

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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Magazine

FLORIDA TURNS 200

By Bob Griffin, Publisher

Florida has a birthday this year and it is a big one – two hundred years! On March 30, 1822 Florida became an official territory of the United States.

The process of becoming a territory was long. It began in 1513 when Spain owned Florida after Ponce de Leon landed on Florida's east coast and declared the land to be the property of Spain. He named it "La Florida," meaning "Land of Flowers."

In addition to Florida, Spain claimed most of today's southeastern United States—as far north as North Carolina, and as far west as the Pacific Ocean. Spain owned Florida until 1819 - about 300 years - except for a twenty-year period (1763-1783) when they traded it to Great Britain.



During those twenty years, the British attempted to govern Florida as two colonies—East Florida with St. Augustine as the capital and West Florida with Pensacola as its capital. The British hoped to create a strong economy based on exports and traded with the local Indians and Cubans.

Florida remained a British Colony during the American Revolution (1775-1783). During the war, Spain sided with France in support of the Colonists and invaded Pensacola in 1781.

After the war, Great Britain traded Florida back to Spain and the English fled leaving the area "de-populated and unguarded." Spain's reoccupation consisted of some government officials and soldiers—but few settlers.

To improve things, they encouraged Spanish and American citizens to settle on the lands for free, as long as they signed a loyalty oath to Spain.

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Two Milestones for the Mayor

Indian Rocks Beach Mayor Joanne "Cookie" Kennedy celebrates 35 years in business as she begins her third term in office - page 10

Learn Italian at Beach Art Center

Interested in learning to speak Italian? Retired sports anchor Roberto Alvarez brings his Italian class to the Beach Arts Center - page 12



Salt Rock Grill Turns 25

The legendary Indian Shores staple opened on April Fools' Day in 1997. - page 13

Sugar Sands Returns in 2022

The Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival will be April 8-24. This year's theme is "SANDimals - An Animal Adventure." - page 7

CREDITS



This newsletter is published by Magriff Productions, LLC. 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.

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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, and 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..

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

Thank you for reading,

Lora & Pete Magnani 813-239-6862
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SEE YOU AGAIN IN MAY!



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MAYOR - Cookie Kennedy

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EMERGENCIES: 9-1-1

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Karen Seel 464-3278

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Rick Scott 202-224-5274

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AREA UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE:

Charlie Crist 202-225-5961

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

www.Crist.House.Gov

CALENDAR OF HOLIDAYS & EVENTS

As always, this is subject to change.

MARCH

- Mardi Gras - Fat Tuesday 1
- Ash Wednesday 2
- Lent Begins 2
- Music on the Bay Whiskey Joe's 2-10
- Strawberry Festival Plant City 3-13
- HOB Beerfest Dunedin 4-5
- 17th AV Park Cleanup A2K 5
- Belleair Sunset 5K and Fun Run 5
- International Women's Day 8
- City Commission Parking Discussion 8
- Gasparilla Film Fest Tampa 10-13
- Largo Shamrock Run at Ulmer Park 12
- Spring Break Pinellas Schools 12-20
- Daylight Savings Time Begins 13
- St. Patrick's Day 17
- Valspar Championship 17-20
- Rotary Pancake Breakfast 19
- First Day of Spring 20
- St Pete Beach Craft Festival 21
- No Public School 21
- Rotary Runs the Beach 26
- IRB Greenfest 26
- Florida's 200th Birthday 30

APRIL

- April Fools' Day 1
- Dunedin Highland Games 2
- Tour the Botanical Gardens 2
- Ramadan Begins 2
- Indian Rocks Beach Garage Sale 2-3
- Sugar Sand Festival Pier 60 8-24
- Paw Fest Largo Central Park 9
- 12th AV Park Cleanup A2K 9
- Holocaust Remembrance Day 12
- City Commission Meeting 12
- Taxes Due 15
- Good Friday 15
- No Public School 15
- Mainsail Art Festival Vinoy Park 16-17
- Indian Rocks Easter Egg Hunt 16
- Easter Sunday 17
- Dyngus Day 18
- Patriots' Day 19
- HOA Mix & Mingle Chicago Jaqx 21
- Administrative Professionals' Day 21
- Earth Day 22
- IRB Beachfest 26
- Arbor Day 30



Chef Isaias' COASTAL CRAB CAKES SPECIAL RECIPE

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 lb lump crab meat
- 1 cup of Ritz crackers crumbs
- 1 tbsp creole seasoning
- 1/2 cup mayo
- 6 stalks of green onion
- 1/2 cup panko
- 2 oz mustard
- 1 red bell pepper
- Dash of salt
- Dash of cayenne pepper
- Juice from 1 lemon
- 2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 2 eggs
- 2 tbsp chopped parsley

DIRECTIONS:

1. Finely chop red bell pepper and green onion.
2. In a large bowl mix well the mayo, creole seasoning, mustard, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, eggs, parsley, red bell pepper, and green onion.
3. Add the crab meat, Ritz crumbs, panko, salt, and cayenne pepper to the mix. Fold the ingredients together slowly and carefully.
4. Form into 6 patties.
5. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, coat the pan with oil and heat until simmering. Add crab cakes and cook, in batches, until golden and crispy.

DON'T WORRY, BE CRABBY!

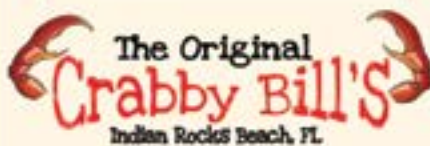
Monday	11AM-10PM
Tuesday	11AM-10PM
Wednesday	11AM-10PM
Thursday	11AM-10PM
Friday	11AM-12AM
Saturday	8AM-12AM
Sunday	8AM-10PM

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Did You Know

CHOOSE BAMBOO

According to industry experts, a single 40 foot pine tree makes almost 1,500 rolls of toilet paper. The fastest growing pines grow up to two feet a year, meaning it takes twenty years for each harvested tree to regrow and make another 1,500 rolls.



Bamboo, however, is the fastest-growing plant in the world and can grow up to 35 inches per DAY or 1.5 inches per hour! That is not a great thing in your yard, but the fact that it's both soft and strong, as well as highly renewable, makes bamboo a premier toilet paper and paper towel material. Because it grows so quickly, bamboo can be replenished almost immediately after harvesting.

Bamboo paper towels and toilet paper are now available in most local grocery stores. Give it a try.

GOT HAZARDOUS WASTE? Do you know what Pinellas County considers Hazardous Waste? It ranges from chemicals (paint) to electronics (computers and monitors). Do not throw it in the trash can or dumpster, instead take it to the County's Hazardous Waste Center in north St Petersburg.



(Visit the web site below to see the complete list of what qualifies.) They want to keep your waste out of our landfills. The county invites businesses to drop off electronics and chemicals on the second Wednesday of every month (from 9am to 4pm). Residents can drop off their waste at no charge. The HEC-3 plant is located at 2857 110th Avenue N, St.

Petersburg and is open 7 days a week. See their web site, PinellasCounty.org/BizWaste or call (727) 464-7500.

CMA CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY Clearwater Marine Aquarium turns 50 in 2022 and invites the community to join their celebration. Veterans will receive discounted "Appreciation Admission" tickets throughout the year, and everyone can visit the aquarium free of charge on their own birthday. The "Legends of the Deep" exhibit has been extended through April 30th, featuring a multimedia exhibition that highlights living, prehistoric and mythological creatures that have become legends and folklore. Visit cmaaquarium.org for info and tickets.



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and More...

SPC TO RECEIVE \$1 MILLION GRANT Bank of America awarded St. Petersburg College a \$1 million grant on January 25th to support the job placement of students who are near the end of their educational pathway, with a focus on students of color and those struggling financially to achieve their career goals. SPC is projected to place a minimum of 500 students into high-wage, in-demand careers over the next three years. U.S. News and World Report ranked SPC Number One for Best Online Bachelor's in Business, and third for Best Online Bachelor's Program Overall. The eight-week spring term begins March 14th.

ENROLL NOW FOR AMBULANCE COVERAGE

Enrollment applications are still available for the 2022 Sunstar FirstCare Ambulance Membership. Enroll now to receive a full year of financial help with out-of-pocket expenses for ambulance transportation.



The estimated average cost of a single ambulance transport is \$796. Annual membership fees for the Sunstar FirstCare Ambulance Membership plan are \$83 for a Single Membership and \$125 for a Family Membership. Membership covers 100% of expenses associated with deductibles and co-payments and 50% of medically necessary trips denied by insurance. Uninsured members receive a 20% discount on medically necessary ambulance transportation. In 2020, the membership plan saved residents an average of \$180 per transport. For more info and plan coverage, call (727) 582-2008 or visit pinellas.gov/membership.

MEET SPOT, THE NEWEST ST PETE PD K9

The St. Petersburg Police department introduced the most recent addition to its K9 team. SPOT is a remote-controlled robotic dog that can climb stairs, open doorknobs, and move over rough or uneven terrain.



It can be used to mitigate risk to human First Responders in life-threatening situations including active shooters, hostage situations, search and rescue in unstable buildings, biological or chemical hazards,

mass casualty incidents and natural disasters. SPOT features an intercom and camera so its operator can see and communicate with those in front of it. SPOT will also be available for Fire/Rescue situations. The program was financed completely through a donation by The Speer Foundation.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Lora and I value your input. Is there something you would like to see in this news magazine or you any feedback, please let us know by emailing pete@magriffproductions.com. If you need another copy of this newsletter, you may pick up one up at Beach Arts Center, the Library, USA Grocery, Beach Welcome Center, or CVS. Find us online at BeachNewsletters.com and follow us on Facebook for ongoing local news.

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HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO FLORIDA, continued

Beginning in about 1790, people from Georgia and South Carolina began moving into northern Florida. They were known as "Patriots."

Florida also became a haven for escaped slaves from southern plantations, specifically in southern Georgia. The Spanish offered slaves freedom, if they converted to Catholicism and agreed to serve in the Spanish military. Although Spain later reversed that policy, escaped slaves continued to flee to Florida where they were sheltered by Indians from the Lower Creek tribes of Alabama and Georgia. The slaves and Indians eventually merged and become known as The Seminoles Indians.

Spanish authorities never effectively policed the border and immigration from the north continued unchecked. The residents began to fight with the Seminoles. Rouge British traders provided guns and ammunition to the Seminoles escalating the problems. Anarchy reigned over most of Florida.

President James Madison and his Secretary of State James Monroe secretly plotted to seize Florida for the United States. They used the excuse that the Spanish were not able to "control anarchy and protect American citizens there."

In January of 1811, Congress passed a secret act of acquisition for Florida when they were told it would "support local revolts against Spanish oppression."

In March of 1812, the United States invaded northern Florida in "The Patriot War of 1812." The Seminoles joined with the Spanish, raiding homes and attacking Patriots and their sympathizers. It was not popular with Congress or the public causing President Madison to recall the troops and apologized to Spain. By May of 1814, the Patriot movement had collapsed.

Relations between the United States and England deteriorated, culminating with the War of 1812. Though the U.S. had fought many battles with Spain, this time Spain sided with Great Britain. England and Spain were defeated and the U.S. annexed land west of Florida leading to the creation of Alabama and Mississippi.

Many British loyalists sought refuge in the Florida territory, even though it was owned by the Spanish. They built a fort north of Apalachicola that had several names before eventually being called "Negro Fort" because it primarily housed runaway slaves and Indians.

The American government slowly expanded toward the Pacific, but they had their eye on Florida. They did not like Spain owning land adjacent to its young country. Thomas Jefferson predicted that "the United States could not keep its hands off of Florida."

Spain was at war with dozens of countries - all at the same time - including Great

Britain, France, Russia, Prussia, Austria, Peru, Ecuador, Granada and even Mexico. And they were running out of money.

Florida was costly to Spain both in terms of money and manpower. Their forts throughout Florida, including in St. Augustine, Pensacola, St. Marks, and Key West, did not have enough soldiers.

There were constant border disputes along the loosely defined Georgia and Mississippi borders. When the Seminole Indians began attacking American citizens on their own property, the United States started to take it seriously.

In 1816, General Andrew Jackson sent Lieutenant Colonel Duncan Clinch to Florida to look for slaves and fight renegade Indians. He attacked Negro Fort to capture runaway slaves hiding there.

The shelling of the fort killed 270 soldiers, women and children and caused an international incident with Spain. President Madison withdrew the troops and once again apologized to Spain.

Two years later, due to increased hostilities with the Seminole Indians in South Georgia and north Florida, now President James Monroe asked General Andrew Jackson to go to Florida and fight the Indians; he gladly accepted.

Having fought in other Spanish conflicts involving natives, fugitive slaves and settlers, Jackson, was very familiar with Florida's problems. He hated the Spanish, and he hated the Indians. Virtually with no oversight, he invaded Indian strongholds from Pensacola to St Augustine.

Jackson destroyed Seminole Villages in Mikasuki on the Suwannee River, then St. Marks. He captured and executed two British traders, who traded with the Indians - another international incident. Then he marched to Pensacola.

The Spanish surrendered Fort San Marco (St. Marks), Fort Barrancas and finally Spain's primary Florida stronghold Pensacola, all coastal forts.

President Monroe ordered Jackson to retreat. Jackson declared victory, returned Pensacola to the Spanish government, and went home to Nashville, Tennessee where he announced he was "officially retired" from public service.

The Spanish and British were furious, as were many in Congress. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams tried to smooth things over. He was already talking to his counterpart in Spain, Luis de Onís y Gonzalez-Vara about their North American relationship. They negotiated the "Adams-Onís Treaty," also known as the "Transcontinental Treaty."

It was signed on February 22, 1819, but needed to be ratified by both countries.

Spain did so on October 24, 1820, the United States four months later.

The U.S. received Florida under Article 2 of the Treaty. With Article 3, the U.S. also received Texas, the Louisiana Purchase, and the Oregon Territory. All claims to Texas were ceded, which became part of the Mexican territory in 1821.

On March 3, 1821, President James Monroe authorized United States' forces to take possession of Florida and provide for its initial governance.

Few people lived south of a line running from Pensacola to St. Augustine. The population was estimated to be about 12,000 people—50% of which were Black and/or Indian. Some Spanish residents left for Cuba or Spain, while others stayed and became U.S. citizens.

Monroe tapped retired General Andrew Jackson to return to the territory and supervise Spain's military exit. Jackson was an obvious choice. He was nearby, available, knew the territory, and hated the Spanish. His first act was to jail the reigning Spanish Governor until he agreed to leave peacefully.

Jackson served as temporary governor from March until the end of the year, although he considered his work done after three months and returned to Tennessee. He left his right-hand man, Robert Call in charge and recommended he be appointed the next governor.

Not taking Jackson's advice, Monroe appointed William Pope DuVal to be the Florida Territory's first official governor. Soon thereafter, Tallahassee was established as the capital, for no other reason than it was half-way between Pensacola and St. Augustine.

Once it was an official territory, Americans flocked to Florida in search of free land and a better life. Most settled along the coasts or major rivers. The Seminoles did not like all these new neighbors, leading to three Seminole Wars - 1816-1819, 1835-1842 and the final one in 1855-1858.

The second war occurred after Congress passed the "Armed Occupation Act of 1842" giving citizens 160 acres if they settled the land, cleared five acres, and fought the Indians as needed. So many signed up - over forty in Pinellas County alone - the Act was repealed in 1844.

By 1840, the population of Florida had swelled to over 55,000 people, and most wanted to become a state. A constitutional convention was held in 1838 near Apalachicola, to draft a document for statehood. Seven years later, in March of 1845, Congress granted Florida statehood and it became the twenty-seventh state in the Union. ■

PIER 60 SUGAR SAND FESTIVAL RETURNS IN 2022

The Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival returns to bright and beautiful Clearwater Beach in the spring of 2022. Event organizers are thrilled to announce the festival's return April 8 to 24, 2022. From architectural masterpieces created from Clearwater's famous sugar sand to concerts, performers, and daily entertainment, the Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival is a fascinating event attracting visitors from around the world each year. The festival returns to Clearwater Beach in 2022 for its eighth and biggest year yet with the theme "SANDimals, An Animal Adventure."



Fourteen world-class artists will craft elaborate sand sculptures from Clearwater's internationally famous sugar sand. The works of art will be on display in a 21,000-square-foot structure. More than 1,000 tons of Clearwater sand takes on a new life, bringing visitors on a "SANDtastic" adventure. The festival is a joint effort between Sunsets at Pier 60 Daily Festival, a 501(c)3 organization and the city of Clearwater.

Tickets are on sale now. General admission tickets cost \$12 per person. Ages 3 and younger are free. Skip the line, and buy online at SugarSandFestival.com/p/tickets.

Discounted tickets for military personnel, police officers, firefighters, teachers and healthcare workers can be purchased for \$10 each on "Frontline Fridays," which are April 8, 15 and 22. These discounted tickets will be available at the gate only with proper identification. Other tickets can be purchased online.

Baystar VIP Lounge tickets are on sale for \$60 and include:

- A fast lane entrance and ticket admission to the Sugar Sand Walk sculpture exhibit
- A complimentary souvenir photo
- An admission to the Baystar VIP Lounge
- Three beer, wine or seltzer beverages
- Two soda or bottled water beverages
- A swag bag, which includes an insulated cooler tote, a festival-themed T-shirt, and a plush souvenir towel.
- Access to air-conditioned VIP rooms
- Warm, assorted appetizers from 6:30 to 8:30 pm

The Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival is an annual event attracting visitors from around the world and this upcoming event will be the festival's eighth and biggest year yet on bright and beautiful Clearwater Beach.

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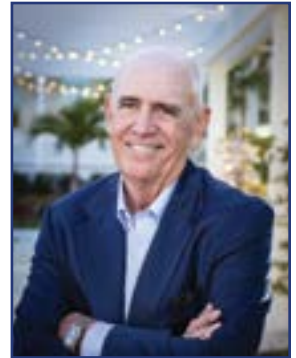
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TAX CHANGES FOR 2022

by Ray Ferrara, ProVise Management Group

Last year there was an abundance of proposed tax changes. Many, although not all, were aimed mostly at the wealthy. Many overreacted and made hasty decisions about what “might” happen and as it turned out didn’t. But that doesn’t mean changes did not occur. For those still working, the Social Security tax of 6.2% is now applied to \$147,000 of wages. That means those earning this amount will pay \$260 more.



The amount that can be contributed to retirement plans increased for 401k, 403b, most 457, and Thrift Savings Plan, but not those for an IRA. Those limits remain \$6000 for those under age 50 and a catch up of \$1000 for those age 50 and above. A participant can now set aside up to \$20,500 and if 50 or older another \$6,500 as a catch up. Should you not be putting in the maximum, increase your contribution by at least 10%. If your employer matches contributions, then be sure to set aside enough to at least get 100% of the match. It is almost like free money.

Many of our business owners and those self-employed have set up a defined contribution plan which has a maximum contribution in 2022 of \$61,000, inclusive of the regular 401k contribution. It is possible set aside much more in many situations if the business has a defined benefit plan.

On the income tax side, the tax percentages stayed the same, but the brackets increase by about 3%. The standard deduction was increased to \$25,900 for married and \$12,950 for singles. For those that are itemizing there is no limit to the amount that can be deducted.

Turning to gift and estate taxes, the maximum annual gift tax exemption rose to \$16,000. This means a couple could give away \$32,000 per person to as many people as they want. It is a powerful estate planning tool that does not reduce your lifetime exemption but is unfortunately underutilized by many. The estate tax lifetime exemption was increased to \$12,060,000 which means a married couple need a taxable estate of over \$24.12 million. Keep in mind, however, that the new rules from the 2017 tax act sunset in 2026 and the amount will likely be cut in half.

Why not start the new year with a review of your tax and retirement plan by taking advantage of our one-hour complimentary consultation?

V. Raymond Ferrara, CFP®, Chair and CEO
ProVise Management Group, LLC
611 Druid Rd E, Suite 105, Clearwater, FL 33756
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The information herein is general and educational in nature and should not be considered legal or tax advice. Tax laws and regulations are complex and are subject to change.

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

“MEOW NOW” PROTECTS FREE ROAMING CATS

by Pete Magnani

Started in 2014, the Pinellas “Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate, and Return” (TNVR) program was developed in response to animal rights activists lobbying to address the estimated 160,000 free-roaming and abandoned cats in the county. The program was implemented by MEOW Now, the short name for Managing and Ending Overpopulation Wisely. The organization is comprised of citizen advocates and representatives from SPCA Tampa Bay and the Humane Society of Pinellas.

Prior to the establishment of TNVR, it was illegal to provide food or water to strays in Pinellas. The pilot program rebranded the at-large population as “community cats” and established a colony database. Volunteer caregivers were trained to provide food, clean water and medical care to the felines, and the county ordinance was amended to legalize caring for these community cats.



The first part of the TNVR process is trapping the cats. They are then sedated, surgically sterilized, and given rabies and other vaccines. The tip of the left ear is removed, providing a visual aid to identify cats that have already been through the process. After a recovery period, the cats

are released back into the same area they were found.

Kittens found at large are often too young or sick to be sterilized. To address this problem, MEOW Now developed a “Foster and Adopt” program to care for these kittens until they are old and healthy enough for the surgery. This also provides socialization, enabling the kittens to be put up for adoption instead of being released into the wild.



While caring for cats that are found at large is protected, it is still illegal for a pet owner to allow a domestic animal to roam freely. Domesticated cats lack the necessary skills to survive in the wild and can become targets of coyotes and other predators.

Since the start of the program, MEOW Now estimates an average of 1,100 cats have been treated annually and hundreds of kittens have been adopted into loving homes. The organization is a 501(c)3 non-profit, and the only provider of TNVR services in Pinellas County. The continued success of the program is entirely dependent on the generosity of donors and volunteers. For more information on TNVR and how you can help, visit meownowfl.org.

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JOANNE "COOKIE" KENNEDY TO START THIRD TERM AS MAYOR

by Pete Magnani

Joanne Kennedy was born at Morton Plant Hospital and grew up in Largo, living in the same house for her first 18 years. She was given the nickname "Cookie" by family members at an early age. "Actually, everyone in my family, Momma, Dad, brothers, and sister all claim they picked the name," Cookie says. "Looking back, I guess it was a family effort."



Cookie moved to Connecticut where she graduated from the New London Academy of Design and became a hairdresser. It was in Connecticut that she opened her first salon. She returned to Florida and in 1987 opened Cookie Cutter Salon at 1511 Gulf Boulevard. She lived in an apartment above the salon and developed a loyal clientele. Ten years later, the business outgrew the Gulf Boulevard location, and she began construction on the building where Cookie Cutters has been ever since. As of this March, Cookie Cutters has been operating in Indian Rocks Beach for 35 years.

Cookie has been a hairdresser for 40 years, but that wasn't her first ambition. While attending Largo Junior High, she ran for Student President and won her first election. "I was the first female president the school had in 8 years," Cookie says. Her passion for politics and community involvement continued and she was elected as a City Commissioner in Indian Rocks Beach. She served several terms as commissioner before being elected Mayor in 2018. This year, she will begin her third term after running unopposed.

One of her priorities is mitigating red tide. During the algal bloom of 2017-19, Pinellas County removed 1800 tons of dead marine life at a cost of over \$7 million. Another is trash in the city, particularly on the beach. The city collected twenty-two loads of fireworks debris after the Fourth of July in 2019. Subsequently Cookie announced a crackdown on fireworks in 2020, calling for strict enforcement of the city's existing ban.

In addition to running a business and serving as Mayor, Cookie has served for eleven years on the board of Forward Pinellas, the county's land use and transportation planning agency. She represents the beach communities from Pass-a-Grille to Belleair Beach and was appointed 2022 Chairperson of the Board. "It is a great honor to be the first Mayor from the beach communities to serve as chair since my mentor, Mayor Bob DiNicola," Cookie says.

Cookie has found a balance between business and public service and looks forward to continuing to advocate for Indian Rocks Beach and Pinellas County. Check out her "Mondays with the Mayor" video podcast on Facebook.



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HELP US HELP YOU: BUY FLOOD INSURANCE

By Karen Williams Seel, Pinellas County Commissioner

As a Pinellas County Commissioner, I am always proud of the work our staff accomplishes to make life better for our residents, businesses and visitors. One of the ways our staff does that is to continually improve our National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System (CRS) classification, helping save millions of dollars in flood insurance premiums for unincorporated Pinellas County property owners and renters.

You may not be aware that last Fall Pinellas County improved its CRS rating to a Class 3—up from a Class 5. It's a huge achievement. We're the first coastal community in Florida to achieve this rating and only the second community in Florida ever to have attained this significant milestone.

What does that mean to unincorporated Pinellas County flood insurance policy holders? They will receive up to a 35 percent discount on their flood insurance premiums, regardless of flood zone—up from a 10 percent discount in low or moderate risk zones and up from a 25 percent discount in high-risk zones. That discount is projected to save unincorporated policy holders more than \$7.9 million per year in total annual flood insurance premiums. Because Pinellas County and most of its municipalities provide flood services and participate in the CRS, the savings adds up to more than \$25 million per year countywide. To see if your community participates in the CRS and look up your discount visit fema.gov/cis/FL.pdf.

Getting the word out about buying flood insurance is one part of how we and our municipalities earn the higher CRS rating and the discounts. That is why I want to encourage all property owners and renters in Pinellas County to find out about their flood risk and how much flooding could cost you, to purchase flood insurance at our discounted rate, and to understand what is covered under the flood insurance policy.

Pinellas County understands that insurance is a complicated topic. That's why we offer free flood insurance technical assistance from professionals who provide reliable information about your flood risk and step-by-step advisement about purchasing and understanding flood insurance. Visit pinellascounty.org/flooding/advocates.htm or call (727) 464-7700 to get in touch with one of our flood insurance advocates.

Find out your risk for flooding at floodmaps.pinellascounty.org to see if your property is in a high, moderate or low risk flood zone, floodplain or floodway. You can also learn if it's in a storm surge area, how deep it could get and what your hurricane evacuation zone is. The maps also show if you live near protected areas that have natural floodplain functions. These areas store flood waters or buffer wave action while providing habitat for wildlife. You can also check if an elevation certificate is available for your property.

If you're thinking about building, build flood smart. Find out what the flood hazards and required standards are before you design your project. Pinellas County uses both FEMA data and maps to determine how high you need to build to be reasonably protected from flooding. Find out what permits are required and always hire a licensed contractor. Consider raising your AC unit and other utilities above your living floor to protect your investment from flood damage to lower your premium. If you are building new, consider building stronger to withstand future storms. Visit pinellascounty.org/flooding/buildsmart.htm for more information. Contact Pinellas County Flood Information Services for more information by visiting pinellascounty.org/flooding or call (727) 464-7700.

I hope this information serves you well. As always, I welcome your comments and concerns. Please email me at kseel@pinellascounty.org. I look forward to hearing from you.

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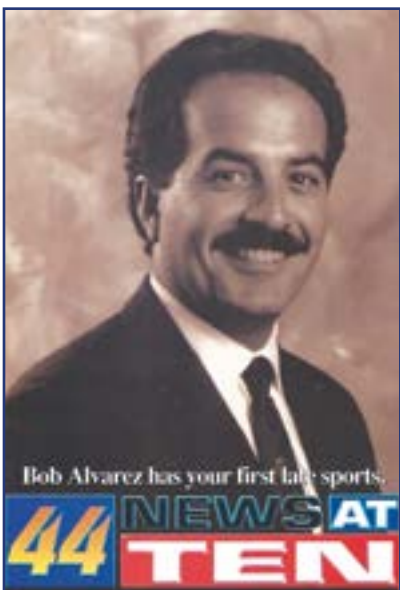
by Pete Magnani

"Food, fun, laughter and learning" is how Roberto Alvarez describes his Introductory Italian Language classes, which he conducts at locations throughout Pinellas County, most recently including the Beach Arts Center in Indian Rocks. He has developed a unique curriculum that combines learning the language, discovering Italian culture, and enjoying a meal with fellow students

Roberto was born in Gary, Indiana. He was the first of his brothers and sister to be born in the U.S. His father was from Spain and met Roberto's mother in her hometown of Napoli, Italy. His older siblings were born there before his parents moved the family to Indiana. Italian was the household language and Roberto spoke the Neapolitan dialect from a young age.

Roberto attended Indiana University Bloomington and was an avid sports fan. He studied radio and communications and became a DJ for the college radio station, eventually doing play-by-play and color commentary for the basketball and football games. He also worked as a camera operator and later as a reporter on the college sports TV show.

In 1978, Roberto spent his junior year studying abroad in Italy at Università di Bologna, the world's oldest college in continuous operation. It was the first time he met his Italian extended family. He decided that when he graduated, he would move to Italy and pursue a career in journalism. He graduated college in 1979, but a leg injury derailed his planned move.



While recovering, he got hired at the Lake Central High School in St. John, Indiana. The school had a television and communications curriculum that produced a student TV sports show. Roberto started as Control Room Supervisor and eventually ran the entire program before leaving for job as a sports reporter at a TV station in El Paso, Texas.

In 1988, Roberto came to Tampa, working for WTOG Channel 44. In his seven years there, he held a multitude of positions, working as

an on-field reporter and sports anchor covering the Rays, Bucs and Lightning. He also hosted the Coaches' Show. He left in 1995 for a television station in New Orleans before returning to Florida in 1998.

From 1990 to 2010, Roberto traveled to Italy once every year, and since 2010 he has returned every other year. In 2002, he wanted to do something different and began teaching Italian lessons at the St. Pete Community Center. His class consisted of four 90-minute lessons over four weeks. He had the inspiration to try to move out of the community center setting and began to approach



neighborhood Italian restaurant owners about holding classes there. Students sit together and learn to speak Italian while enjoying a meal (and maybe some wine.) Now, Roberto teaches classes at several restaurants in Pinellas county, as well as at the Beach Art Center in Indian Rocks Beach. Along with basic language instruction, he incorporates, art, literature, and Italian culture into his classes. "If you want to reconnect with your heritage, converse with family, or just have a different kind of night out, this is the class for you," Robert says.

Many of his students take the class ahead of a vacation in Italy. One of his greatest pleasures is to hear from former students who made their second trip to Italy after taking his class and had a much more enjoyable time being able to speak the language. "In the airport when you first arrive, all the signs are in English as well as Italian," he says. "Once you get out of the airport, it's a different story, and you'll wish you'd paid more attention in class!"

In his classes, Roberto tries to introduce aspects of Italian culture with a goal of erasing some of the stereotypes that movies and television have created about Italians. "Italy is more than mafia and meatballs," he says. "I try to undo some of the damage that TV has done and let my students know that Italian culture is more Dante than DeNiro."

In 2015, Roberto led 10 of his students on a tour of Italy. They visited Napoli, Florence, the Amalfi Coast and Rome. He even brought them for a home-cooked meal at a relative's home in Napoli. He hopes



to organize another tour next year, and continue bringing intimate groups to Italy in the future.

Currently, Roberto offers restaurant-based Italian classes in Tierra Verde, Oldsmar, St. Pete, Palm Harbor, and Sarasota. His latest class at the Beach Art Center in Indian Rocks Beach began February 24th and will run through late March. Roberto expects to begin another class at Beach Art around April 14th. He also offers private instruction in your home or via Zoom. For more information or to register visit www.learnitalian.us or send an email to ralvarez@learnitalian.us.

Salt Rock Grill Celebrates 25 Years

By Bob Griffin, Publisher

On April 1st 1997, Salt Rock Grill celebrates twenty-five years of fresh seafood and some of the best grilled steaks on the beach. Even though it opened on April Fool's Day, they aren't foolin' around with their menu.

Now a legendary beach restaurant, twenty-five years later, Salt Rock Grill has become a landmark where many locals go to celebrate a special occasion. It is known for their hand cut U.S.D.A prime and choice grade beef, freshly caught seafood, and its raw bar. For a more casual evening, many visit their tiki bar, overlooking the intercoastal waterway, for a specialty cocktail and light meal.

Today, the upscale waterfront restaurant is one of many owned by the Baystar Restaurant Group, headed by owner Frank Chivas. A leading figure in the restaurant business along the Pinellas Gulf Coast, Chivas has been a restaurateur for over fifty years. He opened his first restaurant – the casual Pep's Sea Grill – in 1989 on St. Petersburg's 4th Street. He and the late Chef Tom Prichard opened Salt Rock Grill together.

While Chivas was remodeling Le Pompano, one of a string of failed restaurants on the future site of Salt Rock Grill, he proclaimed, "I am building the best restaurant on the beach." And he did just that. Salt Rock has won virtually every award there is by local media and People's Choice.

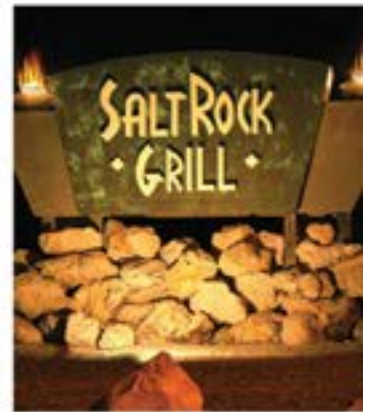
Not only does Baystar own ten local restaurants in the area, it also operates a sizeable fishing operation that in addition to fish, harvests stone crab claws in season. Their fleet of day boats supplies Baystar's restaurants with fresh local seafood.

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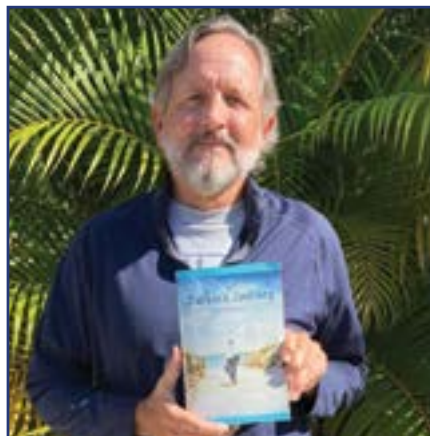
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| Salt Rock Grill | Salt Rock Tavern |
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Salt Rock is located at 19325 Gulf Blvd, in Indian Shores. Get more information and see their menu at www.SaltRockGrill.com. Reservations are highly recommended. Call 727-593-7625.

Baystar is also one of the leaders in catering in Pinellas County. Call 727-391-4052 for catering information.



LOCAL WRITER PUBLISHES THIRD BOOK



Three and counting. Indian Rocks Beach resident, Tim McGee, has just published his third novel, *Durkin's Journey*. It is a unique story about Brian Durkin, a corporate executive living in the sun and sand of Indian Rocks Beach, who sets off on a wild trek to try and retake control of his life. Durkin straddles two very different worlds; he works in a cutthroat environment in corporate consulting while living in a beach community full of folks who approach life in a very different manner. Both worlds converge and take Durkin on an unexpected and often humorous journey toward its conclusion. McGee contends that the story in *Durkin's Journey* is pure fiction, yet he admits that the characters in the beach community may reflect bits and pieces of some of the folks he has come to know and love during his time wandering the coastline of Florida. As for the corporate intrigue in this book, he taps into his long career working in market research in Corporate America for the threads woven together and making Brian Durkin's career so challenging. McGee moved to IRB in 2010 after spending over twenty-

five years working in the corporate world. He decided to slip out of the rat race and pursue his dream of telling lies for others to read at the tender age of fifty, while he felt his brain was still functioning relatively well. The inspiration for his books comes from a single reader he has in mind when writing and touching on the importance of family, friendship, and the role that complex relationships and situations can play in living one's life fully.

The author would like to acknowledge the artist who painted the cover for *Durkin's Journey*. While finishing his edits on the novel, McGee reached out to his former neighbor, friend, and local artist, Larry Gerwig, to paint the cover. Gerwig was an artist painting at the Beach Arts Center of Indian Rocks Beach, and McGee has several of Gerwig's previous works hanging in his home. McGee conveyed the spirit of what he was trying to capture to Gerwig of a man coping with two worlds and trying to survive in both. They went through a few iterations before landing on the cover that the author says perfectly captures the spirit of the story being told. Shortly after finishing the art work, which he presented to McGee last Spring, Gerwig past away.



Durkin's Journey, and McGee's previous novels *Worthy McGuire* and *Seasons*, can be found on Amazon by searching for the author's name or the book titles.

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CRIMESTOPPERS: SOLVING CRIME, ONE TIP AT A TIME

From the Desk of Sheriff Bob Gualtieri

With tax season upon, the stress of filing taxes can cloud judgement and leave taxpayers vulnerable to becoming victims of fraud. To avoid becoming a victim of a tax scam, you have to know how the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) would typically initiate contact with you.



Under most circumstances, the IRS will contact you via standard mail. In special circumstances, they may have someone call or visit your home or business. Some of the special circumstances, include but are not limited to: an overdue tax bill, an open criminal investigation, or to secure a delinquent tax return. Before the IRS makes a phone call or an in-person visit, you would have received multiple notices in the mail.

Criminals that are impersonating the IRS can be aggressive and sophisticated. From using fake names to counterfeit IRS identification badge numbers, the method in which scammers try to coerce payments is not a method used by actual IRS employees. Scammers will always try to instill a sense of fear and urgency in order to get what they want. Before you give in, take a moment to evaluate the legitimacy of what they're asking for and the method of payment they are requesting.

Unlike scammers, the IRS will never demand a specific form of payment, like a prepaid debit card, gift card, or wire transfer. They will also never require immediate payment or threaten to bring local police, immigration officers, or other law enforcement agencies to arrest you for not paying. In fact, the IRS cannot revoke a license or immigration status. Threatening you with law enforcement action is just one of the many ways scammers try to instill fear.

The IRS assigns overdue tax debts to private debt collection agencies. Before a debt collection agency calls, the IRS would have sent you, the taxpayer, a letter letting you know that the debt has been turned over to one of the private agencies. The IRS only uses the following private collection agencies (PCAs): CBE Group, Coast Professional, and ConServe. Only one of the aforementioned agencies will contact you about the tax debt that was turned over, not all of them at once. If they contact you, remember that PCA representatives will never ask for a prepaid gift card, they will never take law enforcement action, and most importantly, they will only ask for payments to go to the U.S. Treasury

As you prepare to file your taxes this year, remember, the IRS will never contact you via email, text messages, social media, or demand immediate payments. If you're unsure if you owe money to the U.S. Treasury, you can check your tax account by visiting: <http://www.irs.gov/payments/view-your-tax-account>.

If you believe that you or someone you know has been a victim of a scam, contact the PCSO at 727-582-6200.

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Restaurant & Bar News

CRABBY BILL'S NAMED BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

The Tampa Bay Beaches named The Original Crabby Bill's Family Brands Business of the Year for 2021. The Original Crabby Bill's Restaurant will celebrate its 39th anniversary in April. Also, congratulations to Matt Loder, Sr. on being named the 2022 Vice President of the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association. The FRLA is Florida's premier non-profit hospitality industry. Their mission is to protect, educate, and promote Florida's hospitality industry, representing 1.5 million workers.



CLEAN EATZ Belleair Beach residents Kreg and Jen Schmidt are opening this new concept next to Bonefish in the space vacated by Richard's Foodorium. Clean Eatz is part of a new franchise with over 75 other locations. Look for it to open in early April. The specialty café will offer a variety of healthy style foods, including bowls, salads, wraps, smoothies, protein bars and energy drinks. Kreg and Jen plan to open four more stores in Pinellas. Get more information at www.CleanEatz.com or find them now on FaceBook @ CleanEatzBelleairFL.

NEW HOURS FOR VIP MEXICAN AMERICAN



Starting February 17th, VIP Mexican American Cuisine opened for lunch and dinner Thursday-Monday from 11am to 10pm. Tuesday and Wednesday they will open for dinner only from 4-10pm. They will also be hosting a Cinco de Mayo Celebration featuring live music from 11 am to 10 pm on May 5th.

BE PATIENT IN PINELLAS Whether you are a local or a first-time visitor, please be patient when you are out on the town. Although things are getting back to normal, restaurants and bars are still dealing with staffing and supply shortages left over from the pandemic. The Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber of Commerce created posters last year for businesses to display reminding guests to try to be patient and understanding. As tourism in Florida surpasses pre-pandemic levels, the sentiment holds true today. If staffing levels remain low, longer wait times and more closure days will continue. So please, "Dine and Be Kind!"

GUPPY'S PATIO OPENS

Guppy's reopened their patio seating area last month after an extensive remodeling. Significantly larger than the previous space, the patio features several more tables, as well as an outdoor waiting area with seating.



RESTAURANT NEWS WANTED If your restaurant has news or an upcoming event, we want to include it in this Magazine. E-mail details to Lora@MagriffProductions.com or call 813-361-7376.

JD'S RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE SOLD

by Bob Griffin

JD's Restaurant was sold to the owners of The Original Crabby Bill's Seafood by the Downing family in February. The businesses and restaurants that have operated out of JD's location go way back - and vary. It was not always a restaurant.

The building (or house) JD's occupies today was built by Furman Moody about 1945. He was married to Elise Moody, together they operated Moody's Drug Store.

Shera Bie, a long-time resident of Indian Rocks Beach, worked at Moody's. "It was my first job, serving sodas and ice cream," she says. "I worked there around 1948. In the beginning, there was a soda bar where you could buy a sandwich, cold drink, ice cream or pie. There was a display area for selling beach things, such as towels, sandals, purses, bathing suits and t-shirts. A larger restaurant was added a short time later."

Later, Moody sold the building to Jimmy O'Neal, who renamed the business O'Neal's Restaurant. He was married (twice) to Mary Lou Mayers "Dubie" O'Neal. Dubie was the restaurant operator. She went on to run O'Neal's on the Bluffs in Belleair, where E&E Stakeout is located today.

They owned the restaurant until November of 1985 when



Tom and Jackie Downing bought it and changed the name to JD's Restaurant. Eventually, their three children - Kip, Jay and Leslie worked there doing everything from serving food to bartending.

The Crabby Bill's family bought JD's in February of this year. "We plan to leave JD's just as the Downings made it," says Matt Loder of Crabby Bill's. "We will do our best to continue JD's popularity and the success the Downing family have entrusted to our family." "I believe my father, Bill Loder, would be very happy with this acquisition. We are also a family business, and our children will manage JD's and hand it over to their children one day, as well."

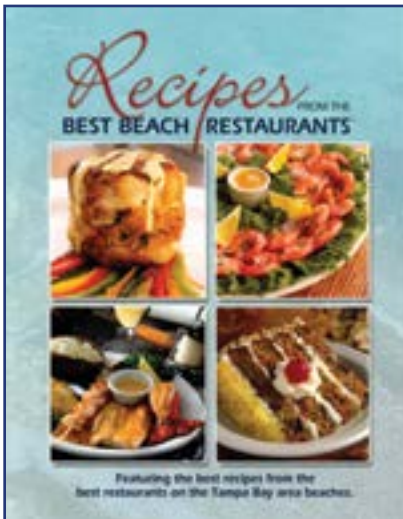


Jay, Leslie, Jackie, and Kip Downing

- Tampa Bay Magazine -
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Pass-A-Grille to Clearwater Beach, from the Don Cesar to Frenchy's.

See it online at www.BestBeachRestaurants.com. It costs \$20 plus tax. Shipping may be \$4 extra. Buy it now at Guppy's and/or Crabby Bill's (Gift Shop).

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2021 SEA TURTLE NESTING SHEDS LIGHT ON COMMUNITY IMPACT

Despite some environmental and man made setbacks, biologists say 2021 was a good year. With over 275 sea turtle nests observed by biologists with Clearwater Marine Aquarium this nesting season in North and mid-Pinellas County, up from 222 nests in 2020, this seemingly average year was wrought with challenges and major milestone successes.

When high winds, rain and storm surges from Tropical Storm Elsa hit Florida's Gulf Coast in July, over three-quarters of the 200 nests already established by CMA's biologists were impacted. "Our team was out in the rain and high-winds replacing nest markers, putting up signs and updating our data," said Sea Turtle Conservation Program Manager Lindsey Flynn. "Essentially, we had two days to re-do all the work we had done in the last two months, in addition to taking inventory of any new nests that may have been laid and bringing in any disoriented hatchlings for our vet team to evaluate."

Getting all the nests re-marked quickly was especially important to hotels with beachfront property. "During nesting season we speak with the sea turtle team at CMA each morning to make sure our beaches are cleared before we can place any cabanas, furniture or do any beach cleaning," said Miguel Diaz, Area Director of Sales & Marketing. "This is to ensure we do not disturb any nests laid over night."

"Our major successes this year include the City of Treasure Island and the Town of Redington Beach both changing their street lights to become sea turtle friendly," said Flynn.



"The City worked for years to get the white streetlights on Gulf Boulevard changed out to sea turtle-friendly ambers," said Stacy Boyles with the City of Treasure Island. "In 2017, after an increase in false crawls and hatchling disorientations, the City sent a request to the Florida Department of Transportation to request a variance from their lighting design standards in order to install the ambers. Since Gulf Blvd. is a state road, the City didn't have the authority to change out the lights without FDOT approval. Instead of granting the variance, FDOT was prompted to incorporate turtle friendly wildlife standards into their state standards so that sea turtle friendly lights can be installed along coastal highways throughout the State."

Winter the Dolphin's Beach Club also became the first hotel in the City of Clearwater to receive the Sea Turtle-Friendly Certification from Ocean Allies, a community-led movement designed to spark a culture shift away from environmentally damaging products and towards ocean friendly lifestyles.

"Our property proudly now has all sea turtle friendly lighting fixtures, uses only sustainable products, and has a protective film over all our Gulf-facing windows to reduce any artificial light from escaping," said Juli Norberg.

The CMA nesting team received funding from the Sea Turtle Grants Program to produce and place signs throughout th area to educate beachgoers about nesting season and how to help protect sea turtles. The Grants Program is funded through the sale of Florida's Sea Turtle Specialty License Plate.

Flynn's team patrols 20.8 miles of beach from Dunedin Pass through Treasure Island in Pinellas County 7 days a week, rain or shine, April 15 through October 31.



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THE OFFSHORE REPORT

by Captain T.J. Shea



There's nothing quite like spring and there is no doubt the Gulf of Mexico takes center stage. As our waters warm up, the bait run makes its way near shore, bringing sharks and the many other pelagic species we love to

target. Kingfish and Tuna top this list, so don't leave the dock without your chum, spoons, planners and stinger rigs. Also, a great idea to stock up on the deadliest of all hooks, those dreaded Sabiki rigs. Troll the hard bottom, wrecks and artificial reefs; keep your eyes open while running for birds and boils on the surface. For all the anglers who prefer bottom fishing, the red grouper bite should get better near shore. Those bigger Reds like warmer water and move deeper in the winter as it is actually a few degrees warmer out deep. Make sure to have a flat line or two out if you can. We like to have one with a whole frozen sardine and one with a live bait, preferable the liveliest threadfin or sardine that you have sabikied up. We also like to have a spinner rigged with a Yo-Zuri popper and another spinner with only a hook ready for those Cobia for when they appear unannounced off your stern. The hogfish

bite will probably taper off some, but since everything eats shrimp, we always have a few lines targeting snapper, porgies, and those hard fighting, thick slices of bacon. Speaking of hogfish, the increasing water temperatures will



help most of our local divers and spear fishermen/women to dust off their tanks and get back in the water. As long as the weather cooperates, the diving this time of year is outstanding. Visibility is normally great due to the lack of rain and runoff from land. The warmer water brings about all kinds of marine life for both regular and macro photographers to see and take pictures of. Remember to get your SCUBA gear serviced at the manufacturer-specified intervals and do some familiarization in a pool with new gear before using it offshore. If you have any questions, please feel free to email us as we are always here to help, whether you head out on one of our boats or your own.

2 Shea Fishing and Diving Center is a full-service charter and dive shop. Visit online at 2SheaCharters.com or come by the shop at 198 Seminole ST, Clearwater.

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WHAT IS THE RUBE ALLYN REEF?

And who was Rube Allyn anyway?

By Keith Kans

I am a long-time resident of the greater Tampa Bay area. I grew up in St. Petersburg and Dunedin and have been back for many years as an adult, following my service in the Navy. I have enjoyed fishing since I was in elementary school, boating most of my adult life, and much more recently diving in our local waters and throughout the state. All of these pastimes I find extremely enjoyable and reinforce for me why our area must be the best place to live.

In recent years I have worked my way to certification as a professional in the recreational SCUBA diving industry. One of my favorite roles in this capacity is to serve as a dive guide and crewmember with a well-known dive operation in Clearwater. Simply put, I help crew the boat and I provide certified recreational divers with the information and support that they need to conduct safe and enjoyable dives in the Gulf of Mexico. I also lead those who want to personally dive with me on underwater tours of the natural and artificial reefs that lie just a few miles offshore. Diving has opened my eyes to the beautiful environment and the unique life that has always existed as I sat in a boat ignorant of the magic below. I now get to see with my own eyes that things I thought I knew as a land-based intellect were in many cases, wrong. I genuinely enjoy sharing that with others.



One of the key services I provide to my divers is a dive briefing for the sites we visit before they enter the water. A frequent and special site that we visit is the Rube Allyn Reef, a set of underwater structures placed by Pinellas County over the past

several decades. Early on I learned from my co-workers that the reef is a collection of "bric-a-brac" from the former Sand Key Bridge. The reef is comprised of more than six hundred tons of cement. Basically, it is a set of pilings and spans from a bridge I used to fish from as a boy. The structure is grown over with corals and plant-life and holds a dynamic and impressive collection of sea life, large and small.

That material information about the site is important of course, but I quickly wondered, "Why is it named Rube Allyn?" Rube Allyn sounded to me like the name of a vessel, and I have heard many divers refer to it as the "Rube Allyn Wreck." Why would Pinellas County name a pile of bridge materials placed to construct a massive artificial reef after a boat? It was time to do some research.

The first stage of my quest for information took me in an unexpected direction. Rube Allyn was a person, and the Rube Allyn that the reef is named for is a storied personality from our area's early days, but is not the first Rube Allyn that comes up in a search. That first Rube Allyn was born in Ontario, Canada in 1866. Life led him on a winding path, which eventually him to west central Florida. Along the way he worked as a boatyard worker in Philadelphia, a rough-and-tumble entertainer throughout both the northern and southern United States, and as a tramp newspaperman

in Sarasota. He was an aspiring politician on present day Siesta Key, and a murder suspect. What? Yes, William "Rube" Allyn the senior was suspected and arrested for the violent, bludgeoning murder of former Sarasota Mayor Harry L. Higel on the morning of January 7, 1921, a crime which occurred on the north end of Siesta Key.

Rube Allyn, Sr. was eventually acquitted of the crime and was released. The evidence makes for extremely interesting reading but at the time was deemed to be circumstantial, and the murderer, whoever it was, evaded justice. According to my research, Rube Allyn Sr. had an interesting life with more than one instance of fisticuffs and violence woven into his story. Certainly though, Pinellas County would not name one of its best artificial reefs for a man suspected of murder. Would it?

No, it would not. Rube Allyn Senior was father of six, including Rupert Royce "Rube" Allyn, Junior. The younger Rube graduated from Sarasota High School, and like his father went into journalism and writing. He was an adventurer and author, and sometimes was



thought of as Tampa Bay's hometown version of Ernest Hemingway. He, like Hemingway was a war veteran, serving in submarines during World War II. He was a writer who was a long-time fishing editor for the St. Petersburg Times known for romanticizing fishing in his work. He also wrote many books related to fishing, specifically here on the west coast of Florida. I found during my research that he wrote a book I bought when I was about ten at a small shop behind the Kingfish restaurant at John's Pass. I dutifully carried that book in my tackle box until well into my forties!

Also Hemingway-esque, he was a colorful figure who liked to have an enjoyable time and who left us with many interesting stories. For one, he was an outdoorsman who became a legendary local fishing expert. He operated a shark-fishing business during the Great Depression until, as the story is told, a twelve-foot bull shark "ate" his homemade boat. A real-life version of Benchley's Captain Quint forty years earlier!

In another tale rooted to Rube's reputation as a local ladies' man, one day he was aboard a boat heading out of John's Pass for a day of sportfishing, when a spurned paramour spotted him. Unhappy with the conclusion of the relationship, she shouted out in earshot of many witnesses, "Rube Allyn, you are the biggest liar in town!" Rube, without missing a beat, replied, "and you, madame, are the most beautiful woman upon whom I have ever laid my eye," leaving her to draw one of two equally unpleasant conclusions.

So, if you are a SCUBA diver or a fisherman, the next time that you visit the Rube Allyn remember that you are visiting a site meant to remember a local bit of Pinellas County's history. A site named for a fishing and story-telling pioneer in our area. Now, we know!

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Business Briefs

PROVISE NAMES NEW CEO ProVise Management Group named Eric Ebbert, CFP®, MBA as CEO, replacing founder Ray Ferrara, CFP®. Ferrara will remain as Executive Chair and Chief Compliance Officer. Succeeding Ebbert as President is Jon Brethauer, CFP®, AIF®, CPFA, MBA.

Ebbert joined ProVise in 2000 and was named President seven years ago. "I look forward to setting the stage for our future growth as we approach \$2 billion in assets under management," said Ebbert.

Brethauer has been Executive Vice President for the past three years and oversees the Retirement Plan Division. "We have come a long way in a short 35 years to become one of the leading financial planning firms in Tampa Bay, and it is an honor to help move us forward," Brethauer said.

CANOPY LIGHTS OPENS This new shop opened in Antique Alley. New owner Brenda Griffin-Wagner has an eclectic mix of art and furnishings. "We sell functional lights and sculptures, home accessories, wood collage, bobble, art, and gifts," she says. The store's Grand Opening celebration is Saturday, February 5 at 396 Indian Rocks Road N. in Belleair Bluffs.. Call Canopy Lights at 651-356-5473.



DR JEFF JENSEN RETIRES After 12 years as Morton Plant's Chief Medical Officer and 20 years as a practicing OB/GYN in our community, Dr. Jeff Jensen retired last month. During his career, Dr. Jensen delivered several thousand babies and was a role model for many physicians, demonstrating the combination of clinical excellence and compassionate care that makes an outstanding physician. The hospital's President and BayCare Market Leader for North Pinellas and West Pasco Counties Lou Galdieri said of Dr. Jensen, "Personally, he has helped Morton Plant Hospital become one of the top performing hospitals in the country, thanks to his dedication to clinical excellence." Thank you, Dr. Jensen! Enjoy your retirement. You will be missed.

NEW SURF SHOP IN LARGO Brook O'Hair celebrated the grand opening of her new store Blacktop Surf Shop on February 19th.



She quit the corporate world to follow her lifelong dream of opening a local surf shop. Blacktop features unique apparel and accessories for men, women, children and the home. Stop by and check it out at 12071 Indian Rocks RD, Largo and visit blacktopsurfshop.com.

BUSINESS NEWS WANTED If your business has news you would like to share with the readers of this Magazine, send an e-mail Lora@MagriffProductions.com or give us a call at (813) 361-7376.

DYNGUS DAY

Dyngus Day is a post-Lenten celebration observed by Polish communities across the globe. The event occurs on Easter Monday and is based on "Smigus Dyngus," a Polish celebration that predates the Fourteenth Century. Also known as "Lany Poniedzialek" or "Wet Monday" in Poland, the festival is customarily celebrated by boys dousing girls they like with water and spanking them with pussy willows. Girls could buy a reprieve by giving the boys painted eggs as a "ransom." On the following Tuesday, the girls got their revenge by doing the same.

In the U.S., Dyngus Day is mostly a celebration of Polish heritage. The largest event nationally takes place in Buffalo, N.Y. Locally, The Original Crabby Bill's hosts a Dyngus Day Celebration complete with traditional Polish food, a polka band, and the necessary water fight. This year, Dyngus Day falls on Monday, April 18th.



BETTY WHITE CHALLENGE A SUCCESS IN PINELLAS

Thanks to the compassion and support of the community, Pinellas County Animal Services saw 55 pets adopted and \$4,347.79 received in donations through the #BettyWhiteChallenge campaign. The initiative honored actress and lifelong animal welfare advocate Betty White, who passed away at age 99 in December. The #BettyWhiteChallenge became a viral fundraising effort nationwide when shelters and communities found individual ways to honor White's anticipated 100th birthday and her legacy of caring for animals. Pinellas County Animal Services chose to waive all adoption fees during her birth month in January, and community members promptly began donating to the shelter in White's honor. "Pinellas County Animal Services is so grateful for the kindness and generosity of our community," said Animal Services Director Doug Brightwell. "Thank you to everyone for your compassion and your support." The Animal Services Shelter currently has pets available for adoption. Those interested in adoption can view adoptable cats and dogs through the Adoption Center. All adoptions include sterilization, registered microchip, age-appropriate vaccines, internal/external parasite prevention and more. To learn more information about Pinellas County Animal Services, visit pinellas.gov/animalservices.



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THE HISTORY OF ST PATRICK'S DAY

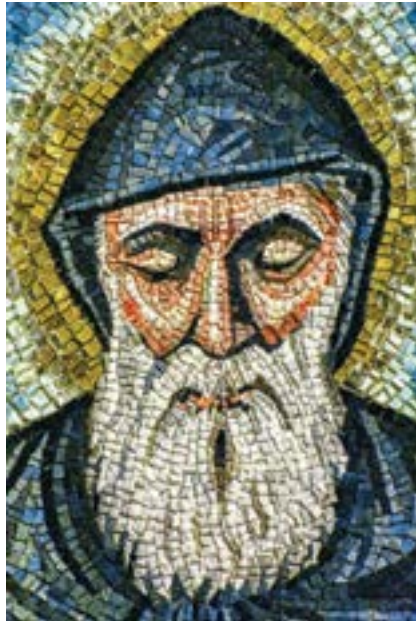
by Bob Griffin

March 17th is known as St Patrick's Day. Who was this Patrick and why do we drink green beer and wear green on his day? To find out, we must go back a few hundred years and travel to Ireland.

Patrick was born in Roman Britain around 385 AD. His grandfather was a priest in a Christian church and his father a deacon, but Patrick was not a Christian himself. At age 16, his household was attacked by Irish rebels, and he was taken to Ireland and sold off as a slave. He was kept a slave for five years, mostly acting as a shepherd. While in captivity, he studied the Bible and strengthened his relationship with God. He eventually converted to Christianity.

One night, in a dream, God told him to escape captivity and join the ministry. Patrick was eventually liberated, returned to England, and became a priest.

In 432 AD, Patrick was ordained as a bishop and was sent



back to Ireland with the goal of bringing Christianity to the Irish people. After thirty years of evangelism, Patrick died on March 17, 461 AD. Although there were other, more successful missions to Ireland from Rome, Patrick endured as the principal champion of Irish Christianity and is highly esteemed in the Irish church.

After his death, he became known as the 'Apostle of Ireland.' He became a cult figure in Early Christian Ireland and was soon canonized a saint. He is the Patron Saint of Ireland.

ST PATRICK'S DAY

Saint Patrick's Day, or The Feast of St Patrick, became a day of religious celebration in the ninth and tenth centuries. St Patrick's feast day was placed on the universal calendar of the Catholic Church in the seventeenth century, making it a Holy Day of Obligation. Irish Catholic families traditionally attend church in the morning on St. Patrick's Day, then celebrate in the afternoon.

In 1903, St Patrick's Day became an official public holiday in Ireland. The first Saint Patrick's Day parade to be held there took place in Dublin in 1931.

By the mid-1990s, the Republic of Ireland began a campaign to use Saint Patrick's Day to showcase Ireland, and its culture, and to increase tourism there. St Patrick's Day became St Patrick's week, growing into a five-day festival.

The biggest celebrations in Ireland are in Downpatrick, County Down, where St Patrick is said to be buried. The festivities include a parade with over 2,000 participants, over eighty floats, bands and performers, and over 30,000 spectators. St Patrick's Day is celebrated in many other countries, including Japan, New Zealand, Argentina and Canada.

GROWTH OF CELEBRATIONS

The City of Boston has long claimed to have hosted the first St. Patrick's Day celebration in the American colonies in 1737. The first recorded St. Patrick's Day celebration in New York City took place in 1762. The Irish Aid society and the Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick started to hold parades in Manhattan featuring bagpipes and drums. In 1848, the two



groups combined their parades, creating what is now the world's oldest civilian parade and the largest in the United States. It has over 150,000 participants and is seen by three million people.

The American Irish soon began to realize that their large and growing numbers in the US

endowed them with political power. They began to organize and soon became known as "The Green Machine." The annual St Patrick's Day parades became a show of strength for Irish Americans and politicians began to appear in them. In 1948, President Harry Truman participated in the New York City parade.

Today, in the U.S., St Patrick's Day is associated with shamrocks, leprechauns, good luck, music, Irish cuisine, and wearing green. Municipalities pour green dye in rivers, and pubs pour it into beer.

WHY THE SHAMROCK?

Folklore says that Patrick used the the three leaves of the shamrock to explain the doctrine of the Trinity to the pagan people of Ireland. The Holy Trinity is the Christian concept of God as three entities in one: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.



WHY GREEN?

Originally, the color associated with St Patrick was blue. Beginning in 1798, the year of the Irish Rebellion, Irish soldiers began to wear green uniforms to contrast the red uniforms of their British opponents, and green became the color of Ireland. Over the years, green and its association with St Patrick's Day grew. Green ribbons and shamrocks were worn in celebration of St Patrick's Day as early as the 17th century.

SNAKES IN IRELAND?

Folklore has it that St. Patrick drove the snakes out of Ireland, however most scientists agree there never were any snakes on the island. Historically, snakes were used as symbols representing sin. In St. Patrick's time, during the fifteenth century, most Irish people practiced a nature-based pagan religion. The Irish culture has a tradition of oral legend (story telling). It is, therefore, no surprise that a story about snakes could be linked to St Patrick and his religious teachings.

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Community News

ACTION 2000

Submitted by Diane Flagg, President



Action 2000 kicked into volunteer mode, braving some very cool and windy weather to spruce up the mini park at 10th Ave and the Nature Preserve. This green space was a project of ours and one we continue to preserve to keep IRB beautiful. Thank you to all the volunteers that helped keep this green oasis on Gulf Blvd looking good. Shawn Stover, one of our executive

board members has coordinated dates in cooperation with the City to plan clean-up projects throughout the year. We depend on spirited volunteers to make it happen. Here are the projected dates for 2022:

- Service Saturday March 5th 9-11am, 17th AV Park.
- Service Saturday April 9th 9-11am, 12th AV Park.
- Service Saturday September 17th, 9-11am, 17th AV Park.
- Service Saturday October 29th 9-11am, 10th AV Preserve
- Service Saturday November 19th, 9-11am, 12th AV Park.

Additional projects will be announced throughout the year as needs arise. If you would like to join in and volunteer to help us keep IRB beautiful, please sign up on our website, or email us at info@irbaction.com

Our May Mixer planning is now underway and it will be a Cinco de Mayo celebration at our local Jake's Cantina. The mixer gives our membership an opportunity to mingle with our neighbors while they join in the festivities and find out what Action 2000 is all about. More details will be available on our website.

We always welcome guests to attend our regular meetings on the 2nd Monday of each month. For more information about our non-profit organization, volunteering and events, please visit irbaction2000.com and follow us on our Facebook page.

INDIAN ROCKS BEACH HISTORICAL MUSEUM

The Indian Rocks Beach Historical Museum is open Wednesday through Saturday from 10:00am until 2:00pm. We would love to see you! Come experience Indian Rocks Beach history in an original beach cottage. We have lots of memorabilia. See our Orange Grove with our biplane graphic which is reminiscent of the red biplane that used to fly over the beach. We have the 2022 Plein Aire Cottage Artists calendars for sale as well as a selection of history books and postcards. And, if you are interested in being a volunteer docent, we would love to talk to you. Admission is free. Check us out at www.irbmuseum.com and on our Facebook page.

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Community News

GREENTOWN KIDS CELEBRATES 5TH ANNIVERSARY

Submitted by Alli DeVore, President

A2K has been working hard to keep IRB beautiful, but we need your help! Join us for the cleanup of the County Park (across from Guppy's) on Saturday, March 5th from 9-11am. Help make this park a clean, bright and welcome place for residents and visitors. Bring your garden tools and gloves. Greentown Kids is happy to sponsor this event with a donation of dune sunflowers to be planted! Come out and help plant them. Register now at signup.com/go/wYZndsr.

Our awesome volunteers picked up seventy pounds of trash to help keep our beach & ocean clean at our first annual New Year Beach Cleanup!! Thanks to all who came out in the cold and started the year off with a clean beach & clean slate. Thanks to our generous sponsors: Country Day IRB, Surge Fitness and The Original Crabby Bill's, as well as our project partners: Keep Pinellas Beautiful and the City of Indian Rocks Beach. Participate in or sponsor our next citywide beach cleanup on April 22nd from 5:30-7:30pm at the 18th AV Beach.



Greentown Kids made a donation to help Save the West Klosterman Preserve and the species that call it home. The WK Preservation Group is a nonprofit 501c3 working to stop the destruction of fourteen acres of untouched woods with wildlife and natural beauty. Check out their cause and consider making your own donation at wkpreserve.com.



The School Garden Project at Anona Elementary is flourishing with a bounty of strawberries, celery, chocolate mint and French Sorrel, along with two succulent boxes. The teachers have made French Sorrell Soup and mint chocolate brownies. Way to go Anona Eagles! Nominate your child's school for a future #SchoolGardenProject.

Stop by our tent at Greenfest on March 26th for kids' eco-craft, exciting raffles and succulents for sale. Greentown Kids is made possible, in part, by donations from neighbors

like you! Thank you for your generous donations of time, money, supplies, expertise (and all the love!) We are a 501c3 Public Charity, and your donations may be tax deductible. You can donate at greentownkids.org/donate or mail checks to GreenTown Kids at 410 20th AV Indian Rocks Beach, FL 33785.

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Community News

ROTARY CLUB OF INDIAN ROCKS BEACH

submitted by Earl Wertheim

The Indian Rocks Beach Rotary will present its annual Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, March 19 from 7:30 to 11 am at Calvary Episcopal Church, 1615 First St, Indian Rocks Beach. The menu will consist of pancakes (all you can eat), sausage, orange juice and coffee, all lovingly handcrafted by our club members. All proceeds will fund the Lou Gregor Memorial Scholarship Program, which honors one of our charter members and co-founder of the Pancake Breakfast. Tickets are \$10 each and can be purchased at the door. Please contact event chairperson Michael Schulz at (727) 415-7916 with any questions.

Also, IRB Rotary will present its 3rd annual Rotary Runs the Beach, which will take place on Saturday, March 26, starting at 8 am at the 17th Avenue Beach Access. The event will consist of a 5K run and a 1-mile walk. Entry fee will be \$30 for the run or \$25 for the walk. Participants can register by visiting runsignup.com then searching Rotary Runs the Beach. Businesses or organizations that would like to explore sponsorship opportunities can contact Marykay Csege at mkcsenge@gmail.com or 727-735-5002. When you participate in any of our fundraisers you support the local, national and global good works of Rotary.

We wish to extend an invitation to anyone who would like to learn more about our club, our members and what Rotary does to 'make a difference in the world.' We meet every Wednesday morning, starting at 7:15 am, at Jimmy Guana's in the Holiday Inn Harborside. Your first breakfast is on us! For more information, please contact David Kline at (727) 418-1673 or kline22@tampabay.rr.com.

TOSS OUT CHILD ABUSE

Harbor Exchange Club of North Pinellas is hosting a cornhole tournament to "Toss Out Child Abuse." Proceeds will go to charities working to stop the cycle of child abuse. The event will be held at Harbor Bar, 840 Main ST Safety Harbor. Team registration costs \$50 and prizes will be awarded for first, second and third place. Food from local restaurants will be available, as well as beer, wine and cocktails. Registration begins at 11 am with competition starting at noon. Register in advance at harborexchangeclub.com and save \$10.

HOMEOWNERS MIX AND MINGLES ARE BACK

The HOA Mix and Mingles are back. They are typically held on the 3rd Thursday of the month from 6pm - 8pm. They are a fun way to meet new friends, learn about what is happening with the HOA and support our local businesses.

- March - No Mix & Mingle due to St. Patrick's Day
- April 21 - Chicago Jax
- May 19 - Hurricane Eddies
- June 16 - Beach Waves Grill
- July 21 - V.I.P. Mexican American
- August 18 - Jake's Cantina
- September 15 - Slyce
- October 20 - Guppy's
- November - No Mix n Mingle
- December - No Mix & Mingle (Holiday fun activities)

The HOA is free to join and open to everyone. For more information visit irbhome.com.

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Community News

INDIAN ROCKS BEACH GREENFEST

Church of the Isles United Church of Christ is once again proud to present this wonderful eco-friendly event for families and friends of all ages from the IRB community and beyond. There will be many vendors with products and services made to keep our footprint green, as well as representatives from non-profit organization, local food, beer & wine, baked goods, a children's area, Silent Auction, handmade gifts, live music and more! IRB Greenfest helps bring community awareness to the impact of our carbon footprint and how to reduce it by recycling, using ecological friendly produce, buying local and organic, and shining a spotlight on the importance of conservation efforts to sustain our environment. We average 1,000-1,500 attendees for the day and anticipate more this Covid-weary year. Come celebrate the beauty of Indian Rocks Beach and our eco-friendly commitment to conservation! Contact us if you are interested in being a vendor, would like to be a sponsor, or just want more information at IRBGreenfest@gmail.com and check us out on Facebook at facebook.com/irbgreenfest, or call the church office at (727) 595-1038.

Join us for a Sunrise Service on the beach on Easter Sunday, April 17th, 7:00am, at the 25th St. access, a community brunch at 8:30 and/or our 10:00am service in the sanctuary. Come celebrate the miracle of the risen Lord!

BELLEAIR BEACH ISLAND GARDEN CLUB

It hasn't always been known as the Belleair Beach Island Garden Club but in one name or another, it has endured for 75 years in the name of Gardening in Florida.

In June 1947, ten ladies met to discuss Florida gardening and formed the Belleair Beach Garden Club. With an emphasis on horticulture in the beach area, the club continued for over forty years to help beautify the area and help to preserve natural resources and native plants.

In 1959, six ladies started a second garden club, the Island Garden Club, for the communities of Belleair Beach and Belleair Shore. For over 30 years, members stimulated interest in home gardens and assisted in the beautification of Belleair Beach.

Then, in 1991, the Belleair Beach Garden Club and the Island Garden Club came together as one and became known as the Belleair Beach Island Garden Club. Known as BBIGC, members have continued to meet for over 30 years and counting. The club continues in its' dedication to help in the beautification of Belleair Beach and the surrounding area and stimulating interest in home gardens and the study of horticulture.

Although the ever-present Covid variants have curtailed some BBIGC activities in 2021 and quite possibly in 2022, we are determined to meet, where possible, in an environment that is safe for all of our members. We all look forward to a time when we can meet on a consistent basis on the 3rd Wednesday on the month, October through April, in and around the Belleair community.

We always look forward to welcoming new members with an interest in home and community gardens. Feel free to contact Marjorie Rose at rosemarjorie38@yahoo.com for further information.

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Community News

FLORIDA BOTANICAL GARDENS

Florida Native Plant Symposium will be held Saturday, March 5th from 9:30 am-4:30 pm. Spend a day focused on Florida natives at the Florida Botanical Gardens! Enjoy keynote speakers, breakout sessions, docent-led tours, browse our Eco Alley and shop a native plant sale. Includes a boxed picnic lunch. General Admission: \$75, FBGF Members: \$50. Visit flbgfoundation.org/symposium for more information or to register.

Yoga in the Gardens will be held on Saturdays - March 5th, 12th and 19th from 10-11 am. Join us for a private vinyasa yoga class in the Wedding Garden led by Salty Souls Yoga. Register in advance at saltysouls.com/schedule.

Tour the Public and Private Gardens on Sunday April 3rd from 10am-4pm. Docent-led tours of the Florida Botanical Gardens will be offered from 10am-12pm, then guests may tour private gardens at their leisure from 12-4 PM, via a self-guided map.

NEW THIS YEAR -enjoy a plant sale on McKay Creek Plaza, with local orchid vendors. flbgfoundation.org/gardentour

This year's Spring Orchid Sale will be Saturday April 2nd-Sunday April 3 from 9 am-5 pm. Shop from a unique selection of vendors, including orchids, plants, candles, honey and more! Suggested donation: \$5 per person. flbgfoundation.org/orchidsale.

Come celebrate Earth Day at the Florida Botanical Gardens Friday, April 22nd from 9 am-12 pm. We will have a wide array of virtual and in-person activities available, free for the public to enjoy. Includes self-guided scavenger hunts, games from our TaleBlazer app, as well as instructor-led events from our Growing Up Wild curriculum in the morning. flbgfoundation.org/earthday.

PICTURE PAW-FECT PHOTOS

Clearwater Marine Aquarium is offering a unique photo opportunity for your dog or cat on March 12th from 9-10am. This limited-time offering includes five expertly-edited photos of your pet with some of the rescued dolphins that reside at the aquarium. Book your session online at visitcmaquarium.org before they sell out.



BEACH ART CENTER

Submitted by Patricia Thomas

Gift Shop - Are you looking for a gift for that special someone or a piece of art for your home? Stop by our newly restocked gift shop to see original works of art by local artists, handcrafted jewelry, cards, pottery and so much more. Our shop is filled with lovely and unique items. Something for everyone. Open from 9-4 Monday through Friday.

Kids Camp - 2022 Creative Kids Camp has a whole new look! So many new options! We will have 8 Weeks of camp, 6 Different Teachers in 2 Classrooms plus a Clay Studio! Weekly camp sessions begin June 6th. Full details and registration will be available on our website by April 1.

Gallery Show - One of our most exciting shows of the year is the "Art & Poetry" Show. This year, "Art & Poetry" will run from April 4th – May 13. Opening Reception will be held on April 22nd. This reception is free and open to all. Submitting Artists – Note that take-in for this show will be March 21 – 23. Details can be found on our website.

Classes - We have several new classes added to our schedule, you can find full details and course registration information on our website at beachartcenter.org.

Special Workshops

March 5 - John Clayton - Color Bootcamp

March 12 - Heather Rippert - Fun & Free Florida Skies

March 19 - Shelley Jean - Encaustic Explorations

April 4 - Suzanne Natzke - Night Scenes in Watercolor

April 7-9 - Chris Brandley - Paint Alla Prima

Art on the Rocks - \$38 (materials are included)

Super Fun and Creative - Spend an afternoon or evening with us, bring snacks & refreshments if you like. "Art on the Rocks" are generally 3 hours long and focus on a single project, all materials and instruction are included, and you walk away with a finished product. Here are some of the topics coming in March & April:

March 4 Colorful Pet Portraits

March 18 Mandala Art (Canvas)

March 19 Greeting Cards for Spring

March 25 Bird of Paradise Painting

April 1 Peace Pole Painting

April 15 Mandala Art (Flower Pot)

April 16 Seashell & Sea glass Mosaic

CLOTHES TO KIDS NEEDS SCHOOL CLOTHES

Times are difficult for many families and they need clothing for their school children. CTK continually needs new and gently used clothing and shoes. CTK wants boys' and girls' pants, shorts, tops both short and Long-sleeved, 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 we need small clothing and shoes and youth clothing all the way up to high school. Please check your closets and help the children in Hillsborough and Pinellas by donating today! Clothing and shoes can be donated in Clearwater at 1059 N Hercules AV or in St. Pete at 2168 34th ST S. Monetary donations can be made at the Clearwater location. Visit colthestokids.org for more information.

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