

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS Magazine

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FROM FARM TO WHITE HOUSE AND YOUR HOUSE

By Becky Griffin, Local Author

Christmas trees are grown in various regions around the country, but most trees sold in Florida come from a small six county area in Western North Carolina. Just like you, this year the White House Christmas tree was grown in that area – specifically, Avery County, North Carolina.

The North Carolina Christmas Tree Industry is ranked second in the nation for the number of trees harvested, and it produces twenty-two percent of the real Christmas trees grown in the United States. Annually, over three million trees are harvested in North Carolina and ninety-six percent are North Carolina Fraser Fir trees.

The Fraser Fir is native to the Western Appalachian Mountains. Its sturdy branches that can hold heavy ornaments make it very popular. It also retains its needles longer, meaning the trees can be harvested earlier, and ship better. North Carolina's 940 Christmas Tree growers have approximately fifty-three million trees growing on over 33,000 acres. Close to ten percent of those trees are harvested each year.

Every two years, the National Christmas Tree Association hosts a national tree contest, at which growers, industry experts and consumers vote to select the Christmas Tree grower who will provide the official White House Christmas Tree. To qualify, growers must first win their state or regional competitions, so being named National Grand Champion is quite an achievement.



- Continued on Page 6

Also in this Issue:



Moon Names

We have all heard of a blue moon, but what about wolf, worm, and blood moons? Read all about moon names and their origins.

- page 19

Holiday Events

After a trying summer and fall, everyone can use some holiday cheer. We have a list of upcoming festivities that you don't want to miss.

- pages 16 & 17



The Sandwich Generation

Caring for elderly parents while raising children presents a unique set of challenges.

- page 34

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BELLEAIR AREA NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

Inside, you will find articles and local information about the nearby area inside. We call it a Neighborhood News Magazine because it is about your neighborhood. It is mailed to the entire Belleair Area - a total of about 8,000 households - six times a year.

Do you need another copy of this magazine? You may pick up additional copies at all City Halls, Panera Bread, UPS Store and the Belleair Market. Call (813) 239-6862 if you need more than a few.

We hope you enjoyed our newsletter. We want your input. Did you like this issue? What suggestions do you have for future articles? Call or email us with your comments. Follow us on Facebook for ongoing local news.

Thank you for reading,

Lora and Pete Magnani
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SEE YOU AGAIN IN FEBRUARY

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Anna Paulina Luna 202-225-5961

Republican, District 13

1201 Gandy Blvd N., St Petersburg

CALENDAR OF HOLIDAYS & EVENTS



PinellasSchoolWinterHolidayBegins	21
Winter Solstice	21
Public Schools Close	23
Christmas Day	25
Hanukah Begins	25
ReliaQuest Bowl Beach Day	29
Holiday Lights and Rides Largo Ends	29
ReliaQuest Bowl	31

JANUARY

New Year's Day	1
Public School Begins	3
Holiday Lights in the Gardens Ends	4
Dunedin Art Festival	4-5
Pinellas School Winter Holiday Ends	5
Epiphany	6
Creative Pinellas Fundraiser	7
City Commission Meeting	14
St. Pete Boat Show	16-19
Belleair Mayor's Pickleball Tourney	18
Gasparilla Children's Parade	18
John's Pass Seafood Festival	17
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	20
Public Schools Closed	20
Gasparilla Pirate Fest	25
Pinellas Park TacoFest	28

DECEMBER

Cyber Monday	2
BelleairBluffsChristmasTreeLighting	6
Winter Wonderland Clearwater	7
97X Next Big Thing at The Sound	7
Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	7
Belleair Holiday Parade and Party	8
ChristmasParadeClearwaterBeach	10
PolarExpressExperienceatTheSound	13
Clearwater Yacht Club Boat Parade	14
Bret Michaels at The Sound	14
Kenny G at The Sound	17
Indian Rocks Lighted Boat Parade	21

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Did You Know

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

The National Guard turns 388 years old on December 13th. The state-based military reserve force is activated for service upon declaration of emergency by the governor of the state or territory where they serve and can be mobilized for federal active duty during times of war or national emergency. Over 11,000 Florida National Guard soldiers and airmen were deployed across after Hurricanes Helene and Milton. Some were also sent to North Carolina to assist in relief efforts.



Most National Guard members hold full-time civilian jobs and serve the Guard part-time. There are more than 430,000 National Guard soldiers nationwide.

NEW PARK IN LARGO In September, Pinellas County officials and community leaders held a groundbreaking ceremony Friday for Dansville Community Park, a new recreation space that will be built around Mill Pond in the Greater Ridgecrest area of unincorporated Largo. The 12-acre park will feature a multi-use path, picnic shelters, benches and restrooms. The park is funded by the American Rescue Plan Act and the Penny for Pinellas. Construction is expected to take about one year.

Dan Henry, a former sharecropper, founded Dansville in 1946. Henry's vision and determination helped lay the foundation for what has become a close-knit neighborhood. He purchased two 40-acre tracts and shared the land with family and friends. Other families settled in the area, building homes and opening businesses.

WATER SHORTAGE Florida TaxWatch, a nonpartisan research institute, recently analyzed Florida's water supply and found that nearly \$2 billion in critical water projects were needed to avoid a significant shortage, predicted to begin in 2025. The group blames Florida's rapid economic and population growth for shortage, estimating the state will have 26.4 million residents by 2040.

PLAY BALL The Rays are looking for a new home for their 2025 season after Tropicana Field was damaged during Hurricane Milton. A damage report given to the St. Petersburg City Council estimates the cost of repairs at \$55.7 million, including replacement of the roof that tore off during the storm. The city has not decided on whether or not to fund the repairs considering a new stadium is expected to be built before the 2028 season.

According to Major League Baseball, the Rays will play the 2025 season at Steinbrenner Field in Tampa, the Spring Training home of the New York Yankees.

OUR NEXT ISSUE WILL BE FEBRUARY If you need another copy of this magazine, pick one up at all City Halls, Panera Bread, The UPS Store and Belleair Market. If you need more than a few, call (813) 361-7376.

Read this issue and others at BeachNewsletters.com. Follow us on Facebook for local news.

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and More...



MARINE MAGIC Dive into a sea of lights and wonder with Aqua Lanterns: a Chinese Festival of Lights at Clearwater Marine Aquarium. This luminous experience, featuring dazzling lantern displays, is open Wednesday through Sunday evenings and other select dates through December 30th.

As the sun sets, the aquarium transforms into a glowing seascape, filled with over thirty illuminated sculptures of whales, penguins, jellyfish and other sparkling sea creatures. Visit CMAquarium.com for more information and tickets.

HEALTH INSURANCE OPEN ENROLLMENT For those that buy insurance on HealthCare.gov, open enrollment started last month and ends January 16th for plans beginning in February. Now is the time for individuals and families not insured through their employers to enroll or change plans for 2025. For plans beginning in January, the enrollment deadline is December 15th.

Before enrolling, decide your medical needs and how much you can afford to pay in premiums and deductibles. Monthly premiums have increased an average of six percent, but most people will qualify for enhanced federal premium subsidies. To register, call 800-318-2596 or visit HealthCare.gov.

MOVE OVER FLORIDA Passed in 2016, Florida State Statute 316.081 requires drivers on multi-lane roadways to move out of the leftmost lane when being overtaken by another vehicle travelling at a higher rate of speed. The law pertains even if the overtaking vehicle is speeding.

A bill vetoed by Governor DeSantis earlier this year would have made it illegal to be in the leftmost lane except when passing or preparing to exit the roadway.

HAZARDOUS WASTE Pinellas County Solid Waste's Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Program diverts household hazardous waste from the municipal solid waste stream for proper recycling and disposal. The HHW Program currently collects chemicals at HHW North, a permanent collection facility open select Saturdays from 9am-2pm. The facility is located at 29582 U.S. 19 N. in Clearwater.

Accepted materials include automotive oil and coolant, household chemicals, paint, batteries, and pool chemicals.

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The White House Christmas Tree, Continued

Participating growers entered up to four trees at the National Christmas Tree and Wreath Contest held at rotating locations throughout the country. Each grower is responsible for cutting, transporting (in a refrigerated truck) and displaying their trees. The Grand Champion provides the eighteen-and-a-half-foot tall tree on display in the White House's Blue Room. The contest is held every two years, so two Champions are chosen, one for this year and one for next.

The Carter Christmas Tree Farm in Newland, NC was chosen to provide this year's White House Christmas tree. In late October, White House personnel visited the farm and traveled to the top of a mountain where they had four trees to choose from. Sam Cartner, one of the owners of Cartner Christmas Tree Farm, is responsible for delivering it to the White House. Shortly before Thanksgiving, hoping it isn't foggy, icy, or snowing, his crew will cut the twenty-five-year-old tree and using a crane, load it on a trailer to bring it down the mountain, where it will be baled and shipped in a refrigerated truck to Washington D.C. This is the fifty-eighth year the National Christmas Tree Association has provided the White House tree. The North Carolina Fraser Fir is a sixteen-time winner, more than any other state and tree species in the nation. This year's tree is named "Tremendous."

Sam Cartner, along with his brothers Jim and David, grew up on the Cartner Christmas tree farm his parents founded in 1959 and together they manage the farm. David, a lawyer with a practice in Asheville, NC, is responsible for shipping logistics. Jim, owner of a veterinarian clinic in Statesville, NC visits throughout the year and assists with order loading during harvest. Sam, a retired veterinarian and former Director of the Animal Resources Program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, oversees operations and visits customers throughout the year.

Owning a Christmas tree farm is a lot more complicated than planting some trees. The seedlings come from a local grower. Cartner participates in a seed orchard that has been perfecting seeds for the last twenty years. A bushel of cones, harvested from the tops of forty-foot-tall trees, yields 2 or 3 pounds of seed (optimally, that is 60,000 seeds or trees per pound). A good cone crop only happens every 5 to 7 years, so after being properly cleaned and dried, the seeds can be frozen for years.

When the six-inch-tall seedlings arrive on the Cartner farm, they are already five years old. After they are manually planted, the trees will grow about a foot a year. That means your seven-foot-tall tree is eleven to twelve years old. A late frost will kill the tips and add a year to the growing schedule. After planting, the trees are regularly trimmed, hand-sheared for shaping, and fertilized. The ground cover must be managed to avoid choking the new trees. Pest are also a problem, and the trees are routinely inspected and treated for fungus. Sam estimates each tree is touched about 150 times before it is harvested. A field manager oversees the daily work performed by experienced crews.

Earlier this fall, the trees were inspected, measured and tagged. In early November, the harvest began. The tagged trees are being cut, baled and carried from the mountain fields to a storage area, to be sorted by size and watered daily as they await shipping. The tree stumps and roots left in the field will quickly decompose and the nutrients return to the soil.

The Carner farm provides Christmas Trees primarily to independent garden centers and non-profit organizations throughout Florida. Each truck that leaves the farm contains multiple orders, requiring it to be carefully loaded separating each order. Wreaths, made by hand on site are also included with the orders. When they are done, eighty truckloads of trees will leave their farm - only about ten percent of their planted trees.



Like many local farms, the Cartner Christmas Tree Farm offers a "Choose and Cut" option for those that want to pick their very own tree in the field. It is a small, but popular portion of their business and nearly 1000 people drive two or three hours just to pick that perfect tree.

With the easy availability of artificial trees, why buy a real tree? While they're growing, the trees absorb carbon dioxide and other gases and emit fresh oxygen. A harvested six-to-eight-foot tree contains approximately sixty pounds of carbon absorbed from the air. Yearly, an acre of trees produces the same amount of oxygen used by twenty people use each year. In addition, the trees stabilize the soil, while providing refuge for wildlife. In many cases, the trees are grown in soil that does not support other crops. Just like any other agricultural crop, they are replanted each year. To ensure a constant supply, growers plant one to three seedlings for every tree harvested. The best part is that real trees are biodegradable; they can easily be recycled for mulch and other purposes.

The Cartner family has been invited to the unveiling of the Blue Room Christmas tree. Unfortunately, it is in the middle of their harvest. They hope to be able to see their tree fully decorated and on display at some point before Christmas.

As you probably know, Western North Carolina was also hit by the devastating Hurricane Helene on September 27. The storm dumped 20-30 inches of rain over twenty-four hours with 50 mph winds. Creeks and rivers quickly overflowed taking people, animals, land, homes and buildings with them.

The community, government, and people throughout the U.S. quickly came together creating a response exceeding anything imaginable. The Cartners were spared, only losing some small Christmas trees. Many harvest roads were damaged by the mud slides which caused gullies, washed-out culverts, and downed hardwoods. Through the hard work of their team, they are now harvesting and will be able to ship all the trees needed to fill existing orders, including the White House's tree. Sam Cartner wants all to know, "our devoted temporary workers from Mexico, who return year after year, are as much our heroes as the first responders, and community volunteers." Visit CarolinaFraserFir.com or more information on the Cartner Farm.

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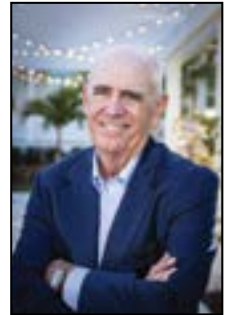
SIX BIG MISTAKES IN RETIREMENT - PART ONE

by Ray Ferrara, ProVise Management Group

Most articles about retirement planning explain what you should do. We thought it might be worthwhile to list six BIG mistakes to avoid.

MISTAKE #1 - TAKING MORE RISK THAN NECESSARY

While working, we accumulate money for future financial needs and wants. Hopefully, we have saved diligently and invested wisely. When younger, we have time to take risks because there is time to recover, but once in retirement there are more years behind than in front of us.



Suppose you have \$1 million saved and you believe that you need to draw \$40,000 each year in addition to Social Security and maybe a pension. Over the past fifty years according to Standard & Poor's, the 500 Index produced an average annualized return of 11.1 percent through 12/31/23 with lots of volatility; that keeps you up at night.

That worked great while working but who wants to stay awake at night in retirement? If your plan works with "only" a projected 6 percent return, why not reduce the risk? Think of it this way - if the additional risk brings no additional value, why take the risk?

MISTAKE #2 - TAKING LESS RISK THAN REQUIRED

Too often retirees are not willing to take enough risk to get the return necessary to support their lifestyle. Turning to guaranteed investments like CDs is not likely to achieve a high enough return, especially in light of inflation. Guarantees come at cost- usually a lower return. It is difficult to look 10, 20, 30 years into the future and see the devastating effects that come with not enough risk.

MISTAKE #3 - NOT UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ACCUMULATION AND DECUMULATION

While working we are accumulating money – values go up. Of course, there are times when the value goes down, but we feel confident that over time there will be more pluses than minuses. But when you are withdrawing (decumulating) and investments decline, it is harder to recover. It is a triple whammy. For example, if you retired at the beginning of 2021 (up about 27 percent) as opposed to 2022 (down about 19 percent) the amount you would have at the end of the first year would be quite different. This is known as "sequence of return risk."

These three mistakes have strategies to mitigate or eliminate them. Take advantage of our one-hour complimentary consultation I our Clearwater office, or by Zoom.

V. Raymond Ferrara, CFP®, Chair and CEO
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HOLIDAY DECORATING

- Be careful with holiday decorations. Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant
- Keep lit candles away from decorations and other things that can burn.
- Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands to connect.
- Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.
- Keep decorations away from windows and doors.



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Before Heading Out or to Bed

Blow out candles when you leave the room or go to bed. **Turn off** all the light strings before leaving home or going to bed.

FACTS

- ① More than **one-third** of home decoration fires are started by candles.
- ① More than **two of every five** decoration fires happen because decorations are placed too close to a heat source.



HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING

- Test your smoke alarms and tell guests about your home fire escape plan.
- Keep children and pets away from lit candles.
- Keep matches and lighters up high in a locked cabinet.
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking on the stovetop.
- Ask smokers to smoke outside. Remind smokers to keep their smoking materials with them so young children do not touch them.
- Provide large, deep ashtrays for smokers. Wet cigarette butts with water before discarding.

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Bar & Restaurant News

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

After thirteen years, SLYCE Indian Rocks Beach has decided not to reopen. The damage from Hurricane Helene was simply too great to overcome. SLYCE was not just a great pizza joint, it held many community events and fundraisers for the Indian Rocks Beach Community such as toy drives and IRBHome mix and mingles. Two other locations are open, SLYCE Maderia is located at 662 150th Avenue in Maderia Beach and SLYCE St. Pete Beach is located at 6340 Gulf Blvd.



TOY DRIVE Jimmy Guana's Waterside Restaurant at the Holiday Inn Harbourside is having a toy drive for the Marine Corp Toys for Tots. They ask that you bring in a new unwrapped toy worth \$20 for local boys and girls from the ages of babies to 12 years old. With your donation, Jimmy's will give you a free dessert or holiday drink special. They are accepting donations through Tuesday, December 17th. For more information, call (727) 595-8356 or send an email to Lisa@HHHarbourside.com.

CLOSED After 52 years in Clearwater, Capogna's Dugout, made the difficult decision to close in October. The neighborhood pizzeria was known for being a local hangout where friends and families would gather after their kids' big game or to kick back and enjoy good food and company. After back-to-back hurricanes and a tough economy, the Capogna family said they have taken a hit from which they cannot recover. They would like to thank their staff, employees, loyal patrons and the Clearwater community for the many great years they got to work with and serve them.

GUESS WHO'S BACK AGAIN Last year, the Brown Boxer on North Clearwater Beach closed for a remodel and reopened as Salt Social (now Hurricane Eddies). Residents, regulars, and snowbirds thought it was the end of the Brown Boxer, but it turns out the restaurant just moved south. The Boxer Kitchen & Bar opened in November in the former Jimmy Hulas location at 454 Mandalay Avenue. Jeff and Allison Brown, Mike and Lexi Caracappa, and John and Liz Cairns are the owners, but they are definitely not new to the Boxer family. The menu has many of the old favorites and some new ones too. The bar has twenty-eight televisions for guests to watch their favorite sports teams, live music seven days a week, Jukebox Bingo on Tuesdays, and other specials. Follow them on Facebook or call (727) 221-7794 for more information.

COMING SOON, AGAIN The Turkish Flame Mediterranean Restaurant opened at the beginning of September in the space previously occupied by Casa Italia, but that new restaurant feeling was cut short by Hurricane Helene. After being completely flooded, owners Borah Caliskan and Melis Sinoglu, had to start from scratch. With a lot of hard work, they they reopened mid-November

Customers can enjoy their cuisine at their sister restaurants, Mio's of Sand Key at 1261 Gulf Blvd in the Shoppes of Sand Key and Mio's of Downtown St. Pete at 119 2nd St. N.

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.



Happy Holidays

While this year has been challenging for many, I am here to help—whether it's with temporary housing, rentals, selling assistance, or support with insurance and community resources. Thank you for trusting me with your real estate needs.

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Business Briefs

STATE REP JOINS NONPROFIT Our Children Have Rights (OCHR), a statewide nonprofit organization, announced the appointment of State Representative Linda Chaney as Development Director. In this role, Rep. Chaney will oversee all development strategies to increase fundraising efforts through individual and corporate donations, grants, and sponsorships. A highly regarded statesperson, Rep. Chaney brings a wealth of expertise from both the business and nonprofit sectors.



This addition reinforces OCHR's commitment to serving children by helping parents more seamlessly navigate their child custody and co-parenting journeys, at no cost to the families. Along with the organization's dedication to helping children reach their full potential in school and life through successful co-parenting strategies.

"Working with Our Children Have Rights is a unique opportunity to impact generations and build healthier communities. I'm excited and honored to be part of the Our Children Have Rights team and invite everyone who cares about our children and communities to join us," said Rep. Chaney.

DIRECTOR AWARDED St. Pete-Clearwater Airport Director Tom Jewsbury was selected as the Florida Department of Transportation's Aviation Professional of the Year for 2024. Tom has served at the airport for over 30 years and led the airport to record-breaking annual passengers and over \$3.4 billion economic impact.

GOLF COURSE RECOGNIZED

The Belleair Country Club was recognized by Top 100 Golf as the 13th best club in the state of Florida.

For twenty years, Top 100 has been rating golf courses in the Sunshine State and this year designated BCC West as falling within the same elite company as traditional top Florida courses such as Seminole Golf Club, TPC Sawgrass, and Jupiter Hills.



Tasked with restoring the original 1897 Donald Ross design, architects Jason Straka and Dana Fry worked with one-hundred-year-old plans to bring the original course to life. After only two years, the course has blossomed into a star.

According to Top 100, in addition to the water views from over half the holes, two par 3s serve as the course's highlights. Number 7 is a peninsula that juts out into the water and plays from 80 to 182 yards. Top 100 found the fourth hole with its necklace of sand and its water panorama a "showstopper."

The club, which also garnered a top four ranking from Golfweek, has already approved renovation of its East Course and is slated to begin construction in the Spring of 2026.

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

Robert Young

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REVIEWING YOUR ESTATE PLAN AFTER DEATH OF A LOVED ONE

By Theodore Schofner, Esq.

The death of a loved one is never easy. Regardless of your relationship with the deceased (for example, a relative, significant other, or close friend), you need space and time to process and grieve your loss. Once you have had time to cope with all that has happened, you should consider updating your estate plan in light of your loved one's death.

Although your estate plan primarily focuses on what will happen if you become incapacitated (unable to make or communicate your wishes) or die, the death of a loved one can have a significant impact on your planning. If you have an estate plan, one of the first things you need to do when a loved one dies is to review the documents with the following questions in mind:

Was your deceased loved one named as a beneficiary of money or property under your will or revocable living trust? If so, do your documents address what happens to that money or property should your loved one predecease you?

One of the main objectives of establishing a will or revocable living trust is to create a plan for what will happen to the things you own at your death. If you have strong feelings about who should receive your money and property, you must name who will inherit from you and also who will inherit the money and property if your first choice dies before you.

Is a trusted decision-maker now deceased? As part of your comprehensive estate plan, you likely selected several different important decision-makers to act on your behalf if you become incapacitated (agents under your financial and medical powers of attorney and a successor trustee) or to wind up your affairs after your death (a successor trustee, personal representative, or executor). If your deceased loved one held any of these positions, make sure a backup was nominated. If not, you need to update the affected document to include a new first choice and at least one alternate. If you have already named a backup in the document, you will want to update your document to name your backup as your new first choice and remove your deceased loved one's name to prevent confusion when a third party reviews the document.

Guardian for your minor child. You have likely invested a lot of time and consideration in deciding who you would like to serve as the guardian of your minor children if you and the children's other parent are unable to care for them. If the loved one you have selected has passed away, it is imperative that you update this selection. While your circumstances may vary, if your chosen guardian is unable to serve for any reason, and you have no alternate guardian nominated, the probate court will determine who will raise your child. As with other roles, the selected person may not be the one you would have chosen, and absent input from you, the judge may have limited information when making this critical decision.

We Are Here to Help. We understand that you are grieving the loss of a loved one. When you are ready, we are here to help you take the next step in your estate planning journey, whether you are starting, completing, or updating your estate plan. Give us a call to schedule your in-person or virtual appointment.

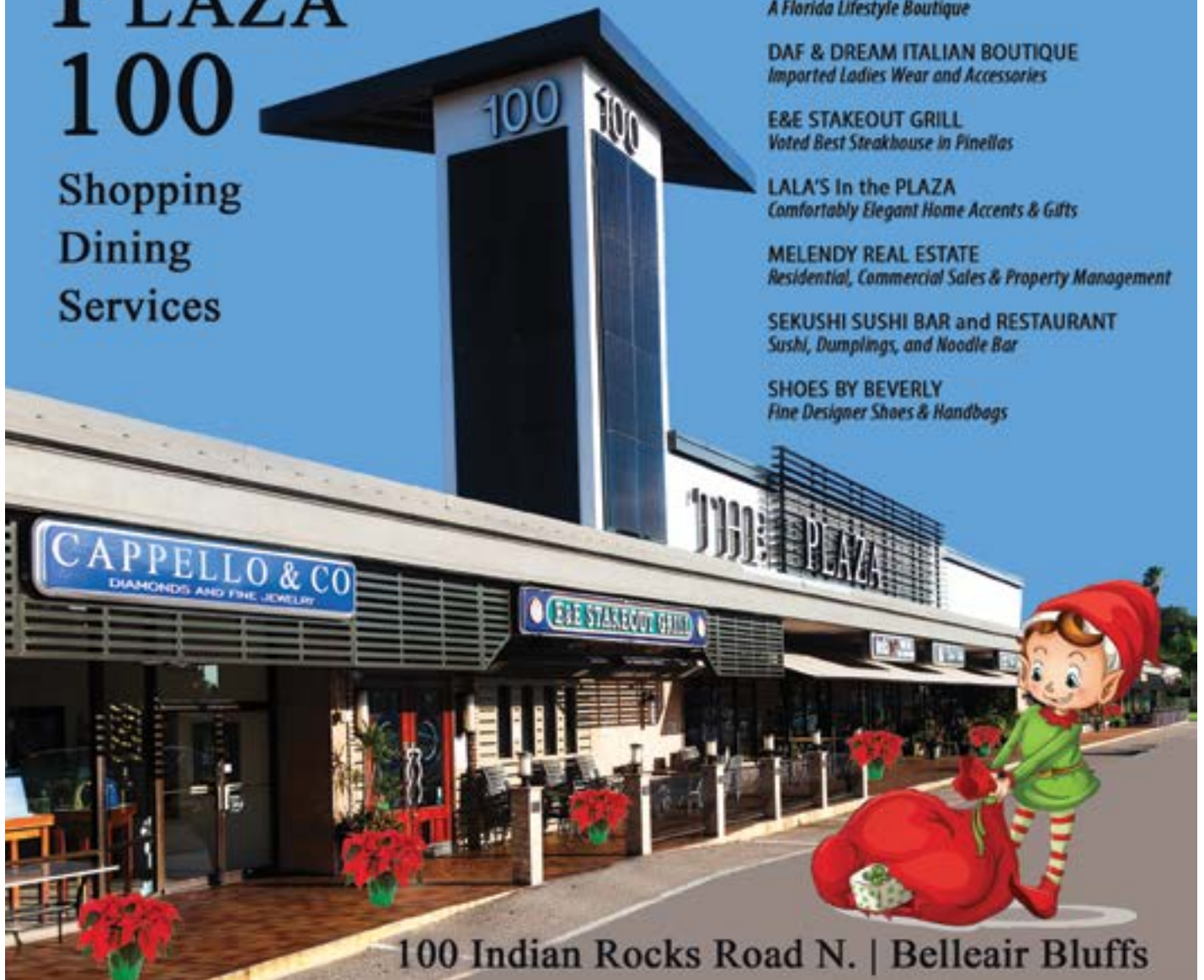
You can reach Theodore Schofner, Esq. at the Schofner Law Firm, 2117 Indian Rocks Road S. in Largo, (727) 588-0290.

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LOCAL HOLIDAY



Through December 29th 5-10pm nightly

Largo Central Park Holiday Lights & Carnival Rides

101 Central Park Dr

This family-friendly annual tradition presented by the City of Largo that features a spectacular holiday light display, with more than 2.5 million dazzling LED lights. It is free to park and walk to the view lights, Amusement rides \$6.00 for one ride, 10 rides for \$50.00.

Dogs on a leash are welcome but must remain on the leash at all times.

Through January 4th 5:30-9:30pm nightly

Holiday Lights in the Garden

12520 Ulmerton Rd

The Florida Botanical Gardens will sparkle with one million, twinkling, LED lights in a multitude of colors. Vibrant laser lights and lighted figures round out the display to wow guests of all ages. The opening of our new Majeed Discovery Garden takes this already awesome event to the next level. There will be free kids activities in the Majeed Discovery Garden every Sunday and Thursday evening throughout the month of December. A donation of \$10 per person is kindly requested children 12 and under are free.

December 2nd, 5-6pm

Belleair Beach Holiday Social & Tree Lighting

Belleair Beach Community Center at 444 Causeway Blvd

The town of Belleair Beach invites residents only to join them for some festive fun and watch the sparkle of their beautiful tree lighting!

December 5th, 6-8pm

Christmas at the Plaza Belleair Bluffs

100 Indian Rocks Rd

Join the Shops at The Plaza for their annual Christmas at The Plaza musical holiday event. Fresh Brass of Belleair, a brass quintet consisting of local musicians that perform and teach in Pinellas County, will be performing as well as Largo High School's Madrigal Singers who will be strolling The Plaza while caroling. Refreshments will be served, and the shops will be open for this event.

December 6th, 6-8pm

Belleair Bluffs Tree Lighting

City Hall, 2747 Sunset Blvd

Rachel Smith Vocal Coaching Presents SHINE, a children's group from the area, that will regale friends and families with their singing while they gather. Following a welcome by Mayor Chris Arbutine and the City Commission, the holiday tree will be lit heralding the arrival of Santa. This free event includes Santa, live music, hot cocoa bar and cookies, face painting, petting zoo and much more! Sunset Blvd will be closed to all traffic to accommodate the event. This year, the City is collecting children's books for the Little Library. Anyone that brings in a new or gently used Children's Book will receive the City's annual holiday ornament.

December 7th- 8th

10am-4pm (Saturday) and 10am-1pm (Sunday),

Largo Central Park Train Rides

101 Central Park Dr.

Ride around beautiful Largo Central Park on the miniature railroad. The accurately modeled scale locomotives pull you and your family along a mile-long loop through great scenery and waterfall pond. Fun for all ages! There is no charge for this family-fun activity, but donations are welcome. Your contributions keep the trains running.

December 8th, 4:30pm

Town of Belleair Holiday Parade & Party

The parade will begin on Belleair Road and travel west on Ponce De Leon Blvd, then north on The Mall, and return East on Ponce De Leon Blvd, ending where they started.

The Town of Belleair invites residents and their family and friends to attend their Annual Holiday Parade & Party following the parade. Join them for a party at Brewster Field with visits from Santa, hot cocoa, crafts, and holiday fun! Cars, trucks, trailers, walkers, bicyclists, and golf carts are all welcome to participate in the parade! They will award a prize to the golf cart decorated with the most holiday spirit! For more information or to register, call (727) 518-3728 or visit recdesk@townofbelleair.net.

December 7th, 5-10pm

Largo Holiday Tree Lighting & Stroll

101 Central Park

Stroll through the holiday light display and watch various performers during Largo's annual Holiday Tree Lighting & Stroll event. The tree lighting is at 6pm. Santa will make a visit for free "Photos with Santa" from 6:30-8:00 pm.

Food and beverage vendors will be on-site selling delicious treats and eats. \$10 onsite parking, parking lots open at 5:00 pm. Park a walk from Largo Middle or Largo High School for \$5. Don't miss the Holiday Strolling Market or the opportunity to ride the Carousel or Ferris wheel. Please note that the playground will be closed during this event. Call (727) 587-6740 extension 5014 with event related questions.

December 10th, 4-6pm

Clearwater's "Making Spirits Bright" Holiday Parade

Island Way Grill at 20 Island Way

Celebrate the magic of Christmas on Clearwater Beach! The line up begins at 3pm at Island Way Grill. The parade will begin at 4pm and travel from Island Estates to North Beach Clearwater, then to South Beach Clearwater, and finish at Island Way Grill for a holiday celebration at 6pm. For more information and to register, send an email to Aquilar2@verizon.net.

HOLIDAY EVENTS



December 13th, 4:30-9pm

The Polar Express Experience at the Baycare Sound

300 Cleveland St.

Enjoy falling snow on the plaza while enjoying a wide variety of family-friendly experiences for kids of all ages, including games, activities and crafts. A visit from Santa Claus, is also promised. At 6:30pm, the Ruth Eckerd Hall Chorus will take the stage for a Holiday Sing-A-Long. Then, enjoy a FREE screening of the Oscar®-nominated animated movie, The Polar Express starring Tom Hanks on a large screen on the amphitheater stage. For more information, please visit TheBayCareSound.com.

**December 13th, 14th, 20th and 21st
5:30-9:30pm**

Ruldoph Limited at Largo Central Park

101 Central Park Dr.

The city of Largo invites you and your family to join them for an enchanting journey through a winter wonderland as their festive train whisks you around the park, dazzling with millions of twinkling lights. Marvel at the breathtaking displays as you glide through a magical tunnel and across a shimmering bridge. Experience Largo Central Park in a whole new light, while creating unforgettable memories with family and friends. All riders must obtain a ticket to ride. benefit the Largo Central Railroad. Limited availability. Don't miss out on this magical experience! For more information, please call or text (727) 601-3168.

December 14th, 6:30-9pm

Clearwater Yacht Club's Lighted Holiday Boat Parade

Clearwater Yacht club invites you to come and celebrate half a century of maritime magic with their 50th Anniversary Holiday Lighted Boat Parade! Enjoy a night filled with beautifully decorated boats, festive music, and holiday cheer! This lighted, nautical event celebrates the spirit of the holidays and raises funds for sailing scholarships at the Clearwater Community Sailing Center for youth in the Boys and Girls Club of the Suncoast. Laura Moody of Fox13 Tampa Bay will once again be the 2024 Grand Marshal. For parade routes, more information, or to register visit ClearwaterYachtClub.org or call (727) 447-6000.

December 14th, 10am-2pm

12 Days of Christmas with Market Marie

Coachman Park, 300 Cleveland St

The Market Marie is held on the 2nd Saturday of every month. It has over 150 vendors, delicious food, fresh produce, pet adoptions and more. This particular Saturday will be extra festive. Families can have their faces painted, have their picture taken with Santa, listen to story time with Mrs. Claus, do arts and crafts in Santa's workshop, and enjoy the PAWrade of festive furry friends. Bring your family and friends, and let's make it an unforgettable holiday celebration!

December 19th, 6-8pm

Deck the Paws at Largo Central Park

101 Central Park Dr.

Don't miss this paws-itively memorable evening in Largo Central Park as SPCA Tampa Bay features pet photos with Santa. Also enjoy pet friendly vendors, food and music as you stroll through the holiday lights with your pooch in tow. As always, pets are welcome to the Holiday Lights, but please make sure they are leashed. SPCA Tampa Bay will also be on-site sharing adoption information. For more information, please call 727-587-6740 x5014

December 21st, 12-2pm

Largo's Old Fashion Christmas Parade

Begins at the corner of First Avenue and Fourth Street Southwest and circles the streets of Downtown Largo.

The Rotary Club of Largo will host its annual Old Fashioned Christmas Parade in Downtown Largo. The parade will feature decorated floats, local dance troupes, fire trucks, marching bands, and Santa Claus.

December 21st, 9:30am-12pm

Breakfast with Santa at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium

249 Windward Passage

Bring the whole family to celebrate the holiday season. Enjoy a memorable morning filled with holiday spirit, delicious food, festive crafts, and a chance to meet Santa himself! Whether you're crafting ornaments, sipping hot cocoa, or taking photos with Santa, there's holiday cheer for everyone. To reserve tickets, go to CMAquarium.org

December 21st, 6-9pm

Indian Rocks Beach Holiday Boat Parade

Begins at 401 2nd St Indian Rocks Beach.

The parade starts at the Holiday Inn Harborside and heads north down the Intercoastal Waterway. Watch the beginning behind Jimmy Guana's Waterfront Restaurant.

December 30th 5:30-7pm

Chanukah Festival

420 Main St. Pioneer Park, Downtown Dunedin

Join the Chabad of Pinellas County for a Chanukah Festival in Pioneer Park, downtown Dunedin. All are welcome! There will be a giant, neon menorah lighting, a DJ and light show, DIY glow sticks, neon wearables, snacks, balloons, a dreidel man, Chanukah music, and a drone gelt drop. For more information, call 727-789-0408.

December 31st 8pm-12:30am

Light It Up Clearwater

301 Drew St

Fireworks will light up the sky at midnight. Watch from all along Clearwater Beach, especially near the southern end of Clearwater Beach. Note that the fireworks will be set off from the north end of Sand Key, across the bridge from Clearwater Beach. Coachman Park at the Baycare Sound is great place to watch if you choose to stay on the mainland. Many hotels and restaurants have special events going on that night as well including Shepard's, JW Marriot, and the Edge Hotel.





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Once In a Blue Moon



By Bob and Becky Griffin, Local Authors

Full moons have inspired poets and artists since the beginning of time. Each month, the moon moves through phases constantly waxing and waning from full moon to new moon and back again. Full moons occur every 29.5 days when the moon moves to the side of Earth opposite the sun and reflects the sun's rays. The reflection causes the moon to appear to be a perfect, glowing disk in the sky.

The moon's path across the sky changes with the seasons. Full moons are very high in the sky between November and February. They are lower in the sky between May and July.

A "Blue Moon" is when there are two full moons in a single calendar month. (It has nothing to do with its color.) The next Blue Moon will occur in 2026 on May 31st.

Each year, the moon completes its final cycle about 11 days before Earth finishes its orbit around the sun. These days add up; every two and a half years or so, there is an extra full moon – known as a blue moon. Today, the term is commonly used for a second full moon in the same calendar month. Once every century, two Blue Moons happen in the same year.

The moon does not actually appear blue during a blue moon, it can appear blue on rare occasions when tiny particles in the air, like smoke or dust, scatter red wavelengths of light. This has been known to happen after a volcanic eruption or wildfire. The phrase "once in a blue moon" was first mentioned in a pamphlet in 1528. The modern use of the word comes from a reference in the *Maine Farmer's Almanac*.

Throughout history, the moon's cycles have been used to track time and set schedules for planting and harvesting. Ancient man began to name the full moons based on what was happening during the lunar month. Most of those names are still used today. Here is a list of the months and their full moons.

January: Wolf Moon - Native Americans named this full moon after the howling wolves during the winter. They were easily heard as sound carries farther with winter's clear skies.

February: Snow Moon - Due to the typically cold, snowy February weather in North America.

March: Worm Moon - The last full moon of winter, Native Americans named it for the worms that would appear as ground begins to melt. They knew the worms would be followed by the return of the robins. Other cultures call it the Sugar Moon because that is when they tapped the maple trees.

April: Pink Moon - Though not really a pink moon, Northern Native Americans knew a species of pink wildflower – the moss pink, or moss phlox - would begin blooming.

May: Flower Moon - May's abundant flowers give this full moon its name.

June: Strawberry Moon - Usually, the last full moon of spring, in North America this is the time strawberries are at their peak.

July: Buck Moon - Male deer, also known as bucks, shed their antlers each spring, and regrow larger ones. By July they are at their largest.

August: Sturgeon Moon - North American fishing tribes knew sturgeon were abundant this month.

September: Harvest or the Corn Moon - Because the calendar and the moon cycle don't always align, the moon closest to the fall equinox is the Harvest moon (the best-known moon name). That usually happens in September, but every third year it falls in October. This full moon is particularly bright and rises around sunset, allowing farmers to continue harvesting into the night before the frost comes.



October: Hunter's Moon - The first moon after the harvest moon, the Hunter's moon is usually in October but occasionally falls in November. This is the time to hunt summer-fattened deer easily seen in the cleared fields. It too is particularly bright.

November: Beaver Moon (unless it is the Hunter's Moon) - Some say the name is due to the activity of beavers building their dams and preparing for winter, while others think it references the season the Native Americans set beaver traps for their fur.

December: Cold Moon - The coming of winter and its dark cold period earned December's full moon name. It is also known as The Old Moon or The Moon after Yule.

A "Blood Moon" occurs during a total lunar eclipse, which only happen during a full moon. Since the moon orbits in a different plane than the Earth and the sun, eclipses are rare. At times, however, the planes coincide and Earth passes between the moon and sun, making the moon appear rusty or red in color.

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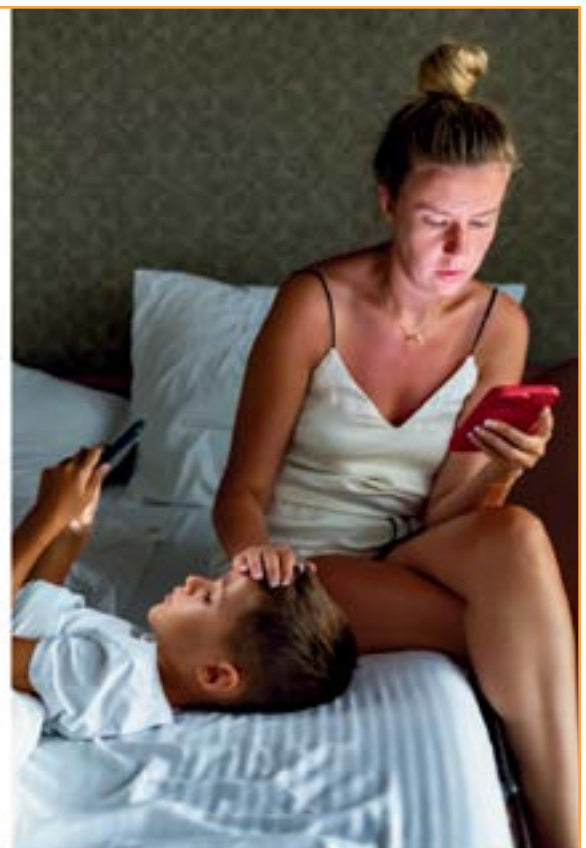


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Century Club

By Pete Magnani, Publisher


This the 100th Issue of the Belleair Neighborhood News Magazine. Started by Bob and Becky Griffin as the Neighborhood Newsletter in August of 2007, the magazine is now mailed to thousands of homes in the Belleair area.

Bob and Becky are enjoying retirement as snowbirds, with homes in Clearwater and North Carolina. My wife Lora (Bob's daughter) and I are proud to continue the tradition.

We would like to thank our readers and advertisers for supporting this magazine, and we hope you enjoy it for years to come.




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**CELEBRATING ELECTION
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By County Commissioner Brian Scott

I would like to extend heartfelt congratulations to Supervisor of Elections Julie Marcus and her dedicated team for ensuring a smooth and efficient election process in Pinellas County. Their hard work and commitment to providing multiple early voting locations, ample time for mail-in ballots, and secure polling places on Election Day made participating in our democracy both accessible and convenient. This is no small feat, and it is thanks to the efforts of volunteers and poll workers that election results were known before many of us went to bed on election night.



With the election of Chris Scherer and Vince Nowicki to the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners, we welcome two fresh perspectives to help guide us through the next chapter of recovery and growth. Commissioners Scherer and Nowicki will bring diversity of thought to the decision-making process, ensuring that our Commission continues to approach issues with thoughtful deliberation while always prioritizing the needs and quality of life of our residents.

As we usher in this new leadership, we must also thank Commissioner Janet Long and Commissioner Charlie Justice for their years of dedicated service to our community. Their contributions, leadership, and willingness to engage in meaningful debate have left an indelible mark on Pinellas County. Our community is better because of their service, and we wish them every happiness in their future endeavors.

To the residents of Pinellas County, your participation and engagement is what makes government work. Your voices shape policy, and your participation in meetings, committees, and boards drives progress. If you are interested in serving, please reach out to any of your elected officials for information on how to become involved. Thank you for voting, for being heard, and for helping to build a stronger, more vibrant Pinellas County. God bless Pinellas County and God bless America.

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THE SANDWICH GENERATION: JUGGLING RESPONSIBILITIES AND NAVIGATING CHALLENGES

By Alison Ross Tompkins, Broker Associate for Coldwell Banker

The “sandwich generation” describes a group of middle-aged individuals who are caring for their aging parents while also supporting their own children—sometimes even adult children. This unique position leaves them metaphorically “sandwiched” between the needs of two generations, often with little room for themselves. While caregiving can be a deeply rewarding experience, it frequently leads to feelings of guilt, stress, exhaustion, and even resentment as individuals balance personal life, careers, and caregiving duties.

Understanding the pressures faced by this group is essential for offering them the right support and resources to help navigate their responsibilities without sacrificing their own health and well-being.

Many caregivers put on a brave face and keep moving forward, but it’s important to recognize that they are often stretched thin. They’re trying to balance demanding careers and family obligations while managing the physical and emotional toll of caregiving. These individuals rarely have time for themselves and may even feel guilty for considering options like retirement communities for their parents.

For some, the challenges become especially apparent during the holidays, when occasional visits reveal that Mom or Dad has aged dramatically, is no longer eating well, or is living in an unhealthy environment. Whether you provide daily care or only see your loved ones periodically, it’s crucial to know there are options to help your parents thrive.

There are many local resources, support groups, and professional services designed to support caregivers and

their loved ones. In addition, there are exceptional retirement communities that can provide care and companionship for aging parents while offering peace of mind to their families.

Some great options to consider include: Stratford Court at Palm Harbor, Elevate Senior Living at Clearwater, Mease Life in Dunedin, Regency Oaks Senior Living in Clearwater, Elison Senior Living of Pinecrest, and The Palms of Largo.

As someone who has worked with hundreds of families, I’ve seen how the right senior living community can transform lives. These communities not only alleviate the logistical challenges of caregiving but also create opportunities for families to reconnect and enjoy meaningful time together—without the constant worry of daily care tasks.

If you’re part of the sandwich generation, acknowledge your limitations and prioritize what’s truly important: the quality of the time you spend with your loved ones. Considering a retirement community isn’t a failure—it’s an act of love that ensures your parents can receive the care and support they need while you regain balance in your life.

Caring for loved ones is one of the greatest acts of compassion and devotion, but it doesn’t have to mean sacrificing your own well-being. The right choices can be life-changing—for both you and your family. If you’re feeling overwhelmed, know that help is available. Together, we can explore solutions that provide comfort, care, and a renewed sense of connection for everyone involved.

Alison, Broker Associate for Coldwell Banker, has been in sales and Real Estate for 30 years. You can reach her on her cell at (727) 729-9942 or at the Belleair/Dunedin offices at (727) 581-9411.

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RECOVERING FROM TWO HURRICANES

From the Desk of Sheriff Bob Gualtieri

We went through the unimaginable – two hurricanes in two weeks – and as we work to rebuild, I want to say how proud I am of the way the people of Pinellas County have come together to survive and begin to recover. As I worked throughout the county in the immediate aftermath of both storms, I saw neighbors helping neighbors, and strangers stepping up. You opened your homes to friends in evacuation zones, brought food and water to people in need, and cleared debris from the yards of the elderly.



I'm also proud of the hard work that all members of the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) did before, during, and after the hurricanes. As the storms approached, we prepared equipment and notified people in evacuation zones. We responded to people's calls for help as long as we could as the winds grew fiercer, and as soon as the storm passed our deputies jumped into action, rescuing people from flooded homes, clearing trees from roads, and helping traffic flow despite broken traffic signals. Civilian and sworn members alike performed essential tasks like keeping the jail running smoothly and safely and protecting stored property and evidence. The Public Relations Bureau stayed on top of messaging, putting out valuable, potentially life-saving information even in the middle of the hurricanes.

Tragically, lives were lost in both of the storms. In most cases those deaths were preventable. People drowned, were electrocuted, or had medical emergencies when first responders couldn't come to help them – all of which could have been avoided if they had evacuated. While any storm can bring the unexpected in the form of tornadoes, falling trees, or unanticipated flooding, you can mitigate the risk by evacuating when the order comes out.

After the storms, closures helped keep people safer, giving officials time to assess the damage. After Helene passed, we kept the barrier islands shut for a few days. After Milton ravaged Pinellas, the entire county was closed for a while. Many roads were impassable because of fallen trees, traffic lights were out at many major intersections, and more than half of the county was without power. Bridges were closed, and deputies blocked land access to Pinellas until crews had a chance to assess the major hazards. Access resumed by midday, but the area was full of hazards for a long time afterward.

For all the generosity and public-spiritedness of so many people in the county, there are plenty of people who want to take advantage of our disaster. We increased patrol to combat looters. Scammers also flocked to the area, posing as contractors or FEMA or insurance agents. Don't let yourself be scammed – don't make hasty decisions, don't pay upfront, or pay by non-traditional means like Venmo, gift cards, or crypto, don't give out your personal information, and be wary of any offer that seems too good to be true.

Pinellas County is strong, we are resilient, and we will emerge stronger and safer than ever.



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FALL COLOR

By Randy Lee, Landscape Designer

For the second year in a row, Landscapes by Randy Lee, Inc., renowned for actualizing homeowners' exterior and landscape design aesthetics and living experiences for more than 31 years, has once again been awarded national "Awards of Excellence," in both the Gold and Silver categories, by the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP); and they received more than twice the number of awards this year, vs. 2023, for five separate St. Petersburg-area projects.

NALP's national "Awards of Excellence," annually recognize exceptional commercial and residential lawn care and landscape contracting, management and design projects throughout the United States. This year, Landscapes by Randy Lee, Inc., won one "Gold" and four "Silver" awards in the "Exterior Design/Build" category of \$250-\$500K focusing on creating and installing a landscape design as requested by the client, and meeting the clients' specific needs.

"Our team truly enjoys creating one-of-a-kind landscapes for our amazing clientele," stated Randy Lee, President, Landscapes by Randy Lee, Inc. "Winning the gold category for a second year in a row celebrates our accomplishments on a national scale, and is a pinnacle of success for us," he added. The "Gold" was awarded to a new-construction project in Redington Beach, FL, aptly titled, "Contemporary Gulf Front Retreat." The client desired a private, sleek and modern design to complement their new Gulf-front home. The project required the use of salt-tolerant materials as

the site offered a harsh environment, and wind was a factor. Mature trees and palms, including Clusia, Coconut Palms and Alexander Palms, created a clean, minimal environment. Stone was used as a groundcover because it has more weight and durability. The home is also more flood-prone, therefore, the pool deck had to be elevated 12-inches, and a 3-foot wall was erected between the beach and the pool. An important ecological element included the use of sea turtle-friendly beachfront lighting, denoted by a red-amber hue, within the 80 LED lighting system.



The four "Silver" awards were presented to Landscapes by Randy Lee, Inc., for residential properties in St. Petersburg, FL. Those winning projects are as follows:

- Contemporary Bayou Revamp
- Expanded Tropical New Build
- Prairie Style Elegance
- Modern Canal Front Remodel

Landscapes by Randy Lee, Inc.'s team received their "Gold" award in-person at NALP's annual conference and expo "ELEVATE," in Charlotte, NC, in early November. The four silver award-winning projects were displayed via video at the ceremony.

Landscapes By Randy Lee, Inc. is a full service landscape design company here to help you with all of your landscape needs. Call us direct at 727-421-2715 or visit us Online at www.landscapesbyrl.com.

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ADDRESSING EDUCATION IN PARENTING PLANS

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

Child custody outcomes are determined when a parenting plan is approved by or established by the courts. The parenting plan governs the relationship and decision-making roles between co-parents and their child(ren). It addresses issues such as the child's education, health care decisions, a time-sharing schedule, and more.



Florida courts are presumed to generally favor joint custody, where possible. If parents agree on an approved parenting plan, they have the option to agree on sharing decision-making. The expectation is that parents will communicate and confer on issues, like education. This can be challenging when parents have opposing views on the best educational path for the child(ren). Understanding what education-related issues co-parents commonly disagree on is extremely important when drafting a parenting plan. It could be the difference between addressing or not addressing an educational issue in the plan. And if the outcome is agreed through mediation or by going to court. In court, further disagreement may result in less control over the outcome for both parents, and the judge will decide!

EDUCATION ISSUES TO CONSIDER:

- Where will the child(ren) go to school? What type of school? Private school? Who pays?
- What sports will they play at school? Lacrosse? That's expensive equipment! Who pays?
- What if the child is struggling with grades and may need tutoring? Who decides?
- The teacher cites behavioral issues. How does that get handled?

Knowing the education issues to consider can help parents anticipate disagreements and be better prepared to draft a parenting plan they agree on. The more prepared both parents are regarding each other's concerns, the more likely they can work collaboratively and agree on a plan.

Parenting plans address education because education is one of the important aspects of a child's life. If not resolved through mediation and disagreement continues in court, the decision goes to the judge!

OCHR is a 501c3 nonprofit that serves children by helping parents more seamlessly navigate their child custody & co-parenting journeys, at no cost to the family.

We kindly ask you to consider a small donation. Your support is needed for us to serve more children by helping more parents achieve successful co-parenting strategies. Successful co-parenting is critical to a child's development, and success in school and life. Successful co-parenting better positions children to reach their full potential and become positive contributors to our community. They are our future workforce!

Most importantly, if you, or someone you know, need 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: www.ourchildrenhaverights.org/donate.

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Community News

BELLEAIR REC CENTER UPCOMING EVENTS

Holiday Parade and Party – December 8th 4:30pm: The annual Belleair Holiday Parade and Party is the merriest way to welcome the Holiday season! The parade begins at 4:30pm along Ponce de Leon Blvd. and The Mall. Don't miss out on the Holiday Party at Brewster Field after the parade. The party will feature pictures with Santa, food, crafts, bounce houses, music, and more.

Club Belleair Rec – Monday-Friday, 3-5pm: 1st-8th graders can hang out at the Belleair Rec after school while enjoying games and activities in the gymnasium, game room, and outdoor areas. This program includes Homework Help Club and Jr. Pickleball. (Membership or \$5 drop-in)

Jr. Pickleball – Mondays and Wednesdays, 4-5pm: 1st through High School aged pickleballers have the opportunity to learn and practice their pickleball skills. Age groups are separated by courts. (Membership or \$5 drop-in)

Upcoming Day/Holiday Camps – 8am-4pm, 1st-7th grade, \$30/day members or \$35/day non-members:

- December 23rd and 24th • December 26th and 27th
- December 30th and 31st



CLEARWATER YACHT CLUB LIGHTED BOAT PARADE

Submitted by Holly Shuga

Come and celebrate half a century of maritime holiday magic at Clearwater Yacht Club's 50th Anniversary Holiday Lighted Boat Parade on Saturday, December 14th. This lighted, nautical event celebrates the spirit of the holidays and raises funds for sailing scholarships at the Clearwater Community Sailing Center for youth in the Boys and Girls Club of the Suncoast. Laura Moody of Fox13 Tampa Bay will once again be our 2024 Grand Marshal. Cash and prizes will be awarded in several categories.

Both individual and commercial entries of all types and sizes in holiday décor are encouraged. There is no registration fee for the event. Participants must register for a boat number for the parade to be eligible for prizes. For sponsorship opportunities, email Julie@floridabeachbusiness.com. The proceeds of the 50th Annual Holiday Lighted Boat Parade will foster youth sailing programs in the Clearwater area. For boat registration and further information please visit ClearwaterYachtClub.org/boat-parade.

FLORIDA BOTANICAL GARDENS FOUNDATION

Submitted by Emily Goot

The Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation (FBGF) is excited to announce the 1st anniversary of the Majeed Discovery Garden, the 2+ acre addition of a children's garden to the Florida Botanical Gardens.

The Gardens are free to enjoy, open daily, maintained and cared for by Pinellas County Parks and Conservation Resources, with events and programming led by the FBGF.

Since its grand opening last November, the Majeed Discovery Garden has since seen hundreds of children and families through its gates— with field trips, birthday parties, family programming and daily visitors to the Gardens.

This garden expansion was made possible by generous donations from the community, including the Majeed Foundation and the Berolzheimer Foundation.

Visit FLBGFoundation.org/events or contact Executive Director, Emily Goot, at emily@flbgfoundation.org to learn more about the Majeed Discovery Garden's One-Year Anniversary Celebration.

Other Events:

Holiday Lights in the Gardens: Voted 9th in the Nation in 2023! Friday, Running through Saturday, January 4th from 5:30-9:30pm - This family-friendly, Pinellas County Holiday tradition returns for its 24th



year. The Florida Botanical Gardens sparkle with over one million twinkling LED lights. Includes live, local entertainment nightly, seasonal concessions available for purchase. Opens the day after thanksgiving and runs every night through the new year. Suggested donation, \$10 per person, ages 12 and under free.

Gift & Plant Sale: Shop small this holiday season! Saturday, December 14th from 8am-9pm -A selection of local vendors set up shop in the Florida Botanical Gardens for this annual fair, including plants, crafts and more - includes a night market in the evening at Holiday Lights in the Gardens.

For more information on all events, visit FLBGFoundation.org.

CREATIVE PINELLAS

Submitted by Roman Black

Due to the two recent historic hurricanes, Creative Pinellas has transformed our Arts Annual Fundraiser into the Arts Annual Hurricane Relief Fundraiser, now rescheduled for Saturday, December 7. This year, our arts community needs support more than ever.

Through ticket sales, sponsorships, donations, and art sales, Creative Pinellas will distribute 80% of net proceeds to Pinellas County artists and arts organizations to aid in their recovery.

The Arts Annual 2024 exhibition will be on view through January 4 along with our first-ever Arts Annual Pop-Up Gift Shop.

Creative Pinellas is located at 12211 Walsingham Road in Largo. Visit CreativePinellas.org for more information.

Community News

BELLEAIR GARDEN CLUB

Find a treasure at the Belleair Garden Club's Annual "Junk & Jewels Sale" fundraiser, which will be held February 7th-8th from 8am-2pm. The event is open to the public, and there is no charge to attend. In addition, the club will offer their customary "Pre-Sale Night" on Thursday, February 6 from 4:30-7pm. Collectors and shoppers can browse and get the first dibs on all the goods. There is a \$5 entry fee to attend the pre-sale night.

Local residents and visitors look forward to the huge upscale rummage sale which has been held annually inside the historic garden club building in Belleair for over thirty years. The entire clubhouse will be overflowing with an eclectic mix of antiques, collectibles, jewelry, home décor, furniture, art, clothing books, toys, tools, household goods, and vintage treasures. Additionally, there will be an outdoor plant sale featuring a wide assortment of potted plants that have been propagated, grown, and cared for by Garden Club members, and will be available for purchase. Gardening tools and accessories will also be available for purchase.

Funds from the Belleair Garden Club's "Junk & Jewels Sale" help support the club's Scholarship and Historic Preservation Programs. The Belleair Garden Club is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) public charity organization. Don't miss the excitement and community spirit of this highly anticipated event! There will be something for everyone, plus it benefits a worthy cause.

The Belleair Garden Club is located at 903 Ponce de Leon Blvd, Belleair. Visit BelleairGardenClub.com for more information.

GFWC CLEARWATER COMMUNITY WOMAN'S CLUB

GFWC Clearwater Community Woman's Club's signature initiative for 2024-2025 is to combat food insecurity for children and families in Pinellas County by establishing new school food pantries.

One in four children in our area is food insecure. Food is the most basic of human needs and hunger has been associated with academic and behavioral impairments in school going children. Families rely on school meals and food pantries to provide nutritious food.

GFWC Clearwater Community Woman's Club's goal is to create or support two new school pantries for needy families. Visit CCWCFloida.org for information.

CLEARWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Upcoming Events at the Clearwater Historical Society:

- December 13th at 11am: Basketweaving Class
- December 18th at 5pm: Macrame Class
- December 21st at 10am: Santa visits the museum

All events are at the Clearwater Historical Society, 610 Fort Harrison. Call (727) 754-8019 for more information.

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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