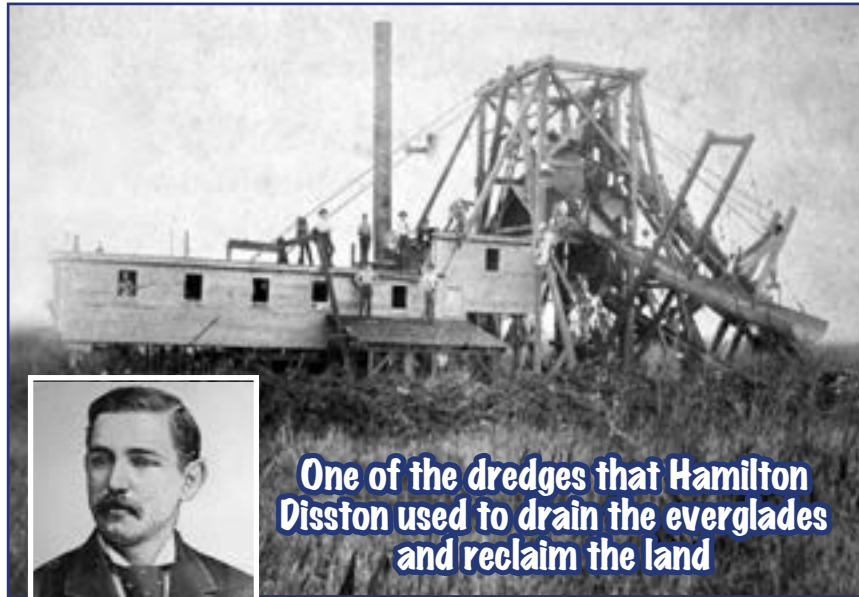


NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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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

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Vacation Donations

An Indian Rocks Beach resident is putting vacation leftovers to good use.

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Photos from the Deep

Local artist and SCUBA diver brings the aquatic world to the surface through his underwater photography.

- page 14



Sugar Sand Festival Returns

The popular beach art event will be returning to Pier 60 from April 7-23.

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Teacher of the Year

A local educator was recognized for her dedication to special education students.

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CREDITS



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INDIAN ROCKS BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER

Inside, you will find articles and local information about the nearby area. We call it Neighborhood News because it is primarily about our neighborhood, Indian Rocks Beach. This newsletter is printed every other month and mailed to every occupied house in the city.

Do you need another copy? Ask for them at USA Grocers, CVS Drug Store, Beach Welcome Center, City Hall, and Indian Rocks Beach Library.

We hope you enjoyed our magazine. We want your input. Did you like this issue? What suggestions do you have for future articles? Call or email us..

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

Thank you for reading,

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



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MAYOR Joanne "Cookie" Kennedy

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Solid Waste/Trash Pickup 595-6889

ELECTRICITY 443-2641

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Sheriff Bob Gualtieri

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Anna Paulina Luna 202-225-5961
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St Petersburg, FL 33742

CALENDAR OF HOLIDAYS & EVENTS

As always, this is subject to change.

MARCH

US Open Sailing Series 1-5
Strawberry Festival Opens 2
St Petersburg Grand Prix 3-5
Champa Bay Elimination Dinner 4
Belleair Sunset 5k And Fun Run 4
Boots and Brushes Beach Art Center 4
Florida's Largest Home Show 10-12
St Patrick's Night Parade Tampa 11
Rock The Ribbon 5k 10k 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
Downtown Clearwater Art Walk 18
Rotary Runs the Beach 18
First Day of Spring 20
Ramadan Begins 22
Greenfest 25
Rotary Pancake Preakfast 25
Reds, Whites and Bites 25
City Commission Meeting 28
Rays Home Opener vs Tigers 30

APRIL

April Fools Day 1
HOA Easter Egg Hunt 1
McGough Park Garage Sale 1
Dunedin Highland Games 1
Good Friday 7
Sugar Sand Festival Begins 7
No Public School 7
Classic Car Show Heritage Village 8
Easter Sunday 9
Dyngus Day 10
City Commission Meeting 11
Holocaust Remembrance Day 12
Tampa Bay Blues Fest Vinoy 14-16
Beachfest 15
PawFest Largo Central Park 16
Patriots' Day 17
Taxes Due 18
Earth Day 22
18th Ave Beach Cleanup 22
Sugar Sand Festival Ends 23
MainSail Art Festival Vinoy 22-23
Administrative Professionals' Day 26
IRB Citywide Garage Sale 29-30
Arbor Day 29



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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.

PINELLAS SHERIFF RECOGNIZED The Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA) awarded Pinellas County Sheriff Bob Gualtieri with the 2022 Sandra S. Hutchens Sheriff of the Year award during the MCSA 2023 Winter Conference.

The award is named after Sheriff Sandra S. Hutchens (Orange County, CA), who served as the MCSA President. Sheriff Hutchens regrettably passed away in 2021 following a battle with breast cancer.

According to the MCSA award, Sheriff Gualtieri was recognized for his leadership and unwavering support in the advancement of MCSA and the preservation of the Office of Sheriff. Sheriff Gualtieri has left a "lasting impact" that earned him "a place of honor and respect amongst (his) colleagues, who proudly award (him) this distinction of Sheriff of the Year."

IN MEMORY OF HEMINGWAY

Clearwater Marine Aquarium announced the passing of Hemingway, an Atlantic bottlenose dolphin rescued after being stranded off Fiesta Key in Monroe County in 2019. Hemingway was estimated to be about 37 years old. He joined Clearwater Marine Aquarium's family in June 2020 after he was deemed non-releasable due to hearing loss and ongoing health concerns. Hemingway lived at the Ruth & J.O. Stone Dolphin Complex with Apollo and Nicholas.



SPRING TRAINING This year is the 25th Anniversary of our own Tampa Bay Rays. They began 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 RaysBaseball.com.

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and More...

YARD SALE SEASON It is Spring Garage Sale season. Here are a few of them:

- March 4: Belleair Bluffs
- March 4: Largo Community Center
- April 1: Belleair Beach
- April 29-30: Indian Rocks Beach



PINELLAS CELEBRATES LOCAL ART STUDENTS

Pinellas County Tax Collector’s Office celebrated local fifthgrade students and teachers at the eighth annual Kids Tag Art Pinellas Awards Ceremony. More than 400 students, teachers, and parents were present while awards were presented to over 155 students, including the top student and teacher artists of the year. This program is a partnership between the Pinellas County Tax Collector’s Office, Pinellas County schools, and generous community sponsors. Funds are raised for local elementary school art classrooms through donations and by selling artwork – unique, front-facing license plates – designed by Pinellas County fifth graders and teachers. These plates are available online at kidstagartpinellas.org with 100% of the proceeds returning to the participating art classrooms.

TAX DAY IS COMING April 15 is only 45 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.

RECYCLE HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS WITH EASE

Don’t rush to flush! Store your hazardous household chemicals and bring them to Seminole High School at 8401 131st N. on April 15th from 9am to 2pm. Just pull up in your vehicle with the products you would like to recycle and they will retrieve them from your trunk, truck bed, or trailer without you even having to step out of your car. Hazardous chemical recycling will also be available on April 29th at 29582 US19 N. in Clearwater. Times and dates are subject to delays or cancelations due to weather so make sure to check with Pinellas County at waste@pinellas.gov or call (727)464-7500.

There is also the HEC3 Permanent Collection facility at 2855 109th Av. N in St.Petersburg. This location is open 6 days a week from 7am to 5pm.

Always use caution when handling hazardous chemicals and store safely away from children and pets.

DETOUR AHEAD Indian Rocks Road, within the Town of Belleair, will be under construction for the next few months. “Phase 1” of the Indian Rocks Road Drainage and Pedestrian improvements began in January. 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 IN MAY If you need another copy of this newsletter, you may pick one up at Beach Art Center, Library, Beach Welcome Center, USA Grocer, or CVS. Find us online at BeachNewsletters.com.

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HAMILTON DISSTON, Continued

At first, Florida had 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 landowner in Waynesville (today's St. Petersburg) 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 Tarriff 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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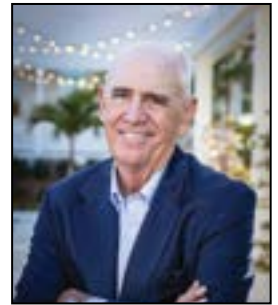
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HOW ARE YOU DOING ON THOSE RESOLUTIONS?

by Ray Ferrara, ProVise Management Group

Now that we are into a new year, it is that time when we make those promises to ourselves by making RESOLUTIONS to exercise, diet, get a physical, save more money, etc. By now some of us have already broken those RESOLUTIONS. Procrastination is a choice but not a good one when it comes to RESOLUTIONS. Here are four RESOLUTIONS to embrace to put/keep your financial affairs in order.



I hereby RESOLVE to do an integrated written financial plan before April 15. Your financial planner has done a written plan for you hasn't she/he? Shame on them if they have not. Doing a financial plan is not just a review of your investments, it is much more. A financial plan lays the foundation for your wealth plan.

I hereby RESOLVE to increase the contribution to my retirement plan to at least equal to the amount needed to get 100% of the match from my employer and if I have already done that to increase my contribution by a minimum of 10%. If possible, I will put in the maximum amount.

I hereby RESOLVE to set an appointment with my attorney to update my estate plan no later than March 15th. WHAT???

You have not done an estate plan? Yeah, I get it - who wants to plan for death? An estate plan is much more than a death plan. There should be at least four documents: 1) a will; 2) a power of attorney; 3) health care surrogate form; and 4) a living will. You may find it advantageous to also have a living trust. In case you did not know, you have a will written for you by the State of Florida and I guarantee it is not likely the will that you want.

I further and finally RESOLVE to get with my property and casualty agent to do a complete review and update all my insurance policies to make sure that everything is covered properly no later than the end of March.

We want you to visit with all your professionals. If you do not have a financial planner or are looking to make a change, then make one more RESOLUTION. I RESOLVE to take advantage of learning more about how ProVise can help me by setting up a complimentary meeting with them in person or by Zoom.

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



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.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER HONORED

Dr. Kristie Jo Redfering, a former Indian Rocks Beach resident and special education teacher was recognized as Teacher of the Year for 2023 by Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). The award recognizes excellence among teachers who provide direct services to children and youth with exceptionalities and who exemplify the best in supporting students with disabilities.

Dr. Redfering has been an educator in Pinellas County for seventeen years and currently teaches grades 9-12 at the Nina Hart Exceptional Student Education Center in Pinellas Park. "Dr. Redfering is the perfect example of a dedicated, passionate educator who cares about the success of her students," said CEC President Angie Jasper. "It's an honor to recognize her as someone who bridges the gaps across her school and community to help her students grow."

One of the programs Dr. Redfering mentors is the school's Suds Club, a multi-step laundry service. She collaborated with the school's technology teacher to create devices to aid students with limited fine motor skills. Children in the program collect laundry from other classrooms using Augmented and Alternative Communication devices to communicate with "customers." They wash, dry, and fold the laundry, then return it to the customer and collect payment. They can spend their earnings in the school store.

"The program allows for the development of a range of skills," said Dr. Redfering. "Tasks are carefully assigned to build on strengths and communicate with devices in consistent and reliable ways. Collecting and delivering laundry offers authentic and relevant learning opportunities

daily to practice communicating. Other students are learning to complete multi-step tasks with increased independence. A few are learning to follow written directions and develop basic financial skills."

"Dr. Redfering is the finest model for new teachers to learn from," said Nina Hart Principal Jacqueline Cassidy, who nominated Dr. Redfering for the award. "She exemplifies all that it means to be a dedicated teacher, mentor and leader each and every day."

As the 2023 CEC Teacher of the Year, Dr. Redfering will receive a \$2,000 cash prize, \$1,000 classroom grant, and travel and accommodations to attend the CEC annual convention in Louisville where she will be recognized in front of her peers. The CEC Teacher of the Year is selected by the CEC Honors Committee and the award is sponsored by Let's Go Learn, one of CEC's premier sponsors.



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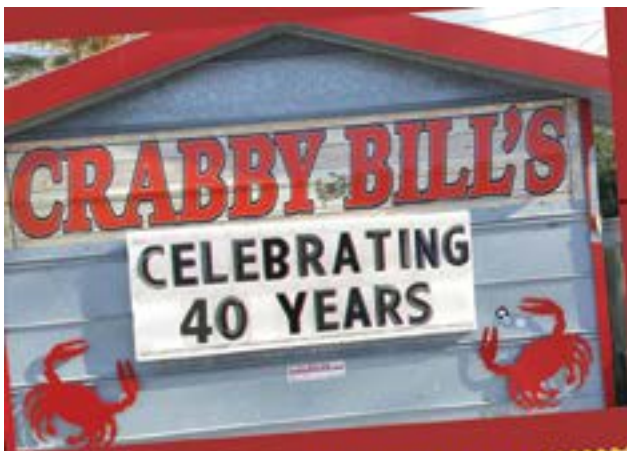
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THE ORIGINAL CRABBY BILL'S

Celebrates 40 YEARS on Indian Rocks Beach

The Original Crabby Bill's Seafood Restaurant has been dishing out great meals in Indian Rocks Beach since April of 1983—that is forty years this Spring. While it may not be the oldest restaurant in Indian Rocks Beach, it is certainly the most well-known.

Bill Loder, better known as "Crabby Bill" and the restaurant's patriarch, moved with his wife Deloris, and their five children, from New Jersey to Florida in 1968. In the beginning, he sold crabs on the side of the road. Crabby Bill's first local restaurant

on Gulf Blvd, between the Loading Dock and Pipo N Betty's. The building previously known as Wally's had been a hot dog stand and the hot dogs were served out of the front window on Gulf Blvd.

"When Dad bought that place, we all thought he was crazy," says Matt Loder. "We did not even have a sign. We used to park a truck out near the road with our name on it."



Bill Loder and his wife, Deloris

operations as COO, Alecia is transitioning to the acting CFO as mother Maria steps back, Mia oversees building projects and design, JT Corrales is in charge of new business and Pauly is in charge of IT and technical systems like point of sale and inventory control. At least ten other family members work in their various Pinellas restaurants.

"It has been such a pleasure to help develop Crabby Bills from a small seafood restaurant into what it is today," says Matt Loder. "I give my mom and dad a lot of credit for developing something they could pass down to their kids, and something that Maria and I can now pass on to our children."

"Being a part of Indian Rocks Beach has been a special experience for us," Matt adds. "We feel that helping our local organizations and being part of special events—big and small—has made our life here more complete. We like to think we do more than just sell food and beer. We live here too."

In addition to the Original Crabby Bill's, in Indian Rocks Beach the family owns Jake's Coastal Cantina, JD's Restaurant & Lounge, Pipo N Betty's Bakery, and Gully Sea Sports Pub. In Redington Shores they own SeaBreeze Island Grill and Bon Appétit Restaurant in Dunedin.



was "Captain Bill's." But he sold that name with his restaurant. He owned restaurants in Redington Shores, Madeira Beach, Bay Pines, and Tyrone before settling down in Indian Rocks Beach in April of 1983.



It was nothing like the building you see today. They first occupied the small building

"By then, Dad was in his 50s. All he wanted was a business that supported his family and one his family could pass down to their kids," reflects Matt. And that is what happened. All of Bill Loder's kids started out working for their dad, who was affectionately known as "The Boss." Today, Bill's son Matt is the CEO and his wife Maria is the CFO. They keep an eye on all the operations. But the restaurants are primarily run by the third generation of kids, Bill's grandchildren: Matt Jr., Alecia (Poole), Mia (Corrales) and Pauly Jenkins. Each have specific jobs. Matt Jr oversees all

Find the Original Crabby Bill's at 401 Gulf Blvd, Indian Rocks Beach. Learn more at www.CrabbyBills.com

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Bar & Restaurant News



GUPPY'S REMODELS 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.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Hungry Howie's Pizza and Subs celebrates their fiftieth anniversary in 2023. Founded in 1973 in Michigan, the company has over 535 stores in 22 states. Bill Kaiser has owned the Largo franchise since 2000 and has worked for the company for over 36 years. Stop by 14219 Walsingham Rd. or order online at HungryHowies.com



ST. PATRICK'S DAY CELEBRATIONS Many bars will have green beer on March 17th, but to properly celebrate St. Patrick's Day, there are a few great options locally for authentic Irish food, drinks, and fun. O'Keefe's at 1219 South Ft. Harrison in Clearwater will be hosting their annual event starting at 11 am. Their parking lot will be full of live music, dancing and food.

Flanagan's in Dunedin is another option. Main Street downtown will be closed with several tents and beer trucks along the route. The event will feature Irish performers, food, and other vendors. Flanagan's is located at 465 Main Street.

Both Finley's in Largo and Mickey Quinn's in Seminole are putting up tents and providing live music. Quinn's is located at 13071 Park Boulevard. Finley's is located at 13477 South Belcher Road. They will have a \$7 cover charge for the event.





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Bar & Restaurant News



DYNGUS DAY CELEBRATION AT CRABBY BILL'S

The annual post-Lenten Polish celebration will be held at the Original Crabby Bill's on Monday April 10th. They will serve traditional Polish fare including pierogies, kielbasa and potato pancakes. Nu Soundz will be on stage performing polka music and a splash zone will be set up with water guns and balloons for the necessary water fight ritual. There is no cover charge for the event which will run throughout the day.

DA POLLANI'S RELOCATION The Italian Bistro closed the doors at its Walsingham Road location and is currently moving into a new building in Seminole. Owner Fallino Pollani hopes for a March opening.

The new address will be 6468 Seminole Blvd. Check in at www.DaPollanis.com for updates.

5K RUN & 1 MILE WALK



Saturday, Mar 18, 2023

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

Where:

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Avg	3	2	0	11	1960	0.88	1,627	\$623	\$994,626	\$998,000	96.9%	33
Med	2	2	0	0	1981	0.13	1,308	\$584	\$748,000	\$754,000	97.2%	11

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Wonders Beneath the Sea

Two thirds of the planet are covered in water, which means only those who have learned to SCUBA dive get to see the wonders of the undersea world. However, artist and Indian Rocks Beach resident Seth Pikal combines his love of diving and his skill with an underwater camera to bring images of sea life to those who do not get to see in person.

Seth was born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio and moved to Indian Rocks Beach with his family in 2001. His mother was an artist, and Seth spent most of his summers at art camps where he excelled in sculpture and ceramics. Later, he learned to weld and began creating large-scale, functioning sculptures from metal and wood. His ten-person bicycle carousel was exhibited at Tampa's Museum of Science and Industry in 2011. He studied art and sculpture at St. Petersburg Junior College and earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of South Florida.

Living in Florida introduced Seth to another passion, SCUBA diving. In 2010, he worked as a dive professional in Australia where he gained his SCUBA instructor certification. He returned to Indian Rocks Beach in 2012 and continued his career locally, teaching divers, and earning his captain's license. Over the next several years, he began developing his underwater photography skills. He captured images of sea life on both coasts of Florida, the Bahamas, and the Caribbean, traveling as far as Indonesia to photograph the underwater world.

During his free time, Seth also learned silversmithing and began making jewelry. He polishes and shapes semiprecious stones such as opal and turquoise, then sets them in silver to create rings, bracelets, and pendants.

Seth currently works as a captain for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission. He pilots the FWC research vessel Gulf Mariner, bringing researchers and scientists offshore in the Gulf of Mexico where they conduct fish counts, habitat analysis, and ecological monitoring. He also continues his underwater photography with trips planned to the Sea of Cortez and Bocas del Toro, Panama. You can find his artwork on Instagram @sethpikalphotography.



AVOID TAX SEASON SCAMMERS

From the Desk of Sheriff Bob Gualtieri

The IRS is never going to call, email, text, or contact you on social media out of the blue. If you receive an unexpected call or message claiming to be from the IRS, it is a scammer. Almost all of the time, contact from the IRS will be in the form of a letter... but even a letter can be a scam. Here are some tips for this tax season to make sure criminals don't get their hands on your hard-earned money.



One ploy scammers use is to promise you something too good to be true. You may get a notification that the IRS has recalculated your refund and you are entitled to a lot more money. All you have to do is send them a form with all of your personal information on it, including your social security number, bank account number, and maybe even passwords. You'll never see a penny, but scammers will use the information to access your bank account, open lines of credit in your name, or even pretend to be you and file for your refund.

Scammers will also try to create a sense of urgency to make you act without thinking. They want to scare you. Here are some of the things they might say:

You owe taxes... and you need to pay it in gift cards or crypto. The IRS will never ask you to pay by those methods. Neither will any other legitimate company or utility. If anyone asks you to pay this way, it is a scam.

You'll be arrested if you don't pay now. Yes, people can be arrested for tax fraud, but an investigation is a lengthy process and you'll get plenty of notification to clear up any errors first. Scammers hope you'll be scared enough to do whatever they say without stopping to think.

Pay us or your social security number will be cancelled. No, your SSN can't ever be cancelled, blocked, frozen, or suspended. This is just another trick to scare you.

Click this link to (fill in the blank). They'll say they want you to verify information, take a survey, or see details about your refund. Sounds harmless enough, right? Do not click the link! Doing so may allow scammers to access your personal information, or even lock your system until you pay a ransom. Never click any links that you aren't expecting.

If you receive any communication from the IRS, the best thing to do is call their main help line at 800-829-1040 or visit www.IRS.gov. Be aware that if you contact them they will need personal information to verify your identity before they give you any information. Remember, if someone contacts you, don't share personal information... but if you call the IRS yourself you'll need to prove it's you, and not an identity thief pretending to be you.

If you are contacted by a suspected scammer, call the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office at 727-582-6200.

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VACATION DONATIONS - AFTER A STAY, GIVE IT AWAY

When Diane Daniel returned to her Indian Rocks Beach condo after renting it to vacationers for several months, she found the cupboards filled with food they had left behind. There were unopened cans of tuna, boxes of pasta, a bag of rice, and even spices and salad dressing.

Meanwhile, a closet shelf held an assortment of leftover books, while the storage room was chock full of used plastic beach toys and floats. Daniel was so overwhelmed with cleaning and reorganizing that she almost threw all the leftover food and items away. "Tossing everything in the trash would have been the path of least resistance," she said. "But as someone who hates waste and loves donating, reusing and repurposing, it was a path I couldn't bear to take."

After researching resources in the area, she discovered that she could donate almost all the leftovers to places within two miles of her condo, and in some cases within two blocks. Some outlets were new to her, despite having lived in the area on and off since the 1970s. (Since 2014, she has divided her time between IRB and the Netherlands.) "We in IRB are so lucky to have all these resources within close reach, but the problem is that many people either don't know they exist or don't know how they work," she said. "My aim is to show them."

To achieve that, she started the nonprofit initiative Vacation Donations, which launched in February. The tagline is: "After a stay, give it away." Daniel's website includes detailed listings of local resources for donating everything from food and toys to household items and old towels. To get the word out, she is providing ongoing encouragement through social media and marketing. She also hopes that property managers, such as Plumlee Beach Realty, which has already expressed interest, will help spread the word.



Vacation Donations' target audience is both vacationers and property owners and managers. "With the proliferation of short-term rentals, many more tourists buy items they wouldn't have bought at a hotel, especially food and beach supplies," Daniel said. "That has really increased the amount of waste."

She thinks that especially longer-stay tourists who "live like a local" will seek out sources for donating food and other items before they go home. As for property owners and managers, they're constantly dealing with items left behind, especially when renters fly in and out and can't take much with them. Managers can also encourage food and goods donations among their guests by mentioning Vacation Donations in their checkout information and

putting a Vacation Donations magnet on refrigerators. The website's main categories are food, beach toys, books, miscellaneous household items and blankets and towels.

Unopened nonperishable food can go to the Beach Community Food Pantry, a mission of Calvary Episcopal Church. Many people don't realize the pantry has donation bins outside, meaning food can be donated any time.

Beach toys can be deposited at the "Take-a-Toy, Leave-a-Toy" bins found at several IRB beach accesses, a program managed by the IRB nonprofit GreenTown Kids. And books can be left at the IRB library or at several Take-a-Book, Leave-a-Book cabinets. Household items can go to local thrift stores, with the farthest being only two miles away.

One category particularly pertinent for vacation rentals is stained towels, sheets and blankets. Animal shelters and veterinarians use these items daily. As Daniel points out, one small stain on a towel means it cannot be used in a vacation rental, but the dogs don't mind. The two animal shelters are the only listings that aren't within two miles of IRB, but Daniel thought they were important to include.

Vacation Donations includes the locations and operating hours in all categories of donations, as well as information on online sharing sites, such as BuyNothing.

Community members are grateful to see this information put in one place. "Vacation Donations is a wonderful resource to help vacationers and residents alike limit waste and reallocate supplies to the local organizations and people in need," said Allie DeVore, IRB resident and founder and director of GreenTown Kids.

Daniel would particularly like to see more donations going to the food pantry, not only because the food will go where it can be used, but also to remind visitors that IRB is not only about fancy homes on the water and a resort lifestyle.

The pantry welcomes any additional attention and donations coming their way. "We're really appreciative to have the extra support for our pantry," said the Rev. Jon Roberts, Calvary priest and rector. "I've always wondered if there was a way to encourage more vacationers to donate their unopened food to the pantry. This is a great start."

Daniel hopes to use her skills as a freelance journalist to get the word out beyond Indian Rocks about vacation rental reuse, which she sees as an ever-growing issue.

"There are some 13,000 Airbnb listings in Pinellas County alone, and more than 6 million worldwide, so that's a lot of potential leftover food and goods," Daniel said. "I'll soon be posting an article about how Telluride, Colorado, is examining the issue and I've already written about a fantastic food-donation program in coastal North Carolina. My dream is to inspire other resort communities to start their own reuse initiatives."

For more information and to get free stickers and fridge magnets, visit vacationdonations.org or contact Daniel at vacationdonations@gmail.com or (727) 201-2333.



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NEW TROLLEY TOURS Jolley Trolley is excited about its newest adventure, providing legendary tours. Tours feature the mysteries and haunted past of our area. Haunted Clearwater tours began last year and Haunted Dunedin tours will begin in March.

A pirate trolley sets sail, by land, to bring mates to local breweries; and the Clearwater Sightseeing Tour debuted in February - showcasing the coastline communities of our beautiful region.

Jolley Trolley Transportation, serving the Clearwater Beach area and beyond, has enjoyed forty years of being in business as a non-profit organization in our community. Through its partnership with PSTA, it provides daily route services 365 days a year, from Tarpon Springs to Clearwater Beach. Additionally, Jolley Trolley provides private charter services specializing in weddings and corporate events, an outstanding way to enjoy events with your family and friends, all aboard together!

Be sure to visit clearwaterjolleytrolley.com to book your next adventure soon.

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

LIFEGUARDS NEEDED FOR 2023 BEACH SEASON Pinellas County needs seasonal lifeguards to ensure the public health and safety of the community at Pinellas County beach parks. Lifeguards will be stationed on county beaches at Fort De Soto, Sand Key and Fred Howard parks from April to September. Individuals who enjoy helping the public in a fast-paced, detail-oriented role are encouraged to apply.



Positions are available for full-time or part-time seasonal employment, with the highest advertised starting pay in Pinellas County for government lifeguard positions. Pay starts at \$18 per hour for new lifeguards and up to \$19.57 per hour for returning senior-level lifeguards. Lifeguards with Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification and returning senior lifeguards with EMT certification can make even more per hour. Lifeguards may work 10-hour shifts. To apply, visit: www.pinellas.gov/careers.



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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.



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Community News

TAMPA BAY WATCH

In February, Tampa Bay Watch marked thirty years of efforts to improve the Tampa Bay Watershed. Help them prepare for the next thirty by joining the Shoreline Club with an automated monthly donation of \$30 or more. To celebrate the anniversary, two anonymous donors have offered to match the first thirty donations up to \$10,000.

Have your kids join them this summer for an unforgettable camp experience immersed in the Tampa Bay estuary! Camp sessions are offered at Estuary EDventures in Tierra Verde and the Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center on the St. Pete Pier. Under the guidance of their professional education staff, campers will participate in boating trips, snorkeling, exploring native habitats, and collecting unique species inhabiting the estuary.



Tampa Bay Watch members get a ten percent discount on summer camp fees. Registration opens on March 6th. Visit TampaBayWatch.org/membership to enroll or renew.

KEEP PINELLAS BEAUTIFUL

Pinellas County Commissioner Charlie Justice was recognized by Keep Pinellas Beautiful as their "Outstanding Environmental Civil Servant" at the organization's annual luncheon on Friday, February 10. The annual event was hosted at Anona United Methodist Church in Largo.

Through Commissioner Justice's service on the County Commission, he has helped enact policy to protect our Tampa Bay estuary system. In addition, he was the catalyst behind the formation of the Stormwater/Wastewater Partnership which includes Pinellas County staff as well as elected officials and city staff from the 24 municipalities, working together to improve our infrastructure, and teaming up for the occasion of a catastrophic storm or wastewater event.

Commissioner Justice continues to champion environmental service through his work on the Tampa Bay Estuary Program where he has served as Chairman of the Board for three consecutive terms. Additionally, he is Pinellas County's representative on the Gulf Consortium, which is a public entity created through interlocal agreement between Florida's twenty three Gulf Coast counties who were affected by the British Petroleum oil spill in Spring of 2012. He also serves on the Executive Board of the Gulf Consortium. Keep Pinellas Beautiful's mission is to conserve and beautify our natural environment. For more information, visit KbpCares.com.



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Community News



ROTARY CLUB OF INDIAN ROCKS BEACH

Submitted by Claire English

The Rotary Club of Indian Rocks Beach kicks off our 25th year of service, fellowship and of course, fun. Founded in 1998 by a group of business leaders looking for the opportunity to give back, we work hard to raise funds that allow us to support causes that impact not only our local community but international projects.

This March brings two great annual events. On March 18th at 8am we have Rotary Runs the Beach, a 5K timed run and 1 mile walk starting at the 18th Ave Beach Access. Register at runsignup.com/Race/FL/IndianRocksBeach/RotaryRunsTheBeach. The following weekend on Saturday, March 25th is Rotary's annual Pancake Breakfast to benefit vocational service education from 7:30 to 11am at Calvary Episcopal Church's Parish Hall. We will be serving IRB Rotary's best, prepared-with-love, pancakes as well as sausage, fresh orange juice and great coffee. Tickets are \$8 in advance or \$10 at the door and are on sale from any IRB Rotarian or by calling David Kline 727-418-1673. We also encourage all attendees to bring non-perishable food items for donation to the Food Pantry.

From Memorial Day 2023 until Flag Day, hundreds of U.S. Flags will be displayed at Chic-A-Si Park, Indian Rocks Beach, to show our appreciation for those who have sacrificed and dedicated themselves to help others. Please become a part of this year's event by honoring your family or friends. Sponsor a flag and create a custom banner for those you wish to honor for only \$35.00 plus shipping. Each banner will display the name, branch, rank, place of service and service time of your particular hero. After our Flag Day celebration, you will be able to collect your banner as well as one of the display flags. There is no limit on the number of banners you can sponsor, but the deadline for ordering is May 10, 2023. If you have questions, please contact Paul J. Burns at 727-595-4540 or RotaryClubofIRB@gmail.com

Interested in learning about Rotary or getting involved with the Rotary Club of Indian Rocks Beach? Join us at our breakfast meeting Wednesdays at 7:15am at Crabby Bills in Indian Rocks Beach. Check out our website at www.indianrocksrotary.org or contact Club President David Kline at Kline22@tampabay.rr.com or call 727-418-1673.

Community News

BEACH ART CENTER

Submitted by Patricia Thomas

It's not too early to think about Summer 2023! Creative Kids Camp 2023 registration begins March 13th. We had one of our most successful camps last summer and this year is shaping up to be even better. This year's "Creative Kids Camp" will be filled with fun and friends for seven weeks in June and July. Our Creative Campers will have 14 themed camps to choose from including painting, pottery, mixed media, claymation, drawing and more!



Camp for Kids 1st through 6th grade will run from June 5 to July 28 from 9am - 1pm

There are two themed camps each week, cost is \$225 for non-members, \$200 for members, per week.

Details are available at beachartcenter.org/kids-camp.

There is a lot going on at the Beach Art Center this March and April as well.

Our "Boots & Brushes" Country Gala will be held Saturday, March 4th. This community street party is our annual fundraiser and will take place in front of our building on Bay Palm Blvd. This event will 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! Last-minute tickets can be purchased on our website.

Gallery Exhibits change throughout the year and are always free and open to the public. Our Student-Teacher Gallery Show runs through March 24th.

Our "Poetry in Motion" is one of our most popular shows of the year and opens in April. Once artwork has been displayed, local poets come in and write their interpretation or inspiration. The poems are then posted next to the art. This is a fascinating show.

"Poetry in Motion" runs from April 10 – May 12 (poems will be hung next to the art from April 17th). An Opening Reception will be held on Friday, April 21st from 6– 8 pm, all are welcome.

You can find a full calendar of classes on our website for beginners to advanced artists, from ongoing weekly classes to single events we call "Art on the Rocks" where all materials and instruction are included, and you leave with a completed work at the end.

The Beach Art Center is a 501c3 not for profit organization. Our annual memberships help to cover the expenses of the art center. However, being a member is not required to participate in our events, we welcome the entire community. If you have any questions about the Beach Art Center or our classes check out our website www.beachartcenter.org or stop in and visit us. We are open Monday – Friday from 9-4, located across from Kolb Park at 1515 Bay Palm Blvd.

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Community News



GREENTOWN KIDS

Submitted by Allie DeVore

Thanks to all who participated in our first beach cleanup of the year in January! We had one hundred volunteers and picked up over one hundred pounds of trash from the beach.

Our next community wide beach cleanup is on Earth Day. Volunteers of all ages are welcome to participate in IRB's Great American Cleanup on April 22nd, from 5:30-7:30pm. Meet at the 18th Ave. beach access for supplies, then enjoy pizza and a sunset afterwards.

In February, we hosted a community bee presentation at the IRB Nature Preserve, where we learned all about local pollinators, tasted local honey, and then planted our spring garden in the community garden.

Stop by the Keegan Clair Docks to check out GTK's latest community project: 4 mini reefs, which will create a habitat for marine life and help filter up to 70,000 gallons of water per day!

Thanks to GTK's members and 2023 sponsors for supporting us and helping further our mission: Plumlee, Slyce, Country Day School, RAD Bikes, Threat Angler, Palm Legal, ZEN Massage & Yoga, Midori Eco Salon, Groupers on the Gulf, Church of the Isles, Keep Pinellas Beautiful, and the City of Indian Rocks Beach.

GreenTown Kids is a volunteer-run 501(c)(3) nonprofit serving Indian Rocks Beach and the surrounding schools. Visit www.greentownkids.org to get monthly updates, become a member, and donate.

BLUFFS BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

The Bluffs Business Association organizes a business after hours mixer at a different member business the second Thursday of the month from 5:30 to 6:30pm. Salted Air Mercantile at 596 Indian Rocks Road, Belleair Bluffs will be the host on Thursday, March 9. Valley Bank, 2781 West Bay Drive, Belleair Bluffs will host on April 13. All businesses are invited to attend and enjoy making new business connections in a fun, casual atmosphere. Bring a door prize and give a quick commercial about your business. For membership and event information visit www.BBAstrong.com or call Alanna Karaosmani of Valley Bank at 727-686-5807.

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A2K / ACTION 2000

Daryl Frahn (727) 512-7292
www.IRBAction2000.com

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Andrea Harms (727) 596-4331
Andrea@BeachArtCenter.org
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www.PinellasCounty.org

GREEN TOWN KIDS

Local Environmental Youth Group
Allie DeVore (727) 480-3907
www.GreenTownKids.org
GreentownKids@gmail.com

HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION

Marybeth Dunn, Pres. (727) 272-5251
www.IRBHOME.com
IRBHomeOwners@gmail.com

HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

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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.



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Community News

ACTION 2000

Submitted by Daryl Frahn



On a cold January morning, volunteers arrived at the 10th Ave mini park with rakes, clippers and loppers! In about two hours this team transformed the park into a beautiful sanctuary. The 10th Ave mini-park is one of A2K's signature projects. We designed, planted and continue to maintain this special walkway along Gulf Blvd. Check out the photos at www.facebook.com/irbaction2000.

The next A2K Service Saturday is scheduled for March 11th from 9-11 am. We'll be weeding, mulching and putting down shells at the County Park across from Guppy's. We hope you will join us!

March Annual Meeting - The election of officers and new board members will take place at the March Annual Meeting on Monday, March 13th at 6:30 pm. We are excited about the potential our organization has for further growth and development under these new leaders.

Discover the charm of IRB Looking for something fun to do with company and friends? The streets and cottages of IRB have stories to tell. Download the free app and take a self-guided audio and visual tour and learn about them at www.walkindianrocksbeach.com.

Want to learn how you make a difference in our community? Visit www.irbaction2000.com

BELLEAIR WOMENS REPUBLICAN CLUB

The Club will not meet in April but will meet on May 5. Payment for the luncheon at Belleair Country Club, One Country Club Lane, Belleair, Florida, will serve as your reservation, and must be received by April 28th. Please make your \$35 check payable to BWRC and mail to Treasurer Robin Schenck, 301 Belleview Blvd., Belleair, FL 33756. Unfortunately, walk-ups cannot be accommodated.

Upcoming dates to remember: Regular meetings will be held May 5th and June 2nd with no meetings for July or August. The Club will resume regular meetings on September 8th.



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Community News

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 Summer membership opportunity runs from May 1st-September 30th. It has no initiation fee and monthly dues are \$250. Club Members can use the pool, tiki bar, dining room and other amenities at the newly remodeled club. Members also can enjoy day dockage on the club's brand new docks. Best of all, you can meet new people. Call the Yacht Club's office, 447-6000. Learn more at ClearwaterYachtClub.org, or e-mail Office@ClearwaterYachtClub.org.



WELCOME NEWCOMERS CLUB

This club is open to the women of Pinellas County; all are welcome to come and socialize. They meet at local country clubs or restaurants on the first Tuesday of each month with programs, activities or speakers of interest. Please contact Judy at 512-789-5686 for the location of the next event.

CLOTHES TO KIDS

Clothes To Kids is clothing more families this year than in previous years. The need for clothing and shoes is great. Families in our community are experiencing homelessness and unforeseen difficult situations. School aged children are in need of clothes and shoes. Each shopper may receive up to 5 new underwear, 5 new socks, 4 bottoms, 5 tops, 1 pair of shoes, a dress and a jacket in season during their shopping trip. This requires a consistent flow of new or quality used clothing items to continue our mission. Just last year, Clothes To Kids provided more than 15,766 wardrobes to low-income or in crisis school aged children, PreK-4 to 12th grade, FREE of charge. Please clean out your closets and children's closet to help children in Hillsborough and Pinellas County by donating today! Our current need is Elementary School clothing and shoes.

Clothes To Kids is always in need of volunteers. Call Nikki at (813) 616-6430 ext 1003 to discuss positions and hours available.

Monetary donations can be sent to Clothes To Kids, 1059 N. Hercules Avenue, Clearwater, FL 33765. A \$65.00 donation provides one child a week's worth of school clothing, a total of 22 items! Donations may be dropped off from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday at 1059 N. Hercules Avenue in Clearwater or 2168 34th Street South in St. Pete. For more information or to schedule an appointment to shop, please call 441-5050 or visit www.clothestokids.org.

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Memorial Plaza Honors the Bay Area's Earliest Residents



by Dr. Robert F. Black, Historian and Native American Educator

The Tocobaga Memorial Plaza in Indian Shores was dedicated on June 16th, 2022. This spectacular memorial plaza honors the Tocobaga Indian tribal culture that occupied the Tampa Bay region when the Spanish expeditions arrived in the AD1500's. The "public art" approach taken for the Memorial is a large plaza intended to be a gathering place whereby people may visit not once, but return many times to contemplate Florida history and attend events such as presentations on Tocobaga history, community star gazing and in the future, make kayak launches into the adjacent Intercoastal Waterway.

The site concept and design was led by chief architect/creator - artist Steve Graff, with strong support by Sara Mullins, CEO of Galleries-On-The-Go, and Sarasota sculptural artist, Geza Gaspar. They employed a design methodology named "Art as Place Making" and established this plaza and monument as an important gathering place for visitors to learn about our local history and use for multiple public activities. SignStar was responsible for the fabrication, coordination and installation of the plaza, the arch over the plaza providing an historic timeline, the two adjacent information kiosks, and final installation of the centrally located sculpture.

The project was seven years in development and was funded as a Gulf Beautification Project by the Penny for Pinellas tax. In addition to the great sculptural center-piece, the plaza includes two nearby education kiosks that provide very important historical information which can be cleverly enhanced using your cell phone to access and view eight brief videos about the Tocobaga people, Florida wildlife, the Seminole Tribe, and many archaeological sites in Pinellas County. This authoritative historical information was provided by Tampa Bay's Alliance for Weedon Island Archaeological Research and Education and the Seminole tribe of Florida. The kiosk signage includes pictures of Tocobaga cultural artifacts excavated by archaeologists in Pinellas County and is



accompanied by the beautiful artwork of local artist, Ted Morris, who is famous for his renderings of Tocobaga tribal life-ways.

Enhancing the new Tocobaga monument and plaza is an arch high over the central sculpture that provides an important historical timeline of dates of important eras and historical events prior to and following the Tocobaga era in the Tampa Bay area (900AD - 1628 AD). This timeline establishes an excellent historical context for the Tocobaga Indian period in Tampa Bay which then can be honored and better understood in the sweep of Florida History and American history as well.

The Tocobaga monument in the center of the plaza is a beautiful bronze and aluminum sculpture created by Sarasota Hungarian artist, Geza Gaspar. It features three Tocobaga Indian adults and one child arranged in a three-generation family grouping. The monument accurately represents what these early people looked like, what they wore and what each did to live and survive in their natural tropical environment in what was to become the Tampa Bay area.



The Tocobaga Memorial Plaza establishes a wonderful location and an important educational environment for teaching school and public interest groups about the Tocobaga Indian history of Florida. The central sculptural assemblage is a very accurate representation of what a Tocobaga family looked like in the 1500's when the Spanish arrived in Tampa Bay. The Memorial not only effectively honors the Tocobaga as the people who lived here in Tampa Bay, it wonderfully expresses their native "humanity" and it represents the vital cultural tenets of their native life-way with great integrity. It is located at 19601 Gulf Boulevard in its own plaza in the Mayor James J. Lawrence Veterans Memorial Park on the site of Pinellas County's Tiki Gardens beach parking lot and associated beach access.

Community News

FLORIDA BOTANICAL GARDENS

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.



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.

The Florida Native Plant Symposium will be held Saturday, March 25th from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. The event includes a boxed picnic lunch in the gardens. Advanced registration is required, \$75 general admission, \$50 for Foundation members.

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.

The Florida Botanical Gardens is located at 12520 Ulmerton, Largo, across the street from the Indian Rocks Christian Church.

Get more information at www.FLBGFoundation.org.

INDIAN ROCKS BEACH PUBLIC LIBRARY

The On the Rocks Book Club meets at the library at 4 P.M.

Here is the list of books and meeting dates:

March 28, 2023- "Matrix" by Lauren Groff

April 25, 2023- TBA

Story time for pre-readers in the kids' area every Wednesday 11:30 AM with stories and songs.

The IRB Library offers e-content through the Libby app, if you need help using Libby give us a call or stop by for some support. You can also find "how to videos" on YouTube.

The IRB Library offers IRB library members Kanopy film downloads for your device or home TV. More information on how to access Kanopy is available at the library or online with your library card. Download the app from your app store.

The bookstore – is full of lots of recent fiction, paperbacks, and DVDs for sale. You will find "take and leave" little lending libraries at the beach access on 4th 12th and 22nd Avenues and City Hall. We are also accepting newer fiction and paperback donations.

The IRB Library continues to welcome library volunteer applications, please stop by and say hello.

Memorial bricks are available from the Friends of the Library, stop by and we will show you the library memorial walkway.

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