

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

including Sand Key and Island Estates

Magazine

FROM FARMER TO TAX ASSESSOR

By Bob Griffin, Local Historian

The process for collecting our property taxes involves many people. The Pinellas County Commission, School Board, and local city governments determine the amount your property is taxed, but it all begins with what the Pinellas County Property Appraiser (formerly known as the Tax Assessor) says your property is worth. The Property Appraiser is charged with establishing the value of every parcel of land in the county. As you can imagine, it is no small job.

Pinellas County was established on January 1, 1912, as Florida's 48th county after a referendum where 1,379 of the 1,884 registered voters voted to approve it. Then Governor Albert Gilchrist appointed Thomas J. Northrup of St. Petersburg to be the county's first Tax Assessor. He was charged with "tracking all taxable property within the county, both real and personal." That first year, Pinellas County's tax roll listed 14,000 taxpayers and 12,313 parcels of property, valued at \$4,854,288.

The Governor also created the office of Voting Registrar (Supervisor of Elections) and Charlie Wilcox accepted an interim appointment to that office in 1916. In 1918, he became the permanent Director and won that department's first election in 1921. Wilcox's job included collecting a one dollar "poll tax" from every voter. After three years, instead of running for reelection, he chose to run for Tax Assessor. He won that election and served for twenty-four years, but not consecutively.



Charlie Wilcox, Courtesy of Heritage Village Archives & Library

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Meet the Artist

Local artist Dee Rodrigues uses glass, sand, and talent to craft beautiful and unique creations.

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Make a Plan for Your Pets

Read these tips to make sure your pets are covered under your hurricane preparedness plan.

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Hidden Gem

Tucked away in Historic Old Northeast St. Pete, Sunken Gardens is an oasis of flora and fauna that dates back to the 1930s.

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CREDITS



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CLEARWATER BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

Inside, you will find articles and local information about the nearby area inside. We call it Neighborhood News because it is about your neighborhood - Clearwater Beach. It is mailed to the entire 33767 zip code including Island Estates and Sand Key - about 6,000 households, six times a year.

You can pick up additional copies at the Beach Chamber Office, The Beach Rec Center, Shorty's Gourmet Deli, Sand Key Realty or the Island Estates UPS.

We hope you enjoy our newsletter and we want your input. Did you like this issue? What suggestions do you have for future articles? Call or email us with your comments, or take our online survey at beachnewsletters.com.

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

Thank you for reading,
Lora and Pete Magnani (813) 361-7376
Lora@MagriffProductions.com

SEE YOU AGAIN IN AUGUST

CITY NUMBERS

CITY HALL	562-4250
600 Cleveland St, Ste 600, www.clearwater-fl.com	
MAYOR OFFICE	562-4050
MAYOR - Bruce Rector	
CITY COUNCIL	562-4050
Ryan Cotton - Seat 2 • Mike Mannino - Seat 3 • David Allbritton - Seat 4 Lina Teixeira - Seat 5	
CITY MANAGER	562-4040
Jennifer Poirrier	
ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER	562-4040
BUILDING PERMITS	562-4567
HUMAN RESOURCES	562-4870
PLANNING & ZONING	562-4567
PUBLIC SERVICES	562-4950
PUBLIC UTILITIES	562-4600
PUBLIC UTILITIES EMERGENCY	462-6633
CLEARWATER GAS	562-4980
SOLID WASTE	562-4920
PIER 60	462-6466
MARINA	462-6954
BEACH REC CENTER	462-6138
BEACH LIBRARY	462-6138
VISITOR INFO CENTER	442-3604
BEACH AQUATIC FACILITY	462-6020
POLICE NON-EMERGENCY	562-4242
FIRE DEPARTMENT	562-4334
POLICE HOT LINE	562-4080
NEIGHBORHOOD LIAISON	562-4554

AMPLIFY Clearwater	461-0011
1346 S Fort Harrison Ave, Clearwater	
SAND KEY PARK	588-4852
Shelter Reservations, PinellasCounty.org/park	
CLEARWATER AQUARIUM	441-1790
249 Windward Passage, Island Estates	
JOLLY TROLLEY	445-1200
CLEARWATER BEACH MARINA	562-4955

CLEARWATER YACHT CLUB	447-6000
830 Bayway Blvd S.	
CLEARWATER SAILING CTR	517-7776
CARLOUEL HOMEOWNERS ASSN	
Sue Williams, President 446-4471	
CLEARWATER BEACH ASSOCIATION	
Sam Hutkin hutloan@aol.com	
CLEARWATER GARDEN CLUB	316-5504
ISLAND ESTATES CIVIC ASSOCIATION	
David Farrar, President 813-810-3564	
ISLAND ESTATES WOMEN'S CLUB	
Trisha Rodriguez, President 262-620-3866	
FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY	
Linda Owens 260-894-0270	
CLEARWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY	
Allison Dolan 754-8017	

PINELLAS COUNTY INFO	464-3000
COMMISSION OFFICES	464-3377
Chris Latvala 464-3278	
STATE:	
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FLORIDA UNITED STATES SENATORS:	
Marco Rubio 202-224-3041 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

JUNE

No Fertilizing (June -Sept)	
Hurricane Season Begins	1
World Reef Awareness Day	1
1st Responders Night Baycare Ballpark	1
Disaster Prep Tax Holiday	1-14
Blue Crab and R&B Fest Tropicana	1
D-Day Remembrance Day	6
City Council Meeting	6
Clearwater Garden Club Work Day	8
Hope Expo St Pete	8
World Oceans Day Tradewinds	8
US Army Birthday	14
Flag Day	14
Big Cleanup Beachcomber	14
Strike Out Cancer Baycare Ballpark	14
CLW Smooth Jazz Ruth Eckerd	14-15
Third Saturdays at Pinewood	15
Father's Day	16
City Council Meeting	18
Juneteenth	19
Summer Solstice	20
City Council Meeting	20
Tampa Bay Boat Show	21-23
St Pete Pride Parade	22

JULY

Freedom Month Tax Holiday	1-31
Independence Day	4
Fireworks at Coachman Park	4
Suncoast Ladies Classic St Pete	11-13
Arts and Crafts Bazaar Largo	13
Tarpon Springs Art and Craft Fest	13-14
Bastille Day	14
National Pet Fire Safety Day	15
MLB All Star Game	16
City Council Meeting	18
Christmas in July Baycare Ballpark	19
Third Saturdays at Pinewood	20
Summer Olympics Begin	26
Skin Cancer Screening Pier 60	27
Sad Summer Festival at The Sound	27
Parents Day	28
Back to School Tax Holiday Begins	29

AUGUST

First Preseason Football Game	1
US Coast Guard Birthday	4
UB40 at The Sound	8
Fireworks at Baycare Ballpark	17
Third Saturdays at Pinewood	17

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880 Mandalay Avenue #N802 | Clearwater Beach
1 Beds | 1 Baths | 775 sqft | \$495,000

660 Island Way #606 | Clearwater Beach
2 Beds | 2 Baths | 1,350 sqft | \$399,900

SOLD



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Did You Know



NEW STAMPS Two new 68¢ Forever postage stamps will be available in June. Last March, The United States Postal Service (USPS) Stamp Showdown invited social media users to vote for their favorite among eight stamps in a bracket system designed like those used by the NCAA's March Madness. The conservation-themed stamp "Protect Sea Turtles" won first place and will be released on June 11th. The eighteen-stamp sheet features photographs of six unique sea turtle species taken by various photographers.

"Carnival Nights" received second place, showcasing the energy and color of a nighttime summer carnival. These sheets of twenty stamps will be released June 6th.

A panel of stamps featuring images captured by iconic photographer Ansel Adams was released in May. The panel features sixteen of Adams' most famous images in his "straight photography" style, which depicts the scene or subject in sharp focus and detail.

SALES TAX HOLIDAYS Shoppers will have several opportunities to save on sales taxes this summer. The "Disaster Preparedness" holidays will be held June 1st - 14th and August 24th - September 6th and includes items like flashlights, batteries, plastic sheeting, and portable radios.

"Back to School" will be July 29th - August 11th with no sales tax on certain school supplies, clothing, learning aids and computers.

July is "Freedom Month," with no sales tax due on admissions to concerts, fairs, and other events. Certain boating, camping, and general outdoor supplies are also tax-free.

The "Skilled Workers" event will take place September 1st - 7th and includes certain tools, safety equipment, and toolboxes used by trade workers.

Each tax holiday has limitations on products and their prices. Visit FloridaRevenue.com/Pages/SalesTaxHolidays.aspx for detailed information.

OUR NEXT ISSUE IS AUGUST If you need another copy of this magazine, pick up one up at the library, rec center, or the UPS Store on Island Estates. If you need more than a few, call (813) 361-7376.

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INTRACOASTAL BOATHOUSE STILL AVAILABLE

The historic property at 81 Gulf Blvd was offered for sale in April and is currently listed at \$2,499,500. The home was built by Harry Ulmer, one of Largo's pioneers, and was completed in 1912. The original two-story structure featured three boat wells accessed from the Intracoastal Waterway. It was bought by local realtor Norman Bie in 1938 for \$300. Bie remodeled the house, closing off the wells and adding a third story, increasing the home's size to 3,300 square feet. Bie's family sold the property last year for 1.5 million.

OPERATION MEDICINE CABINET Drop off your expired or unused medications during business hours at Operation Medicine Cabinet drop boxes located throughout Pinellas County.

Operation Medicine Cabinet aims to Provide Awareness about prescription drug abuse, protect children from accidentally ingesting medications, and provide the public with a safe, proper way to dispose of medications.

Safely remove medication from bottles and place in ziplock bags. Remove labels from bottles and destroy them. Find a dropbox near you at PCSOWeb.com/omc.



OTTER OVERLOAD Clearwater Marine Aquarium is pleased to announce the arrival of Opie, a young male North American river otter, to its Otter Oasis. Opie joins the CMA family, where he will reside with Walle and Boomer, who have been captivating visitors since their arrival in 2012 and 2018, respectively. After several weeks of acclimation behind the scenes, Opie has been introduced to Walle and Boomer and guests can see him adjust to his new habitat. Opie's name holds a special significance, as it pays tribute to the late Mary Opall, the director of Nature World Wildlife Sanctuary, a 501c-3 organization dedicated to rescuing, rehabilitating, and releasing injured or orphaned wildlife. Mary, who passed away after being diagnosed with stage four cancer, dedicated her life to wildlife conservation and played a pivotal role in the sanctuary's success. For more information about CMA and its newest resident, visit CMAquarium.org.

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Charlie Wilcox, Continued



Charlie Wilcox and Staff, Courtesy of Heritage Village Archives & Library

In 1924, Charles (Charlie) Albert Wilcox, a longtime area resident became the County's third Tax Assessor / Appraiser. Charlie was born in New York in 1889; his father, Edward Everett Wilcox, moved the family to the Anona area in the early 1900s.

Edward bought many acres of land east of Indian Rocks Road. A railroad ran to the Belleview Biltmore on its way to St. Petersburg. It had a short spur to take people to Indian Rocks Beach, through Anona. Edward built a small house near that railroad, where he also planted a citrus grove and opened a sawmill. It was near today's Anona United Methodist Church.

When the Indian Rocks Bridge opened, the spur was discontinued, and the tracks were converted into a road, first called "Railroad Road" and later renamed "Wilcox Road."

When the Wilcox family first moved to Anona, few people lived there. The earliest settlers were the McMullens, Lowes, Whitehursts, Hammocks, Meares, and Wilcoxes. As primarily the only families, they frequently married each other.

Charlie and Ruth Hammock went to school together and "knew each other forever" doing all the things kids did back then - swimming, picnicking, fishing, taking trips to towns, and attending fairs and dances. Ruth's father was a Hammock, her mother a Whitehurst. Charlie and Ruth married in 1910, moved into his father's house and quickly became known as the "Anona Wilcoxes."

Charlie and Ruth had seven children, all of whom went to Anona Elementary and later Clearwater High School.

Charlie followed his father's lead and bought land in the Anona area. Soon he had one hundred and sixty acres in the area. Charlie worked at his father's sawmill, but soon after Ruth and Charlie were married, he was in a terrible accident there. He was taken to Morton Plant Hospital, where he almost died; they were forced to amputate his left arm.

After the accident, he could not do the work required at the sawmill and instead took a job in the office of a canning plant. There he learned how to run a business. Mary Wilcox Rogers, one of Charlie's daughters, once said, "It was said he could do more things with only one arm, than most men with two."

Charlie loved to grow things. He always had citrus groves and loved the fruit business. He eventually opened Wilcox Nursery on Indian Rocks Road for his two sons, Everett and Norman. His son David opened a florist shop in the same building.

When Charlie was appointed to the office of Voting Registrar, he needed to live closer to downtown Clearwater, and moved the family—all seven kids. "Clearwater was such a wonderful little town to grow up in," said his wife, Ruth. Soon after the move, Charlie was elected to the office of County Tax Assessor, where he introduced several changes, which have endured today. The foremost was to send a notice to taxpayers reminding them to file for

homestead exemption to help reduce their overall tax.

Charlie lost reelection in 1929 to Republican opponent Herschel Sterling. The two ran against each other again in 1933, Charlie won and continued to serve until he retired in 1949. Herschel Sterling went on to serve from 1949-1961.

Charlie and Ruth's income primarily came from his government job and the citrus groves (in good years). They were said to have lived very frugally and sent all seven children to college.

Upon Charlie's retirement, they sold their Clearwater house and moved back to Anona. He began building his dream house on the northwest corner of Indian Rocks and Josephine Roads, across the street from Wilcox Nursery. Unfortunately, in 1951, during the construction, Charlie died at the early age of 62. Ruth finished the house and lived there until 1980, when at the age of 91, she too passed away.

At the time of his retirement, Charles A. Wilcox had been Pinellas County's fourth and sixth Tax Assessor. He served thirty-two years in office, eight as the Voting Registrar (1916-1924) and 24 years as Tax Assessor (1925-1929 and 1933-1949). He won six elections.

In 1974, the voters changed the name from Tax Assessor to Property Appraiser as the office doesn't levy taxes — others determine the tax rates. The Property Appraiser determines the value of the property.

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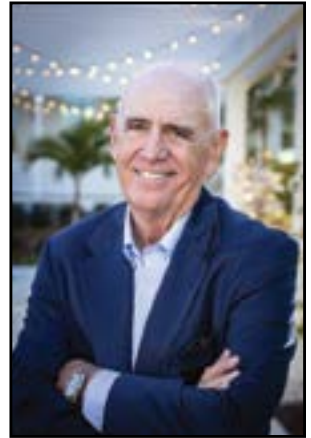

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RETIREMENT? WHAT'S THAT?

by Ray Ferrara, ProVise Management Group

As the Greatest Generation began retirement at about age 65, they had the comfort of knowing that Social Security was in good shape, that they had a guaranteed pension, and that the economy was in rather good shape. Things are quite different today.



Social Security is expected to run out of money in about a decade, very few have a traditional pension, and the economy seems to be on shaky ground. 66% of those that are between the ages of 55 and 65 think they will work past age 65 according to a recent survey by Nationwide. Worse still, 27% said they would have to live below their lifestyle in retirement.

Among the fears associated with retirement are replacing a paycheck and outliving the money saved. In short, how does one create financial security and the peace of mind that comes with it?

If you have a retirement plan available through work with a matching contribution, make sure that at a minimum you are saving enough to get the entire matching contribution. If you are trying to catch up, put as much as possible into the plan.

When you are ready to retire that paycheck will come from Social Security, savings, and maybe a pension. It is no easy task to turn on a withdrawal plan that will last a lifetime. A married couple retiring at age 65 could easily live another 30 years. It is not a task to do on your own and it requires a serious analysis. This is why we advocate for everyone getting ready or entering retirement to have a written retirement plan.

What should it entail? It is going to look at sources of income and more. How will you pay for healthcare? When and how do you take Social Security? What do you do with your life insurance now that you may not need it? How will you cover long-term care expenses? Is your estate plan up to date?

The ability to retire is not about age. Think of it this way – it is when work becomes optional. Do you really want to do this all by yourself? Why not work with a fiduciary financial planner that will help in preparing for retirement? We offer a one-hour complimentary consultation in our Clearwater office or by Zoom to help you begin tailoring a retirement plan to your unique situation.

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

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

THROW SOME FUN INTO YOUR DAY WITH DISC GOLF

By Nathaniel Jenks, local author

If you are seeking a new and challenging outdoor activity for the whole family, look no further than disc golf. The Largo/Clearwater area is blessed with three excellent courses and a great shop to buy discs and accessories. Once you are properly equipped, it is free to play!



Like regular ball golf, disc golf has a par-based scoring system. You throw the disc from a concrete tee pad and shoot toward a pin, which in the case of disc golf is a metal basket with chains hanging from it to stop the flight of the disc. There are a wide variety of discs for long drives, mid-range shots, and putting.

Aaron Tishim is the owner of Saltwater Crew Disc Golf Pro Shop, which is located directly across from Taylor Park beneath Your Pizza Shop on 8th Ave SW in Largo. After running local events and doing business online for several years, Aaron was able to establish his brick-and-mortar business in the space formerly occupied by the golf pro shop for the now-defunct Pinecrest golf course.

"I first started playing disc golf 20 or so years ago. I found some discs, found a course, and just threw around with friends," says Tishim. "We'd tow our kids around in wagons to get them outside. You don't have to be a super-advanced player to enjoy the game."

With the Taylor Park disc golf course right across the street, you can pick up some discs at Saltwater Crew, play a round of golf, and then relax with pizza and beverages at Your Pizza Shop. "Taylor Park is pretty scenic," says Tishim. "The thing that many people love about Taylor is that it has multiple pin positions, so it changes regularly."

The other two courses are in Clearwater off Drew Street on opposite sides of US 19. Cliff Stephens Park is just east of the highway and connects to a string of parks via a picturesque walking/biking trail. "Cliff Stephens is an iconic course here. It has a very good mix of shots, with a lot of water hazards and different challenges," Tishim says. Cliff Stephens is also the home course of 12-time World Champion Ken Climo.

On the west side of US 19, only about a mile away, is NE Coachman Park. In Tishim's opinion, "it's a fun course if you're a lesser-developed player, so you probably won't lose many discs."

There is also a beginner-friendly, 9-hole disc golf course at Hammock Park in Dunedin, and a more advanced course at Sheffield Park in Oldsmar.

Whether it's just a fun outing with family and friends, or you want to become a competitive player, disc golf is a fantastic way to be active in a peaceful park setting.

Disc Golf Shop

- Saltwater Crew Disc Golf Shop – 1200 8th Ave SW Largo

Local Courses

- Taylor Park – 1100 8th Ave SW Largo, FL 33770
- NE Coachman Park – 1120 Old Coachman Rd Clearwater
- Cliff Stephens Park – 901 Fairwood Ave Clearwater
- Hammock Park – 1900 San Mateo Dr Dunedin
- Sheffield Park – 1923 Cutty Bay Ct Oldsmar

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Bar & Restaurant News

NEW RESTAURANT AND VENUE The location at 752 S. Gulfview Blvd will be the first for Hogg Daddy's Beach Bar & Grill. Gerstles Owner Erik White partnered with Jeff Hawks in November 2023 to start a new "beach concept."



"The success of Gerstles was the perfect foundation for us to come in and focus on a concept that had been in the making for 10 years," said Jeff Hawks. "My love for Hogfish and Memphis BBQ got it started and we will be launching a never-done-before Specialty Oyster Menu."

The menu includes "The World-Famous Boss Hogg Sandwich"(Hogfish), Seafood Margarita (shrimp, crab, and scallops diced up in salsa), and Beach Nachos on plantain chips. Hogg Daddy's will smoke its own pork and brisket, with Memphis-style barbecue sauce.

The venue has capacity for large events with live entertainment, the spring break party had over 1000 attendees. Owners hope the location becomes a hotbed for emerging musicians and artists.

Hogg Daddy's Beach Bar and Grill is located at 752 S. Gulfview Blvd., Clearwater Beach.

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MAINE COMES TO BELLEAIR BLUFFS

Dan Beck grew up in Annapolis, a fishing community in Maryland. His career as a restaurant seafood buyer sourcing fresh Maine lobster led Beck to open his first Mason's Famous Lobster Rolls in Annapolis. The

concept is simple – "a taste of luxury without the pretension." Mason's now has over 30 locations in 12 states, Washington, D.C., and Milan, Italy.

The newest Florida location opened in Belleair Bluffs last month. In addition to classic chilled or warm lobster and shrimp rolls, it offers salads, lobster bisque, clam chowder, and a kids' menu.

Mason's Belleair Bluffs is located at 2907 West Bay Drive. View the menu and order online at MasonsLobster.com.

NEW RULES FOR DELIVERY SERVICES A new law requires significant changes to food delivery service in Florida. It requires food delivery platforms like Doordash and UberEats to provide customers with an itemized bill including tax, service charges and anticipated date and time of delivery.

The law also mandates that delivery providers give restaurants a method of communicating with the consumer for up to two hours after the order is picked up for delivery. Also, delivery platforms may not alter a food service establishment's price without a written agreement and must remove a restaurant listing within ten days upon the establishment's request for removal.

Bar & Restaurant News

NEW ON THE BEACH

Chaser's North Beach, formerly Senor Tequilas, opened in April. Owner Bill Rudy, a Wisconsin native, started visiting Clearwater beach a little over three years ago and says, "it just feels like home."

After buying a home in Belleair Beach he brought his passion and vision for an elevated sports bar to Clearwater Beach's North Beach.



Chaser's has Happy Hour from 3-6pm every day and live music Thursday-Saturday. They offer 18 beers on tap, burgers that are hand-made to order, homemade wing sauces, and of course Wisconsin's famous cheese curds. Chaser's is located at 486 Poinsettia Avenue next door to the public parking garage. The restaurant is open daily at 3pm. Follow them on Facebook or call (727) 386-9686 for more information about specials and upcoming entertainment.

MAKEOVER AND MARTINIS Some area Village Inn restaurants are getting a new look along with beer, wine, and full liquor bar. Franchise owner Dan Lehan implemented the changes at his St. Petersburg, Clearwater, and Oldsmar locations, and says the changes will be implemented at all nine of his restaurants.

The menu has some updates as well, but has retained most customer favorites such as breakfast skillet, patty melts, and chicken-fried steak. New features include lemon artichoke chicken, albacore tuna melt, and chocolate hazelnut banana crepes. The classic pie menu will also remain.

The nearest updated location is the Clearwater restaurant at 2659 Roosevelt Blvd. Visit VillageInn.com/Clearwater-FL to view the new menu.

CONGRATUALIONS

Visit St. Pete-Clearwater asked residents and visitors to rank their favorite beaches, hotels, restaurants, and attractions. Salt Rock Grill won Best Restaurant in the "\$\$\$" category. Island Way Grill won the award for Best Brunch. Frenchy's



Rockaway Grill took the prize for Best Grouper. Clearwater Marine Aquarium won Best Family Activities. View the winners at VisitStPeteClearwater.com/bestthingstodo.

CLOSED Orlando-based seafood chain Red Lobster closed 87 locations across 27 states last month after considering filing for bankruptcy protection. Sixteen Florida restaurants were shuttered, including two in Tampa and the Largo location at 10500 Ulmerton Road. The restaurant at 26320 U.S. Highway 19 is still open.

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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By Pete Magnani, Publisher

Occasionally a traumatic event can turn into a fresh and successful new beginning. Artist Dee Rodrigues found her calling after such an experience. Rodrigues was raised in Southington, Connecticut and began her career as a surgical assistant at a dental practice. While visiting the beachside town of Old Saybrook, she saw a stained glass piece in the window of a small shop and went in to buy it for a wedding gift. The owner said he could sell the artwork to her, but also mentioned that he taught a four-day class on making stained glass art. If she took the class, she could make the gift herself. Rodrigues returned for the class, and her journey as an artist began.

When the practice she worked for closed, Rodrigues moved to Florida. After working in the dental field as a temporary employee for two years, she opened her own temp agency, and eventually accumulated five houses that she rented out. She learned to do her own maintenance, including how to use a trowel for grouting and stucco. She continued developing her growing talent for stained glass and other forms of art.

Several years later, Rodrigues desired a career change and went to work for Publix. She started in the deli but hoped to eventually use her trowel skills decorating cakes in the bakery. After several years of unsuccessful attempts to transfer, she quit and took a job at a small mom and pop bakery. On her first day, as she was dipping a spatula into a pot of boiling water, the pot tipped over, and she sustained third-degree burns to her leg and foot.

During the eleven months of convalescence, Rodrigues decided it was time to try and make her art into a career. "I looked into myself, didn't like what I found, and I decided to change," said Rodrigues. "With baby steps, guided by the heart, I went after the life I should have had years before."

In 2010, she found a studio at the Institute for Creative Arts in Dunedin and founded DelorGlassDesign, producing stained glass and sand art, mosaics, and sculptures. She creates seascapes and nautical artwork, music-themed pieces like guitars and concert scenes, and stained glass portraits. Steve Tyler, lead singer of the band Aerosmith, is proud owner of *Miss Dream On*, pictured below.



Rodrigues' talent is particularly obvious in her quirkier, more unique work. *Themba*, pictured to the left, combines sculpture, metalwork, stained glass, and paint depicting a South African tribal woman from the Ndebel Tribe. It is mounted on a beautiful cedar base. Rodrigues hopes to see the statue in an African cultural history museum as an education display.

In 2012, Rodrigues was given another opportunity to put her trowel skills to use. She was commissioned by the Clearwater Marine Aquarium to make the first piece for its *Clearwater's Dolphins* exhibition. She created *Hunter*, decorating the six-foot tall fiberglass dolphin with swirls of stained glass pieces. The white on the front of the sculpture represents the cap of a wave. "My idea for *Hunter* was a beautiful dolphin coming up from the waves, searching for peace and hope," she said. After the exhibition, *Hunter* was displayed around the state including a stint in Tallahassee at the Florida House of Representatives. It now resides on Broadway Avenue in Dunedin. Rodrigues was later commissioned to make two more dolphins for the Wyndham Grand hotel on Clearwater Beach, each dolphin is covered in more than 5,000 pieces of glass.

In addition to creating art, Rodrigues teaches aspiring artists to create their own stained glass mosaics. She particularly enjoys teaching students with ailments. She finds the level of concentration needed to create these intricate pieces often focuses their attention on the work and not their affliction.

After twelve years at the Institute for Creative Arts, Rodrigues had to vacate her studio when the building was repurposed. She was fortunate to find a space suitable for her equipment in The Alley at Belleair Bluffs. The new studio and gallery is open Thursday-Monday from 11am-4:30pm. View her work and get information on classes online at DelorGlassDesign.com.





Sugar Sand Festival COO Charissa Shatanoff and Founder Lisa Chandler accepting Visit St. Pete-Clearwater's "Best Festival" Award

Ten Years of The Sugar Sand Festival

The Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival returned to bright and beautiful Clearwater Beach in April. Fourteen world-class artists craft elaborate sand sculptures from Clearwater's internationally famous sugar sand.

The Sugar Sand Festival is a 17-day beach wide celebration of Clearwater Beach's two most notable natural assets: sugar sand and sunsets. Fourteen master sand sculptors use 1,000 tons of Clearwater Beach sand to create a walk-through art exhibit housed in a 21,000-square-foot structure. The event also raises money for the community and supports the educational initiatives of the Sunsets at Pier 60 Festival.

Lisa Chandler, founder of the Sugar Sand Festival, was introduced to the concept of a walk-through sand sculpture exhibit more than fifteen years prior to the debut of the first Sugar Sand Festival. She and her husband Steve have been business owners on Clearwater Beach for over thirty years but serve as volunteers for both the Sugar Sand Festival & Sunsets at Pier 60.

The Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival is the largest destination event on Clearwater Beach attracting over 200,000 visitors each year and has an economic impact of over \$30 million to the community.



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Business Briefs



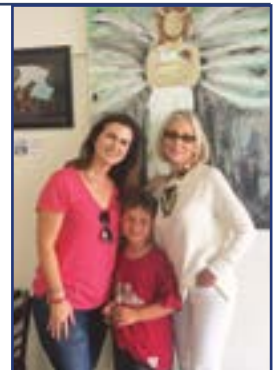
FAVORITE FINDS The gift shop Our Favorite Things opened last month on the second floor of the Pelican Plaza at 483 Mandalay Avenue. According to owner Christy Keltner, the name comes from the Sound of Music anthem *My Favorite Things*. The store carries handmade island crafts like magnets made from locally sourced shells found on Clearwater Beach, chocolates from around the country like Goo Goo Clusters and Moon Pies, fun tropical décor, jewelry, and other trinkets and treasures. Stop by and find one of “Your” favorite things. For more information, go to OurFavoriteThings2024.com and follow them on Facebook.

NEW HOME On April 30th, Clearwater-based MarineMax partnered with Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas and West Pasco to sponsor a home for a deserving family for the seventh consecutive year.

Jannese Hadley, a receptionist and single mother of two sons, Jah’Veon and Jah’Len, was recipient this year. Prior to receiving the keys to their new home, the Hadley family lived with Jannese’s grandmother in a one-bathroom, overcrowded house.

MarineMax’s CEO, Brett McGill, states “It’s incredibly rewarding to witness the life-changing impact this brings.” With tears in her eyes, Hadley immediately called her boys to tell them the good news.

ART AND FOOD Local artists Donna Kay Malloy and her daughter Alexis Novak are teaming up for the Spring Showcase 2024 at the Café in Nature’s Food Patch at 1225 Cleveland Street.



Malloy is longtime Town of Belleair resident and holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts and summa cum laude from the International Academy of Design and Technology in Tampa. “Outside the Lines” is the theme for her portion of the exhibit and includes the themes of nature, design and mixed media.

Alexis Novak, a Florida native, is fascinated by all things wild in nature like flowers, horses, trees, and her three kids. Novak’s theme for her portion of the exhibit is “Vignettes of Wild Wonders.”

The mother-daughter duo’s collaboration of colorful acrylics and photography is on display until July 5th. All art is available for purchase and each artist will donate 20% of their sales to a charity of their choice.

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



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Business Briefs

SAY CHEESE Happy fifteenth anniversary to Blue Merle Pet Photography. Originally from New York City, owner and photographer Yamile Haibi relocated to Largo in 2001, starting Blue Merle in 2009. The specialty studio is dedicated to photographing “pets and their people” and raising awareness to help animals in need.



Haibi began her career as a volunteer for animal rescues taking photographs of pets in need of homes, love, and a family of their own. That experience led Yamile to earn a certificate in Animal Psychology and Pet Behavior. Clients began to commission her to photograph them and their pets. Her photographs have been on display at the Cleveland Photo Fest in 2022 and 2023 at the Bostwick Design Art Initiative.

If you are interested in having a fun adventure in pet photography with candid and playful images that capture your pet’s personality and the loving bond you have, call or text Yamile at (305) 801-6232. For more information visit BlueMerlePhoto.com or email Info@BlueMerlePhoto.com.

FITNESS AND REJUVENATION

Clearwater Beach Fitness has been servicing Clearwater Beach and the surrounding areas for over ten years. They relocated from their South Beach location to 802 Court Street last June. The new location offers brand new state-of-the-art equipment in a spacious 4,000 square foot facility.



“Our most gratifying reviews that come from our customers include a motivating, supportive and inclusive atmosphere that encourages members to reach their fullest potential” says owner and trainer Juan Garcia. Juan and his fiancé Julie (also a trainer) are offering a “buy ten personal training sessions, get two free” special until June 30th for any new client.

Clearwater Beach Fitness has partnered with Prime Medical professionals to offer an elevated fitness transformation to members through rejuvenation and functional medicine. Mention this News Magazine and Prime Medical will take 10% off your first virtual consultation. For more information go to ClearwaterBeachFitness.com or call (727) 286-8918.

DOGGIE DELUXE DAYCARE

Posh by Lucky Puppies has a new home. The owner, Jennifer Elder, has moved from her Dunedin location after four years on Grant Street to a larger, more spacious spot at 1300 N. Fort Harrison Avenue in Clearwater. Posh by Lucky Puppies is a boutique dog daycare that specializes in sun-filled, fun-filled experiences in a safe and nurturing environment. They offer day stays, extended stays, and doggie birthday PAW-ties. For more information go to PoshByLuckyPuppies.com or call (727) 440-3355. Follow them on Facebook and Instagram.

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COLLABORATIVE DIVORCE WHEN CHILD CUSTODY IS IN PLAY

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

A Collaborative Divorce is a legal divorce process that allows co-parents to negotiate the terms of divorce.

It's an alternative to fighting in court, while avoiding a prolonged process where the child(ren) is the subject of a nasty litigation dispute. Co-parents can use a mix of mediation and negotiation to form an agreement on the most important details. Mainly, the division of property and debts. But most importantly, child custody and support obligations.



What Makes Collaborative Divorce Special?

With Collaborative Divorce, co-parents and each of their legal representatives sign a "collaborative participation agreement" (CPA). With a CPA, lawyers cannot take part in contested court proceedings. Simply put, all parties commit to resolving the issues in the best interest of the child(ren). It's a unique practice that allows co-parents to respectfully achieve agreeable child custody arrangements without the mudslinging in court.

What Are the Requirements to Qualify?

Requirements include both co-parents, their attorneys, and a participation agreement. The participation agreement includes a disqualification clause. This clause advises the parents, and their lawyers, that if the collaborative process breaks down, the parents fire their legal representatives and hire new ones.

What Are Some Benefits of Collaborative Divorce?

Co-parents set the pace while resolving issues respectfully. A neutral facilitator helps customize parenting plans. Attorneys act as legal guides, working towards innovative, long-lasting solutions. Priority is given to the present and future, not past wrongdoings. It's an efficient process that generally condenses the timeline and is significantly less expensive compared to combative litigation. Above all, the child(ren) isn't subjected to a prolonged legal dispute that harms their emotional and social development.

OCHR is a Pinellas-based 501c3 nonprofit that helps parents more seamlessly navigate their child custody and co-parenting journeys, at no cost to the family. We were recently recognized with the AMPLIFY Clearwater "Community Spirit Award". Support of our mission is vital. And we kindly ask you to consider a small financial contribution to OCHR. Your support is deeply meaningful and necessary to serve parents through our no cost, confidential program, intended to benefit our youth.

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 at JakeHornstein@OurChildrenHaveRights.com or www.OCHR.Org To donate: OurChildrenHaveRights.org/donate.

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HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS FOR PETS

By: Kristen Davis, Director of Marketing & Communications at SPCA Tampa Bay

SPCA Tampa Bay has important information for pet owners as we approach hurricane season. It is likely that the Tampa Bay area will feel the effect of a hurricane or tropical storm this season. Keep your family and pets safe by knowing what to do in the event of an emergency.

Hurricane season, which lasts from June through the end of November, can be a scary and stressful time for pet owners. To ensure the safety of pets during a hurricane, it is important to have a plan in place.

Pet owners should ensure that their pets have identification. A collar with a tag that includes the pet's name and owner's current contact information is a must for all pets, even those that live strictly indoors. When traveling, have a temporary tag with your current address and contact information.

It is strongly recommended that all pets have a microchip. Please ensure that the microchip is registered to you with your current contact information. To check your registration info, go directly to your microchip company's website. The likelihood of a pet being reunited with their owner dramatically increases if the pet is microchipped.

In addition to identification, pet owners should have an emergency kit prepared for their pets. This kit should include:

- Food and water for your pets for at least a week.
- Any necessary medications. If your pet requires medication for anxiety during storms, be sure to have your prescription filled well in advance.

- Medical and vaccine records. Ensure that your pet is current on vaccinations. This will help protect them from diseases that may be present in shelters or other areas where people and animals are displaced.

- A sturdy carrier or crate for each pet, as well as bedding, litter, cleaning supplies, and familiar items like a favorite toy or blanket.

- A current photo of each pet in case you are separated and must provide identification to rescuers.

Make a plan for where you will take your pets during a hurricane.

Never leave your pet behind, as dangerous conditions may prevent your return for days or possibly longer. Know your zone at kyz.pinellas.gov so you are aware if you are required to evacuate. Some shelters may allow pets, but not all do. It is important to research ahead of time to find pet-friendly shelters in the area and have your pet's vaccine records printed and easily accessible. View a list of pet-friendly shelters at pinellas.gov/emergency-information/public-shelters.

There are very few emergency shelters that accept pets and their owners, and they are never large or comfortable. You and your pets will handle the stress of an evacuation far better if you find pet-friendly hotels and motels, or can stay with friends and family.



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MAYOR'S UPDATE

By Mayor Bruce Rector

Thank you, Clearwater, for electing me as the 36th Mayor of the city on March 19th. It is an honor and privilege to serve this great community and I look forward to working with residents, leaders and organizations throughout our city and region to make Clearwater thrive more than ever.

In my first month as Mayor I have been actively working to reach out to regional, state and national leaders to bring important resources and opportunities to Clearwater. The reception I have received has been very positive. There is a great deal of optimism and confidence in working in and with the City of Clearwater to make our community more successful and vibrant than ever before.

A few updates on projects activities important to beach residents:

- Coachman Park and BayCare Sound. Soon to be celebrating its first anniversary of opening, we are pleased with the first year of activity and attendance with exceeded forecasts. We are looking forward to increasing the number and diversity of the events coming to the park in the second year. If you have not attended an event in our newly renovated park, I hope you will do so soon.

- Clearwater Beach Marina. Significant renovations to the Clearwater Beach Marina are progressing albeit with some initial delays. Our marina is an important community asset for both recreational and commercial users and it will be a challenge to accommodate everyone's needs while the renovations are taking place. Our city staff is working hard to get us through this process. Once completed the marina will be making every effort to get us through this process. Once completed these improvements will be better positioned to serve the millions of residents and visitors that use it each year.

- Memorial Causeway Improvements. FDOT will be resurfacing and making a number of improvements to the Memorial Causeway this year including adding 500 feet of additional right turn lane into Island Estates.

- North Beach Stormwater Update. Our City of Clearwater team has been working hard to address frequent flooding problems on North Beach with both short-term and long-term solutions. Our staff is providing an update of the project at each council meeting, and we are working collaboratively with state and federal funding sources to make the needed improvements.

We continue to work on many projects and initiatives to make all of Clearwater thrive more than ever. Your ideas for improving our community are always welcome and I hope you will share them with me at Bruce.Rector@MyClearwater.com.



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MOTORCYCLE SAFETY AWARENESS

From the Desk of Sheriff Bob Gualtieri

In the US, motorcycles make up only three percent of all registered vehicles, and a minuscule 0.6 percent of total vehicle miles traveled. Despite that, motorcycles account for 14 percent of all traffic fatalities. That disproportionate number reflects their vulnerability. Additionally, more than 80,000 motorcyclists are injured each year. I urge you to be a safe rider.



Be visible and be predictable. Simply put, motorcycles are hard to see. Most drivers are more cued-in to cars and may miss motorcycles – hence the slogan look twice, save a life. Car drivers need to pay attention, but motorcycle operators have a responsibility too. Obey traffic control devices and stick to the speed limit. Leave sufficient room between you and other vehicles. Check and signal before you change lanes, and never pass in the same lane or ride the line. Drive defensively, as if other vehicles don't see you – because often they may not.

If you are in a crash, a helmet can save your life or prevent traumatic brain injury. Find the style that matches your head shape, size, and the specific type of riding you do. The more comfortable your helmet is, the more likely you are to wear it on every ride. Make sure your helmet is DOT-compliant – look for the sticker on the back and watch out for fakes. Helmets should be at least one inch thick with a stiff foam inner liner, and have sturdy, riveted chin straps. Beware of helmets advertised as “the lightest helmet” – helmets that meet safety standards usually weigh about three pounds.

Protect the rest of your body too. It may be uncomfortable to wear full gear in a Florida summer, but covering your arms and legs with denim or leather is a good idea. Wear gloves, and boots that come over the ankle too. Black leather may look good, but bright colors keep you safer. Opt for high-visibility colors on your upper body and add reflectors to your clothing or to your ride.

You need a motorcycle endorsement to legally ride in the state of Florida. For that you must complete the Basic Rider Course, which teaches the fundamentals of riding your motorcycle responsibly and safely. Advanced courses which help prepare you for more extreme or unexpected situations are a good idea too. Take time to get used to your motorcycle, practicing in easy conditions and working your way up to more challenges as your skills improve. Know how to ride in the rain and prepare for how you'll handle slick roads or obstructions.

Keep your motorcycle in good repair and check it before every ride. Check your tires – pressure and tread – as well as brakes, lights, signal, and fluids. Make sure loads are balanced, and that any necessary adjustments are made to compensate for additional weight.

Passengers need to know how to ride safely too – they're not a passive spectator like a passenger in a car, but an active participant whose behavior can affect performance and safety. Make sure your passenger knows to mount only when the kickstand is raised and the motorcycle is braced, to keep their feet on the footrests, hold the driver's waist or the handholds, and avoid making sudden moves. Be aware of how the extra weight and wind resistance will affect handling.

Pinellas County averages 524 motorcycle crashes and 27 fatalities annually. Ride smart to avoid becoming part of that statistic.

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HISTORY OF THE TAX APPRAISER'S OFFICE

by Bob Griffin, Historian and Mike Twitty, Property Appraiser
The Property Appraiser, which once was known as the County Tax Assessor, has the legal responsibility to estimate the market value of all real and tangible personal property in Pinellas County, administer exemptions, and appraise the property accordingly. The purpose of this is to provide taxing authorities with accurate values for taxing purposes.

A property's market value is determined to be the "estimated sale price." There are several methods of doing this. With this information, the Property Appraiser's office can place a "fair market value" on every piece of property in Pinellas County.

Originally, the only taxes the State of Florida collected were on real estate. Once automobiles started becoming popular, in 1905, the State imposed a \$2 license fee on all cars and trucks. Today, that initial registration fee is \$225 and higher.

Today, the County lists 436,209 parcels, with a just/market value over \$207 billion and a taxable value of over \$118 billion dollars. Taxable values increase to \$123.8 billion when tangible personal property is added.

Once called the Tax Assessor's office, in 1974 the voters changed the name to Property Appraiser. It was argued that the Tax Assessor did not actually levy taxes—that is the job of the County Commission, Municipalities and School Board since they determine the tax rates. The Property Appraiser only determines the value of the property by following the market, whether up or down.

In Pinellas County's first year, the Assessor, Thomas Northrup, was appointed by the Governor. He was a former St. Petersburg Mayor. John Brown, also from St. Petersburg, was the first elected Assessor. He took office in 1913, when

Pinellas County held its first elections. He served two, four-year terms before becoming the Clerk of the Circuit Court (1917-1925). He was followed by Albert Blocker (1917-1925), who also served two, four-year terms. He was followed by Charles (Charlie) Wilcox, Jr.

The Homestead Exemption Act, established in 1934, provided tax relief for property owners who permanently lived in Pinellas County. The law required property owners to file for homestead exemption on or before March 1st of each year to receive a \$5000 reduction in assessed the property's assessed value. In 1980, the exemption was raised to \$25,000. Today, it is \$50,000 for eligible residential property owners as long as the assessed value exceeds \$100,000.

Each parcel of Pinellas County's property is reassessed annually, effective January 1. The assessment is based on the previous year's sales data. All parcels are visually inspected every five years to verify any changes or upgrades to the property's physical condition. Sales and building permit activities are reviewed annually.

Mike Twitty is the current Pinellas County Property Appraiser. He has held that office since 2017. He is the tenth person to hold that office.



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SUNKEN GARDENS – A WALK BACK IN TIME

By Becky Griffin, local author

Nestled in the heart of St. Petersburg, Sunken Gardens' four acres of botanical gardens in the Historic Old Northeast neighborhood, is the area's oldest museum. This 100-year-old garden boasts some of the oldest tropical plants in the region, and its storied history as a sinkhole turned sanctuary is a testament to its enduring appeal.

For many, Sunken Gardens evokes a sense of nostalgia—a connection to a bygone era that offers a space for reflection and relaxation. It has long been a haven for both nature enthusiasts and those seeking a tranquil escape from city life.

The world-famous botanical attraction was created by a plumber named George Turner, Sr. who had moved to the area from Jacksonville in 1902, at the age of 21. George and his wife Eula bought the property in 1911 with plans to make it the site of their family's home.

The property had a small pond, really nothing more than a sinkhole, called "Curlew Pond" that was about ten feet below sea level. It caused the property to flood and be swampy. Using his plumber's background, George created an elaborate maze of clay tiles (still in use today) that functions as a drainage system. He drained the pond leaving a rich mucky soil perfect for gardening. His garden was a real "sunken" garden, below both sea and street level.

Eula shared in George's love of gardening, and together, the Turners planted vegetables, citrus, flowering trees and bushes. They soon began to add tropical plants such as papaya and banana trees. Their gardens flourished and Turner's hobby became their passion. Most Sunday's, neighbors would stop by to stroll in the gardens, hoping to bring home a bit of their bountiful crops.

George retired as a plumber and devoted his time and attention to the gardens. At the original entrance to the garden, he opened a small nursery and vegetable stand. They sold roses and other plants along with fruits and vegetables grown in the gardens.

Over time, more exotic plants replaced their vegetables and in the early 1930s, the Turners began to charge fifteen cents for garden tours that included hundreds of azaleas, gardenias, and exotic plants and over 35 types of palm trees. Sunken Gardens had become an official roadside attraction.

The Turner's children and grandchildren continued the work of creating the



unique tropical garden with its flowing ponds. After George's death in 1961, two of his four sons, Ralph and George Jr., operated the gardens. The property eventually passed to Ralph's three sons.

Through the 1970s, over 200,000 people toured the gardens each year wanting to see the exotic plants and famous flamingos. A gift shop was built that was billed as the "world's largest" gift shop. Bird shows were added featuring trained parrots. Celebrity sightings and beauty pageants were weekly occurrences.

Ranked as one of the top ten Florida attractions, you could find Sunken Gardens billboards lining the Southeast's highways. It helped St. Petersburg earn its reputation as a tourist destination.

Unfortunately, with the birth of Disney World and other theme parks, by the early 1980s, the popularity of the Old Florida attractions began to wane, and attendance began to drop. The family decided it was time to sell the property and in 1999, voters approved the City of St. Petersburg's purchase of Sunken Gardens to preserve the garden for the community. On June 27, 2002, it was added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places.

Each year thousands of visitors still enjoy the serene gardens, over 100 years after George Turner Sr. began his hobby. It is one of the last remaining Florida roadside attractions, and home to some of the oldest tropical plants in our area. Many of the Turner's original plants are still thriving.

Today, a visit to the gardens allows visitors to meander the paths through a living collection of thousands of plants, waterfalls, and a koi pond. There is always something in bloom among the tropical plants and lush gardens.

The garden is also home to a dozen rehomed tropical parrots. They are all rescues whose owners either died or were no longer able to care for them.

In 2016, the Sunken Gardens Forever Foundation acquired a flock of 20 young Chilean Flamingos. They joined the two remaining flamingos, George and Lucy, from the original 17-member flock that was acquired by the Gardens in the 1950s.

The Sunken Gardens Forever Foundation also donated \$100,000 towards the funding of the new History Center at the original 1940 entrance. The building was previously home to the Garden's tropical birds. The birds were moved, and the building was restored. The exhibits feature the Gardens' history and its role as a Florida roadside attraction.

The Gardens has grown into a cultural hub, with events and workshops that invite community involvement. Events include plant sales, workshops, orchid festivals, and yoga. Most events are included with your admission ticket. Sunken Gardens is also a popular place for weddings and private parties, offering a unique entertainment experience. The historic Garden Room, located in the main building overlooking the gardens and built in 1926, is a popular spot for luncheons, banquets, and receptions.

If you plan to visit, Sunken Gardens is located at 1825 4th Street North, St. Petersburg. It is open Monday through Saturday: 10 am to 4:30 pm and Sunday: Noon to 4:30 pm. The last admission is sold at 4 pm. Sunken Gardens is closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.

The cost of admission is, Adults: \$15, Seniors (62+): \$12 and Children (2-12): \$6.

Community News...

SAND KEY CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Submitted by Fred Irwin

Save the date! *Motown with the Stars* will make July 9th a night to remember! Join us for a rooftop extravaganza at the stunning waterfront Courtyard by Marriott, where the spirit of Motown will come alive under the stars. Prepare to be transported back to this soulful era with DJ Dickens spinning the best Motown hits, complimentary hors d'oeuvres, dancing to the rhythm, winning exciting prizes and the chance to mingle with your Sand Key Civic Association neighbors. It's an evening you won't want to miss. Admission is free for SKCA members.

Act Now! Become a member and unlock access to extraordinary events like *Motown with the Stars*. Join our vibrant community today and elevate your social calendar to new heights. For more information or to become a member, call Shelley at (813) 417-6153 or send her an e-mail at shelleyab@gmail.com.

The Sand Key Civic Association to host Clearwater Fire Chief Scott Ehlers

This is your invitation to attend the Sand Key Civic Association Speaker's Forum with Clearwater Fire Chief Scott Ehlers. He will be speaking on Wednesday, September 4th at 7pm at the Clearwater Community Sailing Center, 1001 Gulf Blvd. He will be talking about the services that the Clearwater Fire Department provides to the community and seeking more community involvement. Chief Ehlers will be joined by Jevon Graham, Division Chief of Emergency Management and David Kadau, Division Chief of Training/Special Ops who will be discussing their respective areas.

CREATIVE PINELLAS

Flora & Fauna showcases the artworks of A Galban, Adriano Nicot, Jorge Dans, Froilán Escobar, Josignacio, and Leslie Hiatt in a captivating fusion of color, line, and creativity, where the beauty of nature intertwines with artistic expression. Curated by A Galban and Tarin Mohajeri, this art exhibition offers a profound and immersive experience, granting visitors the opportunity to marvel at the wonders of flora and fauna while encouraging them to embrace a sense of responsibility for the preservation of our planet's biodiversity.



Awardees of the Beyond Placemaking Grant from Creative Pinellas and the National Endowment for the Arts, the *Flora & Fauna* artists have partnered with the Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation to provide art experiences for people of all ages and abilities through scheduled tours and field trips.

Flora and Fauna runs through July 7th. *Threads of Nature: Art Inspired by the Florida Botanical Gardens* opens on July 18th. The Gallery is open Wednesday-Sunday from 10am -5pm.

WELCOME NEWCOMERS CLUB

This club is open to the women of Pinellas County; all are welcome to come and socialize. Luncheons are held the first Tuesday of each month at Belleair Country Club. There is always a guest speaker or other entertainment with cards following for those interested. Please contact Mary at 727-240-5372 with any questions.

CLEARWATER FREE CLINIC

The Clearwater Free Clinic proudly announces the appointment of Anthony "Tony" Degina as its new CEO, succeeding Jeannie Shapiro, who retired.

Degina brings to the role a wealth of experience, with 40 years in the healthcare industry, specializing in hospital management. He holds a Master's degree in Health Care Administration and



Management from Trinity University and has a proven track record of success in healthcare management and operations. Known for his tireless advocacy for staff and exceptional leadership, Degina's appointment has been met with enthusiasm from the Clearwater Free Clinic board and community.

Prior to joining the Clearwater Free Clinic, Degina served as President, National Division at Thrivewell Infusion and spent seven years as CEO of Largo Medical Center. His background uniquely positions him to understand and address the needs of uninsured patients, a crucial aspect of the clinic's mission.

Shapiro and Degina will collaborate closely in the coming weeks to ensure a seamless transition of leadership. The Clearwater Free Clinic extends its deepest gratitude to Shapiro for her years of service and dedication and eagerly anticipates a bright future under Degina's guidance.

Contact Charlie Hart at chart@clearwaterfreeclinic.org or call (727) 331-3504 for more information.

ISLAND ESTATES YACHT CLUB

Submitted by Commodore Scott Lefebvre

The IEYC has been active with a variety of events, celebrating St. Patrick's Day with brunch at the Island Way Grill, Cinco de Mayo at Tequila's Mexican Grill & Cantina, and chartering the Little Toot for an IEYC day on the water.

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. The IEYC has no clubhouse nor other facilities; therefore our membership dues are minimal. The club meets monthly at different venues with a variety of themes and events. Many members meet more frequently for various activities. Please visit the IEYC website at 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.

The IEYC is always looking for new members. 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.

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SUMMER EVENTS AT THE CLEARWATER BEACH LIBRARY

For Kids:

Sunshine Storytime: June 3rd and July 1st at 11am. Join them at the Beach Library for an energetic storytime with dancing, stories, rhymes, crafts, and silliness! All kids and their grown-ups are welcome, but Sunshine Storytime is primarily geared towards kids 6 and under.

STEAM Play: Choose Your Own Adventure: Come to the library every second and fourth Tuesday from 11:30am-1pm for STEAM Play Adventures and learn or create something new. This is part of the Clearwater Public Library System's Adventure Begins at Your Library summer reading program. Small children may need help. Registration recommended.

No Bones About It with the Clearwater Marine Aquarium: June 14th at 2pm. This program is all about invertebrates. Learn all about the Gulf of Mexico's smallest inhabitants that call CMA home through this hands-on look at crabs, snails, and sea urchins. The program is for kids in kindergarten through 12th grade. Register online.

Boppin' to the Beat with Great Explorations: June 28th at 1pm. As part of the Summer Reading Program at the Clearwater Beach Library, experience music from around the world led by staff from Great Explorations. This program is loud, students with sensitivity to noise should be aware. Register online.

Josh the Otter presented by BayCare Kids: July 15th at 11am. This is an engaging water safety education program for young children featuring Josh the Otter. Program presented by Jennifer Galligan from BayCare Kids. Registration recommended as class size is limited; registration opens June 15th at 11am.

Super Bodies with Great Explorations: July 19th at 1pm. This is a high energy program, students that are sensitive to overstimulation should be aware. This program is ideal for kids in PreK through second grade. Register online starting June 19th.

Interactive Movie Afternoon at the Beach Library: July 30th at 2pm. Pick up a backpack from the Clearwater Public Library's Backpack Giveaway and then enjoy the Beach Library's Interactive Family Movie Afternoon viewing of the movie Up (PG). Registration recommended starting June 30th.

For Adults:

Mahjong Mondays: Join your neighbors for Mahjong at the Beach Library in the Beach Banquet Room every Monday at 2pm. For more details, contact the Beach Library at (727) 562-4970 and select "6" for Beach.

Beach Book Club: June 5th and July 7th at 4pm. Join in-person at the Clearwater Beach Library or on ZOOM for monthly book discussions. Virtual participants will need access to the Internet, a microphone, and preferably a webcam. Online registration is required to receive the Zoom meeting ID and password.

Tech Help: June 12th and 26th, July 10th and 24th at 1pm. Drop-in technology assistance with a library staff member offered on a first come, first served basis for tech issues. Please call the Clearwater Beach Library at (727) 562-4970, option "6" for more information.

Visit MyClearwaterLibrary.com for more information or to register for programs.

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Community News...



CLEARWATER BEACH MARINA

Submitted by Kristen Mann

At their recent meeting, the Community Development Board approved the new Clearwater Beach Marina design. All design documents have been submitted to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Pinellas County and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers for permitting. Bid packages have been received by the Construction Manager at Risk and are being reviewed. The construction is scheduled to begin at the end of August 2024.

All recreational permanent tenants have been vacated and the main dock is being used for transient reservations. Work is underway to ensure that the docks are in good working condition so that the fuel dock and commercial operations can remain open during the first phase of construction. The current plan is to move all commercial operators currently located in the first phase of construction area to the west side of the marina, into a slip on the fuel dock in late August.

Visit MyClearwater.com/BeachMarinaConstruction for construction updates.

COAST GUARD AUXILIARY CLEARWATER FLOTILLA

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Clearwater Flotilla is taking a proactive approach to promote boating safety by offering a series of virtual safe boating classes in the upcoming months.

Understanding the evolving landscape of education and the need for flexibility, the CG Auxiliary Clearwater Flotilla will conduct safe boating classes via Zoom throughout the year. This virtual option allows participants to join from the comfort of their homes, providing a convenient alternative for those unable to attend in-person sessions.

The use of Zoom technology not only expands the reach of the education program but also accommodates individuals with busy schedules or those residing outside the local area. Participants can interact with instructors, engage in discussions, and complete the course requirements online.

Boat America Classes are \$50 per person, including all books and materials. Class times are from 9am to 2pm on the following dates:

- June 29 and 30
- July 27 and 28
- August 24 and 25
- September 28 and 29
- October 26 and 27
- November 28 and 29

To 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 classes are limited, so early registration is encouraged.



FLORIDA BOTANICAL GARDENS

Submitted by Allie Fisher

It's summertime at the Florida Botanical Gardens! Stop by our Majeed Discovery Garden to attend various programs for kids of all ages and abilities. Our Children's Garden Educator will be offering preschool, homeschool and family programs all summer long. These programs allow children to connect with nature through hands-on learning. Visit our calendar: FLBGFoundation.org/events for more information, including pricing and registration. And as always, become a member of the Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation to receive discounts on programs and enjoy other benefits: FLBGFoundation.org/membership.

ISLAND ESTATES CIVIC ASSOCIATION (IECA)

Join the IECA on July 13th for Floatapalooza. Use a kayak, jet ski, boat, or take the shuttle from the IECA clubhouse at 425 Island Way to get to One Palm, a small island east of Island Estates. Bring a raft to float and listen to music, play games, fly kites, or just have a vgreat day on the water. The event is from 10am-2pm. Visit MyIslandEstates.com for more information.

After being damaged by an automobile accident, the sign at the entrance to Island Estates is getting a makeover. The remodeled entrance will feature three towers, three sign monuments, and four Island Estates signs. A fundraiser is underway to help offset the cost of the project. To donate, visit GoFund.me/17580317 or contact IECA President David Farrar at DavidFarrars@gmail.com. To Join IECA, visit MyIslandEstates.com.

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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