

# NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

including Sand Key and Island Estates

Magazine

## THE HOWARD FRANKLAND BRIDGE AND THE MAN BEHIND IT



By Pete Magnani, Publisher

**W**illiam 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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Drones are now being used to deliver packages in Florida.

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

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

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**PUBLISHERS**

Lora and Pete Magnani

**ART DIRECTION**

Pete Magnani

**SALES**

Lora Magnani  
(813) 361-7376

**CONTACT INFO**

P.O. Box 2628  
Dunedin, FL 34698  
(813) 239-6862

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**CLEARWATER BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS**

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

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

We hope you enjoy our magazine and we want your input. Did you like this issue? What suggestions do you have for future articles? Call or email us with your comments, or take our online survey at [BeachNewsletters.com](http://BeachNewsletters.com).

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

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

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<b>STATE:</b>	
Senator Ed Hooper,	727-771-2102
Republican, District 21	
3450 East Lake Road Ste 305, Palm Harbor	
Hooper.Ed.web@flsenate.gov	
Senator Nick DiCeglie	850-487-5018
Republican, Dist. 18	
3637 Fourth St. N., Ste 101 St. Pete	
DiCeglie.Nick.web@flsenate.gov	
Rep. Kimberly Berfield	727-216-6035
Republican, District 58	
2189 Cleveland St. Suite 229	
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Governor Ron DeSantis	
Ron.DeSantis@myflorida.com	
<b>FLORIDA UNITED STATES SENATORS:</b>	
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**CALENDAR OF HOLIDAYS & EVENTS**

**APRIL**

April Fools Day	1
Pascua Florida Day	2
City Council Meeting	3
Threshers Home Opener	4
Dunedin Highland Games	5
Mercado Park Grand Opening	6
Tampa Bay Blues Fest	10-13
Sugar Sand Festival	11-27
Chicago at the Sound	11
Rowdies Home Opener	12
Market Marie	12
Ukelele Fest Downtown	12-13
Air Supply at the Sound	13
Income Taxes Due	15
Easter Festival at DK Farms	18-20
Classic Car Show Heritage Village	19
Patriots Day	19
Easter Breakfast CMA	19
St.Pete Renaissance Fair Begins	19
Public Schools Closed	18-21
Easter Sunday	20
Earth Day	22
Arbor Day	25
Shredathon at Countryside Mall	26

**MAY**

City Council Meeting	1
Stone Crab Season Ends	1
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
AC/DC at Raymond James	16
Armed Forces Day	17
150th Preakness Stakes	17
Safe Boating Week	17-23
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](http://CMAquarium.org).

**WASH YOUR HANDS** Stomach bugs have surged nationwide in recent months, with Florida ranking second in the country for confirmed norovirus cases. Outbreaks are most common from November to April, however this season started early in Florida, with twenty-four confirmed outbreaks between September 1st and October 31st. Norovirus cases generally peak between December and March.

The virus spreads easily, often in enclosed environments such as cruise ships, day care centers, and nursing homes. Eating contaminated foods, touching infected surfaces and then your mouth, or direct contact with an infected person are the most common modes of transmission.

There is no specific treatment for norovirus, but doctors recommend hydrating with water or sports drinks and avoiding caffeine and alcohol. Frequent hand washing with soap and water is the best way to reduce the risk of contracting the virus.

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

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# 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

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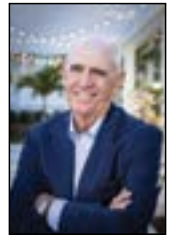
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## WHAT KEEPS ME UP AT NIGHT?

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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### 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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# 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](http://SoulMediterraneanCuisine.com).

**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.

**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](mailto:Lora@MagriffProductions.com) or call (813) 361-7376.

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### MAYOR'S UPDATE

By Mayor Bruce Rector

Spring continues to be the favorite time of year for many to visit Clearwater. Our community is full of festivals, music, events, major-league baseball and many fun activities. We are happy to have many visitors and seasonal residents returning to Clearwater this year and welcome their support for our tourism industry, local businesses and the thousands of families they employ.

The BayCare Sound and Coachman Park continue to grow. We have a wide diversity of music talent performing over the next couple of months. We continue to get rave reviews from both performers and visitors on the quality of their experience at the BayCare Sound. In addition, the Green at Coachman Park is hosting a variety of events. The nationally televised Purina Incredible Dog Challenge returns to the Green this April 11-12th. Movies, music and festivals and many family-friendly activities are also regularly taking place on the Green. The Clearwater Ferry is also now operating again to shuttle beach residents and visitors to and from Coachman Park and Downtown Clearwater.

Clearwater is one of 1,500 communities that participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. Our city team works hard to get our residents discounts on flood insurance premiums. Clearwater's Community Rating improved to a five from a six, as of October 1st, which resulted in a 25-percent discount that residents receive on their flood insurance.

One of our favorite events of the year is the annual Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival that kicks off on April 11th and runs for 17 days. The festival has grown over the years to include not just phenomenal sand sculptures, but also live music, demonstrations and competitions.

Construction continues across Clearwater Beach to make our extraordinary home better than ever. Some projects like the already popular pickleball courts at McKay Park and the impressive Opal Sol Resort are now completed. The Clearwater Beach Marina renovations and Memorial Causeway improvement and resurfacing projects continue to progress as scheduled. Temporary lane closures on both the causeway and Coronado Drive were recently removed. Thank you for your patience with the inconvenience during these significant construction projects.

We are always striving as a city to become more closely connected, create more community conversations regarding our mutual challenges and opportunities, and to share thoughts as to how we can make Clearwater shine brighter than ever. Please reach out to me at [Bruce.Rector@Clearwater.com](mailto:Bruce.Rector@Clearwater.com) to share your ideas or concerns.



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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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# 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 currently 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 is 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 will retract the line, ascend vertically to a cruise altitude, and return 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 deliver 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.

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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](https://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](mailto:Info@OurChildrenHaveRights.com) or visit [OCHR.org](https://OCHR.org).

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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 Nort Fort Myers Beach through their build partners. Visit [SeasafeHomes.com](http://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](http://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](http://MercedesLockeHypnotherapy.com) and book a free phone consultation today.

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# Community News

## 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](http://ShepherdsVillage.com/Gala).

Interested in sponsorships? Contact Candice Ross, Donor Development Manager at [candice@shepherdsvillage.com](mailto:candice@shepherdsvillage.com)

## CLEARWATER GARDEN CLUB

Upcoming Events:

Tuesday April 1st – Please Renew your Membership. Find the Zeffy payment Link at [ClearwaterGardenClub.com](http://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](http://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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# 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](http://www.CreativePinellas.org).

## CHAPEL BY THE SEA

Join them on Easter Sunday in the newly remodeled sanctuary for Easter services, as well as an Easter egg hunt for the kids. There is a 7am sunrise service in the courtyard, an 8:30am and 10am traditional service, followed by the Easter egg hunt.

Visit [ChapelByTheSea.net](http://ChapelByTheSea.net) for more information.

## WE WANT TO PRINT YOUR NEWS

Does your organization have news you would like to see printed here? Community News is always free! We would like to promote your upcoming events, anniversaries, and other important information. Send your information to [Pete@MagriffProductions.com](mailto:Pete@MagriffProductions.com).

## 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](http://Pinellas.Gov/dog-parks).










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# Community News

## ISLAND ESTATES WOMENS CLUB

Submitted by C. Genovese, IEWC Publicity Chair

The Island Estates Women's Club (IEWC) held its Annual Scholarship Fundraiser Luncheon and Fashion Show on March 18th at the prestigious Belleair Country Club. It was an afternoon of elegance, entertainment, and philanthropy dedicated to raising funds for IEWC's esteemed college scholarship program.

The annual luncheon is a cornerstone event for the IEWC, reflecting their unwavering commitment to empowering young women through education. The beautifully curated fashion show by Pool Side, Inc. was held while guests enjoyed a gourmet luncheon and contributed to the noble cause.

The primary goal of the fundraiser is to generate funds for the IEWC college scholarship program. Established in 1997, the program has been instrumental in supporting young women graduating from Clearwater High School. Over the past decades, more than 120 scholarships have been awarded to deserving students, providing them with the financial means to pursue higher education and achieve their academic dreams.

Scholarships are awarded based on a comprehensive evaluation of the applicants' academic achievements, extracurricular involvement, leadership qualities, and financial need. The deadline for applications was March 28th, and the award recipients will be announced soon and recognized at the IEWC May lunch.

In addition to the fashion show, there was a silent auction and raffle, offering attendees the chance to bid on an array of exclusive items and experiences, from luxury vacations to unique artworks. As of this writing, the fundraising totals were still being calculated.

## 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](http://CommunityDTLClinic.org) for more information.

## CLEARWATER COMMUNITY WOMAN'S CLUB

GFWC Clearwater Community Woman's Club (CCWC)

presented a check for \$30,000 to Feeding Tampa Bay during the club's holiday luncheon held on December 17th at Belleair Country Club. This donation supported the creation of a food pantry in a



Clearwater elementary school. Feeding Tampa Bay's Feeding Minds Program opens school food pantries to bring fresh groceries and nutrient-rich meals to children and families in areas with a high risk of food insecurity. The donation from CCWC was part of the club's 2023-2025 Children's Food Insecurity initiative, which includes working with Feeding Tampa Bay, Pinellas County Schools, and other local non-profit organizations that target food insecurity in Clearwater.

One in four children is food insecure across Tampa Bay and the hurricanes last fall worsened this crisis.

CCWC partnered with Feeding Tampa Bay, a member of the Feeding America network that works across the US to address food insecurity and build a hunger-free America, to increase school food pantries in Clearwater.

CCWC is a volunteer organization dedicated to improving the quality of life in Clearwater for more than 50 years. For more information on CCWC and children's food insecurity, visit [ccwcFlorida.org](http://ccwcFlorida.org). To learn more about Feeding Tampa Bay and how they serve the 10 counties across West Central Florida, visit [feedingtampabay.org](http://feedingtampabay.org).

## 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](http://SugarSandFestival.com) for more information and to purchase tickets.



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