DUNEDIN
NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS
Magazine
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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2026 ISSUE 17

The Seminole Wars: Florida's Longest Conflict

By Bob Griffin, Local Historian

Cities, counties, lakes, rivers, a major college football team, and even a casino carry the Seminole name. It gives the impression that Floridians and the Seminole people have always lived together peacefully.

In truth, that was far from life during the 1800s. Estimates suggest that between 5,000 and 20,000 Seminoles lived in Florida at the time, although census counts excluded Native peoples. These numbers came mainly from military sources and are approximate.

The Seminole Wars, also known as the Florida Wars, roughly occurred during the first half of that century and saw the Seminole Nation and the Federal government in many violent conflicts.

Historians and military leaders still debate the precise beginning of the First Seminole War. Prior to open conflict, both sides engaged in deadly skirmishes that claimed the lives of hundreds of Seminole warriors, U.S. soldiers, and civilians.

The Seminole Wars were three major military conflicts between the United States and the Seminoles, spanning roughly from 1817 to 1858. Understanding the political and cultural landscape before the First Seminole War is essential to understanding the wars themselves.

Billy Bowlegs, Seminole warrior

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Also in this Issue:

Driverless Taxis

Waymo's driverless taxis have arrived in the Tampa Bay area, but commercial rides will not happen just yet.

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McMullen Oil Company

The McMullens are one of Pinellas County's earliest settlers and have been providing oil products to county residents since 1930.

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A Legacy of Fellowship and Service

Dunedin's three Rotary clubs embrace the motto of "Service Above Self."

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DUNEDIN NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS MAGAZINE

Inside, you will find articles and local information about the nearby area. We call it Neighborhood News because it is primarily about our neighborhood, Dunedin. This magazine is printed every other month and direct mailed.

Do you need another copy? Ask for them at the Chamber of Commerce, History Museum, Community Center, Library, and the UPS on Main St. We hope you enjoyed our magazine. We want your input. Did you like this issue? What suggestions do you have for future articles? Call or email us.

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

Thank you for reading,

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SEE YOU AGAIN IN MARCH

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CALENDAR OF HOLIDAYS & EVENTS

As always, this is subject to change. Please verify dates and times.

JANUARY

New Year's Day	1
First Friday Lunch Market Coachman	2
Ringling Brothers Circus	2-4
Holiday Lights in the Gardens Ends	3
Dunedin Craft Festival	3-4
Public School Starts	5
Epiphany	6
World's Largest Duck Coachman	9-26
NFL Wildcard Games Begin	10-11
Harlem Globetrotters at USF	11
FL RV Supershow Fairgrounds	13-18
Florida's Arbor Day	16
Treasure Island Kite Festival	16-18
St. Pete Power and Sailboat Show	16-19
NFL Division Championships	17-18
Tampa Bay Frogman Swim Gandy	18
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NCAA Football Championship	19
Dunedin Int'l Film Festival	22-25
Gasparilla Children's Parade	24
Pinellas Medieval Fair DK Farms	24
Pinellas Park TacoFest	24-25
NFL Conference Championships	25
Gasparilla Pirate Fest	31

FEBRUARY

Groudhog Day	2
Florida State Fair Begins	5
Dunedin Pipe Band Bar Crawl	7
St. Pete Fine Art Festival	7-8
Super Bowl LX	8
Wild Iris Cafe Five Year Party	12
Helle Hansen Sailing Regatta	13-15
Sant Yago Knight Parade Ybor	14
Rays Fan Fest St. Pete Pier	15
Fat Tuesday	15
President's Day	16
Chinese New Year Begins	17
Ramadan Begins	17
Ash Wednesday	18
The Honu's Ten Year Party	20-21
MLB Spring Training Begins	20
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Blue Jays Spring Home Opener	23
Raising Relief Poker Tourney	25
Phillies Spring Home Opener	25
Strawberry Festival Begins	26
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Styx and Cheap Trick at the Sound	27
Clearwater Sea-Blues at the Sound	28-1

More details for items highlighted in red can be found in the Bar/Restaurant News, Business Briefs, Community News or Holiday Events Sections

Did You Know

CLEARWATER GOES DUCKING CRAZY

A 6-story-tall inflatable icon is taking over Coachman Park in Downtown Clearwater from January 9th-26th.

"Mama Duck," a 6-story-tall inflatable public art piece, is nesting in Clearwater and bringing along "Timmy," her 10-foot-tall baby duck, who will be making pop-up appearances at local businesses throughout the month.

Events include the "Duck Dash 5K" fun run on January 11th, "Rubber Ducky's Birthday Bash" on January 17th, and the "Duck and Drive Jeep Invasion" on January 24th.

For more information, visit MyClearwater.com or VisitStPeteClearwater.com.

NO MORE FREE RIDES The Freebee loop service ended when the contract expired on December 21st. The City Commission determined that the $219,000 expense was not warranted in a challenging budget year. The city applied for numerous grants to help cover the annual cost, but none were approved, leaving the city to cover the entire cost from the general fund. Ridership never reached the anticipated volumes, even with an added on-demand option.

SPECIALTY PLATES Over 2 million Florida drivers have a specialty license plate, celebrating everything from their alma mater to their favorite sports team or commemorating their military service.

The big picture: Here are the top five most popular specialty plates in Florida as of October 1st, according to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

- Endless Summer (142,999)
- Helping Sea Turtles Survive (112,996)
- University of Florida (93,347)
- Miami Heat (88,805)
- Florida State University (69,407)

Tampa Bay's popular plates: The Tampa Bay Buccaneers-themed plate is number one across our eight counties, with nearly 40,000 registered.

- Endless Summer (34,905) is second
- Helping Sea Turtles Survive (26,055) is third
- University of Florida (20,639) is fourth
- Save the Manatee (16,724) is fifth

and More...

SUGAR SAND FESTIVAL RETURNS

The countdown is officially on! Just one month until tickets go on sale for the 2026 Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival presented by Visit St. Pete-Clearwater. More than 1,000 tons of Clearwater Beach sand will be transformed into a stunning sand sculpture museum featuring the theme, "United in Sand: Celebrating Sports & Spirit!" The Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival returns to Clearwater Beach March 27th - April 12th.

SLOW DOWN Last month, the Florida Department of Transportation announced a speed limit reduction in two construction work zones on the Howard Frankland Bridge and its Pinellas County approach. The zones are Interstate 275 from 38th Avenue North to 4th Street North (previously 65 MPH) and the Howard Frankland Bridge between Pinellas and Hillsborough counties (previously 60 MPH).

The new speed limit will be 55 MPH in both work zones. The speed reduction will help ensure a consistent and clear speed for all drivers along the I-275 corridor throughout each project area.

Once complete, the new bridge will consist of eight lanes: four general-use lanes and four express lanes, and a new shared-use pathway separated from the roadway for pedestrians and cyclists.

ATM SCAM If you are at an automated teller machine and cannot put your card in because it is jammed, go to another location. There is a new scam where suspects have intentionally jammed ATM machines with quarters, metal, or paper so that people cannot access them. Then the suspects - posing as good Samaritans - offer to help by showing them how to use the tap function instead of inserting your card. They take your card, tap it, switch it out with another stolen card, and hand it back to you, while also memorizing your PIN. Then the suspects head out to other locations to use your card and steal your money.

CLEARWATER SEA-BLUES FESTIVAL The annual Clearwater Sea-Blues Festival returns to Coachman Park on Saturday, February 28th and Sunday, March 1st. Jam out to soul-stirring music from national recording artists, shop local market vendors and enjoy delectable seafood, craft beer and wine from local businesses at Coachman Park.
The Clearwater Sea-Blues Festival presented by Visit St. Pete-Clearwater is a free event. Tickets are not necessary for general admission. For those looking to elevate their experience, VIP tickets and reserved seating are both available. Visit Facebook.com/ClearwaterSeaBlues for more information and tickets.

The Seminole Wars, Continued

Historically, Florida was home to many Indigenous peoples—including the Calusa, Apalachee, and Timucua. The modern Seminole and Miccosukee peoples mostly descend from Native Americans who migrated south during the 18th and 19th centuries to escape conflict with the U.S. government, American settlers, and rival tribes.

Most early Seminoles were Lower Creek Indians from Georgia and Alabama. Spain controlled Florida from 1513 to 1821, except for a brief time from 1763 to 1783 when Great Britain ruled the territory.

During the 1700s, Great Britain also controlled North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Settlers in these colonies frequently clashed with Native Americans over land and hunting rights. Between 1716 and 1767, many Lower Creeks migrated into Florida, reaching as far south as modern-day Tampa Bay, because, the Spanish welcomed Creek Indians and runaway slaves into their territory," La Florida." They offered land grants and traded heavily with them to support Spanish missions.

The Spanish referred to the diverse group as cimarrones, meaning "runaways," "wild ones," or "the untamed." British settlers, mispronounced cimarrón, as" Seminoles." The people though still themselves identified as Creeks, Miccosukees, and members of related tribes.

The French and Indian War was 1754–1763. When it ended, Native Americans lost many land rights and Spain ceding La Florida to Great Britain
During the Revolutionary War, Britain used Native Americans to fight colonists, causing lasting tensions between American settlers and Native tribes. At the end of the war Great Britain returned Florida to Spain.

The Louisiana Purchase added vast lands to the United States. The U.S. assumed it included West Florida. France claimed the western Panhandle; Spain disagreed.
Georgia volunteers began crossing into Spanish Florida to attack towns and Seminole villages, trying to seize land for the United States. Colonel Daniel Newman's soldiers assisted, burning farms and villages before being driven out by the Seminoles.

Meanwhile, many Native Americans sided with the British in the land disputes. Andrew Jackson—living in Nashville—was ordered to fight the Muscogee tribes in the Creek War (1813–1814).In the Battle of Horseshoe Bend (1814), Jackson's forces killed approximately 800 Creek Red Sticks. The name derived from the red-painted war clubs they cared. Jackson then compelled the Creeks to sign the Treaty of Fort Jackson, surrendering large portions of southern Georgia and Alabama causing thousands of Creeks to flee into West Florida.

Over 1,000 Native Americans lived in West Florida after the battle, including 700 warriors. The British built Fort Prospect on the Apalachicola River, and at the end of the War of 1812, they left the fort—along with food, weapons, and ammunition—to Creek refugees and free or formerly enslaved Black residents. Americans named it "Negro Fort."

The treaty ending the War of 1812 included a clause restoring Creek land, but the United States ignored it. American officials also feared Negro Fort would inspire enslaved people to revolt or flee south.

In early 1816, Jackson ordered the fort to be seized. A confrontation followed. When a U.S. supply boat approached the fort, Black defenders fired warning shots. A U.S. cannon struck the fort's ammunition magazine, the ensuing explosion killed more than 270 of the 335 occupants—mostly Black families. It was described as "the single deadliest cannon shot in American history."

As tensions escalated between the Americans at Fort Scott (present-day Decatur County, Georgia) and the Mikasuki community of Fowltown. Chief Neamathla ("Fat Warrior") asserted sovereignty over the area, citing the Treaty of Fort Jackson. In November 1817, 250 soldiers were ordered to seize Fowltown. About 60 Mikasuki warriors drove them back. The U.S. returned with 300 men, burned Fowltown, seizing crops and killing six or eight Native Americans and one American soldier. Historians often cite this attack as the true beginning of the First Seminole War (1817–1818).

A week later, Native warriors attacked a U.S. supply boat on the Apalachicola River. Most of the passengers—soldiers and families—were either killed or captured. Washington responded by ordering troops invade Florida to pursue hostile groups, but to avoid Spanish forts.

Meanwhile, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams was quietly negotiating to purchase Florida from Spain. The Secretary of War John C. Calhoun assigned the mission to Andrew Jackson, who accepted December 26, 1817.

A turning point came when General Andrew Jackson arrived in Florida in March 1818. After that, the war moved rapidly. Jackson called for volunteers and militia forces, assembling more than 4,800 men: 800 U.S. Army regulars, 1,000 volunteers from Tennessee, 1,000 volunteers from Georgia, and 1,500 allied Upper Creek warriors under General William McIntosh. These forces gathered at Fort Scott. They faced roughly 1,000 Seminole warriors and 300 Black allies who were formerly enslaved people that sought refuge among the Seminole.

On March 15, Jackson's army began a sweeping march through northwest Florida. Following the Apalachicola River, they moved toward the site of the destroyed Negro Fort. Jackson ordered a small contingent to rebuild it as Fort Gadsden. From there, he advanced toward the Lake Miccosukee region (northeast of present-day Tallahassee) and attacked several Mikasuki villages.

On March 31, Jackson assaulted the Seminole town of Anhaica, located where Tallahassee stands today. The next day, he captured the nearby town of Miccosuki.

By early April, Jackson turned south toward St. Marks (San Marcos), directly below the Anhaica area. There he found a small Spanish fort. Jackson explained he was a friend of Spain but insisted the fort was harboring Seminoles and escaped slaves. Jackson took the fort the next day without resistance. Leaving a garrison there, he continued to march east attacking Seminole towns along the Suwannee River, including Old Town, which still exists today.

On April 12, Jackson declared victory. He wrote to Washington stating that peace had been achieved and his mission completed.

While traveling between Fort St. Marks and Fort Gadsden, Jackson heard rumors that the Spanish in Pensacola were supplying Seminole fighters with weapons from Cuba. Although he had declared victory a month before, in early May, he left Fort Gadsden with 1,000 men heading west. He reached Spanish-held Pensacola on May 23, where only 175 Spanish soldiers remained. On May 28, the Governor of West Florida surrendered without a fight.

Before departing, Jackson placed Colonel William King in charge as Military Governor of West Florida—even though the United States did not yet officially own the territory.

Jackson then returned to Nashville and informed President Monroe that he was retiring from public service. Of course, Andrew Jackson later became President of the United States, serving from 1829 to 1837.

And so, the First Seminole War ended as abruptly as it began, just scarcely two and a half months. Yet in reality, the conflict marked only the beginning of a far larger struggle. In Washington, officials continued to speak of what they called "the Indian problem" in Florida—a problem they worried had not yet been solved.

To be continued in the next issue.

ROTARY CLUBS OF DUNEDIN

By Commissioner Rob Walker

Dunedin, with its 38,000 residents, proudly supports three Rotary clubs — the Rotary Club of Dunedin, the Rotary Club of Dunedin North, and the Rotary Club of Dunedin Waterside. Far from a coincidence, this reflects a community deeply committed to service. Whether members prefer breakfast, lunch, or happy hour meeting, there's a place for everyone to engage and make a difference. Together, these clubs embody the Rotary spiridt that connects people across generations, professions, and cultures.

Rotary International's enduring motto, "Service Above Self," captures the essence of what it means to be a Rotarian. Across the globe, 1.4 million Rotarians unite under this mission to make a lasting difference in the world. From eradicating polio — a campaign led by Rotary and now on the brink of complete success — to bringing clean drinking water to communities in need, Rotarians are driven by compassion and collaboration. Rotary also supports medical research, including efforts to combat dementia and Alzheimer's disease, and fosters peace and understanding through youth exchanges, education, and international partnerships.

Wherever you travel, the saying holds true: If you meet a Rotarian, you've found a friend.

Our Rotary clubs are an integral part of the fabric of our community, demonstrating how local service reflects global values. One of Rotary's hallmark initiatives include the Peace Pole Project at the Dunedin Community Center — inscribed with "May Peace Prevail on Earth" in multiple languages — symbolizing unity amid diversity.

Dunedin Rotary clubs are champions of youth development, providing scholarships to Dunedin High School students and supporting leadership programs such as Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) and Interact. Following the devastating impacts of Hurricanes Debbie, Helene, and Milton, members worked side by side with residents and first responders to aid in recovery and rebuilding efforts.

Other projects, such as Rotary on the Dunedin Causeway, unite all three local clubs in preserving and enhancing the scenic bridge linking Dunedin to Honeymoon Island, one of Florida's coastal treasures. Veterans' initiatives, community partnerships, and humanitarian outreach remain cornerstones of the club's identity — celebrating service, resilience, and the enduring Dunedin spirit.

Rotary's timeless ethical guide — the Four-Way Test — asks of all that we think, say, or do:

1. Is it the truth?
2. Is it fair to all concerned?
3. Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned — and, as Dunedin Rotarians like to add, is it fun?

Together, these principles ensure that Rotary doesn't just build programs — it builds community. Through service, compassion, and friendship, the Rotary Club of Dunedin keeps Dunedin the warm, connected city it has always been — and always will be.

I am proud to be this year's President of the Rotary Club of Dunedin North, and I have been fortunate to serve with such committed and passionate members who embrace "Service Above Self" and are truly making a difference in the world. I strongly encourage anyone that is interested in checking out our Dunedin Rotary clubs to experience the fellowship and serve a common purpose.

Bar & Restaurant News

CELEBRATING TEN YEARS
The Honu Restaurant and Tiki Bar, at 516 Grant Street, will be celebrating their "Big Ten" anniversary on the weekend of February 20th-21st.
On Friday the 20th, they will have vendors from 3-8pm, and at 5pm they will have a mug release from Tiki Diablo. At 7pm, there will be live music, and a luau show and luau plate.
On Saturday the 21st, they will have vendors from noon-6pm. Big Tiki & The Mai Tais will perform from 3-6pm and The Sandy Bottom Boys will be on stage from 7-10pm. There will be luau food and drink specials. There are no reservations, seating is first available.

Co-Owner Kimberly Platt looks back on where it all began: "I met my wife Lisa years ago when we worked in an Italian Restaurant in Largo. Lisa went into the military and did a tour in Afghanistan. When she came home, we spent a lot of time in Hawaii. While getting our degrees, we bought a food truck which we ran for three years. We opened Honu in 2016, and have survived through Covid, multiple Hurricanes, and a lot of other challenges.

For more information, call (727) 333-7777 or visit TheHonuRestaurant.com. Follow them on Facebook and Instagram.

BAUSERWEEN Rescue Not Retail Dunedin (RNR) partnered with Bauser's Neighborhood Bar, at 520 Douglas Avenue, to host Bauserween 2025. The "Nightmare Before Christmas" themed charity event brought the community together raising money to support RNR's mission of providing veterinary services, food, and pet supplies with a special focus on veterans and their service animals. Bauser's owner Janet Bausert pledged thirty percent of the bar's profits from the day to the rescue. They had a dunk tank, where patrons could pay to dunk one of seven local bartenders from the neighboring bars. Mike from Simon's Pub, at 608 Union Street, took home first place with the most money raised. The dunk tank raised $2,500 for RNR.

The Community Bark Box at Bauser's was launched in 2023, offering an anonymous resource for free pet food, toys, leashes, and more to those struggling to provide for their pets. Bauser's is located at 520 Douglas Avenue. Visit Bausers.com and RNRDunedin.com for more information on to help.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY The Wild Iris Café at 434 Virginia Lane will be celebrating their five-year anniversary on Thursday, February 12th. Starting at noon, they will have live music (at least two national acts) with drink specials and more.

Owner Jody Pucello reflects on the café and how it began: "Before COVID I was working for the New York Mets as an equipment manager for their AAA team in Syracuse. After the end of the 2019 season, I came to spend the winter in Dunedin, where I had been a resident and homeowner for many years. Then COVID hit, baseball was canceled, and New York shut down. I decided that if I was going to be stuck somewhere it was going to be beautiful Dunedin. I decided to get back into the restaurant business in Downtown Dunedin, and rest is history!"

Wild Iris has been home to many Hallmark movies and short films, and on January 15th, the streaming television show "Florida Eats" will be filmed at the café, one of the featured restaurants chosen out of 14 thousand in Florida.

Follow them on Facebook for more details on their upcoming events and specials.

DRIVERLESS TAXIS HAVE ARRIVED

By Pete Magnani, Publisher

Waymo LLC's self-driving taxis have arrived in the Tampa Bay area. The Google subsidiary has begun training routes with human "specialists" operating vehicles on city streets to learn local traffic patterns, pedestrian behavior, and other environmental conditions. Waymo plans to expand service to Orlando and other Central Florida municipalities later this year.

The company launched driverless taxi service in Arizona in 2022 and now operates full commercial service in select areas of Arizona, California, Georgia, and Texas, with testing underway in eleven additional states. Waymo is part of a rapidly growing field of autonomous transportation companies, including Amazon's Zoox and Tesla's Robotaxi.

Self-driving cars, or autonomous vehicles (AVs), are capable of operating with reduced or no human input. They manage all core driving tasks: sensing the environment, controlling the vehicle, monitoring internal systems, and navigation. The concept traces back to the 16th century, when Leonardo da Vinci designed a self-propelled cart powered by unwinding springs.

Source: Waymo

Modern AV development began in the 1950s, when General Motors equipped test vehicles with radar. Advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS) entered production cars in the 1970s with the introduction of anti-lock brakes—a precursor to today's collision-avoidance technologies such as blind-spot monitoring, electronic stability control, lane-departure warnings, and adaptive cruise and traction control.

The first semi-autonomous car was developed in 1977 by the Tsukuba Mechanical Engineering Laboratory in Japan. It navigated specially marked roads using two cameras feeding an onboard computer. U.S. AV research accelerated in 1984 when the Department of Defense funded Carnegie Mellon University's Navlab, fueling breakthroughs in speed management, collision avoidance, and night and off-road driving.

Google began AV development in 2009, outfitting 100 Toyota Priuses with digital mapping technology that incorporated Google Street View imagery. Waymo later spun off as a standalone company and began testing vehicles without safety drivers in 2017. In 2020, the company launched road tests in a geofenced area of Phoenix, with remote engineers able to intervene if necessary.

Waymo vehicles use an integrated hardware suite that includes sensors, cameras, radar, and lidar. These systems provide 360-degree visibility, with lidar detecting objects as far as 980 feet away. Short-range lidar monitors the area near the vehicle, while radar helps detect objects obscured by other cars and tracks movement. Waymo currently relies on modified Jaguar I-Pace vehicles and plans to introduce Hyundai Ioniq 5 and Zeekr RT models. AV-specific hardware adds about $100,000 to the cost of each vehicle.

Riders start trips using a button and have optional "help," "lock," and "pull over" controls. A passenger may sit in the front right seat, and an onboard display shows real-time sensor data, including nearby pedestrians. The steering wheel moves as the car drives autonomously. As of April 2025, Waymo reports more than 100 million fully autonomous miles driven and over 450,000 paid rides per week.

Despite rapid growth, AVs face ongoing scrutiny. NHTSA crash data shows 1,160 incidents involving Waymo vehicles between 2021 and August 2025. These incidents involved, but were not necessarily caused by, AVs. The dataset includes one fatality and 78 injuries—four serious, eight moderate, and 66 minor.

Last year, Waymo issued a voluntary software recall after Texas officials documented ten cases in which its vehicles illegally passed stopped school buses, some with lights flashing and stop arms extended. The Austin Independent School District asked the company to halt operations near schools during pickup and drop-off times. Waymo deployed updated software, but violations continued through December.

Two pet fatalities in San Francisco—in October and December—also raised concerns about the vehicles' ability to reliably detect smaller animals. According to NHTSA, Waymo AVs have been involved in at least 14 animal collisions since 2021.

Driver-assistance technologies requiring human oversight have also faced criticism. Tesla's Autopilot and Full Self-Driving (FSD) systems, which still require attentive drivers, have been tied to 65 fatalities between 2013 and October 2025, according to NHTSA data.

AV advocates argue that overall safety benefits outweigh isolated incidents. Waymo cites data indicating its vehicles are associated with 91% fewer serious-injury crashes than human-driven cars, as well as 92% fewer pedestrian injuries, 89% fewer motorcycle injury crashes, and 78% fewer cyclist injuries.

Tampa's Mayor Jane Castor supports the expansion, stating, "Welcoming Waymo's self-driving taxis to our streets marks another step toward a safer, smarter, and more connected city. Innovation can improve people's daily lives, and this technology has the potential to do just that—expanding transportation options while reducing crashes and congestion."

No date has been announced for the start of driverless commercial taxi service in Tampa Bay.

Business Briefs

NEW MENSWEAR SHOP DOWNTOWN

Black & Glen is a new elevated menswear boutique created for the modern man who values quality, fit, and effortless sophistication. Located in the heart of Dunedin, the shop blends timeless British style with contemporary Florida ease, offering curated apparel and accessories built to last.

Founded by Neil Brown and Tina Taylor—partners in life and in adventure—Black & Glen reflects their shared love of travel, craftsmanship, and superior design. Neil, born in Scotland, is an Army veteran with a long career at Deloitte; Tina is a successful HR entrepreneur with a keen eye for detail and experience developing people and brands. Together, they set out to bring thoughtful, well-made menswear to Dunedin—creating a space where every man can dress with confidence, personality, and polish.

Black and Glen is located at 735 Broadway. They are open Wedsnesday-Sunday from 10am-7pm. For more information, call (727) 332-5939 or visit BlackAndGlen.com.

TARGET IS COMING A portion of Countryside Mall, located at 27001 U.S Highway 19, near Whole Foods Market and Nordstrom Rack, has been acquired by Bradenton developer Benderson Development, for $28.5 million. When Whole Foods was built in 2014, they took over a portion of Sears. Sears completely vacated the mall in 2018, and that space acquired by the developer has been vacant since.

According to the city of Clearwater, a permit has been approved for a two-story, 140,000 square-foot Target. Construction began in December. There is no opening date set as of the printing of this magazine.

NEW GROCERY STORE COMING Aldi acquired Southeastern Grocers, the parent company of both Winn-Dixie and Harveys Supermarket as part of a $9 billion expansion plan set to unfold over five years and wrap up in 2028. The Winn-Dixie store at Keene road and Main Street is closing and will be rebranded as an Aldi Grocery Store.

Aldi is focused on efficiency and affordability, offering a curated mix of private-label groceries, fresh produce, organic options, and weekly limited-time specials. They are open seven days a week from 9am-8pm.

NEW REALTY COMPANY Patricia Harris opened a boutique real estate agency, Celtic Realty, in 2007, which quickly became a respected business in the community. She operated the business until her recent retirement, but that did not last long.

New opportunities and circumstances that prompted her to start another business in town, Patricia Harris Realty. She continues helping others navigate the process of purchasing or selling their home.

Patricia Harris Realty values honesty and integrity, and providing exceptional service to their clients. Patricia can be reached at PatriciaHarrisRealty@gmail.com and (727) 389-2618.

Community News

MEASE DUNEDIN VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENT

Submitted by Lauretta Fernandez

Do you want a fun, rewarding volunteer experience?

Mease Dunedin Hospital needs your help. We offer several opportunities throughout the hospital.

We need friendly people to greet and escort visitors at either the main hospital or the Physician's Office Building. Do you love retail and have a flair for displays? We need volunteers to help cover the gift shop and help us extend our hours.

Do you have a flair for floral arranging? We would like to hear from you. Do you enjoy thrifting? We have opportunities at the Tree House, our resale shop.

Do you love being out in the community? Our Carelift Van Transportation service may be for you. We provide free transportation to BayCare hospital campuses for those ambulatory members of our community that do not 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.

Ready to make a difference?

Volunteer Coordinators:

- Lauretta Fernandez – Lauretta.Fernandez@baycare.org (727) 734-6046
- Tina Huelsman - Tina.Huelsman@baycare.org (727) 734-6046

PAINT DUNEDIN PURPLE

Submitted by Patti Bryant

Save the date – on March 28th, we will once again Paint Dunedin Purple to raise funds and awareness on brain health for Alzheimer's. The streets will be decorated, windows painted, and businesses will provide unique purple items and specials with proceeds going to The Alzheimer's Association. We will have a variety of brain health awareness events, and once again the Brain Bus will be on site to answer questions.

New for 2026, we will "Do What We Love, To END Alzheimer's" by hosting a week of curated activities to bring awareness and raise funds for the cause. Whether it's a dog parade, bar crawl, drag bingo, game night, painting, or golf cart decorating, there is a purple event for you!

Last year, due to the community's generosity, we proudly raised over $38,000. With your help, we look to exceed this performance in 2026!

Stay tuned for exciting updates as our Squad is actively building the plan.

Visit Events.alz.org/fundraisers/pattibryant/paint-dunedin-purple to register.

THE HIDDEN TOLL OF ISOLATION

By Alison Ross Tompkins, Broker Associate for Coldwell Banker

As the holidays approach, many older adults feel the sting of loneliness. While others gather with loved ones, some seniors spend quiet days alone - feeling disconnected, bored, and forgotten. This isn't just emotionally painful - it can be physically harmful.

Loneliness and boredom can be as deadly as smoking.

Research shows that chronic isolation increases the risk of heart disease, depression, and cognitive decline. The effects are real - and they're serious.

Why the Holidays Feel Harder

This season often magnifies feelings of loss. Whether it's the absence of a spouse, children living far away, or fewer social connections, the holidays can feel more like a reminder of what's missing than a celebration.

You're not alone in feeling this way. Many older adults report increased sadness, anxiety, and even physical symptoms during the holidays. But there is hope - and there are options.

From Isolation to Connection

Imagine spending the holidays surrounded by friends, laughter, and meaningful activities. That's the reality for many who've moved to a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC). These vibrant communities offer festive events, shared meals, and opportunities to build lasting friendships.

Instead of watching the days go by, residents find purpose. They volunteer, travel, and participate in engaging programs. The change isn't just emotional - it's life-enhancing.

You Don't Have to Do It Alone

Making a move can feel overwhelming. That's why I've built a trusted transition network - a team of professionals who specialize in helping older adults navigate life changes with confidence. This includes:

- Estate and elder law attorneys
- Financial advisors
- Senior living consultants
- Professional organizers and movers
- Home inspectors and landscapers

Every conversation is confidential. You'll receive thoughtful advice, compassionate support, and expert guidance - every step of the way.

How Neighbors Can Help

If you know someone who may be feeling isolated this season, consider reaching out. A simple invitation to coffee, to a church service, a holiday card, or a warm conversation can make a world of difference. Small gestures build connections - support our community and remind others they're not alone.

Take the First Step Toward a Fuller Life

You deserve connection, joy, and vitality - not just during the holidays, but every day. Let's explore your options together.

Call today to learn more about local CCRCs or to speak with a Seniors Real Estate Specialist.

I'm available for an afternoon meeting or coffee at the Coldwell Banker office.

P.S. - Your next chapter could be your best chapter.

Alison Ross Tompkins, 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.

The McMullen Oil Company - A Family Tradition

By Bob Griffin, Local Historian

Everyone has seen fuel trucks running around the Tampa Bay area but what you may not know is that one of those companies belongs to a local family whose roots trace back to the first settlers of the county in the 1840s - when horses were the main form of transportation.

The McMullen Oil Company is owned by Paul McMullen and his family. Paul is a direct descendent of James Parramore McMullen, the first of the McMullen clan to settle here. Paul acquired this business from his father, Daniel (Guy) McMullen.
Guy McMullen started in the oil business in 1930, managing a corner gas station located at what was known as "Five Points," Gulf to Bay Boulevard at Cleveland Street. "This was when gas pumps were really pumps," says Paul. "The kind that had a glass tube at the top, and you pumped by hand." The gas station was owned and supplied by Standard Oil of Kentucky, part of the larger Standard Oil Company of Ohio. The company asked Guy McMullen to represent them in the Pinellas area, and he became a commissioned agent, establishing new gas stations working strictly on commission.

As he learned the business, Guy struck out on his own and started McMullen Oil in 1932, operating first in downtown Clearwater off Seminole Street, supplying oil, gas, and other products directly to area gas stations, and later homes and businesses.

Guy and his wife, Laura, had four children: Daniel Guy Jr., Paul, and twin sisters, Linda and Laura--the first twins ever born at Morton Plant Hospital.

As the hospital was not equipped for twins at that time, they were kept in an orange crate in the nursery. In an ironic twist of fate, it was their great grandfather James P. McMullen who had invented the orange crate years earlier.

Paul, Linda, and Laura also worked for their dad at McMullen Oil. Guy and Laura raised their family in the Safety Harbor area, with all four children following in their father's footsteps and graduating from Clearwater High School. "I worked in the company with my dad, helping build gas stations from the ground up," remembers Paul, now 86. "Later, I started driving the delivery trucks, learning all aspects of the business."

Eventually needing a larger facility, the company relocated to their present location off 49th Street and 118th Avenue North, in Clearwater.

Paul McMullen married Janet Wilson and moved into a house in Clearwater, where they raised two sons. Paul bought the oil company from his father in 1989, and along with his wife Janet, their sons, Brett and Paul Jr., their wives, and grandsons, Maverick and Austin--have been keeping the family business thriving. Today, the elder McMullen's have two sons, three grandkids, and three great grandchildren.

McMullen Oil continues to supply oil products to the Tampa Bay Area, as well as keeping its legacy in history alive. It is truly a family business. The company is located at 11965 49th Street North in Clearwater. They carry gasoline, diesel, VP race gas, oil, and grease. Their gas station at 118th Avenue yard carries 90, 91, and 93 non-ethanol gas and diesel at the pumps.

They are open to the public five days a week, from 6am-6pm. Oil and gas are also available for delivery. For more information, visit McMullenOil.com or call (727) 573-0016.

Community News

STIRLING ART STUDIOS & GALLERY

Submitted by Janice Kadushin

Our January Exhibit is The Tampa Area Professional Photography Association. The Second Saturday reception will be held January 10th from noon-3pm.

The February show is the Pastel Society of Tampa Bay with a Second Saturday reception on February 14th from noon-3pm.

Visit StirlingArtStudiosandGallery.com for more information.

THE INTERFAITH STORY CIRCLE

Submitted by Katie Green

The Interfaith Story Circle's January gathering will be hosted by the Clearwater Friends Meeting on Monday, January 19th at 7pm at La Femme Institute, located at 1150 County Road One in Palm Harbor. The theme will be Change.

The Interfaith Story Circle has been meeting monthly since March 2023. Nine local faith communities have hosted the Story Circle. The purpose of the group is to build community and mutual respect through storytelling.

Persons attending this group come from diverse spiritual backgrounds, including persons with no religious affiliation. Each gathering features two storytellers, and then the attendees form small groups and are invited to share their own stories on the theme.

You are welcome to come to listen or come to share a story. It is not unusual for a new attender to say, "I didn't expect to tell a story, but I did, and everyone listened!" Storytelling makes a heart-to-heart connection between people that promotes understanding and the awareness of our commonality. Storyteller Katie Green says that storytelling can, and does, change the world.

STUDIO 1212 ART GALLERY

Submitted by Colleen Baxter

Studio 1212 Art Gallery at 234 Monroe Street in Downtown Dunedin, Florida, opens the New Year with "Elements Of Line" Opening Reception on Sunday, January 11th from 1-4pm. Artists are taught to use the visual ingredients of the Elements of Art, and Studio 1212 is devoting this year's exhibits to the elements of line, shape, value, color, form, space and texture.

Join local award-winning artists to view their beginning through the elements and plan to follow their journey throughout the year with each new exhibit. Open Wednesdays through Sundays from 11am-3pm, this exhibition runs through February 22nd.

This charming boutique gallery also offers smaller art originals and prints, unique hand-made items such as jewelry, note cards, tote bags, journal notebooks and more. View additional art and gallery sponsored events at Studio1212.org.

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Alexis Honigbaum, MD, FAAD is a board-certified dermatologist specializing in medical and surgical dermatology. Originally from Massachusetts, she obtained her undergraduate degree from University of Miami and medical degree from Eastern Virginia Medical School. She then completed her Dermatology Residency at the University of South Florida, which eventually brought her back to the Tampa Bay Area and private practice.

She has been published in peer-reviewed journals, presented at national meetings, and was recognized in Newsweek's "America's Best Medical Dermatologists" in 2022. She is excited to join Dr. Nayyar and the team at Dermaclinique, where she looks forward to providing compassionate, high-quality dermatologic care to the community.

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