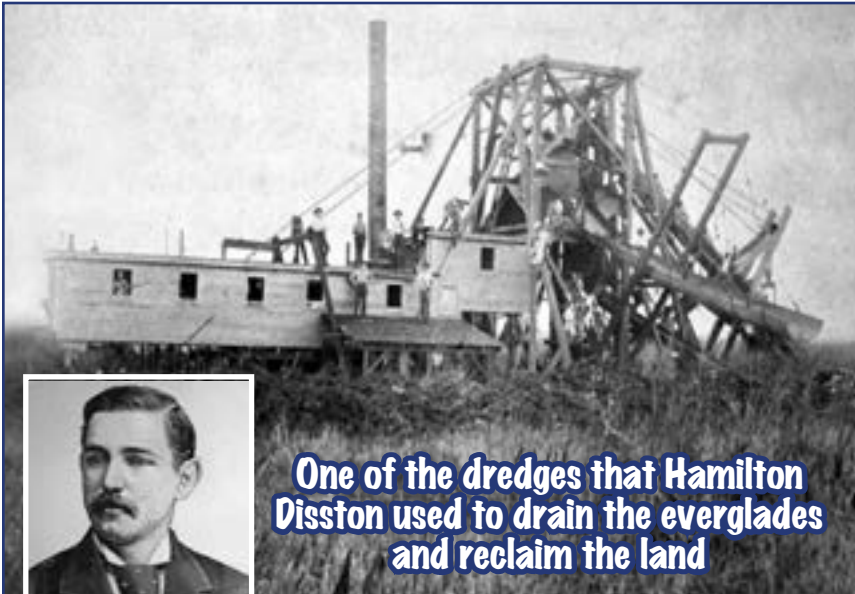


NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

www.beachnewsletters.com

Magazine

HAMILTON DISSTON: THE MAN WHO SAVED FLORIDA



One of the dredges that Hamilton Disston used to drain the everglades and reclaim the land

By Bob Griffin, Publisher

Can you imagine buying land in Florida for just twenty-five cents an acre? That is exactly what Hamilton Disston did in 1881 and became the largest single landowner in not only Florida, but the United States when he purchased four million acres.

Disston's land purchase, which not only made him famous but also rescued Florida from bankruptcy, included land south of Ocala including Kissimmee and much of Pinellas County.

At the time, Florida was no place you wanted to live. Only a few farsighted men saw Florida's future and Disston was one. He brought Florida to life with a million dollars he did not have. Like so

many others, he used other people's money to build a fortune and reputation. If he lost money, so did his investors. But when he made money, everyone won.

Hamilton Disston, the oldest of nine children, was from Philadelphia. His father owned a sawmill and metal shop producing saw blades which grew to be a large business. After the Civil War at the urging of his father, Hamilton became the President of the company, which he ran with three of his brothers. With over 2,000 employees it grew to the largest saw manufacturing company in the world.

Continued on page 6

Also in this Issue:



Super Bowl

Are you going to a Super Bowl party? Get some fun Super Bowl facts that will impress your friends.

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Odey O'Donnell Dies

Belleair resident Odey O'Donnell died at the end of December at the age of 101.

- page 36

Storm Causes High Prices

Have you tried to buy oranges lately? Hurricane Ian devastated this year's citrus crop.

- pages 20



Children Need Access to Parents

Meet the men behind the new non-profit, "Our Children Have Rights, Too" and find out what they are doing to provide support to non-custodial parents.

- page 9



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

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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,

Bob & Becky Griffin, 727-430-8300 bob@griffindirectories.com

SEE YOU AGAIN IN APRIL

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Police Dept: 588-3769

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www.Rubio.Senate.gov

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www.RickScott.Senate.gov

AREA UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE:

Vacant 202-225-5961

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CALENDAR OF HOLIDAYS & EVENTS

FEBRUARY

- Ground Hog Day 2
- St Jerome Choir Festival 3
- Garage Sale McGough Nature Park 4
- Beach Walk Clearwater Beach 4
- Belleair Rec Sunset 5K Run 4
- Bluff's Business Assn Mixer 9
- Galentines In Antique Alley 9
- Florida State Fair Opens 9
- Pickle Ball Tournament Belleair Rec 11
- Market In the Bluffs 11
- Super Bowl Sunday 12
- Peace Memorial Concert 12
- Deadline To Register to Vote 13
- Valentine's Day 14
- Winterfest Indian Rocks 18
- City Garage Sale Town of Belleair 18
- President's Day 20
- Florida State Fair Closes 20
- Mardi Gras Fat Tuesday 21
- Ash Wednesday/ Lent Begins 22
- Largo Center Stage Frank & Dean Show 23
- Phillies Spring Training Opens 23
- Blues On The Block 24-25
- Gasparilla Run 25

- Rays Spring Training Opens 25
- Hope Village Blue Jean Ball 25
- MARCH**
- Strawberry Festival Opens 2
- St Petersburg Grand Prix 3-5
- Champa Bay Elimination Dinner 4
- Gasparilla Festival of the Arts 4 - 5
- Belleair Sunset 5k And Fun Run 4
- Beach Art Center's Boots Gala 4
- Belleair Bluffs City Garage Sale 4
- Garage Sale Largo Community Center 4
- Bluff's Business Assn Mixer 9
- Market In the Bluffs 11
- Rock The Ribbon 5k10k 11
- Shamrock Run Ulmer Park 11
- Daylight Savings Time Begins 12
- Strawberry Festival Closes 12
- Peace Memorial Concert 12
- Municipal Elections 14
- Public School Spring Break 13-17
- St Patrick's Day 17
- Rotary Runs the Beach 18
- First Day of Spring 20
- Ramadan Begins 22
- Red, Whites And Bites 25

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Did You Know



TALL SHIPS ARE COMING TO ST. PETE A half-dozen tall ships, including a replica of Christopher Columbus' largest ship, *The Santa Maria*, will sail into the St. Petersburg waterfront March 30-April 2.

The nonprofit Tall Ships America is responsible for this maritime festival. It is the first time in twenty years the ships have included a St. Petersburg port. Tall Ships America is dedicated to maritime heritage and education, and sponsors an annual tour of tall ships across the country.

The fleet coming to St. Petersburg includes the Spanish ship *Nao Trinidad* (seen above), a replica of the *Santa Maria*. There will be five additional ships including *Ernestina-Morrissey*, *Pride of Baltimore II*, and *Barque Elissa*, one of the oldest ships still sailing having it first launched in 1877. For the schedule and tickets, visit tallshipsstpete.com.

CLEARWATER BLUES ON THE BLOCK A spin-off of the Clearwater Sea-Blues Festival takes over Cleveland Street for 2 days of music and fun. Enjoy live music from national blues recording artists, culinary experiences from downtown restaurateurs, craft beer and wine from local brewers, market vendors and so much more. All located at Cleveland Street and Garden Avenue in Downtown Clearwater February 24-25. Find more information and a full lineup at: myclearwaterevents.com.

RECYCLE YOUR FLAG PROPERLY The U.S. Flag Code outlines the proper etiquette for disposing of an American flag that is worn and no longer serviceable. VFW Post 10094 has a flag disposal box for residents to drop off their aged and weathered flags. Veterans will retire the flags in a ceremony involving a color guard presentation, a chaplain's prayer, and salutes, after which the flags are dipped in kerosene and respectfully burned. The post is located at 14450 Walsingham Road in Largo.

SPRING TRAINING This year is the 25th Anniversary of our own Tampa Bay Rays. They will begin Spring Training on February 25, but in a different location as their facility in Port Charlotte was heavily damaged by Hurricane Ian. Signs, fencing, score board and the roof above the seating were so damaged, the Rays cannot use the facility. Instead, the Rays will begin their Spring Training in Orlando and move to the Tropicana Dome March 2nd. Get more information and schedules at www.RaysBaseball.com.

The Philadelphia Phillies and the Toronto Blue Jays both play locally as well.

YARD SALE It Spring Garage Sale season. Here a few of them:
 February 5: McGough Park, Largo
 February 18: Town of Belleair
 March 4: Belleair Bluffs
 March 4: Largo Community Center
 April 1: Belleair Beach
 April 28-30: Indian Rocks Beach





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and More...



STREAM FAIR STREAM Fair 2022 at St. Cecelia Catholic School was a huge success. This year's fair showcased a wide variety of projects and they are so proud of the hard work and expertise demonstrated by their 7th graders. They had nine first place winners and of those first place winners, one project was named Best in Fair – Congratulations to Adrian Zouain and his project "Radio waves and the effect on plants." Judge's Favorite went to Joseph Battle and his project "Do you know what is in your H2O?" Congratulations to these young scientists!

BELLEAIR MONTESSORI ACADEMY TO REOPEN After 70 years of educating thousands of children, Belleair Montessori Academy closed and now has been sold. The new owner, Mr. Kharey Wisdom, will renovate it and plans to reopen in the late Spring a lot of upgrades to the building, air conditioning, lighting, and playground equipment. Mr. Wisdom owns several childcare centers in Polk, Pasco and Hillsborough counties. It will not reopen as a Montessori school, but there will be many similarities. It will offer childcare for infants through five year olds. He also plans to also offer after school care.

TAX DAY IS COMING April 15 is only 75 days away. That is the day your federal income taxes are normally due. You should already have begun receiving your W-2s and 1099s. But hold on, this year April 15th falls on a Saturday, so you get a reprieve until Monday the 17th. But hold on, that Monday is Emancipation Day, which is celebrated in Washington D.C. So, this year your taxes are not due until April 18th. Of course, if you file an extension, you have until October 15th to file, but hold on, that is a Sunday - they will be due on October 16.

REBATES AVAILABLE FOR SEWER PIPE REPLACEMENT Pinellas County Utilities announced eligible sewer customers who own single-family homes can apply for rebates to inspect and rehabilitate or replace their private sewer lateral. Eligible customers can receive 100% of the inspection cost up to \$350 and 50% of replacement or rehabilitation cost up to \$3,500. For eligibility information, visit privatesewer.pinellas.gov.

DETOUR AHEAD Indian Rocks Road, within the Town of Belleair, will be under construction for the next few months. "Phase I" of the Indian Rocks Road Drainage and Pedestrian improvements began in January. Town Manager Gay Lancaster says, "it is not scheduled to be completed until September." There will be road closures and detours in the area between Mehlenbacher and Poinsettia Road. Information is updated on their website, TownofBelleair.com.



OUR NEXT ISSUE IS APRIL 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 at BeachNewsletters.com. Follow us on Facebook for local news.

Happy Valentine's Day!

FROM

DR. TREVOR F. QUICK

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HAMILTON DISSTON, Continued

At first, Florida had with few residents and no growth. To help, the United States gifted Florida 15,000,000 acres of land, primarily wetlands and swamps, with a condition: convert and reclaim wetlands.

Florida created a fund that primarily pledged that land to developing railroad companies and guaranteed their bonds. After the Civil War, those companies defaulted, causing the fund to sink into debt and then receivership. The law forbid issuing more bonds to cover the debt and by 1877 the fund was \$1 million in debt.

Through his company's contacts, Disston knew many people, including railroad developer Henry Sanford (City of Sanford). Sanford was an avid angler and invited Hamilton and his wife to Florida for a fishing trip. During the trip, Disston recognized Florida's real estate possibilities, specifically in reclaimed land for agriculture. To qualify for the land, all he needed to do was build canals to drain Florida's Lake Okeechobee.

In 1881, Disston entered a land deal with Florida's then broke land fund for four million acres. The deal also stipulated Disston could keep "half" of any other land he reclaimed around Kissimmee, Okeechobee, Ft. Myer's Caloosahatchee River, and the Miami River.

Confident he could drain all the swamp land south of Kissimmee, Disston stood to gain up to twelve million acres, eight million more than his initial deal. But when he still had not paid a penny for the original four-million-acres, the Governor personally visited him in Philadelphia to collect that purchase price - \$1,000,000. It was just what the state coffers needed.

When Disston signed the deal, The New York Times reported "this was the largest purchase of land ever made by a single person in the United States - possibly, the world!" Six months later, Disston would sell two million of those acres for thirty cents an acre - a \$100,000 profit.

Some people argued the state sold the land too cheap, but it helped fund new railroad bonds. It helped land sales and soon the state's taxable property doubled.

Disston opened real estate offices across the United States and in Europe, promoting himself as the owner of two-thirds of Florida. His headquarters were on the shores of Lake Tohopekaliga, which became the City of Kissimmee. He founded a 20,000-acre sugarcane plantation, which created the City of St. Cloud. Sugarcane refineries established nearby in Kissimmee created more growth there, too.

The key to Disston's main plan was a massive dredging effort to drain the Kissimmee River floodplain flowing into Lake Okeechobee by removing the surface

water in the Everglades. When he dredged the rivers to the east and the west leading to St. Lucie (Stuart) and Caloosahatchee (Ft. Myers), he claimed another three million acres.

Disston founded Tarpon Springs in 1884, as a small fishing village with access to the Gulf. He owned most of the area but had not seen it until 1882. He directed the waterfront city's layout adding a commercial pier and two small hotels. Lumber arrived from his sawmill in New Jersey. His Philadelphia friends soon built winter homes there.

Through an 1883 land deed, Disston received 26,000 acres in today's St Petersburg. In addition, he got land in North Pinellas and most of the acreage south of Central Avenue to the tip of Pinellas - 110,000 acres of the peninsula.

It was during this time Disston met Peter Demens who was building a railroad from Sanford to the Gulf Coast. Financial problems prevented Demens from making payroll. Disston introduced him to his investment friends and saved Demens from bankruptcy, allowing him to continue.

Disston had his eye on south Pinellas. He created a city named after himself, Disston City (today's Gulfport). He envisioned a large city with 50,000 inhabitants and a major port connecting railroads to shipping from Cuba and New Orleans. He planned 12,000 acres on Boca Ciega Bay for the city with streets one hundred feet wide - one of which still exists today.

He built a wharf, warehouse, several model homes, a school, three local businesses and the area's first hotel with twenty-six rooms unabashedly named "The Waldorf." It opened on Christmas Day, 1884.

He bought a steamboat he named the S.S. Mary Disston, after his mother, to bring settlers and supplies from Tampa and Cedar Key. The residents called it the Dirty Mary because it produced too much smoke.

Disston City land sold from \$1.25 to over \$5 per acre. At first, (1885) the town boomed with the help of advertising in the north and in England. The Sea Breeze, a small Disston City newspaper was the first newspaper in the county. It promoted the town as a wonderful place to work and live.

Disston was also heavily invested in land near today's downtown St. Petersburg owning almost everything west of today's 4th Street. While others were trying to develop downtown St. Petersburg, Disston had no real interest in that property and as a result, the land around Central Avenue became a patchwork of lots stretching to Boca Ciega Bay. After his death, it took years to straighten it all out.

Disston needed a railroad to make his

Disston City take off. He knew Peter Demens was bringing his railroad to Tarpon Springs. Disston and Demens shook on a deal to continue the railroad thirty miles south to Disston City. Disston promised he would have a deep port and access to the Gulf, which he never did.

Soon after, Colonel John Williams, a major Waynesville (today's St. Petersburg) landowner offered Demens half his acreage on the east side of the peninsula in exchange for bringing the railroad there. Part of the deal promised to Demens was he could name the town after his hometown in Russia - St. Petersburg.

Demens never told Disston of the change in plans. Disston found out later, after the new tracks turned to the southeast.

Disston City never met expectations. It went on to have two other names - Bonifacio and Veterans City before today's Gulfport. St. Petersburg, though, became one of Florida's largest cities.

The revived Land Fund encouraged others to invest, especially railroad companies. It chartered 564 railroad companies; 154 operated as part of the Seaboard Coast Line. Disston did not jump on the railroad craze. He felt Florida's future lay with steamships, farming, and raising cattle. This was certainly another big mistake.

Disston continued to buy real estate, which he used as collateral to borrow more money from Philadelphia banks. He lived in his floundering town of Disston during turbulent financial times - The Panic of 1893, The Depression of the 1890s, the Wilson-Gorman Tariff Act of 1894, and the Great Freeze of 1894 and 1895. Disston eventually mortgaged all his Florida assets for only \$2 million.

While in Philadelphia, on April 30, 1896, after attending the theater with the mayor and his wife, he returned home and shot himself. The newspapers reported it as a heart attack. He was only fifty-one.

Disston left a wife, three children and an estate only valued at \$100,000, but he had a \$1,000,000 life insurance policy—the second largest in the United States. His brothers had no interest in the Florida business and his creditors foreclosed.

Tarpon Springs and Gulfport are still thriving cities, though few know Disston's name. There is still a Disston saw company in Philadelphia, and in St. Petersburg off 49th Street N. is an area named Disston Ridge with a Disston Plaza. His name lives on with Disston Street (Crystal Beach), Disston Heights Subdivision (St Petersburg), Disston Jr. High (near Boca Ciega High School) and Disston Lake (north of Deland). The 100-foot-wide street named for him in Gulfport is now 55th Street South / Beach Blvd.



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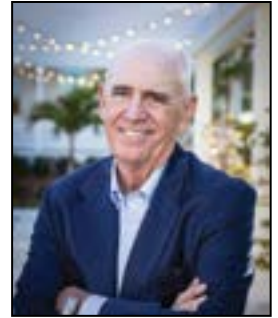
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NO FINANCIAL PLAN IS A PLAN

by Ray Ferrara, ProVise Management Group

No plan is a plan, but certainly not the best alternative. Without a written plan it is hard to stay focused on what success looks like. Life is complicated with moving parts that can easily distract us away from our goals and objectives. What should be in a financial plan?



Begin by developing a Net Worth Statement. It should be divided into Current Assets (checking, savings, CDs, life insurance), Long Term Assets (investments, retirement accounts, business interests, rental real estate), and Personal Use Assets (home, auto, personal property). Liabilities should be divided into short- and long-term.

Next, develop a budget and cash flow analysis. You will likely find you are spending more than you realize.

What is your tolerance for risk? Are you okay with rolling the dice, or are you super conservative? Is your risk tolerance consistent with meeting your goals? Even though you may be willing to take risk, do you really need to do so to have a successful plan? Taking too much risk is just as bad as taking too little.

Now analyze your investments. Is the portfolio reflective of your risk tolerance given the asset allocation? Do you have the investments saved in the most tax efficient manner? Should you use individual securities, mutual funds, exchanged traded funds, alternatives, etc.? Are there better investments than the ones you own?

Will the saving and investments grow sufficiently to meet your short- and long-term goals? Education planning for children/grandchildren? A new residence or second home? Big vacation? Start your own business? Retirement?

Do you have an asset protection plan? What about an estate plan – will, living trust, power of attorney, health care surrogate, and living will? When did you last update it? What about your insurance for vehicles, home, real estate, personal liability, umbrella, health, disability, and life? Is the plan properly integrated? Have you had them professionally reviewed?

Financial planning is not a one and done. It is a continuous process. But only you can start the process. People spend more time planning for a vacation than they do for financial planning. With the new year upon us why not start fresh. Take advantage of our complimentary one-hour consultation to learn more about a personal financial plan. We offer a money back guarantee – if unhappy with the plan, just return it and we will refund your money.

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Financial planning for your life and your lifestyle



The information herein is general and educational in nature and should not be considered legal or tax advice. Tax laws and regulations are complex and are subject to change.

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

OUR CHILDREN HAVE RIGHTS

By Jake Hornstein, Co-Founder & COO

When Greg Hill became a father, he knew he always wanted to be available to his son. Unfortunately, since Greg was not married to his son's mother and there were no longer in a relationship, under Florida law, he had no legal rights to his child. After a series of unsuccessful legal outcomes (using reputable attorneys) Greg decided to change his approach. He represented himself in court, and ultimately achieved a favorable 50/50 custody and co-parenting outcome.



In January 2021, fueled by lived experiences, Greg and I established a web-based nonprofit named Our Children Have Rights .org (OCHR.org). OCHR.Org focuses on children and families by helping parents more seamlessly navigate the various processes related to child custody and co-parenting. While we work directly with parents, the goal is to establish a successful co-parenting strategy and living environment that best positions the child(ren) to reach their full potential. Our services are FREE to all parents regardless of demographics or parenting circumstances (single mothers/fathers, unwed parents, married couples seeking divorce, same-sex couples and undocumented families).

Education is the core of our work, with a priority focus on process, documentation, and meeting your state's custody formula as seamlessly as possible. This allows us to further assist and better equip parents through their journey. Legal aid can be very costly, and our educational resources, when used properly, can minimize, or even eliminate the need for legal aid, thus saving a parent money, time, and resources. Alternatively, when a parent seeks assistance identifying the right attorney given their circumstances, we guide them through that process as well.

Our Direct Services include FREE consultations (Zoom, FaceTime, phone) and FREE documentation review (parenting plans). We're proud to share that the scope of our work covers a wide range of Human Services. It's a direct result of constantly learning more from the thousands of parents that we've engaged with, who share with us the ancillary challenges that they face while establishing custody. Those needs may include financial assistance, housing/down payment assistance, mental health, reemployment, assistance with public benefits, and access to basic needs, among many others. We address these needs through a network of program partners; Pinellas County Government, 211 Tampa Bay, Bay Area Legal Services, Feeding Tampa Bay, NAMI, Warrick Dunn Charities, Gulf Coast JFCS, and many others.

Since inception, OCHR.Org has served over 18,000 parents, conducted free consultations with 850 parents, and reviewed over 350 parenting plans. We were recently recognized by AMPLIFY Clearwater with the "Launch Award," celebrating a new business that's "Well on its way." We even adopted Sand Key Park & Beach to create volunteer opportunities within our community.

Most importantly, if you, or someone you know, needs our assistance, we're here for you. We're on a mission. A mission to protect the rights of children to have access to parents by providing education, resources, and support services for successful co-parenting. Why? Because Our Children Have Rights.

You can contact Jake Hornstein at 516-652-7880 or by e-mail at JakeHornstein@OurChildrenHaveRights.com. For information, visit www.ourchildrenhaverights.org. To donate, visit www.ourchildrenhaverights.org/donate.

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SUMMIT FITNESS MOVED Summit, Belleair Bluff's premier private fitness club, has opened in their new location inside the old fire house.

The new state-of-the-art facility features top-of-the-line equipment and spacious personal workout areas. Summit is a personal training studio that offers sessions with trainers that will work with you in a one-on-one capacity to create a customized fitness plan tailored to your specific goals and needs.

They invite you to come and check out see it for yourself. Call 727-586-7680 or book a Private Tour online at www.SummitBelleair.com.

PATCHINGTON GIVES BACK Once again, the Belleair Bluffs Patchington boutique is supporting the American Heart Association by donating five percent of their profits from January 31 through February 6. To thank customers for helping make a difference and supporting the American Heart Association, they are offering twenty percent OFF the purchase of regular priced items during their "Give Love, Get Love" American Heart Association Week.

For over a decade, Patchington has committed to supporting this great organization. Patchington is a collection of women's resort-wear boutiques with ten locations across Florida and online at www.patchington.com. The Belleair Bluffs store is located at 280 Indian Rocks Road N.

NOW OPEN - THE BLUFFS HAIR SALON

This new Belleair Bluff's hair salon was opened by Jazmin Del Valle in September. She offers cuts, complex coloring, texture services (keratins and perm), hair loss systems, full face waxing, and brow or lash tinting. She specializes in hair-extensions. Jazmin has over ten years of experience in the industry and her team takes pride in providing an upscale hair experience.

"From hair loss to hair coloring, we offer advanced solutions for any hair project," adds Jazmin.

Find them at 321 Indian Rocks Road N, Indian Rocks Road North, and at www.BluffsHairSalon.com or on Facebook and Instagram. Call 330-7247 for an appointment.



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Business Briefs



GULF TOWERS CLOSED The perennial budget friendly beachfront hotel is permanently closed. About ten years ago it was sold and closed to build a condo project, but the real estate market changed and condominiums were not selling. It reopened as hotel again, waiting for the market to catch up. Now it looks like the condo project is back on the horizon. As of now, they are proposing a condo building with eight units, each approximately 5000 square feet. The City has only received conceptual site and building envelope plans at this time. It is located at 404 Gulf Blvd.

BLUFFS BUSINESS ASSOCIATION Their networking Socials are held the second Thursday of the month and include:

FEBRUARY 9: Carrie Smith Art Gallery in The Plaza, 100 Indian Rocks Road North

MARCH 9: Salted Air Merchantile in the Alley, 596 Indian Rocks Road North.

Social hours begin at 5:30pm. To get involved, call Bonnie Trembulak at 686-8797 or Larry Bell at 644-9197. Visit BBAStrong.com for more information about up coming events. E-mail questions to info@BBAStrong.com.



BELLA VINO GIFT BASKETS

If you are looking for something different this Valentine's Day, consider a gift basket from Bella Vino's. They have grab-and-go baskets from \$65 to \$150 or they can make a custom baskets filled with whatever you choose. The price range from \$65 on up, depending on what wine you choose to include. Find them online at BellaVinoWineMarket.com or just drop by at 100 Indian Rocks Road North, in The Plaza. Call 584-5552.

ANOTHER RECORD BROKEN St Pete-Clearwater Airport (PIE) set an all-time passenger record in 2022 with 2,445,919 passengers. That is an increase twenty percent increase over 2021 and a seven percent increase over 2019, the last record-breaking year.

DUFFY'S GOLF STUDIO CLOSSES Duffy's Golf Studio, located next door to Panera Bread is gone. owner Nick Becerra said they have closed.

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



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SILVER QUEEN'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY



By Bob Griffin, Publisher

The Mayor of Belleair Bluffs is also the Mayor of the Silver Queen in Largo. The Silver Queen and Belleair Coins has been operating for 50 years—since 1973. Chris Arbutine is the owner and operator and has also been the Mayor of Belleair Bluffs for twenty two years.

The Silver Queen and Belleair Coins, under the same roof east of Belleair Bluffs, are one of the state's largest buyers and sellers of gold and silver.

The business, started by Art and Pat Arbutine, both 88, first opened Belleair Coins in 1972 when Art left the Air Force.

"We moved around a lot while Art was in the Air Force," says Pat, "and we knew we wanted to retire in Belleair Bluffs. Art had this idea to open a small coin shop, so when he left the Air Force, that is what we did.

The Arbutines leased a small 700 square foot shop, where Peter's Tailor Shop operates today, at 778 Indian Rocks Road N. and opened Belleair Coins. In 1979, they created The Silver Queen, a related concept, but specializing in buying and selling china, silver place settings, and fine jewelry.

Both businesses kept growing and by 1984 needing to expand, they bought land at the south end of their strip center and built a larger storefront. They ran both businesses out of that slightly larger space for ten years. When they decided they needed to expand again, they found there were zoning issues in Belleair Bluffs. In 2002, they decided to move their business out of Belleair Bluffs into a new 15,000 square-foot home in Largo at 1350 West Bay Drive, where they remain today.

For decades their sons, Greg (58), Chris (57) and Jayson (56) worked with their parents learning all they had to teach them, until their parents retired and they took over operations. Recently, Greg and Jayson also retired, leaving Chris to manage the day-to-day operations. The third generation

is showing the beginnings of a future there too, as their grandchildren are learning the trade.

When you walk in the store, to the right, is Belleair Coins. This is where people come to have their valuables appraised and possibly sold. "We buy almost anything precious—except furniture," says Chris. "This includes silver, gold, coins, bullion and jewelry."

"People come in with stuff and they have no idea its worth," Chris adds. "There is no charge for us to estimate their bounty. If they are interested, we will make them an offer, on the spot."

"We are experts in pricing such things. We have been doing this a long time and we are in contact with a network of buyers who expect us to call them for certain types of jewelry and antiques. We may or may not offer the most money, but we are definitely competitive."

Some of the items are put up for sale at The Silver Queen. Some are sent to other buyers and some jewelry and products are melted down and resold as solid gold and silver.

"We are not just scrap buyers and we are not a pawn shop either," Chris emphasizes. "We buy value. We buy to resell. We look for the nicer pieces of jewelry—that we might be able to resell."

"The business has certainly changed over the years," says Chris. "People in Flea Markets are showing jewelry and silver that may or may not be worth anything and EBay did not exist twenty years ago. Many times, those that want to sell or buy on EBay do not always know the value of what they are selling or buying"

"We are local and have been here for over fifty years. People know us. Occasionally, we even make house calls," Chris explains. "Sometimes people call us when a family member dies and there is just too much stuff or it is just too heavy. Our kind of customer service is something you can't find online."



Chris, Art and Pat Arbutine

"When we buy something for resale, we take a ten to twenty percent fee; it is just like buying and selling a car."

"When buying coins, we either buy them to resell to investors or to melt down for their raw value. We have many people in our network - collectors, investors or even auctioneers. Many small dealers buy from us."

The Silver Queen is the other side of the company. They buy and sell preowned silver and sterling.

"In the old days, hippies would come in and buy our old sterling silverware and turn it into hip jewelry, rings, and bracelets," says Pat, reflecting on the 1970s and '80s. "Now after fifty years, we are seeing our friend's grandchildren coming in selling their grandparents stuff."

The businesses function like economic see-saws. People selling in down economic times at Belleair Coins and buy when the economy is moving upwards at Silver Queen.

"You cannot be a collector—and a dealer—at the same time," Chris reminds his mom who has tended to keep special finds over the years. "You can't do both."

"We wanted to be the Tiffany's of Belleair Bluffs," says Pat proudly. "Now we are the Tiffany's of Largo."

People have been shopping at The Silver Queen and Belleair Coins for over five decades, maybe it is time for you to join them. Get more information on these two businesses on their web sites: www.SilverQueen.com and www.BelleairCoins.com.



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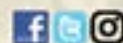
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NOT FEELING THE LOVE ON VALENTINE'S DAY?

George Rohrmann, L.C.S.W.

First remember, Valentine's Day does not have to be only for romantic couples. Anyone can rejoice in having friends and relatives with whom to share the spirit of the day. Some individuals choose to be single, and they are quite happy and well adjusted. They have not given in to the pressure to have "that special someone" and a "perfect relationship."

But this article is not for them, it is for those who are in a romantic relationship or want to be in one. If you are in a relationship and are very pleased and happy with it, perhaps the following will validate what you have accomplished.

The internet is packed with articles outlining five, ten, or even more key elements to having a better relationship. It can be overwhelming to try to meet all of them. In addition, there are many notions promoted by the card, book, movie and music industries that create a nice fantasy of romantic love, but it is not realistic expectations for a relationship. Ideas like "you complete me," "I'm nothing without you," "we have to do everything together if we are really in love" and "you need to find that special person" are just a few of the unrealistic notions created by these industries.

Often, couples unknowingly have idealistically high expectations of what a relationship is going to do for them. For example, if you are unhappy in your life, finding a special person may initially feel good, but it will not, in the long run, make you happy.

For those seeking a romantic relationship, ask yourself "Am I ready for it?" The best relationship is between two whole, happy, well-adjusted individuals who want companionship, share goals and values about life, are friends, are cheerleaders for each other, share some activities, but also

allow and accept an appropriate amount of individualism such as separate activities, which help an individual bring energy and joy back to the relationship.

When looking for a relationship, it is important to understand why you are attracted to certain types of romantic partners. The emotional reasons may not always be healthy ones and until recognized, are often repeated in consecutive relationship. Until you are aware of these reasons, those emotional forces can create repeated unhappiness.

If you are in a romantic relationship, Valentine's Day is certainly a time to celebrate it, but it should not be the only day to give your relationship attention. Cards, candy, and flowers are not going to make up for a lack of connection the remainder of the year. For many couples, the daily lack of connection leads to feelings of loneliness, unhappiness, and feeling unfulfilled. Those of you who have felt this will understand what I am talking about.

In my practice I take a simple approach. I utilize "Emotionally Focused Therapy" (EFT) which helps couples get connected so that each partner feels they are being heard, respected, and valued. I take issue with the idea that "relationships are work." They should not be "work." Once set in motion, there is a satisfying, natural flow that is easily maintained through ongoing nurturing of the relationship.

If you would like to learn more about your relationships, you can reach me at 727-240-4975. My office is located in the Powell Professional Center at 401 Corbett Street, Suite 460-D, in Belleair. Get more information about improving your relationships at www.georgerohrmann.com.

George Rohrmann, L.C.S.W. is a licensed individual, family and couples therapist in Belleair who is accepting new patients.

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WAYS TO STAY FIT EXPLORING FLORIDA'S GREAT OUTDOORS

by Shannon N. Herbon, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

As 2023 gets underway, it's a great time to focus on a healthier lifestyle. Luckily, living in Florida is like having your own personal outdoor gym, so getting adequate exercise can be quite easy with hundreds of state parks and greenways throughout the state. An added bonus? You get to enjoy Florida's natural beauty while doing so.

Below are some ways to keep your mojo going ... and since you will be enjoying Florida's great outdoors, you'll probably have trouble stopping.

While you may have walked for miles in the confines of a gym, a hike among native plants and wildlife, while breathing in the fresh air and soaking up some sunshine is even better. Why not trade in the treadmill? Florida's public lands offer a variety of trail options – through pine forests and hardwood hammocks, rolling hills, on dirt or paved trails, and even along beaches like Anclote Key Preserve State Park.



For those who seek the workout benefits of a rowing machine, miles of crystal clear springs, freshwater lakes and saltwater paddling trails accommodate kayakers and canoeists while offering scenic backdrops guaranteed to take your workout to the next level. HoneyMoon Island State Park is a favorite feeding ground for many wading birds, including great and little blue herons, snowy egrets and roseate spoonbills.

Trade in the stationary exercise bike for the real thing and explore Florida's paved and off-road mountain-bike trails. Like with the hiking trails, they wind through a variety of landscapes and rank from easy for those leisurely days, to some of the most challenging around. At Hillsborough River State Park, both hiking and biking trails await leading through more than 7 miles of nature trails. Or enjoy ranger-guided tours through Fort Foster State Historic Site, a reconstructed fort from the Second Seminole War.

As an added bonus, the price for these workout opportunities is next to nothing! Most state parks charge a minimal entrance fee – usually less than the price of a single movie ticket. And there are thousands of miles of greenways and trailways that don't cost a dime to visit, with no lines and no waiting.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Florida Park Service maintains more than 700,000 acres within its national award-winning Florida Park system. So getting healthier is just a step, paddle or peddle away. To find your healthy outdoor lifestyle, visit www.floridastateparks.org and www.floridagreenwaysandtrails.com.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection, dep.state.fl.us. photo credit-Sam Rosenbaum

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PALM TREES

By Randy Lee

Palm trees grow in many parts of the world. Most areas where temperatures stay above freezing are ideal habitats for palm trees- tropical and subtropical climates. There are over two thousand species of palm trees in the world. Closer to home, palms can be found as far north as the Carolina coast, however, the Tampa Bay region is ideal for growing many different palms.

Palm trees can be distinguished by their cold tolerance. The most cold tolerant palms include Sable, Pindo, Chinese Fan, Ribbon, Reclinata, Palmetto, Rhapsis, Sago, Paurotis, European Fan, Washingtonia, Medjool, Canary Island, Pony Tail and Sylvester. Palms that may show some freeze damage include Roebelenii or Pygmy Date, Bismarkia, Fishtail, Queen, Bamboo Palm and Foxtail. Palms that will show the most cold damage include Thatch, Areca, Alexander, Adonidia or Christmas Palm, Coconut, Royal, Triangle, Bottle and Spindle.

Smaller palms are ideally suited for smaller gardens and homes. These include Roebelenii, Pony Tail, Cardboard, Sago, Pindo, Bamboo and Christmas Palm. These palms usually have a slower growth rate and require less maintenance.

The most expensive palms include Old Man, Lipstick, Latan, Rhapsis, Kentia, Medjool and Licuala. These usually have a slow growth rate, have unusual characteristics or color and are not readily available. These palms can cost hundreds or thousands of dollars.

Current trends in palms include native, drought tolerant and slow growing varieties. These include Ribbon, Sable(with boots), Bismarkia, Paurotis, Palmetto and Foxtail. Sables will always be popular since they are native to Florida and represent our state tree. We plant many Date palms, Roebelenii Palms and Adonidia Palms as well.

Summer is an ideal time to plant palms- their root systems are most active in hot weather. When planting, always plant the palm at grade level- never too deep. Water and fertilizer are important in establishing and maintaining palms. Most palms benefit from periodic hand watering the first year and fertilization twice a year. Best of luck in selecting the right palms for your Florida landscape.



FEBRUARY/MARCH CHECKLIST

- Clean gutters, pressure clean
- Watch for freezing temperatures
- Fertilize trees, shrubs and lawns in March
- Plant herbs, flowers and vegetables at this time
- Remulch landscape beds in March
- Prune freeze-damaged plants and trees at the end of March

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SUGAR SAND FESTIVAL RETURNS

Come to Clearwater Beach this spring and watch 1,000 tons of Clearwater’s sugar sand come to life. After a hugely successful post-pandemic return to Clearwater Beach last year, the Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival returns to bright and beautiful Clearwater Beach April 7 to 23 for its ninth and biggest year yet.

Fourteen world-class artists craft elaborate sand sculptures from Clearwater’s internationally famous sugar sand. The works of art are 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.

From architectural masterpieces created from Clearwater’s famous sugar sand to concerts, performers, and daily entertainment, the 17-day festival attracts visitors from around the world each year.

This year’s festival theme is “Decades: A Blast from the Past!” and takes you on a nostalgic trip back in time to the 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s.

Tickets are on sale now at SugarSandFestival.com. General admission to the sculpture exhibit is \$14 per person and is free for children 3 years old and younger.

Discounted tickets for military personnel, police officers, firefighters, teachers and healthcare workers can be purchased for \$10 each on “Frontline Fridays,” April 7, 14 and 21. These tickets will be available at the gate with proper identification.

Baystar VIP Lounge tickets are on sale for \$70. VIP tickets include fast-lane entrance and admission to the Sugar Sand Walk sculpture exhibit, a free souvenir photo, and a festival themed T-shirt. VIP also includes admission to the Baystar VIP Lounge, three beer/wine/seltzer beverages, two soda or bottled water beverages, access to air-conditioned VIP rooms, and an enhanced dinner menu from 5:30 to 8:30 pm.

Each year, the Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival continues to grow in popularity and garner national attention. The 2022 event drew more than 200,000 visitors throughout its 17-day run.

Learn more and get your tickets at SugarSandFestival.com.

EVERYONE MUST REAPPLY TO VOTE BY MAIL

More than one in three Americans vote by mail. The number dramatically increased during the Pandemic. Now a new Florida law changed your eligibility to receive a mail-in ballot. Previously, if you checked the box on your last ballot asking to vote by mail in the next election, that was enough. Now after EVERY General Election (like the last November’s mid-terms) ALL mail-in requests expire and must be renewed.

Voters will no longer automatically receive their mail-in ballots, and that begins for the March municipal elections. Few people have renewed their requests and will be surprised when they don’t receive their mail-in ballot.

It is recommended to submit your request at VotePinellas.gov – click on Request a Ballot. You are required to include either the last four digits of your Social Security number or your driver’s license number, whichever form of identification you previously provide and is on file. If you do it online, it will prompt you for the correct form of ID. If you make your request by mail, you may submit the wrong form, and it will be rejected.

Remember, this request will only last through the 2024 Presidential election. It will have to be renewed every two years, after EACH General Election – those are always in November. Of course, if instead, you prefer to vote in person, you do not need to do anything (assuming you are registered). Just show up at your polling place on election day, with your ID.

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Bar & Restaurant News



GUPPY'S REMODELS

Indian Rocks Beach's Guppy's on the Beach recently took advantage of a shutdown for plumbing issues to remodel the inside area of their popular restaurant.

"We were closed for three weeks beginning the Monday after Thanksgiving," says Eugen Fuhrmann, longtime owner of Guppy's. "Everything was gutted except for the kitchen. The colors were all changed and updated. The walls were covered in new material. The bar was totally redesigned."

Almost everything is completed except for the restrooms and new tables, which unfortunately are still on back order.

The hope to have everything complete in the coming weeks and the staff would like to thank you for your patience and patronage during their shut down.

Find Guppy's on the Beach at 1609 Gulf Blvd., Indian Rocks Beach. Visit Guppys.com to see their menu and make reservations.

INDIAN ROCKS CAFE EXPANDED This small cafe in Indian Rocks Beach doubled their space when they added what used to be a produce store next door.

By adding the space, they were able to have more seating and a large deli display area. Their existing space is becoming their kitchen where they prepare the food. They have stayed open throughout the construction.

"Once again, we want to thank the people of Indian Rocks and Belleair Beach for supporting us through our first year in business," says co-owner Jean.

Find them at 1401 Gulf Blvd, next to Groupers. See their menu online at www.IndianRocksCafe.com. Call ahead for take-out orders at 475-9949.



SEÑOR TEQUILA'S BY THE BEACH

A fun, new Mexican restaurant has opened in the previous location of the Greek restaurant, Alati. The open air Mexican restaurant serves lunch and dinner until 10pm most nights.

Find them on the backside of the parking garage, just south of Baymont Street at 486 Poinsettia Avenue in North Beach. This is their second location, the first one is in Tampa's West Chase area.

Bar & Restaurant News



GUILTY SEA OPEN FOR BUSINESS The latest addition to the Original Crabby Bill's Family Brands opened for business in December following a yearlong renovation. The former Mexican restaurant was completely gutted and refurbished from top to bottom before reopening as Guilty Sea.

"It was a mess," Matt Loder Jr. said while praising his sister, Mia Corrales, for overseeing the rebuild. "We're just very happy to have it almost done a year later after starting it. It was probably one of the longest and most difficult projects that we've ever done."

"Why Guilty Sea?" says Matt Sr. Loder. "We are blessed with the opportunity to take this journey as an adventure into something fun. I likened this location as if it were a ship. So a ship's name would be fitting. I like the names of sailing vessels, trawlers, or ships some are quite unique. Even if everyone doesn't like the name we can agree it's different."

The sports pub on the beach features over twenty televisions, pool tables, and dart boards. The pub offers a diverse menu including "smash" burgers, entrees, salads and wings, among other dishes. Guilty Sea Sports pub is located at 301 Gulf Blvd. and is open Mon-Sun from 11am to 2 am. www.guiltyseabeachbar.com.

MAGGIE MAES Now with your meal, you can enjoy Mimosas, Bloody Marys, Beer, Wine and Sangria at BOTH locations. Enjoy a breakfast cocktail with the area's finest breakfast and lunch for the past fourteen years. Find them at 2961 West Bay Drive in Belleair Bluffs and in the Shoppes on Sand Key.

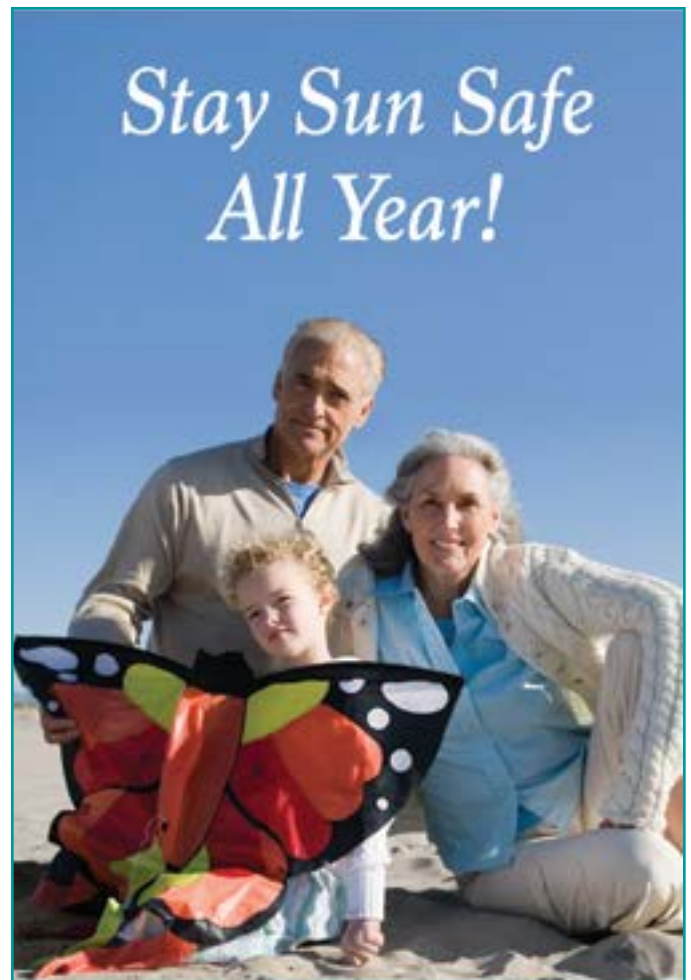
NEW LOOK AT SLYCE PIZZA The restaurant recently completed renovations including new carpeting and furniture both inside the dining room and out on the patio. Also, the Slyce Wyne Bar is opening soon. Guest have the option of ordering from the Wyne Bar menu or from Slyce.



O'KEEFE'S FOR ST. PATRICK'S DAY O'Keefe's Irish Bar and Grill is once again hosting the biggest St. Patrick's Day event in the area. This year it lasts only one day - Friday, March 17 from 11am on. The event is always HUGE. There will be no tent this year, but the event will fill their parking lot with live Irish music, dancing, and lots of green beer. It is free to attend, of course the food and drink is extra.

Find them at 1219 South Ft. Harrison. See their web site for more details - www.OKeefesTavern.com.

RESTAURANT NEWS WANTED If your restaurant has news or an upcoming event we can include in this News Magazine, please e-mail Bob@GriffinDirectories.com or call 727-430-8300.



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HURRICANE IAN DEVASTATES THE CITRUS INDUSTRY

By Bob Griffin, Publisher

As we all know, Florida had a major hurricane in September – Ian followed by Hurricane Nichole in November.

When it came ashore in Southwest Florida just short of a Category Five, Hurricane Ian was the fifth most powerful hurricane to ever hit the United States.

We have all seen photos of the devastation in Ft Myers Beach, Sanibel, and Cape Coral, but as it cut a path across the state, it the damage first damaged Orlando and then Daytona Beach. Cities receive most of the storm damage coverage, but this storm passed directly over our agricultural areas destroying any crop that was growing, including Florida's fragile citrus. At the time of landfall, the Florida Citrus crops were in their final growing month and harvesting was to begin within four to six weeks.

Losses for all Florida crops are estimated to be up to \$1.56 billion. In total, counting vegetables, cattle, and other agriculture, Ian affected about 5 million acres. Citrus led all the other agricultural in expected losses.

Before farmers could recover from Hurricane Ian, Hurricane Nichole destroyed what Ian didn't. Almost the entire citrus crop was a loss. Now after the storms, the forecast for Florida's orange crop has dropped 36 percent from pre-storm estimates, putting the citrus industry on a path toward its lowest production since the Great Depression.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) expects eighteen million boxes of oranges this growing season, down from a forecasted of twenty-eight million. Boxes generally weigh ninety pounds. Projections for grapefruit production is ten percent lower, and fourteen percent lower for specialty fruits.

The USDA estimates those crop losses, in addition to the loss of many trees, are between \$417 and \$675 million. Replacing destroyed citrus trees alone will cost \$270 to \$371 million.

These numbers do not include the growers' heavy infrastructure damage and the future death of trees that stood in water after the flooding. It is estimated the Florida citrus industry will lose eight percent to eleven percent of its 55.75 million trees due to hurricane damage.

"Most of these (citrus) losses are due to fruit drop, damage to branches and impacts due to heavy precipitation and flooding," says the The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

"Hurricane Ian hit Florida citrus growers on many levels – their groves, their homes, their communities – all in the path of destruction," said Shannon Shepp, Executive Director of the Florida Department of Citrus. "Growers approached this season with optimism for good reason. Innovations in greening therapies and the discovery of trees that show signs of natural resistance/tolerance to the disease were teed up for deployment. The hurricane is a setback, for sure."

What does this mean to you? The cost of citrus has definitely gone up, if you can even find it. Some of your favorite oranges, grapefruits, and tangerines may not even be available. Juices and related citrus products have also seen a price increase, while food producers and distributors are scrambling to find imports from other countries.

"Yes, Hurricane Ian, hit the Citrus Industry, and people like us, very hard," says John Buck, owner of Yellow Banks Groves on Walsingham Road in Largo.

Yellow Banks Groves has been around for more than sixty years and has seen many October hurricanes. They do not own any groves; they order their citrus from wholesale growers in Central Florida, especially around and south of Lakeland. They primarily resell the citrus by the bag or box and package it for shipping. Some is squeezed into juice, which they sell and add it to their popular soft ice cream.

"From our perspective, October is the worst time for a hurricane to hit Central Florida," Buck says. "Citrus is in its final month of maturing. The orange and grapefruit supply was severely damaged by Hurricane Ian. Tangerines are also normally picked in November. We get them primarily from the area south of I-4, near Wachula and Sebring. That was some of the hardest hit areas. The popular mercots always come in later; they aren't picked until January. While the fruit was still young, the trees took a big hit."

"Our orange juice mainly comes from the Hamlin orange," Buck adds. "We have noticed a reduction in that orange being available. Thus, you will see an increase in the cost of our various citrus juices."

Yellow Banks normally squeezes and sells five to seven hundred gallons of orange juice each week. The total varies with the tourist season. Their orange juice is also in their ever-popular ice cream.

Buck employees ten to fifteen people at his Largo location - all locals - and many have worked there for years. Yellow Banks Grove is located at 14423 Walsingham Road, in Largo.



John Buck, of Yellow Banks Groves and a shipment of Hamlin juice oranges

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COUNT DOWN TO SUPER BOWL SUNDAY

By Bob Griffin

Super Bowl Sunday is not an official holiday, but most people celebrate it in some form. Even if you don't watch football, it is a great excuse to get together with family and friends for some good sports food and great television commercials. This year, "Super Bowl Sunday" is February 12 - the second Sunday of February.

This year Super Bowl, LVII, otherwise known as #57, will be played in Phoenix, Arizona's "State Farm" stadium, which holds 63,400 people, however, it can expand to 73,000 for special events. This is the fourth Super Bowl to be played in Phoenix and the third in this stadium.

The game is only played in cities that have a National Football League (NFL) team. It starts shortly after 6:30 pm (EST) and is over by 10 pm. This year it will be broadcast on Fox. As of press time, the teams have yet to be determined.

Professional football has been played since 1920. At one time there were two separate leagues, NFL and AFL. Before they merged in 1970, the two leagues agreed to play a championship game, aptly titled "AFL-NFL Championship Game" at the end of their seasons. The first of four, was in 1967 between Green Bay and Kansas City. It was played in the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum and Green Bay won 35-10. They won the second championship game, too, in Miami against the Oakland Raiders. Today's winning team receives the Vince Lombardi Trophy, named after the famed Green Bay Packers head coach, probably because he won those first two championship games.

Those that don't care about the game, or their team is not in it, watch for the commercials and advertisers know that. 50 percent of those surveyed said they were "more interested" in the commercials than the game. Ads, sold months in advance, were 95 percent sold before the playoffs began.

The cost of a 30-second Super Bowl ad is \$7 million, up from \$6.5 million last year. But most commercials will be 60-second - \$14 million - or \$233,000 PER SECOND! The cost of 30-seconds is almost triple what it cost in 2000

when it was "only \$2.5 million."

The network will sell between seventy-five and eighty thirty-second spots, which may be combined into longer ads. There will be a few free spots to promote Fox's upcoming shows. In all, it will generate about 545 million ad dollars - in just four hours! This doesn't count the revenue from the higher priced ads in the pre-game Shows.

Last year, 99 million people watched the game, which was down from 111 million people who watched in 2017. Although the numbers appear to be falling, viewership is harder to track with streaming services and the Internet. It is very dependent on the teams playing, too.

FUN FACTS

The Pittsburgh Steelers have won six out of eight appearances. The New England Patriots have also won six out of eleven appearances. Dallas Cowboys and the San Francisco 49ers have each won five.

New England has the most appearances with eleven. The Miami Dolphins has the only perfect season winning seventeen games including the Super Bowl.

Four NFL teams have never appeared in a Super Bowl - Cleveland, Detroit, Jacksonville, and Houston. Thirteen teams have played in one, but never won the Super Bowl.

During odd numbered games, the NFC is the Home Team; during even numbered games it is the AFC. Away teams have won 58 percent of the games.

Tom Brady has personally won the most rings - seven - six with the Patriots and one with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. He and Peyton Manning are the only two quarterbacks to win rings with two teams

The highest scoring Super Bowl game was in 1995 with a combined score of 75. San Francisco had 49, San Diego 26. Our own Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 2003 share the #2 position with 69 combined points (Tampa 48 vs Oakland 21).

All four dominate networks have televised the game. The first Super Bowl was simultaneously broadcast on CBS and NBC. John Madden is the

only person to host a Super Bowl for each of the four networks.

Three cities have hosted the Super Bowl the most. Miami - eleven, New Orleans - ten, and Los Angeles - seven. Tampa has hosted five Super Bowls: 1984, 1991, 2001, 2009, and 2021.

Super Bowl 2015 with 114.44 million viewers was the most-watched game and holds the record for the most most-viewed television broadcast of any kind in the U.S. (Seattle and New England). On the other hand, Super Bowl 2021 held here in Tampa, was the least watched game with 96.4 million viewers (Kansas City and Tampa Bay).

Tickets this year start at \$6,000, but not the good seats; those are \$25,000 (Club Level). Executive Suite seats are over \$100,000 each.

HALF TIME

The Super Bowl Half-Time Show is the most watched TV entertainment event in the world. For the first time it is being sponsored by Apple Music. Pepsi has sponsored it for the last ten years.

Unlike normal NFL games, the Super Bowl's half time may last more than 30-minutes. Originally, the Super Bowl had typical high school and college bands play at half time. Later, famous artists were added. 1993 was the first Super Bowl to feature a single performer - Michael Jackson. It still ranks as one of the most-watched half-time shows in Super Bowl history.

The primary performer this year is Rihanna, winner of nine Grammy's, with fourteen number-one hit songs (thirty-one in the top ten). This is Rihanna's first live performance in over five years

The Top 10 Rated Half-Time Shows?

- 10 (2019) Maroon 5
- 9 (2020) Jennifer Lopez
- 8 (2018) Justin Timberlake
- 7 (2013) Beyonce & Destiny's Child
- 6 (2022) Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Eminem, Mary J. Blige, And Kendrick Lamar
- 5 (2012) Madonna with MIA
- 4 (2014) Bruno Mars & The Red Hot Chili Peppers
- 3 (2016) Coldplay
- 2 (2017) Lady Gaga
- 1 (2015) Katy Perry with Lenny Kravitz

RESOLUTIONS FOR A SAFER NEW YEAR

From the Desk of Sheriff Bob Gualtieri

The New Year is a perfect time for a fresh start. While plenty of people make – and sometimes even keep – resolutions about their health, most people don't think about making resolutions to improve their safety. Here are a few things you can do in the coming year to keep you and your family safe. Much like drinking more water or exercising daily, once you make these things a habit they will become second nature.



Vehicle Burglary and Theft: It sounds so simple but locking your car door every time you exit your vehicle prevents Pinellas County's most common crime. A majority of vehicle burglaries and thefts occur to unlocked vehicles. Don't make your vehicle a target by leaving valuables in plain sight. Take them out of the car when you can or keep them out of sight in the trunk. Never leave a firearm in your vehicle.

Online security: Criminals are always finding new methods to part you from your hard-earned money and one of the most common ways they attack your finances is online. Create strong passwords and don't use the same password for all accounts. Don't respond to any text or email that asks you for personal information and never click on a link included in a text or email from someone you don't know.

Scammers: The best advice I can give you to avoid a scam is to take your time and think before you act. Scammers create a sense of urgency. They may call, email, or text pretending to be from companies like Amazon, eBay, or a utility company and say you owe money or are about to have your power turned off if you don't send money right away. Scammers often demand payments in cryptocurrency or gift cards – no legitimate company will ever do this. Don't send money or give personal information. Instead, look up the company's main website and contact them to find out if you really owe money.

Driving safety: The rules of the road are there for a reason: to keep you and other drivers safe. Don't think that you're the exception to the rules. Keep to the speed limit and obey traffic control devices. Always wear your seatbelt and resist the temptation to use your phone. Texting and driving is against the law and distracted driving is a leading cause of accidents.

Personal Safety: It's easy to be complacent, but in this day and age you should never let your guard down completely. Being alert to potential danger will give you a chance to avoid it. Don't be a target – walk with confidence, keep your hands free, watch for anyone entering your personal space, and don't be afraid to get loud if you feel threatened. Criminals don't want to be noticed so if you shout stop! get back! they might decide you're not worth the trouble. Pay attention to exits wherever you go and always have an escape plan. Above all, trust your intuition. If a person or situation makes you feel uncomfortable, get away fast.

Keeping these simple things in mind can help you have a safer year. I wish you and your family a happy and safe 2023!

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Photo courtesy of Tampa Bay Watch

TAMPA BAY WATCH OYSTER SHELL RECYCLING PROGRAM

Tampa Bay Watch recycled 49,087 Pounds of Oyster Shell in 2022! In addition to keeping them out of our land fill, the recycled shells contributed to improved water quality in Tampa Bay. A big thanks to their restaurant partners who contributed to a successful pilot year of the Oyster Shell Recycling Program:

- The Island Grille & Raw Bar, Tierra Verde: 33,768 lbs
- The Oyster Bar, Downtown St. Petersburg: 15,095 lbs
- Morgan Mae's Oyster House, Tarpon Springs: 224 lbs

The waste oyster shells are used to create Vertical Oyster Gardens (VOG) made of recycled oyster shells from local restaurants that are suspended from docks to create a hard substrate to which juvenile oysters can attach and develop. The shells can also be used to create oyster shell bars to restore lost habitat systems to the bay, prevent further erosion of the shoreline and improve water quality through natural biological filtration.

Vertical oyster gardens, oyster reef balls, and oyster shell bags are methods developed by Tampa Bay Watch for creating oyster habitat. Oysters are a food source for birds and fish. Many small fish, crabs, shrimp and other critters live among the oysters and provide food for large fish and wildlife. Oysters are natural filters, and clean 2-5 gallons of water per hour. More oysters mean a cleaner bay!

In January 2023, Crabby Bill's St. Pete Beach and Crabby Bill's Indian Rocks Beach joined the program, so they hope to double our shell intake this year! Please remember #EatMoreOysters - make more vertical oyster gardens.

Would you like to create your own vertical oyster gardens to hang off your dock? You can make it from recycled oyster shell from a local restaurant or even your own meal.

STEPS TO HANGING YOUR VOG:

1. Be sure to choose a spot for your VOG with the most water flow and that the water is deep enough to cover the entire VOG at high tide. Place an eye screw in the side of the dock.
2. Drill a hole in the middle of each shell slightly larger than your rope and thread the rope through the shells.
3. Hang VOG from dock using the eye screw. To calculate appropriate height for your VOG, check your pilings and seawalls for oyster/barnacle growth. Try and match the height/depth of the best growth. This is the optimal zone for your area.
4. Be patient; it may take several months for oysters to colonize your VOG. If you are in doubt about whether the shells are hanging at the right depth, move them higher or lower in the water, always trying to match the growth on adjacent areas.



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HOW TO DISPOSE OF YOUR UNWANTED MEDICATION

If you have expired or unneeded painkillers in your cabinet, you are not alone. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) estimates up to three-quarters of patients keep unused opioids for the future, or just forget they still have them. While the dangers of these drugs are well known, keeping pain killers or any old prescription can be risky. The leading cause of child poisoning is accidental consuming medications; it is also the most common reason people call the the Animal Poison Control Center for their pets, too.

Getting rid of these medications is more complicated than just throwing them away. They need to be properly disposed of to keep children and pets safe, prevent misuse, and keep it from entering our environment. Here are some recommend ways to dispose of unneeded drugs.

Find a collection site -

The DEA has more than 15,000 permanent drug collection spots across the country — including your neighborhood pharmacy. The large, mailbox-like containers allow you to deposit old pills in their original bottles, no questions asked. There are rules though. They accept unused or expired prescription or over-the-counter medication, including pet medication, in capsule, tablet, liquid, patch or ointment form. No illegal drugs (including marijuana), thermometers, needles, syringes, or inhalers. Since 2017, the program has collected more than 1 million pounds of drugs. Locally, Walgreens, CVS, and Publix participate. Check with your local pharmacy to make sure they have a drop box.

National collection day

Twice a year, the DEA holds National Prescription Drug Take Back Day events. The next one is April 22 from 10 am to 2pm. Drop-offs are anonymous and they will accept vaping devices. Nearby locations include the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (both the administration building and North District), Largo Police Department, and Clearwater Police Department at Countryside. A couple of weeks before, visit DEATakeBack.com to confirm your nearest location.

With both DEA collection methods, after the drugs are collected, the bags — which are never opened — are sent to incinerators.

Trashcans are an option if prepared correctly.

While the take-back locations are preferable, you can dispose of some medicines in your home trash. Empty it into a sealed bag or jar with unappealing substance such as dirt, cat litter or coffee grounds and throw the container in your home's trash. Make sure to scratch out personal information on the prescription label to protect your identity, before discarding the empty packaging.

In limited cases, flushing is okay.

The science has become clearer about pharmaceuticals in our ground and surface water. Most experts agree flushing prescriptions down the toilet should not be done because the chemicals can affect aquatic life. But there are some exceptions. The FDA recommends drugs sought-after for potential abuse and those that can result in death from one dose if inappropriately taken, be flushed if you can't take them to a collect site right away. This includes fentanyl patches and Vicodin. The label will alert you if your drug is in this category. Studies reveal these drugs have negligible effects on the environment.

Think before you buy or refill

The best way to reduce your volume of unused medications is just don't buy them. Rather than refilling a prescription you may not need or buying over-the-counter drugs just in case, wait until it is needed. Think about the time and money you will save! And the extra room in your cabinet you will have.



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GERRY HUBBELL (1931-2022)



By Bob Griffin, Publisher

Longtime Hubbell Funeral Home owner and Belleair resident Gerry Hubbell passed away in December. He was not just a business owner, he helped get Belleair Bluffs up and running in the very beginning.

Gerald was born in Takoma Park, MD in 1931. Prior to college, Gerald volunteered to serve in the Navy during the Korean Conflict. After the Navy, he went to Columbia Union College where he met his wife, Stella. "He really wanted to date my roommate, but then he started dating me," says Stella, about how they met. "Gerald had one of the only cars on campus and he used to take us out for ice cream." Stella received her BSN and Gerald received a two-year Associates degree and went to work as an electrician. They got married in 1956.

The Hubbells visited his parents in St. Petersburg one winter; they soon decided Florida was where they to be.

After they were settled in Florida, a friend asked Gerald to work his shift at a nearby funeral parlor. That is when he got the idea of opening a funeral home. "All I had to do was clean up, take out the trash, move caskets around and greet people when they came in for funerals," recalls Gerald. "There didn't seem to be much to it."

After Gerald was laid off from his electrician job, he visited area funeral homes asking for work, but with no experience, there weren't any takers until Osgood Funeral Home in Pinellas Park hired him. It motivated Gerald to enrolled in Mortuary College.

After he passed the state boards, he was ready to start his own business. He met a Largo Realtor who showed Gerald a vacant lot on Indian Rocks Road North. "I had no money and no job," he recalled. The Realtor said, "No problem, we'll get you the money." He then looked at Stella and said, "What do you do?" When she told him she was a nurse at Mound Park Hospital (today's Bayfront Medical), he exclaimed, "That's

good enough!" He got a \$40,000 loan for the land and building, plus buying furniture and caskets. "It is amazing how easy it was to get a loan then," Hubbell remembers. Jewel Welch owned most of Belleair Bluffs and the property behind their lot. She agreed to sell them the back half of the lot. "She just sold it to me and said to pay her later."

"At the time, we lived in Seminole but sold our house to an elderly couple. I negotiated only with the wife because they expected her husband to die soon. After the sale, I got a call from Pasadena Hospital and they told me the 'wife had died-not the husband.' I was speechless. She was our first customer."

"We started small," Stella says. "For years, we lived in the funeral home."

"The funeral business has changed a lot over the years. When we opened in 1964, we had a funeral coach/ambulance combination. We operated as a county ambulance," says Gerald. "We got paid \$5 per trip." "I remember one lady telling me she was not going to pay her bill since when she died, I was going to get her money anyway."

Gerald was also involved with the City of Belleair Bluffs. He was one of the first City Commissioners, serving for five years as Vice Mayor.

"Gerry used to be the Master of Ceremonies at the annual Christmas Tree Lighting, back when it was held on the big lot, where Cody's Plaza now sits," said Debra Sullivan, Belleair Bluffs City Administrator.

His primary function on the Council was to oversee the police and fire department. "That was easy seeing how we only had one policeman and one police car," Gerald chuckled. "I also oversaw the all-volunteer fire department. Whenever there was a fire, it was our job to sound the alarm. The siren was on our property and the switch was inside the funeral home. The siren was tested every Saturday at noon. It was my responsibility for years; you could set your watch by it. The warning system was eventually replaced by a phone system and now of course the fire department has real paid employees," Gerald explained. The local funeral directors help create what today's Pinellas EMS system. Gerald convinced the City to own their own ambulance and even got the Rotary to pay for it.

"I believe I have known Gerry most of my life. We moved here in 1975 and even then, Gerry was a pillar of the community. He was involved in Rotary and many other Civic organizations," says Chris Arbutine, Mayor of Belleair

Bluffs. "He was always heavily involved and willing to lend a helping hand. My first memory of meeting him was at the original Christmas tree lighting celebrations prior to the new Community Center Complex being built. He was the Master of Ceremonies."

In the 1970s, Gerald was the founding President of the Belleair Bluffs Rotary. Gerald moved up to become a District Governor for the State of Florida from 1977-1978. "I had to go to a meeting somewhere in my district virtually every day," he remembered.

"I knew Gerry from his earliest days in the business, dating back to 1963, when he and Stella lived in Seminole," said George Feaster, former owner of Moss-Feaster Funeral Home. "We were never competitors. His business was similar but different than ours. He provided the funeral services; we owned the cemetery.

"We were even partners in several business outside of the funeral industry, such as oil drilling in Texas. We built a cemetery together in the 1970s. Gerry and I were involved in setting up the rules and laws for the funeral industry statewide," Feaster explained.

Gerald and Stella celebrated 66 years of marriage on August 19, 2022. Two of their three children, Gerald Jr. and Christine run the company and deal with the day-to-day operations.

"Gerry was both a Bluffs resident and Bluffs business owner which gave him a broad perspective of the Community," Mayor Arbutine explained. "He also raised his family in Belleair Bluffs as well, which was unusual as then most residents were retirees."

"Gerry was proponent of positive change and growth for our community. It has been a while since Gerry has been able to be actively involved, however, his past actions and positive energy still flow through the City. He may be gone but his legacy lives on," Arbutine concludes.

Hubbell's Funeral Home is located at 499 Indian Rocks Road.





It is with great excitement we announce that Dr. Priya Nayyar MD is now offering a complete spectrum of Dermatology services, including skin cancer surgery, cosmetics and laser treatments, at her Clearwater office located at 510 E Druid Rd. in downtown Clearwater.

Dr. Nayyar, a New York City board certified dermatologist and fellowship trained Mohs and cosmetic surgeon, is the owner and medical director of Dermaclinique, a premier dermatology, cosmetic and skin cancer center. This will be Dermaclinique’s second office location, with its first being in St. Petersburg. Dr. Nayyar is highly trained in the treatment and management of high-risk skin cancers as well as advanced dermatologic laser and cosmetic procedures, including hair restoration and upper eyelid blepharoplasty. She is known for providing the highest level of care to all her patients, and she takes pride in achieving extraordinary results for both surgical and cosmetic patients.

Additionally, Dermaclinique is thrilled to welcome Dermatology Physician Assistant Shana Morreale to the practice. Shana is a board-certified dermatology physician assistant who specializes in skin cancers, psoriasis, atopic dermatitis, acne, rashes, and hair loss. She completed additional training in adult and pediatric plastic surgery. Shana is proud to be a Florida native. She is accepting new patients at our Clearwater and St. Petersburg locations.

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FROM PUPPY MILL TO FIRE STATION DOG

Since the eighteenth century, fire stations in the U.S. have kept "station dogs," whose job traditionally was to calm the horses that drew the equipment carriage to fire scenes. In modern times, station dogs no longer tend to horses, but serve an equally important position keeping up the morale of firefighters during long and emotionally exhausting shifts. This past fall, The Treasure Island Fire Department welcomed their newest station dog, "Captain," an 8-month-old beagle puppy. He was adopted by the crew when they learned of the rescue of almost 4,000 beagles from a puppy mill in Cumberland, Virginia.




Puppy mills are large-scale breeding operations designed to mass-produce offspring and maximize profit for the breeder. There are about 2,000 of these licensed facilities in the U.S. Some responsibly place importance on the animals' health, unfortunately, proper care is expensive, and many facilities barely comply to the minimum legal standard.

The Virginia facility had been in operation for over 50 years, breeding dogs for laboratory research. The animals were kept in cages without beds, toys, or stimulation. After an extensive undercover investigation conducted by PETA and a local news station, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) cited the facility's operator, for more than seventy violations and shut down its operation.

The USDA regulates animal breeding under the federal Animal Welfare Act of 1966. This is the only federal law regulating the treatment of animals in research, teaching, testing, exhibition, transport, and breeding. It provides minimal survival standards for dogs and cats in breeding facilities. State laws are more strict but vary widely across the country, resulting in a concentration of bad breeders in states with lax laws and poor enforcement.

The Animal Legal Defense Fund ranks Florida seventh in the nation for animal protection laws. They consider things such as animal assault laws, veterinarian reporting requirements, post-conviction possession bans, and shelter requirements. More than eighty local Florida governments have passed ordinances banning retail sale of dogs and cats in pet stores, resulting in an increase in adoptions. Nationwide, Florida ranks third in pet adoptions according to teterinary telehealth service, Dutch.

The closure of the Virginia breeding facility prompted a nationwide coalition of animal welfare organizations to facilitate the adoption of the rescued dogs. The Humane Society of Tampa Bay received fifteen of the beagles in August and all were adopted in a few days, including Captain. He is now the official station dog at Fire Station 24 in Treasure Island. According to a TIFR press release, "Captain will serve as a therapy dog for our first responders. He will also join the department at public education events and become TIFR's official mascot."



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COMINGS AND GOINGS

EMILY BLOXAM, FLORIDA BOTANICAL GARDENS' NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Emily Bloxam is the new Executive Director of the Florida Botanical Gardens in Largo. But Emily is not new to the gardens. She has been their Communications Coordinator for the past four years. She replaces Vernon Bryant, who retired recently after five years serving in that same position.



"We are delighted to have Emily lead our FBG organization and advancing our mission," says John Thomas, President of the non-profit.

This leadership change coincides with the construction of the new Majeed Discovery Garden, a special garden area for children. It is place for children to learn - and explore - the world of plants. It is set to open later this year.

"I really look forward the Discovery Garden opening in the near future," Emily adds. "Come see what we have done." It's free to the public."

The Florida Botanical Gardens is a 182-acre botanical garden located in Largo, Florida. The park showcases flora, fauna, and natural resources in motivational surroundings that promote environmentally friendly techniques.

Florida Botanical Gardens is located at 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo, across from the Indian Rocks Christian Church. Get more information at www.FLBGFoundation.org.

HOPE VILLAGES OF AMERICA CEO RESIGNS

CEO Kirk Ray Smith has resigned. Their Chief Operating Officer and Chief Administrative Officer, Melinda Perry, will be the interim CEO while they look for his replacement.

THERESA WHITE, COMMUNITY DENTAL CLINIC'S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Theresa White recently joined the Community Dental Clinic as their Executive Director. She received her expanded function Dental Assistant certificate in 1996. Over the last 26 years, she has gained experience by working directly with private and non-profit dental companies and attending leadership courses, with organizations such as Bell Leadership. Most recently, she graduated from the Charitable Dental Clinic Leadership Institute through AmeriCare.



Through her training and professional development, Theresa has acquired firsthand knowledge and experience and has been instrumental in establishing an array of other community partnerships. She was the past Vice Chair member of the Florida Association of Free and Charitable Clinics (FAFCC) and was appointed Chair of the FAFCC State Conference Planning Committee.

Theresa is a constant advocate for the low-income population, working to ensure they have access to assistance for medical, dental, and behavioral needs. As part of her continued efforts, she traveled to Tallahassee to speak with Florida Legislature to pursue funding for FAFCC's grant program.

Community Dental Clinic, an independent nonprofit organization, is located at 1008 Woodlawn Street, Clearwater.

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ARE YOU PLANNING TO VISIT A NATIONAL PARK THIS YEAR?

If you are planning your 2023 vacations now, you might want to include a visit to a National Park. The National Park Service announced their annual fee-free days for 2023. On these dates, visitors will be able to enter for free, regardless of the normal daily cost.

For 2023, the Park Service will waive the entry fee on the following days:

- April 22 – The first day of National Park Week
- August 4 – Great American Outdoors Day
- September 23 – National Public Lands Day
- November 11 – Veterans Day

Originally introduced to increase accessibility to National Parks, Fee-free days waive the price of entry, which can be anywhere from \$5 to \$35 depending on the park. But most locations are always free to enter. The more popular parks including the Grand Canyon and Zion are \$35, but only 108 of the more than 400 national parks have an entry fee. The fees primarily contribute to the park’s operating budget and pay for infrastructure, habitat restoration, visitor education programs, and other services.

If you’re planning to visit a national park in 2023, hopefully your dates will correspond with a fee-free day, but if you intend to see more than one park, or visit more than one day this year, the \$80 America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass is a fantastic deal. It allows unlimited admission to any park for one year. It covers entrance fees, standard amenity fees and day use fees for a driver and all passengers in a personal vehicle at per vehicle fee areas (or up to four adults at sites that charge per person). Children 15 or under are admitted free. The cost of the same pass for Seniors is \$20. The price of the lifetime America the Beautiful – The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Senior Pass is \$80.

Before you travel, buy one online at www.usparkpass.com.

HEP FASHION SHOW: Renewing Hope on the Runway

Join HEP at Ruth Eckerd Hall on Sunday, March 12th from 2 to 5pm for an afternoon of fun, fashion, and fundraising during the 8th Annual HEP Fashion Show: Renewing Hope on the Runway. Guests will enjoy a fashion show featuring sustainable styles all found in the HEP Thrift Store, hors d’oeuvres, and boutique shopping. There will also be a chance to win raffle prizes.

Tickets are \$60/person or \$450/table* (max 8 per table), with proceeds supporting HEP’s Youth & Family Services. Sponsorship opportunities including ticket packages are available for individuals and businesses alike.

Please note, if purchasing a table, funds must be submitted through one online donation, one \$450 check, or one envelope containing all individual checks.

Tickets are on sale. To purchase them or learn about sponsorship opportunities, contact HEP Marketing Specialist Madeline Stone at MadelineS@HEPempowers.org or 727-442-9041 ext. 105.

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ART INSTRUCTOR CHARLOTTE DIGENNARO RETIRES

by Patricia Thomas

Retiring from a job of 30 years may not seem unusual, but Charlotte DiGennaro is doing it for the second time! Charlotte had a full career teaching art in public schools for over thirty years before retiring to Florida with her husband Sam. Soon after arriving in our beautiful community, she began to teach again at the Beach Art Center, which was the start of another thirty-year career. Charlotte started teaching at the Center in 1992 alongside founder George King.

When Charlotte talks about her students – be they past or present, she beams while sharing what it was like to experience their creativity. Charlotte is not an instructor that tells you what to create or specifically how to do it, she teaches you how to feel, how to let yourself go and how to be creative.

Charlotte grew up in the Finger Lakes Region of New York State. She pursued a career as an art teacher, graduating first from college in Buffalo, NY before going on to earn a master's degree in Education from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Charlotte's education focused on realism and detail, using pen and pencil to achieve a life-like resemblance. Charlotte says she found her current creative and free style as a teacher through her students.

Starting out as a high school teacher, Charlotte says she "did what was expected of me," and instructed her students as she had been taught, to achieve realism. Later in her career, she taught in junior high and at elementary levels. When asked how and when she developed her signature, creative, happy style, Charlotte credits the children. "My style developed by teaching the elementary kids, they were so free," she says. "They taught me the fun side of art...and

that was everything." Never afraid to make a stand, Charlotte refused when asked to give her elementary students a grade in art. She was teaching the children to find their voice and creativity and she did not feel this should be ranked.

Charlotte has inspired countless students and artists at the Beach Art Center in her 30 years. In her current "Water Media" class, there is a vast array of students working on interesting projects, all learning from each other and from Charlotte. "Make a stroke on a paper and it will talk to you," she says. "There are no rules in art, do what you like doing." At age 90, Charlotte has so much to offer as a teacher but says she continues to learn from her students every day. Charlotte plans to continue to offer her signature "Water Media" class at the Beach Art Center on Tuesday afternoons through March 2023. She will then move closer to her roots and family. Her creativity will continue with her involvement in the Arts Center of Yates County in Penn Yan, New York. If you asked Charlotte how to find the fountain of youth, she would likely direct you to the business end of a paint brush.

The Beach Art Center will be holding a special show featuring the works of Charlotte DiGennaro and her students. The show is called "Reflections," is open to the public and will run from January 9 to February 10. There will be an Opening Reception on Friday, January 13 from 6:00 – 8:00 PM. Visit beachartcenter.org for more information.



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IT IS TIME FOR THE FLORIDA STATE FAIR

The Florida State Fair is scheduled for February 9 – 20 at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa. About 500,000 people attend the Florida State Fairgrounds to enjoy midway rides, exhibits, bright lights, and fun food during the 12-day tradition. The State Fair has run annually since 1904 and is the largest midway in North America

The Fair is famous for its food and has been billed as Florida’s Fried Food Capital. Each year vendors outdo themselves creating new food experiences. New this year? Mexican Street Corn Sundae (Chile con Queso cheese, Mexican spices, crumbled cheese, crushed corn chips, topped with Shrimp or Steak), Fried Key Lime Pie (Pieces of mini donuts with buttercream frosting, layered with Key Lime Pie filling and whip cream, topped with white chocolate, graham cracker crumbs, and a lime slice), Cookie Taco Supreme (A chocolate chip cookie folded into a taco, stuffed with s’mores ice cream, topped with Oreos & chocolate dip, and whipped cream), Dill Pickle Lemonade (Lemonade with pickles and pickle juice), and a Cuban Funnel Cake Sandwich (typical Cuban sandwich pressed between funnel cakes instead of bread and topped with a donut glaze)

It is billed as endless entertainment including an outdoor circus, musical acts on stage, local community performers presented on the big stage, the dueling pianos act, a fire guy, and oh so much more, all on several stages throughout the Fair with shows happening throughout the day and night.

Of course, there are educational things, too. There will be the standard livestock exhibits and competitions where you just might see a newborn calf. Open every day, Cracker Country lets you step back in time to 19th century Florida. It is Tampa’s only living history museum. At the Florida Fish



& Wildlife Exhibit Discover some of the many ways to enjoy Florida’s natural environment, which include hiking, fishing, boating, hunting and photography. Visit the milking parlor and see a modern milking operation.

And what would a Fair be without the rides? There will be all the rides you remember and some new ones too. You can ride unlimited rides with an Advance Anyday Armband - \$30 for one day or for \$50 you can skip the lines on weekends, too. Buy them in advance online and skip the wait.

Entry prices vary; discounts are available for advance purchase online, or at Publix and Wawa stores.

In advance tickets are \$14 per adult, seniors 55 and over are \$9, children 6-11 are \$8. Under 6 is free. At the Gate it is \$15 adult, \$9 children. This year, no one under 18 will be admitted after 6pm unless accompanied by their parent or an adult 21 or older.

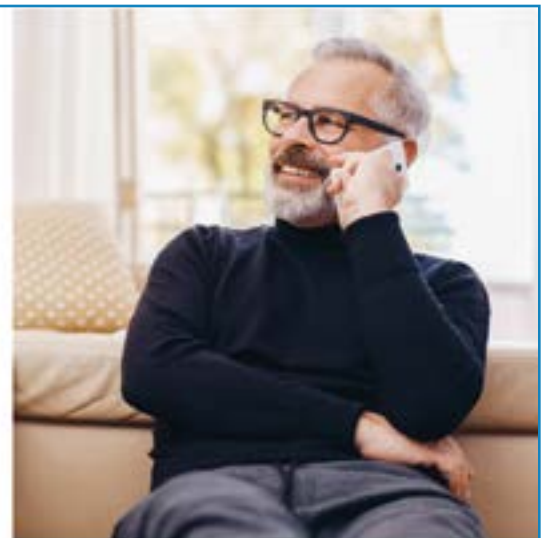
See the complete list of food, entertainment, exhibits and rides at www.FloridaStateFair.com.

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IT'S 5 RACE AND WALK SEASON

Was one of your New Year's resolutions to get fit? There are lots of 5K runs and walks planned in our area to help you on your journey.

February 4th is the Belleair Rec's "Sunset 5k & Fun Run." It begins at 5:30pm and the post race party is back! For more information, please contact the Dimmitt Community Center at 727-518-3728. Register at www.runsignup.com/belleair.



"Beach Walk" February 4, 7:30 am on Clearwater Beach at the Palm Pavillion. The route is from the Palm Pavilion to Pier 60 and then finish at Chapel by the Sea for music, and breakfast. The cost is \$40 per person or \$80 for a family. Register in person, on the day of the walk, at the Palm Pavilion or online at chapelbythesea.net/beachwalk-2023.

The "Gasparilla Distance Classic" February 25-26, in Downtown Tampa. It includes a 5K Run, 5K walk, 5K stroller race, 15K, half marathon, and more. For information or to register, visit www.RunGasparilla.com.

"Rock the Ribbon" Kids Dash, 5k and 10k races are on Saturday, March 11. It benefits Morton Plant Mease cancer services. Kids Dash Starts at 4:30 pm; the 5k & 10k start at 5 pm. Both are on the Morton Plant Hospital campus. Register at www.rock-the-ribbon.org.

The City of Largo's "Annual Shamrock N' Run" Race is Saturday, March 11 at Ulmer Park, 301 West Bay Dr. Live music starts at 4 pm. The Clover Kids Fun Run is 4:45 pm, 5K Run & 1.5 Mile Walk at 5 pm

Pre-register by March 3 at Largosports.com. "Shamrock N' Run" shirt T-Shirts available while supplies last so register early to receive one. Enjoy post-race food and beer.

"Rotary Runs the Beach" on Indian Rocks Beach March 18 with a 5K timed/chipped race, one mile family fun run or a virtual run. The 5K begins at 8 am and the 1 mile begins five minutes later at 1700 Gulf Blvd on Indian Rocks Beach. Register at runsignup.com/Race/FL/IndianRocksBeach/RotaryRunsTheBeach.



FIRESTONE GRAND PRIX

The Annual "Firestone Grand Prix of St Petersburg" is coming back for its 19th big year Friday through Sunday, March 3-4 in Downtown St. Petersburg.

This is a series of races along a picturesque 14-turn, 1.8-mile temporary track. The races feature different types of race cars, culminating in the IndyCar Series race on Sunday, March 5th.

Pricing starts at \$124 for reserved three-day grandstand seats or \$65 for general admission for all three days. Sunday only, general admission is \$60 per person.

Tickets are available at gpstpete.com or call 727-898-4639.

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ODEY O'DONNELL (1921 - 2022)



Belleair resident Frances Joseph O'Donnell, Jr., better known as Odey, passed away on December 30, 2022 at the great age of 101. Odey, a true Irishman, was born on St Patrick's Day, March 17, 1921. He was the son of Frances O'Donnell Sr. and Elle Zimmerman.

When WWII began, Odey was only 22. He joined the Army Air Corps and became a bombardier navigator flying a B-24 Liberator, stationed in North Africa and later in Italy. Odey and his crew flew 69 missions over Europe, and the entire crew returned home safely. Victory was declared while the crew was on a transport home. When they reached New York harbor they were greeted with unprecedented celebrations and parades. In 1951 Odey was recalled into military service. He served stateside during the Korean Conflict.

After the war, Odey married Betty Winter and they had 7 children. Through the GI bill, he graduated from Providence College in Rhode Island. Odey had a successful, 40 year career in the medical supply business. He married his second wife Lois, and they enjoyed 55 wonderful years together.

Odey was a lifelong sports enthusiast. He attended Buckley High School in Hartford CT where he was on the basketball, football and track teams. Upon graduating in 1940, Odey received a one-year football scholarship to the Kingswood Oxford Academy. His education was interrupted by WWII, but Odey remained a lifelong supporter of Providence and Connecticut basketball teams. He was an avid golf and tennis player. Odey continued to play tennis with his friends

at Imperial Point community well into his 90s.

Odey and Lois enjoyed many friends and interests. They were active members of St. Jerome's parish, founding members of the North Suncoast Associates of The Florida Orchestra symphony, and members of the Clearwater Yacht Club where Odey served as Commodore in 1995 -1996.

Odey's wife Lois has been in a wheelchair since the age of 18 when she recovered from polio. Even though Lois was in her wheelchair, they regularly cruised from the Clearwater Yacht Club on their boat "The Good Life." Their favorite pastime was to tie up beside the tiki bar, after a day of boating, with Lois still on the boat, and enjoy a drink and the company of their yacht club friends.

On June 12, 2021, O'Dey, then 98, flew to Washington D.C. on an Honor Flight, to see the World War II Memorial for the first time. He was the oldest veteran on the flight. He was recognized for his service at a 2021 Tampa Bay Buccaneer's home game.

Odey was preceded in death by his half brother Leslie Burg and son Stephen. He leaves his wife Lois of Belleair, and his children Michael of CO, Ginny Molleur and Peter of CT, France Winter of RI, Anthony of MI and Libby Murphy of NY plus several grand and great grandchildren.



Remembrances may be sent to: Lois O'Donnell, 1712 Indian Rocks Road, Belleair, FL 33756.

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CHAPEL BY THE SEA'S 14TH ANNUAL BEACH WALK WEEK

This fundraiser, hosted by the Chapel, is one of the most popular events of the year. It includes a bevy of local company and residential sponsors, an exciting auction, enthusiastic participants, and a delicious breakfast catered by the ClearSky Café.

In the last few years, this event has evolved in order to be successful during Covid, and this year, the organizers are excited to get back to tradition. One thing that has changed are the recipients of the funds raised. In years past, Hope Villages of America (previously RCS) was the sole organization for which the fundraiser was created. However, since the Beach Walk has grown and become such a successful event, the Chapel has decided to include a new charity! They are excited to be able to include HEP (the Homeless Empowerment Project) into the mix. HEP is a wonderful organization that has similar goals as Hope Villages of America, in that, their goal is to rehabilitate, serve, and empower families, individuals, and particularly veterans, who need assistance getting back on their feet. Between the two outreach programs, they serve to encompass our local community in a greatly needed way.



If you're new to the Beach Walk fundraiser, here's how it works; Register online at chapelbythesea.net/beachwalk-2023 or register on the day of the walk. The cost is \$40 for an individual and \$80 for a family. Walkers can register in person, or on the day of the walk at the Palm Pavilion, beginning at 7:30am on February 4, 2023. The route will take you from the Palm Pavilion, at 8am, to Pier 60 and then finish at Chapel by the Sea. At the finish line, enjoy music, breakfast, and preview auction items. During the week leading up to the Walk, there is an online auction, where anyone can bid on exciting items. The auction will open January 29, 2023 and will close at noon on February 4. The link can be found on the Chapel's facebook page, website, and through their weekly emails. Auction items range from resort packages to restaurants, spa packages, unique items and more!

This year will be the best event yet!

- Beach Walk Week auction began: January 29, 20 and runs through February 4, 2023
- Beach Walk Week event: February 4, 2023 at 8am at the Palm Pavilion

To become a sponsor, register for the Walk, or find the online auction visit chapelbythesea.net/beachwalk-2023. To contact Chapel by the Sea or get on the mailing list visit chapelbythesea.net/contact. Information about Hope Villages of America is available at hopevillagesofamerica.org. More information regarding HEP can be found at hepempowers.org.

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Community News



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PEACE MEMORIAL CONCERT SERIES

Concerts are the third Saturday in the sanctuary at 110 S. Ft. Harrison Ave. The season series continues through March.

February 12 at 3pm, CON BRIO PIANO STRING QUINTET Hailing from Boca Raton, this fine string group plus pianist Sheng Yuan Kuan will present French chamber works by Ravel and Franck.

March 12 at 3pm, Acclaimed organist TIMOTHY BELK will be joined by trumpeter Kenneth Brown and violinist Aaron Hilsinger for an exciting program featuring the works of Johann Sebastian Bach.

BELLEAIR WOMENS REPUBLICAN CLUB

They will meet on Friday, February 3, from 11:30 am until 1 pm at the Belleair Country Club, One Country Club Lane, Belleair, Florida. The speaker will be Mike Twitty, Pinellas County Property Appraiser, who has served in that capacity since 2017. Having over 30 years of experience in the valuation of a wide variety of property types within Pinellas County, he is a life-long Pinellas County resident, presently residing in Largo with his wife, Michele, and their two sons.

Please remit annual dues of \$25 for this calendar year. Mail checks for \$32 for each luncheon and your dues to: BWRC Treasurer Robin Schenck, 301 Belleview Blvd., Belleair, FL 33756. Please respect the policy of no walkups, as they cannot be accommodated.

CALVARY EPISCOPAL CHURCH'S WINTERFEST

They will present their 18th annual fundraising festival on Saturday, February 18 from 10am-4pm. The Church is located at 1615 First Street, Indian Rocks Beach and all are invited.

This event is held inside and outside Calvary Episcopal Church and will feature a patriotic pet contest with prizes. There will be beer, wine, soft drink vendors, clowns, face painting, an old-fashioned bake sale, pulled pork sandwiches, and an "All American" hot dog prepared by Church volunteers. Children will find activities including a build and sail your own toy sailboat area. Additional games have been added this year as well as returning music and entertainment.

A silent auction displaying many treasures will be located inside the Church and there will be a special grand prize drawing for an electric bicycle. For further information, call the Church at 595-2374 or visit calvaryirb.org/winterfest.

FLORIDA BOTANICAL GARDENS EVENTS

The Pinellas African American Heritage Celebration returns this year, Showcasing Black history and culture Saturday, February 25, 10 am to 4 pm at Pinewood: Florida Botanical Gardens, Heritage Village, and Creative Pinellas. Enjoy live performances, historical presentations, art exhibits, a mini-market of Black owned businesses, and food trucks. Admission and parking are free. Visit pinellasafrikanamericanheritagecelebration.org.

The Florida Native Plant Symposium is Saturday, March 25 from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. Enjoy keynote presentations from prominent and engaging speakers, choose your own breakout session led by a UF/IFAS Specialist or a Master Naturalist, and browse display tables along Eco-Alley. Includes a boxed picnic lunch in the gardens. Advanced registration required: \$75 General Admission, \$50 FBGF Members. For information visit flbgfoundation.org/fnpsymposium.

The Florida Botanical Gardens located at 12211 Walsingham Road, Largo.

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Community News

ST. JEROME CATHOLIC CHURCH CHOIR FESTIVAL

The 2023 St. Jerome's Choir Festival is Friday, February 3rd at 7pm. Choirs from several area churches will sing individual selections, then come together with over 300 voices to sing the "Hallelujah Chorus." St. Jerome's is located at 10895 Hamlin Blvd in Largo. The parish office number is (727) 595-4610.

WELCOME NEWCOMERS CLUB

This club is open to the women of Pinellas County; all are welcome to come and socialize. Luncheons are held the first Tuesday of each month at Belleair Country Club. There is always a guest speaker or other entertainment. Please contact Mary at 727-709-9906 with any questions.

COMMUNITY DENTAL CLINIC

Announcing a new Venue for Reds, Whites & Bites! The ever popular 2023 Reds, Whites & Bites Wine Event & Fundraiser for the Community Dental Clinic will be held Saturday, March 25, 2023, in a new location - the Kapok Special Event Center and Gardens, just south of Ruth Eckerd Hall at 923 McMullen Booth Rd, Clearwater. This new spacious indoor & outdoor setting - lush with beautiful gardens & old-world charm - will provide the perfect backdrop for this delightful event. Honorary Chairs Dr. James & Leah Hayslett invite guests to enjoy complimentary red & white wines provided by Bella Vino Wine & Cheese Market and sample delicious bites from popular local restaurants. The evening will include music & dancing and culminate, as always, in an opportunity for guests to win over 80 bottles of fine wines and wine dinners donated by area connoisseurs.

The real winners are the thousands of disadvantaged adults in Pinellas who will find relief from their dental distress thanks to the work of the Community Dental Clinic which is funded by this event. Over the past 9 years, the clinic has delivered more than \$7.6 million in dental services for thousands of disadvantaged people in our community (www.communitydentalclinic.net).

MILITARY ORDER OF WORLD WARS

The Clearwater chapter of the Military Order of the World Wars meets first Tuesdays at the Dunedin Golf Club, 1050 Palm Blvd., Dunedin. Social hour is at 11:30 am followed by lunch and a short program. Active duty, retired, or former Military officers and their spouses, or widows, are invited to attend. The MOWW welcomes those interested to RSVP for lunch, by calling Richard Gouin at 727-789-6754.

MARKET IN THE BLUFFS

The outdoor Market is the second Saturday of the month, from 9am to 2pm. It features handmade items, local honey, jewelry, gourmet foods, art, plants & pet items. Vendors differ from month to month.

Outside City Hall at 2747 Sunset Blvd Belleair Bluffs, the pet friendly event will be held February 11, March 11, and will close for the season on April 8. For information, e-mail EventsbyJK@aol.com.

LARGO ART ASSOCIATION

They meet weekly at the Largo Community Center (400 Alternate Kean Rd, Largo). It is a gathering of local artists to paint and network. They have open studio, juried member shows and periodic demonstrations. If you are interested, join on Fridays between 10am and 2pm. Call 727-518-3131.

Lucy says
it's time
to get your
groom on.




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OF PINELLAS

PEACE MEMORIAL WELCOMES YOU!

Con Brio Piano String Quintet
Sunday, February 12 - 3 p.m.
French music of Maurice Ravel and César Franck.

The Music of Johann Sebastian Bach
Sunday, March 12 - 3 p.m.
Timothy Belk, organ | Ken Brown, trumpet
Aaron Hilsinger, violin

In Witness to the Resurrection
The Feast of Easter: Our Lord's Day, April 9
Joy in the Morning - 8:30 a.m. (Dunselth Garden)
Festival Service of Worship - 10:30 a.m.



PEACE MEMORIAL
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
110 S. Fort Harrison Avenue
Clearwater 33756
800|479-8846
peacememorialpresbyterian.org

I'm Karen Rafferty, and I am running for Commissioner in Belleair Bluffs. As an 8-year resident of Belleair Bluffs at Harbour Club Condominiums, I value the unique character and quality of life in our city. While 2/3rds of our city residents live in condos or apartments, 100% of our city commission lives in single family homes giving them little insight into the needs of most residents. I'll provide needed representation for our condo and apartment residents.

I've served Belleair Bluffs for 2 years on the City Planning Board and on our Code and Ordinance Review Committee. With 35 years' experience in commercial and retail development and construction, I've worked with city governments across the country in my capacity as a corporate representative. I have a unique understanding of the needs of our local businesses. I'll work to promote and nurture the quality businesses and services we all rely on and enjoy.

It takes work to keep our city a beautiful, safe and friendly community, and I am committed to that endeavor. So vote for Karen Rafferty for Commissioner on March 14th to help keep Belleair Bluffs a wonderful place to live.



GASPARILLA ITS NOT JUST ABOUT PIRATES

When locals hear the word Gasparilla, they immediately think of the Pirate Fest held in Tampa each year at the end of January. The parade, which attracts over 300,000 people a year is the third-largest parade in the United States and has been a tradition since 1904. However, Gasparilla is really a "season." There are multiple Gasparilla events held through March and they don't have anything to do with a pirate invasion.

The Gasparilla Distance Classic is being held Feb. 25-26, in Downtown Tampa. The event includes races for all levels of runners. It includes a 5K run, 5K walk, 5K stroller race, 15K, half marathon, and more. Begun in 1978, this area tradition has donated \$5.9 million to Tampa Bay area charitable youth organizations and running programs. For information or to register, visit www.RunGasparilla.com.

Also held in Downtown Tampa, along the Hillsboro River, **The Gasparilla Festival of the Arts** is March 4-5. With over 1000 requests, they hand select 235 artists to participate in one of America's most prestigious fine arts and fine craft shows.

Now in its fifty-third year, the festival has showcased artists and their work creating the feel of a giant outdoor museum. The event this year will also feature the works of local young artists and a weekend full of live entertainment. Discover why this has been a must-see event for art lovers for more than fifty years, visit www.gasparillaarts.com/festival

Gasparilla International Film Festival will be held in multiple locations March 23-26. Launched in 2006, it is Tampa's longest-running screen festival. It has hosted thousands of filmmakers, talent, producers, and film buffs while screening countless World Premieres, USA Premieres, and Florida Premieres. Visit www.gasparillafilmfestival.com for updates on the movie schedule as the event get closer or to volunteer.

Gasparilla Music Festival has always been held Downtown Tampa in the Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park in February. Unfortunately, the three-day music festival is looking for a new home after issues were found with water intrusion at Kiley Garden. Being cautious, city leaders will not allow any events at the space until the issue is addressed. Organizers "remain optimistic" the music festival will happen in 2023 and "look forward to being able to announce those details soon." Watch www.gasparillamusic.com for updates.

ZOPPE AN ITALIAN FAMILY CIRCUS

Central Park Performing Arts Center announced the latest addition to the 2023, March lineup is ZOPPE An Italian Family Circus, March 9-19, 2023. Tickets are on sale now and are available at LargoArts.com or call (727) 587-6793



If you're longing for some Big Top fun, join them for this captivating 175-year-old European circus, run by the Zoppé family for eight generations. This enchanting, intimate show carries on centuries-old circus traditions, with bareback riding and equestrian stunts, hilarious clowning (featuring Giovanni Zoppé and his son Julien), acrobats, jugglers, and more. Even the horses – and the talented performing dogs – are part of the family. In their 500-seat tent, no one is more than 25 feet from the ring!

\$25 Seating in The Round General Admission, \$45 Preferred VIP Seating (includes cast and crew Meet & Greet after the show and Individual padded chairs for the show) plus applicable fees.

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THE SEASIDE SEABIRD SANCTUARY *Fallout from Hurricane Ian*

At the peak of hurricane season in September, our staff regularly monitor weather forecasts to keep a close eye on any storms forming near the Gulf of Mexico. Within a matter of days, the formation of Hurricane Ian in the Caribbean and a concerning storm track put our staff into action.

In response to a potential direct hit from the storm, we immediately began preparing our birds for evacuation from the Sanctuary. Five days ahead of the storm, we released nearly 150 birds back into the wild that had been successfully rehabilitated. Wildlife know what to do when storms are coming in, and in order to conserve resources for our most critical patients it was the best course of action to release them. Our staff and many volunteers packed up to-go kits with food and medical supplies for birds that they would be taking into their homes, and we began prepping our off-site warehouse for our 70 resident Brown Pelicans and 12 White Pelicans. On September 27th after Pinellas County declared a mandatory evacuation, we moved all our birds to their assigned locations and secured the property as best we could. Hurricane Ian made an unexpected shift and on Wednesday, September 28th made landfall to our south in the Fort Myers area after directly hitting Sanibel Island.

We all breathed a sigh of relief knowing that the Sanctuary was OK, and we had very little damage and debris on our property. After cleaning up and securing the Sanctuary, we were able to move our birds back the following day. We are so thankful to have been spared the worst of the storm, but were heartbroken to see the devastation of Fort Myers and Sanibel Island.

We immediately reached out to our friends at CROW Clinic on Sanibel Island to see what we could do to help, and we were able to take 12 of their patients into our care as well as their avian ambassadors, Talon and Mina. Talon, pictured here, is a Red-tailed Hawk that was admitted after being struck by a vehicle. Mina is a Great Horned Owl that was found with a healed, partially amputated wing. We will be caring for Talon and Mina for as long as needed, and we hope you'll get to meet them during your next visit to the Sanctuary.



WHERE DID THE TERM "FREE-FOR-ALL" COME FROM?

Today a free-for-all suggests chaos, but that is not what it meant when the phrase was first use in the mid-1700s. Coined by horse-racing folks, the term meant exactly what it says. It described a racing contest that was free for all who wanted to enter. Truthfully, there were usually some restrictions such as previous winners were banned, or it was only for certain age groups, but there were no entry fees.

The term began in England, but by the 19th Century, it was commonly used in the United States for all types of races, not just horses. By the late 1800s it began to have a more harsh meaning, specifically a rowdy brawl or fight.

How it evolved from a free horse race into an unruly fight is unclear. However, both are uncontrolled events. Today it applies to all types of frenzied activities including Black Friday shopping.

CITY OF BELLEAIR BLUFFS

CITYWIDE GARAGE SALE
Saturday March 4, 2023
8 am - 2 pm
All fees are waived

MUNICIPAL ELECTION
March 14, 2023
at City Hall, 2747 Sunset Blvd

Polis are open from 7 am - 7 pm
3 Candidates for
2 Commission Seats.
Vote for no more than 2

Adele Hoffman
Karen Rafferty
Suzy Sofer - incumbent

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Local Students Learning to Make a Difference Underwater

SCUBAnauts International began in 2001 as Scuba Scouts USA with a group of six newly certified teen divers led by Captain David Olson, who wanted to use SCUBA as a means to teach kids about the marine environment. The science-based nature of the group distinguished it from other dive clubs, and Olson developed partnerships with several marine research scientists to introduce the young divers to informal science education through underwater exploration. Interest in the program grew, and today SCUBAnauts consists of six chapters in Florida and Georgia.

Katie Cooper became involved with SCUBAnauts in 2013 while working as a SCUBA instructor. At that time, there were two branches of the program in Tarpon Springs and St. Petersburg. She began teaching science classes to the students, then helped to start a new chapter in Tampa. She currently serves as the organization's Chief Operations and Dive Safety Officer.

"Our mission is to build character and leadership skills through scientific diving and other water-based research activities," said Cooper. Each chapter meets monthly for lessons on science and oceanography, dive safety instruction, and student-led presentations. Dives take place throughout the year with students participating in reef surveys, fish counts, and coral restoration.

In addition to obtaining their Open Water SCUBA, First Aid and CPR certifications, students are required to complete the American Academy of Underwater Sciences' (AAUS) Scientific Diver course. This intensive 100-hour training program teaches dive theory, physics, and emergency accident management, as well as scientific data-

gathering methodologies. Students participate in classroom and in-water learning, then complete written tests and check-out dives.

In 2006, the program became an organizational member of the AAUS, giving them increased credibility in the scientific community. "When you approach National Marine Sanctuaries and say you have a fleet of divers willing to do research for free, they say 'Great!'" said Cooper. "Then you tell them they're teenagers and they say 'Oh, never mind.' Having that backing and showing that our students have gone through that rigorous training gives us the validity and strength to make those partnerships." The certification also gives a benefit to students who intend to pursue a career in marine sciences after graduation.

The culmination of the SCUBAnauts annual efforts are the summer expeditions where the students and mentors embark on a week-long mission to destinations that have included the Bahamas, Belize, Jamaica and Hawaii. They identify a science project, then outline a trip and a dive plan to suit it." In 2020, the group traveled to Thunder Bay in Michigan, which is a National Marine Sanctuary.



"There's an ongoing project to make 3-D maps of the shipwrecks within the sanctuary," said Cooper. "We were able to do some imaging and give that over to the researchers to assist in their modeling."

Another summer mission brought the SCUBAnauts to much warmer waters, Cayos Cochinos is a group of fifteen small islands located approximately twenty miles off the northern coast of Honduras. The islands are part of a Marine Protected Area which includes part of the world's second-largest coral reef system, the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef. The sanctuary is managed by the Honduras Coral Reef Foundation, an organization that works with the Honduran government to preserve the reef. The foundation makes conservation decisions based on biannual surveys of a few sites, which offer a limited data set. Since the survey methodology used by the foundation is one that SCUBAnauts also utilize, the students were invited to Honduras for a week of underwater research. "We were able to add two sites to their long-term dataset," said Cooper. "That allows them to do a little bit better decision making in terms of what are and are not permitted in the protected area."

The staff of SCUBAnauts is an all-volunteer group of SCUBA instructors/divemaster, licensed boat captains, scientists, and educators and is always in need of additional help. The program relies on donations for funding as well as sponsorships with local dive operations and businesses. For further information on participation as a student, volunteer, or sponsor visit scbanautsintl.org.

FLORIDA STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL

The Florida Strawberry Festival will be held March 2-12 in Plant City. The 11-day community event brings the entire community together to celebrate the great Florida strawberry and the strawberry harvest of Eastern Hillsborough County. Each year, over 500,000 visitors enjoy the Festival's headline entertainment, youth livestock shows, exhibits, rides, attractions, and of course, the strawberry shortcake.



In addition to strawberries, the Festival will host nationally known live entertainment through the eleven days. Each day has two sometimes three headline acts. Tickets for the headline entertainment artists performing on the Wish Farms Soundstage are already on sale

A new theme is created for each year's Festival to offer patrons a glimpse of the experience they will have at the Festival. The theme for its 88th annual event is – "We Have a Winner!" "Yes, it points to the recent win we achieved in naming strawberry shortcake as Florida's official dessert as we're a little partial to the berry," said Paul Davis. "We're excited about this year's event and look forward to sharing in the celebration of the shortcake dessert that has come to make us so successful!"

The 2023 Festival's strawberry character featured each year, wears a sweatband, waves a #BerryFest23 baton and holds a plate of strawberry shortcake as he crosses the finish line. This past year, state Rep. Lawrence McClure and state Sen. Danny Burgess filed a bill to designate strawberry shortcake as the state's official dessert and Gov. DeSantis visited the Festival grounds to officially sign the bill into law.

"In Florida, the strawberry industry has an economic impact of more than a billion dollars," said Davis. "Plant City is home to roughly 12,000 acres of strawberries and the Festival serves about 200,000 shortcakes each year. It's kind of a big deal around here!"

For more information, visit www.flstrawberryfestival.com

ORCHID RE-POTTING CLINIC

The Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation is partnering with the Florida West Coast Orchid Society, for a morning of Orchid re-potting.

It's the time of the year to re-pot your orchids. Are you afraid to re-pot your orchids, or you don't have time to do it? Let the Florida West Coast Orchid Society do it for you March 11, at The Florida Botanical Gardens, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo, in the Tropical Pavilion located in the East Gardens of the Florida Botanical Gardens, 9 am to Noon.

The Orchid Society will be available to re-pot your orchids and provide you with information on orchid culture. The oldest Orchid Society in Florida, its members can answer your questions about how best to ensure your orchid re-blooms and stays healthy. They charge a very reasonable fee to cover the cost of the supplies. You can watch and learn as they re-fit your orchid into a new pot or hanging planter. The will also be selling their plants. All proceeds go to the Florida West Coast Orchid Society (www.fwcoss.org). Let the experts do their magic and give your orchids a new life!

Visit flbgfoundation.org/events or call 727-582-2117.

Saturday
March 4,
2023
5:30pm

918 Osceola Road
Belleair, FL 33756

Register online: runsignup.com/belleair
Call for more information:
(727) 518-3728

Registration Information:

Registration Dates	Belleair Residents	Non-Residents
November - February 2	\$30	\$35
February 3 - March 2	\$35	\$40
March 3 - March 4	\$40	\$45
Ages 5 - 12	\$25	\$30
Post Race Party Only	\$20	\$20

Belleair resident discounts are provided in person at the Dismitt Community Center

Event Details:

Race shirt provided for all pre-registered runners

\$k medals to the top 3 male/female finishers in each age division, masters male/female, and overall male/female winners

One-of-a-kind post-race party includes all you can eat and drink plus live music

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Sponsored by The Original Crabby Bill's

Community News

5K RUN & 1 MILE WALK



Saturday, Mar 18, 2023

5K 8:00 am
1 mile 8:05 am

Where:
Indian Rocks Beach
17th Avenue Beach Access, 1700 Gulf Blvd.

Main Sponsor:
The Original Crabby Bill's
Indian Rocks Beach, FL

Registration:

Search:
Rotary Runs The Beach 2023

Cost:

5K \$30
1 mile \$25

We increase on Feb 13th and again on March 10th

Packet Pick up:

March 16 & 17
Guilty Sea
301 Gulf Blvd.
Indian Rocks Beach

Proceeds to benefit:



- Feed for people in need
- Public education
- Youth educational programs

Website:
<https://indianrocksrotary.org>

100 WOMEN WHO CARE OF PINELLAS COUNTY

They presented \$12,300 to Hero To A Child on Wednesday, December 14th. Hero To A Child advocates for and supports children, young adults, and families impacted by abuse and neglect in Pinellas and Pasco Counties by collaborating with community partners and the Guardian ad Litem staff and volunteers who support the children they serve. Hero To A Child will also receive a \$5,000 matching grant from the Richard M. Schulze Foundation. (Schulze is the founder of Best Buy).

100 Women Who Care of Pinellas County is a philanthropic group that provides an avenue for women to join together to bring financial support to local, charitable organizations that have a 501(c)(3) status. Members commit to attending four meetings per year (one per quarter) and pledge to donate \$100 to an elected charity at each meeting. The members can nominate any organization, three of the nominated organizations are then randomly selected to give a 5-minute presentation, a vote is taken, and then checks are written directly to the winning charity. Since February of 2013 the group, along with the foundation, has given almost \$500,000 to local charities. The next meeting is 7- 8 pm on Thursday, February 16th at Cove Cay Golf Club at 2612 Cove Cay Drive in Clearwater. There is a social time from 6 - 7 pm at the Cove Cay restaurant, where drinks and snacks can be purchased. For information, contact Brenda George at 727-515-1868, on Facebook at 100+ Women Who Care- Pinellas County, or visit www.100womenpinellas.org.

CLEARWATER FREE CLINIC GOLF TOURNAMENT

On May 1, the Clearwater Free Clinic (CFC) will host the annual John H. Meek, Jr. Memorial Golf Tournament at the Belleair Country Club. The tournament will take place on the newly renovated West Course featuring a signature peninsula hole. All tournament proceeds benefit the Clinic's mission to provide quality medical and behavioral health care to people in need in upper and mid-Pinellas County.

The CFC invites all community partners, donors, and interested participants to join us for a full day of golfing festivities with the opportunity to play at the Belleair Country Club's highly regarded West Course. Participants will enjoy a day including an exciting round of golf, food, and refreshments. At the end of the day, the CFC will host a casual gathering to celebrate the tournament winners. For more event details, including participation and sponsorship information, visit www.clearwaterfreeclinic.org.

Over the past 22 years, funds from the annual golf tournament have provided patients with quality clinical care, behavioral health services, medications for chronic illnesses, specialty care, and diagnostic services all free of cost.

The John H. Meek, Jr. Golf Tournament was created in memory of former CFC board member and community activist, John H. Meek, Jr.

HOPE VILLAGES OF AMERICA

They have announced the resignation of CEO, Kirk Ray Smith. Their Chief Operating Officer and Chief Administrative Officer, Melinda Perry, will be the interim CEO.

Their Blue Jean Ball will be Saturday, February 25 at 7pm. It is being held at Cove Cay Golf Club, 2612 Cove Cay Drive, Clearwater. Please save the date and make plans to join them for a night of dinner, dancing, and denim. Tickets and sponsorships are available at hopevillagesofamerica.org.

BELLEAIR BEACH COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
ENGRAVED BRICK PROGRAM

Be a part of our COMMUNITY WALKWAY

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4" x 8" \$100

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 Please make checks payable to: "BCCF"
 If you have questions, please Email: bccf23179@gmail.com

Community News

BEACH ART CENTER

Submitted by Patricia Thomas

Please join us for our annual community celebration on Saturday, March 4th. Our "Boots and Brushes Country Gala" was so much fun, we decided to do it again! This community "street party" will take place in front of our building on Bay Palm Blvd and include a delicious BBQ spread, live Country music with the Logan Brothers Band, live auction, raffles, beer, wine and whiskey bar, and dancing in the streets!

Not only is this an opportunity for gaiety and diversion, but it's also a chance to demonstrate your indulgence for the ongoing efforts to support local art in your community. The Beach Art Center has been "Bringing Us Together with Art" since 1978. Visit BeachArtCenter.org/gala for more information

In addition to attending the event, this year we ask that you or your business consider becoming a sponsor of our Gala. As expenses continue to rise, we find we need your help more than ever. The Beach Art Center is a 501c3 not for profit. Fundraisers are a critical part of our annual budget and without generous sponsors like you, we would not be able to continue to serve this community. We have many sponsorship opportunities available to fit your budget. Let's work together to support one another!

ROTARY CLUB OF INDIAN ROCKS BEACH

Submitted by Claire English

Our next big event is the Fourth Annual "Rotary Runs the Beach" on Indian Rocks Beach March 18 with a 5K timed/chipped race, one mile family fun run or a virtual run this year. Running on the beach is as beautiful as ever!

The 5K race begins at 8 am and the 1 miler begins 8:05 am at the Indian Rocks Beach Access located at 1700 Gulf Blvd on Indian Rocks Beach. The race is chipped and the course is "out and back." This is a great event for competitors as well as beginners. Register at runsignup.com/Race/FL/IndianRocksBeach/RotaryRunsTheBeach.

A special thanks to our main sponsor The Original Crabby Bill's restaurant! Proceeds will benefit the Rotary Club of Indian Rocks projects supporting local and international causes and our mission of "Service Above Self."

Interested in learning about Rotary or getting involved with the Rotary Club of Indian Rocks Beach? Visit indianrocksrotary.org, contact Club President David Kline at Kline22@tampabay.rr.com or call 418-1673.

CLEARWATER YACHT CLUB

The Club is one of the oldest Yacht Clubs in the country, continuing the long-standing tradition the world over. You don't need a boat to join in the fun at CYC in Clearwater Beach. Many members don't have boats. Their social activities center around parties in their restaurant or at their Tiki Bar.

Their Winter Membership program runs through March 31. It has no initiation fee and monthly dues are \$250, with no food minimum Winter members can use the pool, tiki bar, dining room and other amenities, including participating in weekly parties. Best of all, you can meet new people. You can end your membership whenever you wish, or convert to a permanent member in the Spring. Visit ClearwaterYachtClub.org, or e-mail Office@ClearwaterYachtClub.org.



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Community News

TAMPA BAY WATCH

In 2022 Tampa Bay Watch made the following environmental improvements through your generous donations:

- 630 miles of fishing line recycled into new products
- 7,234 pounds of marine debris removed from the watershed
- 1,140 oyster reef balls (ORBs) built by volunteers
- 695 ORBs installed on shorelines
- 5,300 people experienced 650 educational eco tours
- 1,103 students educated through 63 school field trips
- 283 estuary campers had the best summer ever

GFWC CLEARWATER COMMUNITY WOMAN'S CLUB

They are in year two of its multi-year signature initiative to raise funds for safe housing and programs for survivors of Human Trafficking in the Tampa Bay area.

For over six decades, Clearwater Community Woman's Club's (CCWC) parent organization, General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), has supported various UNICEF campaigns, one of which is End Trafficking. In 2022, Florida ranked third in the nation in reports of human trafficking. As a major tourist destination with exceptional amenities, sports and other attractions, Tampa Bay is a hot spot for this activity.

In support of the End Trafficking campaign and to address this issue in our community, CCWC formed a Human Trafficking committee and sprang into action. Last year, their sports themed fundraiser was a grand success, bringing in more than \$50,000. On March 4, they are hosting their second Champa Bay Elimination Dinner and believe it will be bigger and better than last year. The sports-themed event offers great food, games, a photo-booth, silent and live auctions with sports memorabilia, jewelry, art, vacation packages, and more!

"Our fantastic Tampa Bay sports teams brought the area the name Champa Bay, and we chose that name for our fundraiser, as in our eyes, everyone who supports this cause and gives these women a chance to get their lives back is a champion," says Nita Cole, co-chair (with Carole Harris) of the Fundraising Committee.

The funds raised will go directly towards supporting safe housing and programs these women need to rebuild their lives. To provide these important services, CCWC works with Created Women, Inc., an organization known for advocating for and empowering trafficked women in the Tampa Bay area. Created has recently expanded its services to Pinellas County and CCWC has chosen to support Created's efforts based on their experience, quality staff, and recovery programs.

Visit ccwcFlorida.org to become a sponsor, bid on auction items, or donate.

ROCK THE RIBBON, RACE FOR A CURE

Join Morton Plant Mease Health Care Foundation for the "Rock the Ribbon" Kids Dash, 5k and 10k races on Saturday, March 11, to once again combine forces to raise support and awareness for our cancer services at their hospitals. Proceeds from this event will benefit the cancer services at the not-for-profit hospitals of Morton Plant Mease, and all money raised stays in our local community. Racers will start at Morton Plant Hospital, go over the Clearwater Memorial Causeway, and back to our famous post-race party.

The Kids Dash Start Time: 4:30 pm, and the 5k & 10k Start Time is 5:00 pm on Morton Plant Hospital campus (300 Pinellas Street, Clearwater). To learn more or sign up, please visit: www.rock-the-ribbon.org.

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Community News

THE BELLEAIR BEACH COMMUNITY FOUNDATION.

This new organization plans to raise money for needed city amenities and to host public social events, which also how they raise money.

Their mission statement broadens their purpose to include "good works, community improvement projects and social gatherings."

They have kicked off with an "Adopt A Mile" program to clean the area around the Belleair Beach bridge every quarter (April, July, October and January).

They also are starting an "engraved brick program" that allows residents to order personalize pavers to be installed in front of City Hall

Tammie Levenda is the Chairman, you can reach her at 219-707-3745. Other board members are Deb DiCosimo, Nicole Sussman, and Wendy Gattis. For more information, visit Belleairbeachcommunityfoundation.org.

BELLEAIR REC FEBRUARY:

- 11th - I "Heart" Pickleball Tournament: Intermediate and Advanced brackets open for registration. Please contact the Dimmitt Community Center at 727-518-3728 for pricing and more information.
- 18th - Community Wide Garage Sale: 8am-1pm and is open to the public. For a map of locations, or more information please visit the Dimmitt Community Center.
- 20th - Presidents' Day – Facility Open – Day Camp

MARCH:

- 4th - Sunset 5k & Fun Run: Beginning at 5:30pm. Register at www.runsignup.com/belleair. The Post Race Party is back! For more information, please contact the Dimmitt Community Center at 727-518-3728
- Belleair's 2023 Summer Camp Registration will begin in March 2023, exact dates to be announced.

Dimmitt Community Center is located at 918 Osceola Road in Belleair. You can call them at (727) 518-3728.

CLEARWATER HISTORICAL MUSEUM

The "Clearwater Salutes Our Coast Guard" exhibition runs through February 25th. It celebrates the history, notable events, missions and rescues of USCG Air Station Clearwater, USCG Station Sand Key and USCG Auxiliary Division 11, Flotilla1.

The museum is open Fridays and Saturdays from 10 am until 2 pm at 610 S Fort Harrison, Clearwater., (727) 754-8019.

DAYDREAMING: NIKI BUTCHER'S HAND-PAINTED PHOTOGRAPHY

Experience the beautiful and sometimes quirky aspects of our world through the eyes of a thoughtful optimist. Through her black and white photography, Niki captures places and people that stand out as unique, endangered, and authentic. But what sets her work apart is her use of color as she breathes life and imagination into these photographed scenes, creating a picture of life far beyond what a camera could capture.

More information at: downtownclearwater.com/nikibutcher

This exhibit is on display through April 2023 at the Clearwater Public Library Main Branch, 100 N. Osceola Avenue in Downtown Clearwater.



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