

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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Magazine

THE HOWARD FRANKLAND BRIDGE AND THE MAN BEHIND IT



By Pete Magnani, Publisher

William Howard Frankland was born in Jackson, Tennessee on November 26th, 1901. He was the third of five sons born to Frank Mortimer Frankland and Bertha Vorsburg. Frank Sr. owned the Frankland Carriage company, selling tires, auto parts, and later, furniture.

After graduating high school, Howard traveled to Akron, Ohio to study the tire business at the Goodyear Industrial University. It was the world's first industrial school, offering male students degrees like Master Rubber Worker, Graduate Rubber Mechanic, and Machinist. Women were welcome also, for schooling in "household arts" which included domestic science, housekeeping, and sewing, as well as stenography and typing.

After completing his training, Howard returned to Tennessee and was named vice president of the Frankland Carriage Company. In 1921, he married Winifred Perry. In 1925, the couple moved to Tampa during the Florida real estate boom. He purchased the Pioneer Filling Station at 817 Grand Central on the corner of North Boulevard and founded the Pioneer Tire Company in 1928, selling tires, gasoline, and batteries. Pioneer also provided vehicle maintenance and service.

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Drone Delivery

Drones are now being used to deliver packages in Florida.

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Light Therapy

Lights are being used to treat ailments ranging from skin conditions to cancer.

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Dogs on the Beach

Most dogs love the beach, but not all beaches are for dogs.

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CREDITS



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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 JUNE

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1201 Gandy Blvd N., St Petersburg

CALENDAR OF HOLIDAYS & EVENTS

APRIL

Pascua Florida Day 2
Threshers Home Opener 4
McGough Park Garage Sale 5
Belleair Centennial Concert 5
Dunedin Highland Games 5
Tampa Bay Blues Fest 10-13
Sugar Sand Festival 11-27
Chicago at the Sound 11
Largo Shredfest 12
Rowdies Home Opener 12
BBA Mixer Reel Deel Outpost 13
Income Taxes Due 15
Wine and Tapas on the Bluffs 15
Largo Breezeway Concert 18
Classic Car Show Heritage Village 19
St.Pete Renaissance Fair Begins 19
Patriots Day 19
Hurricane Eddie's Beach Cleanup 19
Public Schools Closed 18-21
Dyngus Day at Crabby Bill's 21
Easter Sunday 20
Earth Day 22
Arbor Day 25
Taste of IRB 26

MAY

Stone Crab Season Ends 1
Belleair Beach Blood Drive 2
Country Thunder at Ray Jay 2-4
Derby Day 3
Cinco de Mayo 5
Teacher Appreciation Day 6
Letter Carriers' Food Drive 10
Mother's Day 11
St. Pete Renaissance Fair Ends 11
Armed Forces Day 17
150th Preakness Stakes 17
Safe Boating Week 17-23
Largo Evening Market 24
Memorial Day 26

JUNE

Hurricane Season Begins 1
D-Day Anniversary 6
Belmont Stakes 7
Flag Day 14
U.S. Army Birthday 14
Father's Day 15
Summer Solstice 20
Ringo Starr at the Sound 21

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Did You Know

NEW STAMP The United States Post Office released a commemorative stamp honoring the late actress Betty White last month. Often called the "first lady of television," White graced screens for more than eight decades, including *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *The Golden Girls*. Also an avid animal lover, White used her star power to advocate for creatures great and small.



BEACH RENOURISHMENT A Pinellas County delegation led by County Commissioner Kathleen Peters traveled to Washington to further efforts to reestablish federally funded beach nourishment. The trip followed multiple discussions Commissioner Peters has had with the former and current White House administrations and a letter she sent to President Trump on February 5th with the full support of the County Commission. Federal projects on Sand Key, Treasure Island and Long Key are on hold because of a requirement by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) that all property owners sign easements allowing public access and use wherever sand is placed. In previous nourishment cycles, USACE worked with the County to place as much sand as possible utilizing construction easements. Well short of the 100 percent easements needed, the County has been pursuing a dual path of planning a County-led project while pressing federal officials for relief in the easement language that would make it easier to restore the federal projects.

Federal beach nourishment has been taking place for decades on the Pinellas coast. It is critical for storm protection not only on the barrier islands, but also on the mainland across the Intracoastal Waterway. It is also vital to maintain the quality of the County's primary economic engine, tourism. The federal cost share on beach nourishment projects is 65 percent, so the County has long counted on it as an investment in our shoreline.

NEW TRANSPORTATION OPTION The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) launched the Grouper, a brand new, on-demand shuttle service connecting St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport (PIE) to anywhere on Clearwater Beach, including Sand Key hotels, Sheraton and Marriott.

Priced at just \$8 for one person, \$20 for a group of 2-4, or \$30 for a group of 5-8, a trip on the Grouper typically costs much less than many other ride options—at peak times, a one-way ride on other rideshare services can top \$115. The Grouper is staffed by professional drivers in dedicated vehicles that can handle up to nine passengers, luggage, and wheelchairs. The Grouper will also book taxis at the same rates when shuttles are fully booked.

Book your ride online at PSTA.net/grouper or through the Grouper app on iPhone or Android. You can request your ride on demand or schedule ahead up to two months in advance. If your flight is delayed, you can cancel and rebook with no fees or hassle.

Find the shuttle marked with the Grouper logo in the Ground Transportation Lot at PIE. Service is also available anywhere on Clearwater Beach, including the Sheraton Sand Key Resort and Clearwater Beach Marriott Resort on Sand Key.

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and More...

NEW ROOS Clearwater Marine Aquarium is excited to announce the arrival of two juvenile kangaroo joeys — Irwin and Bindi. They are both juvenile kangaroos, known for their boundless energy and curiosity. Irwin, named in honor of the late wildlife conservationist Steve Irwin, is a playful male joey, while Bindi, named after Irwin's daughter, a spirited female joey, is eager to explore her new home. The joeys are 11 months old and in the early stages of their development. Visitors can expect educational presentations showcasing the kangaroos' natural behaviors, feeding routines, fun facts about their native Australian habitat, and about vital kangaroo conservation efforts to help protect these incredible marsupials.



CMA will also present a Pouch Pals Baby Roo Encounter where guests can experience the unique opportunity to have a kangaroo snuggle into their lap, with the chance to touch, interact and bond with the baby roo while it stays cozy in its pouch.

For more information, visit CMAquarium.org.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY BELLEAIR The Town of Belleair is turning 100 and will be celebrating in a big way. Don't miss the party of the century, featuring live music, food, drinks, activities, and fun for the whole family! Celebrate 100 years of this amazing town, worth every bit of this grand celebration! The event is proudly presented by the Belleair Community Foundation. It will be held at the Dimmitt Community Center Athletic Fields at 918 Osceola Road. Gates open at 3pm and the opening band Crossfire Creek begins at 4:15pm. The event will feature a kids activity area, a variety of food vendors, Town Centennial merchandise, a Beer Garden, and more.

Adult admission is \$40, tickets for children under 12 years old are \$15. VIP tickets are available for \$150 and include access to a private tent, food and beverages, and private restrooms. Visit TownofBelleair.com for more information and tickets.

PASCUA FLORIDA April 2nd is Pascua Florida Day, according to Ponce De Leon. Pascua Florida is a Spanish term that means "flowery festival" or "feast of flowers" and is an annual celebration of Juan Ponce de León's arrival in what is now the state of Florida.

Pascua Florida Day is celebrated as a special day in Florida and usually falls on April 2nd. It is the anniversary of the discovery of Florida in 1513 by Juan Ponce de León, who searched for gold and the Fountain of Youth. He named the land "Pascua Florida" probably because the date was near Easter that year.

OUR NEXT ISSUE WILL BE JUNE 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.

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Howard Frankland Bridge, Continued



Howard Frankland
Credit: University of
Florida Digital Collections

After completing his training, Howard returned to Tennessee and was named vice president of the Frankland Carriage Company. In 1921, he married Winifred Perry. In 1925, the couple moved to Tampa during the Florida real estate boom. He purchased the Pioneer Filling Station at 817 Grand Central on the corner of North Boulevard and founded the Pioneer Tire Company in 1928, selling tires, gasoline, and batteries. Pioneer also provided vehicle maintenance and service.

During the Great Depression, Howard learned all he could about rubber, particularly how to "reclaim" rubber from used tires.

He caught the attention of the General Tire company, which hired him to design and build a pilot plant in Tampa. Howard began recapping and retreading tires and experimented with ways to reuse the rubber dust that was a byproduct of the process.

He eventually discovered that, when combined with cork, the dust could be strengthened and reconstituted into rubber balls through a process called vulcanization. Howard and his brother Frank formed a new company, Hofran, and began producing rubber balls in a factory in Tampa. They eventually sold it to AMF and Voit.

The Gandy Bridge had been completed in 1924 as a two lane span. The Ben T. Davis Causeway (later renamed after Courtney W. Campbell, who represented Florida's 1st Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives) opened in 1927. In the mid-1950s, Howard saw a need for an additional bridge connecting Central Pinellas to Tampa. As a member of the Florida State Road Board, he used his influence to lobby for a new span and proposed extending Interstate 4 across Tampa Bay between the two existing bridges.

Dredging began on the new structure in June 1957 and by the end of the year they began setting pilings. The bridge had not been named and was referred to as the Third Bay Bridge. Construction was completed in August of 1959, with the cost for the bridge and its approaches totaling \$16 million (\$170 million in today's dollars). The overall length of the four-lane span and its approaches was over eleven miles, using 15 million pounds of steel and 84,000 cubic yards of concrete. The state chose to name the bridge after its founder.

With great fanfare, the W. Howard Frankland Bridge opened on January 15th, 1960. The MacDill Air Base Color Guard raised the American Flag over the bridge, which was christened by Mrs. Winifred Frankland. Howard's grandchildren, Winifred and Jennifer cut the ribbon to open the bridge. A motorcade led by Governor Thomas Leroy Collins proceeded west from Tampa across the span, turned around at State Road 694, and proceeded eastbound back to Tampa.

Due to the bridge's narrow span and lack of a center median wall, head-on collisions were frequent and devastating. The crashes led to several disparaging nicknames, including "Howard Frankenstein," "How Weird Frankland," and "Car Strangled Banner." A state highway official proclaimed the span a "death trap." In 1962, after the bridge had recorded its tenth collision fatality, a steel-reinforced concrete dividing wall was installed to separate the north- and southbound lanes.

As the Tampa Bay Area population grew, traffic projections increased and the need to expand the Howard Frankland's capacity became clear. Construction to increase the bridge to eight lanes began in 1988. The \$54 million four-lane southbound span opened in 1990. The original bridge closed for rehabilitation and reopened in 1992. The construction doubled the number of lanes on the bridge itself, but did not address the capacity of its approaches. Traffic snarls remained prevalent, particularly during rush hour. A ten-year project increased northbound Interstate 275 to six lanes from downtown St. Petersburg to Gandy Boulevard, and eight lanes from Gandy to the bridge. The interstate was widened several times on the Tampa side.

In 2017, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) began planning to further expand the capacity of the bridge with an additional span adding two express lanes in each direction. The express lanes will come with a dynamic toll structure, giving drivers the option to avoid congestion at a premium. The cost of utilizing the lanes will increase as they become more congested and decrease as congestion goes down. According to FDOT plans, the toll lanes will connect to express lanes on the I-275 Pinellas Corridor, the recently opened Gateway Expressway, I-275, I-4, I-75, and the Veterans Expressway. The Howard Frankland plans also include future construction of a fourth span with Light Rail tracks connecting Pinellas and Tampa. The 2020 cost estimate put construction totals at \$865 million, with the first phase being completed this year.

Howard Frankland participated in numerous charitable and civic organizations, including the Hillsborough Taxpayers Association, the Boys' Clubs, and Merchant's Association. He became vice-chairman of the Florida State Turnpike Association. He was named "King of Gasparilla" for the 1950 festivities, and won the 1956 Civitan Award, being named "Tampa's Outstanding Citizen" for that year. Howard spent his later years growing azaleas and other flowers in the vast gardens surrounding his home in the Golfview neighborhood in South Tampa. He died on December 17th, 1980.



Construction of New Span, January 2025 Credit: FDOT

SOUL SPRING CLEANING

By Mercedes Locke, Certified Clinical Hypnotherapist

Aw, sweet spring! The time of year when the temperatures rise, and our wintery layers are shed. It is also when many of us thoroughly clean our homes and personal spaces. This practice is commonly referred to as "spring cleaning" - a seasonally appropriate action intended to remove all the dust and darkness of winter, thus making space for the lightness of a warmer and brighter time of year.

The practice of spring cleaning can be traced back to ancient Iranian traditions as they prepared for the Persian New Year by fully cleaning their homes. The concept can also be found in the Jewish customs of removing any leavened foods in order to prepare for Passover. The Catholic church and Greek Orthodox culture prepare for the spring holiday of Easter by cleaning their homes and churches during Lent. In northern areas, wrought by freezing temperatures and snow, spring offers more moderate weather, encouraging us to open windows, letting fresh air in and the dust of winter out.

Religions and cultures aside, we all know how good it feels to give those closets and dresser drawers a big overhaul. Who hasn't felt a surge of pride over a tidied space that once was a mess? The process can feel daunting at first, but once we start to take action, we will most likely feel encouraged to continue the process, knowing a more cleansed and organized space is our reward. Most of us thrive in an external environment that is tidy and clean because a decluttered space makes our lives simpler and more efficient.

It's probably no surprise to anyone that we thrive even more when our internal environment is also fresh and clear. Dusting out the emotional cobwebs - like resentment, guilt and grudges - leaves everything in life brighter and shinier. Intentionally creating more emotional space helps us feel like we can easily move forward towards what will work better in our lives. By removing that which no longer serves us: outdated thoughts and patterns, we open up space for that which will serve us: new behaviors and aligned action towards what we really desire.

If you are looking for support to release the old and embrace the new, book a free telephone consultation at mercedeslockehypnotherapy.com. I look forward to sharing with you how hypnotherapy can shed light on what is no longer working in your life - old sweaters and old behaviors alike!



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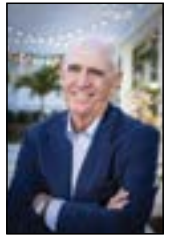
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WHAT KEEPS ME UP AT NIGHT?

by Ray Ferrara, ProVise Management Group

Oh, my gosh. Where do I begin?

The Republican Party has taken control of Congress and the White House. These political shifts are enough to keep me up guessing what happens with tariffs, immigration, crypto, tax legislation, energy policy and much more. Then there is the economy, jobs, inflation, high interest rates, the stock and bond markets and much more.



But you know what, these are things that could keep me up but rarely do. Why? Because I have no control over these events and challenges. So, in the words of the infamous Mad Magazine kid, Alfred E Neuman... "what me worry?"

I worry about the things I do have some control over including not letting my emotions get in the way, getting off my butt by stopping the procrastination, and quit listening to friends, family, and talking heads about how to manage my life and especially my finances.

Like every investor, I do not remember how much I invested initially as much as I remember the high-water mark. I do not like it when the account goes down. My emotions tempt me to sell when a correction occurs, and the temptation becomes greater when a bear market happens. The temptation becomes greater as I get older. But I must keep my emotions in check, because every time a correction/bear market has happened, it has always been better at a later date.

I know that it is not any fun to think about my death. Therefore, I procrastinate doing my estate planning. I need to bypass "GO" and not collect my \$200 but instead go directly to an attorney for my legal documents. I will then have peace of mind that my affairs are in order for my family.

Lastly, I need to take control of the information that barrages me every day from family, friends, the internet, and the talking heads. I need a plan. A path that is specific to my situation and circumstances. Without that written plan, I am like Alice in Wonderland with rabbit reminding me that if I do not know where I am going, then any path will get me there. The plan helps eliminate the noise from others.

Take advantage of our complimentary one-hour consultation in our Clearwater office or by Zoom so we can help you sleep at night. Now go get some ZZZZZZZs.

V. Raymond Ferrara, CFP®, Founder and Executive Chair
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Bar & Restaurant News

NEW RESTAURANT

Soul Mediterranean Cuisine recently opened on North Clearwater Beach. It is a fresh and exciting new dining experience inspired by the vibrant flavors of the Mediterranean Sea. Their menu takes you on a journey through the coastal regions of Greece, Turkey, Italy, Spain and more.

Every dish is crafted with authenticity and passion from tender lamb, fresh seafood, and perfectly grilled steaks to hearty vegetarian specialties and handcrafted mezzes designed to be shared.

Complement your meal with one of their signature handcrafted cocktails, thoughtfully infused with Mediterranean herbs, citrus and exotic spices. Their bar also features a curated selection of international and domestic wines and beers.

It has an inviting open-air atmosphere where guests can enjoy indoor seating, a lively bar or a breezy sidewalk dining experience just one block from the beach.

Whether you come for a leisurely dinner, a handcrafted drink, or a taste of the Mediterranean's finest flavors, SOUL is your new go-to destination for an unforgettable culinary experience.

They are open Tuesdays – Sundays, beginning at Noon.

Find Soul at 486 Poinsettia Avenue, in North Beach. This is on the East Side of the Pelican Plaza, off Mandalay at Baymont Avenue (near Mile Marker 23.9)

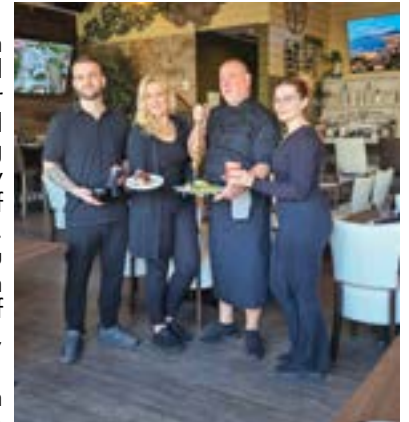
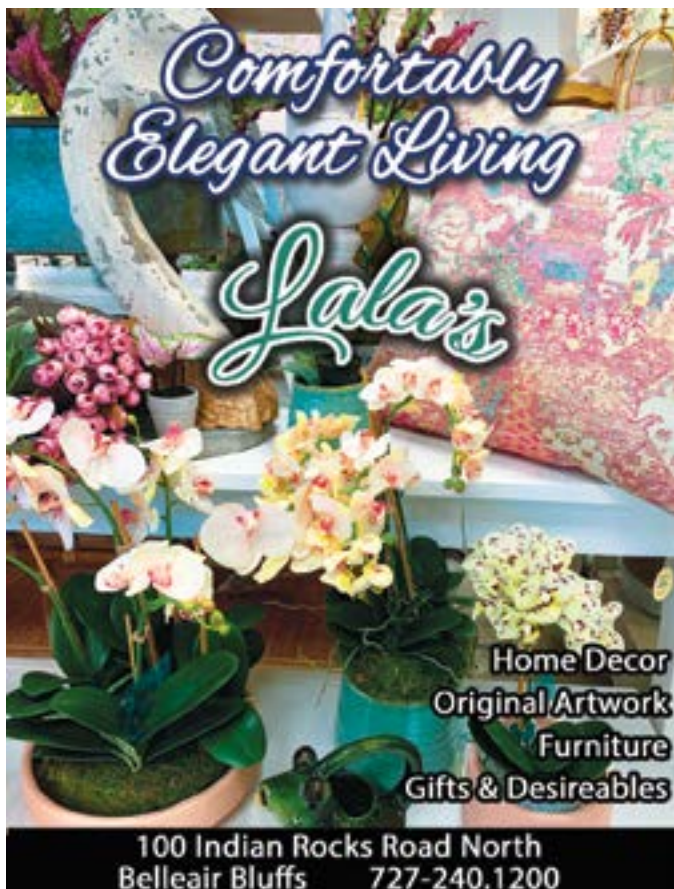
Call them (727) 221-5299 for reservations and see their web site at SoulMediterraneanCuisine.com.

EASTER BRUNCH Join Jimmy Guana's at 401 2nd Street in the Holiday Inn Harbourside on April 20th for their Easter Brunch Buffet. They will have omelets made to order, eggs benedict, French toast, garden salad bar, pastas, baked fish, raw seafood bar, carving stations with spiral ham and prime rib, desserts and more. Reservations are recommended. Brunch begins at 11am and finishes at 3pm. For more information or to make a reservation, call (727) 595-8356.

BUBBLES AND BRUNCH Coco's Crush Bar & Grill IRB, located at 2405 Gulf Blvd, is now serving brunch on Saturdays and Sundays from 10am-3pm. Their new brunch menu features a few specialty plates such as Corn Flakes Stuffed French Toast, Old Bay Shrimp and Grits, and the Bacon Three-Way Burger

Patrons will have the option to purchase "Bottomless" Mimosas or Bloody Marys or they can try their Brunch Crush (a brunchy spin on their "World Famous Crush Drinks.") Coco's IRB is open weekly from 11am-2am and on Saturdays and Sundays from 10am-2pm. Follow them on Facebook and Instagram for their specials and upcoming events. For more information call (727) 223-5446 or go to CocosCrushBar.com.

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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Bar & Restaurant News



DYNGUS DAY CELEBRATION AT CRABBY BILL'S

The annual post-Lenten Polish celebration will be held at the Original Crabby Bill's on Monday, April 21st. They will serve traditional Polish fare including pierogies, kielbasa and potato pancakes. Jasiu's Polka All Stars will be on stage performing polka music and a splash zone will be set up with water guns and balloons for the necessary water fight ritual. There is no cover charge for the event which will run throughout the day. Call (727) 281-2193 for more information.

NEW BAR Schooners is a new neighborhood restaurant and sports bar at 2441 West Bay Drive (previously occupied by The Venus Restaurant). Their new menu has sports bar favorites such as wings, fried mozzarella, pulled-pork nachos, and pub pretzel bites. They also have five different types of specialty hot dogs, seven signature burgers, five different ways to dress-up your tater tots, and more. They are open weekly from 11am-midnight and 11am-1am on Fridays and Saturdays. Happy Hour is 11am-7pm every day. For more information follow them on Facebook or call (727) 223-4331.

HOGG'S CANTINA Nearly a year ago, Jeff Hawks took over the lease of Gerstle's on South Clearwater Beach and rebranded it as Hogg Daddy's Beach Bar and Grill, kicking it off with a big Memorial Day party. They made it through the hot summer and the three hurricanes and decided 2025 was the time to expand. At the end of January, they celebrated the grand opening of their new sister restaurant, Hogg's Cantina (previously PJ O'Reilly's), directly next door. The Cantina menu features a variety of Tex-Mex options such as tacos, fajitas, burritos, bowls, sandwiches, and much more. They have happy hour Monday-Friday and daily food specials. Follow them on Facebook for scheduled entertainment and specials. They are located at 741 Bayway Blvd.

MICHELIN COMES TO PINELLAS In February, the Michelin Guide announced it will expand to the St. Pete-Clearwater area and by 2026 the guide will be covering the entire state. Michelin first entered Florida in 2022, where it began covering Tampa, Orlando, and Miami. Tampa currently has five restaurants with Michelin stars. The Michelin Guide is one of the most prestigious, well-known, and respected authorities on restaurants in the world. Their anonymous inspectors have already begun checking out new locations in these areas. A Michelin Star is awarded based on quality of ingredients, flavor, cooking techniques, chef personality, value for money, and consistency. The 2025 selection will be revealed later this year at the annual Michelin Guide ceremony for Florida.

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Business Briefs



NEW BUILDER ON THE BEACH Seasafe Homes was born in between Hurricanes Helene and Milton when founders Chad Lubke and Michael Zehnder realized the need for strong, flood-resistant, elevated homes using a streamlined process for faster recovery. Semi-custom home modules are constructed in a controlled, enclosed, Offsite Build Center.

While being built to Miami-Dade wind rating of up to 180 mph, elevated Seasafe Homes can be completed in six months. Design options allow for custom porches, outdoor living spaces, and storm-safe features. Modular construction saves time and money by reducing delays, material waste, and overall costs compared to traditional homebuilding.

Seasafe is building two waterfront models expecting a July completion but currently have access to models in North Fort Myers Beach through their build partners. Visit SeasafeHomes.com to view models or call (727) 248-8757 for more information.

NEW HOTEL OPENS Opal Sol, the “Sol Mate” resort to Opal Sands and the newest luxury hotel in the Opal Collection opened Valentine’s weekend at 400 Coronado Drive, just steps from the beautiful sugar-sand of Clearwater Beach. It has 478 guest rooms, each with private balconies and views of the Gulf. There is 106,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor event space with dining and open-air networking spaces. Guests have access to all of Opal Sands amenities as well. For more information or to book reservations visit OpalCollection.com and follow them on Facebook for ongoing and upcoming specials.

NEW HYPNOTHERAPIST Mercedes Locke Hypnotherapy is excited to announce the opening of its (virtual) doors. Having been a health and wellness coach since 2020, Mercedes embarked on a transformative and personal journey using hypnotherapy. Once she found this powerful tool, she felt compelled to share it with others. Earning her Certified, Clinical and Transpersonal Hypnotherapy certifications in 2024, she is now looking forward to building her private practice.

Mercedes offers online appointments, so her clients can experience the profound effects of hypnotherapy from the comfort of their own homes or sacred space. To learn more about how hypnotherapy can transform your life, visit MercedesLockeHypnotherapy.com and book a free phone consultation today.

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Drone Delivery



By Pete Magnani, Publisher

Online shopping increased dramatically during the pandemic, According to Census.gov, e-commerce sales rose by \$244.2 billion or 43 percent in 2020. Understandably, the number of delivery vehicles flooding the streets increased correspondingly, and both sales and vehicles have continued to rise since. The National Highway Transportation and Safety Administration attributed 10 percent of traffic crashes to delivery vehicles in 2022. In response, some delivery providers are offering alternatives, though not everyone is celebrating the new developments.

After several years of successful test flights, Wing Aviation LLC began using drones to deliver products to Australian customers in 2014. The company used the unmanned aerial vehicles to deliver hot coffee, fresh food, over-the-counter medicine, and rotisserie chickens to consumers in Australia.

Wing's public operations have faced noise complaints. Residents in the rural southeastern region of Australia where Wing operates have complained about the disruption to their lives. A local dog club president said that the noise from the delivery drone trials spooked dogs when nearby. Some customers opted-out of the trial citing this disruption. One ecologist states they worry these "drones are taking to the air without a lot of thought for the ears of people on the ground." In November 2019, the Australian Federal government found Wing's Canberra operation exceeded the residential noise standard. Wing developed a quieter propeller and promised other measures to address this issue.

Wing is proposing to conduct drone retail package delivery operations from up to 150 "nests," which are drone takeoff and landing sites, five in the Central Florida metros areas, using Wing's Hummingbird 7000W-B and 8000-A beginning with the Tampa and Orland metro areas.

The Hummingbird 7000W-B has a maximum takeoff weight of less than 15 pounds which includes its maximum payload weight of 2.7 pounds. The Hummingbird 8000W-A has a maximum takeoff weight of less than 25 pounds when combined with a maximum payload weight of five pounds. All Wing aircraft use electric power from rechargeable lithium-ion batteries.

The nests will each serve a specific area to avoid over-concentration of flights surrounding any given nest. Each nest houses up to 24 aircraft with a delivery range of approximately six miles. Wing's initial proposal was for 150 nests located in shopping centers and other commercially zoned areas. The company projects up to 400 deliveries daily from each nest, with operations occurring between 7am-7pm.

The drones will be operated at an altitude of 150-300 feet above ground level while en route to and from delivery locations. At a delivery location, the drone would descend vertically to a stationary hover at 23 feet above ground and lowers the package by a retractable line. Once a package has been lowered to the ground, the drone would retract the line, ascend vertically to a cruise altitude, and returns to the nest. Flight missions are automatically planned by Wing's flight planning software.

Customers can download the Wing app and enter their address to determine if their home is within the delivery range. Since Wing's inception, they have logged over 450,000 residential deliveries.

Walmart is now providing delivery via DroneUp in Arizona, Florida and Texas. In September 2020, the retailer partnered with Quest Diagnostics and DroneUp to pilot drone delivery of at-home COVID-19 self-collection kits, and also kicked off a pilot with end-to-end drone delivery company Flytrex to deliver select grocery and household essentials from its stores using automated drones.

The retailer says that 85 percent of the items sold in its Neighborhood Market stores meet the weight and volume requirements for drone delivery. Top-selling items for drone delivery orders include cookies, ice cream, bags of lemons, rotisserie-cooked chickens and paper towels.

Looking ahead, Walmart plans to use its U.S. base of 4,700 stores located within 90 percent of the country's population to offer drone delivery services.



2 Year Housing Outlook

As the letters from the Pinellas beach municipalities reach homeowners, with the determination of which homes have been considered substantially damaged by FEMA, I am receiving numerous calls asking for my prognostication of what the next 2 years will look like pricewise for new homes along the Pinellas beaches. Although I have a 53-year history in experiencing housing trends, not a single person can be 100% positive about the outcome. History of communities that were damaged by Hurricane Sandy along the Jersey Shore leads me to believe my thoughts below.

The prices I am receiving from my subcontractors and suppliers are rising now, but I believe that will almost certainly increase substantially as the great number of new homes get started. Additional variables such as the rebuilding of western North Carolina homes and the replacement of the homes destroyed by the California fires will put pricing pressure on new home buyers here also, as suppliers raise their pricing to home builders. The old "Supply & Demand" equation! I believe that in the next 6-12 months, we will experience many cost increases, putting additional pressure on homeowners that are struggling to figure out how to move forward. My guess is that construction costs will continually rise for the next years.

Enough bad news. We anticipate interest rates to be lower when a construction loan is converted to the permanent mortgage at the end of construction. As in the example I used above about the Jersey Shore, my wife and I have close friends there, and we were amazed at how the area has not only survived but prospered with the new residential construction. Just as we have here in Pinellas, the 60-year-old homes, originally built only 5' above sea level, are now raised, and are constructed with updated structural components (150mph walls, windows, doors), and all new mechanical systems (electric, plumbing, A/C). Also, all the newer design features in a new home today are a big benefit (higher ceilings, cabinetry, tile features). A home is very often the most valuable asset for a family, so when a 2025 new home is eventually listed in MLS to sell, the resale value is considerably higher than a 60-year-old outdated home. In most cases, some of a new homes construction cost would be paid from the FEMA or homeowners insurance policy. Also, from the federal government there are ICC funds (Cost of Compliance), that allows up to \$30,000 to demo your existing home.

Classic Florida Dream Homes is now offering our "Affordable Luxury" home series, featuring 4 homes starting at only \$499,900. This price is turnkey, including a new elevated home (4' above FEMA requirements!) including the architect, engineering, permitting, home construction and sitework. As a Design/Build General Contractor, we also specialize in waterfront custom homes for families. Check out our website www.cfdh.info, or call us at (727) 404-1347 for additional information.



SEVEN TIMES YOU SHOULD CONSIDER HIRING AN ELDER LAW ATTORNEY

By Theodore Schofner, Esq.

Aging is not an easy process. Sometimes we are faced with certain issues or problems that we just cannot understand on our own and may need the professional guidance of an Elder Law Attorney. Here are seven key areas/issues that you may be confronted with that should send you thinking about reaching out for professional help:

1. Estate Planning: Everyone needs Estate Planning, regardless of how old you are or how wealthy you are. An Elder Law Attorney can help you draft a comprehensive estate plan that include a Will, Trust and other documents to make sure that you wishes are carried out when you die. Good planning can help avoid Probate and for the very wealthy estate taxes.

2. Probate: If you have a Last Will and Testament and your estate didn't justify Probate avoidance, then an Elder Law Attorney can administer your estate through the Probate process and make sure that the beneficiaries that you have chosen receive the bounty that you intended for them to receive at the time of your death.

3. Long Term Care Planning: As we grow older, the likelihood of long-term care increases. An Elder Law Attorney can help you understand the differences between in-home care, assisted living and the nursing home and help you to chart a course as to how to pay for that care. Advanced Directives like a Durable Power of Attorney can also be prepared to avoid guardianship because of incapacity issues.

4. Medicaid Planning, Applications and Appeals: Medicaid Planning is a government program that can help pay for long-term home care, residence in an ALF or a skilled nursing home. But it is also a minefield with many archaic and complex terms and complexities that make obtaining benefits difficult to obtain. An Elder Law Attorney can help you navigate the eligibility process and develop a plan to protect your assets and get you qualified for benefits.

5. Durable Power of Attorney: The Durable Power of Attorney may be the most important estate planning tool that everyone should have prepared. The DPOA allows you to appoint someone to make financial/legal decisions on your behalf if you become incapacitated and cannot make those decisions on your own. The Durable Power of Attorney is one of the most important Guardianship avoidance tools.

6. Guardianship: Guardianship may be necessary if the individual has not properly planned for incapacity and decision making as they age. The Court actually removes some or all of the rights of the "Ward" and appoints a guardian. Guardianship should not be necessary if good estate planning with the proper Advanced Directives has been completed.

7. Financial Exploitation of the Elderly: An Elder Law Attorney can guide you in ways to ensure that a senior loved one is safeguarded to protect their assets from fraud or exploitation by using trust planning or a good DPOA. The attorney can also suggest appropriate legal action if a loved one has been exploited.

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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WOOFS & WATER

By Lora Magnani, Publisher

One of the most relaxing and uplifting things to see is a dog frolicking in the waves, so proud of the stick it just retrieved, and wagging its tail. It is also great to see the many newcomers moving to or just visiting the Pinellas beaches again. It feels like things are getting back to normal. With that being said, dogs are not welcome on all beaches, and this is unclear to some.

In Pinellas County, non-service dogs are generally prohibited on beaches, apart from designated dog-friendly areas. Violating the ordinance can result in fines up to \$500 and up to 60 days in jail per offense. The pet can also be taken into custody and turned over to Animal Control. Additional fines include failure to clean up after pets and not having pets on leashes. It is also a 2nd degree misdemeanor for intentionally misrepresenting a pet as a service animal.

Don't worry though, there are plenty of places you can take your water-loving dog and still get to enjoy the Gulf.

Honeymoon Island State Park in Dunedin, is one of the state parks that has a designated "Dog Beach." It is located at the southernmost point of the park and has views of Caladesi Island and Hurricane Pass. The beach is shallow enough for pups to wade and play while cooling down in the crystal-clear water, just be sure to keep them on a six-foot long leash. The park and dog beach are open 365 days a year from 8am until sunset.

Fort DeSoto Park, just south of St. Pete Beach, is a county park that has been named one of the best dog parks in the south by Southern Living magazine. The Paw Playground is a fenced off area where pups can play off-leash, it has separate areas for small and large breeds, and its own private beach. It also has K-9 friendly water fountains and cooling stations. Dogs are welcome anywhere in the park, provided they are on a six-foot leash, except the main beaches. The Paw Playground is located next to the Fort. The park is open year-round (except on Christmas and Thanksgiving) from 7am to sunset, unless otherwise posted. The park also has many amenities such as camping, playgrounds, picnic areas, lifeguards, and much more.

Many of the causeways are pet friendly, such as Tarpon Spring's Fred Howard Park, which has a mile long stretch before the park that dogs are welcome to splash around in. Another dog-friendly spot is North Clearwater Beach. North beach begins at Somerset Street and has public parking. However, North Beach is not a dog beach, so there are no restrooms, showers, or spots to discard your pups poop bags.

For more information, visit Pinellas.Gov/dog-parks.



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FINDING BALANCE IN SHORT-TERM RENTAL REGULATIONS

By Chairman Brian Scott, Pinellas County Commission

Pinellas County’s new ordinance on short-term rentals represents a step toward addressing the complex and often contentious issue of balancing the rights of property owners with the rights of neighboring homeowners. In an area like Pinellas County, where natural beauty, outdoor recreation, and vibrant arts and culture scene attract both residents and visitors, this balance is essential to preserving the quality of life for all.

Under the new ordinance, short-term rental properties in unincorporated areas will be required to register annually and undergo bi-annual inspections. Registration fees will fund additional code enforcement officers, enabling more responsive oversight during evenings and weekends. These measures aim to enhance safety, transparency, and accountability in an industry that has seen rapid growth over the past decade.

Short-term rentals can bring significant benefits to property owners, providing income opportunities and contributing to the local economy by attracting tourists who spend at restaurants, shops, and attractions. However, they can strain the infrastructure of residential neighborhoods, and increase complaints about noise, parking, and a transient atmosphere.

The ordinance strikes a pragmatic balance by laying the groundwork for oversight without imposing burdensome restrictions. By implementing a registration system and regular inspections, the county will have better data to understand the scale and impact of short-term rentals. Meanwhile, enhanced enforcement will address concerns from neighbors who feel their quality of life has been disrupted.

This approach acknowledges the rights of property owners to realize investment backed expectations while also recognizing the legitimate concerns of those who call these neighborhoods home. It reflects a willingness to adapt and refine regulations as the community navigates this evolving issue together.

As data is collected, we need to remain flexible and responsive, adjusting processes to ensure they are effective and fair. With thoughtful implementation and ongoing dialogue, Pinellas County can lead the way in creating a model for short-term rental regulation that balances economic vitality with neighborhood integrity.

This process won’t be without challenges, but by working together, we can protect the qualities that make our community such an attractive place to live, work, and visit.



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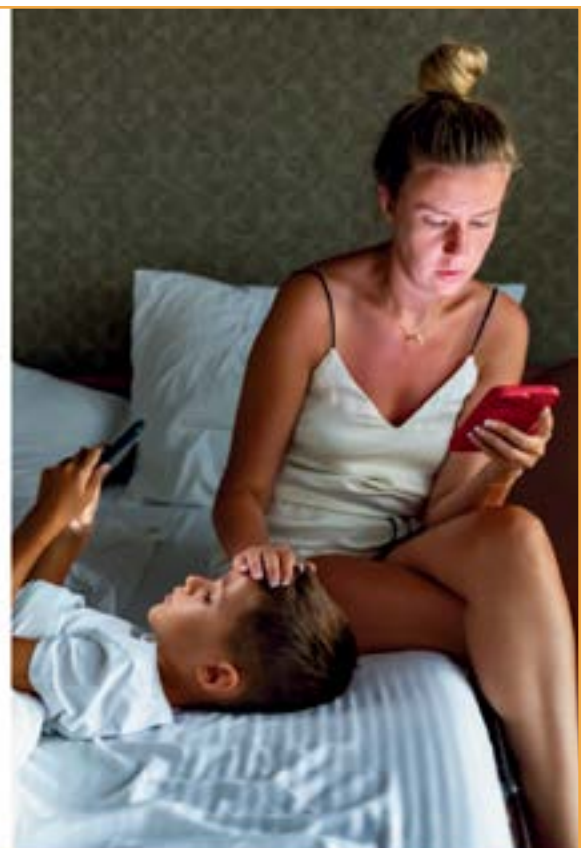


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MOTHER'S DAY

By Bob Griffin, Local Historian

Mother's Day was created by Anna Jarvis in the early 1900s to honor her mother and all mothers. However, when she learned of its commercialization, she spent the remainder of her life fighting the business world that tried to exploit her sentimental concept.



A day to honor one's mother has been celebrated around the world for centuries. In the U.S., Mother's Day was a concept first promoted by Anna Jarvis, of Grafton, West Virginia. She was one of 13 children born to Ann Reeves Jarvis.

Ann, was a peace activist who cared for wounded soldiers on both sides of the Civil War. She created Mother's Day Work Clubs to address public health issues.

Anna went off to college and later became the first literary and advertising editor of Fidelity Mutual Life Insurance Company in Philadelphia. During this time she maintained a close correspondence with her mother.

Anna Jarvis first recognized Mother's Day in 1905, the year her beloved mother died. After that, she started a campaign to create a holiday to honor her mother and all mothers, "the person who has done more for you than anyone in the world," said Jarvis.

In 1908, three years after her mother's death, Jarvis held a memorial to honor her mother—and all mothers—making it the first official observance of Mother's Day. After that event, Anna Jarvis embarked upon a campaign to make Mother's Day a recognized holiday. She spent countless hours writing business executives, church groups and politicians to promote the commemorative day. With her persistent efforts, Mother's Day was finally proclaimed a national holiday, in 1914 by President Woodrow Wilson. The date was set as the second Sunday in May.

After it became a national holiday, many businesses started to commercialize the day. Businesses that sold candy, flowers and greeting cards jumped on the bandwagon. By the 1920s, the floral industry had increased the price of white carnations and introduced red carnations to meet the demand. The meaning had now changed. The red carnation represented living mothers and white honoring deceased mothers.

Jarvis was quite upset by these changes and their attempt to commercialize the special day she had established. "A printed card means nothing except that you are too lazy to write to the woman who has done more for you than anyone in the world", said Jarvis. "And candy—you take a box of candy to your mother, and then eat most of it yourself. This is a petty sentiment."

She was so upset by the misinterpretation and exploitation of the Mother's Day message, she protested and even tried to rescind Mother's Day. It was supposed to be for sentiment, not profit. She organized boycotts and threatened lawsuits. She was arrested for disturbing the peace at a convention that was selling carnations.

Today, Mother's Day is one of the most widely celebrated days on the calendar. It is estimated that it is a \$15 billion event for the retail industry. Mother's Day is the biggest day of the year for the floral and restaurant industries. Long distance phone calls peak on this day.

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FROM CLUTTERED TO COVETED: HOW ONE COUPLE'S DOWNSIZE LED TO A BIG WIN

By Alison Ross
Tompkins, Broker
Associate for Coldwell
Banker



When Bob and Maureen decided to sell their Clearwater home of 30 years, they felt overwhelmed. "Where do we even start?" Maureen sighed, staring at the boxes stacked in the garage. The thought of downsizing—and staging their home to sell—felt like climbing a mountain.

That's where I came in. As a Senior Real Estate Specialist, Broker Associate, and professional stager, I've guided countless homeowners through this exact transition. I assured them, "We'll take this one step at a time."

Step One: Less is More

The first challenge? Years of accumulated treasures. With my vetted resources, together we created three categories: Keep, Donate, and Sell. Maureen had a hard time letting go of her beloved family collections—until she realized her daughter would appreciate the crystal, her nephew liked her father's camera and gem collection, and her granddaughter even found a doll that she cherished. A win-win all around!

Step Two: Staging Magic

Once we had streamlined their belongings, it was time to showcase their home's beauty. I took down the lovely decorator window treatments that were now faded, dusty and out of date. I hired my flooring company to remove the wall-to-wall carpeting and polish the hardwood floors underneath. Maureen teared up when she saw the sunlight pouring through the windows and reflecting from the floor. She laughed and said, "This is exactly how the house looked when I first fell in love with it. What a great memory. We moved furniture around to create positive energy flow, added fresh flowers, and removed a bush that allowed more curb appeal." Bob added, "Why didn't we do this years ago?"

Step Three: The Big Reveal

When their home hit the market, the results were instant—multiple tours were scheduled, two offers in the first weekend! The buyers raved about how spacious and inviting the home felt. Maureen beamed, "We thought this would be stressful, but it's been the best decision we've made."

Bob and Maureen are now happily settled in a beautiful, right-sized home. Their story is proof that downsizing isn't about losing, it's about gaining freedom.

Thinking about selling? Let's make your transition just as smooth, and maybe even fun! Call me today for a free consultation!

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

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USING LIGHT TO HEAL

By Pete Magnani

The first electric light bulb was invented in 1879 by Thomas Edison. The device was a solution to the use of flame or sunlight for illumination, but it would be fourteen years before light was first used therapeutically. Danish physician Niels Ryberg Finsen suffered from Pick's Disease, which resulted in reduced function of the heart, liver, and spleen. Symptoms included general weakness and fatigue, which he noted were alleviated by exposure to the sun. In 1893 Finsen began succeeded in using concentrated light rays to treat smallpox and lupus. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology in 1903 for his work.

In 1917 Albert Einstein laid the theoretical foundation for the laser, which he described as the theory of "simulated emission." The first practical use of the lase came in the 1940s when physicist Charles Townes developed the MASER or Microwave Amplification by the Stimulated Emission of Radiation. Townes and colleagues continued experimentation, and the first functioning laser was produced by Theodore Maiman in 1960.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the therapeutic effects of laser therapy were discovered, beginning with veterinary medicine and progressing to human use including treatment of cancers, angioplasty, dentistry, and cosmetic dermatology.

In the early 1990s, research funded by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) led to the discovery that rays from light emitting diodes (LED) stimulated and increased plant growth. In 1995, they used an LED plant growth unit to grow potatoes on the space shuttle. The LEDs used red and blue wavelengths, and scientists that worked long hours under the red lights noticed that wounds on their hands healed much faster.

LED devices were provided to the United States Navy for treatment of training injuries. These studies showed red and near-infrared light produced more than forty percent greater improvement in musculoskeletal injuries and fifty percent faster healing time for lacerations. These results spurred commercial research and development of treatment devices including full body beds, LED panels, and handheld devices.

Further studies have shown red light therapy to stimulate skin rejuvenation, accelerate muscle recovery, and reduce inflammation. Other benefits include reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety, boosting mood and cognitive function, and improving circulation and cardiovascular health.



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Community News

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SHEPHERD'S VILLAGE

Submitted by Sherry Chandler

Save the date for our Annual Gala – "Creating Connections: A Night of Community & Impact" on September 26th at the Opal Sands Resort on Clearwater Beach.

When we come together, we build bridges of support—helping single moms and their kids face their future with confidence. Your presence has the power to change a future.

Shepherd's Village is a local non-profit dedicated to empowering single moms and their children with safe housing, life-changing programs, and a supportive community.

Hear firsthand from a single mom who found hope at Shepherd's Village—her journey from our community to the keys of her very own Habitat for Humanity home.

Limited seating available. Stay tuned for details! For more information, visit ShepherdsVillage.com/Gala.

Interested in sponsorships? Contact Candice Ross, Donor Development Manager at candice@shepherdsvillage.com

CLEARWATER GARDEN CLUB

Upcoming Events:

Tuesday April 1st – Please Renew your Membership. Find the Zeffy payment Link at ClearwaterGardenClub.com.

April 5-6th from 10am-3pm: Clearwater Community Gardens (our Sister organization) hosts their Spring Garden Sale featuring locally grown friendly vegetable starts, herbs, flowers, butterfly plants, local honey, raffle prizes and more. Come for the plants, stay for the fun at 1277 Grove St, Clearwater. Visit ClearwaterCG.org for more information.

April 7-10th: FFGC Convention and Installation at Southbank Hotel Jacksonville Riverwalk, 1515 Prudential Dr., Jacksonville.

Saturday, April 19th at 11am: CGC Members Meeting, Elections, and Installation of Officers, followed by Potluck Luncheon.

Saturday, May 10th from 9am-1pm: Clearwater Garden Club Mother's Day Plant Sale. Consider starting and cultivating plants now. For more information, call Paul Keleti at (816) 719-0192.

MORTON PLANT MEASE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Submitted by Laretta Fernandez

Carelift Van Transportation Service -Need a Lift?

CareLift Van Transportation Service, a member of Morton Plant Mease Hospital is available to people who live in the local area from Largo to Palm Harbor. We provide free transportation to BayCare hospital campuses for those ambulatory members of our community that don't have the option of using their own vehicle. The service is available Monday through Friday and helps to improve the lives of the most vulnerable people in our community.

To register for Carelift, please call (727) 734-6107. We are in the office Monday – Friday from 8am-3:30pm.

CareLift is also looking for volunteers in Dunedin and the surrounding area. We provide over 1,000 free rides every month, but we can't do it without our volunteers. If you enjoy meeting new people, we would love to have you join our dynamic volunteer team. A few hours of your time can make a positive difference in your life and the lives of others.

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10 LANDSCAPE TRENDS FOR 2025

By Randy Lee, Landscape Designer

1. Sustainability/more naturalistic landscapes: Not overusing natural resources. We have more green choices in sod, plants, irrigation and materials. A big push for less potable water use and stormwater management. It is easy to grow plants.
2. Pollinator-friendly, native and edible gardens: Back to nature approach. Attracting wildlife and bees, growing your own food and herbs and using native species and plants that grow here with little care.
3. Storm-proof: Everyone now wants flood-proof and salt-tolerant plants in their designs. They don't want to replace landscapes year after year. Excessive rain and salt water are two different problems with the same outcome. Also, high winds damage trees, and newly established trees are vulnerable. Proper tree choice and staking are essential. Flood barriers are all the rage and protect the interior of the home.
4. LED Lighting: New fixtures, colors, material and style are available. 10-year warranties are common. Brass is best for durability. Can be integrated into the "smart home."
5. Technology integrated landscaping: There's now a remote for everything – outdoor lighting, the jacuzzi and speakers. Smart homes integrate the interior and exterior seamlessly. This is very popular in new construction.
6. Multifunctional outdoor spaces: One area now serves several purposes. Maybe a pool area and a children's play area as one or private area for conversation around a fire pit for adults. Outdoor kitchens have become very popular.
7. Artificial turf: Love it or hate it, it's here to stay. Sod is the number one water-user and the most problematic with maintenance. Artificial turf did very well in the storms, is pet friendly and consumes no water. There are restrictions to follow in cities and neighborhoods. It is expensive to install correctly.
8. Mixed materials: Mixing of materials is now cool, but up to a point. Think furniture, pots, stone and boulders, flowers in various colors. Clean and modern is very popular now with maybe one color as opposed to many colors – less busy and fussy is the trend.
9. Emphasis on minimalism and low maintenance: Everyone wants low maintenance – less work, water and cost. Clients also want beautiful landscaping. Right plant, right place is important here. There are many plants and trees that are relatively slower growers with little maintenance.
10. Designs that are style-specific: People want their yards to reflect their personalities. They want the interior and exterior to match and blend. Traditional, modern, formal or somewhere in between? We can help you find your landscape personality.

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Community News

GREENTOWN KIDS

Submitted by Allie DeVore

GreenTown Kids (GTK) and the City of IRB have been working hard to get the IRB Community Garden back in shape and better than ever. This will be our main community project for the year and we're excited to re-create a beautiful garden for the whole community to enjoy. We're also excited to plant spring gardens with the students at Anona and Mildred Helms Elementary Schools this year.

GTK will host four city-wide beach cleanups this year, where volunteers of all ages are invited to participate to help keep our beach clean and healthy. Cleanup dates are, May 18th and November 2nd from 10am-noon at the 17th Ave. Access. There will also be a DIY cleanup July 4th-6th.

Friends of the IRB Library & GTK will host an Earth Day inspired event for kids of all ages on Saturday, April 26th from 10am-noon at the IRB Nature Preserve and Community Garden. All are welcome to participate in fun kids' activities.

If you'd like to support our 501(c)(3) public nonprofit and help make our community projects possible, please donate via Zelle. Your donations will go directly towards our hurricane relief and community projects as we continue to create a green town together. Learn more at www.greentownkids.org.

Zelle: greentownkids@gmail.com

CONGRATULATIONS

In January, the City of Indian Rocks Beach City Manager, Gregg Mims, presented Captain Michael Leiner of the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office with an award thanking him for his 31 years of service and dedication to the community. Captain Leiner has given much time to ensure the safety of not only the citizens of Pinellas County but has been a great resource and asset to the entire Indian Rocks Beach community.



ROTARY CLUB OF BELLEAIR

Submitted by Ulf Ambjornson

"Wine & Tapas on the Bluffs" the Rotary Club of Belleair's annual fundraiser will be held Tuesday, April 15th at 5:30 PM. Join us for an evening of delicious wines, live music and culinary delights from the area's finest restaurants. There will be prize raffles and a silent auction benefitting People Empowering & Restoring Communities, Coins for Alzheimer's Research, and Clearwater Beach Charity. Tickets are \$40 each. Call or text (727) 481-8241.







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CO-PARENTING FOR A BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIP

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

When parents engage in their child's education, outcomes improve. This includes student achievement, teacher-student relationships, and even school environment. Staying engaged with the child's education can be hard. For co-parents, it can be even more challenging.

Effective co-parenting requires communication and collaboration. When it comes to the child's education, working together and staying in sync is crucial. Co-parent engagement in all aspects of education sets the foundation for the child's future. It can also have implications on the parent's future.

While Florida doesn't require parents to pay for post-secondary education, many plan to, leaving co-parents worried for years about what it will cost. With high tuition, costs of living, and other expenses, the uncertainty of paying for college or vocational school can make co-parenting even more difficult.

Open communication and collaboration with a co-parent can be hard to maintain. Most likely, there's a history of breakup, divorce or disappointment one way or the other. Co-parents often need an extra incentive to maintain teamwork or start collaborating in the first place.

Two factors, when combined, have shown to be key ingredients for sustained co-parent engagement with the child's education, or the incentive that ignites it. 1) A shared S.M.A.R.T. Goal and 2) Finances. Co-parents of teenagers can find this in The Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program (BFS). Funded by The Florida Lottery, a BFS rewards high school graduates for academic achievement with multiple scholarship options.

Financial Incentive: A BFS can significantly reduce the cost of higher education.

Co-Parents: Family structure is not in the criteria. Co-parents are incentivized to help their child pursue a scholarship.

Long-Term Shared Goal: Students can start preparing early, ideally by the end of sophomore year. This creates a longer timeline for co-parents to stay engaged on requirements like GPA, test scores, and service hours.

A shared goal with that can be easily tracked is crucial. This adds the element of sharing information on school performance, a common cause for major disputes when not shared. Florida families have saved thousands. ROI generally goes together with risk. If the risk is co-parents staying collaboratively engaged in their child's education, it's a good investment. Teenagers take note of co-parents working as a team. It's a great opportunity to set an example. More importantly, the child will be better positioned to reach educational goals.

Program information is readily available, and the FL Lottery has district offices throughout the state. You can learn more about the program by visiting floralottery.com.

Our Children Have Rights is a 501c3 Pinellas-based nonprofit that serves children by helping parents with child custody & co-parenting, at no cost to the family. We're on a mission... A mission to protect the rights of children to have access to their parents by providing education, resources, and support services for successful co-parenting strategies. Why? Because Our Children Have Rights.

Contact Jake at Info@OurChildrenHaveRights.com or visit OCHR.org.



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Community News

BELLEAIR REC CENTER UPCOMING EVENTS

Submitted by Katie Murray

Belleair Rec Summer Camp - June 2nd-August 8th Keep an eye out for Belleair Rec's Summer Camp registration. More information can be found on BelleairRec.com. Teen volunteer applications for the summer season will become available in April.

We're hiring! We're looking for energetic Summer Camp Counselors to create the best summer ever. For more information, visit TownofBelleair.com/jobs.

Youth athletic activities: Spring flag football, volleyball, and basketball are back. Visit BelleairRec.com for more information and to sign up.

SAGES THEATER

A group of talented seniors, in partnership with the Largo Police Department and Pinellas County will entertain you in "Phoney Baloney," a comedy play in Largo's Central Park Performing Art Center on Sunday, April 6th from 2-3:30pm. The SAGE Players will entertain you with stories of true-to-life scammers that mistakenly thought seniors were an "easy mark." One show only, attendance is free. Call

(727) 202-2302 or email PlaysWithPurpose@SagesTheater.org for more information. Visit SagesTheater.org for tickets.

TOWN OF BELLEAIR

Belleair resident and business owner Randy Ware was recognized as Dreammaker of the Year at the Children's Dreammaker Luncheon. For over a decade, Randy and his company, WestCMR, have been dedicated supporters of the Tampa Bay charity, helping make countless dreams come true for children in need.

Beyond his philanthropic efforts, Randy is deeply involved in the Belleair community, making a lasting impact both as a resident and a business leader. He now joins an esteemed group of past honorees, including Richard Gonzmart of the Columbia Restaurant Group, Joe Maddon, former Tampa Bay Rays manager, and Jeff and Penny Vinik, former majority owners of the Tampa Bay Lightning.

COMMUNITY DENTAL CLINIC

Submitted by Theresa White

The Community Dental Clinic is thrilled to invite you to our annual fundraiser, Reds, Whites, and Bites + More! This year's event promises to be exceptional as we gather at our new location, The Collection on Palmetto on April 5th. Like a fine wine, this evening will be lively, crisp, and satisfying - a perfect blend you won't want to miss. We are delighted to announce our Honorary Chairs for the evening - Ruthy & Tom DuPont, whose dedication to our community inspires us all.

Highlights of the evening include our exciting wine lottery, featuring more than 80 bottles of exclusive, featured, and classic wines, over 20 different spirits, and other extraordinary items.

We are honored to host you for a night of tasting fine wines, spirits, and delicious bites while celebrating the community's generosity. Your support of this event will help the Community Dental Clinic provide comprehensive dental services, education, and access to care for uninsured, low-income adults in Pinellas County.

Our Reds, Whites, and Bites fundraiser generates 20 percent of our annual operating budget. As the need for dental care grows, your contributions are vital to ensuring we can meet this demand and continue our mission.

Please mark your calendars and join us for an unforgettable evening. Visit CommunityDTLClinic.org for more information.

SUGAR SAND FESTIVAL

The Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival returns to bright and beautiful Clearwater Beach April 11th - 27th. This year, the festival celebrates its eleventh year and its biggest year yet with the theme, "DinoShores: A Prehistoric Adventure in Sand!"

From architectural masterpieces created with Clearwater's famous sugar sand to concerts, performers and daily entertainment, the Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival Presented by Visit St. Pete Clearwater is an annual event attracting visitors from around the world. This year's festival will again stretch for 17 days, which allows people more time to attend and gives those visiting for Easter a chance to see this incredible and affordable festival.

Visit SugarSandFestival.com for more information and to purchase tickets.



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Community News

CREATIVE PINELLAS

Submitted by Roman Black

Creative Pinellas is pleased to announce the 2024-25 Hurricane Relief Grants have been awarded, providing \$20,000 in critical support to local artists and arts organizations affected by recent storms. Twenty artists will receive \$500 each, while 10 nonprofit arts organizations will receive \$1,000 each to aid recovery efforts. Funded through the organization's December 7th Arts Annual Hurricane Relief Fundraiser, these grants reinforce Creative Pinellas's commitment to strengthening the arts community. The funding will help artists replace lost supplies, repair studios, and continue their work, while nonprofits can sustain programming and operations impacted by the storms.

Beyond their cultural significance, the arts have a profound financial impact. According to the Arts & Economic Prosperity Survey (AEP6)—a major study released by Americans for the Arts, a national leader in arts advocacy and data gathering—Pinellas County's arts and cultural events drive tourism and boost local businesses, with 4.1 million attendees spending an average of \$35.62 per person, per event on dining, parking, and lodging. Notably, 34% of attendees travel from outside the county, with each visitor spending approximately \$46.37—demonstrating that arts travelers are a crucial driver of the local economy.

Recipients include writers, painters, sculptors, musicians, photographers, and mixed-media artists, all using the funds for recovery efforts such as replacing lost supplies, repairing studios, and funding new projects.

Recognizing the economic impact of the arts, Pinellas County leads a Cultural Resources Work Group, which includes Creative Pinellas and many other Pinellas County cultural organizations, such as Heritage Village. Together, they address damages and impacts to cultural resources and facilities in Pinellas County, as well as long-term efforts to enhance their resilience.

For more information about Creative Pinellas events and opportunities, visit www.CreativePinellas.org.

INDIAN ROCKS HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Submitted by Nan Jensen

The museum is open and welcoming visitors. The hours of operation are 10am-2pm, Wednesday through Saturday. We are located at 203 4th Avenue across from the post office.

The museum will host a covered dish luncheon on April 5th beginning at noon. We can guarantee delicious food and an engaging speaker, Robert Griffin, who will share how the beach community towns were named. We ask those who want to attend the luncheon to bring a dish to share with the group.

We are looking for donations of memorabilia, artifacts, and photos of Indian Rocks Beach. If you want to donate items, contact us by email at Info@IRBMuseum.com or call (727) 593-3861 and leave a message.

The museum is looking for volunteers to serve as hosts during our open hours. Training will be provided. Contact Carol McGlaughlin at (727) 420-8662 if you are interested in becoming a volunteer.

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