

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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Magazine

ALBERT ARCHIBALD, A MADEIRA BEACH FOUNDER



By Bob Griffin, Local Historian

Albert "Bert" Archibald was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1885. In 1901, he moved to St. Petersburg; he was sixteen. His first job was as a baggage handler with the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad. Seeing an opportunity, he entered the produce business, opening a warehouse opposite the train station. He eventually owned a sundries store on Central Avenue. About the same time, he married his first wife Catherine (Katie) Galaher, whose father was in real estate. Albert soon became interested in that, too.

In 1913, he met H. Walter Fuller, an active St. Petersburg and beach developer. Fuller had recently bought today's Treasure Island for \$800 and was selling twenty-five separate shares for \$1,000 each. After bargaining with Fuller, Archibald bought one share for less than \$800.

By 1917, as World War I was beginning, the area suffered a recession. Fuller's shareholders wanted out of the Treasure Island land deal. Archibald bought all twenty-five shares, some for as little as \$100. When it was done, at the age of thirty-two, Albert owned most of today's Treasure Island.

He established the Gulf Beach Resort Company and began to lay out a plan and plat for north Treasure Island, which he planned to call Coney Island. It was later renamed "Sunshine Beach."

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Also in this Issue:

Stained Glass

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

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Meet the Greeter

Linda Sarver has been greeting visitors at the Beach Welcome Center since 2021.

- page 9



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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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,

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



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CALENDAR OF HOLIDAYS & EVENTS

As always, this is subject to change.



Happy 4th of July!

JULY

Freedom Month Tax Holiday 1-31

Fireworks at Largo Central Park 2

Independence Day 4

Fireworks at Coachman Park 4

Greentown Kids Beach Cleanup 5-7

Hurricane Eddie's Beach Cleanup 6

Trash Bingo Anecdote Brewing 6

BBQ and Jazz Festival at the Trop 6

City Commission Meeting 9

Bluffs Business Association Mixer 11

Suncoast Ladies Classic St Pete 11-13

Arts and Crafts Bazaar Largo 13

Tarpon Springs Art and Craft Fest 13-14

Tampa International Carnival St Pete 14

Bastille Day 14

National Pet Fire Safety Day 15

MLB All Star Game 16

Christmas in July Baycare Ballpark 19

Tampa Bay Ice Cream Festival St Pete 21

Deadline to Register for Primary 22

Summer Olympics Begin 26

Sad Summer Festival Coachman 27

Parents Day 28

Back to School Tax Holiday Begins 29

AUGUST

US Coast Guard Birthday 4

Community Cleanup 5-7

Bluffs Business Association Mixer 8

Early Voting for August Election 10-18

Bucs First Preseason Game 10

Back to School Tax Holiday Ends 11

Public School Begins 12

City Commission Meeting 13

Fireworks at Baycare Ballpark 17

Primary Elections 20

SEPTEMBER

City Offices Closed 2

Bucs First Home Game 8

City Commission Meeting 10

Patriot Day 11

Bluffs Business Association Mixer 12

Clearwater Offshore Nationals 27-29



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Did You Know



NEW STAMPS Two new 68¢ Forever postage stamps became 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 were 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 were 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.



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. 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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INTRACOASTAL BOATHOUSE STILL AVAILABLE

The historic property at 81 Gulf Blvd was offered for sale in April and is currently listed at \$1,999,900. 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.



NEW ARTWORK Have you seen the new mural on the side of the Nine-to-Nine Food Mart at 13717 Walsingham Road next to Taco Bell? "Arthur the Alligator" is the name of the colorful work of art by Jake Klone. Originally from the U.K., Klone now lives in Indian Rocks Beach. The art that he creates is in a graffiti style, using bold and attention-drawing colors. Jake has been inspired by the art of graffiti since he was 12 years old.

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

"Back to School" is 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 is 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 IN SEPTEMBER Read this issue, and others, online at BeachNewsletters.com and follow us on Facebook at Neighborhood News Magazines for ongoing local news updates.

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Albert Archibald, Continued

Archibald knew no one would buy beach property if they could not get there, so in 1923, with the help of other developers, the Central Avenue Causeway Association was formed. They proposed a bond issue to build a connection from the recently extended Central Avenue to the Treasure Island Causeway. In hopes of motivating city officials to approve this bridge project, Albert Archibald donated land on Treasure Island to St. Petersburg. That area today, located at 114th, is the St. Petersburg City Beach Park, and is still owned by St. Petersburg.

The bond issue failed, partially due to competing developer Perry Snell. Snell opposed the project and bought large newspaper ads encouraging people to vote against it. Ninety-five percent of the voters lived on the mainland and did not go to the beach. They were not interested in building the bridge.

While Archibald was buying Treasure Island, David Welch was buying land on the other side of John's Pass, in what would become Madeira Beach. In 1926, Welch was successful in getting bridge funding for Madeira Beach, opening the area up to visitors. With a bridge in place, Archibald's focus shifted to acquiring land north of John's Pass.



View of John's Pass

The local power company began bringing power to the beaches. Not wanting to wait, Archibald paid the power company \$2,500 to get power to Madeira Beach, for future households. He recouped the money as people moved there and had their power connected. He was also instrumental in convincing the phone company to run phone lines to the area.

In 1926, Archibald sold Madeira Beach property between 150th and today's Archibald Park to a group of investors. They planned to build the hotel resort La Casa Madeira. During construction, the money ran out.

The developers were forced to sell the property back to Archibald for a fraction of what they had paid. It eventually became the Madeira Beach Shopping Center, a small strip center where the Ocean Sands Condos stands now.

Archibald developed a parcel into a casino and built a three-story entertainment building. Unfortunately, the first year it was open, a hurricane destroyed the top two floors.

In 1927, Albert created a beach-front amusement center between 140th and 150th Avenues. It included a bathhouse, dance hall, a fishpond, toboggan slide, chair swings and picnic tables. He even had an old Coast Guard boat, called "Archie's Ark," that had run aground during a storm. A small traveling circus with nearby winter quarters rehearsed their routines on the beach, entertaining the beachgoers. In 1931, the extremely popular amusement park was destroyed by a freak March storm. Archibald rebuilt it and until WWII ran it, with the help of family members.



The Amusement Center in 1930

The park's Articles of Incorporation called it the Madeira Beach Amusement Park. It is believed to be the first time the name Madeira was used. Some people said he chose Madeira after the Madeira Islands off Portugal. In Portuguese, madeira means wood. It is also said he liked the name because it ended in "ira," his brother's name, a Siesta Key real estate developer.

In 1930, Archibald learned that the government planned to build a large Florida veteran's hospital. To encourage the hospital to be built in Pinellas County, Archibald and David Welch joined together and donated five hundred feet of beachfront property to the US government. It was to be a park for veterans to enjoy as they recuperated. The gift worked. The future Bay Pines VA Hospital was announced. Soon plans were in the works for the "Veterans Park," with Archibald donating one third of the needed land, while David Welch donated two thirds. A pavilion (called the Snack Shack) followed in 1935.

Archibald also owned the two islands east of John's Pass Bridge. The west island is named Elnor Island, after his second wife, and the east island is called Island 'A' for Archibald.

During WWII, a serious recession occurred forcing another real estate bust. At the end of the war, only two hundred residents lived in Madeira Beach. By then, Albert had retired to his Redington Beach house. He became interested in gardening later in life, and even invented and patented a composting machine, but he never marketed it. He was one of the original organizers of the St Pete Yacht Club, deacon of the First Presbyterian Church of St Petersburg, and President of the Redington Beach Community Club. He was also an avid chess player and regularly played with his friend David Welch.

At the time of his death, he left the land where the Winn-Dixie store now stands in a trust. The trust stipulated it was only to be used for public non-profit use. The land had been used as a little league field. In an agreement between members of the Archibald Trust and George Hunt, a local developer who owned the land east of City Hall and the Library, the properties were swapped. The city got a larger property, where the Madeira Beach Recreation Complex and Little League field stands today. In exchange, Mr. Hunt was able to develop the Winn Dixie Plaza.

Albert Archibald was an innovator, entrepreneur, real estate giant and Pinellas pioneer. He weathered the booms, the busts and the hurricanes and helped Madeira Beach get its start. There is a commemorative marker at Archibald Park, that reads, "In grateful memory of a founder and benefactor to the City of Madeira Beach, Florida." (1974)

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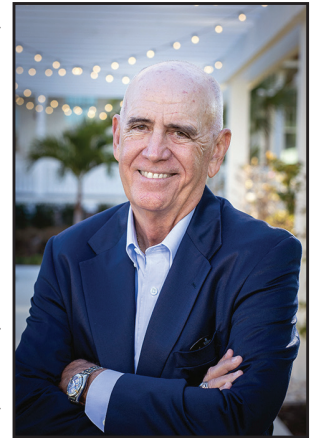
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RETIREMENT? WHAT'S THAT?

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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f i o

ABOUT TOWN: LINDA SARVER WELCOMES THE WORLD TO IRB

By Diane Daniel

When Linda Sarver was hired to be a greeter at the Beach Welcome Center in Indian Rocks Beach, she had her work cut out for her. It was March 2021, high tourist season, and she'd lived in the area for only a few months. Sarver devoured the reading material she was surrounded by at work – maps, brochures, articles and even menus. She quickly advanced from newcomer to local expert. Since 2023, she's been the manager of the center, which is operated by Plumlee Gulf Beach Realty and represents member businesses from John's Pass to Sand Key. The center, which has been in existence in some form since 1960, currently gets about 500 visitors a month.

Although Sarver was a recent transplant, her goal of moving to the area started a decade earlier when she and her husband, Mike, visited a family friend in Largo. They were living in Rome, Ga., at the time.

"On the way home I told him, 'One day we will live down there,'" Linda said. (Mike is from Delray Beach, but Linda prefers the West Coast.)

Linda set up a 10-year plan to head south. She cleaned and downsized, and she and Mike even sold their house before it was time to relocate.

At a high school reunion in Rome, Linda reconnected with fellow graduate Lamar Wright, who she hadn't seen for 40 years. It turned out he lived in Seminole and worked at Plumlee, so the Sarvers tapped him to help them find a home. They settled on a condominium just over the Belleair Causeway in Belleair Bluffs. They moved at the end of 2020.

A couple of months later, Wright asked her, "Are you looking for a job"? The Welcome Center needed part-time help.

It sounded like fun to her. And, indeed, it has been, she said.

"I love meeting all the different people from all over the world, and most everybody is happy and genuinely nice," she said.

The most frequent questions she gets are what her favorite restaurants are.

"All our restaurants are delicious," she answers, then asks what kind of menu, vibe and price point they're looking for.

She also gets a lot of questions about how the Suncoast Beach Trolley works, where to catch a sunset cruise and what to do when they're not at the beach. Her suggestions include John's Pass, McGough Nature Park and the Seaside Seabird Sanctuary. And she always gives them one of the center's visitor guides, which includes discount coupons at local attractions.

The question that makes her chuckle is, "Which beach has the best view for the sunset?"

"I tell them, 'Well, they all point toward the sunset, so it doesn't really matter which beach you're sitting on. So, you might as well stay right here.'"

Diane Daniel, founder of www.vacationdonations.org, feasts on the center's menu selection.



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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."

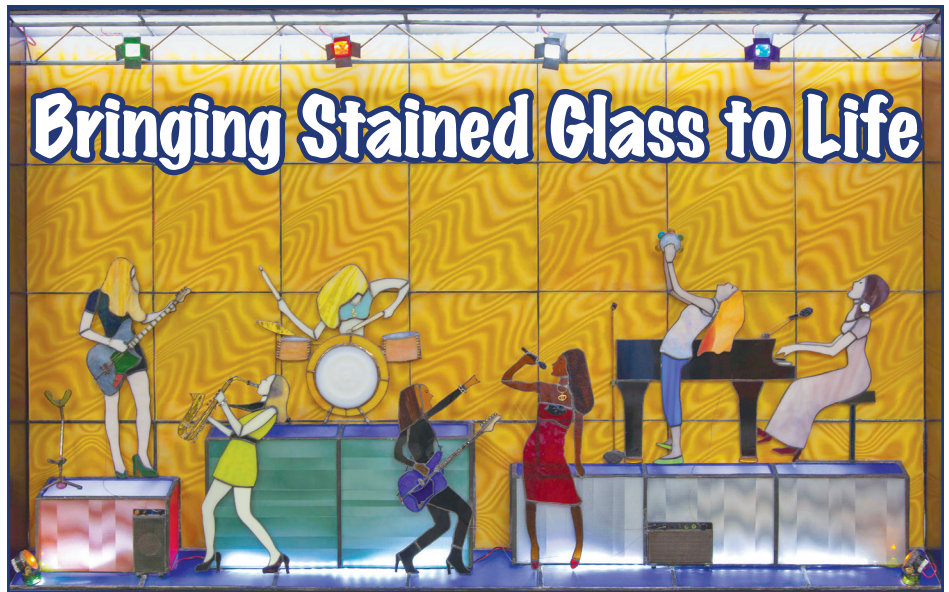
In 2010, she found a studio at the Institute for Creative Arts in Dunedin and founded DelorGlassDesign, producing stained glass and sand art, mosaics, and sculptures. She creates seascapes and nautical artwork, music-themed pieces like guitars and concert scenes, and stained glass portraits. Steve Tyler, 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.





HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

688 Fine Wine & Spirits celebrated 45 years of business this past June. Owners Tony and Vicki Niewiarowski say the success of their business is built upon a foundation of hard work, unwavering customer care, exceptional service, and a wonderful community of customers.

The couple immigrated from Poland to Chicago in 1964. In March 1979, they vacationed on the Gulf beaches and fell in love with the area. While on vacation, they purchased 688 Liquors and a home in Belleair Beach. Three months later in June 1979, Tony, Vicki, and their 10 year-old daughter relocated to Belleair Beach. Dorotka grew up in the store as did her three children, Sevy, Lola and Tessa. Dorotka, Sevy and Lola work for the corporation today. Their sweet dog Luna greets customers daily.

On June 15th, the family commemorated forty five remarkable years alongside valued customers, friends, distributors and Luna! The festivities featured a Hot Dog Cart, giveaways, and tastings.

The store offers a vast selection of rare bourbons, tequila, vodka, aged rums, beer, liqueurs, whiskeys, cognac, and wines sourced from around the world. It also carries a wide variety of hard seltzers, and dietary preferences like low-carb or gluten-free options. The store is thrilled to announce an upcoming expansion of their Cigar Humidor, doubling its current size.

688 Fine Wine and spirits is located at 14590 Walsingham Road in Largo. The phone number is (727) 596-8902. Cheers to 45 years - Na Zdrowie!

DITCH THE POISON

The recent discovery of a deceased bobcat in Safety Harbor puts a spotlight on a recurring poisoning problem in Pinellas County. A family of four great horned owls in Phillippe Park were killed by rodenticide in 2022, leaving one chick orphaned. Last February, an adult eagle and two eaglets succumbed to poison in Oldsmar. According to the Raptor Center of Tampa Bay, more than 70 birds were killed last year by consuming poisoned rats, known as secondary poisoning. Rabbits, squirrels, coyotes, and even family pets are also killed by rat poison each year.

Rodenticide is often used in bait stations placed around buildings and dumpsters. The rodents do not die inside the station, but return to the wild, often taking more than a week to die. The poisoned animal are potentially lethal prey.

There is no such thing as "pet-safe" or "bird-friendly" rodenticides. There are, however, alternatives to using poison. Rodent-proof your home or business by keeping the structure and surrounding area clean and removing any food, water, and shelter sources for pests. Keep dumpsters and garbage cans sealed and use rodent-resistant materials to close off entry points. There are also many types of traps available.

Efforts are underway at the local, state, and federal level to ban the use of commercial rodenticides, but until these are successful, do your part keep local wildlife safe.



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Bar & Restaurant News

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to owners Jean and Jeff Tacy on the three-year anniversary of what was the Indian Rocks Café on June 16th. Now it is the Indian Rocks Café, Deli, and Market, but when it opened, the Cafe was a one room, walk-up counter that offered an assortment of hot and cold coffee drinks, breakfast and deli sandwiches, pies and pastries. After renovation and expansion, they still offer those goodies and more. With a variety of freshly sliced Boar's Head



Deli meats and cheeses, the sandwich selection seems limitless. The market has many selections for you to prepare at home. Pasta and sauce, fresh fruit and produce, charcutier board essentials, and more. They recently added beer, wine, and seltzers as well.

The cafe is open daily from 8am-2pm and the market is open from 8am-5pm. Visit IndianRocksCafe.com to order online or call the store at (727) 475-9949.

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.

WELCOME WAWA It finally happened, the stand-alone drive-through-only Wawa store at 2530 E. Bay Drive near the intersection of Starkey Road opened on June 13th. It is one of only three stores in the country with this concept. WaWa fanatics showed up as early as 4:30am to celebrate the ribbon cutting. They took photos with Wally Goose (WaWa's mascot) and the first 100 customers received a commemorative t-shirt. A hoagie building competition, Hoagie's for Heroes, was between Largo Police and Fire departments. These charity fundraising contests benefitted the charities of choice of the participating everyday heroes. They will continue to offer WaWa's signature items such as coffee and coffee drinks, hoagies and breakfast sandwiches, while adding fries and burgers to the menu, all with the convenience of not having to get out of your vehicle.



Fun Beach Vibes Two Great Locations

HURRICANE

Eddie's

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Bar & Restaurant News



CELEBRATING ONE YEAR

COCO's Crush Bar and Grill of Indian Rocks Beach celebrates its first anniversary on Friday July 26th. They will have live music, happy hour, and \$1 specials. COCO's offers All-You-Can-Eat snow crab legs every Monday and Tuesday, Trivia on Tuesdays, and Happy Hour Monday-Friday from 11am-6pm. Their sister bar, COCO's the Original on Clearwater Beach, celebrated their 5th anniversary at the beginning of the month. For more information about specials and music line up, follow them on Facebook.

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.

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.



CRABBY CHRISTMAS Celebrate Christmas in July at The Original Crabby Bills on July 27th. The day will be filled with holiday cheer, tropical vibes, and plenty of fun in the sun! They invite you to dive into the holiday spirit with sand between your toes as they transform their beachside oasis into a winter wonderland where they will be serving up holiday themed cocktails all day long. There will also be live music performed by Steve Balesteri from 1-5pm and CROWNZ from 6-10pm.

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.

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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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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Lowest New Waterfront Home Prices!!

The majority of families desire to be the first owner of their home purchase, and now there is a limited opportunity to own a new waterfront home in Indian Rocks Beach at exceptionally low costs. Two new homes are being constructed on beautiful waterfront lots in Indian Rocks Beach with great sunrise/sunset views from 3 porches overlooking the water. And, each new home comes with a new swimming pool, new boat dock, and new seawall, along with the new 2024 home. Each of these quality homes come with an elevator, piling foundation systems, 4-6 bedrooms, 4 baths and 4 car garages. Annual Insurance savings are substantial due to new homes being constructed to stringent hurricane standards. These new homes today are selling for only \$929/sf, as opposed to older one-story 70 year old homes that sold these past few months for an average of \$1014/sf. Don't miss this *limited* opportunity to be the first owner of a new 2024 custom waterfront home in beautiful Indian Rocks Beach!

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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*"Bahama Breeze" by Classic Florida Dream Home
(Front Rendering)*

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Anona Elementary 5th Grade Graduating Class with (from left to right) Teachers Cali Kulavic, Caroline Dunagan, Davis Hall, Peyton Hawk, Principal Denise Ballard, Assistant Principal Ann Palmer, and School Safety Officer Andre Simes (Not Pictured - Kristen Clanton – Ledbetter)

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Business Briefs

THE BIG TEN Belleair Market opened in 1971 at 510 Indian Rocks Road, but it was ten years ago in April 2014 that owner Chris Scott took the helm and changed the name to Belleair Market - Your Corner Store. Since then, he has made many changes including the installation of hardwood floors, granite counter tops, a huge walk-in humidor to find that perfect cigar, and added a wide variety of wines, and over 375 craft beers.



The Market carries rotisserie chickens, steaks for grilling, sandwiches made to order with Boars Head deli meats and cheeses and much more, including their award-winning Cuban sandwich. Belleair Market also offers a catering menu for large parties and events, view the menu and weekly specials at BelleairMarket.Dudaone.com or call (727) 584-3697 for more information.

NEW DEPARTMENT STORE The Largo Mall opened a Burlington Store in June. Burlington is a major discount retailer offering deals on customers' favorite brands for the entire family and home at up to 60% off other retailers' prices. The store includes clothing for ladies, men, kids, and babies along with beauty items, shoes, accessories, home décor, and gifts. Largo Mall is located at 10500 Ulmerton Road. Visit Burlington.com or call (727) 625-8944 for more info.

LANDMARK PROPERTY SOLD Listing Agent Pat Calhoun of Smith and Associates Realty announced the sale of the Jersey Jim Towers property on US Highway 19 north of Haines Bayshore Road in May. Jersey Jim senior began selling televisions and appliances in Newark, New Jersey in 1932 before moving the operation to Pinellas in 1956. Originally on Gulf to Bay Blvd, the retailer moved to the US 19 location in 1993.

The business, owned by Jim Towers, son of founder Jersey Jim, will announce a new location soon. Neighboring auto dealer Walker Ford purchased the property for \$2.8 million and intends to use the property to expand its business.

BIG WINNERS Two winning Mega Million Lottery tickets were sold at neighboring Publix stores in Largo last month. The two stores located at 10500 Ulmerton Road and 10411 Ulmerton Road are less than half a mile away from each other. There was no jackpot winner since no one hit the Mega Ball. These were two of the three winning tickets (one in New York) that had the Megaplier number, leaving the winners with \$4 million each. The winning numbers were: 1, 5, 7, 22 and 24.

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



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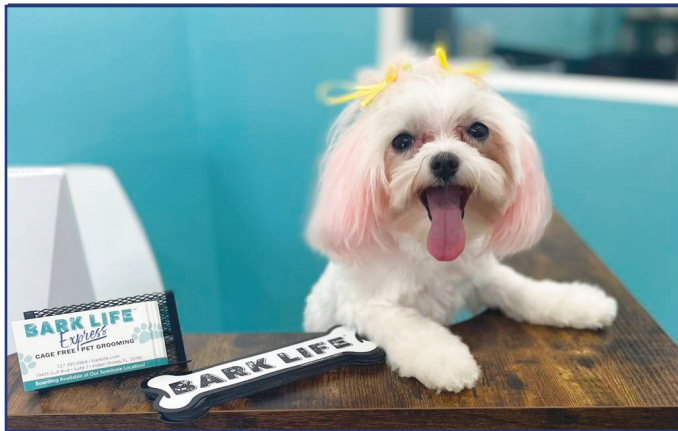
Business Briefs

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.



BARK LIFE A specialty pet retailer has announced that they have acquired Pet Styles by Sharon in Indian Shores at 19455 Gulf Blvd, next to Smuggler's Cove Adventure Golf. They will continue operating the location under the new name "Bark Life Express." This will be Bark Life's third corporate store, including their 14,000 square foot facility in Seminole.

The Bark Life Market was founded in 2011 with the simple mission to provide healthy pet food and treats, along with safe, cage-free grooming services to pet lovers in Pinellas. Reflecting on their 30+ years of experience serving the local pet industry, founders Tammy and Mike Vasquez crafted a uniquely personal, one-on-one shopping experience, highlighted by a friendly, well-educated staff.

Bark Life Express is currently open Monday through Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm, with Saturday hours coming soon. Visit Barklife.com or call (727) 385-0964 for more information or to book an appointment.

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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. Visit pinellas.gov/emergency-information/public-shelters for a list of pet-friendly 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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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.

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 Pincrest 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



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LOCAL PET PHOTOGRAPHER CALLS ON DOGS TO JOIN TAILS OF THE WORLD

By Lora Magnani, Publisher

Largo-based pet photographer Yamile Haibi of Blue Merle Pet Photography is looking for local dogs to help raise funds for animal rescue by posing for an international photography book.

Ten dogs will be photographed by Yamile and featured in *Tails of the World: Volume Three*.



The annual *Tails of the World* books have raised over \$95,000 for animal charities, with over 1150 dogs photographed around the world.

Blue Merle Pet Photography Studio is now taking applications for Volume Three. Photoshoot spots are limited and require a \$100 Donation for Healy Pack Senior GSD Sanctuary in St. Petersburg, Florida. The Sanctuary's mission is to save as many senior German Shepherds from kill shelters as possible. It provides veterinary care, high quality food, and supplements to restore the dogs to good health, and finds appropriate homes for senior German Shepard dogs. If that is not possible, the dogs live and are cared for at the Sanctuary. For more information on this rescue, visit HealyPack.org.

Tails of the World was founded by Caitlin J. McColl, a multi-award-winning professional pet photographer based in Melbourne, Australia. She is an author of eight dog-filled books including *The Tails of the World Collective* in 2015, which began as a dream to unite pet photographers across the globe. Together, they raise much needed funds for animal charities with beautiful photography and heartwarming stories.

"To date, our Collective has raised over \$150,000 for animal charities around the world," McColl said. "We have a series of books featuring different locations around the world - everywhere from *Tails of the Netherlands*, to *Tails of Portland*, to *Tails of Melbourne*. The annual *Tails of the World* book is a huge group effort and we're so excited to be using our photography together to make a difference for animals in need."

"Being part of a worldwide collaboration of pet photographers to help local and international animal rescues is an impactful way to combine the creativity of photography with the passion for helping animals in need," said Haibi of Blue Merle Photography. "I am thrilled to be a part of this beautiful charity project."

Sessions began in June and are available through September 21st. For more information or to get your pet involved, visit BlueMerlePhoto.com/tails-of-the-world.

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Community News



ROTARY CLUB OF INDIAN ROCKS BEACH

Submitted by David Kline

On Friday, June 14, the Rotary Club of Indian Rocks Beach was proud to present the city's annual Flag Day celebration at City Hall, commemorating the 247th anniversary of the adoption of the flag of the United States. On June 14, 1777, the Second Continental Congress resolved, "That the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation."

IRB Rotary President Chris Smaridge officiated the celebration which included a presentation of the colors by the Pinellas County Sheriff's Honor Guard, a demonstration of the inspection and folding of the flag by members of the Pinellas Suncoast Fire and Rescue, and a demonstration of the formal retirement of a flag by members of the VFW Post 10094, Indian Rocks Post. Post 10094 Commander Dean Lyons offered a history of 'Old Glory'. The ceremony concluded with the singing of 'America The Beautiful' by Rotary member Michael Card. Refreshments were served by IRB Rotary.

The keynote speaker was Air Force Tech Sergeant and Pinellas County Deputy Corporal William Lawson, who gave his perspectives of our country's most enduring symbol as a member of the U.S. military who was deployed to and served in the Middle East.

The Rotary would like to thank all those who attended the event, the city of Indian Rocks Beach for their support and also our friends at IRB Home, who have helped sponsor Flag Day in recent years.

BELLEAIR WOMEN'S REPUBLICAN CLUB

Belleair Women's Republican Club (BWRC) will meet on August 2, 2024, at Belleair Country Club, One Country Club Lane, Belleair, Florida. Social time begins at 11:30, with luncheon and program at noon.

Guest speakers will be a judges' panel featuring candidates for the Judicial Sixth Circuit Court. This post is for informational purposes only. This is not an endorsement of any candidates.

Reservations are required. To reserve a seat, mail a check for \$37 for the meal, to arrive by July 24th, to: BWRC, P.O. Box 1117, 850 E. Lime Street, Tarpon Springs, FL 34688. Walk-ins cannot be accommodated.

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Community News

SPCA TAMPA BAY

Submitted by Kristen Davis



This summer, SPCA Tampa Bay is discounting adoption fees on all animals during their Summer Adopt-A-Thon! All dogs and cats can be adopted all summer long at half their normal fee from SPCA Tampa Bay. Additionally, all small animals such as rabbits, guinea pigs, birds, and

reptiles are available to adopt at half their normal fee, or in pairs, two for the fee of one.

As a For-All shelter, SPCA Tampa Bay accepts all animals regardless of the circumstance or situation. There are many reasons why an animal shelter receives animals, and every single situation is unique. SPCA Tampa Bay currently has over 45 dogs, 55 cats, and 85 pocket pets and livestock available for adoption and awaiting a loving home.

The summer season is especially challenging for animal shelters. Our hope is this adopt-a-thon will inspire people who have been thinking of adding a furry friend to their family to do so now. If you are unable to adopt, please consider volunteering, fostering, or getting involved with SPCA Tampa Bay in other ways this summer.

View adoptable dogs at spcatampabay.org/dogs, cats at spcatampabay.org/cats, and pocket pets at spcatampabay.org/pocket-pets or come to the shelter in Largo.

SPCA Tampa Bay is located at 9099 130th Avenue North, in Largo. Adoption hours are Wednesday through Friday from 1-6pm and Saturday and Sunday from 10am-6pm. Potential adopters are encouraged to bring a leash, carrier, or housing that's appropriate for your new pet.

For more information on SPCA Tampa Bay and all their adoptable pets, visit spcatampabay.org and click on adoptions, or call 727-586-3591.

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 at FLBGFoundation.org/membership.

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Community News



PINELLAS SUNCOAST FIRE RESCUE DISTRICT

Submitted by Chief Jeffrey Davidson

Renovations are coming soon to Indian Rocks Beach Fire Station 27. On June 12th, Governor Ron DeSantis signed the state budget. The Pinellas Suncoast Fire Administration Team has been working diligently with legislators and was awarded \$1M for the renovation of Fire Station 27, located at 304 1st Street, Indian Rocks Beach. This building was the original fire station in this area, and was built in 1965. This funding from the State will allow the 59-year-old building to be renovated to allow for a healthier fire station to better serve the community. Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue District services the communities of Indian Rocks Beach, Indian Shores, Belleair Beach, Belleair Shore and unincorporated Pinellas County.

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. featured guest's own words and memories.

REMEMBER ME NFP

Submitted by Nan Prevost

Remember Me NFP, a dedicated nonprofit for suicide prevention and drug overdose, would like to introduce our new program the "You Matter Boat Excursion" for Suicide Bereavement support. The excursions will be held July 16th, and August 13th, from 9am to 12pm, departing from the Bay Pines Veterans Boat Ramp at 9192 Bay Pines Blvd, St. Petersburg. The cost is \$30 per person, with on-site paid parking available. Please note, we set sail at 9am sharp. Coolers are welcome, but no alcohol is allowed. We'll be cruising on a spacious, covered 2-decker pontoon with a slide, heading towards John's Pass for our support group session. Due to limited space, registration is required, with a maximum of 5 participants per session. For more details and to register, please email NanPrevost@gmail.com or call (727) 688-4544. Weather permitting.

BEACH ART CENTER

Submitted by Andrea Harms

Summertime is in full swing at the Beach Art Center! Every year we welcome almost 200 children from IRB and surrounding communities to join our Creative Kids Summer Camp. For seven weeks in June and July we offer Art and Clay camps for kids in first through eighth grade. This is such an important time for the art center as we open our doors to the younger generation and introduce them to creative art concepts. We hope that this early introduction will bring them happiness and a sense of accomplishment, so they'll grow up with fond memories of their summer camp days. Many of our camp parents have told us they had great experiences when they were in camp at the BAC too! We'd really like to thank our Sponsors who make this program possible: Creative Pinellas, Art Lovers Place, State Farm – Team Cocco, Slyce Pizza IRB, Rooth & Rooth Elder Law Attorneys, Great Florida Insurance, Bonham Dental Arts, Island Shop IRB, Coldwell Banker – Sharon Deegan, ZEN Massage & Yoga, IRB Creamery, Tampa Bay Surface Design Guild and the Neighborhood News Magazine.

We still have some openings in our Camp program in July. Check out the fun that is planned in our "Printing & Mixed Media" Camp with local artist and teacher, Deb Vest. Also, look at "Claymation" with Deb, and Clay Creative with Toni McPeck. Details and registration on our website at BeachArtCenter.org/kids-camp.

The Beach Art Center has Art on the Rocks ("make it and take it") sessions starting back up in August including our popular "Pet Portraits" on 8/10, and Mandala Coasters on 8/17. These classes are meant for everyone – all materials and instruction are included! Bring your own snacks and drinks and enjoy some relaxing creative fun with your neighbors.

Don't miss our next "Paint Like Bob" Workshop with certified Bob Ross instructor, Chrissy Samson on Sunday, August 11th from 1-4pm.



Our popular Weekly Classes will start up again once Summer Camp has finished. Some classes will begin in August and some in September. Never stop learning! Check out our Fall schedule on our website BeachArtCenter.org/classes.

In our Gallery we are exhibiting our KID PWR Gallery Show featuring artwork by local children through the end of July. Stop by and see what these kids can do!

CALL TO ARTISTS for our next open media show – "Florida Endless Summer." Art take-in is August 12th to 14th. Show dates are August 19th-September 20th. Join our Opening Reception on Friday, August 30th from 6-8pm. All are welcome! For gallery show details and requirements please visit our website: BeachArtCenter.org/gallery.

We love being part of the IRB Community, please stop in to browse our local art Gift Shop.

The Center is located at 1515 Bay Palm Blvd and is open Monday – Friday from 9am-4pm.



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WHY IS MY AUTO INSURANCE SO EXPENSIVE?

By Kristen Estep

We opened our agency, GreatFlorida Insurance, on April 15, 2007. The one thing that has been constant is change. The increasing cost of auto insurance has been a hot topic lately. We have been informing our clients of some factors contributing to this here in the sunshine state.



1. There are a lot of accidents. More accidents mean higher claims.
2. We have weather. Florida is prone to hurricanes, floods, and severe storms, leading to a higher incidence of weather-related claims.
3. Uninsured Drivers – Insurers compensate for this by raising premiums for insured drivers.
4. No-Fault Insurance – Florida requires drivers to carry Personal Injury Protection (PIP) coverage. PIP provides payment for medical expenses regardless of fault, which can lead to higher costs due to potential fraud and inflated medical claims.
5. Insurance Fraud is a big one! Fraudulent activities, such as staged accidents and exaggerated injury claims, inflate the cost of claims, which insurers pass on to policyholders in the form of higher premiums.
6. Lawsuits – The state’s legal environment can lead to costly settlements and legal fees. The propensity for litigation increases overall claim costs.
7. High Cost of Vehicle Repairs – Many factors contribute to this including higher labor costs, expensive parts due to heavier, more complex vehicles, fewer technicians and pandemic-induced supply shortages.

While it may seem like there is no relief in sight, there are things you can do to mitigate rising premiums:

- Call a local, independent agency, like ours, that represents many A-rated carriers and will shop around for you.
- Bundle Policies – Combine auto insurance with other policies like Umbrella, Motorcycle, Boat or RV.
- Increase Deductibles – Opting for higher deductibles can lower your premium. For example, consider \$1000 deductibles on Comprehensive and Collision coverages.
- Maintain a clean driving record - Accidents have a huge impact on rates, as do traffic violations.
- Take a Defensive Driving Course – Some companies give a bigger discount than others. The discount usually stays on the policy for 3 years.
- Use Telematics – Almost all the companies that we represent offer some usage-based program that monitors driving habits. There is an initial discount just for signing up!
- Ask About Discounts – There can be discounts for good students, military personnel and retirees. Most companies offer low mileage discounts as well.

We encourage policy reviews, especially if you haven’t done this in a while. There may be some additional savings we discover or discounts you are missing out on.

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Thrift store hours:
Tuesday, 10am – 2pm
Friday, 10am – 2pm
Saturday, 10am – 2pm



Community News

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.

TAMPA BAY WATCH

Submitted by Rachel Arndt



As the school year wraps up, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to all the students, teachers, and chaperones who made this field trip season unforgettable. This year, we welcomed 331 classes, 6,813 students, and 1,249 adults to our onsite programs. Additionally, our mobile education program made marine science more

accessible, reaching 222 classes, 3,447 students, and 366 adults by bringing marine education directly to local schools. We're thrilled to unveil our new passenger van next year, allowing us to expand our traveling education programs even further.

Did you know we offer marine education throughout the summer? Our summer camps are the perfect opportunity to continue exploring the wonders of marine science. We have a few camp spots left for your budding marine biologist. Sign up today for a summer of fun on the water!

- Barracuda Week: Shining Under Pressure – July 8-12 ages 9-12
- Jellyfish Week: Mysterious Movers – July 15-19 ages 6-8
- Hammerhead Week: An Ampullae Adventure – July 22-26 ages 9-12
- Mantis Shrimp Week: Beyond the Rainbow Realm – July 29-August 6 ages 6-8

Visit TBWDiscoveryCenter.org for more information or to register.

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Belleair Bluffs: Stunning waterfront residence
4 Beds | 3/2 Baths | 3,683 sq. ft. | 0.88 Acres
Listed at \$4,980,000



Belleair: Coastal craftsman waterfront
home | 3 Beds | 2 Baths | 2,394 sq. ft.
Sold for \$2,250,000



Belleair: Charming pool home on a tranquil
cul-de-sac | 3 Beds | 2 Baths | 3,865 sq. ft.
Listed at \$1,849,000



Indian Shores: Northwest corner remodeled
penthouse | 3 Beds | 2 Baths | 1,790 sq. ft.
Listed at \$1,600,000



Belleair: Remodeled two-story pool home on
a corner lot | 5 Beds | 4.5 Baths | 3,335 sq. ft.
Listed at \$1,599,000



Clearwater Beach: Custom designed unit with
amazing views | 2 Beds | 2 Baths | 1,331 sq. ft.
Listed at \$999,000

Follow your dream, home.



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