

# NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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Magazine

## The Artemis Program: Legacy of Human Space Exploration

By Pete Magnani, Publisher

The Artemis program is a Moon exploration initiative led by the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Its goal is to return humans to the lunar surface and establish a permanent presence there as a stepping stone for future human missions to deeper space. Florida has played a large role in this and all previous programs.

### The Early Space Race

During the Cold War, a space race began between the United States and the former Soviet Union, driving an unprecedented era of scientific exploration. The Soviets were first to send a human into space on April 12th, 1961. In response, President John F. Kennedy challenged the nation "to achieve the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to Earth."

### Project Mercury (1958–1963)

Project Mercury included 25 flights between 1958 and 1963, six of which carried astronauts. Its main objectives were to orbit a human spacecraft around Earth, study human performance in space, and safely recover both astronaut and spacecraft. More than two million people from government agencies and aerospace industries contributed their expertise to make the project possible. Mercury proved that humans could function in space for periods of up to 34 hours in weightlessness.



NASA's First Astronaut team, the Mercury "Original Seven." Front row, left to right, Walter M. Schirra, Jr., Donald K. Slayton, John H. Glenn, Jr., and M. Scott Carpenter; back row, Alan B. Shepard, Jr., Virgil I. "Gus" Grissom, and L. Gordon Cooper. (1962) Photo Courtesy of NASA and Life Magazine

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## Also in this Issue:



### Florida During the American Revolution

Although it was not one of the thirteen original colonies, Florida played a role in the birth of our nation.

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### The Importance of Recess

The nation's leading pediatricians released new guidance on the benefits of free time in school.

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### Pet of the Issue

Meet Yule, this month's pet of the issue. This 12 year-old Chinese Crested Chihuahua mix has defied medical odds and continues to enrich her family's life.

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BELLEAIR AREA NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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

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

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

Thank you for reading, Lora and Pete Magnani (813) 239-6862

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CALENDAR OF HOLIDAYS & EVENTS

As always, this is subject to change.

JUNE

- No Fertilizing June Through September 1
Hurricane Season Begins 1
Belleair Rec Summer Camps Begin 1
Red Bull Cliff Diving St Pete Pier 5-6
Belleair Bluffs Hurricane Expo 6
158th Belmont Stakes 6
D-Day Remembrance Day 6
Symphony by the Sea at the Sound 6
Corey Av Art & Craft Fest St Pete Beach 6
International Children's Day 8
23rd FIFA World Cup Begins 11
FIFA USA vs Paraguay 12
Tampa Bay Spearfishing Challenge 13
Flag Day 14
Vince Gill at Ruth Eckerd Hall 19
FIFA USA vs Australia 19
Father/Daughter Dance Ruth Eckerd 20
Father's Day 21
First Day of Summer 21
FIFA USA vs Turkey 25
St Pete Pride Weekend 26-28
Largo Evening Market 27
Wimbledon Begins 29



JULY

- National Postal Workers Day 1
Fourth of July 4
Clearwater Celebrates 250 3-4
Fireworks Largo Central Park 4
Fireworks at Coachman Park 4
Rock the Rocks Crabby Bill's 11
MLB Home Run Derby 13
MLB All-Star Game 14
Bastille Day 14
Parents' Day 26
The Black Keys at the Sound 28

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# Did You Know

### SALES TAX HOLIDAY

The Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday runs from August 1st-31st saving parents on supplies for the upcoming school year. Exempt items include clothing (\$100 or less), footwear (\$100 or less), wallets/bags (\$100 or less), school supplies (\$50 or less), learning aids/jigsaw puzzles (\$30 or less), and personal computers/accessories (\$1,500 or less). Visit FloridaRevenue.com for more information and a complete list of included items.



**AIRPORT IMPROVEMENTS** St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport (PIE) is currently rescoping the Terminal Improvement project to meet budget and infrastructure priorities. With the immediate need for additional parking, the Parking Garage project was prioritized in their Capital Improvement Plan.

The plan, approved last year, includes a 2,000-space parking garage to replace the 76-spot "Strawberry PIE" lot. The garage is expected to open in Summer 2027 along with a Terminal Improvement Project, with approximately \$110 million allocated for upgrades including more terminal seating and new jet bridges.

Terminal Improvement Design work is expected to resume soon. The work will involve improvements to the existing terminal building, as well as a terminal building expansion just north of baggage claim with jet bridges.

In other PIE news, Mark Sprague was named Director of St. Pete-Clearwater Airport. Sprague became the Deputy Director in 2015 and then the Interim Director in October of last year, where he guided strategic planning, oversaw daily and emergency operations and led construction planning for a new terminal building and parking structure.

**NO MORE FREE PARKING** Non-residents now must pay to park at public beach access points on Indian Rocks Beach. A six-month pilot program began in May to charge visitors in one of the last Pinellas beachfront communities to offer free parking.

Indian Rocks residents can still park for free while displaying a special permit obtained through the city's website. City officials say the funds generated will help with infrastructure improvements and rebuilding costs after the 2024 hurricanes.

ParkMobile machines have been installed in the beach access lots charging \$4.50 per hour for visitors. The fee will be enforced from 8am-10pm in public beach access points citywide. The new program also increased violation fines from \$75 to \$100.

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

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

# and More...



**CLEARWATER AQUARIUM UPDATES** Clearwater Marine Aquarium's (CMA) Nesting Team located its first sea turtle nest in Pinellas County last month. The CMA Sea Turtle Conservation Program monitors approximately 21 miles of beaches between Caladesi Island and Treasure Island with daily patrols starting before sunrise every day during the nesting season. As nesting sea turtles return to the coast and begin to emerge from the Gulf looking for a safe and suitable nesting site, CMA reminds everyone to please put away any beach furniture and other potential obstructions that may deter sea turtles, slow down on the water, and switch to sea turtle-friendly lighting to help ensure the survival of these endangered animals.

On a somber note, CMA announced the passing of Star, age 27. The Atlantic Bottlenose dolphin joined the CMA family in December 2025. Last month, Star appeared to show signs of discomfort requiring supportive care. CMA's veterinary team, animal care specialists, and independent outside experts evaluated and monitored her health around the clock. Despite their best efforts, Star's condition declined and she passed away on May 8th.

**FLORIDA LAGS IN TIPPING SERVERS** The Restaurant Trends Report, powered by Toast, a restaurant point-of-sale platform, uncovers key trends across the restaurant industry through aggregated sales data from approximately 140,000 bars and restaurants nationwide. According to the report, while declared tips at full-service restaurants rose slightly in 2025, Florida tied Nevada for third lowest tip rates in the country, with both states averaging 18.2 percent. California took first place of the worst with a 17.3 percent average and Washington state came in second with 17.8 percent. Delaware remained the best state for tipping for the second quarter in a row with an average of 22.1 percent.

**CLEARWATER BEACH MARINA UPDATE** Phase One of the project has been completed, which included the demolition and rebuilding of the west side of the marina. Tourism boating operations are now in their new slips along Coronado Drive. The fishing fleet and dinner boats are currently in temporary locations but continue to be fully operational and accessible along the floating docks. The new fuel dock is not operational at this time.

The second phase of the project is projected to be completed in August. For more information, visit MyClearwater.com.

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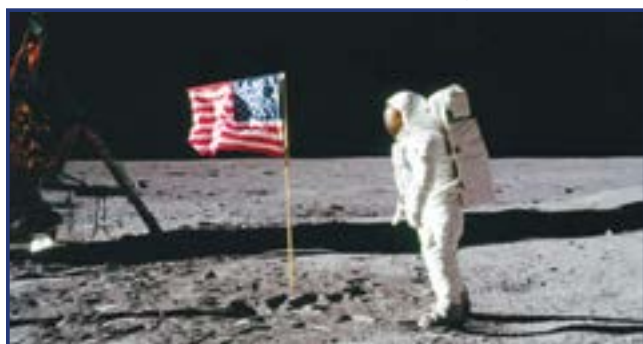
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# The Space Race, Continued



Astronaut Buzz Aldrin on the Moon, NASA

## The Space Shuttle Era (1981–2011)

Beginning in 1981, the Space Shuttle Program flew 135 missions and carried 355 astronauts from 16 countries into space. Each shuttle consisted of an orbiter, two reusable solid rocket boosters, and a disposable external fuel tank. The system could carry up to eight astronauts and 50,000

## Project Gemini (1961–1966)

Conceived in 1961, Project Gemini followed Mercury and tested equipment and mission procedures essential for the upcoming Apollo Moon missions. Its main goals included evaluating long duration spaceflight (up to 14 days), perfecting orbital rendezvous and docking techniques, improving re-entry and landing methods, and studying the effects of extended space travel on astronauts. Named after the constellation "The Twins," Gemini spacecraft carried two astronauts per mission. Between 1965 and 1966, ten Gemini missions flew with sixteen individual astronauts.

## Project Apollo (1961–1972)

Project Apollo conducted eleven crewed missions, including six successful Moon landings. These followed a series of uncrewed test flights.

In July 1969, Apollo 11, crewed by Commander Neil Armstrong, Command Module Pilot Michael Collins, and Lunar Module Pilot Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin, achieved the first lunar landing. Armstrong became the first human to walk on the Moon, followed by Aldrin.

In April 1970, Apollo 13 launched with the goal of becoming the third lunar landing. Two days into the mission, an oxygen tank in the service module exploded, crippling the spacecraft's life-support and power systems. The landing was aborted, but Commander Jim Lovell, Pilot Jack Swigert, and Lunar Module Pilot Fred Haise returned safely to Earth using backup systems, splashing down in the Pacific Ocean.

By the mid-1970s, political tensions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union had begun to ease. Competition gave way to cooperation with the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project, setting the stage for international partnerships in the Space Shuttle Program and later the International Space Station (ISS).

pounds of payload into low-Earth orbit. Over three decades, the reusable orbiters Columbia, Challenger, Discovery, Atlantis, and Endeavour conducted satellite launches and repairs, carried out scientific research, and helped construct the ISS. However, NASA tragically lost two crews of seven astronauts in the 1986 Challenger and 2003 Columbia accidents. The shuttle program concluded in 2011 with Atlantis' final flight. It was retired due to high costs, aging technology, and safety concerns.

## The Artemis Program: A New Chapter

Established in 2017, the Artemis Program marks NASA's return to lunar exploration, aiming to use the Moon as a waypoint for future human missions to Mars and beyond. At its core is the Orion Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle (MPCV), a partially reusable spacecraft designed by Lockheed Martin Space Systems. Modeled after the Apollo Command and Service Module, Orion includes an aluminum Crew Module (CM) paired with a European Service Module (ESM) that provides power and propulsion. It can support a crew of four for up to 21 days undocked or six months while docked. Orion is launched atop NASA's Space Launch System (SLS) rocket and equipped with a launch escape system for safety.

Artemis I, launched on November 16th, 2022, sent an uncrewed Orion capsule around the Moon. Artemis II, launched on March 30, 2024, carried four astronauts on a lunar flyby-returning humans to deep space for the first time since Apollo 17.

Artemis III, scheduled for 2027, will test a Human Landing System (HLS) in Earth orbit, and Artemis IV, planned for 2028, aims to land astronauts on the Moon for the first time in over half a century. Subsequent annual missions will establish a permanent lunar base for scientific research, resource development, and preparation for crewed Mars missions.

## Artemis II: "Integrity" Sets New Records

Sixty-five years after the first human spaceflight, Integrity—the name chosen by the Artemis II crew for their Orion spacecraft, launched from Florida's Kennedy Space Center's Launch Complex 39B on Wednesday, April 1st.

The mission began with Orion entering Earth orbit, where Commander Reid Wiseman, Pilot Victor Glover, and Mission Specialists Christina Koch and Jeremy Hansen tested life-support systems, including the water dispenser, firefighting masks, and onboard toilet. On day two, Integrity set off on a free return trajectory, looping around the Moon and returning to Earth without major propulsion maneuvers other than course corrections.



The crew of NASA's Artemis II mission (left to right): NASA astronaut Christina Hammock Koch, Reid Wiseman (seated), Victor Glover, and Canadian Space Agency astronaut Jeremy Hansen, NASA

On April 6th, Integrity flew within 4,067 miles of the lunar surface and reached 252,756 miles from Earth setting a new record for the farthest crewed mission in history. The spacecraft and crew reentered Earth's atmosphere on April 10, splashing down safely in the Pacific Ocean off San Diego, California, at 6:07 pm Eastern Time. Recovery was carried out by a joint NASA-U.S. Navy team.

Artemis II achieved multiple milestones, including traveling a record distance of 252,760 miles from Earth and completing a 694,481-mile round trip. Christina Koch became the first woman, and Jeremy Hansen the first non-U.S. citizen, to travel to the Moon. This historic mission paves the way for humanity's return to the lunar surface for the first time in more than fifty years.

The Kennedy Space Center is open to the public. They provide tours of each mission's equipment. It is located at Space Commerce Way on Merritt Island. Visit KennedySpaceCenter.com for more information and tickets.

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**ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES OF CONVERTING A TRADITIONAL IRA TO A ROTH IRA**

by Ray Ferrara, ProVise Management Group  
Converting a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA can be a powerful financial planning strategy. It allows individuals to shift retirement assets from a tax deferred environment to one with tax free growth. This decision is multifaceted and should be evaluated carefully, particularly in the context of current and future tax expectations, cash flow needs, estate planning goals, and investment horizons.



One of the most appealing benefits of a Roth IRA is the ability to take qualified withdrawals tax free. Unlike traditional IRAs, Roth IRAs have no lifetime Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs). Because the owner is not required to take RMDs, the full value of the account can be passed to heirs, who may also withdraw the funds tax free.

Tax diversification allows retirees to control their taxable income year by year, potentially reducing the impact of Social Security taxation, Medicare IRMAA surcharges, or general tax bracket creep.

The most obvious downside of a Roth conversion is the immediate tax bill. The amount converted is treated as ordinary income. Because a Roth conversion increases taxable income, it may have ripple effects on Medicare premium surcharges (IRMAA), increase taxes on Social Security benefits, and reduce eligibility for certain deductions or credits.

It is possible that future tax laws could shift in ways that reduce the relative advantage of a Roth IRA or make traditional tax deferred strategies more appealing. Paying tax on a conversion requires liquidity. For individuals who must use personal savings, or worse, must withdraw from the IRA itself, conversions can reduce total investment capital.

Roth conversions generally make the most financial sense when there is enough time for tax free growth to outweigh the upfront tax cost. Those who expect to use the funds in the near future or have a limited investment horizon may not benefit.

Consider doing a little each year to fill up your current tax bracket. Let's suppose a couple has \$150,00 of taxable income. By converting \$50,000 they stay in the same 22 percent tax bracket. Two caveats: 1) you must pay the tax with other savings; and 2) you need to make sure that the additional income does not affect too negatively the other areas mentioned above.

Take advantage of our complimentary one-hour consultation in our Clearwater office or by Zoom. We can help determine whether a Roth conversion makes sense for your financial/retirement plan.

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**LOCAL AUTHOR GIVES BACK TO THE COMMUNITY**

Clearwater Beach resident Jan Walton released her third novel in April and is using her talent to give back to the community. Walton was born and raised in Clawson, Michigan, a small town about twenty miles north of downtown Detroit. Her passion for writing took off when her second-grade essay *What My First Holy Communion Meant Me* won her a prize. "School, church, and the town library formed the geography of my young world, and reading was a lifeline," Walton remembers. "In high school, English class was the respite where I felt safe and capable. Literature enlightened me, and I wrote."

Walton studied Sociology at the University of Michigan and moved to New York City. She began a career in human resources, primarily conducting management training programs. Walton published professional articles and how-to manuals for managers as part of her job, but her career as a novelist did not begin until she retired.

Walton's first novel was born from a piece of her family's history. Growing up, she heard about a relation that ran away and left her family behind, but the details had been passed through generations and were murky. "There was family lore," says Walton, "but there was nobody around who could tell me what really happened." The stories sparked Walton's imagination and led her to write her first novel *River Avenue* in 2016. The story details the difficult life of Dan, a teenager in a 1930s Pennsylvania coal town who struggles to hold things together for his siblings after his troubled mother disappears.

*The Bookkeeper: A Novel*, while not a sequel to *River Avenue*, follows two of Dan's sisters who move to Detroit as adults. The sisters must reconcile the legacy of their family trauma and the complications of love and work in the big city in 1946.

A minor character in *The Bookkeeper* became the protagonist in Walton's third novel *The Ticket Girl*, published in April. The novel is set in the bustling theater world of post-war Detroit and New York City. The story centers on Mabel, a young woman struggling with alcoholism and grief after a personal tragedy shatters her life. She stumbles upon an unexpected chance at a new beginning in a grand theater, but she must find the strength to live with her past and trust opening her heart.



Walton moved to Clearwater Beach in 2019 and is a member of the Clearwater Beach Library book club. The club had to relocate after the hurricanes in 2024 and had recently returned to the beach. "I am especially pleased to donate copies of *The Ticket Girl* to the Beach Library for its reopening," she says. "I grew up using the public library in my small town." Walton also founded the Clearwater Writers' Block, a group of over thirty local authors of all genres, with a goal of promoting opportunities to showcase local writing talent.

*The Ticket Girl* is available from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Indiebound. Find out more about all of her books and the Clearwater Writers Block on Walton's website, JanMWalton.com.

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## HOW ONE BELLEAIR DAD FOUND CLARITY, CONFIDENCE, AND A BETTER SALE-WITH THE RIGHT GUIDANCE

By Alison Ross Tompkins, Broker Associate for Coldwell Banker

On a warm recent morning in Belleair, retired engineer Tom Harrington stood in his driveway, coffee in hand, studying the home he and his late wife had loved for nearly three decades. Father's Day was approaching, and his daughters had been gently encouraging him to consider a move that would bring him closer to family — and free him from the constant upkeep of a large property. "I'm not ready for a remodel," Tom said. "But I am ready for a fresh start."



Before lifting a paintbrush or calling a handyman, Tom scheduled a conversation with me, a 55+ real estate specialist known for helping seniors prepare wisely without overspending. He wanted clarity - not a sales pitch-and he wanted to understand what truly mattered to today's 55+ buyers in Belleair. The guidance he received was simple, calming, and eye opening; he didn't need a remodel, he needed a focused plan.

### A Market Reality Check

Belleair's market continues to perform steadily, with strong interest from both local residents and northern buyers seeking well maintained homes. Properties that receive light pre - listing improvements routinely sell faster, reflecting the priorities of today's 55+ buyers, who value maintenance history and overall condition far more than cosmetic trends. As a result, targeted, low cost updates often deliver the highest return on investment. For Tom, this was a relief. He didn't need to modernize his entire home -he just needed to make it shine.

**The 10 Day Fix-Up Sprint - Designed Before Any Work Began**  
With a clear plan in hand, Tom focused on the updates that matter most in Belleair's coastal climate.

1. Curb Appeal That Speaks Volumes - Fresh mulch, pressure washing, and two new coach lights transformed the entry for under \$300.
2. Florida Functionality First - Summer buyers look closely at HVAC, irrigation, and dryer vents. A quick servicing signaled "well maintained home."
3. A Fresh, Neutral Interior - Sunlight had faded the walls. A warm sand tone paint brightened the home without feeling sterile.
4. Fix the Four Things Buyers Always Notice - Fogged windows, loose fixtures, aging ceiling fans, outdated smoke detectors. These small issues often raise big questions for buyers - and they were easy to address.
5. Skip the Expensive Stuff - No new cabinets. No new flooring. No granite. Clean and functional was enough.

### The Result: A Father's Day Gift That Truly Matters

When Tom makes his home active, buyers will be interested -and it may even sell above the neighborhood median. But the story continues, and the real win is emotional. "I thought I needed a remodel," he said. "Turns out I just needed someone to walk me through it."

For many 55+ sellers in Belleair, that's the heart of the story: the right guidance, the right plan, and the right next chapter-all beginning with a simple conversation.


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.



Staff members pictured from left to right: Principal Denise Ballard, Teacher Peyton Hawk, Assistant Principal Ann Palmer, Teachers Davis Hall, Sophia Kanellopoulos, and Kristen Clanton.

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## Bar & Restaurant News



**THE TEA ROOM AT BELLEVIEW** Clearwater's Historic Plumb House has begun a new chapter in its 130-year history. Built in 1896, the Plumb House was originally a paint store and apartments. It was converted into a single-family home in the early 1900s. In 1983, the structure was moved to Ed C. Wright Park on the shores of Lake Belleview and became a permanent museum for the City of Clearwater.

After extensive renovations, the building is now home to The Tea Room at Belleview, an effort spearheaded by Clearwater Historical Society President Allison Herrington Dolan, Councilmember Lina Teixeira, and Director of Operations of Island Way Grill and Baystar Catering Sheri Aquilar. The beautifully restored space offers a unique setting for monthly tea experiences, as well as baby showers, bridal showers, birthday parties, and private events. The home will also house artists' lofts and a gift shop funded by Councilmember Teixeira. The Victorian Vogue tea room seats thirty guests with additional seating outside on the shaded porch.

The Tea Room at Belleview is located at 1380 South MLK Jr. Avenue. For more information, call (727) 754-8019 or visit [ClearwaterHistoricalSociety.org](http://ClearwaterHistoricalSociety.org).

**BREAKFAST IS BACK** Monstah Lobstah, previously JD's, located at 125 Gulf Boulevard, has brought back breakfast. They now open at 8am daily and serve breakfast until 11am. The menu features classics like the all-American breakfast, steak & eggs, corned beef hash, omelettes, pancakes and French toast from the griddle, handhelds including Cuban breakfast sandwiches and lighter fare such as yogurt parfait and avocado toast.

Monstah Lobstah has karaoke Friday and Saturday nights in the lounge from 7-11pm and live entertainment on the back porch Thursday-Sunday. Follow them on Facebook for their entertainment schedule.

**FINALLY BACK OPEN** Hurricane Eddie's Gulfport, the sister location of Hurricane Eddie's IRB, Dunedin, and Clearwater Beach, has finally reopened after a year and a half of hurricane repairs. They celebrated with a ribbon cutting by the Gulfport Merchant Chamber and continued the party with live music, prizes, and giveaways.

Hurricane Eddie's Gulfport opens at 11am seven days a week. Follow them on Facebook for specials and upcoming events. They are located at 5413 Shore Blvd S.

## Bar & Restaurant News



**QUARTER CENTURY FOR ISLAND WAY GRILL** Congratulations to Island Way Grill on their 25th anniversary last month. Island Way is one of many restaurants in the Baystar Restaurants Group (BRG) led by Frank Chivas on Clearwater Beach and surrounding areas.

The menu at Island Way features dishes from land and sea including Tomahawk ribeyes, succulent filets, "boat-to-table" fresh catches from Baystar's own fleet of fishing boats, and hand-rolled sushi.

Island Way offers daily specials including "Wine Down Wednesdays" with half-off wine bottles and Sam the Sax playing live music on the patio. Sunday Brunch, from 10am-2pm, is a buffet style brunch featuring an array of different stations: pastry, breakfast, sushi, dessert, shellfish, salad, lunch, carving, and made-to-order omelet station. One complimentary mimosa or champagne is included, as well as coffee, tea, and soft drinks. The Early Bird menu runs Sunday-Friday from 4-5:30pm and Noon-5:30pm on Saturdays.

Island Way is located at 20 Island Way, come by land or sea (docking is available at the Island Estates public dock). For more information about the menu or to make reservations, visit [IslandWayGrill.com](http://IslandWayGrill.com). Follow them on Facebook to view specials and upcoming events.

**PIZZA RETURNS** Kera Pizza Tavern, located at 311 Gulf Boulevard on Indian Rocks Beach (previously occupied by SLYCE Pizza), opened last month. This is the sister restaurant to longtime Clearwater Beach staple, Gondolier Italian Restaurant and Pizza at 674 South Gulfview Blvd.

The new restaurant is a mixture of authentic Greek cuisine and Italian-fired pizza. Among their Mediterranean offerings are Spanakopita, Keftedes (Greek meatballs), Avgolemono (chicken, lemon, and orzo soup), gyros, and Pastitsio (similar to lasagna). For pizza lovers, they offer specialty and build-your-own pies, calzones, and strombolis. Guests can enjoy one of their hand-crafted mocktails, libations from their full-liquor bar, or a glass of wine off their carefully curated wine list.

Kera is open Tuesday-Thursday from 4-10pm and Friday and Saturday from 4-11pm (closed on Mondays) and offers indoor and outdoor seating. To view their menu, visit [KeraPizzaTavern.com](http://KeraPizzaTavern.com). For more information about specials and upcoming events, follow them on Facebook or call (727) 660-8010.

**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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Depiction of the Continental Army circa 1776

By Jeanne Holmquist, Clearwater Historical Society Museum

To celebrate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, we thought we would share what was happening in Florida history at that time. Everyone remembers that Ponce de Leon came to Florida in 1513 and planted a Spanish flag along the Atlantic coast. In 1563, the French settled at Fort Caroline near present-day Jacksonville, but in 1564, the Spanish attacked and massacred the French forces, and Florida was once again entirely ruled by Spain. Fast forward 200 years, to 1763, during the Peace of Paris Treaty, that not only ended the French and Indian War, but it also included in the agreement that Britain trade Cuba to Spain for Florida. Although the thirteen colonies declared their freedom from Britain in 1776, it was not until the signing of the 1783 Treaty of Paris that the Americans were truly free from British rule.

The American Revolution lasted from 1763 until 1783, and during that time the British ruled Florida and most of the Spanish people who had lived in Florida moved to Cuba. Florida was a safe place for northern British Colonists uninterested in fighting Britain over taxation or religion and new British loyalists emigrating from Europe.

In 1763, Britain took possession of Florida and divided it into East and West Florida, separated by the Apalachicola River. As strange as it seems, Clearwater and the entire peninsula would have been part of the East Florida colony. The capital of East Florida was St. Augustine. The West Florida colony was the panhandle of Florida, from the Apalachicola River west to Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi River, and its capital was Pensacola. In 1774, the thirteen colonies asked Florida to join the Continental Congress, but Florida declined to attend. They were happy to live under British rule.

The British forces in St. Augustine played a key role as a supply port for the British Army during the American Revolution. There were at least three attempts by the Continental Army to take St. Augustine from the British. All three attempts failed due to a lack of supplies or manpower. The Continental Army got as far south as the St. Mary's River but then they received a surprise attack from the British and retreated into Georgia. The British were able to hold onto St. Augustine and East Florida. Being further away from the other colonies, there was a much more scattered population in West Florida. In Pensacola, the people were more concerned with the Spanish and the French in New Orleans than the British. They were not interested in joining as the next colony and would not swear allegiance to the United States.



Spain reentered the war in 1779 and by 1781 saw their opportunity to retake West Florida from by capturing Baton Rouge, Mobile, and Pensacola. Back in Paris in 1783, the British returned both East and West Florida to the Spanish and their 20-year rule of Florida was over. During the 1783 Treaty of Paris, the original thirteen colonies officially won their independence from the British and formally ended the Revolutionary War.

Florida was back under Spanish rule until 1821. During that time, Spain was weakened by Napoleon's attack on the Spanish mainland, and both the East and West Floridians declared their independence from Spain. In 1810 President James Madison claimed Florida as a U.S. territory, and by 1818, General Andrew Jackson took this opportunity to seize Spanish forts in St. Marks and Pensacola. Negotiations between Spain, Don Luis de Onís, and the U.S. started in 1815, but it wasn't until James Monroe was President and John Quincy Adams was Secretary of State that the treaty was signed making Florida a U.S. Territory.

Florida became the 27th state in 1845.

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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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# Business Briefs

**BIG BIRTHDAY** Belleair Bluffs Cleaners, at 2924 West Bay Drive, is celebrating 45 years in business. Gary Dawson opened Belleair Bluffs Cleaners in 1981. Back then, his neighbors were Winn Dixie to the east and Ben Franklin Five and Dime to the west. He was the only dry cleaner in town, and lot of dirt has gone through Gary's machines since then.



Being a Certified Garment Care Professional, Gary has acquired many certifications from the Dry Cleaning and Laundry Institute including Dry Cleaning, Wet Cleaning, and Environmental Dry Cleaning.

Belleair Bluffs Cleaners is open Monday-Friday from 7am-6pm, Saturday from 9am-3pm, and is closed on Sundays. For more information on their services, visit [BelleairBluffsCleaners.com](http://BelleairBluffsCleaners.com) or call (727) 585-1101

**HORIZON WEST BAY OPENS** Largo's \$85 million mixed-use development opened last month at 440 West Bay Drive. The long-awaited project is the cornerstone of a redevelopment effort that brings municipal services, retail, dining, and public meeting space to the downtown core.

Horizon's open-air plaza will host outdoor markets, concerts, and other civic events. The 18,000 square feet of indoor commercial space includes Louis Pappas Fresh Greek, Strachan's Ice Cream and Desserts, and Parlor Doughnuts.

The building is home to the new Largo City Hall, replacing the 225 1st Avenue SW location which housed government offices and services since 1962. The new facility includes commission chambers, administrative offices, and a training lounge for city employees.

Sustainability was a factor in the planning of Horizon West End, including a 25,000 square foot solar array and a rainwater collection system. It also includes a 300-space indoor parking garage with 11 electric vehicle charging stations. For more information, visit [DowntownLargo.com](http://DowntownLargo.com).

**PROFESSIONAL PLUMBING SERVICE** Plumbers Near Me, Inc. is a family-owned plumbing company serving Belleair, Largo, Clearwater, Seminole, and the surrounding communities. Founded by the Aldrich family - lifelong residents of Largo-the business was created to place a greater focus on the plumbing services that have long been a core part of their work.

Charlie Aldrich has been a resident of Largo for more than 60 years and has over 34 years of experience as a State Licensed Building Contractor. His sons, Charles and Kyle Aldrich, contribute 17 years of combined plumbing experience. For decades, the Aldrich family has provided construction and plumbing services to homeowners and businesses throughout the area through Aldrich Construction Services, Inc. Building on that history, Plumbers Near Me, Inc. represents the next chapter of the family business, dedicated specifically to delivering professional plumbing services with the same values they have always operated by: quality workmanship, exceptional customer service, and honest pricing.

Plumbers Near Me is located at 2401 W Bay Drive Suite #428 in Largo. For more information, visit [PlumbersNearMePinellas.com](http://PlumbersNearMePinellas.com) or call (727)288-0703.

# Business Briefs



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**NEW AT-HOME HEALTHCARE PROGRAM** GoodCall Housecalls has been treating residents and their visiting friends and family in Belleair and the surrounding Beach communities for over six years. They provide care for minor emergencies and illnesses and offer preventative options for health and wellness care. GoodCall Housecalls is proud to announce Care Continuum, a new program to support patients and their families by providing a better alternative to "going it alone" as they recover at home or from a long hospitalization. Their experienced medical care and ongoing coordination ensures the best recovery in the comfort of home. It relieves the anxiety from extended caregiving or scheduling recovery management from long-distance. At the same time, GoodCall offers peace of mind to family and loved ones of those who are recovering from planned or emergency procedures, unexpected illnesses or hospitalizations, or ongoing medical conditions.

For more information regarding their programs, contact them at [Info@GoodCallHousecalls.com](mailto:Info@GoodCallHousecalls.com) or (727) 421-4230.

**NEW VACATION APARTMENTS** Mark Aleksin, the owner of Aleksin Construction and CKBB, Custom Kitchen Baths and Beyond is a long-time resident of FL, living in Indian Rocks Beach. Mark has been in business for 40 years.

CKBB specializes in kitchen and bath renovations, while Aleksin Construction concentrates on full residential construction projects from the ground up along with room additions. Mark also owns a 78-unit storage facility just across the bridge in Largo.

Mark recently added a boutique-style, seven-unit apartment complex in Indian Rocks Beach to his portfolio. It was in disrepair after Helene and Milton hit in 2024. Mark bought the property and fully renovated it. Now called 18 on the Bay, IRB's newest addition is located at 1801 Bay Blvd. See their ad on pages 16 and 17.

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## LET THE CHILDREN PLAY

By Pete Magnani, Publisher

The nation's largest pediatricians group is urging schools to protect free play for children and teens in its first guidance on recess in thirteen years. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), founded in 1930 by 35 physicians to address pediatric healthcare standards, is the nation's largest professional association of children's clinicians. As many schools are cutting back recess to prioritize test performance, the AAP has issued a revision to their 2013 policy statement "The Crucial Role of Recess," advising that playtime is critical to academic, physical, social, and emotional development.

The guidance follows a study published last year in the Journal of American Medicine which revealed that the health of children nationwide has deteriorated significantly across nearly all metrics over the prior 17 years. Utilizing data from mortality statistics, national health surveys, and electronic health records from over two million children, researchers found U.S. kids were more likely to have obesity, chronic diseases, and mental health problems like depression. "The surprising part of the study wasn't any single statistic; it was that there's 170 indicators from eight data sources, all showing the same thing: a generalized decline in kids' health," said Dr. Christopher Forrest, one of the authors of the study.

New research suggests downtime, including recess, helps students retain information, improves their grades and test scores, and contributes to students' ability to focus while in class. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends children and adolescents have at least one hour of physical activity each day and recognizes that schools are in a unique position to promote healthy behaviors like physical education and activity. These behaviors promote lifelong health and wellbeing and help prevent various health conditions.

In addition to the physical and cognitive benefits of daily physical activity, pediatricians stress its role in the social and emotional development of children. Peer-to-peer engagement on the playground is often a child's introduction to social integration, leading them to develop skills including self-control, communication, cooperation, conflict resolution, and leadership. Researchers also say recess gives kids a chance to navigate relationships and build confidence. Despite this guidance, up to 40 percent of US school districts have reduced or eliminated recess since the mid-2000s, according to the CDC, and elementary schools schedule students to have only 27 minutes of recess each day.

About a dozen states require some daily recess. Under Florida law, students in kindergarten through grade 5 must be given at least 20 consecutive minutes of unstructured free-play recess per day. The state's school boards must also provide 150 minutes of physical education each week, with at least 30 consecutive minutes conducted per day. Oklahoma became the latest state last month to expand its recess requirement, passing a law that increases mandatory unstructured playtime to 40 minutes each day.

Among U.S. schools offering recess, the duration ranges from less than 10 minutes to over an hour. In Shanghai, China, students take a 30-minute nap after lunch and are given 10 minutes of recess for every 40 minutes of instruction. Primary school students in England get a 15-minute break in the morning and an hour at lunchtime.

In Finland, elementary school students take a 15-minute recess each hour. Students do not start actual academics until the equivalent of America's second grade, and play is considered more important than homework. The strategy has led to Finland's steep rise in the chart of the *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)*, a worldwide study intended to evaluate educational systems based on pupils' scholastic performance.

After studying the Finnish model, Texas Christian University Professor Debbie Rhea developed the LiNK Project, which promotes the connection between well-run recess periods and classroom achievement. The model includes two 15-minute recesses in the morning and two in the afternoon combined with lessons on social skills like empathy. "Physiologically, you want to reboot every 45 to 60 minutes," says Rhea. "That brings better attentional focus than having a 30-minute recess in the morning and a 30-minute recess in the afternoon." U.S. schools that have implemented the program report a 70 percent reduction in student stress and anxiety and higher math and reading scores.

In many schools, recess is considered a privilege that can be withheld for disciplinary purposes. This is a mistake, according to researchers. Pediatricians argue that withholding recess is counterproductive, as children who struggle with self-regulation, attention disorders, or behavioral challenges are the ones who need movement breaks the most. The AAP recommends that recess be protected and never withheld for academic or punitive reasons, and urges schools to find alternative disciplinary measures, such as reflective writing, restorative justice circles, or loss of other privileges.

Recess is just as important for older students as it is for grade schoolers. Although most of the evidence is focused on elementary schools, middle and high school students also benefit from having recess or comparable physical activity periods in addition to physical education and classroom physical activity. These benefits and opportunities are particularly important for students with special needs, functional limitations, or physical disabilities because they may have more behavioral issues and limited experiences interacting socially with other students.

Research has shown that recess and other breaks from classroom instruction are a necessary component of a healthy learning environment for students across all grades. Unstructured play and social time increases children's physical fitness, improves memory and concentration, and improves their social and emotional development.



## YULE: THE LITTLE DOG WHO DEFIED THE ODDS

By Yamile Haibi, Blue Merle Pet Photography

Yule is a 12-year-old Chinese Crested-Chihuahua mix with a story that will stay with you long after you've heard it. Born in a rescue while her mother awaited a second chance, Yule arrived in December- earning her festive name and, perhaps, a bit of the magic that would come to define her life.

Adopted as a puppy and returned just a year later, Yule's early story is one many in rescue know too well. The reasons were never completely clear, but her unpredictability may have played a role. When her current mom met her, she was searching for a companion for her other rescue, Marley. What she found instead was a dog who would change her life.

It wasn't easy at first. Yule's sweet face invited affection from everyone, but she wasn't always comfortable receiving it. There were challenges, setbacks, and hard days. But there was also a quiet understanding between them. Over time, they learned from each other - built trust, set boundaries, and found their rhythm. Some days felt like a gentle waltz, others more like rock and roll - but through it all, their bond deepened. Yule's love became constant and unwavering. Then, in April 2024, everything shifted.

Yule was diagnosed with Addison's disease-manageable with medication - but soon after came a far more devastating diagnosis: aortic hemangiosarcoma, an aggressive and terminal cancer. Multiple specialists confirmed it. Faced with the unimaginable, her mom chose a different path - focusing on holistic care, love, and hope.

A year later, a friend revealed what the original prognosis had been: "Maybe a month." This past April marked two years since that diagnosis, and Yule is still here.

She spends her days playing with her toys for hours, keeping up with her little brother Tater, and living life fully in the way only dogs can. She is a miracle in every sense, but also something more. Yule is a reminder of resilience, of patience, and of the extraordinary bond between a dog and the person who refuses to give up on them. For her mom, Yule is everything - her protector, her teacher, and her living proof that sometimes, against all odds, miracles are real.

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**WORLD CUP 2026**

By Pete Magnani, Publisher

The World Cup, held every four years, features competition among national teams of the members of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the governing body of international competition. Prior to the inaugural World Cup held in Uruguay in 1930, football's paramount tournament took place at the Summer Olympics. It has been included in every Summer Olympic Games with the exception of the inaugural games in 1898 and the 1932 Games, where it was omitted due to a dispute between FIFA and the International Olympic Committee over the status of amateur players. Although the game is still an Olympic sport, the World Cup is considered the sports highest achievement.

The first two World Cup matches were held on July 13th, 1930, with the US defeating Belgium 3-0 and France besting Mexico 4-1. Uruguay became the first World Cup winner, defeating Argentina 4-2 in front of 93,000 viewers. 13 countries from North America, South America, and Europe took part in the inaugural tournament, with the field expanding to 16 in 1934, 24 teams in 1982, and 32 teams in 1998.

The first Women's World Cup, which was not a FIFA-sanctioned event, was held in Italy in July 1970. Several countries lifted bans on women's football during the '70s, resulting in new teams being established in many countries. In 1988, FIFA hosted a Women's Invitation Tournament in China with twelve national teams competing. Norway defeated Sweden 1-0 in the final match, with Brazil taking third place. The opening match drew 45,000 spectators, and tournament's success led to FIFA establishing a Women's World Cup.

The inaugural FIFA Women's World Cup was held in China in 1991. 12 teams competed, with the US defeating Norway



2-1 in the final match. The event has been held every four years since, during the year following the men's World Cup. The field increased to 16 teams in 1999 and 24 in 2015. In 2023, Australia and New Zealand hosted the FIFA Women's World Cup for the first time as joint hosts, and the number of participants was expanded from 24 to 32. Brazil will host the 2027 tournament.

FIFA World Cup 26 will take place June 11th- July 19th and will feature some notable firsts. The tournament will include 48 teams for the first time, expanding from the previous field of 32. Co-hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico, it is the first men's World Cup tournament to be co-hosted by multiple nations and the first hosted or co-hosted by Canada. Morocco unsuccessfully bid to co-host, the country's fifth unsuccessful attempt.

In the US, games will be played in Dallas, Atlanta, Houston, New York/New Jersey, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Boston, Miami, and the San Francisco Bay Area. Canadian host cities include Vancouver and Toronto, and Mexico's host cities are Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Monterrey.

Team USA will face off against Paraguay on June 12th at 9pm, Australia on June 19th at 3pm, and Turkey on June 25th at 10pm. Visit FIFA.com for more information.

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# Community News

## BELLEAIR GARDEN CLUB

Submitted by Carol Mears

The Belleair Garden Club's inaugural May Day Market at Hunter Memorial Park was a tremendous success, drawing visitors from across the area for a lively day filled with artisan vendors, plants, music, food, and community spirit. Held on May 2nd, the market transformed Hunter Park into a vibrant gathering place where guests explored artisan goods, specialty foods and beverages, garden-inspired creations, and unique local vendors in a relaxed outdoor setting.

Presented by the Belleair Garden Club in partnership with Candles for Caterpillars, the event was designed to celebrate creativity, nature, pollinators, and community connection — and it delivered all of those beautifully throughout the day. Proceeds from the event support the nonprofit missions of both organizations.

Guests enjoyed strolling through the park while exploring a thoughtfully curated mix of artisans and makers, as acoustic music added to the welcoming "garden party" atmosphere throughout the day. Families gathered at the popular Kids Planting Corner, where children created their own potted plants to take home while learning about pollinators and gardening.

One of the highlights of the day was the overwhelming sense of community support and enthusiasm surrounding the event. Visitors lingered, connected with vendors, enjoyed the park, and stopped by the Belleair Garden Club booth for gardening inspiration, flowers, and information about the club's programs and activities.

Vendors also reported an incredibly successful day, with strong sales and enthusiastic customer engagement throughout the market. Several vendors even sold out of products before the event ended, further reflecting the outstanding attendance and strong community support.

The event also brought new interest to the organization itself, with several attendees joining the Belleair Garden Club during the market.

The Belleair Garden Club extended special thanks to the Town of Belleair, volunteers, staff vendors, and community supporters who helped make the event possible.

Although a late-afternoon storm rolled in shortly after the market concluded, the weather held beautifully throughout the event, allowing guests and vendors alike to enjoy a memorable spring day in the heart of Belleair.

Following the enthusiastic response from both vendors and attendees, plans are already underway to bring the May Day Market back again next year.

Visit BelleairGardenClub.com for more information.

## HOPE VILLAGES OF AMERICA

Celebrate Christmas in July while helping Hope Villages of America feed neighbors who need it most. This July, help out by collecting food at your place of business (Hope Villages provides the bins) or make a monetary contribution, because hunger doesn't take the summer off. Your donated food will help feed a child who no longer receives school breakfast and lunch during the summer. For more information, email [Development@HopeVillagesofAmerica.org](mailto:Development@HopeVillagesofAmerica.org).

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By Pete Magnani, Publisher

In Florida, bicycles are legally defined as a vehicle and the bicyclists as drivers. People riding bicycles have the same right to the roadways as drivers of motor vehicles and must obey the same traffic laws, as those specific to bicycles as defined in Florida State Statute 316.2065.

Cyclists must obey all traffic controls, stop signs, and signals. If a bike lane is present, it must be used, if not cyclists must ride in the right-most lane, or as close to the right-hand curb as possible. They may use the full lane to turn left, avoid hazards, or pass another vehicle. Bicycles are permitted on sidewalks, but cyclists have the same rights and duties as pedestrians. They must yield right-of-way and give an audible signal before overtaking and passing any pedestrian.

Between sunset and sunrise, the law requires a white light on the front and a red reflector/light on the rear. Every bicycle must be equipped with a brake which will enable its rider to stop the bicycle within 25 feet from a speed of 10 miles per hour on dry, level, clean pavement.

Bikes cannot carry more people than they are designed for, with the exception of an adult rider carrying a child securely attached to their person in backpack carrier or sling. A rider may carry a child under four years of age or weighing 40 pounds or less in a seat or carrier that secures and protects the child from the moving parts of the bicycle. The rider cannot leave a child in the seat or carrier when they are not in immediate control of the bicycle.

Helmets are mandatory for all riders and passengers under age 16, including a child riding in a trailer attached to a bicycle, and wearing headphones or earplugs while riding is prohibited. It is illegal to ride under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

When riding in groups, cyclists may not ride more than two abreast, except on a bicycle path. Where bicycle lanes are present, riders may only ride side-by-side if both are able to remain in the lane. If it is too narrow, they must ride single file. When groups approach a stop sign, they may only proceed after coming to a full stop, and then in groups of ten or fewer at a time.

A rider who violates any of the provisions of the statute commits a noncriminal traffic infraction, punishable as a pedestrian violation subject to a fine.

The rapid popularity surge of electric bicycles, or e-bikes, necessitated additional regulations, which are spelled out in Florida State Statute 316.20655. E-bikes are considered vehicles to the same extent as bicycles and riders have the same rights and duties under State law, but local governments may adopt stricter ordinances governing the use of e-bikes on bicycle and multiuse paths, trails, beaches, and sidewalks.

Currently, electric bicycles and their operators are not subject to the provisions of law relating to insurance, driver or motor vehicle licenses, vehicle registration, or title certificates. State legislators and many local governments have recently began exploring stricter e-bike laws. Last month, the State Senate passed SB 382, which if passed would require e-bike riders on a sidewalk or any other area designated for pedestrian use to maintain a speed of ten miles per hour or less, yield to pedestrians, and give an audible signal when overtaking and passing. Violators would commit a non-criminal traffic infraction punishable as a moving violation as opposed to a pedestrian offense. The bill would also require the Florida Highway Patrol and each police department and sheriff's office in the state to maintain a list of all the traffic crashes that each respective agency investigates which involve an electric bicycle, then send an annual report to the state.

There are three classifications of electric bicycles:

**Class 1 bikes** (Low-Speed Pedal-Assisted) are equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, ceasing assistance at 20 miles per hour. These are often permitted on paved trails and mountain bike trails.

**Class 2 bikes** (Low-Speed Throttle-Assisted) are those equipped with a motor that can propel the bike without pedaling, provided power cuts off at 20 miles per hour. They are often allowed in the same areas as Class 1.

**Class 3 bikes** (Speed Pedal-Assisted) are equipped with a motor that assists only when the rider pedals, up to a maximum speed of 28 miles per hour. They usually feature a speedometer and are often permitted on roads and in bike lanes.

Electric bicycles manufactured after January 1st, 2021, are required to have a manufacturer-affixed label listing the bike's classification number, top assisted speed, and motor wattage. Modifying an e-bike to change the motor-powered speed of an electric bicycle is prohibited unless the label indicating classification number and top speed is replaced with the updated information. All e-bikes must operate in such a manner so that the motor disengages when the rider stops pedaling or the brakes are engaged.

Florida's roads, sidewalks, paths, and trails are shared space. Motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians must follow the rules and be respectful of each other to ensure their safe and enjoyable use.



# Community News

## CLEARWATER YACHT CLUB

Submitted by Holly Shuga

Clearwater Yacht Club (CYC) proudly hosted its annual Arc Day on Saturday, May 9th, welcoming The Arc of Tampa Bay Foundation clients and staff for a joy filled day of music, laughter, and meaningful connection. The Arc Tampa Bay offers educational, employment, and recreational programs for intellectually and developmentally disabled adults.

What began nearly three decades ago as a simple cookout envisioned by dedicated CYC member Beverly "Bee Bee" Brewer has grown into one of the Club's most cherished traditions. Today, Arc Day brings together hundreds of Arc participants, staff, volunteers, and Yacht Club members for a celebration designed entirely around shared experiences and genuine engagement.

This year's celebration featured live music by JR Connections, who kept the crowd dancing and singing throughout the afternoon, often inviting attendees to take the microphone and join the fun. Guests enjoyed pontoon boat rides generously provided by Clearwater Marine Aquarium, cooled off in the swimming pool, and delighted in balloon art creations crafted throughout the day. A buffet lunch, served with help from CYC volunteers, was followed by a popular ice cream sundae bar.

Each guest received a complimentary Arc Day T-shirt upon arrival, while additional shirts were made available for purchase, with proceeds benefiting The Arc Tampa Bay

Foundation. Volunteers played a vital role in making the day a success, assisting with setup, food service, activities, and, most importantly, spending time with Arc clients.

Arc Day is made possible through the generosity of sponsors and supporters whose contributions help sustain the event amid ongoing reductions in state and federal funding for community service organizations. Sponsors received recognition through event shirts, Club publications, and social media, underscoring the collective impact of community support. At the conclusion of the event, Clearwater Yacht Club Commodore Rod White presented the total funds raised to Arc's Executive Director on behalf of the Club and its supporters.

CYC extends heartfelt thanks to its sponsors, volunteers, entertainers, partners, and members who continue to make Arc Day a highlight of the year for everyone involved. The Arc of Tampa Bay staff consistently shares that this event is especially meaningful because of the time and personal attention CYC members dedicate to their clients, something that keeps them eagerly anticipating the Club's return each year.

Clearwater Yacht Club is honored to host Arc Day annually and looks forward to continuing this tradition of compassion, connection, and community for years to come. For more information, please contact the Club office at (727) 447 6000 or email [Marketing@ClearwaterYachtClub.org](mailto:Marketing@ClearwaterYachtClub.org).



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## HOUSE LIFTING-PART ONE

By Randy Lee, Landscape Designer

House lifting has become the latest trend with coastal building. We now see in Tampa Bay the effects of storms, hurricanes, rising sea levels and stronger storms. We are currently working in neighborhoods where 60-70 percent of the homes have been impacted and they either tear down and rebuild, do some sort of renovation or lift the house. House lifting has been around for many years and these days they have done a good job of perfecting the trade. This proactive approach can take many months and cost several hundreds of thousands of dollars. The size of the home, the complexity of the lift, local regulations and how high the lift will rise all add to the price tag.

Local building codes are now being modified to accommodate them. Structural movers and foundation engineers are first brought in. Then a slow process with hydraulic jacks and crate-like wood framing is installed for 8-12 inches at a time. Then concrete piers are formed, and heavy-duty steel I-beams are placed to secure the home. When the house is safe and secure, the new foundation is poured, and walls are blocked up and your new lower floor is organized into garages and indoor/outdoor spaces. This is a very brief description of the process. It is quite the sight watching these homes rise.

Benefits of house lifting include increased property values and lower insurance rates. Also, you have much less chance of flood damage and repairs. Your living space can be expanded as well. I recently saw a house lift where they left the garage on grade but added more garage space by lifting the rest of the house. They now have parking for five cars.

Several factors are important after the lift is completed. You must have proper drainage and make sure gutters and downspouts are cleaned regularly and the underground drainage is set up to run to the front/back of yard. It is also important to check for pests around the foundation and keep an eye out for mold and mildew. Utility connections are also very important — they are now up in the air 8-12 feet. These include electric, gas, internet, sewer and water — all which have to be carefully thought out and routed.



We have encountered several issues when working/designing house lifts. Usually, an elevator has to go in somewhere and several flights of stairs have to be designed. This can be difficult on an existing structure. Also, lighting, electrical outlets and gutters have to be reworked. Service platforms are another structure to be built to house air conditioners, pool equipment and generators — a lot of complexity is involved here.

House lifts are here to stay. They are quite fascinating to watch over the course of several months. We will talk next on how we landscape these and the challenges we work with.

### Checklist for June/July

- Fertilizer ban in effect
- Weekly lawn and plant maintenance
- Water restrictions in effect
- Rainy season begins and so do storms
- Great time to plant palm trees and tropicals

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# Community News

## COMMUNITY DENTAL CLINIC

Submitted by Jessica Carrier

The Community Dental Clinic is proud to welcome Jennifer Whittington as its new Executive Director. With a strong background in nonprofit leadership and community health initiatives, Whittington brings more than 25 years of experience dedicated to serving underserved populations and expanding access to healthcare services throughout the community.



Whittington's background spans both mental health and nonprofit vision organizations, where for more than two decades she helped lead initiatives focused on health equity, community partnerships, and access to care. Her experience in healthcare shaped her belief in whole-person wellness and the life-changing impact access to healthcare can have on confidence, employability, independence, and overall quality of life. Those values align seamlessly with the mission of Community Dental Clinic to provide dental services, education and access to dental care for the uninsured, low-income adults of Pinellas County.

Already a familiar face among many local nonprofit and healthcare partners, she is excited to help lead the clinic into its next chapter, bringing both heart and fresh ideas as Community Dental Clinic prepares for continued growth in its new facility. For more information, visit [CommunityDTLClinic.org](http://CommunityDTLClinic.org).

## LARGO FIRE RESCUE

Submitted by Summer Mahr

The Largo Extrication Team took home 1st Place Overall in the NAVRA National Rescue championship at the 2026 Palm Beach State Invitational, finishing on top of 10 teams from across the United States and Canada. The competition tested teams in realistic vehicle extrication scenarios focused on teamwork, technical rescue skills, and patient care under pressure-strengthening the lifesaving skills used to protect our community every day.

Several team members also earned individual awards in the competition:

- Best Medical: Firefighters Cristina Lamb & Evan Seabolt
- Best Tech: Firefighters Kyle Parker, Dane Matta & Nick LeBlanc
- Best Incident Commander: Lt. William (Billy) Stark

Largo Fire Rescue is proud of the entire team and the way they represented the department throughout the competition!

Firefighter/Paramedic Bill Edling was named the 2026 Pinellas County Emergency Medical Services Paramedic of the Year. While out to dinner on his day off, Bill responded to a call for help after a man became unresponsive. Bill immediately began CPR and continued care until local paramedics arrived. The patient later made a full recovery. After 38 years in the fire service, Bill continues to demonstrate the compassion, professionalism, and commitment that define Largo Fire Rescue both on and off duty.



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# Community News

## CLEARWATER MARINE AQUARIUM

Submitted by Marsha Strickhouser

Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA) proudly hosted its first-ever Seas the Day luncheon fundraiser on Thursday, April 30th, bringing together community leaders, partners and supporters for an inspiring afternoon dedicated to marine life rescue, rehabilitation and conservation.

Thanks to the generosity of our in-kind sponsors, nearly all luncheon expenses were covered, allowing more than \$160,000 in net proceeds to directly support animal welfare and care.

CEO Joe Hardy highlighted upcoming expansions, including a new sea lion habitat and the "Wings and Wildlife" exhibit, which will soon house birds and tortoises. These developments reflect CMA's commitment to providing lifelong care for non-releasable animals while enhancing public education and engagement.

A special highlight of the luncheon came when CMA presented the inaugural Seas the Day Award to longtime supporters John and Jan Draheim. Through nearly two decades of board service and 15 years of volunteer dedication, respectively, the Draheims have played a vital role in shaping CMA's mission and impact.

Helen Barrott, who also serves as Chair of CMA's Development Committee, chaired the luncheon. She highlighted the powerful stories behind CMA's resident animals, including dolphins Nicholas, Hope, and Izzy, each rescued from circumstances that could have ended very differently.

For more information about Clearwater Marine Aquarium and how to support its mission, visit CMA's official website [CMAaquarium.org](http://CMAaquarium.org).

## CITY OF BELLEAIR BLUFFS

### Hurricane Season Starts June 1 – Are You Ready?

The City of Belleair Bluffs offers valuable hurricane safety resources on our Hurricane Preparedness webpage. Visit [www.belleairbluffs.org](http://www.belleairbluffs.org) for up-to-date information and access to both local and state resources. Come to the Hurricane Preparedness Expo at City Hall on Saturday, June 6th from 11am-1pm to meet the experts and enter for a chance to win a generator thanks to Lowe's Largo Store.

Did you know? The City of Belleair Bluffs participates in the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System. Thanks to our proactive flood management efforts, residents in Special Flood Hazard Areas receive a 15% discount on their flood insurance premiums, and those outside of SFHAs enjoy a 5% discount.

### Celebrate the 250th Independence Day Block Party

Saturday, July 4th from 11am-1pm. Come for FREE Hot dogs, Hamburgers, Cuban sandwiches, and sides prepared by Belleair Market and Embellished Catering with your meal ticket at entry check-in at the city tent. If you would like additional food or Kona Ice sweet treats, please remember to bring cash or debit/credit cards.

Listen to local band The Bluffs as they bring a mix of rock classics, acoustic vibes, and strong vocal harmonies. Join the fun with Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, Largo Fire Rescue, and Waste Management Touch-A-Trucks, a bounce house, face painters, and lawn games. Follow our City of Belleair Bluffs Facebook for updates. Bring lawn chairs to sit under the oaks, but please leave the fur babies at home.



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