside Produce Market, is not just for vegetables. They sell a complete line of meats, too. "All our meats are vacuum sealed and ready to cook," says Morgan Myers, co-owner of Surfside. "We have various cuts of beef and pork, chicken, turkey, ribs, plus ground bison and venison, and wagyu beef burgers delivered to us twice a week. We have filet mignon and T-Bone steaks, too. The filet mignon is so popular, it is hard to keep it stocked."



Many first-time customers are pleasantly surprised to find the market carries meats, seafood, Boars Head meat and cheeses. They expect only fruits and vegetables and are delighted at the large variety of fresh seafood and meats.

"We take personal requests if there is something you can't find in our store," adds Morgan. "We are very competitive with ALL of our pricing and try our very best to have quality products at affordable prices."

Open seven days a week, 8:30am to 6:30pm, Surfside Produce Market is located at 1401 Gulf Blvd. Call 219-7079 for information. Find them on FaceBook - Surfside Fresh Produce (Indian Rocks).

GET FITNESS EXPANDS Despite a global pandemic, Dan Burke had a vision when he purchased Get Fitness in Largo last June. He was extremely excited about the opportunity to own a gym and now is growing it even bigger. Get Fitness will soon be opening HIIT Studio, with a Spin Classroom and a one-of-a-kind Studio 7 Precor gym for group training.

The 3500 square foot HIIT Studio will be a combination of group HIIT training classes as well as high energy spin classes. This group exercise will use the new Studio 7 by Precor and is one of the first gyms in the area to offer this experience. They will be able to have up to 21 students per class.

Get Fitness is also introducing new "smart" cardio equipment throughout the facility that will have the ability to connect with apps on your phone, so you can securely watch Netflix or listen to Pandora or Spotify.

The new HIIT Studio is under construction awaiting a grand opening in a few months. For a sneak preview, visit the website at hiit-studio.com.

TOWNHOUSES FOR SALE The Walk at Indian Rocks Beach, a new townhome development, has opened a model. One-third of the 32 units are already sold. All the 1334



square foot units are basically alike, but you can change the interior packages. Prices start at \$764,400 - but are increased by \$4,000 with every three sales. Visit the sales model at 2414 Gulf Blvd. or visit TheWalkTM.com.

PERSONAL TRAINING

As Low As \$30 Per Session

13845 Walsingham Rd. Largo, FL 33774 | james@getfitnessdubs.com

Package Discounts

GET FITNESS

For More Info
CALL NOW: 727 595 4505
www.getfitnessdubs.com

- + Fully Accredited Certified Trainer
- + Isolated Training
- + Individualized Nutrition Program
- + Memberships starting at \$10.95/mo

Business Briefs



REALTOR WINS AWARD

Yearly, Coastal Properties / Christie’s International, selects one of their Realtors that has volunteered and given back to the community and awards them the “Community Service Award.” This year, Julie Folden received the award for her fifteen-year involvement with Indian Rock’s Action 2000 (A2K) as a member, Director, Secretary and Vice President.

“Julie came to A2K when I was A2K President, wanting to support our community,” said Jim Labadie. “I have known her

for over 40 years. In A2K, she headed up many committees, including Octoberfest. She is a huge asset to A2K as well as all of Indian Rocks Beach.”

“Julie and I started volunteering with A2K about the same time. She was so enthusiastic, and her dedication was proven repeatedly. She served over 15 years on the executive board as secretary with grace and professionalism, and always as a team player. Julie helped with every facet of our growing organization and was always personally committed financially to all our fundraising efforts. She was invaluable to me when I was President of Action 2000, I could not have done it without her. She was always committed to making this the best place to live,” Eric Meyer, Past President of A2K.

LOCAL MORTGAGE COMPANY RECOGNIZED It has been a banner year for Pioneer Mortgage Funding, Inc., Indian Rocks Beach (PMFIRB). They welcomed two new mortgage loan originators and moved into new office space on Gulf Boulevard. Now they are giving back to the community through the Homes for Heroes program.

Joe McCall, Branch Manager of PMFIRB explained, “we wanted to give back to those who serve our community every day and were looking into the Homes for Heroes program for a while.”

The mission of Homes for Heroes is the nation’s largest hero savings program. is to provide savings to heroes who provide extraordinary services to our communities every day. Heroes include firefighters, EMS, law enforcement, military (active, reserve, and veteran), healthcare professionals, and teachers. Furthermore, there is a Homes for Heroes nonprofit private charitable foundation that awards hero grants to local nonprofit charities serving our heroes in need as it pertains to housing or emergency financial assistance.

Their first year, the PMFIRB team earned the Crystal Circle of Giving award for closing loans for at least 25 heroes. Homes for Heroes and its network of affiliates were able to help 9,070 heroes buy or sell their homes in 2020 and give back \$17,948,937 in Hero Rewards savings across the country.

McCall has been in the mortgage business for over 30 years and is passionate about helping his clients. Together with his wife Tammie, Manager of Branch Operations, they earned three Top Producer awards from the Pioneer Corporate Office in 2020 alone.

“Although we were not part of Homes for Heroes a full year, we were still able to serve 26 heroes making us number two in Florida. Our goal for 2021 is to be number one!”McCall says.

Voted A Top 100 Al Fresco Dining Restaurant in America!

HAPPY HOUR 4-6pm Daily

Early Dinner Specials
Dine In: 4:00-5:15pm
Take Out: 4:00-9:00pm
 (Extended Take Out Times are Sun.-Thurs. Only)

Curbside Take Out & Call Ahead Seating:
727-593-2032
Guppys.com
1701 Gulf Blvd, Indian Rocks Beach

GULFSIDE RESORTS
INDIAN ROCKS BEACH

Sorah's Innside **THE NARROWS** **INDIAN ROCKS INN** **THE FILLMORE**
 306 Gulf Blvd. 20 Gulf Blvd. 810 Gulf Blvd. 200 11th Ave.

www.gulfsideresorts.com 727.596.8063

We are all in this together



www.gulftobayrealestate.com

GULF TO BAY
REAL ESTATE, INC.
SALES & MANAGEMENT

Sales - Long Term Rentals & Vacation rentals

Our hope for you & your family is that you stay safe and healthy

2701 Gulf Blvd, Indian Rocks Beach (727) 586-1500

Restaurant & Bar News



VIP OPENS The VIP has been undergoing a soft opening and due to the large Spring Break crowds and new employees, they have only been open three or four days a week, while testing the new to them kitchen and training servers and bartenders. But, owners Nick and Michele Rapisardi say they are excited by their reception in Indian Rocks Beach.

They have a first come, first served policy and do not take reservations or have call-ahead seating. The restaurant has a full bar and specializes in margaritas, of course. Join them for Cinco de Mayo all month long.

They located at 213 Gulf Blvd in Indian Rocks Beach in the former site of Aqua Prime restaurant. See their menu online at www.VIPlounge-fla.com.

NEW WINE CLUB With Da Pollani's Italian Restaurant now in its third year, the Italian-originated family restaurant with a local neighborhood feel, has started The Da Pollani's Wine Club. With membership limited to 42, members will receive one bottle of unique wine per month, one free appetizer (under \$20) per visit, Two complimentary Da Pollani's Wine Club dinners with food and wine pairings for two, and reservations accepted up to four hours prior to arrival.

For more information about the club and its benefits please visit: www.brandtivia.com/dapollanis. Find Da Pollani's at 13650 Walsingham Rd., just over the bridge.

HOOTERS DONATES

\$53,000 Hooters of Clearwater presented a \$52,905 check to Moffit Cancer Center as part of an ongoing fundraising promotion at all area Hooters locations, including Mandalay Avenue. The proceeds from the "GIVE-A-HOOT" promotion supports a grant through the V Foundation for Cancer Research. It will assist the cutting-edge work Moffit, and its researchers are doing in the cancer research.



The February grant was awarded to Dr. Hatem Soliman, Medical Director of the clinical trials in Moffit's Breast Cancer Oncology program, by Ed Droste, owner and co-founder of Hooter's Management Corporation in Clearwater.

Since 2002, Hooters has donated over \$912,905 to the Moffit Cancer Center, thanks to the help of its customers.



The Pie Factory
Serving the Best Cakes & Pies for 30 Years!

A Family Owned Bakery
Specializing in Delicious Desserts Since 1990



Home of Florida Key's Finest Key Lime Pie

Drive Thru Pick-Up
On the East Side

Order Now for Mother's Day!
Open Mother's Day

Retail/Wholesale | Catering | Fundraisers Available

12777 Walsingham Road, Largo | 727/593-1884
Mon - Thurs 10am to 6pm | Fri - Sat 10am - 8pm | Sun 10am to 4pm
www.floridapiesandcakes.com

Restaurant & Bar News

FORMER GATOR'S LOCATION TO REOPEN WITH NEW OWNERS

Beachside Hospitality Group, the owner of eleven restaurants around the state including Clearwater Beach's Crabby's Docksides, is expanding to Treasure Island.



They are reopening the former Gator's Café on the south side of John's Pass as Crabby's On The Pass. Gator's closed at the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic and never reopened.

Crabby's On The Pass will feature traditional American seafood in a casual waterfront atmosphere. You will still be able to go by boat and dock at their back door. They plan to have live music seven days a week and will have banquet and meeting rooms. "This is a long-term investment for us," says Julia Cassino, Marketing Director for Beachside. "Our goal is to be there for a long time."

Look for it to open any day. This is not affiliated with the Original Crabby Bill's restaurant in Indian Rocks Beach.

THE WAIT FOR RED LION CONTINUES In April, owner Tom George, told us he is still waiting for final building permits from the county. He expects them soon and once you see the workers on site, construction should take 60-90 days.

HUNGRY CRAB OPENING Located in Largo Mall in the old Sweet Tomatoes building, Hungry Crab Juicy Seafood offers a diverse range of seafood, including King Crab, Shrimp, Blue Crab, Snow Crab, Crawfish, Clams, Oysters, Mussels, Dungeness Crab, and Lobster. All cooked with their unique blend of spices. Part of a franchise, the Pinellas Park store recently closed and is being relocated here.

NEW BEACH FOOD HALL The Clearwater Beach Marina building has a new concept, it is becoming a food hall. The three levels include six bars and ten individual concepts.

It is a food-lover's dream with the waterfront views at the Clearwater Marina. Choose from ten diverse concepts such as sushi, Mexican, stone oven pizza, good ole southern seafood cookin', ice cream, sandwiches and more. There is something for everyone, all at one convenient location.

CLEARWATER YACHT CLUB DINING The private club is rich in history and tradition. Management has been working hard to improve their restaurant and food service. They recently hired a new Food and Beverage Manager and are upgrading their kitchen staff. Their new General Manager, Michael Ciaccio, also joined the Club's management last month.

Now, to keep up with their summer demands, they are hiring Servers. The full-time positions will include inside and outside work, both days and evenings, and have a \$9 starting wage. The Clearwater Yacht Club is closed on Mondays. Call the office for information, 727-447-6000.

RESTAURANT NEWS WANTED If your business has news we can use in this News Magazine, e-mail Bob@GriffinDirectories.com or call 727-430-8300.



Island Pest Control Services hopes you and your family are safe and healthy during these trying times.

The Bug season is here, it's Spring to Fall.

We are still operating - Social Distancing of course - and providing Exterior Perimeter Treatments for pests.

Don't be BUGGED

Call Island Pest Control Services today
(727)596-7715

**REMEMBER: WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER!!
BE KIND!! AND STAY IRB STRONG!!**

Exp. Since 1986

Lic# JB8237

IRB Resident Since 1987

Family Owned and Operated

GROUPERS

on the gulf

Casual Dining
Outside Seating
Pet Friendly
Beer & Wine

Follow us on Facebook for SPECIALS

Located off of Gulf Blvd. and 14th Avenue
1401 Gulf Blvd, Indian Rocks Beach
www.GroupersOnTheGulf.com



IT'S ALL ABOUT THE VIEW.....

As we meet customers interested in building waterfront homes, the common question is "where do I build to get a great water view"? Fortunately here along the Pinellas Beaches, there are no fewer than 13 municipalities that have residential properties on the water. Of course there are the beach front lots facing the Gulf of Mexico for those families with large budgets. Then there are the Intracoastal lots that are fair priced and offer varying views along the water. Most customers that I speak with realize that in addition to the high price for the gulf beach front properties on the sand, there are two major drawbacks to those properties. First, when it's time to relax and enjoy that glass of wine in the afternoon at your pool, the afternoon and setting evening sun in the west is punishingly hot. Even when inside those homes, shades have to be drawn on windows to keep the heat out. That eliminates the view entirely. Speaking of view, realistically, there isn't really much to look at except the horizon to the west when living on the gulf.

What about the Intracoastal lots? At a much lower price, these lots offer views with "movement" of boats, watercraft, and of course dolphins everyday and occasional manatees. Then too, you can have your boat in the back yard, ready for a fun cruise to a waterside restaurant or fishing. Better yet, most lots on the Intracoastal have their pool and decks overlooking the water to the east, thereby allowing the home to "shade" the important

relaxing areas in the afternoon and evening, free of direct sunlight. That's really a great advantage.

As I stated in my other articles, there actually are many lots available along the Intracoastal, and many opportunities to purchase a 60 year old home to demo and re-build. Many folks purchase the property now, and tell me they are going to build in a few years. That's fine, but they need to realize that inflation in home prices is a constant, and in 3-5 years, a new home will probably cost over 25% more to build. In 2020 alone, housing prices escalated 20.9% in Pinellas County.

Our sales associates can assist in both the lot purchase as well as help in finding the right size home for you, with the amenities you want, at a price within your budget. Feel free to call for an appointment.

... beachfront properties aren't the only option for your waterfront home!

GHD Construction Services, Inc. has constructed over 6,500 homes since 1971. If you have any questions pertaining to new home construction, feel free to come by the GHD showroom, call us at (727) 954-8345, or email to: Info@GHDCsi.com. Meanwhile, look us up on our web site at www.GHDCoastalHomes.com.

Waterfront homes • We build to suit • Build on your lot or ours • Custom affordable luxury

NOW OFFERING
Full-Package Listings
to help
SELL YOUR HOME!

Visit our
NEW SHOWROOM
14995 Gulf Blvd, Ste C
Madeira Beach

Let's get social!




#GHDCoastalHomes
GHDCoastalHomes.com
(727) 954-8345





70 YEARS IN THE MAKING



A loosely organized group of volunteers, residents of Indian Rocks Beach, formed a local fire department in the late 1940s—around World War II. After the population grew over the next decade, 25 prominent citizens, who were actively involved in the community and civic affairs, organized the Volunteer Fireman's Association in 1951. Twenty-two of the members built the fire station in one day on property leased from Florida Power for \$1 per year on 1st Street.

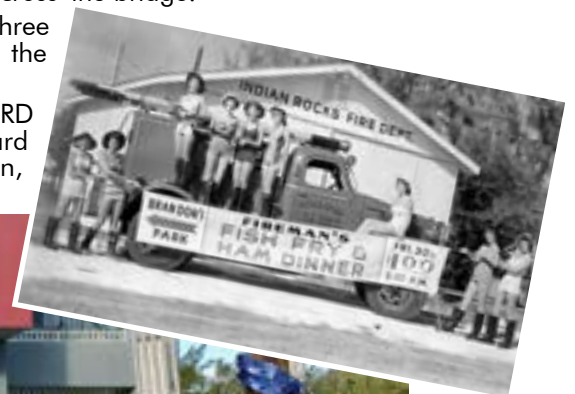
In 1953, community leaders asked the Florida Legislature to create the Indian Rocks Special Fire Control District. Two years later in 1955, the same year the City of Indian Rocks incorporated, they hired the first salaried fire chief. Each residence was assessed \$6 per year to cover the cost.

It was not until 1970 that they began to pay the firemen and most of the volunteers accepted the paid positions. In 1989, the name was shortened to the Indian Rocks Fire District.

The coverage area was eventually expanded to include some other nearby beach communities. In 2000, to reflect that change, the District took the official name "Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue District," as it is known today. The District provides fire suppression and EMS services to Belleair Beach, Belleair Shore, Indian Rocks and Indian Shores in addition to a large unincorporated area on the mainland across the bridge.

Today, the staff totals 44 - 36 of which serve as emergency responders across three shifts. Every day, 24/7, there are ten emergency responders on duty, staffing the three area stations.

Chief Michael Burton (pictured right in the modern-day photo) became the PSFRD Fire Chief on October 9, 2017. He answers solely to the 5-member PSFRD Board of Fire Commissioners, elected by the District's residents. For more information, visit www.PSFRD.com.



Historical photos courtesy of the Indian Rocks Historical Museum.

ELIZABETH (BETS) DRISCOLL - 1923 - 2020



Bets Driscoll, 98, peacefully passed away March 21, 2020, with family by her side. She was one of the early supporters of the Indian Rocks Beach library, and for decades was one of the most active volunteer for the Friends of the Library.

She married Air Force Colonel James (Jim) J. Driscoll in 1983 after both she and Jim had lost their first spouses. They moved to Indian Rocks and Jim eventually was elected to two-terms as Mayor, beginning in 1989. While he campaigned for mayor,

they both walked every street in town talking to residents about Indian Rocks and his stance on issues.

"Bets was a longtime library volunteer, and a fierce advocate for everything concerning books, explains former Mayor R.B. Johnson. "She and her husband, former mayor (and Colonel) Jim, were quite the power couple in Indian Rocks for many years. Long after Jim stepped away from being mayor, they still had considerable influence on the political goings on in this town," he continued. "Bets had a tart tongue but a kind heart and a beautiful smile, and she was utterly

devoted to making IRB the best possible beach community. For several decades she was one of our decidedly colorful figures about town, with a strong, independent point of view. It seems like the passing of an era..." Johnson concluded.

Bets certainly had her own interests and worked tirelessly to improve and promote our city. As an adamant supporter of the Indian Rocks Beach library, she was a member of the "Friends of the Library," and for 30 years, was one of their most dedicated volunteers. Most days you could find her volunteering in the library.

"The library was started in November of 1974. Bets did not start the library but she was a big contributor - as was her husband, Jim," said Jean Scott, President of the Friends of the Library explained. "She continued to volunteer at the library until age 96—2019. "I met Bets in 1993 when I was involved in the Neighborhood Crime Watch and the Homeowners. The Driscolls helped me when I was running for City Commissioner in 1994," she continued. "Bets and Jim were very dear friends to me and my husband George for many years. Bets was a great asset to the city and will be greatly missed."

"Bets and her husband, Jim, ran the used book sale for the Friends of the Library which financed much of our operation for a number of years," remembers Joe Gillesbie a former President of the Friends of the Library. "Later, Bets and her "crew" kept the library open on Saturday mornings. She was very organized and was the chair of the committee to revise the Friends By-Laws. She was a reliable volunteer and worker even well into her 90s. She will be missed by all," Gillesbie says.

ARTISAN PIZZA & SO MUCH MORE
INDOOR & OUTDOOR DINING - CRAFT BEER - COCKTAILS - FINE WINE - FREE DELIVERY

SLYCE[®]

INDIAN ROCKS BEACH
 311 Gulf Blvd
 Indian Rocks Beach, FL
 (727) 408-5272

ST PETE BEACH MADEIRA BEACH
 6340 Gulf Blvd 662 150th Ave
 St Pete Beach, FL Madeira Beach, FL
 (727) 353-3181 (727) 308-7881

SLYCEPIZZA.COM

Yelp, TripAdvisor, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram icons

4 STEPS IN SELECTING A MOVING COMPANY

By Brooke Anderson

With relatively low barriers to entry, there are literally 100s of moving companies across Tampa Bay. So how do you determine the "haves" from the "have nots"? Most consumers acquire 2-3 estimates before making a hiring decision. We asked Brooke and Josh Anderson, owners of Big Man's Moving Company, for some must-ask questions when interviewing movers to compare apples to apples:

Step 1: Interpreting "Licensed and Insured": Companies always say they are "licensed and insured", however there is much more to the phrase. Company A is cheaper than the rest and their "licensed and insured" means they have a business license from the state of FL (Sunbiz.org) and insurance on their trucks. This does not protect the customer. Company B is licensed and insured with workers compensation on their W2 employees, general liability insurance, and cargo insurance. Company B will have a DOT #, and an IM # for intrastate moves, and an MC # for interstate moves.

Step 2: Who is coming into your home? Company A uses 1099 independent contractors (basically day laborers from Craigslist) who can be mowing lawns one day, bartending the next, and moving homes the following day. This information is never openly offered to the consumer. Company B employs full time, professional, uniformed movers who have been drug tested and background checked. They have a history of success with the company.

Step 3: Reliability: Has the mover ever "no showed" on moving day or canceled a move? Red flag!!! There are several factors that can give you peace of mind:

1. Agreement upon booking - Does the moving company send a contract to e-sign upon booking so they must



legally show up? Do they take a deposit?

2. # of Movers - Some companies always send 3 movers on a truck. Why? If someone calls in sick, the move can still go on! This company will never cancel due to lack of manpower.
3. Reliable Trucks - When doing your research, did you see photos of the moving trucks? Did they look newer and well maintained? Another main reason movers cancel: truck maintenance issues.

Step 4: Research: Have you read reviews on Google, Facebook, Yelp, BBB, etc? Moving is a human business and sometimes mistakes happen, but reputable companies consistently maintain a 4.5-5 star ratings on all of the major sites. Has the company won any awards? Is it easy to research the company? Do they have a professional website? How does the owner or management handle disputes?

Big Man's Moving Company has performed over 3300 successful local, statewide, and out-of-state moves since inception in January 2017 and was voted the #1 Mover in Tampa Bay. Bigmansmoving.com 727-772-3458.

THE ORIGINAL CRABBY BILL'S - PART OF INDIAN ROCKS BEACH SINCE 1983!

The Original Crabby Bill's
Indian Rocks Beach, FL

Fresh No Frills Seafood.

DELIVERY, TAKE-OUT, DINE-IN!

WWW.CRABBYBILLS.COM
401 GULF BLVD. | 727-595-4825

MAKING WAVES
 Casual Dining on Indian Rocks Beach, FL
 Fresh Local Seafood Tacos Burgers
 \$1.50 DRAFTS ALL DAY
BEACH WAVES GRILL
 Indian Rocks Beach
 2300 GULF BLVD, INDIAN ROCKS BEACH, FL 33785
 (727) 593-3663 • WWW.BEACHWAVESGRILL.COM

Community News

GREENTOWN KIDS

Submitted by Allie DeVore

GreenTown Kids together with the City of Indian Rocks Beach and Action 2000 hosted IRB's Great American Cleanup to "Restore Our Earth" the last Saturday in April in honor of Earth Month 2021. Volunteers of all ages came and went throughout the day from sunrise to sunset cleaning up the beach from 1st - 28th Ave. Together, we collected lots of trash to help keep our beach and ocean clean and healthy! GTK wants to thank everyone who took the time to participate, as well as Crabby Bill's, A2K, and Island Cove Beads for their donations to our prize drawing. If we all do a little, BIG things can happen.

This May we will be hosting a garden get together in the IRB Community Garden to pick veggies from our Spring crop, create a kid's garden craft, say hello to all our members, and fundraise for our Children's Learn & Play Garden Project. In June, we will be celebrating World Oceans Day, which is June 8th. GTK is a 501c3 non-profit organization with a focus on the environment and a love for gardening and keeping our beaches and oceans clean. We welcome kids, families, and supporters of all ages! Become a Greenie or join our monthly email list to get updates about our upcoming events by visiting greentownkids.org, or email: greentownkids@gmail.com.

BELLEAIR WOMEN'S REPUBLICAN CLUB

Submitted by Sandra Sockwell

For May's meeting, the Belleair Women's Republican Club will host Rep. Nick DiCeglie, a Republican member of the Florida Legislature representing the 66th House District, which includes part of Pinellas County. Rep. DiCeglie, a resident of Indian Rocks Beach, is a small business owner and has been a member of the Florida Legislature since 2018. He will give a post-legislative session summary.

The meeting will be held on Friday, May 7, from 11:30 am to 2 pm at Belleair Country Club, One Country Club Lane, Belleair, FL 33756.

No walk-ins will be permitted. A check for \$26, payable to BWRC, confirms a reservation and should be sent to arrive by April 30th. Checks should be mailed to: Linda Wade, 729 Creekside Lane, Palm Harbor, FL 34683.

Luncheon guests must practice social distancing and observe all CDC-recommended practices, including wearing masks when not seated.

CLEARWATER YACHT CLUB

They are pleased to offer a Summer 2021 Membership program, effective from May 1 - Sept. 30, 2021.

There is no initiation fee and dues are \$200 a month with no monthly food & beverage minimum. This is for use at CYC exclusively and includes daytime dockage at CYC when available.

At the close of the summer membership, the Summer Member in good standing may be offered membership in a class of their choice (Full, Social, or Junior) at the current offer rates for dues and initiation. Prospective members can only take advantage of one Summer membership program.

Call or email the office for more details 727 -447-6000 or office@clearwateryachtclub.org

Chartered in 1911, Clearwater Yacht Club is one of the oldest Yacht Clubs in the country. You don't need a boat to join in their fun. As a private club, they offer monthly parties, waterfront dining, a heated and chilled pool and safe Covid dining.

Beach Trail Lodging
 Located in the Indian Rocks Beach Narrows
 5 STAR REVIEWS Locally owned and operated
 Super clean! This is the perfect place for your staycation or to host friends and relatives.
 Walk to Indian Rock's favorite restaurants, music events, water park, and shops
 Steps to the beach
 Book direct
 www.beachtrailodging.com
 Or text to 727.488.1111

Community News

100 WOMEN WHO CARE OF PINELLAS COUNTY

100 Women Who Care of Pinellas County presented Baby Basics with a donation of \$11,050 on March 25, 2021. Baby Basics' mission is to provide free diapers, kindness, and a sense of community to low-income working families. All monetary donations go directly to buying quality diapers. This charity is simple but so very vital to these families. The group will also receive a \$5,000 matching grant from the Richard M. Schulze Foundation.

100 Women Who Care of Pinellas County is a philanthropic group that provides an avenue for women to join together to bring financial support to local, charitable organizations that have a 501(c)(3) status. Members commit to attending four meetings per year (one per quarter) and pledge to donate \$100 to an elected charity at each meeting. For each meeting, the members have the opportunity to nominate a charity, three of the nominated charities are then randomly selected to give a 5-minute presentation, a vote is taken, and then checks are written directly to the winning charity. Since February of 2013, the group has given \$307,200 to local charities. The next quarterly meeting (with options of both Zoom and live) will be 7:00-8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 18th at Cove Cay Golf Club, located at 2612 Cove Cay Drive in Clearwater. There is a social time from 6:00-7:00 p.m. at the Cove Cay restaurant, where drinks and snacks may be purchased. Contact Brenda George at 727-515-1868 for more information.

INDIAN ROCKS HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Submitted by Linda Dalina

The Indian Rocks Historical Museum would like to thank everyone for the tremendous support of our garage sale fundraiser. Like the saying "it takes a village", we would not have been as successful without the support of the local organizations, those who donated items to sell, stopped by to shop, put money in our donation jars and find out more about our new exhibit "Shifting Sands." This electronic exhibit will provide a look at the transformation of the beaches and the addition of the fingers. We hope to complete the exhibit by Fall 2022. And, a big thank you to Debbie Stover, the winning bid of the Linda Newton Museum cottage painting.

This event not only raised money for our new exhibit but renewed an awareness of the Museum and its importance in the City for the preservation of its history. Some of the "leftover" items from the sale were donated to the Southeastern Guide Dogs for their garage sale April 16 and 17th in Imperial Point.

The Museum hopes to reopen with its normal hours of Wednesday through Saturday 10am to 2pm in May. Thank you to everyone for their support.

FLORIDA BOTANICAL GARDENS

Join them for their 6th Annual Tour of Public & Private Gardens, Sunday, May 2nd from 10 am-4 pm. Docents will lead small-group tours between 10 am-12 pm at the Florida Botanical Gardens, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo. From noon to 4 pm, exceptional public and private gardens will be open for touring at your leisure, via a self-guided map, and using your personal transportation.

Cost is \$40 per person, Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation Members receive a discounted price of \$25. Tickets: www.flbgfoundation.org/gardentourregistration.



Proudly Serving You For 30 Years!

Courtesy shuttle within 3 miles of the shop

Michael K. Schulz, Owner

Bosch Authorized Service

German Imports Corporation
European Service Since 1976

14286 Walsingham Rd. Largo

727.596.1374



AMERICA'S LARGEST ICE CREAM STORE

OVER 120 FLAVORS

TROPICAL ICE CREAM & COFFEE

SE corner Gulf Blvd @ Walsingham Road
Indian Rocks Beach • (727) 674-1500

OPEN: 2pm - 10pm DAILY



Summer Membership Special*

May 1 - September 30

CLEARWATER YACHT CLUB
1911

NO Initiation Fee
\$200 a month
No Food/Beverage Minimum
Daytime Dockage as Available

Enjoy Waterfront Dining, Monthly Members Parties, Summer Events, Heated and Chilled Pool, Tiki Hut, Covid Safe Dining

**For use at CYC exclusively*

830 Bayway Blvd., Clearwater Beach
(727) 447-6000 | office@clearwateryachtclub.org

VISIT NEARBY SILVER SPRINGS - A FLORIDA CLASSIC

Story & Photos by Bob Griffin, Publisher
Have you ever been to Silver Springs? It is right next door to Ocala, Florida.

In March, my wife and I took our recently purchased camper-trailer to a Ocala campground to visited the Springs for the day. Before that, the last time I was there was over 50 years ago when I attended a statewide Boy Scouts Jamboree there.

It is about 125 miles - slightly over 2 hours - from our house in Indian Rocks Beach. It may take a little longer if you are pulling a camper.

The history of Silver Springs goes back centuries. Evidence has been found that the first Neolithic people (Florida's cavemen) lived there. Later, Timucua Indians frequented the springs. The Spanish left relics during their reign (1560 to 1821). Before Florida became a territory, the Seminole Indians lived in the area during the early 1800s.



After Florida became a territory in 1822, the headwaters of nearby Ocklawaha River became important for shipping products and people in and out of Florida. This further developed in the 1850s. Pole barges and special steam steamships made their way from Jacksonville to the big spring and further after the introduction of railroads into the center of the State.

In the 1860s, Samuel Howse bought 242 acres surround the springs. After the Civil War, Silver Springs, as it became known, along with Ocala, began to attract tourists. The area received national attention through tourist journals and guidebooks and became a must-see stop on a Florida grand tour.

In 1870, Hullam Jones and Phillip Morrell fixed a piece of glass to the bottom of a small rowboat inventing their famous "glass-boat boat."

C. Carmichael bought 80 of the surrounding acres for less than \$3,000

in 1909 and retrofitted the tour boats with cushioned seats and canopies.

By 1924, Shorty Davidson and Carl Ray had acquired the rights to the park and improved the tourist attraction by adding gasoline-powered Glass Bottom Boats.

They later added zoological displays and demonstrations.

Now famous herpetologist Ross Allen joined their team and opened "The Ross Allen Reptile Institute" with a reptile show. In 1932 the glass bottom boats were converted to electric motors.

Tarzan movies were filmed at the springs. The first one, in 1935, was "Tarzan the Ape Man." It was followed by five more, all starring Johnny Weissmuller, filmed between 1935 and the early 1940s.

Silver Springs was the set of about twenty other movies and TV shows, including "Rebel Without A Cause," the James Bond movie "Moonraker," "Creature from the Black Lagoon," and episodes of the TV show "Sea Hunt" (1958-1961).

In 1916, "The Seven Swans" was the first movie filmed in Silver Springs. It included underwater photography and cinematography and the equipment for underwater filming was invented in Silver Springs for that movie.

The area around the spring has troupes of wild monkeys. People mistakenly believe the monkeys escaped from the Tarazan movies. However, they were brought to the area in 1930 as an upgrade to the tourist attraction and allowed to roam free on an island for visitors to watch from boats. The owners of the park did not realize monkeys can swim. They quickly tired of the island and left. Today, their population is estimated to be 400.

In its heyday, Silver Springs was the largest tourist attraction in Florida, drawing over 800,000 people per year. At the time, the Florida was still segregated and the owners of the attraction created Paradise Park about a mile from the springs. The recreational facility was "for colored people only," as its sign said. It too had glass-bottom boats and herpetologist exhibits, and drew an additional 100,000 people a year.

Silver Springs began admitting Black patrons in 1967 and closed Paradise Park in 1969. Today it is covered in underbrush.

With the opening of Disney World in



1971 and additional tourist attractions in Florida, attendance started to wane.

The State of Florida bought the land around Silver Springs in 1985 and it is now Silver River State Park, fully protected from commercial development. The State later acquire the attraction, as well.

The condition of the water has been affected by fertilizer run off and septic outflow containing nitrates. This has led to an overgrowth of brown algae destroying the river's habitat. The schools of fish in the nearby Silver River has been noticeably reduced as well.

Today, the number of people visiting the park is a fraction of what it was. Regardless, Silver Springs still operates its Glass Bottom Boats seven days a week, with a nice garden area attached.

The cost of admittance to the park is only \$2. Kids are free. The normal 30-minute boat ride is \$11.



A special 90-minute boat tour operates Friday, through Sunday for \$25; Reserved in advance, though as it sells out quickly.

The park is open seven days a week, even during Covid-19 restrictions and also offers canoe, paddleboard and Kayak rentals. The park does offer camping, but like all Florida State Parks, camping sites are hard to come by.

You should see this nearby natural treasure. It is located at Silver Springs State Park, 5656 E Silver Springs Blvd., Silver Springs, FL 34488, www.SilverSprings.com



Suzette's
...On the Rocks
BOUTIQUE

Ladies Apparel
& Accessories

Brighton.

Suzette's
Too

ALEMIKA

400 INDIAN ROCKS RD. N., SUITE B
BELLEAIR BLUFFS | 727-595-8700



Coastal Aire Design

Home Decor • Curated Furniture
Gifts • Interior Design Studio

COASTAL AIRE O.C.
DESIGN

(727) 286-8686

596 Indian Rocks Rd N. Belleair Bluffs

Mon. - Sat. 11am-5pm • Sun. 11am-4pm • private shopping available



Come visit us at **Crabby's** *Come by Boat or Car!*

On The Pass

Fresh Seafood **Live Music**

Cold Beer **Beautiful Views**

World's Largest Waterfront Bar

Made From Scratch Pizza • Hand Crafted Signature Cocktails

CrabbysOnThePass.com • (727) 300-0191

12754 Kingfish Dr. Treasure Island

Be sure to visit our sister stores on Clearwater Beach!

Crabby's DOCKSIDE **GRABBY'S BAR & GRILL** **SALTY CRAB** **Salty Crab**

MANAGING A SCHOOL DURING A PANDEMIC

By Bob Griffin, Publisher

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair."

Charles Dickens, **"A Tale of Two Cities"**

"It was the worst of times and the best of times," says, of Anona Elementary School Principal Ann Welch, paraphrasing the famous line by Charles Dickens. "This year has been very different for me, the teachers and the children," Ann adds, who is now in her sixth year at Anona.

Last year, the Covid-19 Pandemic began in the middle of the school year—March of 2020. Anona students spent the remaining school year at home tele-learning on laptops and talking to their teachers over ZOOM.

The rapid closure of schools last spring took many families by surprise. Students were asked to learn from home, online, with assignments from the school. This was a new experience. It was not easy to convert homes into classrooms.

"The technology we had to quickly learn and infuse into our lessons is an example of how we adapted to this crazy year," Welch explains. "Our newer teachers became our technology leaders and supported others who were not as familiar with the tools."

The kids returned to Anona in the Fall, but to a school environment much different than they had ever seen. There have been a number of procedures in place to ensure the safety and wellness of students, employees, and ultimately, the entire community.

Anona has 470 students and 72 people on staff, including the front office, cafeteria, security, and maintenance.

"We took every possible step to make the learning environment both safe and effective for everyone - the kids, the teachers, the entire staff," explains Welch. "Their days are different beginning from their arrival until they leave the school grounds," she says.

"The kids spend most of their days inside their classrooms with desks as far apart as possible. They eat breakfast (if applicable) and lunch there" Welch says. "They must wear a mask all day. If they need a mask break - and many do - the teacher lets them take a break, normally outside in the fresh air. They go on bathroom breaks one at a time. At the end of the day, everyone stays in their classroom until their parents arrive and their names are called," Welch explains.

During the first part of this year, there was little or no outside activities. Recently, that restriction has been lifted and the kids get recreation time outdoors under the trees and in the recreation areas. Exercise helps them think better and physical activity is a natural way to reduce students' stress and prevent anxiety.

All these efforts seemed to have worked. Anona only had 15 positive Covid-19 cases among the students and another 15 staff cases and they have not had to quarantine any classrooms or buses. The first staff case was not until November 18. The first student case was a month later. Most cases turned up right after the new year. Welch suspects it had something to do with the Holiday break.

The district maintains a dashboard that lists the positive cases in Pinellas County schools at www.pcsb.org/covid19cases. It is updated each workday and is searchable by location and

date. Additionally, in an effort to keep everyone informed, principals send school-wide messages every time a positive case is confirmed in their school.

Anona has some of the lowest number among all the schools in Pinellas County!

"I want to believe this is due to the support from the children, their parents and my staff," Welch says with confidence.

"This was not easy, but everyone involved knew this was serious and did what they were asked to do without resistance in the interest of the children and learning."

"We also had fantastic attendance," Welch says. "Many schools saw parents keeping their children home and teachers afraid to come to work. It did affect our supply of substitute teachers—many of them are older and dropped out of the substitute teacher pool"

"I want to thank the community, my teachers and staff and all the parents who tried to understand and do what was necessary," add Welch. "This situation is serious and still is on going. We will continue to do what is recommended and necessary until we all get beyond this."

"All and all, I think this Pandemic actually brought out the best in people and our children," Welch reflects. "I am so incredibly proud and appreciative to be leading this wonderful historic school. This was a difficult year no doubt, but in my opinion it ended up being one of our best. The struggles we encountered at the start of the year bought our staff closer together. We had each other's backs and supported one another. We taught each other, so that we could give our very best to our students."

This year, just like last year, there will be no typical "Graduation Ceremony." Instead, the graduation will be a drive-by celebration on June 9th, beginning at about 12:30pm.

"To me, this year's fifth grade class is more special than most. Many students started their first year at Anona when I began six years ago," Welch explains. "They are a wonderful group of students who I have watched grow into talented and positive young people. It is amazing to see the growth between the ages of 5 and 11. We covered an awful lot of ground in those years and I truly appreciate the support I have had from their families."

"Our students have remained happy, engaged, and most importantly are making the gains they need to move on to their next year of learning. It has been truly inspiring each day for me to walk into the classrooms and see the high level of teaching and learning."

"What could have been the worst of times for our school, has indeed been one of our BEST!" Welch concludes.



Anona Elementary School Principal Ann Welch with fifth graders Liam Rock and Jade Darroch

Community News

BEACH ART CENTER

Submitted by Patricia Thomas - Volunteer

Creative Kids Camp returns to the Beach Art Center!

Weekly Creative Kids Camp sessions will run from June 14 – August 6th. Meet the Masters! Our campers will work in clay, paints, mixed media, pastels - in the style of a different Master each session. Each week's theme will revolve around a different artist. Full details are available on our website.

Camp Scholarships Available - Creative Pinellas, our county's local Arts Agency, is again offering "Arts Catalyst Grant Scholarships", which can be used at the Beach Art Center to attend our Kids Camp. You can find details regarding qualifications and how to apply for these scholarships on our website. Quantities are limited.

"Poetry in Motion" - Gallery Show – Runs through May 14.

We invited our Poet Friends to view the artwork and find a piece that moved them. The poems they have written are displayed next to the artwork that inspired it. Our show judge, Suzanne Natzke selected 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners and four Honorable Mentions.

Our poets show is always exciting. We have seventy-three remarkably creative pieces of artwork. Our poets outdid themselves this year, contributing forty-one poems all of which hang alongside the work selected. Please stop in and see this show or view it and read the poetry, on our website.

Summer Plans - The Beach Art Center, our Gift Shop, Galleries and Classes will be open all summer, Monday – Friday, 9 – 4. We also have several Workshops and Art on the Rocks classes planned for the evenings and weekends.

The Beach Art Center is located at 1515 Bay Palm Blvd, Indian Rocks Beach – across from Kolb Park. Find full details on classes, registration, gallery shows and gift shop at www.beachartcenter.org. Also, follow us on Facebook.

LIVING HOPE CHURCH

Join one of their Summer Activity Groups, where they build relationships and community. Activity groups include Pizza Group, Disc Golf Group, Outdoor Activity Group, and more. You can sign up at www.livinghopetampa.org or in person at the church.

Join Living Hope, located at 11633 137th St N. in Largo for worship Sundays at 10am.

FREEFALL THEATRE COMPANY

During the pandemic, the theatre company has hosted a series of outdoor shows that the audience watches from their cars, similar to an old fashioned drive-in theater.

Their latest show *Leonard Bernstein's New York* runs Wed-Sun through May 9. Order tickets at freefalltheatre.com or via phone at 727-498-5205.

The concert revue explores the music of Leonard Bernstein and the city that inspired so much of his life and work. It is packed with beloved hits from shows like *West Side Story*, *On the Town*, and *Wonderful Town*.

This production is on an outdoor stage with audiences experiencing the drive-in style from their vehicles. Combining live musical performance, audio storytelling, and multimedia elements, the audio for this performance will be broadcast to your vehicle via its FM radio. Please note that admission is by vehicle (up to 4 occupants) and general admission within two sections. To ensure the best possible experience for all patrons, vehicles will be parked in the best available spot in the chosen section, based on the size of vehicle.

Da Pollani's Ristorante
New Authentic Italian Restaurant
near the beach in Largo

freshly made in house pasta, pizza and all the classics.
Beer and large wine selections.
Dinner only.
Call for Reservations.

313688 Walsingham Road, Largo
One mile East of Indian Rocks Beach
(727) 239-7855 • www.DaPollanis.com
We offer carry out from the pickup window and delivery thru Uber Eats & SLICE.

LIVING HOPE CHURCH
JOIN US SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 10 AM
Rediscover HOPE.
Experience Passionate Worship, Relevant Teachings, Exciting Kids Worship
April 4th - Special Easter Service
Newly Open!
We would love for you to visit Living Hope Church! You can plan your visit by filling out an online RSVP to our services. When you visit, we will have a small gift for you at Guest Services. We look forward to meeting you soon!

Pastors Josh & Jill Heer and family

HOPE LIVING CHURCH
11633 137th Street N., Largo
Near the closed Burger King Restaurant
727-517-2153
www.LivingHopeChurch.org

How Do They Do That?

DUFFY'S GOLF STUDIO IN BELLEAIR BLUFFS

Last month, Duffy's Golf Studio celebrated its tenth year. John Duffy opened the small golf shop in the Belleair Shopping Center in 2011. As part of Duffy's celebration, he sold the business to Nick Becerra and retired.

Becerra was looking for a golf related business opportunity and saw Duffy's online Tampa Bay sales listing. He was immediately interested.

Growing up in New York, just north of Manhattan, Becerra played golf in high school. He was good and had a scratch handicap and a best ever score of 67. His handicap was .5—basically zero.

He attended the University of South Carolina where golf is a really big thing. "I bumped into Steve Spurrier on the campus golf course on many an afternoon after football practice," says Becerra about those days. "But I did not play on the school's team; I was never good enough to make the team there."

"I do really love golf," Becerra explains. "I knew I wanted to somehow be in the golf business." After college he started looking for



John Duffy, now retired

"Primarily, we analyze golfers and their equipment and help them form a better match," he explains.

"Many people think we sell golf equipment, like tees and balls. We do not. We do however sell clubs. But primarily, we fix, and custom adjust a player's equipment. We do not teach or offer golf lessons. Instead, we study our client's mechanics and adjust their equipment to match their swing," Becerra says.

"Every player should have their loft and lies checked," Becerra emphasizes.

The lie is the angle that the club shaft goes into the club head. Each club has a standard lie angle. Standard clubs can either be flattened or made more upright. Flattening the club will decrease the lie angle whereas increasing the angle will make a club more upright.

"It is important to have the proper lie because it effects the way you contact the ball. If your lie is off, your ability to find the sweet spot on the club will also be off," Becerra explains.

"Most golfers have clubs that are too upright," adds Becerra. "This makes playing golf harder. If the club is too upright, you will make contact with the ground toe first," he adds. "Toe first contact will open the face of the club and the golfer may miss the shot. If the club is too flat, the golfer will make contact heel first. Heel first contact will close the clubface and the golfer will miss to the left."

"When the club has the right lie, you will contact the ground with the center of the club sole, creating straighter and more powerful shots," he concludes.

Clubs can be ordered at a specific angle or standard clubs can be retrofitted to fill player's needs.

"Loft/Lie fittings are the most cost effective way to improve your game," Becerra adds. "I recommend you have a club analysis before you decide the solution to improving your game is buying a new driver."

Fittings can cost as little as \$50 and take about 30 minutes. You can schedule a lie fitting in person, over the phone by calling the store at 330-7830 or online by visiting www.DuffysGolfStudio.com.

Most of Becerra's customers (about 75 percent) book an appointment, but



Nick Becerra, new owner

opportunities. With the help of a business broker, he found Duffy's and bought the business January 1st.

But what is a Golf Studio? And what does Becerra do?

"People who haven't been here before walk in the shop and ask, 'what do you do here?'" Most of them are golfers, of course," Becerra chuckles.



Becerra adjusts a club

about 25 percent just walk in. Many are repeat customers.

Find Duffy's Golf Studio in the Belleair Shopping Plaza, at 2928 West Bay Drive, Belleair Bluffs, next to Panera Bread. Stop by and welcome Nick Becerra to the neighborhood.

FLORIDA'S GULF COAST SEA TURTLE NESTING SEASON

May 1 through October 31

Sea Turtle Conservation Program Supervisor Lindsey Flynn wants everyone to know that Residents and visitors play a crucial role in the extraordinary nesting process.



"There are many things they can do to protect our sea turtles, such as picking up their trash and filling in holes on the beach," said Flynn. "One of the other big challenges we face is encouraging residents and businesses to use sea turtle friendly lighting to reduce the number of sea turtles crawling away from the water or wandering on the beach due to the presence of bright artificial lights. These are what we call disorientation events."

According to the FWC's most recent Disorientation Database as of 4 January 2019, turtle disorientations statewide have been increasing year over year.

"We've been working with Pinellas County Environmental Management, Sea Turtle Conservancy, hotels, and local municipalities to raise awareness on the potential impacts that artificial lights can have on the success of sea turtle nests," said Flynn. "Florida is one of only two primary nesting sites for loggerhead sea turtles in the entire world so anything that affects the nesting here in Pinellas County could potentially impact their global population over time."

Clearwater Marine Aquarium's 2020 Nesting Season Highlights:

- Two green sea turtle nests were successfully laid and hatched. It had been a decade since a green sea turtle nest was found within CMA's survey area on the beaches of North Pinellas. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) pulled samples from the nests to compare their genetic and isotopic makeup with those of nests from around the state to get an idea of how the sub-populations relate to one another.
- 222 nests were observed yielding 10,674 live hatchlings.
- The first nest was discovered in early May.
- Flynn's team increased their observation area from approximately 12.4 miles of beach to nearly 21 this season, stretching from Clearwater to Treasure Island in Pinellas County.

About the Sea Turtle Conservation Program at CMA:

- CMA reports annual nesting data to FWC and Pinellas County. To FWC, the team reports nest and false crawl counts, disorientation events, obstruction events, predation and vandalism. The county also receives weekly escarpment surveys and bi-annual lighting surveys.
- Flynn's team monitors nearly 21 miles of beach, 7 days a week, April 15 through October 31.

Help protect a nest in CMA's survey area by purchasing a personalized plaque. Plaques will be affixed to a nest during the 2021 season. Visit protectnest.org for details.

For more information regarding CMA's turtle conservation program, visit cmaquarium.org.

Cassi & Co.

Classic Modern Apparel

Looking for Spring fashions?




Either Way Stand Out with Cassi & Co Fashions



The Plaza 100, 100 Indian Rocks Rd N.
Belleair Bluffs - 727.585.2011

Lala's



by *Laura Katz Home*




Come check out our beautiful expansion!

**Home Decor
Original Artwork
Gifts & Desirables**

100 Indian Rocks Road North
Belleair Bluffs 727-240.1200

Sunset Cruises
off Clearwater Beach

2 SHEA
CLEARWATER BEACH

Complimentary Champagne Toast
Beer and Wine available
(727) 798-1269
www.clearwatersunsetboat.com

SCAN ME

FIRST LIVE & OUTDOOR
PERFORMANCE OF THE SEASON!

AMERICAN STAGE **POP-UP!**
PERFORMANCES
UNCAGED

MAY 14, 15 & 16 | 7 P.M.
Enjoy a fun evening of celebration and laughter
with songs, scenes and sketch comedy.

Raise the Curtain
on a New Era of Live Theatre

Join us for a celebratory night in support of
American Stage featuring live entertainment,
the unveiling of our 21-22 season,
and additional surprises throughout the evening.

JUNE 11, 2021

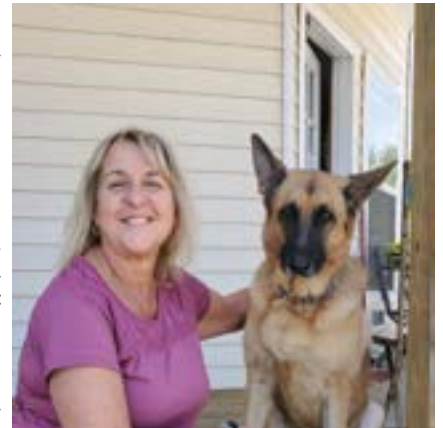
AMERICANSTAGE.ORG

I RESCUED LUNA THEN SHE RESCUED ME

By Cookie Kennedy

As many of you know, Luna is my new girl.

A friend of mine, Vicki Clapsaddle (we've known each other since third grade at Mildred Helms) lost her oldest son Garrett last year. In honor of Garrett, who loved animals, worked at animal shelters, and adopted many dogs, Vicki wanted



to do a fundraiser charity event on the first anniversary of his death and his upcoming birthday. For moral support, she asked me to go with her and one of her best friends to discuss the event the at Pinellas County Animal Shelter, which is just over the bridge on Ulmerton Road next to Botanical Gardens.

As we were getting out of the car at the shelter for Vicki's appointment, I mentioned that I was considering adopting a dog. She looked at me in disbelief because I am usually more of a cat person. In the 45 years Vicki has known me, I have had only one dog.

During the appointment, Jen, the employee at the shelter, was extremely kind to Vicki and very helpful setting up the social media event on Vicki's Facebook page detailing the celebration of Garret by raising funds for the animal shelter. When we finished with the appointment and were getting up to leave, I casually asked Jen if there was a mechanism in place to leave my name to adopt a German Shepherd when one was available. Vicki's face was disbelief.

Jen looked at me and I will tell you it was the most surreal eye contact between Jen and I. She said "I have a German Shepherd right now. She's 6 years old. She is the sweetest dog in the world." I asked to see her. Jen let Vicki and I take her out of the pen and go outside to sit with her. At first Luna walked around, then all of sudden, she turned around came over. I held her face, she licked me then walked over to Vicki and did the same - all the while Vicki was recording the experience.

Vicki sent the video to my son Luke who immediately texted me and then came to the Shelter. Luke is like the dog whisperer Florida style, lol.

We decided to go have lunch while Luke checked Luna out. We brought her home that day.

Luna was a stray. I do not know anything about the first six years of her life. Luke picked the name Luna and she loves her name. She came into my life ten days before my Momma got sick. I have a picture when Mom met her. She petted her and started talking Italian to her.

I am learning as I go with Luna having very little experience with dogs. Everyone tell us I am her person as she wants to be with me all the time. She comes in the shop a lot while I am working. She watches everyone I interact with. I take her for her \$10 bath at Pet Supermarket in Belleair every three weeks. She has a very strong bark.

Shortly after adopting Luna, Momma died. Honestly, Luna saved me during that time. I love her.

MORTON PLANT HOSTS PATIENT'S WEDDING

When we are sick, we expect our nurses to excel in taking care of our physical needs, but often it is the compassion a nurse demonstrates that leaves an indelible mark on our lives. Those nurses who see patients as the individuals they are with fears, hopes, regrets and dreams are the ones patients remember forever, especially when they agree to plan your wedding.



Those are the nurses Raymond Scot DeFlaun recently met when he was a patient at Morton Plant Hospital.

"I was scared and confused when I came to ER, but within 24 hours, the fear went away," he said. "I didn't know my diagnosis, but I trusted every person I met."

Lying in a hospital room for several days, Scot thought a lot about his life and his priorities. He came to the realization that relationships were most important, and his most important relationship was with his longtime girlfriend, Kim. Though he had vowed he would never do it, now he had no doubts about marrying her. He also had decided he wanted to marry her at Morton Plant, where his perspective on life had changed.

Planning a wedding isn't a request nurses receive every day, but nurse manager Melanie Stalbird and her team couldn't let this special couple down. They quickly went into action so they could give Scot and his soon-to-be wife a memorable day. They reserved the chapel, bought a cake, decorated for a mini reception and helped secure the marriage license. When Jessica Tootle, a member of the guest services team who is a notary, brought Scot the paperwork for the marriage license, he asked if she would do the ceremony.

The DeFlauns were married in the Shirley Long Chapel. They brought recordings of their favorite songs, exchanged vows they had written to each other, enjoyed the special reception the team planned, and, most important, shared this special day with the team that showed them care and compassion far beyond what they imagined when Scot came to the ER.

BOATING SAFETY CLASSES

With the advent of COVID-19, the Coast Guard Auxiliary discontinued in-person classes. The good news is they are now approved to conduct online classes. Classes are \$40 per student and include the books, supplemental materials and course completion certificates.

The Clearwater Coast Guard Auxiliary is offering the outstanding "Boat America" courses this quarter:

- Four consecutive evenings 7 to 9:30pm June 22 – 25, sign up by June 12th
- Two weekend mornings and finishing up on two consecutive evening May 22-23 from 9:00am to 11:30am. And May 25-26 from 7 to 9:30pm. Sign up by May 15th

The classes are offered by the Clearwater Coast Guard Auxiliary on Zoom with the same instructors student would have had in the classroom and allowing lots of questions and answers. The boating safety class is required for boaters born after Jan. 1, 1988. Contact the Coast Guard Auxiliary, Clearwater Flotilla, at: www.clwboatingsafety.com, call 727-469-8895 or email at clwtr.auxboating@gmail.com.

Robert Young

JEWELER EXTRAORDINAIRE

TREASURE

NATURAL FROM BRAZIL



CUSTOM DESIGN
EXPERT JEWELRY REPAIR
DIAMONDS & GEMSTONES

**WE'RE ALWAYS
HAPPY TO
SEE YOU**

250 INDIAN ROCKS ROAD NORTH
BELLEAIR BLUFFS, FLORIDA

www.robertyoung.com 727.584.1110

Don't **wait** to look great!

Why wait for the summer when you can
achieve the look you want now!

When diet and exercise just are not cutting it, our non-surgical body contouring and fat reducing options are the perfect solution to achieve the look you want now. FDA-cleared non-invasive CoolSculpting reduces unwanted fat by 40-50% in just two treatments, while minimally invasive LaserLipo is FDA-cleared to tighten the skin while reducing fat by 70% in just one treatment. Both options remove unwanted fat permanently with little to no downtime!

Curious which treatment is right for you?
Call **727-518-7100** to schedule a complimentary assessment today!

Let our expert medical staff with over fourteen years of experience help you achieve the look you want now!
Ask about limited time pricing!

