

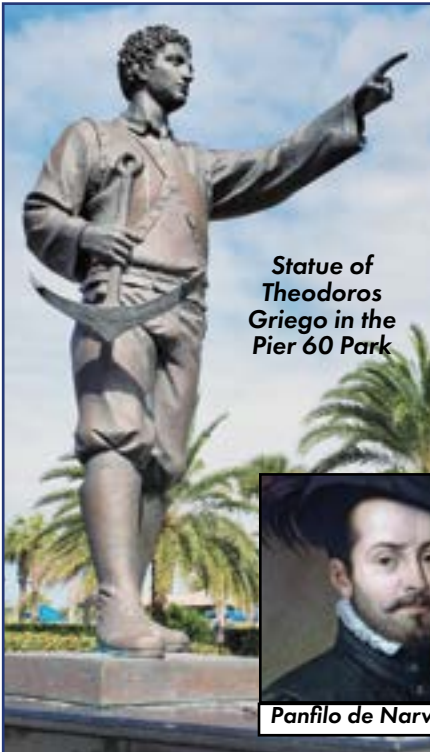
NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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THEODOROS GRIEGO

Pinellas County & America's First Greek Explorer

By Bob Griffin, Publisher



Statue of Theodoros Griego in the Pier 60 Park



Panfilo de Narvaez

If alive today, Theodoros Griego would be over 500 years old. Thanks to the efforts of Belleair Beach resident Michael Servos, Griego's memory is still alive and "resides" near Pier 60 in Clearwater Beach.

Theodoros Griego was an explorer and carpenter by trade. He relocated from the Aegean area of Greece to Spain, where the translation of his name was "Theodore Greek." In 1527, he joined a group of 400 Spanish explorers heading to the New World to look for gold with the permission of King Charles V of Spain.

In April of 1528, the group came onshore on a piece of marsh land due east of today's John's Pass. Led by their captain, Panfilo de Narvaez, a Spanish conquistador and explorer with a reputation for being unpleasant and quite mean, the group had 80 horses and numerous pit bull dogs.

After infuriating the native Indians by cutting off Chief Hirihigua's nose and killing his wife, they demanded to know "Where is the gold?" The Indians who spoke no Spanish, pointed north and said: "Apalachen." Navarez told the men still waiting on their five sailing ships to head north and meet them on the coast. The rest, mostly soldiers, saddled up and headed north through what they called "La Florida" in search of gold they believed was here. Among the foot soldiers was the ship's scribe Cabeza de Vaca and Theodore the Greek.

- Continued on page 6

Also in this Issue:

Community Dental Clinic

They have provided over \$5 million in FREE dental care to low income, uninsured Pinellas County residents. - page 22

Local Artist Dies

A man of many talents, Larry Gerwig was an accomplished artist and active Board Member of the Beach Art Center. - page 19



Caladesi Island Nature Center

The Caladesi Discovery Center is expected to be completed in the next few months. - page 16

Teaching Challenges During Covid

Ann Welsh, Anona Elementary School's Principal, was charged with keeping the school operating safely in a pandemic. How did she do it? - page 28



This newsletter is published by GRIFFIN PRODUCTIONS, Inc. and is mailed to 8,000 households occupied residence and business in Belleair Beach, Belleair Bluffs, Harbor Bluffs, and part of Largo. We are not officially associated with any city government.

PUBLISHERS
Bob & Becky Griffin

ART DIRECTION
Becky Griffin

SALES
727-430-8300

CONTACT INFO
P.O. Box 1314
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BELLEAIR AREA NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

Inside, you will find articles and local information about the nearby area inside. We call it a Neighborhood Newsletter because it is about your neighborhood. It is mailed to the entire Belleair Area - a total of about 8,000 households - six times a year.

Do you need another copy of this newsletter. You may pick up additional copies of this newsletter at all City Halls, Panara Bread, UPS Store and the Belleair Market. Call 430-8300 if you need more than a few.

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

Thank you for reading,
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IN AUGUST**

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Senator Jeff Brandes 727-395-2512

Republican, Dist. 24

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Brandes.Jeff.web@flsenate.gov

Representative Nick DiCeglie 727-588-7090

Republican, District 66

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WATERFRONT LANDSCAPING

By Randy Lee

Several types of waterfront exist in our area. The Intracoastal, the beach, and direct gulf front are all waterfront areas that surround our community. The Intracoastal is two-sided, either on the beach or the mainland. A protected cove can be easy to landscape whereas north-facing fingers can be harsh during winter months. Beach property is anywhere on the beach. Beach properties not on the water still need to address salt spray and wind direction. Direct gulf front is the most challenging landscape. The north and west winds are cold, salty and damaging to most plants and trees.

There are several things to consider when landscaping waterfront: wind and salt spray, the seasons, nesting turtles, drought tolerance, "don't block my view," and plant selection. Wind and salt spray negatively affect most plants- only certain plants work well. Our winters are cold and windy and summers are usually hot and wet. These extremes affect the landscape as well. Turtles are also a concern on the Gulf Coast. It is important to shield most beachfront lighting (both the house and the landscape) during turtle season- they are attracted to light and exterior lighting should be turned off. Most sandy soils on the beach hold little water, so drought tolerant landscaping principles apply here. "Please don't block my view" is an important consideration since people either want to see 100% of their view or have it "filtered" with palms and trees. I prefer to landscape with openings or "windows" of waterfront. The most important part of landscaping the waterfront is plant selection- not all plants work on the water.

Plant selection means right plant, right place. This is important on the beach where the wind, salt, heat, and drought are common. Only specific types of trees, shrubs, palms and

flowers work in this environment.

A proper irrigation system and amending the soil are critical when designing waterfront landscape. Trees that are recommended for the waterfront are Oak, Red Cedar, Clusia and Pandanus. Sea Grape and Buttonwood are also good choices but usually start out as shrubs. Palms that are recommended for the waterfront are European Fan, Coconut, Royal, Bismarkia, Sable and Paurotis. Shrubs that are recommended for the waterfront are Palmetto, Indian Hawthorn, Agave, Carissa, Green Island Ficus and many ornamental grasses. Flowers that thrive on the water include Lantana, Crown of Thorn, Beach Sunflower, Bulbine and Geranium. Landscaping on the beach and the waterfront can be challenging. Follow the above guidelines for a terrific landscape and remember to use the right plant material.



CHECKLIST

- The dry season is here- water accordingly
- Great time to plant tropical plants, palms and trees
- Pressure clean house and clean out gutters
- Redo pots and containers
- Fertilize sod, trees, palms, shrubs and flowers

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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, and the water park as of May 29th returned 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

THE PLUMB CLOSET A facet of The Clearwater Historical Society, the collection includes hundreds of gently used and unique pieces of clothing for sale. Proceeds benefit the Clearwater Historical Society.

All sales are in-person transactions at the Clearwater main Museum. They are open on Saturdays from 10-2. Come see what they have! Get a preview on their Instagram page www.instagram.com/theplumbcloset. The Clearwater Historical Society Museum is located at 610 South Fort Harrison, Clearwater.

LARGO LIVE ON YOUR BLOCK The City of Largo special events is taking "Largo Live" on the road this year! You can now stay local and enjoy free live music, free hot dogs to the first 50 people, and concessions for sale on site. These events are from 6pm-8pm and will feature different, local musicians who will play from 7pm until 8pm.

June 11, at Datsko Park: 3200 Whitney Rd, Clearwater, Band to be announced

June 18, Woodrow Park: 290 3rd St. NW, Largo, Band: Jeremy Thomas

June 25, McGough Nature Park: 11901 146th St. N, Largo. Band: Row Jomah.

BELLEAIR BEACH'S JAZZ IN THE PARK Due to COVID-19 concerns, the Parks and Recs' major city event has been moved until later this year, possibly early October.

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.



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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



SPACECRAFT AT HERITAGE VILLAGE This socially engaged, traveling art project explores creative activities on the themes of Read and Grow led by local artists, writers, gardeners, and educators! Using repurposed locally sourced shipping containers in an open-air environment, SPACEcraft will be presented at Heritage Village on Wednesdays and Saturdays, 10am to noon, now through June 12th. No sign-up required, FREE for all ages, just come as you are for this fun, socially distanced experience. Heritage Village is located at 11909 125th St, Largo.

LARGO'S GOLF COURSE Rumors are swirling around the closing or sale of the Largo Golf Course. The a par-62 "executive course" has been open since 1969 and while the City of Largo admits that the city's only public golf course is not making a profit, they plan to keep it open. City managers say the golf course loses approximately \$100,000 per year. Although it is a burden on the city's finances, the City Council has no plans to sell or develop it into houses or businesses.

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.



OUR NEXT ISSUE IS IN AUGUST If you need another copy of this newsletter, you may pick up one up at all City Halls, Panara Bread, The UPS Store and the Belleair Market. Call 430-8300 if you need more than a few. Read this issue, and others, online at BeachNewsletters.com and follow us on Facebook for ongoing local news.

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MICHAEL SERVOS & THE THEODOROS GRIEGO STATUE, continued



**Jungle Prada De Narvaez Park
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Along the way, Narvaez and his men encountered more Indians who had already been warned of evil men coming their way. They were attacked many times, losing soldiers in every battle while the Indians tried to protect their land and families.

Narvaez's troop dwindled as they traveled north along the west coast crossing the Suwanee River and then the St. Marks Rivers, after they turned west into the Panhandle. They ended up on the banks of the Mississippi River. At this point, they were down to 100 men and no horses. And of course, still no gold.

Narvaez decided to build some boats and paddle away from the land – hoping to find their waiting ships. Unfortunately, his ships were long gone. The ships' new captain assumed Narvaez and his men were long since dead.

Theodoros Griego was the only survivor with any carpentry skills. He supervised the weary soldiers as they cut down southern pines and lashed them together with deer leather and pine tar into four or five 30-foot seaworthy rafts.

They launched the rafts into the Mississippi where they were attacked again. Their bad luck continued with a major storm in the Gulf of Mexico that drowned most of the remaining men including Captain Narvaez.

Upon landing on a beach (probably near Louisiana), Griego went in search of water and was killed by waiting Indians. Only eight of the original 300 men made it to Mexico City. Just four made it back to Spain in 1537 almost ten years later.

Cabeza de Vaca, the ship's scribe, documented the entire trip and wrote a book in 1542 leaving us all the details.

Theodoros Griego is thought to be the

first Greek to visit Florida—and for that matter—America. Other Greek explorers followed, but it would be centuries before large numbers arrived. Today a statue memorializes him in the Pier 60 Park.

So how did that statue end up in at Clearwater Beach's Pier 60? Michael Servos. He paid for it and in conjunction with City of Clearwater, arranged for the installation of the 900-pound work of art.

Servos (73) originally from Greece and the owner of the Freightz Transportation Company, is a 30-year resident of Belleair Beach. He immigrated to the United States with his family at the age of 14 and grew up in New York. He has promoted Greek culture and "Hellenism" in America for almost 50 years.

"Griego was the first Greek in America," says Servos with pride. "I thought we needed to remember him, so I planned and paid for this statue. It was built in Italy and cost \$100,000, which is \$140,000 in today's dollars. The statue was \$70,000; The base was another \$30,000. It was shipped to directly to Clearwater."



Painting of Panfilo de Narvaez and his crew on the beach

Servos points out the base is shaped like a ship's bow. "Theodoros is standing on the bow of a ship, looking for America," says Servos proudly. At the base of the statue is a plaque reading, "The history of Greeks (Hellenes) in America starts

from here."

The City held a big ribbon-cutting in 2005 when it was installed and gave Michael Servos the Key to the City.

"Mike Servos has passionately represented the Greek community in Clearwater and Pinellas for decades. Many don't know it, but Clearwater has the largest Greek population in Pinellas County. I supported the statue of Theodoros Griego because it honored our Greek heritage and the beginning of a strong Greek tradition in the U.S. and Florida. The statue also represented Clearwater's commitment to public art. It perks the interest of tourists and

residents to seek a little more history," says Mayor Frank Hibbard who was also the Mayor when the statue was installed. In addition to the statue of Theodoros Griego in Clearwater Beach, Servos has inspired (and in many cases, paid for) many other statues in the U.S. and in several Greek cities. The list of locations



Michael Servos

is too long to include here.

Locally, he started the Plato Academy Charter School. It operates nine campuses in Florida that teach the Greek language and culture. He is also the co-founder of the Athenian Academy Charter School in Clearwater and in Ft. Myers, in partnership with the Greek Embassy Department of Education.

He is a member and in some cases board member of several social groups devoted to the preservation of Greek heritage. He was founder and first President of the "Foundation of Hellenism of America."

"Mr. Servos has a special appreciation of the culture, traditions, and history of Greece - he epitomizes "Zorba the Greek" whose love of life is a testament to the spirit that is shared by those of Greek descent," says past Mayor George Cretkos.

He has already planned his final resting place—in Greece. He has a tomb waiting for him near the Central Square of his village of Sopik with his name "Plateia Michael Servos" inscribed in addition his personal saying: "Hellenism is the perfect method of thinking that was adopted by humanity."

He hopes to be remembered as an anxious revolutionary who refused to get down from the scaffolding of life by building projects to foster Hellenism. Get more information on Hellenism of America, online at www.Hellenes.com. You can reach Michael Servos by email at Dodonaios@AOL.com.

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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.

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

CONGRATULATIONS!



This is Mildred Helms Elementary IB World School's socially distant 2020-2021 Fifth Grade graduating class. The class of 92 children are the first ones to have had the International Studies/now accredited International Baccalaureate program for their entire elementary career.

Thank you to Fifth grade teachers: Mrs. Francine Campogni, Mrs. Mary Harmon, Dr. Katie Hawley, and Ms. Emily Shelley and Principal Mrs. Shannon Brennan for another successful school year at Mildred Helms!

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PROPOSED DEATH TAX CHANGES Gifting, The New Estate Planning Strategy?

By Edward Castagna Jr. Esquire

The purpose of this article is to share a possible impact on your estate planning, should the estate tax law be changed. This is also a great opportunity to revisit your existing estate plans and look at your assets, growth of assets, and change of family members. You should also even look at the suitability of those named as trustees or alternates.



Death taxes are often a concern as this is a tax on your estate. Currently, there is a unified credit of \$11.7 million, with the effective tax rate at 40%. At first blush, your reaction might be "well my estate isn't that much so I'll be alright." But in reality, that unified credit may be under attack as the new administration may reduce the credit to as low as \$1 million and increase the effective tax rate to as much as 50%.

Would this impact your estate planning strategy? Given the fact that the current unified credit is \$11.7 million, this presents a gifting opportunity. Normally, should you wish to gift your children \$6 million, there would be a gift tax on anything above \$15,000 per child. Thus, the amounts above the \$15,000 would be a "taxable gift." But, you can use a portion of the current estate tax credit, up to \$11.7 million, to make such a gift non-taxable now before the credit is reduced.

Contact us to set a complimentary consultation and discuss how these proposed changes may affect your estate planning. Find Castagna Law Firm, P.A., at 611 Druid Road E, Suite 717 Clearwater, FL 33756 | 727-446-6699 or online at castagnalegalteam.com.

SENIOR SOFTBALL LOOKING FOR PLAYERS

If you are you over 60 and want to play softball, the 3 Score Softball Club wants you. This group of Clearwater players is seeking new members.

The club is made up of about 200 men and women all aged 60 or better....hence the name 3 Score. The oldest players are into their 90s! This is a cross section of working and retired Florida residents and snowbirds, from all walks of life and professions. And, it's not just for Clearwater residents. Members come from as far away as New Port Richey to play.

They have two leagues. The American League plays three times a week and is a more physical group. Depending on the time of the year there are four to six teams. The National League members are 75+ and play on Mondays and Wednesdays at the Sid Lickton Complex, 714 N. Saturn Avenue in Clearwater. That field has shorter base lines and shorter fences. Games are played at 9am, with warm up at 8:30. Teams are redrawn each Monday. Play is a little more casual but no less competitive!

New members are always welcome and added to teams on almost a daily basis. New members should show up at the fields by 8:30 on game days and just ask anyone for one of the league officers. If you want to play make sure to bring your bat and glove!

For more information on joining the 3 Score Softball Club, visit www.3ScoreSoftball.org or call Sid Heuton at 727-238-9891 or Pete Winter at 908-310-6788.

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NEW HABITAT HOMEOWNER

Michelle, a Certified Medical Assistant, has worked for Baycare for the past three years, and has been in the medical field for over 20 years. She is currently on her journey towards homeownership to give a forever home to her three sons. She has been accepted by the Habitat for Humanity program to buy one of their houses in Danville, an area of Largo.



Her oldest son, Erick, is now in college and is studying crime and forensics. Her son, Josiah, loves to play basketball, loves music, dancing, and playing video games. Her youngest, Sincere, loves to hang out with his brother, ride his bike, play hide-and-seek, and watch his favorite show Paw Patrol. Michelle says, "I am a hard-working mother who is always trying to do what's best for my boys. We love to spend time together with movie nights and more."

The family has been in their current apartment for three years and have experienced ongoing issues the entire time. "There are leaks in the living room ceiling when it rains, bad electrical wiring causes breakers to malfunction if multiple things are on, we have termites, and our outdated windows cause a very high electrical bill." While the boys love to play outside, they currently do not have a proper or safe yard to play in. "All of these things cause me to have concerns for my children's safety and health."

Habitat homes are sold to participants at no profit and are financed with a 30 to 40-year, 0% interest mortgage. Normally they are built with a team of volunteers; but due to covid, Michelle's home was built by subcontractors in the community. She helped with the landscaping.

All applicants go through the same process from application to acceptance. It takes about a year, but they set their own pace. They attend twenty homeownership classes on topics like budgeting, home safety and maintenance, plus normally volunteer 350-450 hours of "sweat equity". Each new homeowner contributes \$1000 towards their closing costs. Candidates must demonstrate need for adequate shelter, the ability to pay back a zero-interest loan and a willingness to invest sweat equity hours.

"When I was accepted into the Habitat program, I was excited and in disbelief," Michelle said. "I just imagine coming home every day to our beautiful, safe, and stable home that is built by the love, sweat and dedication of a great community. My home will be our sanctuary where great memories will be made. I will finally be able to feel complete."

"Don't wait to do tomorrow, what you can do today. Tomorrow is never promised," she explained. "These words of self-motivation helped me on this journey."

Since 1985, Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas and West Pasco Counties has served over 850 families and individuals through its new home buyer and exterior repair programs using locally raised funds. This fiscal year alone, they will have built 60 homes throughout Pinellas & Pasco counties and are the second largest Habitat affiliate based on home builds! For more information about Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas and West Pasco Counties, call (727) 536-4755 or visit www.habitatpwp.org.

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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, Belleair Bluffs resident 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 Action2000, 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 Action2000.

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.

BELLEAIR COFFEE FIVE YEARS LATER

Chris Whealan and wife Kammie opened their not-so-small coffee shop in The Plaza in 2016—five years ago this month. Their place has grown into more than just a place to buy a cup of coffee; it is a neighborhood gathering place as well as a meeting place for many area organizations.



Business Briefs



BLUFFS TACKLE AND MARINE OPENS Owners Frankie and Ryan opened their new fishing supply store in mid-May. Whether you prefer fresh or saltwater fishing, this store carries everything including a large selection of rods and reels, artificial and frozen bait, clothing, sunglasses, and tackle; absolutely everything that you need for a great day on the water. They are a 1/2 mile east of the Belleair Boat ramp on West Bay Drive just before Indian Rocks Road, across from Publix. They open at 7am and close at 9pm.

THE SHOP AT RADIANCE OPENS Radiance Med Spa has expanded into the space next door creating The Shop at Radiance. Featuring products from brands like SkinMedica, iS Clinical, SkinBetter Science, ZO Skin Health, PCA Skin, LightStim, Skinchies, Bourbon & Boweties, now all your beauty essentials are in one place. The Shop is open Monday – Friday 10am to 7pm and Saturdays 10am to 5pm. Whether you have problem areas you want to correct or just want to prevent future problems, they have it covered.

BELLEAIR BLUFFS CLEANERS CELEBRATES 40TH

Gary Dawson opened Belleair Bluff's Cleaners in 1981. Back then, Winn Dixie was to his east and Ben Franklin 5 & Dime was to his west and he was the only dry cleaner in town. A lot of dirt has gone through his machines since then.



Wish them a Happy Anniversary when you drop off your dry cleaning. Find them at 2924 West Bay, next to Panera Bread

MORE THAN FRESH VEGGIES Surfside Produce Market, in Indian Rocks, sells 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."

Open seven days a week, 8:30am to 6:30pm, Surfside Produce Market is located at 1401 Gulf Blvd.

JW MARRIOTT GROUND BREAKING Work has finally started on a new JW Marriott being built in Clearwater Beach on South Gulfview Blvd. This is a mixed used concept with 202 hotel rooms and 36 private vacation rental units. Call 727-443-0321 for sales information. Visit www.JWMARRIOTT.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 interiors. Prices start at \$764,400 - but increase \$4,000 with every three sales. Visit the model at 2414 Gulf Blvd. or TheWalkTM.com.

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BELLEAIR BLUFFS NEWS

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MAYOR'S CORNER:

Please join me on the **FIRST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH**. Each month I will visit a different business location, restaurant, condominium, or I will be at City Hall. The location will be presented early enough for anyone interested to attend. This is a great opportunity for residents and business owners who are unable to attend a Commission meeting to meet me and discuss any concerns or simply find out what is going on with the City. I look forward to meeting with you.

The June 7th meeting will be held at the City Hall Community Center. Please call Nancy at City Hall 727-584-2151 by the previous Thursday if you plan on attending to ensure social distancing guidelines.

NEW BUSINESSES:

- Bluffs Tackle and Marine
- Sekushi Restaurant - coming soon
- Radiance Med Spa Retail Store

RECREATION PROGRAMS:

Belleair Bluffs residents have access to **CITY OF LARGO RECREATION PROGRAMS** at Largo residential rates. **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEIR WONDERFUL SUMMER PROGRAMS.** Come to City Hall to pick up your **PLAYBOOK** and Summer camp information.

LICENSES RENEWALS:

Local Business License Renewals will be sent out June 1st. Be on the lookout and remit your payment promptly to avoid late fees! Call Nancy at 727-584-2151 if you have any questions.

EVENT INFORMATION:

FOURTH OF JULY EVENT CANCELLED:

The City Commission decided to cancel the July 4th festivities.

PUBLIC MEETINGS:

Public meetings are held monthly at 6:00pm on the 3rd Monday in person in the Community Center.



NEW EVENTS:

A Fall event and a monthly outdoor market are being discussed. Look for more details to come!

GARAGE SALE:

November 6, 2021 from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. Permit fees are waived and staff will place signage throughout the city.

WASTE MANAGEMENT INCREASE:

Please remember to review your billing statement which indicates an increase effective June 1st. The current rate is \$22.82/month and will increase \$0.85 to \$23.67/month. For specific pricing, please view the schedule on our website.

COFFEE

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BELLEAIR BLUFFS NEWS

QUICK REMINDER - SIGN UP FOR ALERT PINELLAS:

Stay connected. Sign up for Alert Pinellas to receive text, phone and/or email notifications if flooding is expected in your area. Visit www.pinellascounty.org/alertpinellas.



HURRICANE SEASON BEGINS JUNE 1:

Visit our Emergency Preparedness page on our website: <https://www.belleairbluffs.org/hurricane-preparedness> Please take a moment to watch the recording of the Hurricane Symposium, which offers helpful tips and valuable resources. If you think you will require evacuation due to medical reasons register for special needs pick up with Pinellas County **IN ADVANCE**.

The NFIP's Community Rating System recognized the City of Belleair Bluffs as a Class 7 for efforts that go beyond the minimum standards of the NFIP by reducing flood insurance premiums by 15% for residents in a SFHA (Special Flood Hazard Area) and a 5% discount on flood insurance premiums for those residents not in a SFHA. There are many ways to learn about your zone. Please visit our website and review the Emergency Preparedness Links at the bottom or download the mobile app "Ready Pinellas" at your mobile device's app store.

CURRENT WATERING SCHEDULE/RESTRICTIONS:

Visit www.pinellascounty.org/utilities/water-restrict.htm

COMMUNITY CENTER PARK IMPROVEMENTS:

Thanks to a very generous donation from the late David Berolzheimer, an updated park and playground area can be completed. Mr. Berolzheimer owned the Bluffs Plaza at 100 Indian Rocks Road for many years and was a frequent visitor to city hall and the park.

City Administrator Debra Sullivan announced the \$100,000 donation at the November 9, 2020 City Commission meeting. The money is to be used for playground and park improvements. The City was able to obtain another FRDAP grant in 2020 in the amount of \$50,000, which brings the total amount allocated to the park to \$150,000.

Commissioner Shimkus is heading up the planning, which is underway. It will include installing a larger swing area, an adult exercise equipment area and a new children's play area. If funding is available, a gazebo structure may be placed in the grass area outside the playground area.



NEWS FROM PUBLIC WORKS

NPDES - National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Fertilizer RULES

- June 1st – September 30th

Say NO to Nitrogen (N) & Phosphorous (P)!!! The application of lawn and landscaping fertilizers containing N or P are prohibited to protect Pinellas County waters from harmful algae blooms during the rainy season.

- October 1st – May 31st -

Fertilizers may be applied if they have 50% slow-release nitrogen, and they are applied at least 10 feet away from the water.



Tips for Homeowners

- Hard surfaces like roads, driveways, and parking lots drain to our local waterways!
- Any spilled fertilizer must be cleaned up or blown back into the landscape.
- Mow so that the mower chute faces away from hard surfaces or water.
- Keep yard debris out of storm drains ditches, surface waters & roadways. Compost it, bag it or blow it back into the yard.

Thank You All in the *Belleair Community* For Your Continued Support!
-Engen, Chef Emira & Staff




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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.

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?

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Bar & Restaurant News



BELLEAIR CAFÉ CELEBRATES FIRST YEAR Chris and Julie bought Jewel Café July 1st. "We never closed," says Chris Scott, owner of Belleair Market, too. "We signed the papers at the bank and literally opened for lunch that same day." The Café located directly behind the Belleair Market on Jewel Street is also available for small meetings, events, and gatherings.

SUSHI IN THE PLAZA Construction on the new sushi restaurant opening in The Plaza is moving quickly. Owner Frank Manella, a Belleair resident, tells us it is going well and he hopes to be open by July. Manella says, "the new restaurant is called 'Sekushi Sushi' and will have a full liquor bar with plenty of outside dining. We will also have a dedicated area for curbside pick-up."

The restaurant will be at the north end of The Plaza, where AAA Travel was.

18 ON THE ROCKS CLOSÉS Owners Nancy Adani and Doug Thompson have decided five years is enough and will not be renewing their lease on the Indian Rocks property.

"Nancy (who is much younger than I) was undecided at first as to whether or not to continue, but she quickly climbed on board," says Thompson. "I, on the other hand have been in the business for 42 years and decided it was time for me to spend more quality time with my wife, adult children and (soon to be) 8 grandkids as well as my other business interests."

"We are simply leaving 18 On The Rocks and Indian Rocks Beach a better place than we found it! We had fun, met lots of lifelong friends, prepared the best food and drinks possible for ALL of our awesome guests and provided our employees a safe, fun and financially beneficial place to call home," Thompson concludes.

18 On The Rocks closed May 23. It is uncertain what will happen with the property next.

GERSTLE'S OPENS Located in the space previously occupied by Smoke and Barrel, Gerstle's Bar and Grill recently opened.

This is the second location for the Gerstle's. The first has been a fixture for decades in Louisville and dates back to 1924. "We plan to take some Kentucky flare from Louisville and bring it to Clearwater Beach," says Erik White, one of the owners. "We are also bringing that style of food as well as a selection of Kentucky bourbon. We want to keep everything you would find at Gerstle's in Louisville."

They have an open-air atmosphere, with live music every night. In addition, you will find ten indoor TVs, ten outdoor TVs, a 10-foot video wall and a large bar with full liquor.

They opened in March and when fully staffed plan to employ 30-40 people.

Gerstle's is at 735 Bayway Blvd., in Clearwater Beach, next to Brown Boxer South.



LARRY GERWIG: WORK HARD. PLAY HARDER. 1945-2021

By Becky Griffin

Larry Gerwig accomplished many things in his life. He served in the military during Vietnam, stationed in France. He worked for major construction companies building many big things. He was a long time Board Member and Past-President of the Clearwater Jazz Holiday. He was an artist. He loved to travel. He was a husband, married for 32 years to wife Linda. He was a father to two sons, David and Paul, and two step-sons, Mark and Michael. He was a grandfather to eleven grandchildren.

So often people are remembered for their jobs. Larry joined Creative Contractors in 1985. He moved up and eventually become their Executive Vice President. His 50 years of construction experience allowed him to work on projects throughout the state. On most days, if you traveled anywhere in the area with Larry, he would say with his famous grin, "I built that. And I built that over there, too."

"Larry was a trusted resource for clients and architects, and a mentor to many employees who followed in his footsteps. Larry possessed the unique talent 'to build a building in his head'. We will always remember him fondly," says Alan Bomstein, CEO, Creative Contractors.

Larry's last project was the new lobby for Ruth Eckerd Hall in Clearwater. Decades early, he had supervised the building of the original REH as the project manager. His fondness for REH was so great that even while semi-retired, he remained involved on this recent project to make sure the expansion was on time and on budget.

"Larry was instrumental in every construction project at Ruth Eckerd Hall including the initial building. He knew our building literally from the inside out," explains Susan Crockett, the President and CEO of REH. "He approached his profession with an interesting mix of humor, preparation, detail and caution – the perfect recipe for someone charged with making sure every aspect of an extremely complex project is considered and accounted for. Knowing that left brain side of him, I was taken back with the first personal gift I received from Larry. It was a beautiful set of note cards featuring a cigar-rolling senora circa 1950

Cuba, an oil painting signed L. Gerwig." Larry had many passions, and one was jazz music. He was a member of the Clearwater Jazz Foundation Board for 25 years and President from 2004-2005. He always looked forward to October in Coachman Park where he would volunteer and listen to his beloved jazz for four days.

"Larry was a dear friend and committed, long-time Clearwater Jazz Holiday Foundation Board Member. He has been with us at every step as we have grown and evolved," explains Steve Weinberger the CEO of the Clearwater Jazz Holiday Foundation. "We loved Larry - the experience and enthusiasm he brought to the organization and his passion for our mission of Music, Education & Outreach. Larry's legacy will inspire us as we carry on the CJH tradition; we are planning several meaningful ways to honor him."

Always ready for an adventure, for his 50th birthday, Larry decided to learn to sail and bought a sailboat named "Sea Venture." He took many trips on his boat including races to Key West. In 2008, he and Linda moved from Belleair Bluffs to Indian Rocks Beach and kept the boat behind their house.

Linda and Larry instantly fit into the Indian Rocks Beach community. He was a founding member of the Senior Softball League that formed ten years ago. One of his closest friends, Guy Coreno invited him to play.

"I asked Larry if he would like to join," Guy remembers. "He said he had never played organized sports before, but he would be willing to play. I was the pitcher, and he was the catcher. He learned to hit, run and catch. The problem was Larry had trouble throwing the ball back to me. We had no idea where his 95 MPH fast ball was going to end up," Guy chuckled. "Larry would laugh and smile the whole game. Everyone loved his enthusiasm and the respect he had for all his teammates."

Being semi-retired, Larry had some extra time and decided to learn to paint, first watercolor, then oils and perfected his portraits. He joined the Beach Art Center (BAC) for its classes and quickly joined the Board of Directors, volunteering wherever needed. His paintings won multiple ribbons

in various juried shows, all depicting subjects of his various travels.

"It was clear how committed Larry was to the Beach Art Center. He was prepared to do whatever he could to keep her going. He did more than most realized and did it with humility," explained Patricia Thomas, fellow BAC Board Member. "Larry made people feel 'seen.' When he thanked others for helping, it was with a level of sincerity I've rarely experienced. Larry recruited several volunteers and members to the Board and that changed the trajectory of our little art center."

"In March, Larry was re-elected to his fourth term on our Board," said Barb Parker, BAC Board Member. "His professional background was an invaluable asset to the art center. He was instrumental in our success with the recent capital improvements projects. Larry loved the art center and made it a mission to do everything he could to make it a great place for artists and visitors alike. We will miss him greatly," Barb concludes.

Larry loved people and parties, especially his famous Friday parties, though any occasion was a reason for a party! His drink of choice was a dirty martini with extra olives, unless of course it was Sunday. Those were reserved for Bloody Marys. In the last few years, Larry discovered Pickle Ball and loved it and the people he played with.

A few months before the Pandemic, Linda and Larry sold their home in Indian Rocks Beach and moved to Randolph Farms off Indian Rocks Road. During that socially distant time, he bought a "Green Egg" and explored recipes to perfect that talent, too. And he continued to play Pickle Ball with his new "Farm" friends.

Larry Gerwig touched many lives along his journey. He passed away April 21, 2021. A celebration of life was held at his beloved Ruth Eckerd Hall.

We do not remember how we first met Larry. It could have been through the IRB Boat Club, or the Red Lion, or Clearwater Jazz Holiday, or a Homeowners event. All we know is we were soon drawn into his orbit of friends and parties and travel. We too will miss our good friend Larry. Godspeed. Becky & Bob Griffin

Bar & Restaurant News



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VIP OPENS The VIP underwent a soft opening and due to the large Spring Break crowds and new employees, they were only open three or four days a week, while testing the new to them kitchen and training servers and bartenders. But, now owners Nick and Michele Rapisardi, excited by their reception in Indian Rocks Beach, announced they are open seven days a week - dinner only. They hope to start opening for lunch, soon.

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.

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.

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.

Bar & Restaurant News



FORMER GATOR'S LOCATION REOPENS WITH NEW OWNERS

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

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 features traditional American seafood in a casual waterfront atmosphere. You can still go by boat and dock at their back door. They plan to have live music seven days a week and 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."

This is not affiliated with the Original Crabby Bill's restaurant in Indian Rocks Beach.

THE WAIT FOR RED LION CONTINUES Owner Tom George says the building plans are undergoing some revision requested by the county. Once complete, he hopes to receive the 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 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 has been 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.

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The Community Dental Clinic

The calls never stop at the Community Dental Clinic in Clearwater where they provide free urgent dental care for Pinellas disadvantaged adults. Since they opened their doors in 2013, they have relieved the pain and suffering of low income uninsured adults by providing 13,060 appointments and 41,610 procedures equal to \$5.5 million in services – 65% of that in the last 3 years.

To qualify for services, patients must live in Pinellas County with household incomes less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Line and without dental insurance. According to 2018 census data, that describes more than 100,000 people in Pinellas – and that was before the pandemic. Anyone who qualifies can simply call 727-216-6155 for an appointment.

“More and more people are finding themselves with a reduced income and no dental insurance. When they suffer from the pain and stress of a broken tooth, inflamed gums or an infection, they can’t afford to go to the dentist and pay hundreds of dollars or more for treatment,” explained Clinical Director, Sarah Valentine. “If they meet our criteria for enrollment, we try to see them and relieve their pain in 48 hours or less.”



Their front desk and lobby with friendly, COVID safe check in

The CDC enrolls 30 to 50 new patients each month and works to fit them into the schedule in one of their three dental chairs and one hygiene station. They provide the necessary exams, x-rays, fillings, extractions and limited root canals to resolve the immediate pain, then they correct any other issues that could result in future problems. When a patient needs care beyond the clinic’s scope of services, the clinic staff provides contact information for places that can help.

This summer the clinic will pilot an expansion of their services to include

dentures. They also hope to cover oral surgery costs where critically necessary. If all goes well, they will be able to help hundreds of people escape dental and financial devastation – for free.

The CDC is on a mission to improve the oral health and overall health of their patients. Numerous studies link dental decay to serious health conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and arthritis.

“Tooth pain can be so debilitating that people can’t eat or sleep or care for their families. When that pain drives them to our clinic, we often find they need assistance with medical care, housing or food as well. We help with their dental needs, then recommend local programs and services that can provide a safety net of care,” said Executive Director, Pamela Lusi. “We are truly a community clinic provided by the community for the community. We are grateful for the dedicated dentists and other professionals who volunteer their time to help our patients, and for the gracious donations of caring individuals in our community who realize that dental care affects the entire person.”

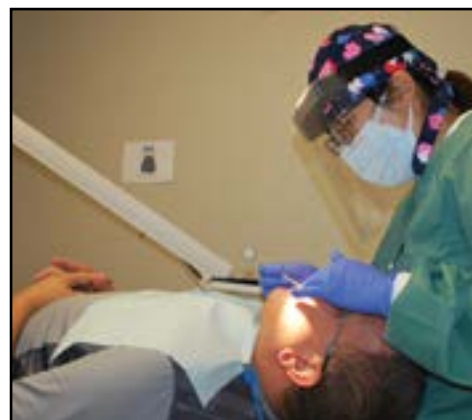
In addition to general donations, more than 300 generous friends participate in the clinic’s annual fundraiser, Reds, Whites & Bites, which provides about one third of the clinic budget each year.

Community partnerships and foundation grants also play a key role in the clinic’s ability to serve. Local hospitals help staff the clinic to provide services for those who turn to the ER for help when a dental clinic can better meet their needs. The Pinellas County Commission supports a Health Department dentist one day a week and a hygienist three days a week.

Grants from thoughtful foundations have funded dental assistants, critical equipment and needed supplies. Caring private foundations and local businesses provide critical financial and in-kind support so the clinic can provide critical community support.

The clinic works to ensure equitable services for their patients. They make the clinic experience very similar to that of a regular dentist. Patients are seen by appointment only, are treated in private rooms with up-to-date equipment, receive a comprehensive treatment plan, and are cared for with the utmost compassion and skill. Dental Director, Dr. Bao-Tran Dao (Dr. Tran), makes sure of it.

“Many of our patients experience great anxiety about visiting the dentist, and that has kept them from seeking regular dental care. We build their trust through



Dr. Tran examines a patients mouth to determine the source of pain.

compassionate service, and give them the knowledge they need to make good oral health decisions.” Dr. Tran said.

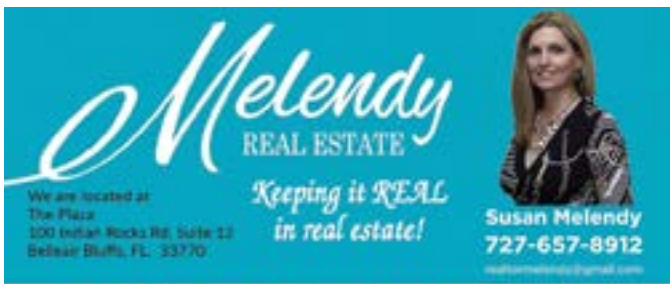
The clinic’s patients echo this commitment to care. Shannon, 48, says she harbored a lifelong fear of dentistry. Now she insists Dr. Tran has taken away her pain as well as her fear of dental care. “She made me laugh! She’s like a therapist and a dentist.”

Patients like Candace, 69, come to the clinic seeking urgent care, but what they receive—in their own words—goes far beyond that. Candace said the way she is treated when she visits the clinic helps her feel better as a patient who can’t afford dental services. “They don’t indicate in any way you are anything but a valued patient. They’re very kind and caring. They know your name, they know what you’re about. I’m just grateful 100 times.”

Compassion, care & community are the guiding lights of the CDC which was founded with heartfelt concern for the disadvantaged in our area.

“In 2009, The Salvation Army commissioned an independent survey to identify the community’s unmet social service needs. We were all surprised to find access to dental care was far and away the most critical,” says Paul Umberg, CDC Chairman of the Board. Through the shared vision of The Salvation Army, the Clearwater Free Clinic, and Arc of Tampa Bay, the clinic was founded in 2011 and, with the help of the City of Clearwater, opened in 2013.

In less than 8 years, the CDC is running at full capacity. They hope to provide more appointments for those who desperately need help by expanding their space to double their impact. If you would like more information or to donate to this important mission, visit www.communitydentalclinic.net or call the clinic at 727-216-6155.



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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.

Community News

BELLEAIR GARDEN CLUB

On May 5, 2021, the Club's new officers and trustees were installed at the annual May meeting of the Belleair Garden Club. The Board includes Jan Bradish - President, Kathe Hardwick - 1st VP, Caroline Kaufman - 2nd VP, Michael Knight - Treasurer, Judy Hanks - Asst Treasurer, Al DeNeve - Secretary, Kathleen Knight - Corresponding Secretary, and Trustees Pat Acken, Daniela Boesshenz, Jackie Ceren, Judy Sorenson, and Carol DeNeve.

Held outdoors at the Belleair Picnic Pavilion, the meeting was a covid safe event. This new Board will direct the club and its philanthropic pursuits for the 2021-2022 club year. The non-profit organization hosts a variety of outreach programs to the town of Belleair and Pinellas County.

The first fundraiser this year will be the annual "Junk & Jewels Sale" in October. Funds raised will support its scholarship program for post high school Pinellas County students and its historic preservation fund. To make a donation to this October sale, please leave a message at 727-586-4021 or visit the website www.belleairgardenclub.com.

BLUFFS BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Social Hours begin at 5:30pm. To get involved, call Bonnie Trembulak at 686-8797 or Larry Bell at 644-9197, visit www.BBAStrong.com or email info@BBAStrong.com

BELLEAIR WOMEN REPUBLICAN CLUB

Belleair Women's Republican Club will host Ed Hooper, Republican member of the Florida Senate, as its June speaker. A resident of Clearwater, Senator Hooper retired after 28 years of municipal service, 24 of which were in the Clearwater Fire Service. He served as a Clearwater City Commissioner from 1996-2000, was elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 2006 & then served as Majority Deputy Whip from 2008-2010. He has been a member of the Florida State Senate since 2018.

The meeting will be Friday, June 4, from 11:30 am-2 pm at Belleair Country Club, One Country Club Lane, Belleair. No walk-ins will be permitted. A check for \$26, payable to BWRC, should be mailed to: Linda Wade, 729 Creekside Lane, Palm Harbor, FL 34683.

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

THE WELCOME NEWCOMER CLUB

The Welcome Newcomer Club is a social organization that meets the first Tuesday of each month at different venues. The June lunch will be on the first at the Cove Cay Country Club at 11:30 am. Lunch will cost \$28. In lieu of a program Bingo will be played. RSVP to Carol Stephenson 734-558-9543 or carollynneparas@gmail.com.

The WNC will meet Tuesday, July 6 at Countryside Country Club at 11:30 am. The program begins at noon with lunch at 12:30 pm. Lunch is \$34.50. RSVP to Carol Stephenson 734-558-9543 or carollynneparas@gmail.com by June 29, 2021.

ISLAND ESTATES WOMEN'S CLUB

The Island Estate Women's Club (IEWC) proudly announced their 2021 Scholarship Winners. The club will be awarding eight Scholarships to deserving young ladies graduating from Clearwater High School this year. Each scholarship winner will receive a \$3,000 scholarship, to be used at the college of their choice, for a total of \$24,000 awarded! To learn more visit www.islandstateswomensclub.com.

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BEACH ART CENTER

Creative Kids Camp Returns

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.

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.beachart-center.org. Also, follow us on Facebook.

CLEARWATER YACHT CLUB

They are pleased to offer a Summer 2021 Membership program, effective through 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. As a private club, they offer monthly parties, waterfront dining, a heated and chilled pool and safe Covid dining.

100 WOMEN WHO CARE OF PINELLAS COUNTY

Brenda George and Julie Webster started "100 Women Who Care of Pinellas County" in February 2013 to raise money for local charities. The group has collectively given away \$307,200 in the last eight years. "It has been enlightening to learn about so many charitable groups," says Julie.

100 Women Who Care provides an avenue for women to make a significant impact on local charities. Members commit to attending only 4 meetings per year, and pledge to donate \$100 directly to an elected charity at each meeting. The charities are nominated and voted on by the members. The goal is to have 100 or more members, resulting in \$10,000 for the organization selected at each meeting. The founder of Best Buy, Richard M. Schulze's foundation can match up to \$5,000 of the group's donation. The concept is modeled after the original 100 Women Who Care, started in 2006 by Karen Dunigan, from Jackson, Michigan. Because it is so simple and effective, it has been implemented throughout the world. "The most exciting part is that we make a bigger impact when we all come together," says Brenda.

For more information, please contact Brenda George at (727) 515-1868 or Julie Webster at (813) 760-4749 or email them at 100WWCPinellasCounty@gmail.com. The group can also be found on Facebook at 100+ Women Who Care– Pinellas County.

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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.

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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



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**FLORIDA'S GULF COAST SEA
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 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.

IS YOUR CAR'S AIR CONDITIONING READY FOR SUMMER?

By Keith Ringel, Moonlight Automotive General Manager

Florida's heat is upon us and it is time to get your car's air conditioning system checked to make sure you can stand the heat and stay comfortable during your commute.

Too often, when a system isn't cold enough, people think "I just need more freon in my system." They head to the parts store and purchase a recharge kit, connect it to their car and push the button.

What most do not know is a store bought freon kit is not the same as professional freon. Kits that can be sold to the consumer contain a "stop leak" additive that can cause expensive damage to your air conditioning system's major components, such as your compressor. Only a licensed professional can purchase regular freon. Also, if you overcharge your system with freon, it will not cool properly.

If you do DIY it, most repair shops will see a stop leak is in your system and will refuse to service the vehicle - stop leak can damage their equipment as well.

It is a best practice to have your system serviced by a knowledgeable professional able to leak test and determine any failure in the system, properly replace the part, and recharge your system to the correct level of freon and refrigerant oil to lubricate the moving parts. Too little, or too much refrigerant oil, will cause the compressor to fail.

Air conditioning is expensive. Do not make a mistake that could cost you even more. See a pro today and have your system checked properly. Moonlight Automotive would be happy to service your system. We are located at 1172 Turner Street in Clearwater. If you have any questions, you can reach me at 727-446-1800.

CLOTHES TO KIDS NEEDS CLOTHING

Clothes To Kids (CTK) has been open and providing clothing to school children in need throughout the pandemic. Our three CTK Stores greatly need more school clothing and shoes. CTK needs new and gently used clothing and shoes, as well as financial donations to buy needed clothing when our inventory is very low. We need packaged underwear and socks, boys' and girls' pants and shorts, tops, uniform pants and shirts, dresses and shoes. Each year Clothes To Kids clothes more than 11,000 low-income and in crisis school children, PreK-4 to 12th grade for FREE. That means they start with small clothes and shoes and continue to clothe the young men and women into high school as well. Please check your closets and help the children in Hillsborough and Pinellas by donating today!

Children who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch or in crisis are eligible to shop with us. Make an appointment by calling 727-441-5050 or visiting clothestokids.org/shop-with-us. Each shopping bag includes 5 pairs of new underwear, 5 pairs of new socks, 5 tops, 4 bottoms (pants or shorts), 1 dress (optional) and a pair of shoes, totally free! If the child attends a uniform school, they may receive 3 uniform tops and 2 bottoms.

Donations: Please go through your closets and donate any gently used school clothing and shoes for children PreK-4 to 12th grade. Monetary donations can be sent to Clothes To Kids, 1059 N. Hercules Avenue, Clearwater, FL 33765. A \$50 donation provides one child a week's worth of school clothing. Donations may be dropped off from 9 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday at any store: Tampa - 5011-H West Hillsborough Avenue, Clearwater - 1059 N. Hercules Avenue and St. Pete - 2168 34th Street South. For more information, please call 441-5050 or visit www.clothestokids.org.

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