

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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Magazine

THE REAL PIRATES OF FLORIDA



By Pete Magnani, Publisher

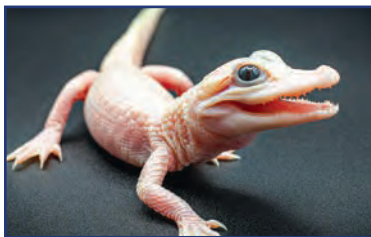
During the Gasparilla season, the folklore surrounding Jose Gaspar begins to resurface despite a lack of evidence that the legendary pirate ever existed. Literature frequently associates the golden age of piracy with the Caribbean Sea and its islands. New Providence, Kingston, Port Royal, and Tortuga are among the infamous pirate strongholds that history and Hollywood have enshrined. However, Florida and the entire Gulf Coast saw their share of seafaring marauders.

Ponce de Leon landed on the east coast of Florida in 1513 and claimed it for Spain. St. Augustine was established as a resupply port for Spanish merchant ships, and their valuable cargo brought pirates to the Atlantic coast. Additionally,

England, Spain, and France sent privateer ships to finance war efforts. They operated almost identically to the pirates roaming the Atlantic and Caribbean, except they did so under the authority of their sovereign. Privateers used decommissioned naval ships or repurposed cargo vessels to seize merchant ships laden with riches. These "prizes" were then brought to a port where the ship and goods were sold. Profits were divided among the ship's owner, captain, and crew. Privateers also sent a share to the government that sanctioned them.

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Also in this Issue:



Rare Company

Gatorland Orlando welcomes a new, extraordinary set of twins.

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Saving Sunsets

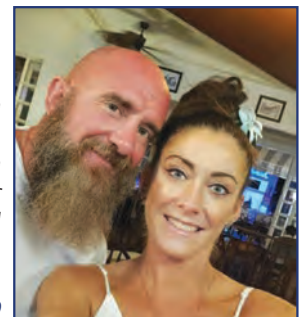
Indian Rocks Beach resident Bill Woerner uses his photography to capture amazing sunsets.

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Changing of the Guard

After nearly 30 years in the publishing business, Bob and Becky Griffin have retired, however your Neighborhood News will remain a family endeavor.

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What is a Michelin Star?

Learn about prestigious culinary accolades and the criteria used in awarding them.

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CREDITS



This newsletter is published by Magriff Productions, LLC. and is mailed to 8,000 residences and businesses in Belleair, Belleair Beach, Belleair Bluffs, Harbor Bluffs, and part of Largo. We are not 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 at all City Halls, Panera Bread, UPS Store and the Belleair Market. Call (813) 239-6862 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. Follow us on Facebook for ongoing local news.

Thank you for reading,

Lora and Pete Magnani
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Pete@MagriffProductions.com

SEE YOU AGAIN IN APRIL

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Nessler • Coleen Chaney • Vacant

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Chris Latvala 464-3278

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DiCeglie.Nick.web@flsenate.gov

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Republican, District 58

2189 Cleveland St. Suite 229

Ron.Ogden@myfloridahouse.gov

Governor Ron DeSantis

Ron.DeSantis@myflorida.com

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www.Rubio.Senate.gov

Rick Scott 202-224-5274

www.RickScott.Senate.gov

AREA UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE:

Anna Paulina Luna 202-225-5961

Republican, District 13

1201 Gandy Blvd N., St Petersburg

CALENDAR OF HOLIDAYS & EVENTS

FEBRUARY

- Bluffs Business Association Mixer 9
- Belleair Family Outdoor Movie Night 9
- Florida State Fair 8-19
- Market in the Bluffs 10
- Dunedin Mardi Gras Parade & Fest 10
- Chinese New Year 10
- Sant Yago Knight Parade 10
- Willie Nelson at the Sound 10
- Super Bowl LVIII 11
- Fat Tuesday 13
- Valentine's Day 14
- Public Schools Closed 16
- Gasparilla Music Festival 16-18
- Winterfest on the Rocks 17
- Clearwater Art Walk 17
- Tampa Bay Rays Fan Fest 17
- Largo PD 100th Anniversary Event 18
- President's Day 19
- Public Schools Closed 19
- MLB Spring Training Begins 22
- Largo Live at Ulmer Park 23
- St. Pete Seafood and Music Fest 23-25
- Sea-Blues Fest Coachman Park 24-25
- Strawberry Festival Begins 29
- Leap Day 29

MARCH

- Women's History Month Begins 1
- Belleair Bluffs Citywide Garage Sale 2
- Largo Community Center Garage Sale 2
- Belleair Sunset 5k and Fun Run 2
- Night on the Rocks Beach Art Center 2
- St. Pete Grand Prix 7-10
- International Women's Day 8
- IRB Rotary Runs the Beach 9
- Latin Food Festival Safety Harbor 9
- Strawberry Festival Ends 10
- Daylight Savings Time Begins 10
- Spring Break Public Schools 11-15
- Bluffs Business Association Mixer 14
- Spring Market in the Bluffs 16
- Shamrock'n Run Largo 16
- St. Patrick's Day 17
- Valspar Championship 18-24
- Primary and Municipal Elections 19
- Tampa Home Show 23
- Air Supply at the Sound 23
- MLB Opening Day 28
- Rays First Home Game 28
- Good Friday 29
- Sugar Sand Festival Begins 29
- Easter Sunday 31



EXCITING MARKET UPDATES FOR 2024

The Frankiewicz mortgage group is proud to share we are once again in the top 1% of loan originators nationwide for 2023.

- **THE FRANKIEWICZ TEAM** is a family mortgage lender with over 60 years combined knowledge in the lending industry. With a father, son, and daughter-in-law team, we are here to help and we work for you 365 days per year. Our promise: your call will never go unanswered. Our goal is to treat every single client as our family as we perfect and simplify the mortgage process one closing at a time.
- **RATES ARE FALLING:** Throughout the final month of 2023 and January 2024, there has been a noteworthy decline in the 10-year bond, leading to a notable reduction in long-term mortgage rates, sometimes exceeding a full percentage point. Consequently, mortgage applications have surged, resulting in reduced monthly mortgage payments by several hundred dollars in some cases. The 10-year bond serves as a valuable indicator for the public to monitor, providing insights into the daily fluctuations of mortgage rates. As a general rule, a lower 10-year bond corresponds to lower mortgage rates.
- **WHAT'S NEW/HOT FOR 2024:** Staying very popular is the DSCR purchase and refi program of investment homes. This program allows you to purchase or cash out refi an investment home with **NO INCOME NEEDED**. This program is based on property type, credit score and rent ratio.
- **HOMES FOR SALE IN 2024:** We are excited to see the market is yielding more homes for sale. Allowing for buyers to take advantage of lower rates and less competition.

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Did You Know



HOLIDAY LIGHTS IN THE GARDENS RECOGNIZED

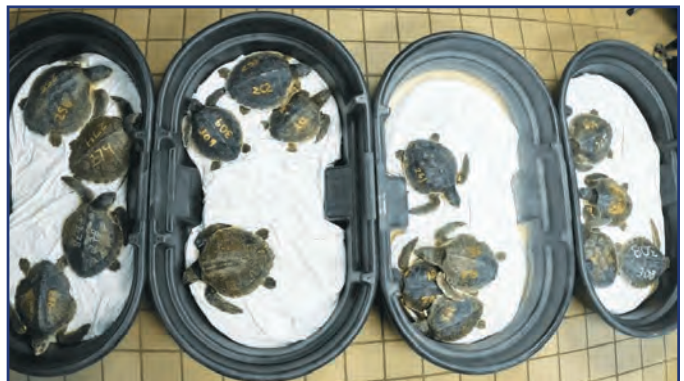
The annual fundraiser at the Florida Botanical Gardens placed 9th in USA TODAY's 10Best Awards for Best Botanical Gardens Holiday Lights. The daily newspaper asked a panel of experts to nominate their favorite light displays at botanical gardens throughout the U.S., then readers voted for their top picks. During the event, the Gardens sparkle with one million twinkling LED lights in a multitude of colors. Vibrant laser lights and lighted figures round out the display. Last year's exhibit ran from November 24th through December 31st.

AMBULANCE MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM Enrollment applications are open for the 2024 Sunstar FirstCare Ambulance Membership. Residents are encouraged to enroll now to receive a full year of financial help with out-of-pocket expenses for ambulance transportation.

The estimated average cost of a single ambulance transport is \$943. Annual membership fees for the Sunstar FirstCare Ambulance Membership plan are \$86 for a Single Membership and \$129 for a Family Membership. Membership covers 100% of expenses associated with deductibles and co-payments and 50% of medically necessary trips denied by insurance. Uninsured members receive a 20% discount on medically necessary ambulance transportation. In 2023, the membership plan saved residents an average of \$175 per transport.

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SEA TURTLES RESCUED In a collaborative effort with the New England Aquarium, the Clearwater Marine Aquarium welcomed the arrival of sixteen critically endangered Kemp's Ridley sea turtles on Dec 5. These turtles were severely impacted by the frigid waters of New England, experiencing a condition known as "cold stun." Kemp's Ridley sea turtles are the most endangered species of sea turtle.

and More...

CLEARWATER SEA-BLUES FESTIVAL RETURNS

After a brief hiatus during Coachman Park's renovation, the festival returns to its original home Feb. 24-25. Jam out to soul-stirring music from national recording artists, shop local market vendors and enjoy delectable seafood, craft beer and wine from area businesses at Coachman Park. The two-day outdoor festival, set against the backdrop of the city's newly renovated waterfront park, will showcase five musical acts starting at 2pm each day.



The Clearwater Sea-Blues Festival presented by Visit St. Petersburg Clearwater is a free event. Tickets are not necessary for general admission. For those looking to elevate their experience, VIP tickets and reserved seating are available starting at \$20. A portion of ticket sales will be donated to the Clearwater-based charity Homeless Empowerment Program. For tickets and information, visit MyClearwater.com/EventsAndMeetings and click on Clearwater Sea-Blues Festival 2024.

HOW DID FEBRUARY AND MARCH GET THEIR NAMES?

Since other months, like January, are named after Roman gods, some assume February was named after the Roman god "Februus." But the word February actually comes from the Roman festival of purification called "Februa," during which people were ritually washed.

March is the third month of the Gregorian calendar. It was named after Mars, the Roman god of war. Most statues and art depict him in battle gear. March was the first month of the Roman (Julian) calendar. The Roman calendar originally began in March, and the months of January and February were added later, after a reform to the Gregorian calendar in the 1580s.

IS YOUR CAR FIT FOR THE ROAD? Find out by participating in a free drive-through vehicle safety check on March 6th from 10am-noon at the Largo Community Center. Checks will include light functionality, tire tread, and steering wheel distance and pitch. Members of the Largo Police Department will be on-site to help answer your questions.

GRAND PRIX The Annual "Firestone Grand Prix of St Petersburg" is coming back for its 20th big year Friday through Sunday, March 8-10 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 10th.

Pricing starts at \$78 for general admission for all three days. Sunday only, general admission is \$60 per person.

Tickets are available at GPSnPete.com or call (727) 898-4639.

OUR NEXT ISSUE IS APRIL If you need another copy of this magazine, pick up one up at all City Halls, Panara Bread, The UPS Store and Belleair Market. Call (813) 361-7376 if you need more than a few. Read this issue and others at BeachNewsletters.com. Follow us on Facebook for local news.

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GULF PIRATES, Continued

During the 16th and 17th centuries, Spanish colonials mined gold, silver, and precious gems in Mexico and Peru. They shipped these valuables back to Europe with the first leg of the journey bringing them across the Gulf of Mexico and through the Straits of Florida. The largely ungoverned islands of the Antilles and West Indies made convenient hideaways for pirate fleets, and the waters of the Caribbean and Atlantic made prime hunting grounds. The Spanish, British, and French also battled each other over territory and religion during this time, and all three governments commissioned privateers to fund those efforts.

In the early 1700s, efforts began to combat piracy in the Caribbean. The British government passed the Transportation Act of 1717, which included a provision concerning suppression of piracy and affirming capital punishment upon conviction. Previously, the crime was considered a relatively minor offense, with pirates only facing punishment if they were caught and returned to Europe to face trial. The British Parliament established commissioners in the colonies with the ability to bring pirates to trial, resulting in the execution of nearly six hundred buccaneers between 1716 and 1726. This crackdown pushed the pirates out of the Caribbean and into safer waters.

Louis Michel-Aury served on privateer ships under the banner of France during the early 1800s. Eventually, he assumed command of his own ship and fought under Venezuelan

authority in the Spanish American Wars for Independence. In 1816, he was appointed the Governor of Galveston where he established a privateering base for attacking Spanish ships in the Gulf of Mexico. Aury left Galveston in 1817 on an expedition to Mexico, and in his absence, Galveston and much of the northern Gulf Coast fell into new hands.

Upon his return, Aury discovered he was unwelcome in Galveston, and briefly established a new base at Fernandina on Amelia Island. The U.S. intended to annex Florida, and on December 23, 1817, a U.S. Navy fleet took control of the island. Aury headed south and continued plundering and privateering until 1821, when he passed away at 33, reportedly striking his head after a fall from his horse.

Brothers Pierre and Jean Lafitte came to the New World from France around 1800, settling in New Orleans. They established legitimate businesses, but also operated as pirates in the Gulf. The United States Congress passed the Embargo Act in 1807, effectively banning trade with other countries. The Lafitte brothers saw an opportunity set up a smuggling network to bring foreign goods into the U.S.

As displaced Caribbean pirates moved their operations into the Gulf of Mexico, they needed strongholds to offload their spoils along the coasts of Florida, Louisiana, and Texas. One such location was Baratavia Bay in southeastern Louisiana between Grand



Portrait of Jean Lafitte

Isle and Grand Terre. The Lafitte network was a perfect means for the marauders to fence their prizes. They fortified Baratavia and it was mainstay for pirates until it was taken by the U.S. Navy in 1814.

The brothers functioned as spies for Spain during the Mexican War of Independence beginning around 1815. It was in this capacity that Jean Lafitte was sent to Galveston in 1817. During Aury's absence, Lafitte took control and fortified the island. His operation ran successfully until one of his captains attacked an American merchant ship. A U.S. Navy schooner was dispatched to Galveston, and Lafitte abandoned the island. He continued taking prizes in the Gulf and the Caribbean until he was fatally wounded in battle with two Spanish warships off the coast of Honduras.

The 1830s brought the beginning of a sharp decline in piracy in the Gulf of Mexico. The U.S. and other nations realized the revenue losses associated with the trade and focused naval efforts to combat it. Despite fading into folklore and foreign news broadcasts during the 20th century, the 2000s saw a resurgence in piracy in the Gulf of Mexico. Hundreds of raids occurred in the Gulf between 2015 and 2020 to both merchant ships and oil platforms. Instead of plundering precious metals and gems, modern-day pirates steal oil barrels and hold ships for ransom. Cooperative efforts between the Navies and Coast Guards of the U.S. and Mexico seem to be stemming the tide. Pirates still exist, and not only during Gasparilla. ■



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25 LESSONS LEARNED OVER 50 YEARS-PART ONE

by Ray Ferrara, ProVise Management Group

As one goes through a career, you accumulate wisdom from others and sometimes you create a few pearls yourself. This is first of two-part series about twenty-five pieces of wisdom to ponder as you think about financial planning, goal setting, saving and investment management.

Financial planning is the glue that brings it all together. Everything else, including investing, is a subset of the plan. Pick a competent and ethical financial planner that has good tableside manners much like you want a doctor with good bedside manners.

There are many credentials financial planners have, but the CFP® designation is the gold standard. They are required to work as a fiduciary acting in your best interest.

Never take any action or invest in anything that you do not understand. If you have doubts, follow your instinct to walk away.

The more that someone pushes a product or an idea, the more likely it is better for them than it is for you.

While taxes are an important consideration when making or selling an investment, it is economics that are most important.

If a financial decision does not add value to your life, why do it? If you do not see value in an investment going forward sell it no matter the profit or loss.

Over a long period of time, more of your return comes from asset allocation rather than investment selection.

Rebalance your asset allocation annually, at least. This means you sell some of your winners to buy some of your losers. It forces you to sell the things that went up (high) and buy those that went down (low). What a concept.

Do not fall in love with your investments and, most importantly, do not fall in love with a deal regardless of you being the buyer or seller. Emotions have no place in the room.

There is nothing wrong with saying, "No". Never feel obligated to do anything that does not "feel" right/good.

We are all going to make mistakes, so cut your losses early. Do not hope for the impossible to bail you out.

If you have others to add to the list, please send them to Ferrara@ProVise.com. We always offer a complimentary consultation in either our Tampa or Clearwater office or by Zoom. Do not pass up a good opportunity.

V. Raymond Ferrara, CFP®, Chair and CEO

ProVise Management Group, LLC
 611 Druid Rd E, Suite 105, Clearwater, FL 33756
 727-441-9022, info@provisemg.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.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

By Lora Griffin Magnani

As you may have heard, after nearly thirty years in the publishing business and 16 years producing the Belleair Area Neighborhood News Magazine, Bob and Becky have taken a well-deserved retirement. My husband Pete and I will be continuing the Magazine in the same tradition they established so long ago.

I was born and raised in Tampa and have lived in the Bay Area my whole life. I studied Mass Communications at USF and worked part time for Griffin Productions whenever Bob (my dad) had projects for me to do. Pete grew up in New York and moved to Tampa in 2000, where he worked as a police officer until an on-the-job injury forced his early retirement. Five years ago, we moved to Pinellas County to be closer to the beaches in anticipation of beginning this endeavor.



Since settling into our home in Dunedin, we have both worked alongside Bob and Becky behind the scenes to learn the ropes of their business. We took over publication of the Indian Rocks Beach Neighborhood New Magazine in January of 2022 and started a magazine for Dunedin in 2023. We look forward to providing you with the same entertaining, informative, and useful resource you have come to expect from the News Magazine.

We will continue the magazine in the same format you are used to. We will continue the cycle of printing every other month, beginning with this issue. And, of course, we will continue this for free for our readers. You may notice a few changes as we add our own personal touch, but basically it will be the same interesting Neighborhood News Magazine the Griffins have brought to you for the past 16 years. Bob and Becky have not gone away, in fact you will see stories written by them in our future issues, including this one.

Pete and I are so grateful for the opportunity Bob and Becky have given us, and we are excited to carry on producing this quality News Magazine. We have big shoes to fill, and we are thankful to our advertisers, contributors, and our readers for their continued support.



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Business Briefs

NEW PEDIATRIC THERAPY CLINIC

Jennifer Mazurkiewicz MS OTR/L C/NDT is launching ReImagine OT LLC, a specialized pediatric occupational therapy clinic that will focus on intensive based rehabilitation services as well as offer intensive camps, play groups, and educational classes for parents. Jenny has been a pediatric occupational therapist for over 16 years and recently moved to Indian Rocks Beach from Michigan eight months ago. ReImagine OT focuses on high intensity and short duration of therapy, maximizing goal achievement in a shorter period of time with parent education and empowerment.



ReImagine OT is currently taking new referrals and offering free virtual consultations to ensure their services are right for your child. If you think your child would benefit from services feel free to visit the website at reimagineot.com, or contact the business directly by phone (727) 902-0756 or email Info@ReImagineOT.com.

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LOCAL BUSINESSES AWARDED AMPLIFY Clearwater awarded \$20,000 to St. Pete-based CR World and \$10,000 to Belleair Bluffs' Allori Blow Dry bar at AMPLIFY's "Pitch Night" in December. The event was the culmination of a ten-week "Business Incubator" program, during which ten local startups received assistance with business planning, networking, market research, and other strategies.

CR World is a web-based retailer offering hemp and cannabis-infused wellness products. Its website is ComeCRWorld.com. Allori is a full-service salon offering hair services, makeup, IV therapy, and aesthetics, located at 2917 West Bay Drive. Visit their website at AlloriBlowDryBar.com.

Applications are being accepted for AMPLIFY's spring incubator at AmplifyClearwater.com/incubator.

Business Briefs



ANNUAL HOLIDAY MEAL DRIVE A SUCCESS

Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, Publix, the Rotary Club of Indian Rocks Beach, and the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) coordinated the annual Holiday Meal project that resulted in 175 meals delivered to those in need.

The entire cost of the meals was funded by those in the community who supported the fundraisers of the Rotary Club of Indian Rocks Beach and who also donated personal funds as they checked out at Publix during the two holiday seasons. The donated meals included a cooked turkey for Thanksgiving and a cooked ham for Christmas, as well as all the fixings, dessert included.

The Rotary Club of Indian Rocks Beach coordinated the effort. The associates at the Publix at 12022 Indian Rocks Road created the meal menu, cooked the turkeys and ham, and assembled 175 individual meal boxes. The PCSO identified those most in need through their direct relationships with the community and personally delivered every meal directly to the families. Rotary Club members, Publix employees, PCSO deputies, and Pinellas Suncoast Fire and Rescue members helped load all the meals into the Sheriff's vehicles for delivery.

Thanks to all who participated to make this annual event a resounding success.

PALM LEGAL CELEBRATES THIRD ANNIVERSARY

Palm Legal, PLLC entered the new year in its third year of business serving local clients. Owner and Managing Attorney, Allie DeVore, lives and works in Indian Rocks Beach where she helps businesses, nonprofits and estate planning clients plan and protect the things most important to them. Allie provides businesses with legal services such as formation, contracts, and ongoing counsel. She helps local nonprofits with formation and obtaining tax-exempt status. Her estate planning services guide clients in accomplishing their unique goals. Palm Legal is mobile and happy to meet at client's homes or places of business. When Allie is not working, you can find her around town with her family, volunteering with GreenTown Kids, and playing tennis. Reach her at PalmLegalFlorida.com; (727) 480-3907, or at Allie@PalmLegalFlorida.com.

BUSINESS NEWS WANTED If you have news for this Magazine, e-mail Pete@MagriffProductions.com or call (813) 239-6862.

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VALENTINE'S DAY

Valentine's Day has become a Hallmark holiday, but the historical origins of the festival vary by account. The consensus attributes the day to the Feast of St. Valentine; however, it is uncertain who Valentine actually was. There were several Christian martyrs who bore that name and the record has become intertwined with folklore as to their histories.



One account describes Roman priest Valentinus, who was condemned to death for his faith. While awaiting execution, he restored sight to the blind daughter of his jailer. Another narrative details Roman emperor Claudius forbidding marriage under the impression that married soldiers would be less effective due to their concern for their wives and children. Valentine, a Roman priest, continued to marry couples in secret and was eventually beheaded for his treason.

The Catholic Church recognizes St. Valentine of Rome as the Patron Saint of engaged couples, young people, beekeepers, and epilepsy. The modern celebration generally involves greeting cards and gift giving, According to Bustle.com, the most popular gifts are chocolates, flowers, and jewelry. Dining out is another staple of the day with steak being the most popular fare followed by lobster, and French or Italian cuisine. Restaurants are usually at capacity for dinner on Valentine's, and OpenTable.com reports nationwide, most reservations are made eleven days before the holiday.

On average, six million couples worldwide get engaged on Valentine's Day, with Hawaii being the most popular location for proposals. Las Vegas averages 600 weddings on the holiday,



and for the last fifteen years, the Pinellas County Clerk of the Court has hosted a Valentine's Day Wedding Ceremony. Each year, the event is held at the Florida Botanical Gardens and provides a wedding ceremony for thirty couples as well as a vow renewal for another thirty. The newlyweds receive a special commemorative marriage certificate and the Clerk waives licensing fees. You may register online at

PinellasClerkValentinesWedding.EventBrite.com.

Valentine's Day certainly seems to be a romantic date for marriage, however a university of Melbourne study shows that couples married on Valentine's are 45% less likely to be married on their third anniversary than those married on any other day of the year. According to a YouGov.com survey one in fourteen U.S. adults say they have had a relationship end on Valentine's and 12% have broken up shortly before or shortly after.

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FEASTING AT THE FAIR

By Lora Magnani, Publisher

The Florida State Fair returns to the state fairgrounds at 4800 US Highway 301 in Tampa February 8th – 19th. The fair is a great family-friendly event with something for everyone, rides, carnival games, shows, music, agriculture, and much more. One of the most unique parts of the fair is the food. With over 100 food vendors and an array of cuisines, people can indulge their favorites from childhood or be a little adventurous and try one of the many new concoctions the vendors have put together.

Here are a few newcomers to the 2024 Florida State Fair:

Shockley's Food Service has brought two salty yet sweet creations this year, the first being the "Honey Bunny Curd Burger." This flamed-grilled burger is topped with melted cheese curds and placed between two honey buns. Don't forget the wet wipes for this one! The second is the "Pop Rock Pickle," a large Kosher pickle wrapped in a Fruit Roll-up, dipped in chocolate and rolled in Pop Rocks candy. Exploding candy might not be the right topping for everyone, but have no fear (well, maybe some). They also offer pickles dipped in Fruity Pebbles and Flaming Hot Cheetos, choose wisely.



Macken Sliders is throwing together their spin on Chicken and Waffles with "Bacon Waffle Cheeseburger." This new delicacy consists of two 100% beef slider patties topped with cheddar cheese and smoked, crumbled applewood bacon. It is then placed between two Belgian waffles that have pearl sugar baked into them.

Are these a little too crazy? What about some basic, not-so-basic, barbecue? Low N' Slow Catering is combining southern BBQ with a Tex-Mex handheld classic, the "BBQ Fried Burrito." Smoked barbecue pulled pork is topped with a hefty scoop of mac n cheese, then rolled into a huge burrito and deep until golden brown and drizzled with tangy barbecue sauce.

The Best Around Funnel Cakes is also taking a stab at BBQ this year with the "Temperamental Hog Funnel Cake." They start with classic funnel cake mix, but for the twist add cornmeal and barbecue seasoning. They drizzle the batter into a deep fryer to create that iconic funnel cake platform, then add to it with barbecue pulled pork. The customer can choose how "temperamental" they would like their pig: "Happy" – Mild, "Sweet Angry" – Hot, or "Furious" – Better have a glass of water ready.



Not everything at the fair is deep fried or spicy, some items are meant for a sweet tooth. The Cinnamon Saloon has combined two classics, a breakfast delight and a midnight snack. The "Oreo Cookie Cinnamon Bun" is exactly what it sounds like, a cinnamon bun with Oreo cookies crumbles in the swirls topped with warm cinnamon bun icing. This delicious treat will have guests licking their fingers until the last bite.

The fair lasts two weeks, so if you can't get your fill in one day, no worries, go back for a second round. Don't forget your antacids, wet wipes, and Tide pens, things will get a little messy. For more information go to FloridaStateFair.com.

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MARCH ELECTION INFORMATION

On Tuesday, March 19th, registered Republican voters will choose their candidate for the General Election in November. Also on the ballot will be several charter amendments for the City of Belleair Bluffs.

Charter Amendment 1: Shall the City amend the Charter to prohibit council members, including the Mayor, from serving more than three consecutive terms, as opposed to the existing limitation prohibiting a councilmember from serving more than two consecutive terms?

Charter Amendment 2: Shall the City amend the Charter to provide for a city council composed of five at-large council members, including the Mayor, as opposed to the existing language providing for a city council composed of seven at-large city council members, including the Mayor, and adjust the corresponding voting requirements for the council to take action?

Charter Amendment 3: Shall the City amend the Charter to provide that each individual term of office for city council members, including the mayor, shall be for four (4) years, as opposed to the existing three (3) year term, beginning with the officials elected in 2024, and amend the regular election cycle to accommodate the longer election terms?

Charter Amendment 4: If a majority of the City’s electors approve an amendment extending councilmember terms to four years, shall the City also amend the Charter to provide that its regular local elections for councilmembers shall be held in November, in general alignment with federal election cycles, as opposed to the existing requirement that regular local elections occur in March?

The deadline to register for the election is Tuesday, February 20th. You may request a mail ballot up to 5pm on Thursday, March

7th. Early voting will take place March 9th-17th. Visit VotePinellas.gov/Election-Information/Voter-Registration to check your voter registration, register to vote, or update your registration. On March 19th, polls will be open from 7am-7pm. Find your voting precinct and polling place by visiting VotePinellas.gov/Election-Information/Find-Your-Precinct-Polling-Place.

Interested in being an election worker?

Poll Workers are assigned to work at a specific polling location on election day. To be a Poll Worker, you must be registered or pre-registered to vote in Pinellas County, speak English, and attend required Poll Worker training. There are various positions available at the polling site.

Clerks oversee operations on Election Day and have additional duties prior, such as coordinating workers, obtaining supplies, and setting up the voting equipment.

Assistant Clerks assist the Clerk and serve as backup for Poll Worker positions. They help determine voter eligibility, make sure forms are properly completed, and assist in closing the polling site.

The Machine Manager assists in setting up voting equipment, manages technical support, assists voters, and is responsible for transporting the ballots after polls close.

The Precinct Deputy maintains order at the polling place, ensures ADA compliance, designates the “no political activity” zone, and assists in closing the polling place.

Poll workers are paid per class for their training, from \$150-\$265 depending on assignment. For more information or to apply to be a poll worker, visit VotePinellas.gov/Election-Worker.



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IT'S 5K RUN 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.

- "Beach Walk" February 3, 8:30 am on Clearwater Beach starting at the Palm Pavilion. The two-mile route is from the Palm Pavilion to Pier 60 and then finishes 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 pre-register online at ChapelBytheSea.net/Beachwalk/walk.
- Bring your pet and "Run for the Dogs and Friends" on February 4 at 8am at Aspirations Winery, 22041 US Highway 19 N in Clearwater. The 5k Course starts and finishes at the winery and follows the beautiful and scenic Ream Wilson Trail. The race will be timed and scored by J3 Timing. Participants will be able to enjoy a complimentary pour of wine at the end of the race. The cost is \$50 per person, participants will receive a T-shirt, finisher medal, collapsible dog bowl, chip-timed race bib, and finish line treats for humans and dogs. Proceeds will support Suncoast Animal League. Packet pickup opens at 7am, race starts at 8am. for information or to register, visit AspirationsWinery.com/tours-%26-events.
- St. Petersburg College is ready to race toward the finish line with the 9th annual "Titan Trot" on Saturday, Feb. 10 at the Clearwater Campus, 2465 Drew St., Clearwater. The trot is a 5K and is open to all community members. Participants run to Cliff Stephens Park and return to SPC's Clearwater Campus. Entry fees fund the Titan Trot 5K Finish Line Scholarship. The scholarship is for SPC students in the final year of their studies. The race's theme is Bring Your Superhero! Costumes are encouraged and walkers and runners of all abilities are welcome, and strollers are also welcome. Learn more about the Titan Trot and register at SPCollege.edu/events/2024-titan-trot-5k.
- The "Gasparilla Distance Classic" February 24-25, in Downtown Tampa. It includes a 5K Run, 5K walk, 5K stroller race, 15K, half marathon, and more. For information or to register, visit RunGasparilla.com.
- The Belleair Rec's 22 Annual "Sunset 5k & Fun Run" is March 2nd. It begins at 5:30pm and has a post-race party. For more information, please contact the Dimmitt Community Center at 727-518-3728. Register at RunRignup.com/Belleair.
- The City of Largo's "Annual Shamrock N' Run" Race is Saturday, March 16 at Ulmer Park, 301 West Bay Dr. Live music starts at 4 pm. The Clover Kids Fun Run, 5K Run & 1.5 Mile Walk start at 5:30 pm. Pre-register online at RunSignup.com/Race/Register/?racelid=154703. "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 9 with a 5K timed/chipped race, one mile family fun run and 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.
- Join the US Road Running Club for the Luau 5K, 10K, and Half Marathon at 8am on March 23rd at Eagle Lake Park in Largo. All finishers receive an event-themed medal with awards for first-third place male and female. Costumes are encouraged, with a prize for best costume. Visit usroadrunning.rsupartner.com/upcoming-races for more information or to register.



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THE OFFSHORE REPORT

by Captain T.J. Shea, 2Shea Fishing and Diving

February is here and that means it's time to get back to doing what we all love, catching fish! Red grouper, to be more specific. They are back in season and should be ripe for the picking since the emergency closure last July. Weather will most likely limit your trips, so I suggest you take advantage of every fishable day possible. If it is flat calm and beautiful on Wednesday the 14th, I hope you are 30 miles offshore with baits in the water. You can bring your Valentine with you!

Our starting point will be somewhere around 90-100 feet of water. Remember that from February 1st-March 31st we are not allowed to target grouper west of the 20-fathom break. You can start a little shallower, around 75-85 feet, but you will have to work a lot harder to get that boat limit. The deeper you go, the bigger they get. We have found that 100-foot area to be a nice, sweet spot with quality fish and very little red snapper by catch.

The Central Gulf Coast has acres upon acres of live bottom loaded with red grouper. If the drift is slow enough that's always the best way to cover ground. When you roll over a spot where you get a few good fish, mark that on your machine. I guarantee that's where the best potholes are. Diving gives us the luxury of seeing exactly what the bottom looks like. It's either hard limestone with lots of sea fans and cracks in the stone or hard sandy bottom with holes that go down to who knows where. Your fire truck reds will stay right next to these holes and cracks, so you need to get your baits close. The more area you cover the more holes you will drift across.

The best part of red grouper fish is constant action and quality bycatch. Porgy's, lane snapper, trigger fish, mangrove snapper and hogfish all inhabit the same bottom. I would take any of these over a red grouper for my freshly caught meal. We will typically designate two or three clients fishing with big chunks of squid or live baits for the reds and the rest fishing light combos with shrimp for the bycatch. We have found this to be the best way to maximize what you put in your fish box. Just switch it up as you go from spot to spot.



If you want to play with big Amberjack, throw a few of the porgies into your live well and hit any of the wrecks on the way in. Bait size doesn't matter, big jacks will destroy these guys well before they make it to the bottom. You can't keep them as they are protected until August, but the fight is a great way to top off your trip.

You won't get many days to fish in February, but the ones you do will most likely be ones you won't forget.

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

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GRATEFUL PATIENT RETURNS TO MORTON PLANT HOSPITAL



Deborah Irving and the Morgan 3 Team

In this season when the focus turns to giving and giving thanks, Morton Plant Hospital's Morgan 3 team was honored when former patient, Deborah Irving, stopped by to say thank you. Deborah wasn't just any patient. She came in extremely ill and was on the unit for six weeks.

"I came in with MRSA, and it went to my heart," Deborah said. "I needed to have my mitral valve replaced."

Her nephrologist Michael Brucculeri, MD, told her the difficult surgery was her only chance for survival. The surgery lasted five hours, but thanks to the skill of Cardiothoracic Surgeon John Ofenloch, MD, and his surgical team, it was a success.

"I could never repay these two doctors for everything they did to save my life," Deborah said.

She faced a long recovery with several more weeks in the hospital followed by a lengthy rehabilitation. It took months to rebuild her strength to walk up the stairs of her townhome, but last week she brought her 8-foot artificial Christmas tree up the stairs by herself and decorated her home inside and out for the holidays.

Almost eight months have passed since Deborah was discharged from Morton Plant, but she continues to rave about the outstanding care she received on Morgan 3. When her children came to visit for the first time, a nurse spent an hour brushing and styling her hair. She also moved medical equipment so her children wouldn't see it and brought in chairs to make them comfortable.

"Melanie, the nurse manager, came to my room every day to encourage me. She told me I was going to come back in and be a walking miracle," Deborah said.

In November, she did just that. Deborah, the walking miracle, didn't come empty handed though. She brought lunch for the team that provided the care she needed to make celebrating this holiday season extra special.

KEEP AN EYE ON THE WATER

The Tampa Bay Waterkeeper (TBW) Patrol Program is a volunteer-based, community-led pollution detection and reporting initiative designed to increase TBW's ability to monitor and improve water quality in the local watershed.

Volunteers help monitor area waters for issues such as algae blooms, illegal dumping, fish kills, and injured wildlife, which will help various environmental organizations aggregate data and identify areas of concern.

Tampa Bay Waterkeeper is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and a member of the Waterkeeper Alliance, a global network of over 350 grassroots leaders on six continents protecting the right to clean water. For information on the Patrol Program, becoming a member of TBW, or donating, visit TampaBayWaterkeeper.org.



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Bar & Restaurant News



NEW VENUE ON CLEARWATER BEACH When the Brown Boxer on North Clearwater Beach closed its doors last October, locals wondered what would replace the popular eatery and bar. The restaurant, nightclub, and arcade were closed for two months, and reopened on December 21st after a complete renovation. The new downstairs restaurant, Salt House, offers delectable plates, hand-crafted cocktails, and live music. They have over forty televisions throughout the establishment, great for the avid sports fan to watch their favorite games with friends and family. After sunset, patrons can head upstairs to the renovated nightclub, Salt Social, for dancing, bottle service, and music from the area's top DJs. If you are feeling competitive, Salt House Arcade offers classic and contemporary games and prizes. Visit their website SaltHouseSocial.com or follow them on Facebook for upcoming events and their new menu. Salt House is located at 483 Mandalay Avenue.

CRAFT BEER AT THE EXPANDED THAI BASIL

The Largo Thai restaurant recently expanded, doubling its size to add more tables, a bar, and five stainless steel beer fermenters. Owners Lay and Lilly currently have two house-brewed beers on the menu and will soon offer a selection of five. The craft brews complement the restaurants soups, entrees, curries, and noodle bowls.



Thai Basil is located at 1700 West Bay Drive. View the menu online at ThaiBasil-Largo.com or call (727) 518-7705 for hours and information.

WINE AND DINE AT BELLEAIR CAFÉ The Key West-themed café will host its second Wine Dinner on February 7th at 6:30pm. The pairing will highlight the Wagner Family wine portfolio and feature offerings from Belle Glos and Quilt.

The cost for the dinner is \$85 per person and seating will be limited to 35 diners. Owners Chris and Julie plan to host dinners at the Café every other month. The Belleair Café is located at 2601 Jewel Road in Belleair Bluffs, behind the Belleair Market.

TURKISH MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE Some diners check the wine list, specialty cocktail menu, or ask the waiter to recommend a pairing. Not at Turkish Mediterranean, they are BYOB (Bring Your Own Bottle). You may bring your own beer, wine, or pre-made cocktails to lunch or dinner without having to pay a corkage fee. The restaurant is located at 1921 West Bay Drive. Call (727) 270-7114 for more information or find them on Facebook and Instagram.

Bar & Restaurant News



ANNIVERSARY AT HURRICANE EDDIE'S IRB Hurricane Eddie's IRB rang in the New Year by celebrating two years on Indian Rocks Beach. Now with a full menu, it is a great place to watch a game or hang out with friends before or after enjoying a magnificent sunset. With open garage-style doors and a full patio, it is the perfect atmosphere to relax with your four-legged pals.

Owner Tom George has recently expanded his bar and restaurant portfolio to include a new Eddie's Bar & Grill and STIX Billiards Bay Pines at the former location of The Sports Bar & Grill at 9685 Bay Pines Boulevard. Find them on Facebook for more information.



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. For more information call (727) 281-2193.

NOW SERVING BREAKFAST Mio's, located in The Shoppes on Sand Key at 1261 Gulf Blvd., recently began breakfast service with a twist. The Mediterranean restaurant specializes in Turkish and Greek cuisines. They offer cheese plates with assorted vegetables and a Turkish Salami called Sujuk. It is a spicy, dry fermented sausage that is high in fat. Sujuk is similar to salami but usually made of beef or lamb, not pork. Sujuk is also used in egg scrambles and similar breakfast dishes. Mio's is open from 9am-9pm seven days a week with breakfast served daily from 9am-1pm. Visit Mio's Grill.com or call (727) 281-2193 for more information.

RESTAURANT NEWS WANTED If your restaurant has news or an upcoming event we can include in this News Magazine, please e-mail Lora@MagriffProductions.com or call (813) 361-7376.

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THINK YOU WANT A PUPPY?



Picking a puppy is a decision loaded with anticipation, joy, and the promise of years of companionship. The task, while delightful, also comes with critical implications for both the pet owner and the puppy. It should be approached with careful thought and consideration, not just to one's lifestyle, but also to the well-being of the future furry family member.

The selection of a puppy goes beyond preferences for a certain breed or coat color. It isn't just a matter of finding the cutest or most energetic pup; it's a commitment that spans the lifetime of the pet, deeply influencing both the animal's life and that of its human family. You need to consider a puppy's temperament, energy levels, and genetic health. These factors can significantly influence the long-term happiness and harmony within their homes.

From a practical standpoint, the process of picking a puppy must be approached with careful consideration of the breed's temperament, size, and energy levels, ensuring they align with your lifestyle and living situation. It's essential to account for the need for regular exercise, mental stimulation, and grooming. The cost of owning a dog, including food, health care, training, and pet insurance, must also be factored in your decision.

Firstly, select a breed that matches your lifestyle. High-energy breeds, for example, may not be the best fit if you live in a small apartment or have limited time for exercise and play. A more laid-back companion breed may suit you if you are searching for a calmer companion. Remember to consider not just your current lifestyle, but also any possible changes, such as moves or additions to the family.

Secondly, the importance of choosing a healthy puppy cannot be overstated. With the rise of puppy mills and irresponsible breeders, potential owners are encouraged to research and visit reputable breeders who prioritize the physical and emotional health of their animals. This includes proper veterinary care, vaccinations, and early socialization practices. Selecting a healthy puppy not only has a direct impact on the pet's quality of life but also on your emotional and financial well-being avoiding costly and heart-wrenching health issues in the future.

The choice of a puppy has ethical dimensions as well. Pet owners are increasingly encouraged to consider adopting from shelters to provide homes to animals in need rather than purchasing from breeders. This not only addresses the problem of overpopulation and euthanasia in shelters, but helps discourage the operation of puppy mills, where dogs are often bred in inhumane conditions and overbred causing chronic health problems.

The breed of the puppy may also be a factor. Certain breeds are stigmatized due to perceived aggressiveness, which can influence housing options and social encounters. It's crucial you understand these breed-specific challenges and be prepared to advocate for your pet, ensuring it is properly socialized and trained to be a well-adjusted member of society.

When picking a new puppy, the decision should be made with an informed and conscientious mind, recognizing it as a lifelong journey that will bring about personal growth, responsibility, and the joy that comes with canine companionship.

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RESOLVE TO LEAD THE WAY TO PERSONAL SAFETY

From the Desk of Sheriff Bob Gualtieri

If you've been on our website, read any of our brochures, or received any correspondence from the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) you know that our tagline is "Leading the Way for a Safer Pinellas." We may be at the forefront, but the citizens of Pinellas County are close by our side. As you make New Year's resolutions for your health, finances, and personal life, remember to resolve to take steps to reduce the chance of becoming a victim of crime.



We talk a lot about ways to keep yourself safe from scammers who want to part you from your hard-earned money, and to lock your car doors to prevent auto burglaries and thefts. But your personal safety is even more important than these property crimes. Statistically, Pinellas County is a very safe place and your odds of being personally attacked by a stranger are extremely low. But when you are taking a walk, shopping, or in any of the public places where you could be a victim of a personal attack, you need to reduce your odds of being seen as a target.

The first component of personal safety is awareness. Far too many people move through life with their eyes glued to their phone. Criminals planning to hurt or rob someone are searching for an easy target and will take advantage of your distraction. Beyond that, think about the impression you convey. Are you standing up straight, looking at passers-by, appearing purposeful and confident? If so, you're less likely to be targeted.

Another important part of maintaining your personal safety is to avoid putting yourself in risky situations in the first place. When you park your car, look for good lighting and security cameras, and don't park in an isolated area. Plan your ATM use for daylight hours. Walk with a friend. Of course, you can't always avoid riskier situations – sometimes you'll find yourself alone in a parking garage or walking after dark. But when you do find yourself in these potentially less-safe situations, you need to be cognizant of the risk and try to compensate with awareness and preparedness.

If anything doesn't feel right, don't be afraid to act. It is better to be wrong and safe. If someone approaches you and makes you feel uncomfortable, shout at them to go away. Don't be shy or worry about looking foolish – yell, scream, and draw attention to the situation. Criminals don't like attention and will usually retreat if they have an audience or think people will peek out of their windows to investigate. You can also call 911 if a person or situation makes you feel unsafe.

I'm often asked about what to carry for protection. Your choice to carry a weapon or deterrent is a personal one. Pepper spray could be a good option. Some people carry a walking stick or even a golf club if they walk after dark to look like less of a target. Florida's new permitless carry law means that most people can carry a concealed weapon, but I highly recommend that you learn to be proficient with anything you are carrying. The Pinellas County Sheriff's Office offers a free carry concealed weapons (CCW) competency class – visit our website to find out more.

Our members dedicate themselves to keeping you as safe as possible, but you must do your part too. The resolutions you make now can keep you safer throughout the year.

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CUISINE AWARDS EXPLAINED



By Becky Griffin, Local Author

This time of year, everyone is publishing last year's top 10 lists – especially restaurants. Whether it's with eagerly awaited Michelin Stars, the coveted James Beard Awards, Bon Appétit's anticipated Best New Restaurants list, or well-known Zagat ratings, chefs and restaurateurs hope to see their names on these lists. But for those of us not part of the industry, how are these awards determined? What is a Michelin and who is James Beard?

Michelin Star

A Michelin Star is awarded by the Michelin Guide to restaurants based on the food on the plate, not the decorations or style of the restaurant. And contrary to the rumor, there doesn't need to be a fancy washroom. This organization does not care if a restaurant is formal or casual; it is all about outstanding cooking.

Michelin Guide Inspectors are former hospitality professionals. They are full-time employees, traveling the world to visit restaurants, anonymously. Each inspector eats approximately 250 restaurant meals a year. They act like any other customer so that the Guide's readers will have the same experience. They book reservations under an assumed name, order and eat in the restaurant, and pay the bill just like you and I.

Inspectors rank the restaurant based on: the quality of the ingredients, the harmony of flavors, the mastery of techniques, the personality of the chef as expressed in the food and, consistency across the menu and over time.

Once several inspectors have eaten at a restaurant, they meet to compare their experiences. The Stars are awarded unanimously. If anyone disagrees, further visits are scheduled.

The highest award is three Michelin Stars given to chefs at the peak of their career. In 2023, thirteen Chefs in the United States were awarded three stars.

Florida has nineteen Michelin Star restaurants; three are in Tampa. All three received their star for the first time this year.

James Beard Awards

The James Beard Foundation recognizes U.S. chefs, restaurateurs, authors, and journalists through its prestigious James Beard Awards, long considered the Oscars of the culinary world.

Known as the "Dean of American Cookery," James Beard, an influential figure in the shaping of American cuisine and food culture, was born in 1903 in Portland, Oregon. He later moved to New York, where he championed the art of American cooking. He was a close friend of Julia Childs.

An author, teacher, and television personality, Beard shared his knowledge and passion through numerous cookbooks. His use of seasonal

produce and locally sourced ingredients played a pivotal role in the development of today's farm-to-table dining experiences.

The James Beard Foundation, founded after his death in 1985, perpetuates Beard's legacy. The foundation offers scholarships, education, and awards to encourage chefs, writers, and food enthusiasts to pursue their passions in the culinary arts.

The Award process starts with an open call for recommendations. Each Fall, the public nominates their favorite chefs and restaurants online. Local experts, including appointed judges, make recommendations, too. Then, the Committee meets to review and confirm the eligibility of the entries and recommendations. Twenty semifinalists for each category—which range from Outstanding Restaurateur to Best Chef – are determined in twelve regions across the country. The voting body, including judges chosen for their expertise, review and vote on the entries to determine the winners.

Zagat Ratings

Zagat is a public survey allowing anyone to rate a restaurant. The rating scores from the general public are used to produce ratings on a 30-point scale. Extraordinary restaurants rate from 26-30.

It began when New York residents Tim and Nina Zagat suggested their friends list their favorite restaurants. The circle of friends quickly expanded to 200 people. The couple published their survey and distributed it all over the city. Today, operating in multiple countries, it is the most well-known brand of public ratings.



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By Becky Griffin, Local Author

The Super Bowl has risen above a mere championship game of the National Football League (NFL); it has become an unofficial American holiday, a cultural phenomenon. People continue to watch, even if their teams are no longer playing.

The NFL was founded in 1920, but the first Super Bowl wasn't until 1967. When the commissioner of the rival American Football League (AFL) sent the NFL an invitation to a "World Playoff" game. It was six years before the match finally occurred, and during negotiations, the name of the game was changed several times. On January 15th, 1967, in front of 61,946 spectators, the NFL Green Bay Packers beat the AFL Kansas City Chiefs 35-10 at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum in the first Super Bowl.

Initially intended to determine the NFL champion, the Super Bowl has seen its significance increase each year. Today, it is an entertainment spectacle featuring A-list halftime performers and an advertising battleground, where companies spare no expense to secure a spot for their most creative commercials. Such changes have not just expanded the viewership but have also made it a global event.

Over time, the game has added many advanced technologies aimed at enhancing the viewer's experience. High-definition, ultra-slow-motion cameras provided viewers with exceptional details, allowing them to dissect plays with the same precision as coaches and players on the field. Instant analytics and in-game statistics are streamed continuously allowing viewers to have immediate and in-depth information.

Where once the game was the main draw, now for casual fans the accompanying entertainment and spectacle overshadows the sports

aspect. This shift has led to increased revenues for the league and all the teams, through broadcasting rights and merchandise sales.

But it is a championship game, so who won the most?

The Pittsburgh Steelers and New England Patriots are tied for the most wins—with six each. The Dallas Cowboys and the San Francisco 49ers have each won five Super Bowls, while the New York Giants and Green Bay Packers have won the Lombardi Trophy (the trophy winners receive) four times.

Tom Brady has won seven Super Bowl rings, six with the Patriots and one with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Terry Bradshaw and Joe Montana are tied for second place with four each. Troy Aikman holds third place with three Super Bowl victories, and nine quarterbacks share fifth place with two wins each.

New England has had the most overall appearances, making it to the big game eleven times. Dallas, Pittsburgh, and Denver have played in eight super bowls. The Buffalo Bills have the most consecutive appearances with four in a row, but they lost each time. The record for consecutive wins is only two games—which is shared by seven teams.

The Miami Dolphins have the only perfect season, winning seventeen games including the Super Bowl in 1972. In contrast, twelve teams have never won the Super Bowl, and four NFL teams - Cleveland, Detroit, Jacksonville, and Houston - have never even played in a Super Bowl.

The Super Bowl serves as an example of how live events have managed to retain or even enlarge viewership even with the rise of digital media. It demonstrates the ability of a sporting event to command live audiences when most television is

watched on-demand, reinforcing the value of live sports broadcasting rights.

The first Super Bowl was simultaneously aired on CBS and NBC. Beginning this year, the broadcast will rotate between CBS, NBC, ABC, and Fox, with the airing network being allowed to simulcast on its sister channels and platforms. The 2024 broadcast will be on CBS, whose affiliate Nickelodeon will air an alternate, child-oriented telecast of the game. The broadcast attracts viewers around the world and will be available in other countries.

Cord-cutters will not be left out this year; Paramount+, Sling TV, Hulu+ and FuboTV will offer subscribers the option to stream the game.

Each game has always been defined by a Roman Numeral. The NFL made that decision to prevent confusion. The game is always played in the year following the season, so it cannot use the year in the title. Numerals I through IV were added later for the first four Super Bowls titles. The only game not to use a Roman Numeral was Super Bowl 50, which would have just been L.

The games rotate from city to city and are assigned by the NFL. Super Bowl LVIII will be played at Allegiant Stadium in Paradise, Nevada. This will be the first time the game has been played in Nevada. Next year, it will be back in New Orleans for the eleventh time. Florida has hosted the Super Bowl seventeen times, more than any other state, with eleven in the Miami area, five in Tampa, and one in Jacksonville. California holds second place with thirteen.

Watching the Super Bowl is only half the fun. It isn't just about the game any longer, the modern Super Bowl party is a social ritual, which attracts even those with no interest in football. People plan their epic game day menu and decorations, right down to the football shaped foods. For those that don't want to entertain at home, local sports bars will be crowded with people enjoying the fun and the game.

To many, the half time show is the highlight. Last year, Rihanna drew millions of viewers while announcing her second pregnancy. This year, Usher will perform. He plans to have special guests on stage with him, but those names have not been announced. Usher has won eight Grammys, his first in 2001. His ninth album, "Coming Home," will be released just before the Super Bowl. The halftime show will start around 8 pm and last 20 to 30 minutes. Super Bowl LVIII is Sunday, February 11th at 6:30 pm. As of our press time, we don't yet know who will be playing.

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RETURN 'EM RIGHT

Many anglers fish solely for sport and return their prizes back into the water. Most do not realize that even “catch and release” can have a damaging effect on the fish. Barotrauma occurs when fish caught at a depth greater than fifty feet are brought to the surface leading to an expansion of gases in the swim bladder. This can cause damage to internal organs and can be fatal without appropriate mitigation efforts. There are two types of tools available to help return fish to the bottom safely and increase their chance for survival. Last February, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission approved a rule requiring the use of these tools and that they be rigged and ready on any vessel fishing in state waters.

Venting tools are sharpened, hollow instruments that treat barotrauma by releasing expanded gas from the swim bladder, enabling the fish to swim back down. Fillet knives, gaffs, and ice picks are not suitable venting tools and should never be used. Venting tools are inserted 1-2 inches behind the pectoral fin at 45-degree angle allowing trapped gases to escape.

Descending devices are used to safely return fish to depth, where the increased pressure will recompress the gas accumulated in the swim bladder. There are three categories of descending devices: mouth clamps, inverted hooks, and fish elevators.

Descending devices and venting tools should only be used when fish show one or more signs of barotrauma, such as bloated belly, bulging eyes, or distended intestines. Once familiar with the use of these tools, anglers can easily ensure the proper release of fish caught at depth. For more information, visit ReturnEmRight.org or MyFWC.com.

BELLEAIR REC UPCOMING EVENTS

- February 3rd – Community Garage Sale from 8am-1pm: Contact Tucker at TJones@TownofBellair.net to register.
- February 7th – Flag Football League Evaluations: Times vary based on age group.
- February 9th - Family Outdoor Movie Night – Bring the kids to see Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory. Gates open at 5:30pm, movie starts at 6pm. \$5 ticket includes popcorn. Bring your own chair or blanket. Concessions will be available for purchase.
- February 10th – Facility closed.
- February 13th – Basketball Development Program First Session: Times vary based on age group.
- February 16th and 19th - Presidents’ Day Camp: Grades K-7, 8am-4:30pm. Members: \$30, non-members \$35 (per day).
- February 29th – Evening Programs Cancelled: Facility will close at 5pm in preparation for the annual Sunset 5K and Run.
- March 2nd – Sunset 5K and Fun Run: Race begins at 5:30pm. Pick up your packet March 1st from 9am-7pm or March 2nd from 3:30-5pm.
- March 9th – Facility closed.
- March 11th-15th – Spring Break Camp: Grades K-7, 8am-4:30pm. Members: \$30, non-members \$35 (per day).
- March 11th-15th – Sports League Bye Week: No practices or games.
- March 29th – Day Camp: Grades K-7, 8am-4:30pm. Members: \$30, non-members \$35 (per day).
- March 30th – Springfest and Arbor Day Celebration: 10am-12pm at the Dimmitt Community Center Fields.

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2024 GASPARILLA DISTANCE CLASSIC

The 46th Annual Publix Gasparilla Distance Classic is scheduled for February 24-25. Races include a 5K, 8K, 15K, and half marathon. The 5K and 15K will be held on Saturday and the 8K and half marathon on Sunday. The Classic also features challenge events, such as the Michelob Ultra Challenge, which consists of running all four races for a total of 30.4 miles over two days. Over 30,000 runners participate each year, as well as wheelchair athletes and walkers.



The Classic has been drawing runners from all over the world since February 1978 when the Gasparilla Distance Classic Association was established. The 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization is dedicated to raising funds for non-profit charitable youth organizations and running programs in the Tampa Bay area. Since its inception, \$6 million has been donated to local youth charities including the Boys & Girls Clubs of Tampa Bay, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay, The Friends of Tampa Recreation, and others.

The event has occurred every year since 1978 except 2021 during the pandemic. Though the races were not official, the route was closed and registered participants were allowed to run, but without hydration stations or official timekeepers. Runners kept their own time and uploaded it to the event website. Virtual participation was also allowed, registrants could run wherever they pleased.

The classic included a full marathon from the first event in 1978 until 2010. That year, Lieutenant Colonel Sam Arwood registered for the race, but was deployed overseas one month prior. He participated remotely by running 26.2 miles on a treadmill in Afghanistan.

NEW CHIEF OF STAFF FOR AMPLIFY CLEARWATER



AMPLIFY Clearwater, the business advocacy organization which serves as a chamber of commerce in Pinellas County has hired Joe Lugo to serve in its recently established role of Chief of Staff. In this role, Joe will be responsible for leading economic development strategies and initiatives, including AMPLIFY's newly launched Tourism Innovation Business Incubator.

Joe Lugo is the founder of J^3 Creations, which helps develop organizations that realize the value in diversity and inclusion and the leadership mindset, and a published author. He co-founded and helped launch the first ever Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in Pinellas County and serves in various leadership and consulting roles with Mi Gente Mi Pueblo, The Diversity Council, and the Hispanic Leadership Council. Joe also currently serves on the board of the Foundation for a Healthy St. Pete.

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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.





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New Single Family Waterfront Homes in Indian Rocks Beach? Really??

New single family homes are now being designed, and with construction beginning this spring, there will be 2 new single family waterfront homes in Indian Rocks Beach on beautiful Harbor Dr. With 6 bedrooms, 4 ½ baths and 4 car garages, these new 2024 designed homes remarkably will cost less per square foot than the existing 60-70 year old housing stock on the water. The recent past sales here for homes 60-70 years old, closed at \$1,014/sf, yet a new elevated home above FEMA standards, constructed above the 150mph hurricane standards, will be selling for only **\$972/sf.**

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A WHITE WINTER IN THE WETLANDS

By Lora Magnani, Publisher

Wrestling alligators is often associated with Florida. But, have you ever seen a white alligator? Probably not, because there are only seven in the world.



Gatorland Orlando welcomed the eighth white leucism alligator on December 7th, the first ever to be born in captivity. The 19.2-inch, 3.4-ounce, all-white female "grunt" cracked out of her shell and entered the world back in August. She was born along with a twin brother; however, he did not inherit the same coloring. Both babies were given a clean bill of health by Gatorland's veterinarians.

"This is beyond rare," says Mark McHugh, President and CEO of Gatorland "It is absolutely extraordinary."

Leucistic alligators are similar to their Albino counterparts, but there is a distinction. Leucism is a condition that involves a partial loss of pigmentation, whereas Albinism is a complete lack of melanin, which is the pigment that gives feathers, skin, hair, and eyes their color. Albinos have eyes that are pink or pale in color and leucistics have crystal blue ones. Leucistic alligators usually have the same coloration as normal American Alligators but have white or lighter color patches on their bodies and in some cases, are white with dark patches. These alligators cannot sunbathe like dark green, camouflaged American Alligators because they are prone to sunburn. They are believed to be the rarest of American Alligators in the world.

The little fair-skinned lady descends from a nest that was discovered in the swamplands of Louisiana over 36 years ago. Her father, Jeyan, was one of seventeen alligators from that nest of leucistic gators in Louisiana. Her mother, Ashley, is of normal, dark green coloring but carries the leucistic gene.

The park plans to begin displaying the new babies in early 2024. "These are incredibly special animals in the reptile world," states McHugh. "We are being very careful with their safety and security."

Gatorland Orlando sits on 110 acres and has one of the largest collections of rare leucistic white alligators. It is also home to over 2,000 American Alligators. This is where some of the new hatchlings' kin reside. Brothers Feros and Trezo call the White Gator Swamp exhibit home.

There is more to the park than these magnificent reptiles. It also features a petting zoo, zip-line, aviary, animal shows, and off-road adventures. If alligators are not your preference, the park also has crocodiles, birds, snakes, tortoises, capybaras, wild cats, and other critters.

The twins have not yet been named, and Gatorland has asked their Gator-fans to help out with this. Some of the suggested entries for the white female are Marshmallow, Snow, Pearl, Ice, and Ivory. A few combination names for the pair have been suggested, including Elsa & Olaf and Grits & Gumbo. Visit Gatorland's Facebook page to see what names are chosen.

Gatorland Orlando is located at 14501 S. Orange Blossom Trail Orlando, FL 32837. Call (407) 855-5496 or visit their website at Gatorland.com for tickets and information.

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CG AUXILIARY CLEARWATER FLOTILLA 2024 SCHEDULE



The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Clearwater Flotilla is pleased to unveil its comprehensive schedule for Vessel Safety Checks (and Boat America classes for 2024. Dedicated to promoting boating safety and education within the community, the Clearwater Flotilla continues its commitment to ensuring that local boaters are equipped with the knowledge and resources necessary for a safe and enjoyable time on the water.

Vessel Safety Checks (VSC): VSCs are a crucial component of the Clearwater Flotilla's mission to enhance boating safety. Trained and certified examiners will be available throughout the year to conduct complimentary VSCs for local boaters. These checks cover a variety of safety aspects, including life jackets, navigation lights, fire extinguishers, and other essential equipment. By participating in a VSC, boaters can ensure that their vessels meet all required safety standards, fostering a safer maritime environment for all.

Boat America Classes: The Clearwater Flotilla is also pleased to announce the schedule for Boat America classes in 2024. These classes provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of boating safety, navigation rules, and emergency procedures. Whether you're a seasoned boater or a newcomer to maritime activities, these classes offer valuable insights and practical knowledge that can contribute to a safer and more enjoyable boating experience. Participation in Boat America Classes is open to boaters of all experience levels, and successful completion may result in valuable discounts on boat insurance.

Schedule Highlights:

Vessel Safety Checks: Second Saturday of each month at the Seminole Boat Ramp.

Boat America Classes are \$50 per person, include all books and materials, and are conducted over Zoom from 9am- 2pm.

February 24 and 25	July 27 and 28
March 16 and 17	August 24 and 25
April 27 and 28	September 28 and 29
May 18 and 19	October 26 and 27
June 29 and 30	November 28 and 29

To participate in Vessel Safety Checks or enroll in Boat America classes, interested individuals can visit USCGAuxClearwater.com or call (727) 469-8895 for more information and to register for upcoming events. Spaces for both VSCs and classes are limited, so early registration is encouraged.

The Clearwater Flotilla looks forward to welcoming boaters from the community to these events and remains committed to promoting boating safety through education and outreach. By working together, we can ensure that our local waterways are safe and enjoyable for all.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed volunteer component of the United States Coast Guard. The Clearwater Flotilla is dedicated to promoting boating safety and providing assistance to the Coast Guard in its mission to ensure the safety and security of our nation's waterways.

2024 NEW YEAR RESOLUTION: GET YOUR LAST WILL OR TRUST DONE, REVIEW & UPDATE YOUR ESTATE PLANNING DOCUMENTS

By Theodore Schofner, Esq.

You might have heard some neighbors or friends talk about the necessity of having "Advanced Directives" prepared as part of their Estate Planning. People often believe that having a Last Will and Testament drawn up by an Attorney will cover decision-making for them when they are incapacitated or are unable to speak for themselves when experiencing an illness or emergency. The reality is that a Last Will and Testament ONLY takes effect after death.

It is the period before death following a bad illness, accident, or infirmity when many bad things can happen and bills, taxes, and health care decisions need to be made. Advanced Directives are Guardianship avoidance tools. The law doesn't allow a spouse or relative to make important financial and health care decisions when a spouse or loved one is unable to make decisions for themselves. In certain instances, when someone becomes incapacitated due to an illness, injury or infirmity, the individual's rights are removed by the Probate Court and a Guardian is appointed. The individual's rights are removed and legally transferred to the Guardian. In a Plenary Guardianship, the appointed Guardian takes charge of all the incapacitated ward's property, finances and health care decision making.

Why would anyone ever want a Guardian for themselves or a loved one? Florida is a "least restrictive alternative" state and when an individual has named person(s) to represent them financially and for health care decisions, the law requires those individuals to be able to speak for the person

who named them in special documents named "Advanced Directives." Advance Directives" are documents that are prepared in advance granting individuals the right to act for the named person when they are no longer able to act for themselves due to illness, injury, or infirmity. The most common Advanced Directives are the Living Will, Pre-Need Guardian Designation, Health Care Surrogate, and Durable (Financial) Power of Attorney.

The preparation of Advanced Directives should always be a part of your Estate Planning and careful thought should be given to who is named in these documents. In brief, a Living Will allows you to not be kept alive by artificial means and to die with dignity. A Health Care Surrogate allows you to name someone to make healthcare decisions for you when you are unable to give informed consent for a medical procedure or facility placement. The Durable Power of Attorney gives strong authorization for the named "Attorney In Fact" to access all financial accounts, sell real property and manage financial affairs. Without these documents, the need for an expensive and cumbersome guardianship could arise.

Having prepared and executed a Florida Last Will and Testament is important to ensure that your estate is settled fairly and that your beneficiaries receive your bounty in an organized and court-supervised fashion. A proper and well thought out Estate Plan consists of both a Last Will and Testament and Advanced Directives.

You can reach Theodore Schofner, Esq. at the Schofner Law Firm, 2117 Indian Rocks Road S. in Largo, 727-588-0290.

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Community News

CLEARWATER YACHT CLUB

Submitted by Holly Fulmer

Ready to jump start your social life? Become a member of Clearwater Yacht Club! Enjoy extensive menu offerings, prepared by our brand-new award-winning and talented chef, David Sanchez, Craft cocktails and drinks in one of our three bars, Poolside Tiki, our newly renovated dry dock bar, and upstairs lounge. A variety of weekly and monthly entertainment and social events with no monthly minimums. It's a perfect opportunity to make new friends! No boat required, your love of the water, great food, and camaraderie is all you need. Call or stop in for a tour today and see what you've been missing, you'll wish you joined a long time ago.

TFO NORTH SUNCOAST ASSOCIATES

The Florida Orchestra's internationally acclaimed Music Director, Michael Francis, will be the featured guest at the 30th Annual Bravura Brunch, presented by The Florida Orchestra North Suncoast Associates (TFONSA). The event will be held Saturday March 2nd at 11am in Edinburgh Hall at the Innisbrook Golf and Spa Resort. The Brunch benefits The Florida Orchestra's music and education and community programs across Tampa Bay.

Maestro Francis, now in his ninth year with The Florida Orchestra (TFO), is recognized for sharing the power of music through his conducting and giving engaging talks about the hidden truths in music, as well as his extensive educational work with young musicians. In addition to his role with TFO, he is Chief Conductor of the Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz and a popular guest conductor for major orchestras in the U.S., Europe, and Asia. Formerly the principal double-bass player with the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO), he came to prominence as a conductor in January 2007, when he stepped in for Velery Gergiev and John Adams with the LSO.

The Bravura Brunch offers a gourmet brunch, silent and live auctions, great music and fun surprises. Co-Chairs of the event are Dr. Patricia Donohue of Palm Harbor and Lynda Olander of Safety Harbor, also president of TFONSA. For information about tickets or sponsorships, visit TFONSAfonsa.org or contact Patricia Donohue at DrPat0111@Gmail.com or (727) 517-6663. Tickets start at \$95.00.

CALVARY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Calvary Episcopal Concert Series continues in 2024 with the following performances:

- American Guild of Organists Lenten Concert February 27th at noon
- Bell Workshop and Concert March 5th at 2pm

Concerts are free and parking is limited. For more information, visit CalvaryIRB.org/Concerts.

FLORIDA STATE FISH ART CONTEST | FEB. 28

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, in partnership with Wildlife Forever, is excited to announce that the 25th Anniversary Fish Art Contest is now open. Students in kindergarten through 12th grade can compete in this free contest to win state and national honors and prizes. It is open until February 28, 2024. For more information, visit MyFWC.com/news/all-news/fish-art-923.

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Dr. Nayyar is an expert in hair restoration and has performed over 10,000 dermatologic surgery procedures including hair restoration and Mohs micrographic surgery. She has trained with hair experts from all over the world and is an active member of the International Society for Hair Restorative Surgery (ISHRS). Her unique surgical training and dermatologic expertise creates optimal cosmetic outcomes for her patients.



Randy Tang, M.D.

Board Certified Dermatologist

Dr. Randy Tang is an established and highly skilled board-certified dermatologist with over 12 years of clinical experience. He is well regarded in the Clearwater/St. Petersburg/Tampa communities for his quality care and patient focused outcomes. His passions in dermatology include skin cancer treatment, complex medical dermatology, and cosmetic dermatology. He enjoys seeing both pediatric and adult patients.

In his spare time, you can find Dr. Tang enjoying time with his family, especially chasing after his twin toddler boys, and spoiling his miniature Dapple Dachshund. His passions include travel, playing the piano, learning languages, and gardening. He is excited to serve the St. Petersburg and Clearwater communities.

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NEW CEO AT CREATIVE PINELLAS

Creative Pinellas, the county’s non-profit Local Arts Agency, has selected Margaret Murray to be its next Chief Executive Officer. The decision was made following a national public search launched by Creative Pinellas in partnership with Arts Consulting Group (ACG) in the summer of 2023.

Murray is well-known for her strong advocacy of the arts in Pinellas County and beyond, with a professional history of providing visionary arts leadership for organizations such as the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), freeFall Theatre and the Tampa International Gay & Lesbian Film Festival. As the director of public programs and community engagement at the MFA from 2015-2023, she developed ground-breaking initiatives including the “Museums for Immunity” collaboration and the “For Justice and Peace” residency program with the Sphinx Virtuosi Orchestra. Most recently, she has been working with Creative Pinellas in steering CURRENT, the Arts Coast Cultural Plan, which is the first comprehensive study of the Pinellas County cultural landscape in 18 years.



Margaret Murray

One of Murray’s first initiatives as CEO is to continue that work by convening a series of community conversations throughout the county for artists, educators, and arts organizations; ensuring that the focus of the cultural plan reflects the aspirations of the region’s cultural community. A key initiative funded by Visit St. Pete/Clearwater; the cultural plan will provide the data needed to strategically plan for continued growth of the arts.

“I am beyond thrilled to continue the work that the Creative Pinellas team has done to elevate the artistic and cultural communities of Pinellas County,” said Murray. “My work has always been centered firmly in the belief that arts experiences – from murals to operas and beyond – should be easily and freely accessible to all.”

Barbara St. Clair, who retired as CEO on December 20, was instrumental in making Creative Pinellas what it is today. Hired to lead the agency in 2016, she turned what had originally been a small initiative to promote the arts into a \$1.8M non-profit Local Arts Agency with a thriving gallery and tourist information hub in Largo’s Pinewood Park – also the home of Heritage Village and the Florida Botanical Gardens. “I have been honored to be the leader of Creative Pinellas for the last eight years,” said St. Clair. “Taking the organization from where it was to the high impact, change-making organization it is now was an amazing journey. I am thrilled that Margaret Murray, who comes with such great skills and history, is stepping into the leadership role.”

During the transition, Kimberly DiVito, currently the Director of Tourism Product Development and Strategy at Creative Pinellas, has taken on the role of Interim CEO and has been a driving force behind building the “Arts Coast” brand. Murray will begin her role as CEO on January 22, 2024.

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WATER RESTRICTIONS - AGAIN!

By Randy Lee

With the past year’s lack of rain, we find ourselves back under water restrictions. We have to figure out how best to deal with them. The good news is we are having a very wet winter thanks to El Nino. We are going to discuss drought tolerant landscapes, Florida friendly landscaping and low maintenance landscaping.

Drought tolerant landscapes describe landscaping that can tolerate smaller amounts of rain and irrigation – but still must be watered. Less lawn areas are a key here. Make planting beds larger or install walkways or a patio. Maybe a pergola – there are many great ways to use hardscaping and have less grass to maintain and water. Irrigation systems can be fine-tuned. Drip irrigation and misters can be used as well as low output sprinkler heads. Turn off your irrigation system when not needed. The use of rocks, mulch and artificial turf is also a great way to conserve water. Artificial turf is very popular, looks great, and is pet friendly.

Florida friendly landscaping uses several sound principles for balance and sustainability. Utilizing the right plants in the right place is essential. Consider shade versus sun and wet versus dry locations. Does the garden attract wildlife, and does it benefit the environment? Efficient use of water, fertilizer, and mulch is key. A three-inch layer of mulch helps keep the ground moist. Recycling yard waste and not bagging yard clippings is also beneficial. Protecting the waterfront and reducing stormwater runoff is also very important to the overall ecology of our state.

Low maintenance landscapes mean just that. You don’t have to spend countless hours doing yardwork. Maintenance is seasonal. We have wet and dry seasons and hot and cold months. Fertilize and water efficiently and choose plants that are easy to maintain with little care.



Some great plants that we use in our landscapes include crown of thorn, lantana, sea grape, juniper, liriope and carissa. Other great choices include palmetto, firebush, Texas sage, ornamental grasses and many varieties of succulents like agave. There are lots of choices based on personal preference. Many herbs and flowers are also drought tolerant like geraniums, periwinkle and rosemary.

Here are several ideas to practice or think about in the next several months during water restrictions. Hopefully, we will have plenty of rain this year as water is one of Florida’s precious resources.

- Check & spray grass for fungus
- Ease off on grass cutting and trimming of plants
- Check irrigation system and turn off if not needed
- Plan the perfect landscape design for spring – now!
- Winter flowers are in full bloom now and need fertilizing

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Community News

GREENTOWN KIDS

Submitted by Allie DeVore

Happy New Year! GreenTown Kids (GTK) goes into its seventh year of serving local schools as a 501(c)(3) environmental nonprofit dedicated to creating a green town. This past year, GTK hosted four quarterly beach cleanups for the community of Indian Rocks Beach where over 250 volunteers helped pick up over 230 pounds of trash off the beach. GTK also runs the IRB Community Garden where community gardeners and members of GreenTown Kids plant and harvest fruits, herbs, and vegetables all year long. Along with the community garden, GTK also worked with the first grade classes at Anona Elementary School to plant garden boxes with strawberries and beans, and several kindergarten and third grade classes to plant sunflowers to take home.



Join us for the Clean Beach, Clean Slate Beach Cleanup on Sunday, January 21st from noon-2pm at the 17th Ave Access.

GreenTown Kids is a 501(c)(3) public nonprofit. The support of volunteers, members and donors furthers our mission. Your donations may be tax deductible. To become a member or donate, visit GreentownKids.org or Zelle us at GreentownKids@gmail.com.

WOMEN WITH PURPOSE

Women With Purpose is a 501c3 with a mission to provide non-medical financial assistance to families with a member battling cancer. They will present "Catwalk with a Purpose" on Saturday, February 24th at 11am at Ruth Eckerd Hall.

This fundraising fashion show will feature couture from two boutiques, modeled by the founders of non-profits supported by Women with purpose as well as cancer survivors. The event will include lunch, refreshments, and opportunity baskets. Tickets are available with a suggested donation of \$60. Email Fashion-Show2024@gmail.com for more information and tickets.

ROTARY CLUB OF INDIAN ROCKS BEACH

The 5th Annual "Rotary Runs the Beach" will take place on scenic Indian Rocks Beach on Saturday, March 9th at 8am. The event includes a timed 5K run and one-mile Family Fun Run.

Meet at the Indian Rocks Beach Access Park located at 1700 Gulf Blvd on Indian Rocks Beach. Parking is available for nominal fee on site or park on city streets for free. The race is chipped, and the course is "out and back."

Are you a run club member? If not, you may join the Running Club when you run the 5K. Individual winners receive medals, but teams are welcome. The Individual Running Contest is open to all runners. Medals will be awarded to winners by age groups in 10-year breakouts.

The Rotary would like to give special thanks to their main sponsor – The Original Crabby Bill's. Email RotaryRuntheBeach@gmail.com with any questions, or for more information.

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Chris Arbutine
Ceo-Owner

Community News

BEACH ART CENTER

Submitted by Patricia Thomas, Volunteer

Save the Date – Saturday, March 2nd - Join us for “A Night on the Rocks!”

“A Night on the Rocks” will be a community art fundraising event that you won’t want to miss. Indulge yourself with delicious food from local restaurants, wine, and spirits.

Enjoy art and artists from around Tampa Bay, live music, and mingling with neighbors while you bid during our live and silent art auction.

Not only is this an opportunity for gaiety, it is a chance to demonstrate your support and commitment to our local community art center.

Tickets are \$50 through Feb 14th and \$75 after Feb 14th. They are available online or at the Beach Art Center. Information on tickets and sponsorship opportunities is available on our website, BeachArtCenter.org/Gala.

The Beach Art Center is a 501c3 not for profit. While this event will be a ton of fun, the reality is that fundraisers like this are also a critical part of our annual budget and without the generous support of our local businesses and community, we wouldn’t be able to continue our mission here in Indian Rocks Beach. We are extremely grateful to all who support our work at the Beach Art Center. If you have any questions, you can reach us by phone or email at Info@BeachArtCenter.org.

AMERICAN STAGE SUMMER CAMP

This year, each Summer Camp offering is categorized under a larger, weekly theme: Musical Theatre, Dance/Movement, Stagecraft, Disney, Epic Adventures, Magic, Wizards, and Witches, and lastly, Mystery Week. Camp this year will include one, two, and three-week sessions.

For Teens: “Behind the Scenes,” an immersive, three-week camp that will give campers a crash course in building “Beauty and the Beast Jr.” from the ground up. The camp includes hands-on instruction in set design and costuming with industry professionals.

Stagecraft Week will introduce three new camps for littles through teens. In “Storybooks Come to Life!” 5–7-year-olds will work as a team to create and perform a unique and imaginative story based on a popular children’s book. The session will culminate in a mini production designed by Youth and Teen campers in the “Gadgets, Gizmos, & Whosits” and “Page to Stage” camps.

Teens and tweens interested in bringing their stories to the screen can enroll in “Acting for the Camera,” a two-week intensive where campers will be immersed in the world of creating mock commercials, screenwriting for TV & Film, and creating short films that will be presented at a viewing for parents and friends.

Summer Camp begins June 3rd and ends August 2nd. Registration is now open, and financial aid is available. Visit AmericanStage.org/summer-camp for more information.

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The Evolution of Big Man's Moving Company

Josh and Brooke Anderson, owners of Big Man's Moving Company

We used a well-known moving company for a local move. Upon investigation of our furniture, we found nicks and scratches all over our belongings. How could such an expensive service come with so much negligence? We realized a careful and diligent boutique moving company would be a huge opportunity in the marketplace... hence, the vision for Big Man's Moving Company was born!

From Humble Beginnings

In late 2016, we got married and collectively decided to pursue our dream of owning a family business, and used our wedding gifts to partially fund our first 26' truck.

Brooke had nicknamed Josh "Big Man" way before they started the moving company. At 6'8, his tall stature was the inspiration behind the name. When deciding on a name for the business, it seemed to be an obvious choice – and now Brooke refers to her husband as the company "mascot".

To Award-Winning Services

Our professional team has successfully completed over 10,000 local, state-wide, and out-of-state moves. The company has evolved from 1 truck and working out of our home to 8 trucks, 30 employees, and an office just off of US-19. Despite the growth, our biggest accomplishment is being voted the #1 Moving Company in Tampa Bay by readers of the Tampa Bay Times for 3 consecutive years and by Creative Loafing in 2023.

For more information about their full services, guarantees, insurance, and free estimates, visit www.bigmansmoving.com or call (727) 772-3458. Licenses: IM2726, DOT2951960

PARENTING PLANS & CHILD CUSTODY

By Jake Hornstein, Our Children Have Rights .Org (OCHR)

What is a Parenting Plan?

A parenting plan is a document developed and agreed to by the parents of a minor child and approved by the court. Or, if the parents cannot agree on a plan, it will be established by the court. A parenting plan governs the relationship between co-parents and their child(ren). It addresses issues such as the child's education, health care decisions, emotional well-being, and must include a time-sharing schedule.



Notable Terms & Definitions

Time-sharing schedule means a timetable that must be included in the parenting plan that specifies the time, including overnights and holidays, that a child will spend with each parent. If developed and agreed to by the co-parents, it must be approved by the court.

Shared parental responsibility means a court-ordered relationship in which both parents retain full parental rights and responsibilities with respect to their child and in which both parents confer with each other so that major decisions affecting the welfare of the child will be determined jointly.

Sole parental responsibility means a court-ordered relationship in which one parent makes decisions regarding the minor child.

To help you and your co-parent get started with writing your parenting plan, consider these important topics:

Parenting Schedule, Holidays, Special Occasions, School Holidays, Sick Days, Vacation, Travel, Discipline, Health Care, Education, Financial Responsibilities and Parent Communication.

Does your draft Parenting Plan need a review?

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How it Works

We review with an unbiased point of view. Submit your draft Parenting Plan and we'll give you our honest feedback via email, video conference or phone call (your choice). If starting from scratch, we can help with that too.

OCHR is a Pinellas based nonprofit that helps parents more seamlessly navigate their child custody and co-parenting journeys, at no cost to the family. And was recently recognized with the AMPLIFY Clearwater "Community Spirit Award".

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 both responsible parents by providing education, resources, and support services for successful co-parenting. Why? Because Our Children Have Rights.

Contact Jake: JakeHornstein@OurChildrenHaveRights.com or visit www.OCHR.org. To donate, visit www.ourchildrenhaverights.org/donate.

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Community News

BELLEAIR WOMEN'S REPUBLICAN CLUB

Submitted by Sandra Sockwell

Belleair Women's Republican Club (BWRC) will meet on March 1, 2024, at Belleair Country Club, One Country Club Lane, Belleair, Florida. Social time begins at 11:30, with luncheon and program at noon.

The speaker for this program will be Wilton Simpson, Florida's 13th Commissioner of Agriculture, who is a fifth-generation Floridian, proud to be born and raised in the Sunshine State. A lifelong Florida farmer and entrepreneur, Commissioner Simpson has deep personal and professional roots grounded in agriculture. For over four decades, he owned and managed a large-scale egg-laying operation that supplied families across the state.

TMail checks for \$37 for the meal & \$25 for 2024 membership dues if you haven't paid yet, to arrive by February 21st to: BWRC P.O. Box 4722 Seminole, FL 33775-4722. Unfortunately, walk-ups cannot be accommodated.



BLUFFS BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Submitted by Bonnie Trembulak

The BBA Board is pleased to announce the appointment of Patty Ruppel as our Events Chairperson. Patty is the Advancement Coordinator for St. Patrick Catholic School. She plans and oversees many events for the school like the annual Fun Fair and the Annual Pot' O Gold fundraiser. We're looking forward to utilizing Patty's expertise to plan events that will help your business grow.

Thanks to everyone who came to the Holiday Breakfast and a big shout out to our sponsor BayFirst Bank who provided the location and the food.

Our Taste of the Holidays event at Largo Golf Course was a big success. Thank you to Mark Abdo from the golf course and to the team from Village Inn for making the event so special. Representatives from all three of our wine walk charities - Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Tampa Bay, Fluff Animal Rescue and Operation Military Matters, came to the party and we presented each of them with a \$1000 check.

The Bluffs Business Association after hours mixers are held at various member businesses the 2nd Thursday of each month from 5:30 to 6:30pm. My Wellness Grove will host the February 9th mixer at a location to be announced. The March 14th mixer will be hosted by Fifth Third Bank at 2510 West Bay Drive, Belleair Bluffs. All businesses are welcome to attend. Bring a door prize and give a quick introduction to your business. To RSVP, visit Facebook.com/BBAstrong.

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ABOUT TOWN: BILL WOERNER STAYS FOCUSED ON IRB SUNSETS

By Diane Daniel, Local Author

Most evenings, you will find Bill Woerner at the shoreline or on the Belleair Causeway ready to capture another glorious Indian Rocks Beach sunset.

His motto: Get there early and stay late. First there's the golden hour, just before sunset, when the low sun gives the sky a warm glow, followed by the cooler tones just after the sun dips below the horizon. Then, of course, there's the often-amazing afterglow.

"The afterglow is everything," Woerner said. "By then, some people are already on their way home."

Woerner, 63, and his wife, Susan, moved to the area seven years ago from Long Island's south shore. They had already visited the area frequently to see their daughter, who lives in Clearwater. They now have two granddaughters.

Since arriving here, Woerner has become one of Indian Rocks Beach's unofficial photographers. The captivating, colorful images he posts on local Facebook groups attract a flurry of comments and likes, and he has had commissions from local publications. His photos will also be featured on the city's upcoming revamped website.

Growing up, Woerner loved snapping pictures of family and friends. When he joined the Navy as a young man, sailing the waters of the Caribbean, Mediterranean and Asia, his desire to capture beauty around the world was fully ignited. He was especially drawn to Hawaii, where he was stationed for a time.

When Woerner returned to Long Island, he joined a group of local photographers called the Sunchasers, who introduced him to sunrise photography. They encouraged him to learn advanced skills to match his natural talent for framing

and composition. He followed their advice and headed down a more professional path, though he still prioritizes awe and enjoyment over competitions and cash.

Until he moved to Largo, Woerner painted houses for work. Once here, he joined the "beach crew" at IRB Chairs and dove into perfecting his sunset photos. A sports lover, he played softball with the Indian Rocks Beach senior league for several years. He also kept pace with the local skim boarders (while shooting photos) enough for them to call him one of their own.

Woerner shoots with a Sony mirrorless camera and spends a lot of time on post-processing. He wants his photos to exude what he calls "the aloha spirit."

"I want it to look exotic and for you to feel like you could step into the picture," he said. "Mostly I just want you to appreciate this amazing world."

Another thing Woerner loves about shooting sunsets are the people around him. "We're all feeling the same spirit," he said. "Everybody's on the same team, no matter what they do in life."

For Woerner, no matter how spectacular one sunset is, "it's always about the next one."

Diane Daniel, founder of www.vacationdonations.org, always stays for the afterglow.



Bill and Susan Woerner



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Community News

BEACH COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

The Beach Community Food Pantry (BCFP) has been providing food for all who need it since 2008, and relies on donations to provide assistance to the community. Supplies are running low, and the BCFP is requesting donations of canned goods, paper products, fresh fruit, and vegetables, as well as monetary donations at OnRealm.org/CalvaryIRB/-/form/give/bcfp.

The BCFP also needs dedicated volunteers in several areas. You can volunteer to help sort and shelve food, process inventory, and assist individuals with their food selection on Wednesday mornings from 9:30am-12:15pm and Thursday evenings from 4:30pm-7:15 pm.

Strong volunteers are needed to unload food deliveries Mondays at 1:30 pm and Thursdays at 10am and to bag the USDA food deliveries every second Thursday of the month.

Drivers are needed to pick up donations from community partners in Tampa and Clearwater using the BCFP van.

For more information on the BCFP and how you can help, visit BCFoodPantry.org.

FLORIDA BOTANICAL GARDENS

Submitted by Allie Fisher

The Pinellas African American Heritage Celebration (PAAHC) will be returning to the Florida Botanical Gardens on Saturday, February 24th from 10am-3pm. Showcasing Black history and culture, the goal of this one-day festival is to exhibit the diversity within Pinellas County. Visitors will get to experience historical exhibits and presentations, shop a mini market of Black-owned businesses, watch live performances, and more. There will also be food vendors on site, so come hungry! Be sure to stop by our neighboring Pinewood Partners, Creative Pinellas and Heritage Village, for even more activities during the event. At Creative Pinellas, check out their Gallery Walk to see artwork from various talented local artists and Pinellas County Schools students. At Heritage Village, take a stroll through historical exhibits preserving Pinellas County History. For more information on the PAAHC, visit www.paaHC.org. See you there!



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8TH ANNUAL REDS, WHITES, & BITES

On April 19th at 6:30pm, the Community Dental Clinic (CDC) will host the annual Reds, Whites, & Bites at the Kapok Special Events Center. This signature fundraiser provides a significant portion of the CDC's operating budget. As the need for dental care continues to rise, so does their need for resources. Honorary Chairs Dr. Lee Ann Brown and Mr. Bradley Meinck, along with the Reds, Whites, and Bites Committee hope you will become a sponsor this year in support of the clinic's efforts to continue providing comprehensive dental health services to the low-income, uninsured of Pinellas County. Join them for an evening of wines, cocktails & delicious bites while experiencing the historic Kapok Tree.

For event details, please visit CommunityDentalClinic.net or contact Executive Director Theresa White at (727) 216-6155 ext. 5 or Theresa@CommunityDTLCLinic.org.

Community News

TAMPA BAY WATCH

Submitted by Rachel Arndt

Registration is now open for Spring Break Camp, and we can't wait for your 6-10-year-old to join us on the bay! Whether they spend the whole week of March 11-15 with us or just a day or two, the choice is yours. Discover the exciting adventures that await at our two fantastic locations - the Auer Marine Education Center in Tierra Verde and the Discovery Center on the St. Pete Pier.

Visit tampabaywatch.org/education-main/spring-break-camp for more information or to register.

BELLEAIR BEACH LADIES LUNCHEON CLUB (BLLC)

Belleair Beach Ladies Luncheon Club (BLLC) was founded in 1958 by a group of ladies that wanted to enjoy friendship and local restaurants. The group meets the second Tuesday of the month, October through May.

Their upcoming luncheons are February 13th at Amici's Italian Eatery in Largo and March 12th at the Holiday Inn Harbourside.

BLLC is proud to support the Police & Kids Foundation, assisting local kids and families.

BLLC is accepting new members. For more information about BLLC, please contact Treasurer, Deborah Hendricks at dsbrown55@yahoo.com.

ROTARY CLUB OF INDIAN ROCKS BEACH

The 5th Annual "Rotary Runs the Beach" will take place on scenic Indian Rocks Beach on Saturday, March 9th at 8am. The event includes a timed 5K run and one-mile Family Fun Run.

Meet at the Indian Rocks Beach Access Park located at 1700 Gulf Blvd on Indian Rocks Beach. Parking is available for nominal fee on site or park on city streets for free. The race is chipped, and the course is "out and back."

Are you a run club member? If not, you may join the Running Club when you run the 5K. Individual winners receive medals, but teams are welcome. The Individual Running Contest is open to all runners. Medals will be awarded to winners by age groups in 10-year breakouts.

The Rotary would like to give special thanks to their main sponsor - The Original Crabby Bill's.

Email RotaryRunstheBeach@gmail.com with any questions, or for more information.

WINTERFEST ON THE ROCKS

Winterfest on the Rocks returns for its 19th annual appearance on Saturday, February 17th from 10am-4pm at Cavary Episcopal Church. This family-friendly event will include arts and crafts vendors, children's activities, entertainment, food, and more. There will be indoor and outdoor activities, and the event will be held rain or shine.

MILITARY ORDER OF WORLD WARS

The Clearwater Chapter of the Military Order of World Wars meets the first Tuesday of each month at the Dunedin Golf Club, 1050 Palm Blvd, Dunedin. Social hour is at 11:30am followed by lunch and a short program. Active duty, retired or former Military Officers and their spouses are invited to attend. The MOWW Clearwater Chapter invites those interested to RSVP for lunch by emailing Col. Brian K. Smith at SmithBK@comcast.net.



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Community News

ISLAND ESTATES YACHT CLUB

Submitted by Commodore Scott Lefebvre

The Island Estates Yacht Club (IEYC) closed out 2023 with three of our favorite events: the Annual Meeting and Member Recognition Banquet on November 5th at the Dunedin Golf Club, the Change of Watch on December 1st at the Belleair Country Club, and the annual New Year's Day Brunch on January 1st at the Bon Appetit restaurant. The club kicked off the 2024 year with the annual Day at the Races at Tampa Bay Downs on January 27th and the men of the IEYC will be hosting their annual club event, Nautical Jeopardy, at DeLuka's restaurant in Clearwater on February 24th.

The Island Estates Yacht Club (IEYC) was officially started in 1975. We are an incorporated not-for-profit club whose mission is to foster fellowship among its members. Please visit the IEYC website at <https://www.islandestatesyc.org/> for more information on the club.

Reservations are required for all events and guests need to be sponsored by a member. Membership in the IEYC is a one-time \$200 initiation fee and \$200 per calendar year for a family and \$100 for a single membership.

You don't need to live on Island Estates, or own a yacht, to be a member of the IEYC. Email IslandEstatesYC@gmail.com if you have any questions.

CLEARWATER MARINE AQUARIUM

Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA) is thrilled to announce its upcoming event, AquaGala on the Island, a sumptuous affair set to take place on March 9th at CMA. This highly anticipated inaugural fundraiser will support the Aquarium's ongoing mission of rescue, rehabilitation and release, with proceeds going to support this important mission.

The AquaGala fundraiser will be a fully immersive philanthropic experience with animal encounters, musical guests, delicious food and enticing cocktails, and promises an evening filled with elegance, entertainment and education. Guests will have the opportunity to enjoy delectable cuisine, mingle with like-minded individuals, and gain a deeper understanding of the vital work being done at CMA.

CMA invites all animal lovers, conservation enthusiasts, and supporters of marine life to join them. By attending this event, guests will not only have a memorable evening but will also contribute to the continued success of CMA's mission.

For more information about AquaGala and to purchase tickets and sponsorships, please visit the Clearwater Marine Aquarium website at CMAaquarium.org/Aqua-Gala.

HOMELESS EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

Join Homeless Empowerment Program (HEP) at Ruth Eckerd Hall on Sunday, March 10th from 2-5pm for an afternoon of fun, fashion, and fundraising during the 9th 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.

Proceeds support HEP's Youth & Family Services. Sponsorship opportunities including ticket packages are available for individuals and businesses. Tickets are on sale. To purchase them or learn about sponsorship opportunities, contact HEP Marketing Specialist Madeline Stone at (727) 442-9041 ext. 105 or at MadelineS@HEPempowers.org.



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Community News

GFWC CLEARWATER COMMUNITY WOMAN'S CLUB

As part of GFWC Clearwater Community Woman's Club (CCWC) 2023-2025 initiative to reduce children's food insecurity, nearly 800 pounds of non-perishable food has been donated to Feeding Tampa Bay (FTB) at their Feeding Pinellas Empowerment Center.

The food will be used to support the organization's on-site Feeding Minds School Pantry. "Our organization relies on the support of our community to make sure families have access to healthy food," said Matt Spence, Chief Programs Officer at Feeding Tampa Bay. "With CWCC's help, more meals will be placed in the hands of families so their children can better grow, learn and play."

FTB's Feeding Minds program currently supports over 74 elementary, middle, high schools and colleges located throughout its ten-county span. In Pinellas County alone, there are currently 16 schools that utilize the program.

With one in four children in the Tampa Bay area experiencing food insecurity, CWCC has taken proactive steps to partner with Feeding Tampa Bay. This collaboration aims to provide vital support to the Feeding Minds program by expanding its access to additional schools in Pinellas County.

Help reduce child food insecurity in Pinellas County by attending the CCWC's "Champa Bay Elimination Dinner." The third annual installment of this fundraising event will be held on March 2nd at the Conmy Center, 750 San Salvador Drive, Dunedin from 5:30-9pm.

The Champa Bay Elimination Dinner is a sports-themed fundraising event that includes great food, silent and live auctions with sports memorabilia, jewelry, art, and vacation packages, games, and more. There will be fun activities for all, and this year's dinner will be bigger and better than ever. The goal of the event is to create or support two new school pantries for needy families. For more information and tickets, visit GiveButter.com/2024ChampaBay.

THE BELLEAIR GARDEN CLUB

The Belleair Garden Club will present the following programs for February and March:

- Wednesday, February 7th at 1 pm - "Annual Orchid Extravaganza" with Art Stone Orchids. Presenters, Michael and Paula Pollin, owners of Art Stone Orchids and Statuary, only do lectures for the Belleair and St. Petersburg Garden Clubs. Art Stone Company has been serving Tampa Bay since 1959. They will display and discuss types of orchid varieties, care, and collecting. A wide variety of potted orchids will be available for purchase.
- Wednesday, March 6th at 1pm - "Backyard Habitat for Birds" with James Stevenson, Extension Specialist with Brooker Creek Preserve. Learn how to attract birds to your yard and provide them with additional habitat.
- Wednesday, March 13th at 10am - "Hydroponics Garden Field Trip" to visit Jemma and Kevin Sinclair's organic farm in Palm Harbor, considered a "Vital Planet" site.

A question-and-answer session and a social hour will follow the programs on February 7th and March 6th at the Belleair Garden Club.

Programs are held at the Belleair Garden Club, 903 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, Belleair. Field trips are held off-site. Programs are free of charge and open to the public. For further information visit BelleairGardenClub.com.



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