

# NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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Magazine

## CARL FISHER AND THE TAMAMI TRAIL

By Bob Griffin, Local Historian

America is a nation of roads. Roads keep us connected, allowing us to freely pass across state lines. Roads allow us to visit family, travel to unfamiliar places, and to see the country. Zipping down the highway in an automobile can be one of the most relaxing weekend experiences.

The Tamiami Trail is a highway that runs from Tampa to Miami. It is the southernmost part of US Highway 41, which begins at Florida's state line. It runs down the west coast of Florida before crossing the state and running directly into downtown Miami. Few people know its origins – it began with Carl Fisher the founder of the Indianapolis Speedway.



Carl Fisher, who established the original "Brickyard" Indianapolis Speedway, was a major Miami Beach developer. Born in Indiana, Fisher was addicted to speed at an early age, both while running and on bicycles. With the popularity of the automobile, his obsession turned to cars. Fisher bought the first automobile in Indianapolis. It was a French made, three-wheeled De Dion Bouton with an internal combustion engine. Before long, he was racing motorcars at local fairgrounds and area dirt racetracks. In 1904, at the age of 30, Fisher set the world speed record on a 2-mile dirt track - at 60.6 miles per hour. Fisher established Indiana's first car dealership, "Carl Fisher Automobiles," which featured both passenger cars and trucks. It was possibly the first auto dealership in the United States.

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**CREDITS**



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**INDIAN ROCKS BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS**

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

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

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

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

Thank you for reading,

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**CALENDAR OF HOLIDAYS & EVENTS**

*As always, this is subject to change.*

**MARCH**

St. Pete Grand Prix 7-10  
International Women's Day 8  
IRB Rotary Runs the Beach 9  
Greenfest Church of the Isles 9  
Latin Food Festival Safety Harbor 9  
Strawberry Festival Ends 10  
Daylight Savings Time Begins 10  
City Commission Meeting 12  
Spring Break Public Schools 11-15  
Bluffs Business Assn Mixer 5/3 Bank 14  
Spring Market in the Bluffs 16  
Shamrock'n Run Largo 16  
Art and Craft Sale McGough Park 16  
St. Patrick's Day 17  
Valspar Championship 18-24  
Primary and Municipal Elections 19  
HOA Mix & Mingle Anecdote 21  
Rotary Pancake Breakfast 23  
Easter Egg Hunt Kolb Park 23  
Tampa Home Show 23  
Palm Sunday 24  
Commission Swearing In Ceremony 28  
MLB Opening Day 28  
Rays First Home Game 28  
Good Friday 29  
Sugar Sand Festival Begins 29  
Vacation Donations Food Drive 30  
Easter Sunday 31

**APRIL**

Dyngus Day Crabby Bill's 1  
April Fools' Day 1  
Dunedin Highland Games 5-6  
Garage Sale McGough Park 6  
Classic Car Show Heritage Village 6  
City Commission Meeting 9  
Bluffs Bus. Assn Mixer Melendy RE 11  
Holocaust Remembrance Day 12  
Tampa Bay Blues Fest Vinoy 12-14  
Paw Fest Largo Central Park 13  
Hurricane Eddie's Beach Cleanup 13  
Pinellas Park PepperFest 13  
Sugar Sand Festival Ends 14  
Patriots' Day 15  
Income Taxes Due 15  
HOA Mix & Mingle Jake's Cantina 18  
Taste of IRB 20  
Great American Cleanup 21  
Mainsail Art Festival Vinoy Park 20-21  
Earth Day 22  
Administrative Professionals Day 24  
Public Schools Closed 26  
Free Tree Day McGough Park 27  
County Recycling Countryside 27  
National Arbor Day 29



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# Did You Know



**CHANGES COMING AT THE AQUARIUM** In February, Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA) announced a multi-year plan of expansion encompassing strategies to welcome new wildlife, create habitats, and launch global conservation efforts. The first of these additions is the Manatee Rehabilitation Center slated to open this spring. The new center will allow CMA to accept the influx of manatees needing critical care.

Internationally, CMA will be breaking ground this summer on a Belize Marine Rescue and Educational Center. CMA Research Institute (CMARI) has rescued and released manatees for 20 years in Belize, which has the highest density of Antillean manatees in the world.

CMA will welcome many new marine ambassadors, including manatees, sea lions, sharks, penguins, albino alligators and additional dolphins. To provide world-class healthcare to these new residents, there will be a significant renovation and expansion to their animal hospital.

## HOW DID MARCH AND APRIL GET THEIR NAMES?

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 and the months of January and February were added later, after a reform to the Gregorian calendar in the 1580s.

There are several theories on the origin of April's name. One is that it derives from the Latin *apriore*, which means "to open," referencing the Spring blossoming of trees and flowers. Another theory follows the naming of months after mythological deities. April could derive from Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty, whose festival begins in April.

**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 back for its 20th 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 [GPSiPete.com](http://GPSiPete.com) or by calling (727) 898-4639.

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# and More...



**RARE GATORS GET THEIR NAMES** After a month of public input, Gatorland Florida announced the new names of the twins born at the park last summer. The leucistic female was named Mystic and her brother named Mayhem. Leucistic alligators are recognizable by their white skin and blue eyes and are sensitive to sunlight.

Gatorland is building a special exhibit for the siblings with a spring opening anticipated.

**PINELLAS CHARITY GETS A BOOST** In February, Pinellas County Tax Collector Charles W. Thomas presented Clothes to Kids in Clearwater with a \$3,296 donation.

Each year, tax collector employees nominate and vote for one local nonprofit organization to fundraise for all year long. Clothes to Kids received the most votes for 2023 and employees raised funds internally for the organization with various initiatives.

Along with the cash donation, the tax collector offices also held a sock drive in 2023, and the public was invited to help support the cause. As a result, over 2,000 pairs of socks were collected to help build wardrobes for 409 Pinellas County students.

Clothes to Kids serves Pinellas and Hillsborough counties by providing new and gently used clothing to low-income or in-crisis school-age children, free of charge. They provided over 350,000 wardrobe items to kids in 2023. Find more info about Clothes to Kids at [clothestokids.org](http://clothestokids.org).

The tax collector team voted to support Suncoast Animal League throughout 2024. For more information about that fundraising campaign as well as the other charitable organizations they support, visit their website at [PinellasTaxCollector.gov/community-involvement](http://PinellasTaxCollector.gov/community-involvement).

**ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE RECOGNIZED** U.S. News & World Report has again ranked St. Petersburg College's (SPC) online bachelor's programs first in the Tampa Bay area.

The 2024 study listed SPC first in the Tampa Bay region in two categories: Best Online Bachelor's Program and Best Online Bachelor's Programs for Veterans. This is the fourth year that SPC received top rankings from U.S. News & World Report.

Among eligible participating colleges in the Florida College System, SPC ranked second for Best Online Bachelor's Program for Veterans and third for Best Online Bachelor's Program in the 2024 study. The College also ranked seventh for the Best Online Bachelor's Program for Veterans and 10th for the Best Online Bachelor's among all participating institutions in the state of Florida.

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# The Tamiami Trail, Continued

Carl Fisher was a prolific salesman with a talent for showmanship, or ballyhoo as it was called, which he used to promote his dealership. One idea was to build a major racetrack in his hometown. With two partners and \$75,000, he created the "Indianapolis Motor Speedway." The first race, on a dirt track, was to be a three-day, 300-mile endurance event but it became a race around ruts and potholes and ended after 235 miles with the death of five - three racers and two spectators.

Fisher rebuilt the track with 3.2 million glazed, hand-laid bricks, adding higher protective walls. The remodeled speedway opened in 1909 and 80,000 spectators turned out to watch the first "Indianapolis 500." Over the next half century, this racing event has turned into the "largest single-day sporting event in the country," drawing more than 150,000 fans to what became known as "the Brickyard."

What has this got to do with The Tamiami Trail? In 1912, at a meeting in Indianapolis with other car industry leaders, Fisher proposed building an east-west highway from New York's Times Square to San Francisco's Lincoln Park. Billed as, "a road across America," he proclaimed, "let's build it before we are too old to enjoy it."

Fisher came up with a plan to fund the project. He persuaded the car makers, dealers, suppliers, and even jobbers to contribute a small percentage of their annual sales to a construction fund to be used once the fund reached \$10 million. At the time, states spent little to no money on road construction. Most of the nation's roads were still dirt and as a result, were muddy and many times almost impassable in a horse-drawn carriages, much less in automobiles. Henry Ford, owner of Ford Motor Company, refused to contribute believing governments would build the roads.

When the road, originally called the "Coast-to-Coast Rock Highway," was completed it, became known as the "Lincoln Highway," and was mostly complete in 1915. Interstate 80 runs parallel to this highway today. The project was the motivation behind the National Interstate Highways Act of 1956, created under President Dwight Eisenhower.

In 1910, at the invitation of a Miami developer, Fisher and his wife visited Miami Beach, which required them to take an exceptionally long train ride from Indianapolis. Fisher fell in love with the area and immediately started

buying land on what was really just a sandbar. Following his Lincoln Highway project, Fisher proposed a link from Chicago and upper Michigan to Miami, what he called the "Dixie Highway." In reality, it was a pair of roads—an east and a west route converging in Miami. Because of the parallel roads, it would cover 5,786 miles, far longer than his east-west highway. The project was estimated to take over a decade to complete.

In 1915, the Florida State Road Department was created. That April, at an informal meeting between the presidents of the Ft. Myers and Miami Chambers of Commerce, building a new highway was discussed. The goal of the plan was to create a hard-surfaced road connecting Tampa and Miami called the "Tamiami Trail."

Building a road through the Everglades proved more difficult than expected, and in 1922 the state ran out of funds. Entrepreneur Barron Collier offered to finance the completion of the highway, he wanted access to the wealth in the Miami area, but his offer came with a catch - the state would have to create a new county named after him. Collier County was carved out of Lee County. In exchange, Collier paid for the dynamite to break up the swamp land and the workers and oxen needed to dredge the area and build the road high enough to prevent flooding. The men worked in the swamps during Florida's 95 plus degree summers, battling mosquitos and alligators.

In 1923, while construction was still underway, Fisher organized a fifteen car caravan, which he called "the Dixie Highway Pathfinders" to travel to Miami. They arrived in October with Fisher in the lead car, of course. It was no accident he planned the highway to end in Miami. Fisher had plans to move from being a car salesman to being a real estate developer - in Miami! He established himself in Alton Beach; it was later to be incorporated as Miami Beach.

Originally intended to be one thoroughfare, the highway was officially designated two U.S. Highways. The north-south portion became U.S. Highway 41, and the east-west portion was designated U.S. Highway 94. In 1949, the U.S. 94 moniker was decommissioned, and the entire route became U.S. 41.



Carl Fisher

The final segment of the Tamiami Trail was completed in April of 1928 and is considered to be one of the largest influences on Florida's tourism industry.

In the early 1960s, Interstate 75 opened following a similar path to US 41 ending in Tampa. By 1970 it was agreed the Interstate would be extended to Naples and across the state to Miami. The portion of I-75 from Naples to Miami is what we call "Alligator Alley." In the late '60s while the Interstate was being planned, the American Automobile Association (AAA) referred to it as nothing but "Alligator Alley." They believed it would be unused and merely an "alley for alligators." However, alligators are often seen in the waterways along the road and the nickname stuck. The state officially adopted the name "Alligator Alley" in 1966.

In 2003, US 41 from Naples to Miami was renamed the "Windows to the Gulf Waters Scenic Highway" under the Florida Department of Transportation's Scenic Highway Program. A \$60 million Federal Highway Administration grant was awarded to fund the Tamiami Trail Next Steps project improving water flow into the Everglades National Park.



Tamiami Trail Next Steps Construction

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## 25 LESSONS LEARNED OVER 50 YEARS – PART 2

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. In the last newsletter we shared the first twelve pieces of wisdom to ponder as you think about financial planning, goal setting, saving, and investment management. Here are the next thirteen.



The time to sell is when you no longer think it is time to buy because the investment has become too expensive.

Be disciplined in your decision making with your serious money. If you want to gamble, roll the dice in Las Vegas; not in your portfolio or other parts of your financial plan.

Whatever the small retail investor is doing, do the opposite. Uninformed naïve investors rarely get it right in the end.

Even the best money manager will get it wrong at least two or three times over ten years. Judge the long-term results, not the year-to-year return.

Last year's winners are rarely this year's winners. If you do not see future winners in your investments, then sell despite capital gain taxes.

Wealth comes not from great investments, although they do not hurt, but more from spending less than you make. Save ten percent of what you make at a minimum.

Finance assets that appreciate and pay cash for assets that depreciate.

Do not fight the Fed.

Like chocolate, a little inflation is good for you. Like a poisonous snake, deflation is never good for you.

Nothing is forever no matter how good it was in the past or it is today. You should always be thinking about tomorrow while enjoying today.

Set realistic financial goals and when you achieve one... reward yourself and celebrate!

Companies that innovate outlast those that do not. If you are not growing you are dying, you just do not know it.

If you do not have the time, inclination and knowledge to manage your financial planning and investments hire a professional. They are an investment, not an expense.

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.

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## ABOUT TOWN: JENI BOND BRINGS A PERFORMERS TOUCH TO IRB

By Diane Daniel, Local Author

If you've been around Indian Rocks Beach for a while, you've likely seen Jeni Bond in action. When her son and daughter were young, she and a friend started a children's program at the former IRB branch of the YMCA. She also taught drama classes at Calvary Episcopal Church, helped coordinate the "Kinderfest" area at Oktoberfest, and launched the library's children's programming some 20 years ago.

"I put on a storytelling show with kids and parents that made me feel like Neil Diamond," she laughed.

Bond is once again involved, both with Action 2000 and as a board member of the Beach Art Center. At the art center, she works on projects for children and adults and helped plan its fundraising event, "A Night on the Rocks", on March 2.

Bond and her husband, Jude, a city commissioner, first discovered IRB in 2002, when they were living in New York City and sought a waterfront venue for their wedding. (They got married at the historic Fay Roy Cottage).

After their daughter, Georgia, was born, they decided to relocate here. Georgia is now a junior at a university in New York City, while their son, Ronan, is a freshman there. In 2012, they moved to their own historic cottage, off the Seventh Avenue access, which they opened to the public last year during the IRB Holiday Tour of Homes.

Playing emcee is not new to Bond – she's been a guest host and product representative at the Home Shopping Network since 2010. Her job ramped up considerably during COVID, because her specialty is cleaning products. During that time, she shot all her spots, which are broadcast live, from a makeshift studio at the couple's house. Bond, who does

infomercials as well, also served as a stand-in and double for Ashley Judd in "High Crimes" and as a stand-in during the filming of "Dolphin Tale" and its sequel, both shot in Clearwater.

While Bond's job takes her to set locations around the world, her heart belongs to IRB. She's particularly excited about how the Beach Art Center is reaching out to all kinds of folks.

"It's quite magical that we have an arts center at the beach, and with its very own space," she said. "We want everyone to feel included, not just one age group, and we're trying out different programs. We had storytelling for adults, and I'd love to add things like staged readings and live music."

That spirit of inclusion can be seen at "A Night on the Rocks," which is a casual event. Tickets are available at BeachArtCenter.org.

"We're taking up the whole street outside and will have activities and all the art inside," Bond said. "We hope that both residents and tourists come."

Activities include an art auction, bar poker, and live music by Indian Rocks-based The Erica DiCeglie Band.

"I told Erica, 'Let's get people dancing,'" Bond says.

Diane Daniel, founder of [www.vacationdonations.org](http://www.vacationdonations.org), is ready to dance.



Jeni and Jude Bond



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### THE OFFSHORE REPORT

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



Spring is almost 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 until Spring, so I suggest you take advantage of every fishable day possible.

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 bycatch.

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 fishing 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.

We may get limited fishing days until Spring, but the days 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](http://2SheaCharters.com) or come by the shop at 198 Seminole Street, Clearwater.



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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 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 overbreed 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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# 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 was 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](http://SaltHouseSocial.com) or follow them on Facebook for upcoming events and their new menu. Salt House is located at 483 Mandalay Avenue.



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## 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](http://ThaiBasil-Largo.com) or call (727) 518-7705 for hours and information.

## NOW SERVING FOOD

Anecdote Brewing Company is now offering a limited menu in-house. They are offering cheese puffs, fries, wings in a variety of flavors, and ciabatta paninis. They have a meal special for \$13.95 that includes a free beer. The brewery is located at 321 Gulf Boulevard. Visit their website at [AnecdoteBrewing.com](http://AnecdoteBrewing.com) or find them on Facebook.

## NEW PIZZA SHOP IN LARGO

Gulfside Pizza and Subs opened recently, east of the Walsingham Bridge at 11703 Hamlin Boulevard. Sarah and Donny Browning and Shannon and Brian Jones partnered up on this next slice of adventure. The owners operated five Rudy's Pizza shops in Ohio before moving to Pinellas County.

Gulfside offers a variety of appetizers, pizzas, salads, subs, and burgers for delivery, take-out or dine-in with indoor and outdoor seating. Their dough and sauce are made fresh daily. Call to order (727) 614-9011 or scan the QR code on their Facebook page.

# Bar & Restaurant News



**DYNGUS DAY CELEBRATION AT CRABBY BILL'S**

The annual post-Lenten Polish celebration will be held at the Original Crabby Bill's on Monday, April 1st. 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. While you are there, check out the new cornhole area on the patio. Call (727) 281-2193 for more information.

**NOW SERVING BREAKFAST** Mio's Grill and Café in St. Petersburg was recently awarded 12th place on Yelp's Top One Hundred Places to Eat in the U.S. The restaurant, specializing in Turkish and Greek cuisine, won over Yelpers with its baba ghanoush, falafel, Greek salad and baklava. Beach-area diners can now enjoy Mio's cuisine without trekking to St. Pete while sitting on the water on Sand Key where Chef Bora Calsikan opened his second location. The restaurant is in The Shoppes of Sand Key at 1261 Gulf Blvd.

Mio's recently began breakfast service with a twist. 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 Sand Key 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.

**CLEVELAND STREET MARKET** A new multipurpose food and drink hall opened in Clearwater at 1011 Cleveland Street in the new Cleveland Street Market. The first five tenants are Deja Brew Coffee, Top Nosh Street Food, Tap Haus on Cleveland, Jersey Dogs, and The Smokin' Cuban BBQ-Fusion.

Deja Brew will offer a variety of coffee drinks with breakfast sandwiches, pastries and baked goods. Top Nosh is described as "comfort food with a twist," serving a variety of burgers and mac n' cheese dishes. Tap Haus on Cleveland offers 32 beers and 64 wines. Customers are assigned a card that they scan at self-service taps. Smokin' Cuban serves BBQ-Cuban fusion cuisine and recently won the "World's Best Popular Cuban Sandwich" award at the 12th annual Cuban Sandwich Festival. Jersey Dogs will offer Sabrett hot dogs and disco fries. (It is still under construction as of this printing). There is also an outdoor courtyard where guests can bring their four-legged companions. For more information follow Cleveland Street Market on Facebook and Instagram.

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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.



## TAX SEASON SAFETY

From the Desk of Sheriff Bob Gualtieri

One of the best ways to shield yourself from scams is to be aware of some of the things that government agencies, utilities, and other entities will never ask you to do. We at the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) will never call you up telling you that you have a warrant and have to pay a fine to avoid arrest. And yet citizens in our community have been losing money to a scammer calling them up and impersonating our deputies. And no one – not PCSO, or Duke Energy, or your bank – will ever ask for payment in a non-traditional form. You can bet that if someone wants you to pay in gift cards or cryptocurrency then everything is not on the up-and-up.



Tax season brings its own financial dangers as scammers try to take advantage of your stress. Most of us are a little uncertain about our taxes – are we getting the right deductions, are we doing everything the proper way? We're ready to believe that we might have made a costly mistake that will involve sending the IRS more money. Criminals will take advantage of that anxiety, playing on your fears to convince you that you owe money – and then persuade you to pay them instead of the government.

The first clue that someone might be scamming you is the method of communication. In almost every circumstance, the IRS will contact you by mail if there is a problem. In special circumstances you may eventually get a personal visit from an IRS agent – for a delinquent tax return or for a criminal charge of tax evasion – but even in those instances you would have received many letters in the mail first.

What you will NOT get from the IRS is a scary phone call. If anyone cold calls you claiming to be from the IRS, you can safely assume they are trying to scam you out of your money. The same holds true for an email or text. (Note that if you have contacted the IRS yourself by phone about a specific problem they may then get back in touch with you by that method to help you or answer your questions).

Scammers will do whatever they can to make you afraid – and since the tax system is inherently intimidating, that is a prime target. They'll threaten you with arrest, suspension of your driver license, or question your immigration status if you don't pay immediately. But the IRS doesn't have the authority to revoke your license or change your immigration status, and an arrest for large-scale and deliberate tax evasion would be a long and complicated process. Believe me, if you were going to be arrested for tax fraud, you'd know about it years in advance.

Once they know you're afraid, they'll demand money immediately. They won't give you a chance to think, make a phone call, or do a little research. Their scam depends on you acting in a panic. They'll ask for payment in crypto or gift cards, or a wire transfer.

Even if you know you owe money to the IRS, don't let yourself be scammed. The IRS assigns overdue tax debts to private debt collection agencies and only uses CBE Group, Coast Professional, and ConServe. And these agencies would only ask for payment made out to the U.S. Treasury.

If you're unsure if you owe money to the IRS, you can check your tax account by visiting: [www.irs.gov/payments/view-your-tax-account](http://www.irs.gov/payments/view-your-tax-account). If you believe that you or someone you know has been a victim of a scam, contact the PCSO non-emergency line at (727) 582-6200.

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## The Evolution 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.

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

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 Loading in 2023.

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



## JUST DO IT, BECOME A BIRD NERD

By Lara Milligan, Natural Resources Agent UF/IFAS Extension Pinellas County

“So, there I was minding my own business...”

When these words came out of my teacher’s mouth, we all dropped our pens and tuned in; it was story time! Mr. Weinrich was not only one of the most inspirational, funny, and captivating teachers I ever had, he was also a total bird nerd. As a high school student, I did not think birding was cool. I didn’t get the attraction or the draw. But, as any incredible teacher can do, Mr. Weinrich inspired me to become a bird nerd too. And I’m here to say it is cool! While I’m no Mr. Weinrich, I’m hoping to inspire you today to start your journey to the amazing world of birds.

From large to small, there are birds of all shapes and sizes you can observe. In Pinellas County, in 2023, there were 127 distinct species documented on iNaturalist.org. From 2015-2023, there were 416 species sighted in Pinellas County according to eBird.org.

Birding is a hobby you can do anywhere, any time of year. Pinellas County is blessed with migrants in the fall and spring too, so just when you think you’ve got your resident birds down, a flash of yellow passes by and it’s a bird you’ve never seen before - a migrant!

Once you learn to identify one bird by its call or characteristics, it’s likely you will want to learn more! One becomes two, two becomes four, and the learning never stops. It’s a way to enjoy nature, build a connection with your local environment, and seek out new opportunities to go birding in places you’ve never been. Speaking of places you’ve never been, did you know there is something called the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail? There are 15 sites within Pinellas County alone! We may be the most densely populated county in the state, but we still have some amazing wildlife wonders to see.

So, use your eyes to observe or your ears to listen. If you see a bird, take note of its size, color, any distinct markings, time of year, and habitat. It’s fun to learn bird calls too. You can know what is nearby just by learning which species make which calls. There are endless resources to help you start identifying birds once you gather some information. You can download a smartphone app or pick up some field guides to get started. I am always here as a resource as well. If you’re able to snap a picture or record some audio, I would love to try to help you identify the birds you’re observing.

The best news is this is a hobby you can do for free, at least to start. I highly recommend binoculars if you’re going to get into identifying our smaller songbirds. For me, I always have binoculars within reach because you never know when you will see something cool. Happy Birding!

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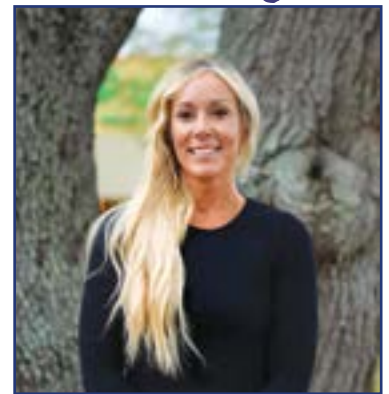
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# Business Briefs

## 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 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, visit the website at [reimagineot.com](http://reimagineot.com), or contact the business directly by phone (727) 902-0756 or email [Info@ReImagineOT.com](mailto:Info@ReImagineOT.com).



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**NEW BUT OLDE BARBER SHOP** Irena Nolasco, owner of Stefanec's South Barber Shop at 772 Indian Rocks Road North in Belleair Bluffs, took ownership of George's Barber Shop in Largo on February 20th. George's has been in business in the area for over 45 years. Irena says she will continue the nostalgic feel of a true, old fashioned barber shop, but with the new name Olde Time Barber Shop. It will offer \$20 haircuts with a \$5 discount for seniors and will be cash only. The hours will be Tuesday through Saturday 8am-3pm. The shop is located at 11965 Indian Rocks Road and can be reached at (727)315-4900. Follow them on Facebook at Olde Time Barber Shop.

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

# 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.

**NEW LOCATION FOR GOIN' COASTAL** You may have seen Goin' Coastal golf carts and EBikes around Indian Rocks Beach for years now but not have noticed the storefront. That is because owners Danny and Denise Krais ran their business from their Indian Rocks Beach home when they moved here from Indiana in July of 2021, but they now have a new storefront at 311 Gulf Blvd next to SLYCE Pizza. The Grand-Opening is scheduled for March 23rd from 10am-5pm with food, fun, and giveaways, as well as 15% off in-stock and special-order bikes.

Goin' Coastal offers 8- and 24-hour rentals with the ability to extend to multiple days and serve the area from Clearwater Beach to Treasure Island. They also have a bike shop where you can rent or purchase EBikes, beach cruisers, and city bikes, or get repairs and service on a bike you own. Danny and Denise sponsor many of the golf cart parades and poker runs that help support the IRB Food Pantry and other causes. As a retired veteran-owned and operated company, they offer discounts to veterans and first responders. Follow them on Facebook or check out their website [GoinCoastalRental.com](http://GoinCoastalRental.com). You can reach them at (260) 668-9808.

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PINELLAS SUNCOAST FIRE & RESCUE DISTRICT

By Chief Jeffrey Davidson

As our area moves into the season with spring and summer breaks just around the corner, it is important to remember to prioritize safety in short-term rentals, whether you are a host or a guest at one of these establishments.

Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue District was one of the first fire departments in the area to enact some basic fire safety requirements specifically for short-term rentals.

The first and most important requirement for a short-term rental is installing and maintaining working smoke detectors. When at home or traveling, we take for granted that these safety features are working properly. Unfortunately, there have been fire related deaths in short-term rentals in the United States that have been attributed to the lack of smoke detectors. When you patronize a traditional hotel or motel, they must operate under a certain set of fire codes that mandate annual fire inspections and maintenance of these devices; currently this is not the case in most locations for short-term rentals. Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue District is making sure that our residents and visitors get home safely.

The second most important requirement is an up-to-date ABC fire extinguisher that is properly mounted and readily accessible. According to the National Fire Protection Association, cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and injuries. One of the reasons that short-term rentals are so popular is that these locations have a vacation vibe with all the features of a home. For some, this means less going out to eat and more cooking at home. Having a fire extinguisher in case of a cooking or other fire-related emergency can be used as a first line of defense while simultaneously alerting 911.

Some other important things to remember for both the hosts and the guests are to have functioning carbon monoxide detectors in those homes with garages or gas-burning appliances. Emergency evacuation routes and information on how to contact the local police, fire, and emergency medical services should be posted in plain sight. Keep exit paths clear of luggage, groceries, and any other items that may impede escape.

In conclusion, safety is an important aspect of short-term rental management as well as for those who utilize these types of accommodations while traveling. By making safety the number one priority, hosts can create a safe and enjoyable experience for their guests and ensure that they have a memorable experience. For more information on the Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue District short-term rental program please visit [PSFRD.org/str](http://PSFRD.org/str).



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# Community News

## 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 second Thursday of each month from 5:30-6:30pm. 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.

## FLORIDA BOTANICAL GARDENS

Submitted by Allie Fisher

The Florida Botanical Gardens welcomes the public to explore the Majeed Discovery Garden, a place connecting children to nature. This children's garden has many interactive and educational features across more than two acres. Our Children's Garden Educator will be leading preschool and family programs in the Majeed Discovery Garden this spring. Preschool programs include Plant Play, Imagination Time, Story Time and Sensory Exploration.



Family programs include topics of sustainability, reading, growing your own garden and more. View the preschool and family programs on the Event Calendar of our website at [FLBGFoundation.org/events](http://FLBGFoundation.org/events). In addition to programs, the Majeed Discovery Garden is the perfect place to host birthday parties and other events. For more information on rentals, visit [FLBGFoundation.org/rentals](http://FLBGFoundation.org/rentals). We hope to see you soon in the Majeed Discovery Garden!

# New Year, New Real Estate Needs!

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# Community News

## IRBHOME

Submitted by Marybeth Dunn

New season, same great taste! Come out and enjoy great food, music and fun for the annual Taste of IRB at Chic-A-Si Park on Saturday, April 20th from 3-9pm. The event will feature food from a variety of local restaurants, beer, wine, soda and water. Bring beach chairs and/or blankets and spend the evening listening to great music, sampling the best fare the beach has to offer, and partying with good friends and neighbors.

Admission to the event is free, dogs and coolers are prohibited. Street parking will be available or take the free shuttle from the Calvary Episcopal parking lot on 16th Avenue. You can also come by boat and use the municipal docks at Keegan Clair Park just south of the event.

Volunteers are needed, if you can donate your time, visit at [signup.com/go/LPThDcv](http://signup.com/go/LPThDcv).

## BEACH COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

The Beach Community Food Pantry (BCFP) has been providing food for anyone who needs it since 2008, and they rely on donations to successfully 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. Donate online at [OnRealm.org/CalvaryIRB/-/form/give/bcfp](http://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, or 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](http://BCFoodPantry.org).

## 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](mailto:SmithBK@comcast.net).

## ROTARY CLUB OF BELLEAIR

The Club will present Wine and Tapas on the Bluffs on Tuesday, April 9th from 5:30-7:30pm. The event will feature wine provided by Bella Vino as well as tapas from several local restaurants. Tickets will be \$40 per person and will be on sale soon.

Rotary is looking for restaurants, sponsors, and in-kind donations to be auctioned. Proceeds will benefit the Club's projects supporting local and international causes within Rotary's mission of "Service Above Self." Please call Dana Ford at (727) 481-8214 for more information.

## LOCAL ARTIST FUSES ENGINEERING WITH ART

By Pete Magnani

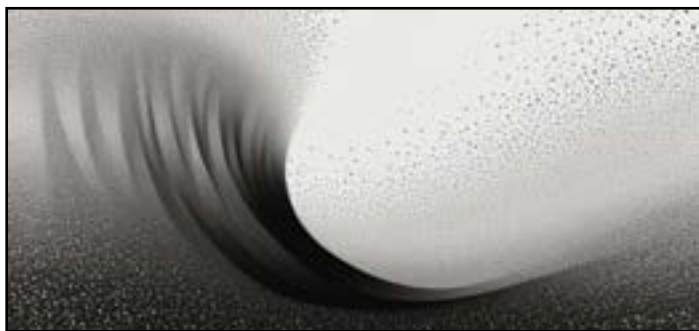
On February 22nd, Creative Pinellas held an opening reception for Nature Pix, a multimedia exhibition by Mikhail Mansion. The artist and software engineer combines computer code with sculpture to “celebrate the creative synergy between nature and technology.” The free exhibit will be displayed at The Gallery at Creative Pinellas, 12211 Walsingham Road in Largo through April 21st.

Early in 2023, Mansion was named Creative Pinellas’ Artist Laureate and given a professional artist’s grant. He envisioned creating an “exquisite data sculpture” driven by wind. “The exhibit is looking at nature through the lens of the computer,” says Mansion. Cameras and weather sensors placed in the nearby Florida Botanical Gardens capture images and data from the wind, water, and sky. The data is fed through a network into the gallery and transmitted into monolithic sculptures that are custom-made LED screens. The gallery floor is transformed by a grid of thirty-nine four-foot by four-foot LED panels into a digital canvas that displays data-driven images.

Speakers throughout the gallery provide an audible complement. “It is a sound sculpture as well,” says Mansion. “There is a real-time presence in spatial audio, so you will be hearing the wind represented in different sounds that move around the gallery space.”

The digital exhibit is surrounded by more than fifty new pieces of Mansion’s visual art. These are a blend of his hand-drawn works and what the artist calls “creative coding,” using the computer as a creative medium to generate art.

Born and raised in St. Petersburg, Mansion studied at the



University of Tampa and the Rhode Island School of Design. He began his career in the U.S. Air Force working on weapons design but became uncomfortable with the potential consequences of his work. Mansion’s engineering background translated well into his primary medium of algorithmic and generative art.

In 2021, Mansion co-founded Fairgrounds St. Pete, an art and technology museum celebrating original Florida stories. His work has been exhibited at venues such as the Smithsonian Design Museum, Miraikan - The National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation in Tokyo, and the Pyongyang Winter Olympics. He plans to move to Japan this summer to finish his Ph. D. at the University of Tokyo. Mansion published a series of articles on the Creative Pinellas website explaining digital and algorithmic art, as well as using computer code as a creative medium. You can find them at [CreativePinellas.org/Artist/Mikhail-Mansion](http://CreativePinellas.org/Artist/Mikhail-Mansion).

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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.

Classic Florida Dream Homes, LLC is a family owned building company, with considerably lower overhead than most contracting firms, and as such, these cost savings get passed on to the consumer.

### What are the benefits of a new waterfront home verses an existing home?

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- More modern higher ceilings vs. yesterday's 8' ceilings
- 2024 Building and mechanical codes today vs. outdated systems for Electric, A/C & Plumbing
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# Community News



## ROTARY CLUB OF INDIAN ROCKS BEACH

Submitted by David Kline

The Rotary Club of Indian Rocks Beach is excited to announce that the 5th Annual Rotary Runs The Beach will take place on beautiful Indian Rocks Beach on Saturday, March 9th. This fun and unique, family-friendly event will begin at 8am at the Indian Rocks Beach Access at 1700 Gulf Blvd. This is a scenic 5K race and 1 mile walk/run along the beautiful shoreline of Indian Rocks Beach. The 5K race will be timed, with awards presented for age-group and overall winners.

Once again, the main sponsor is Crabby Bill's, the iconic beach vibe restaurant. Numerous other local and national organizations are also joining in to sponsor this family friendly fundraiser. Many sponsors and local vendors will be on hand with their products and services on the beach. A post-race after-party will take place at Guilty Sea.

Proceeds from Rotary Runs The Beach will benefit the Indian Rocks Rotary Foundation, Inc. which supports numerous community service and charitable programs, including Rotary's Polio Plus initiative to eradicate polio from the globe; promoting peace; clean water and sanitation; protecting the environment; scholarships for local high school students, donations to local food banks, and many other local and international causes.

For more information or to register, please visit: [runsignup.com/Race/FL/IndianRocksBeach/RotaryRunsTheBeach](https://runsignup.com/Race/FL/IndianRocksBeach/RotaryRunsTheBeach).



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[vacationdonations.org](https://vacationdonations.org)



Rotary Big Game Raffle Winners

# 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.

## INDIAN ROCKS BEACH LIBRARY

The library is open Mon-Fri from 10am-4pm. They host the "On the Rocks Book Club" on the last Tuesday of the month at 4pm in the library. Contact the library at (727) 596-1822 for more information on the club and book selections. Pre-readers' story time is on Wednesdays 11:30am. Join them for a story, songs, and activities.

The library is located at 1507 Bay Palm Blvd.

## CALVARY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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

- Bell Workshop and Concert March 2nd at 2pm
- American Guild of Organists Lenten Concert March 5th at noon
- Easter Organ Duo Concert April 13th at 2pm

Concerts are free and parking is limited. For more information, visit [CalvaryIRB.org/Concerts](http://CalvaryIRB.org/Concerts).

## BELLEAIR BEACH LADIES LUNCHEON CLUB

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 luncheon is 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](mailto:dsbrown55@yahoo.com).



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# Community News

## GREENTOWN KIDS

Submitted by Allie DeVore

In January, GreenTown Kids hosted our annual Clean Beach, Clean Slate Beach Cleanup. Thanks to the 60 volunteers who came out and helped pick up 65 pounds of trash from the beach and surrounding accesses to keep our beach and water clean and healthy! Shout out to our local community organization and business sponsors for supporting our beach cleanup efforts.



This month, we will be planting our spring gardens at the IRB Community Garden and Anona Elementary School. All volunteers are welcome to help refresh the Community Garden in the IRB Nature Preserve Sunday, March 3rd 1-3pm.

This season at Anona, GreenTown Kids will sponsor and teach 1st grade students how to plant spring veggies in their class's Earthboxes and 3rd grade students to start a new garden project setting up, planting, and taking care of veggies and native plants in planters on campus donated by the County. We can't wait to help all the greenies learn about gardening and watch everything come to life!

GTK is excited for Greenfest hosted by Church of the Isles on March 9th and will have fun kids activities at our table.

April is Earth Month! We will host our annual Earth Day Great American Cleanup on April 21, 12-2pm at the 17th Ave Access in IRB.

GreenTown Kids is a 501(c)(3) public charity made possible in part by donors and volunteers like you. Thank you for your support! School volunteer hours are available. To learn more, visit [GreenTownKids.org](http://GreenTownKids.org), follow us on social media @GreenTown Kids or email: [GreenTownKids@gmail.com](mailto:GreenTownKids@gmail.com).

## 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](http://CommunityDentalClinic.net) or contact Executive Director Theresa White at (727) 216-6155 ext. 5 or [Theresa@CommunityDTLClinic.org](mailto:Theresa@CommunityDTLClinic.org).

## INDIAN ROCKS BEACH HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Submitted by Nan Jensen

The museum will be hosting a covered dish luncheon on April 13th beginning at 12pm. We can guarantee some delicious food, an interesting speaker who will open a window to our county's past, and an opportunity to meet new friends or reconnect with old ones. We are asking those who want to attend the luncheon to bring a dish to share with the group. The museum is located at 203 4th Avenue across from the post office. The museum is looking for volunteers to serve as hosts during our opening hours. Training will be provided. Contact Carol McGlaughlin at 727-420-8662 if you are interested in becoming a volunteer.

## VACATION DONATIONS

Submitted by Diane Daniel

On Saturday, March 30, from 8:30-11:30 am, Vacation Donations will hold a citywide food drive aimed at departing vacationers. Volunteers are needed to help receive food. Accepted items are unopened perishables and nonperishables. The food will go directly to Lifeline Pantry at St. Jerome in Largo. For up-to-date drop-off locations, please check the "News" heading at [VacationDonations.org](http://VacationDonations.org). For more info or to volunteer, please contact me at [VacationDonations@gmail.com](mailto:VacationDonations@gmail.com) or (727) 201-2333. Thank you for spreading the word to vacationers, owners/property managers, and cleaners!

## ISLAND ESTATES YACHT CLUB

The men of the Island Estates Yacht Club (IEYC) hosted their annual club event at DeLuka's restaurant in Clearwater on February 24th. This year's theme was Nautical Jeopardy. The Social Committee has a full slate of events planned for this spring, including a Sunday Brunch at the Island Way Grill, an adventure on the Little Toot out of Clearwater Marina, and a sunset beach party on Sand Key.

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. Please email [islandestatesyc@gmail.com](mailto:islandestatesyc@gmail.com) if you have any questions.

## 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](http://TampaBayWatch.org/education-main/spring-break-camp). for more information or to register.

# Community News



Mayor Kennedy and Members of the Big C

We at the Indian Rocks Beach Neighborhood News Magazine would like to congratulate Mayor Joanne "Cookie" Moston Kennedy on being named president of the Barrier Island Gulf Council (Big C). The Big C is a governmental council including eleven municipalities from St. Pete Beach to Clearwater. It encourages communications between the barrier islands cities to focus on mutual problems, including tourism, recycling, public transportation and safety, waterway regulation, and taxation.

The City of Indian Rocks Beach will host a reception for Mayor-Commissioner Kennedy following the swearing-in of the incoming City Commissioners on March 28th at 6pm. The reception will honor her years of dedicated service to the city as a commissioner, board member, and mayor.

## REMEMBER ME NFP

Submitted by Nan Prevost

Remember Me is a nonprofit for suicide prevention and drug overdose. We are a free Narcan distributor with education. Narcan is used to treat opioids overdoses.

We now offer a free Suicide Bereavement Support Group meeting monthly at the Largo Public Library. Our next meeting is March 19th from 6-8pm. This is a group for survivors of suicide only, meant to be a safe and confidential place to share stories with other survivors.

Starting March 26th, we will be offering our Paddle for Prevention mental health support group paddle every second and fourth Tuesday of the month. These paddleboard events are for individuals, groups and families to support mental health with peer-to-peer conversations of their experience with suicide. Visit our website at [www.RememberMeNP.com](http://www.RememberMeNP.com) or call (727) 688-4544 for more information.

"Paws Up for Mental Health" is a free mental health support group for families and caregivers of children ages 6 months -12 years of age. We use music, puppets, dance, and educational materials for brain development and establish a mental health pledge. Participants also receive a free book "Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health." Classes will be held at the Largo Public library on March 11th, April 8th, and May 13th from 10:30-11:15am.

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# Community News



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## ACTION 2000

Submitted by Daryl Frahn

**A2K Celebrates 25 Years!**  
 We're thrilled to announce that 2024 marks the 25th anniversary of IRB Action 2000, and we want to celebrate this milestone with all of YOU! Join us for a memorable evening of festivities at Kolb Park on Thursday, May 4th from 5-8 pm, as we come together to commemorate a quarter-century of community spirit and progress.

Come enjoy Music in the Park, featuring the Surfin' Raccoon's Band. This free, family-friendly event promises something for everyone, with food trucks offering a delectable array of culinary delights and sweet treats, along with wine and beer to toast to the occasion. Stay tuned for more details, which will soon be posted on the A2K website and Facebook pages.



**What's new for 2024?** The Executive Team kicked off the year with a bang, starting the January meeting with a food-filled social gathering before diving into the business at hand. Our Project Team has been hard at work, identifying the top beautification priorities for 2024, with a keen focus on enhancing our public spaces to make them more attractive and engaging for all.

**IRB Historical Markers** - Keep your eyes peeled for two exciting additions to our historical landscape! Two new markers—one located at 18th Avenue and another at Kooky Coconut's at 8th Avenue—will be installed by the end of March.

The 18th Ave marker will highlight the fascinating history of the dredging that shaped many of our beloved residential neighborhoods, along with the remarkable tale of how the majestic oak on 18th was preserved. Meanwhile, the new marker at Kooky's will focus on the evolution of Gulf Blvd.'s business development over the years.

With these latest additions, the total number of markers across the City will reach 14, each one weaving a unique narrative about IRB's rich history. This collaborative effort between A2K, the IRB Historical Museum, and the City of Indian Rocks Beach underscores our shared commitment to preserving and honoring our community's heritage.

Join us as we embark on this journey of celebration, reflection, and progress. Together, let's continue to build a future that honors our past and enriches the lives of generations to come! We invite you to be a part of A2K. Join us at our monthly meetings at City on the second Monday of the month at 6:30PM.

A2K is a non-profit community organization that has been serving Indian Rocks Beach for 25 years! We work to preserve the unique small-town character of IRB while continually beautifying our public places for all to enjoy.

Visit our website at [IRBAction2000.com](http://IRBAction2000.com).

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# Community News

## BEACH ART CENTER

Submitted byt Andrea Harms

Did you know the Beach Art Center is a non-profit organization that relies on our community for support? Many people who visit the center assume we are funded by the City, but this is not the case. The City of IRB graciously provides some funding each year, as do local community organizations such as IRB Home and IRB Action 2000. But most of our operating funds come from class and workshop income, membership fees, donations, and fundraisers like our annual Gala.

We have so much to offer the people who live in and visit our beautiful community. Weekly classes this Spring include Acrylics, Oil Painting, Mixed Media, Drawing, Watercolor, and Pottery. Drop in for one class or sign up for as many as you want. Become a Member of the art center to receive a discount on weekly classes.

Workshops include Impressionist Painting with local Plein Aire Cottage Artist, Violetta Chandler and our popular "Paint Like Bob Ross" workshops with certified Ross instructor, Chrissy Samson. Each month Chrissy shows her students how to paint a gorgeous outdoor scene in Bob Ross style.

If you haven't tried one of our "Art on the Rocks" classes, this spring is a great time to tap into your creative side. These classes are for anyone looking to relax and have some fun. Paint an Egret, a colorful Roseate Spoonbill, or a portrait of your pet! You'll be amazed at your beautiful watercolor beach scene that's ready to frame and hang on your wall. Sign up with a friend and create a Mandala on a mug or play with clay and make a pottery bird. All of these "make it and take it" classes are \$38 and include all the supplies you need. Just sign up and show up!

Don't forget we have Creative Kids Classes too. This new program needs your support. We offer monthly classes on the weekend for kids. Drop them off for some fun and enjoy some free time or go to the beach! We're making a Clay Spring Flower Bowl on Saturday, March 9th.



We are very happy to announce the return of Creative Kids Summer Camp for 7 weeks beginning June 3rd. Each week, we offer two themed camps – an art camp and a clay camp. Registration opens March 1st. Be sure to check out the scholarships available through Creative Pinellas. Find all the details at [BeachArtCenter.org/kids-camp](http://BeachArtCenter.org/kids-camp).

We hope you will visit our galleries showcasing our student's work in our annual Student-Teacher Show through March 22nd. Next up is one of our favorite gallery exhibits, "Poetry in Motion." Art take-in for this unique show is March 25-27. You are invited to our Poetry in Motion Gallery Reception on April 12th from 6-8pm.

Visit [Greentownkids.org](http://Greentownkids.org) to become a member.

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**Clearwater:** Vacant buildable lot | 3.20 Acres MOL | 300 ft. of seawall.  
Sold for \$24,750,000  
By Kelly Kepler and Sylvia Tzekas



**Indian Shores:** Luxury Condo in Onella Building 4 Beds | 3 Baths | 3,620 sq. ft.  
Sold for \$4,200,000



**Belleair Beach:** Amazing 100ft south facing deep water lot | 3 Beds | 2 Baths.  
Listed at \$2,099,000



**Indian Shores:** Northwest corner remodeled penthouse | 3 Beds | 2 Baths.  
Listed at \$1,900,000.



**Island Estates:** Waterfront residence surrounded by deep water | 4 Beds | 3 Baths.  
Listed at \$1,699,000.



**St. Petersburg:** Wide open views of Tampa Bay | 2 Beds | 1 Bath.  
Listed at \$1,399,000

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