

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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Magazine

The Story of Boca Ciega Bay: From Ancient Shores to Our Modern Backyard

By Pete Magnani, Publisher

Boca Ciega Bay—the scenic, shallow estuary framing the local Intracoastal Waterway—is bordered by St. Petersburg, Gulfport, Seminole, and South Pasadena to the east, and the barrier islands of Madeira Beach, Treasure Island, and St. Pete Beach to the west. Its Spanish name translates to “blind mouth,” a nod to the bay’s confusing inlets, shallow waters, and shifting shorelines. For centuries, this vital body of water sustained Florida’s earliest indigenous peoples and, later, European settlers. Eventually, it fueled the mid-century development boom that altered the local landscape, ultimately sparking the modern conservation efforts that protect the bay today.

Early Peoples and the Tocobaga

Long before modern homes lined the waterfront, these shores supported thriving Indigenous communities who depended entirely on the bay’s rich resources. Archaeological evidence connects the eastern shoreline with the late Weeden Island and Safety Harbor cultures, spanning from roughly 800 A.D. to 1700 A.D. The Tocobaga people are most famously tied to this area, leaving behind remnants of their civilization in the historic Jungle Prada area of present-day St. Petersburg.

The Tocobaga Chiefdom was a powerful society centered around Tampa Bay, with its main political hub located near Safety Harbor. Their villages stretched from northern Tampa Bay down to Sarasota, usually nestled along productive coastal waters. They reshaped the local geography by building massive mounds: platform mounds made of shell and clay served as elevated foundations for homes; middens of discarded shells and bones doubled as elevated lookout points; and sacred sand mounds served as resting places for their ancestors.

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Map of Boca Ciega Bay,
circa 1919
State Archives of Florida/
Pinellas County
Board of Trade (Fla.)

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The Legacy of Firefighter Stephen Siller

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The Man Behind Our State Song

He never set foot in Florida, yet Stephen Foster wrote one of its most beloved songs.

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The Lucky Side of Sports

Lucky socks. Playoff beards. Pregame rituals. Discover why athletes and fans alike embrace sports superstitions—and the psychology behind these time-honored traditions.

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BELLEAIR AREA NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

Inside, you will find articles and local information about the nearby area. 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, The UPS Store, and the Belleair Market. Call (813) 239-6862 if you need more than a few.

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

Thank you for reading,

Lora and Pete Magnani

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SEE YOU AGAIN IN OCTOBER

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Luna.House.gov

CALENDAR OF HOLIDAYS & EVENTS

As always, this is subject to change.

AUGUST

Back to School Sales Tax Holiday Month
Coast Guard Appreciation Month
NFL Preseason Begins 6
Purple Heart Day 7
Deep Purple Ruth Eckerd Hall 8
Trim Notices Mailed 10
Public School Begins 11
Buccaneers First Preseason Game 14
Belleair Back to School Drive Ends 14
61st St. Pete Spearfishing Open 14
Primary Elections 18
Dog Day at Baycare Ballpark 21
Asian Food and Music at the Sound 21
WearableArt Fashion Show Dunedin 22
DEVO at the Sound 27
NCAA Football Kickoff 29
Jimmy Buffett Day 30

SEPTEMBER

97X Next Big Thing at the Sound 4
Gulfport GeckoFest 5
First USF Home Game 5
Labor Day 7

Patriot Day 11
MORFLOW Music Fest at the Sound 12
Rosh Hashanah 11-13
Buccaneers Season Opener 13
Grandparents Day 13
Modest Mouse at the Sound 16
Pasco Scallop Season Ends 18
NHL Preseason Begins 19
Buccaneers Home Opener 20
Yom Kippur 20-21
International Day of Peace 21
Clearwater Offshore Nationals 25-27
First Day of Fall 22
Greentown Kids Beach Cleanup 27
MLB Playoffs Begin 29

OCTOBER

Lightning Season Opener 1
Lightning Home Opener 3
Clearwater Fall Family Festival 3-5
Columbus Day 12
Stone Crab Season Begins 15
Clearwater Jazz Holiday 15-18
Dunedin Fall Fest 15-18
Bluffs Wine Walk 24

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Did You Know

FINAL TOWER AT GROUND ZERO

The rebuilding of New York City's World Trade Center reached its final milestone with the groundbreaking of 5 World Trade Center, the last tower to be constructed on the 16 acre site. More than two decades after the September 11th terrorist attacks, the project marks the completion of one of the nation's most significant redevelopment efforts.

The 900-foot tower will feature approximately 1,200 residential apartments, along with office space, retail, and community amenities. About one-third of the apartments will be permanently affordable housing, helping address Lower Manhattan's growing housing needs.

The groundbreaking represents far more than the start of construction. It symbolizes resilience, remembrance, and renewal while completing the transformation of the World Trade Center into a thriving neighborhood. Surrounded by One World Trade Center, the National September 11th Memorial & Museum, and other landmark buildings, the final tower stands as a tribute to those lost on September 11th and a testament to New York City's enduring strength and commitment to the future.



SPECIAL NEEDS EVACUATION PROGRAM With hurricane season underway, Pinellas County Emergency Management is encouraging residents with qualifying needs to register now for the Special Needs Evacuation Program.

During emergency evacuations, the program provides transportation and shelters for residents of all ages with medical, functional, or special transportation needs including requiring assistance with routine care and medications, being dependent on oxygen or electricity for medical equipment, requiring assistance with walking or getting out of bed, or requiring transportation assistance to an emergency shelter during evacuations.

Key program features include generator-powered shelters to ensure uninterrupted power for medical devices and life-safety equipment, onsite health professionals available throughout the evacuation to assist with medical needs, transportation assistance for registered participants without other evacuation options, personal outreach from Emergency Management staff to verify needs and confirm enrollment, shelter access for immediate family members and caretakers, and pet care provided by Pinellas County Animal Services for registrants without alternative arrangements, until they return home.

County staff recently contacted all program registrants to confirm their information is up to date and they are still eligible for the program. Existing registrants who have not confirmed their information with program staff this year are asked to call Pinellas County Emergency Management at (727) 464-3800 as soon as possible to ensure they remain on the registration list.

For more information or to register for the Special Needs Evacuation Program, visit Pinellas.gov/SpecialNeeds or call (727) 464-3800.

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

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and More...

NO FLAMINGO, FOR NOW

Several new state laws took effect in July, but the northern mockingbird survived unscathed. A proposal to make the American flamingo Florida's official state bird stalled in the Florida Senate, failing to receive final approval before the legislative session ended. Supporters argued that the flamingo better represents Florida's unique wildlife, tourism, and coastal heritage than the current state bird. The northern mockingbird has held the title since 1927 and will continue to do so for now. While the legislation fell short this year, advocates say they intend to bring the proposal back in a future legislative session, keeping alive the effort to make the colorful flamingo an official symbol of the Sunshine State.



PROPERTY TAX ESTIMATES A new Florida law will require more accurate property tax estimates on online residential real estate listings beginning February 1st, helping prospective homebuyers better understand their potential property taxes before purchasing a home. The new law addresses one of the most common sources of confusion for homebuyers by ending the longstanding practice of using a seller's current property taxes as an estimate of what the new owner will owe. Following a change in ownership, a property's assessed value generally resets to market value, often resulting in property taxes that are significantly higher than the seller's.

Online residential real estate listing platforms that choose to display estimated property taxes must use a standardized methodology based on the property's listing price and information published by the Florida Department of Revenue. Listing platforms that do not provide an estimate may no longer display the seller's current property taxes and instead must direct consumers to the county property appraiser's tax estimator or website. For more information visit PCPAO.gov, call (727) 464-3207, or email Mike@pcpao.gov.

PRIMARY ELECTIONS Polls are open from 7am-7pm on Election Day. Be sure to allow enough time to arrive before the polls close.

Your polling place for a county election may be different than your polling place for a municipal election. Use the Find Your Precinct feature at VotePinellas.gov to confirm your polling place.

If you have moved, be sure the Elections Office has your new address to avoid delays at the polls. You are required by law to vote in your home precinct. Call (727) 464-VOTE (8683) to make an address change within the state or use the Address Change Form at VotePinellas.gov to make a change online. You are encouraged to update your information prior to Election Day to help you avoid delays at the polls.

Be sure to bring the proper ID when voting at an early voting site or your polling place on Election Day to avoid delays. Without valid and current ID, you may vote a provisional ballot, which will be presented to the Canvassing Board to determine eligibility. Get Election Ready by viewing your precinct-specific sample ballot at VotePinellas.com.

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Boca Ciega Bay, Continued

The Tocobaga occupied Jungle Prada from approximately 1000 to 1700 A.D. Surviving shell middens show just how deeply these early residents relied on what we now call Boca Ciega Bay. Fish, oysters, clams, and sea turtles formed the basis of daily life. Unfortunately, much of this ancient mound landscape was damaged or leveled by twentieth-century housing development, making the surviving, protected portions of Jungle Prada incredibly precious to our local history.

Today, the Jungle Prada archaeological site spans both public parkland and private property, showcasing these surviving ancient mounds alongside an educational museum. Added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2003, Jungle Prada is also famous as the setting for the 1528 landing of the Spanish Narváez expedition.

Spanish Exploration and the Narváez Expedition

Pánfilo de Narváez sailed from Spain in 1527 to explore La Florida, a vast territory named in 1513 by Juan Ponce de León. The expedition navigated into Boca Ciega Bay in April 1528, where the crew spotted indigenous buildings perched high atop platform mounds. Narváez made landfall near Jungle Prada, officially claiming the entire region for King Charles V.

While the expedition sought to secure vast colonial wealth and new territory for Spain, it ended in disaster. After landing, Narváez split his forces, marching inland with 300 men while ordering his ships to wait. The plan failed catastrophically; the ships lost track of the land party, and only four members of the expedition ultimately survived to tell the tale. Tragically, these and other explorers also introduced European diseases and violence, causing the Tocobaga to vanish from historical records within two centuries. Despite the grim outcome, this fateful landing permanently links Boca Ciega Bay to one of the earliest European encounters on the Gulf Coast.

Settlement, Fishing, and Waterfront Life

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Boca Ciega Bay remained the heart of daily life in western Pinellas County. The bay's shallow seagrass beds, oyster bars, and tangled mangroves offered both abundant food and natural shelter, allowing small, tight-knit waterfront communities to take root.

By the late 1800s, rustic fishing camps and pioneer homesteads dotted the shoreline near modern-day Gulfport, St. Petersburg, Madeira Beach, and Treasure Island. In Gulfport, the waterfront evolved into a popular community gathering place. The town built its first public fishing pier in 1907, and the iconic Gulfport Casino (originally

built in 1906) marked the community's transition from a quiet fishing village into a vibrant social destination. Steamships, ferries, and small skiffs ferried goods and passengers across the water, where early winter residents fell in love with the mild climate, world-class fishing, and serene coastal views.

When the railroad reached St. Petersburg in the late 1880s, local growth accelerated. The rail lines connected the lower Pinellas peninsula directly to national markets and wealthy winter tourists, sparking a boom in grand hotels, cozy boarding houses, and waterfront recreation. Commercial fishermen continued to harvest the bay to feed their families and tourists, and the shoreline adapted to the influx of new residents and vacationers.

The arrival of the automobile marked the bay's next great transformation. Roads, bridges, and causeways provided easy, direct routes to our barrier islands, slowly replacing the old reliance on boats and ferries. The original Welch Causeway opened to Madeira Beach in July 1926, followed by the Treasure Island Causeway in 1939. These new thoroughfares carried steady traffic across Boca Ciega Bay, transforming isolated islands into the bustling, beloved beach communities we know today.

By mid-century, neighborhoods around the bay actively promoted our region as a paradise for boating, fishing, and retirement living. Yet even as neighborhoods expanded, commercial fishing remained a cornerstone of the bay's identity, bridging early maritime history with modern coastal growth and setting the stage for future conservation battles.

Dredging, Filling, and Development

The most dramatic visual transformations occurred during the post-WWII boom. Rapid population growth and an insatiable demand for waterfront real estate led to massive dredge-and-fill operations. To create competitive waterfront property, developers reshaped the shallow bay bottom into residential finger canals and man-made subdivisions. Scientific studies estimate that roughly 3,500 acres of Boca Ciega Bay were filled in after 1950, shrinking the bay's total surface area by 20 percent and devastating vital seagrass beds, shellfish habitats, and marine nurseries.

These massive engineering projects forever altered natural tidal flows, water circulation, and the coastline itself. The bay quickly became a stark, cautionary example of the delicate conflict between rapid coastal development and environmental preservation in Florida.



Pasadena Estates across Boca Ciega Bay, early 1900s. Archives Heritage Village

Protection and Restoration

Mounting public alarm over this environmental degradation during the mid-twentieth century sparked an organized movement to protect Boca Ciega Bay's remaining natural resources. Decades of dredging, neighborhood expansion, and navigation projects had severely altered the shoreline and submerged habitats. Residents, scientists, and environmental advocates united to raise the alarm about dropping water quality, disappearing mangrove wetlands, and the steep decline of local fish and wildlife populations.

In response to this grassroots pressure, the state designated Boca Ciega Bay as an official aquatic preserve in 1969, making it one of Florida's very first protected estuarine systems. This designation successfully halted large-scale dredge-and-fill projects, preserving the bay's ecological future. This success inspired the creation of the neighboring Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve in 1972, extending vital protections to surrounding coastal waters and preventing further habitat loss along our coast.

Over the last few decades, local conservation efforts have focused heavily on restoring these precious marine habitats. Today, our mangrove forests, seagrass meadows, oyster bars, and salt marshes are recognized as essential infrastructure that cleans our water, stabilizes our shorelines, and protects our properties. Current initiatives include seagrass monitoring, constructing artificial oyster reefs, and neighborhood education programs that teach homeowners how to practice good stewardship in their own backyards.

Our local waterfront parks play a starring role in connecting residents with this shared history. Beautiful spaces like Boca Ciega Millennium Park, Clam Bayou Nature Preserve, and Jungle Prada de Narváez Park give neighbors a place to experience untouched coastal habitats while learning about our past. Together, these parks remind us of the enduring bond between people and Boca Ciega Bay—from the ancient Tocobaga to the modern homeowners working to protect our county's most precious coastal ecosystem.

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WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INVESTING AND GAMBLING?

by Ray Ferrara, ProVise Management Group

Betting is not new. From early online poker to today's real-time sports wagering—where you can bet on the next pitch, pass, or shot—gambling has become faster and more accessible than ever. Predictive markets have expanded wagering into politics and other real-world events, gaining attention during the 2024 election cycle. As access has increased, so has a concerning trend: many people, especially younger individuals, are beginning to view gambling as a legitimate form of investing. So, what separates the two?



The difference comes down to purpose, process, and probability—how and why money is put at risk.

Purpose: Investing is intended to build wealth over time. It involves allocating money to assets such as stocks, bonds, or real estate that are expected to grow or generate income. Gambling, by contrast, is primarily about winning money quickly based on chance. There is typically no underlying asset nor long-term value being created.

Process: Investing requires research, discipline, and strategy. Decisions are based on economic conditions, company performance, and long-term market trends. Risk can be managed through diversification, asset allocation, and time. While returns are not guaranteed, they are grounded in analysis and historical patterns. Gambling, on the other hand, depends largely on random outcomes—cards, dice, spins, or short-term events. There is little to no ability to manage risk in a meaningful way, and the odds are often structured against the participant. As the saying goes, “the house always wins.”

Probability: Over long periods, investing very often carries a positive expected outcome as markets historically rise and productive assets generate returns. Gambling generally has a negative expected value, meaning the average participant is likely to lose money over time.

Time Horizon: Investing is a long-term endeavor measured in years or decades. It represents ownership in assets that can appreciate and produce income. Gambling is short-term, with immediate results and no lasting economic value.

In summary, investing uses risk to build long-term wealth, while gambling uses risk to pursue short-term excitement. Confusing the two can lead to costly financial decisions—and unfortunately, it's becoming increasingly common.

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Investment Advisory Services may be offered through ProVise Management Group, LLC.

BUCKY: THE ROAD TRIP THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

By Yamile Haibi, Blue Merle Pet Photography

In 2020, Bucky's mom, Kristen, moved from Florida back to New York to be closer to family. The following summer, while visiting her sister in North Carolina and then spending time with friends in Florida, she received a text that would change her life forever. Her friend, Veronika, asked if she could help transport a rescue puppy from one foster home to another. Before she had even finished reading the message, her answer was, “Yes.”

That Friday, they drove to St. Petersburg to pick up a little rescue pup named “Buck” from Compassion Kind Rescue. As she knelt on the sidewalk, Buck trotted straight toward her and leaned his entire body against her, as if they had known each other forever. During the hour-long drive, he curled up in her lap the entire way, and with every passing mile she realized saying goodbye wasn't going to be easy.

When they arrived to meet Buck's foster mom, Shawn, Kristen's tears had already started. She was in a transitional season of life—living with family in New York and only visiting Florida—so adopting a dog didn't seem practical. But then Buck gently kissed her on the chin. In that instant, everything changed. She looked at the others and said, “I'm going to be his mom.” Adding a “y” to his name, Buck officially became “Bucky”.

That same evening Kristen submitted her adoption application. Having previously volunteered and fundraised for Compassion Kind, she was quickly approved. After a veterinary visit the following day, Bucky officially came home on Sunday. Before heading north, Bucky spent one night with Veronika and her dog, Chai. The two became instant best friends, playing together as if they'd known each other forever. The next morning, Bucky and his new mom began the two-day drive back to New York. Those long hours on the road became the beginning of an incredible bond—just the two of them learning to trust each other, one mile at a time.

Today, the pair are again living in the Belleair area and Bucky continues to inspire kindness. His mom now hosts “Paint Your Pal Pawties” donating a portion of the proceeds to Compassion Kind in his honor, helping other rescue dogs find loving homes just like he did.

Bucky wasn't part of the plan, but he turned out to be exactly what his mom, Kristen, needed. Sometimes life has a way of putting the right soul in your path at exactly the right moment. Sometimes you rescue a dog and sometimes, a dog rescues you.

Could Your Pet Be Our Next Pet of the Issue? Blue Merle Photography is always looking for remarkable local pets to feature in the Belleair Neighborhood News Magazine. To nominate your pet (or another deserving pet), visit: contest.blumerlephoto.com.



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SAHARAN DUST RETURNS TO FLORIDA, BRINGING HAZY SKIES, SUMMER HEAT, AND STUNNING SUNSETS

By Lora Magnani, Publisher

If Florida's skies have looked unusually hazy lately, the cause isn't smoke or pollution—it is dust from one of the world's largest deserts. A massive plume of Saharan dust, stretching nearly 5,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean, has once again reached Florida and much of the Gulf Coast, creating milky skies while influencing temperatures, air quality, and even hurricane activity.

Known as the Saharan Air Layer, this annual phenomenon occurs when strong winds lift fine dust from the Sahara Desert in North Africa and carry it westward across the Atlantic. The dust typically reaches Florida between June and August, with some plumes being much larger than others.

One of the most noticeable effects is hotter weather. The Saharan Air Layer contains extremely dry air that suppresses the formation of Florida's familiar afternoon thunderstorms. Without those cooling rain showers, temperatures and heat index values can soar above 100 degrees. During these periods, health experts recommend staying hydrated, limiting strenuous outdoor activities during the hottest part of the day, and checking on older adults and others who are especially vulnerable to heat-related illness.

While the dust contributes to hazy skies, it also creates some of Florida's most spectacular sunrises and sunsets. Tiny dust particles scatter sunlight, intensifying brilliant shades of orange, red, pink, and purple at dawn and dusk. Beachgoers and photographers often welcome these colorful displays, particularly along the Gulf Coast.

The dust can also affect air quality. Although concentrations are generally low for healthy individuals, the fine particles may irritate the eyes, nose, and throat or worsen symptoms for people with asthma, allergies, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and other respiratory conditions. Those in sensitive groups should consider limiting extended outdoor activity on especially hazy days.

There is also an upside during hurricane season. The Saharan Air Layer carries exceptionally dry air into the tropical Atlantic while increasing wind shear, making it more difficult for tropical disturbances to develop into organized storms. Although the dust doesn't eliminate hurricane threats, it can temporarily suppress tropical development.

Additional dust plumes are expected throughout the summer before gradually diminishing in early fall. For Floridians, the annual arrival of Saharan dust is a reminder that weather systems can travel thousands of miles, bringing hazy skies, intense heat, breathtaking sunsets, and even a temporary lull in Atlantic hurricane activity.



YOU NEED AN ELDER LAW ATTORNEY. WHAT DO THEY DO?

By Theodore Schofner, Esq.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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ARE YOU READY FOR SOME FOOTBALL?

With Florida being a melting pot of residents from all over the country (and Canada) the odds are good that football fans are going to disagree on what game should be on the TV. Whether you are a transplant or simply live in a house divided, there are plenty of bars and restaurants that can accommodate the need to watch your home team. Preseason games begin Thursday, August 6th at 8pm with the Arizona Cardinals hosting the Carolina Panthers. Here are a few local options to catch your home team's game:

Largo and Belleair:

Goose's Sports Bar 11988 Indian Rocks Road
Rock House Live Sports Bar and Grill 14219 Walsingham Road
Mike's Pizza and Pub 14477 Walsingham Road
Sauced Sports Bar 1250 Seminole Blvd
Sports Shack Bar & Grill 999 Missouri Avenue North
Whiskey Wings Largo 2480 East Bay Drive
Sportscaster's Bar & Grill 2655 East Bay Drive
Eddie's Bar & Grill 3665 East Bay Drive
Schooners Westbay 2441 West Bay Drive
Tavern on the Bluffs 2890 West Bay Drive

Indian Rocks Beach (south to north):

Sharky's Sea Pub 19703 Gulf Blvd
Guilty Sea Sports Pub 301 Gulf Blvd
Kera Pizza & Tavern 311 Gulf Blvd
Hurricane Eddie's IRB 1407 Gulf Blvd
Coco's Crush Bar and Grill IRB 2405 Gulf Blvd

South Clearwater Beach:

Hogg Daddy's Beach Bar and Grill 752 S Gulfview Blvd
Hogg's Cantina 741 Bayway Blvd
Jimmy's Fish House Bar 521 S Gulfview Blvd
The Boxer Coronado 207 Coronado Drive
Jimmy's Island Grill 40 Devon Drive

BUCCANEERS' SCHEDULE

Buccaneers at Bengals September 13th at 1pm
Browns at Buccaneers September 20th at 1pm
Vikings at Buccaneers September 27th at 4:05pm
Packers at Buccaneers October 4th at 1pm
Buccaneers at Cowboys October 8th at 8:15pm
Steelers at Buccaneers October 18th at 1pm
Buccaneers at Panthers October 25th at 1pm
Falcons at Buccaneers November 1st at 1pm
Buccaneers at Bears November 8th at 8:20pm
Buccaneers at Lions November 22nd at 1pm
Panthers at Buccaneers November 30th at 8:15pm
Chargers at Buccaneers December 6th at 1pm
Buccaneers at Ravens December 13th at 1pm
Saints at Buccaneers December 20th at 1pm
Buccaneers at Falcons TBD
Rams at Buccaneers TBD
Buccaneers at Saints TBD

WHERE YOUR FIRE DOLLARS GO

By Chief Ken Grimes, PSFRD

At 2:14 in the morning, a 911 call comes in. A husband wakes up to find his wife is not breathing. He is trying CPR, unsure if he is doing it correctly. Panic sets in quickly. Every second feels longer than the last. He is waiting for help.

Before that call was ever made, your fire district was already preparing for that moment. Crews were staffed. Equipment was checked. Stations were strategically positioned. Training had already taken place long before the emergency happened. We often say this about our profession. We are there on people's worst day, and we feel a responsibility to make it better. That responsibility drives how your fire district invests your tax dollars.

About 85 percent of the district's budget goes directly into salaries and benefits. That number tells an important story. Emergency services are fundamentally about people. Firefighters and paramedics are on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They train constantly to respond to medical emergencies, fires, water rescues, hazardous materials incidents, hurricanes, and countless other situations where seconds matter. Right now, as you read this, firefighters, paramedics, boats, special rescue teams and even helicopters are only minutes away.

When someone calls 911, the outcome often depends on the skill, experience, and preparation of the people who arrive in those first few critical minutes. That level of readiness requires investment. It also requires the ability to recruit and retain high-quality professionals in a very competitive environment. Departments across Florida compete heavily for experienced firefighters and paramedics. It is estimated that 4,000 new firefighters are needed a year but the state is producing 2,000. Maintaining strong staffing is not just about today. It is about ensuring the system remains dependable years into the future.

Your fire dollars also support the stations themselves. Fire stations are not simply buildings. They are carefully placed response points designed to improve coverage and reduce response times. Location matters. Seconds matter. Just as important, how those stations are built matters too.

Recently, when the district was told a traditional fire station project could cost nearly ten million dollars, we challenged the assumption. Instead, we purchased an existing home and adjacent property and began adapting it into a functioning station at a fraction of the cost. That decision potentially saved about 7 million dollars while still improving service to the community. In many ways, it may also create a healthier and more comfortable living environment for firefighters who spend a third of their lives at work.

Training and equipment are another major part of the investment. Emergencies do not give second chances. Firefighters and paramedics train continually so their response becomes automatic under pressure. Engines, rescue units, protective gear, medical equipment, radios, and lifesaving tools all must perform without fail when they are needed most. At the center of all of this is readiness. Unlike many services, emergency response cannot be created after the emergency happens. The people, equipment, stations, and systems must already be in place before someone dials 911.

One of the things that makes your special fire district special is that these decisions are guided locally. Your district is overseen by a local board made up of residents who live in the community. They experience the same storms, traffic, risks, and emergencies as everyone else. Their role is to balance strong emergency service with responsible stewardship of public funds. This is not really about budgets, buildings, or taxes. It is about making sure that when someone is having the worst day of their life, help arrives quickly, professionally, and prepared to make things better.

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Bar & Restaurant News

EXCITING EVENTS AT CLEAR SKY ON CLEVELAND Summer is in full swing, and Clear Sky on Cleveland is bringing even more reasons to visit Downtown Clearwater with two unforgettable evenings of food, wine, and entertainment.

On Tuesday, August 4th, guests are invited to experience a Five-Course Tour of Italy Wine Dinner, where each chef-crafted course is thoughtfully paired with exceptional Italian wines. It's an evening designed to transport guests through the flavors and traditions of Italy, one course at a time.

On Tuesday, August 11th, the spotlight shifts from the dining room to the stage as Clear Sky on Cleveland welcomes comedians Sheena Reagan and Bobby Goldsmith for a night of laughs, great food, and handcrafted cocktails. Whether you're planning a date night or an evening out with friends, it's the perfect way to enjoy Downtown Clearwater's entertainment scene.

From exclusive dining experiences to live entertainment, Clear Sky on Cleveland continues to bring the community together through unique and memorable events. Tickets for both evenings are available at ClearSkyRestaurants.com under the Events page.

NEW ICE CREAM ON THE BEACH Recently, the owners of long-time Clearwater staple Gondolier Italian Restaurant & Pizza opened Kera Pizza & Tavern at 311 Gulf Blvd on Indian Rocks Beach, but that's not all. A few steps away, in the same plaza as Kera, owner Dimitri Sioutis has opened Beverly's Ice Cream Shop. Beverly's, named after Sioutis' mother, originally opened in 2020 on Clearwater Beach under the Hyatt Regency but they were unable to rebuild after hurricane Helene in 2024.

They offer 32 flavors that can be on waffle cones, waffle bowls, cake cones, cups, chocolate dipped cones, and assorted sundaes. Patrons can also enjoy ice cream on top of made-to-order waffles, banana splits, milkshakes, assorted coffees, espresso, cappuccino, lattes, ice coffees and much more. Their ice cream comes from Chocolate Shoppe which is one of the leaders in high-quality ice cream manufacturing; they are based in Madison, Wisconsin.

They have one more location in Morristown, Tennessee and one soon to come on St Pete Beach. They are open 11am-10pm (Sunday - Thursday) 11am-11pm (Friday and Saturday). For more information follow them on Facebook or visit BeverlyslceCream.com.

EXPANDING TO HILLSBOROUGH Tom George, owner of Eddie's Bar & Grill and Hurricane Eddie's, is bringing over 40 years of Pinellas County tradition to Hillsborough. The fourth Eddie's Bar & Grill will be in Westchase at 12217 West Linebaugh Avenue, previously occupied by Surf Shack.

Eddie's Bar & Grills are family-friendly sports bars with wall-to-wall TVs, a large menu filled with lots of fan favorites like their award-winning wings, a full bar, and an array of arcade games to keep guests of all ages entertained.

They have not announced an opening date for the new location, so follow them on Facebook to stay up to date on their progress.



Bar & Restaurant News



SUNDAYS ARE BETTER WITH BBQ Looking for the perfect way to end the weekend? Belleair Hideaway, located at 560 Indian Rocks Road North, invites guests to gather every Sunday for a relaxed afternoon of great food, good company, and Southern-inspired hospitality at BBQ Sundays.

Featuring slow-smoked favorites, chef-inspired specials, and a welcoming atmosphere, BBQ Sundays have become a local tradition for families, friends, and food lovers throughout the Belleair area. Whether you're craving tender pulled pork, smoked brisket, classic sides, or signature sauces, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

More than just a meal, BBQ Sundays offer an opportunity to connect with the community, unwind from the week, and experience the unique charm that makes Belleair Hideaway a favorite local destination. Bring your friends, bring your appetite, and make Belleair Hideaway part of your Sunday tradition.

For weekly menus, specials, and event updates, follow Belleair Hideaway on Facebook.

CLOSED FOR GOOD It was with heavy hearts that Capogna's Dugout, the Italian restaurant and sports hangout at 1653 Gulf-to-Bay Boulevard, closed for good on June 26th. Capogna's was opened in March 1973 by Art Capogna and his family.

This was not the first time Capogna's had closed. After Hurricanes Helena and Milton took out the power, the restaurant was stuck with thousands of dollars of spoiled food and unusable equipment. In the spring of 2025, with the help of former Monty's Pizzeria owner Sean Stoffel and the Capogna siblings, they were able to reopen. It is unknown what will replace the neighborhood staple.

NEW RESTAURANT IN CLEARWATER The owners of Michelin-starred Rocca, a Tampa based Italian restaurant, are opening a restaurant in the newly - restored Telephone Building on Cleveland Street in downtown Clearwater.

Tastes Pretty Good (TPG) Hospitality Group is opening a "New American" restaurant known as Rippers. It will be TPG's first Pinellas County location. Rippers will serve American classics centered around signature "ripper—style" hot dogs, which are deep fried until their casings split open, along with burgers, chicken wings, sandwiches, fries and milkshakes.

The new restaurant is part of the growing revitalization in downtown Clearwater led by the Cleveland Street Alliance. The Telephone Building, built in 1914, is the first historic landmark completed in the Cleveland Street restoration. The restaurant will be on the ground floor of the historic building at 534 Cleveland Street.

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TUNNEL TO TOWERS HONORS FALLEN HEROES BY PAYING OFF MORTGAGES FOR THEIR FAMILIES

By Pete Magnani, Publisher

Firefighter Stephen Gerard Siller, the youngest of seven children born to Mae and George Siller, understood better than most that life is precious. After losing his father at age eight and his mother just 18 months later, Stephen was raised by his older siblings. Though he struggled for a time, the love of his family and the values his parents instilled helped shape him into an extraordinary husband, father, and firefighter. In just 34 years, he left a legacy that continues to inspire millions.

On September 11th, 2001, Siller had just finished his shift with Brooklyn's Squad 1 and was headed to play golf with his brothers when he heard over his scanner that a plane had struck the North Tower of the World Trade Center. He immediately called his wife, Sally, asking her to tell his brothers he would catch up with them later, then returned to his firehouse to retrieve his gear.

Driving toward Lower Manhattan, Siller reached the entrance to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel only to find it closed for security reasons. Refusing to let the barrier stop him, he strapped approximately 60 pounds of firefighting equipment to his back and ran through the tunnel on foot to the Twin Towers. There, while helping others escape, he made the ultimate sacrifice.

His courage became the inspiration for the Tunnel to Towers Foundation, which is dedicated to ensuring that the events of September 11—and the sacrifices made that day and every day by first responders and military service members—are never forgotten.

Among the organization's signature initiatives is its Fallen First Responder Home Program. The program pays off the mortgages of first responders who lose their lives in the line of duty or from 9/11-related illnesses, leaving behind young children. By eliminating a family's mortgage, the foundation provides financial stability and peace of mind during one of life's most devastating moments.

This Independence Day, the Tunnel to Towers Foundation continued that mission by delivering mortgage-free homes to the families of 30 fallen first responders across 19 states, ensuring they will always have a place to call home. Two local families were among those.

Among those honored was the family of Firefighter Jimmy Dale Riley Jr. of Plant City Fire Rescue.

Riley died on February 24th, 2021, following a long and courageous battle with occupational glioblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer linked to the hazards firefighters often face. He was 40 years old and had devoted 17 years to serving the Plant City community. Before becoming a firefighter, Riley served his country as a military police officer in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Born in Bartow and raised in Lakeland, Riley excelled both academically and athletically at McKeel Academy, where he played baseball and displayed the competitive spirit that would define his career. Drawn to a life of service, he joined Plant City Fire Rescue in 2004 and served with distinction as a firefighter, EMT, paramedic, instructor, and driver engineer. His professionalism and dedication earned him numerous honors, including being named Firefighter of the Year twice. Beyond his own accomplishments, Riley was a respected mentor who helped train and inspire countless future first responders, leaving a lasting impact on his department and community.



Sergeant Elio Diaz

The foundation also honored the family of Sergeant Elio Diaz of the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office. Diaz was fatally shot during a traffic stop in Charlotte Harbor after spending more than an hour speaking with a driver who lived in his vehicle. Attempting to help the man resolve an insurance issue and avoid having his car towed, Diaz demonstrated the compassion that characterized his career.

Without warning, the driver pulled out a rifle and opened fire before fleeing the scene. Diaz was transported to the hospital, where he later succumbed to his injuries. He was 40 years old and had served the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office for 11 years.

During his career, Diaz was recognized for his exemplary service. He was named Deputy of the Year in 2019 and received a Certificate of Appreciation from the U.S. Border Patrol in November 2024.



Firefighter Jimmy Riley

Following his death, he was posthumously promoted to sergeant and awarded both the Medal of Honor from the American Police Hall of Fame and the Medal of Valor from the Fraternal Order of Police.

Through its Fallen First Responder Home Program, the Tunnel to Towers Foundation paid off the mortgages on the Riley and Diaz family homes, easing a significant financial burden while honoring two men who dedicated their lives to protecting others.

Today, the Tunnel to Towers Foundation has grown into one of the nation's leading nonprofit organizations supporting America's heroes. In addition to providing mortgage-free homes for the families of fallen first responders, the foundation builds specially adapted smart homes for catastrophically injured veterans and first responders, helps homeless veterans regain stable housing through its Homeless Veteran Program, and assists Gold Star families who have lost loved ones serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. The foundation also preserves the memory of those lost on September 11th through educational programs and annual events that honor their sacrifice while inspiring future generations.

To support the foundation's mission individuals can make a one-time or monthly donation, sponsor fundraising events, participate in community walks and runs, or organize local fundraising campaigns. Volunteers are also needed throughout the year to assist with fundraising events, community outreach, and programs supporting veterans, military families, and first responders. Businesses, schools, civic organizations, and faith-based groups can also partner with the foundation through volunteer service projects and charitable giving initiatives.

More than two decades after Stephen Siller ran through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel toward danger, his selfless act continues to inspire a mission that transforms tragedy into hope. Every mortgage paid, every smart home built, and every veteran helped reflects the legacy of a firefighter who refused to stop when others could not go forward. To learn more about the Tunnel to Towers Foundation, volunteer opportunities, or ways to donate, visit T2T.org. Every contribution helps ensure that America's heroes—and the families they leave behind—are never forgotten.

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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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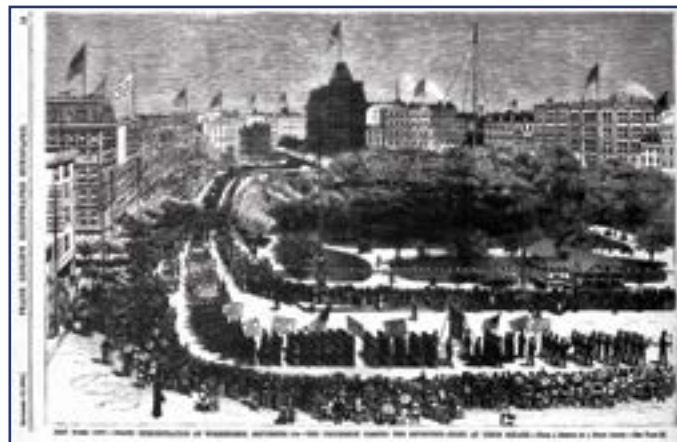


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CELEBRATING WORKERS



Sketch of the first Grand Demonstration of Working Men from Frank Lester's Illustrated Newspaper, 1822.

Labor Day is an American national holiday celebrated annually on the first Sunday in September to honor American workers. There are several accounts of the holiday's origin. The most accepted is that various labor unions gathered in New York City on September 5th, 1882, and held a parade celebrating the city's working men and women. Over 20,000 workers attended the first celebration, despite having to give up a day's pay. The event was organized by the Central Labor Union of New York, Brooklyn, and New Jersey, which later became part of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). Unions in other states soon followed suit.

After the economic depression of 1883, the Pullman Company, a manufacturer of passenger rail cars, laid off thousands of workers and reduced salaries of others. After negotiations failed, the American Railway Union organized a strike against the company, crippling most rail lines in the central and western United States. The following year, President Grover Cleveland and congress designated Labor Day a national holiday in an attempt to appease workers.

Today, Labor Day is "unofficial last day of summer," as many school districts resume the week before or after. Many retailers offer sales over the long weekend, making it one of the busiest shopping weekends of the year.

TRIM NOTICES

TRIM (Truth in Millage) notices, officially known as Notices of Proposed Property Taxes, are mailed to property owners each year in mid-to-late August. Although they often resemble a tax bill, they are not bills for payment.

The notice outlines your property's assessed and taxable values, proposed property tax rates, estimated taxes for the upcoming year, and any exemptions applied to your property. It also explains how to appeal your property's value or exemptions if you believe they are incorrect.

In addition, the TRIM notice lists the dates, times, and locations of public budget hearings where local taxing authorities—including counties, municipalities, and school boards—will vote on their final millage (tax) rates.

For questions about your property's value or exemptions, contact the Pinellas County Property Appraiser at PCPAO.gov. For questions about tax payments or collection, contact the Pinellas County Tax Collector at PinellasTaxCollector.gov.

NAVIGATING THE POOL DECK: A PARENT'S GUIDE TO PRESCHOOL SWIM CLASSES

Swimming is more than a fun childhood activity—it's an essential life skill, especially for families in Florida. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), drowning is the leading cause of injury-related death for children ages 1 to 4 in the United States. Studies also show that nearly 70% of toddlers who drown were not expected to be near the water. Fortunately, formal swim lessons can reduce a young child's risk of drowning by as much as 88%, making early instruction one of the best investments parents can make.

With so many programs available, choosing the right class may seem overwhelming. The key is finding one that matches your child's comfort level, personality, and stage of development.

Parent-and-Me Transition Classes

If your preschooler is still hesitant around water or struggles with separation anxiety, a parent-assisted class is often the best place to begin. In these lessons, parents join their children in the pool while the instructor guides activities. Your presence provides reassurance while helping your child build trust, confidence, and basic water skills before moving into independent instruction.

Play-Based Group Lessons

Children who are comfortable in the water but haven't yet learned swimming fundamentals often thrive in developmental group classes. Programs labeled "Water Acclimation" or "Beginner Preschool" use games and imaginative activities to teach essential skills. Blowing bubbles develops breath control, retrieving sinking toys encourages submersion, and

playful kicking exercises strengthen coordination. Look for classes with no more than four children per instructor so each child receives frequent practice and individualized attention.

Survival-Focused Swim Programs

Some programs emphasize water survival rather than traditional swim strokes. These highly structured lessons teach children how to roll onto their backs, float independently, control their breathing, and remain safe until help arrives. Families with backyard pools, boats, or homes near lakes, canals, or beaches often choose this type of instruction because it focuses on self-rescue skills that could prove lifesaving.

Questions to Ask Before You Enroll

Before signing up, ask a few important questions. What is the student-to-instructor ratio? Smaller classes provide more hands-on instruction and less waiting between turns. Does the school offer makeup lessons? Preschoolers inevitably miss classes because of illness. Finally, ask about the teaching philosophy. Some instructors emphasize gentle encouragement and gradual progress, while others use a more structured approach. Choose the environment that best fits your child's temperament.

Every child learns differently, but the goal is the same: developing confidence, water awareness, and essential safety skills. By selecting the class that best matches your preschooler's needs, you'll help build a lifelong love of swimming while giving your family greater peace of mind. In the end, the most important lesson isn't perfect strokes—it's learning to stay safe around the water.



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WHY SPORTS SUPERSTITIONS NEVER GO OUT OF STYLE

By Pete Magnani, Publisher

From wearing lucky socks during a winning streak to refusing to step on the foul line, superstitions have long been part of sports. Even in an era dominated by sports science, analytics, nutrition, and advanced training methods, athletes at every level—from Little League to the professional ranks—continue to rely on routines they believe help them perform at their best.

Some rituals are simple. A baseball player may always put on the left cleat before the right. A golfer might use the same ball marker throughout a tournament. Basketball players often follow identical warm-up routines before every game, while hockey players are famous for refusing to shave during the Stanley Cup Playoffs, believing the legendary “playoff beard” brings good fortune.

Other superstitions have become legendary. Tampa Bay Ray and Baseball Hall of Famer Wade Boggs famously ate chicken before every game, took batting practice at precisely 5:17pm, and drew the Hebrew word Chai—meaning “life”—in the batter’s box before every at-bat. Tennis legend Rafael Nadal is known for carefully arranging his water bottles and following the exact same routine before every serve. Michael Jordan wore his University of North Carolina practice shorts beneath his Chicago Bulls uniform throughout much of his NBA career because they gave him confidence.

While these habits may seem unusual, many athletes admit they don’t believe their rituals possess magical powers. Instead, the routines provide familiarity, consistency, and confidence.

Sports psychologists have long recognized that pre-performance routines reduce anxiety by giving athletes a greater

sense of control in situations filled with uncertainty. A hitter cannot control the next pitch, a quarterback cannot predict every defensive adjustment, and a golfer cannot stop an unexpected gust of wind. What athletes can control is their preparation.

By focusing on familiar routines, athletes shift their attention away from distractions and toward the task at hand. Research has shown that athletes who feel prepared and emotionally settled often make better decisions and perform more consistently under pressure. In many cases, the routine itself isn’t what matters—it’s the focused mindset it creates.

Fans have their own superstitions. Many refuse to change seats while their team is winning. Others wear the same jersey every game day or won’t mention a no-hitter in progress for fear of “jinxing” it. During championship runs, families may gather in the same room or repeat the same traditions each game, convinced they’re helping the team. Whether they truly believe in luck or not, these rituals become part of the shared experience of being a fan.

Sports superstitions also vary across cultures. In Japan, baseball players and fans often carry *omamori* good-luck charms from Shinto shrines or Buddhist temples. Throughout Latin America, many athletes wear religious medals or make the sign of the cross before competition. Across Europe, soccer players often enter the field in a specific order or touch the club crest before kickoff. These traditions are often passed from one generation to the next. Modern sports science continues to reinforce the value of consistent pre-performance routines—stretching, visualization, controlled breathing, or listening to music—while making a clear distinction between preparation and superstition. The routine itself isn’t magic; the mental focus it creates can be.

Even so, sports will probably never outgrow superstition. Games are filled with uncertainty, split-second decisions, and unpredictable outcomes. Rituals provide comfort, confidence, and familiarity in situations where so much lies beyond anyone’s control.

Championships are won through talent, preparation, perseverance, and teamwork—but there will always be room in every locker room, dugout, and living room for a lucky pair of socks, a favorite pregame meal, or the comforting belief that today’s familiar



Brent Burns, San Jose Sharks
(Photo by Amy Irvin / The Hockey Writers)
routine might help create tomorrow’s unforgettable moment.

Famous Sports Rituals

Michael Jordan (Chicago Bulls)

Michael Jordan was known for his famous game-day superstition of wearing his University of North Carolina shorts underneath his Chicago Bulls uniform during games. He began the tradition as a reminder of his college career and continued wearing them throughout his NBA success, including his six championship seasons. Jordan believed the routine brought him confidence and helped him stay connected to the mindset that made him a champion.

Tom Brady (Tampa Bay Buccaneers)

Brady emphasized preparation over luck. His disciplined game-day routine of hydration, nutrition, stretching, and visualization helped him maintain focus throughout his career.

Tim Tebow (University of Florida)

Known for his pregame prayer and quiet reflection, Tebow’s visible displays of faith became one of the defining images of his football career.

Patrick Roy (NHL Legend)

Four-time Stanley Cup champion Patrick Roy was famous for his game-day rituals and superstitions as a goaltender. Before games, Roy was known for talking to his goalposts before and during games, convinced they were helping him stop pucks. He also followed a strict pregame preparation routine, including visualizing saves and mentally preparing for the challenges ahead. His unique habits became one of hockey’s most memorable examples of how rituals can build confidence and concentration.



Enes Kanter, New York Knicks
(Photo by Elsa/Getty Images)



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Business Briefs



CELEBRATING AND EXPANDING Congratulations to Indian Rocks Beach residents and owners of IRB Creamery Jade and Will Pendley on five years in business. In May of 2021, the couple took over the neighborhood staple Pinky's Ice Cream & Candy Shop. After working for Pinky's for over 10 years, Jade made the transition from employee to boss, adding her husband as her wingman.

If that wasn't enough to celebrate, Jade and Will have taken on a new venture. Old Florida Cigar & Bait Company, just a few doors down, was put up for sale by owner and operator Tim Chase back in November. Chase ran the business for 15 years before retiring. The store provides anglers and cigar connoisseurs with an assortment of fishing gear, bait, and Tampa's famous hand-rolled cigars. It is open seven days a week from 6am-sunset.

Both shops are located in the Sunrise Plaza at 1401 Gulf Blvd. For more information, call (727) 333-5496 or follow them on Facebook.

NEW HEALTH AND WELLNESS STUDIO The Tox Technique, a lymphatic body sculpting studio designed to sculpt and restore, is one of the new businesses opening this August in the Horizon West Bay building. It is a transformative approach to wellness, blending body contouring modalities with proprietary methods to de-bloat and redefine. Their proprietary body sculpting method incorporates different techniques that can increase metabolic rate, rid the body of excess toxins, and assist with water retention. They also offer "Sculpting Facials," which remove muscle tension and naturally sculpt the face while ridding the body of excess toxins and bloat. These facials include the use of a "Gua Sha" stone and Tox sculpting wand to assist in toning the muscles of the face.

The Tox Technique is a nationwide franchise with the nearest location in Tampa. Women and men are welcome; they also have pregnancy options available. This location is coming soon, contact the studio directly for booking inquiries by calling (601) 843-8699 or drop by at 454 West Bay Drive. They will be offering VIP packages to the first 50 guests at their Grand Opening. For more information email them at Clearwater@TheToxTechnique.com.

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED Volunteer registration is now open for The ANNIIKA driven by Gainbridge at Pelican 2026. Organizers are seeking more than 700 volunteers to fill a variety of roles during the tournament week from November 11th-15th. The \$65 volunteer package includes a custom-made official tournament - branded golf shirt, a hat or visor, two weekly grounds passes, a volunteer credential allowing grounds access and complimentary parking all week, and meals provided on scheduled days. For more information, visit TheAnnika.com/volunteer.

PROVISE CELEBRATES 40 YEARS ProVise Management Group, LLC, a financial planning and investment management firm with offices in Clearwater and Tampa, is celebrating its 40th anniversary. ProVise is a SEC registered Investment Advisor serving over 1200 clients in over 30 states and managing about \$2 billion at a fiduciary standard of care.

Ray Ferrara, Founder and Executive Chair said, "We are humbled by the confidence our clients have placed in us and proud of the excellent advice and service our team members provide each day." ProVise Management Group, LLC is located at 611 Druid Rd E, Suite 105 in Clearwater. Reach them at (727) 441-9022 or Info@ProVise.com.

RECLAIM YOUR INVESTMENT A life settlement is the sale of all or part of an existing life insurance policy. Perhaps the policy is no longer needed or affordable. Instead of letting it lapse or surrendering to the insurance carrier, a structured life settlement transaction may be a better financial option. Boyd Crisler has been providing his expertise to help clients successfully sell all or part of their life insurance policies for over 20 years.

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For Financial Professionals, the emergence of the life settlement market has helped many people uncover value for an asset that wasn't thought to have had much value. Recognizing the fundamental right of a policy owner's ability to assign ownership to a third party can be extremely impactful for your clients.

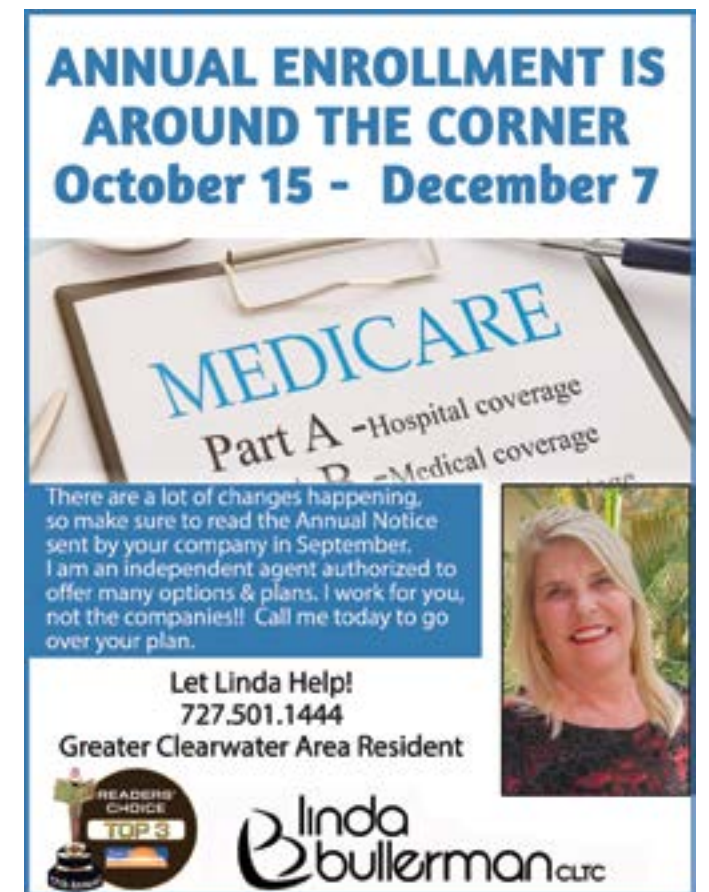
For more information on life settlement transactions, visit BoydSettlements.com or call (727) 365-0076.



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BOATING SAFETY: PREVENTING CRASHES & SAVING LIVES

From the Desk of Sheriff Bob Gualtieri

Florida is the boating capital of the United States, which also means we have the highest number of boating accidents. The United States Coast Guard (USCG) recorded 619 boating accidents in 2023 with the leading causes being operator inattention/improper lookout, inexperience/lack of training, and speed. It's prime boating season in Pinellas County and before you head out on the Gulf, Bay, or Intracoastal Waterway, make sure you have a responsible vessel operator and the proper safety equipment onboard to prevent you from becoming a statistic.

Florida doesn't require any kind of boating license, but to legally operate a vessel of ten horsepower or more, you must be at least 14 years of age and anyone born after January 1st, 1988 must take an approved boating safety education course. Vessel operators must carry proof of that certification, or they can be issued a citation.

Vessels are required to have several kinds of safety equipment, including a (Type I, II, or III) personal flotation device (PFD) for each passenger, a throwable ring or cushion, an audible signaling device such as a whistle or a horn, and a USCG-approved fire extinguisher. Additionally, requirements for specific equipment may vary based on the vessel or activity.

If you're on a personal watercraft or jet ski or you're being towed behind a vessel in any way, you must wear a PFD. Children under six years old must wear a PFD whenever the vessel is underway. A Type V Hybrid PFD – which is inflated with a CO2 cartridge or can be manually inflated – may be substituted for operators or passengers, but those must be worn, not just stored onboard. All motorized boats are required to have a fire extinguisher, but larger boats may need two or three fire extinguishers of different kinds depending on their size.

Of course, there's more to safe boating than having a qualified operator with the proper safety equipment. Awareness is another vital component. Watch for signs indicating no-wake or minimum-wake zones. These are the marine equivalent of speed limits and can be in place to help prevent collisions, reduce harm to protected species or ecosystems, or protect property. The vessel operator should always be looking out for hazards including boats, swimmers, divers, underwater obstructions, or structures.

Finally, pay attention to weather conditions before you head out. Check out the forecast including storm potential, wind speeds, and tides. As some know too well, conditions can change quickly here in Florida, especially during the summer months.

Being prepared, compliant with safety regulations, and following these simple tips all but guarantee a fun, safe day on the water.



NEW PLAN AIMS TO PROTECT TAMPA BAY FROM FLOODING

By Lara Milligan, Natural Resources Agent UF/IFAS Extension Pinellas County

Tampa Bay is taking a big step toward preparing for future flooding, and local residents are being encouraged to take part. A \$1.99 million grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation will fund the creation of a new Coastal Master Plan designed to reduce flood risks across the region while protecting natural habitats.

The plan will cover seven counties (Citrus, Hernando, Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Manatee, Sarasota) and focus on helping coastal and inland communities that are most vulnerable to rising water and recurring flooding. Leaders say the effort is needed now more than ever, as much of the region sits at low elevations and faces increasing flood risk—even during smaller storms.

Rather than relying only on traditional infrastructure like seawalls, the plan will emphasize nature-based solutions. These include restoring wetlands, protecting mangroves, and improving natural shorelines—features that can absorb floodwaters and reduce damage while also supporting fish and wildlife.

The four-year effort will bring together more than 40 partners, including local governments, universities, technical experts, and community organizations. Together, they will map flood-prone areas, identify solutions, and recommend projects that can help protect both people and the environment.

An important part of the plan is public input. Organizers say community involvement will help ensure the final plan reflects real needs, especially in neighborhoods that have historically been underserved.

Residents will have several ways to get involved. Public workshops and meetings will be held throughout the region, giving people a chance to learn about flood risks, ask questions, and share their ideas. Community groups will also help lead outreach efforts, making it easier for residents to stay informed and engaged.

In addition, an online platform will allow users to explore maps and see how flooding could affect their area in the future.

Organizers say local knowledge is key to making the plan successful. Residents who have experienced flooding can offer valuable insights that data alone may not capture.

The Tampa Bay region has been identified as one of the most vulnerable areas in the country to storm surge, making long-term planning critical.

By combining science, community input, and natural solutions, leaders hope the Coastal Master Plan will help build a safer, more resilient future for the region.

Residents interested in participating can learn more and find upcoming events at CoastalTampaBay.org.



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CLEARWATER MARINE AQUARIUM UNVEILS NEW ANIMAL HABITATS

Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA) is giving visitors new reasons to explore this summer with two major animal experiences that broaden the nonprofit’s conservation and education mission. The expansion introduces California sea lions, harbor seals, tropical birds, tortoises and small mammals to the aquarium’s resident animal family, offering a closer look at wildlife from ocean and land habitats.

At the center of the expansion is *Pinniped Pier*, a new waterfront habitat overlooking Clearwater Bay and designed specifically for pinnipeds, the group of marine mammals that includes seals and sea lions. The habitat officially opened to guests in July and marks an important milestone for CMA: the arrival of Tuna and Wahoo, two female California sea lions who are now making their home at the aquarium.

The sea lions join harbor seals that arrived earlier this year, expanding CMA’s marine mammal care while creating a new platform for public education. *Pinniped Pier* was designed to encourage natural behaviors and well-being, with spaces for swimming, resting and sunning, plus updated thematic elements and specialized sound-mitigation technology.

“Clearwater Marine Aquarium is entering an exciting new chapter with the opening of the Pinniped Pier habitat,” said Joe Handy, CMA’s CEO. “This project represents a significant step in strengthening our animal care capabilities and enhancing the guest experience while continuing to invest in the long-term future of our facility.”

For guests, the habitat offers an immersive opportunity to observe sea lions and seals while learning about challenges they face in the wild. Native to the Pacific Coast of North America, California sea lions are known for intelligence, social behavior and vocal personalities. They are also considered indicators of ocean health because they are vulnerable to marine ecosystem changes.

Although sea lions live thousands of miles from Florida’s Gulf Coast, the threats they face are global. Marine debris entanglement, pollution, harmful algal blooms and climate-related ocean changes can endanger marine mammals and their ecosystems. Through *Pinniped Pier*, CMA connects the stories of Tuna, Wahoo and its harbor seals with broader conservation concerns.

“Although these animals are found thousands of miles from Florida, their stories help us better understand the health of our oceans,” Handy said. “By introducing guests to sea lions and harbor seals, we can inspire greater awareness and action to protect marine life everywhere.”

The new habitat was made possible through a \$6 million grant from the Pinellas County Tourism Development Council, supporting CMA’s continued efforts to expand animal care, strengthen conservation education and enhance the visitor experience.



CMA’s summer expansion reaches beyond marine mammals with *Wings & Wildlife*, a new habitat introducing tropical birds and tortoises, and *Animal Connections Village*, featuring two sugar gliders, a chinchilla and Benjamin, the Virginia opossum. Together, the areas expand CMA’s resident family while continuing its focus on rescue, rehabilitation, conservation and lifelong care.

Several of the new residents came to Clearwater after the closure of Miami Seaquarium, where animal care teams worked to find safe, permanent homes for the animals. CMA welcomed four tropical bird species for the first time: a Green-winged Macaw, a Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, an Umbrella Cockatoo and a Red-lored Amazon Parrot. Several tortoises also arrived from Miami Seaquarium, while others were rescued locally in Clearwater.

The colorful new flock gives guests an opportunity to meet animals with distinct personalities. Big Bird, a 30-year-old Green-winged Macaw, is known for bright red plumage, dancing and enthusiastic “Hello!” greetings. Powder, a Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, is recognized for his affectionate nature, while Skipper, an Umbrella Cockatoo, stands out for his dramatic crest. Mr. Thumbs, a Red-lored Amazon Parrot, whistles, makes kissing sounds and even purrs like a cat.

The *Wings & Wildlife* habitat is sponsored by Universal Parking, CMA’s parking partner, while the new animal experiences further reinforce the aquarium’s evolving role as a home for animals that need long-term care. By welcoming birds, tortoises and small mammals alongside dolphins, seals, sea lions and other marine species, CMA is creating new ways for guests to connect with wildlife and understand the many forms rescue can take.

According to Handy, the new habitats reflect CMA’s continuing commitment to rescue, rehabilitation, conservation and education while giving visitors more opportunities to form personal connections with animals from around the world. Those connections, he said, are central to inspiring action on behalf of wildlife and the natural places they depend on.

With *Pinniped Pier*, *Wings & Wildlife* and *Animal Connections Village* now part of the guest experience, Clearwater Marine Aquarium is entering a new chapter that blends animal care with immersive storytelling. Visitors can meet sea lions, observe harbor seals, discover tropical birds and encounter rescued animals in settings designed to educate, engage and inspire.

For CMA, the expansion is more than a summer attraction. It is a continuation of the aquarium’s mission to use animal stories as a bridge to conservation, helping guests see how the health of individual animals, local waterways and global oceans are all connected.



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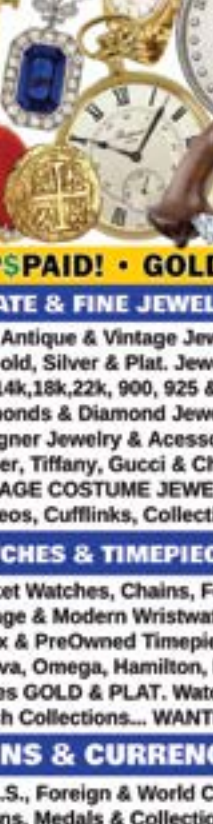
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WAY DOWN UPON THE SUWANNEE RIVER

By Bob & Becky Griffin, Local Writers

Recently, we took a trip to Kentucky and spent a few days in Bardstown, a historic town 40 miles south of Louisville. The Stephen Foster Museum and My Old Kentucky Home mansion are both there. Today, this 1,300-acre state park preserves the soaring brick mansion of Judge John Rowan. Though his cousin, Stephen Foster, never actually lived there, he visited frequently, and the estate's sweeping beauty inspired him to pen "My Old Kentucky Home" — now that state's official anthem, sung every May at the start of the Kentucky Derby. In a striking historical irony, Foster also wrote "Old Folks at Home," Florida's official state song, having never once set foot in the Sunshine State.

Stephen Foster did not have an easy life. The inkwell on his desk in Pittsburgh was always full, but his pockets were usually empty. It was 1851, and the twenty-five-year-old composer was pacing his room, humming a melody that felt as warm as a southern breeze. He was writing a song about a longing for home, a nostalgic pining for a simpler place.

He had the lyrics mostly finished, but he was missing a name—a two-syllable southern river to anchor the chorus. He had originally scrawled “Yazoo,” but it sounded too harsh. He asked his brother, Morrison, for a suggestion. Morrison flipped through an atlas and pointed to a tiny, twisting ribbon of water in Florida. “How about the Suwannee?” Morrison asked. Stephen smiled, shortening it to fit the meter. “Way down upon de Swanee River.”

Thus, "Old Folks at Home" was born. Yet, for all the deep, humid longing Stephen breathed into those lines, he had never once set foot in Florida. He had never felt the thick southern heat of the state, nor had he ever seen the Spanish moss draping over the real Suwannee River. To Stephen, Florida was not a geographic reality; it was a beautiful, imagined paradise—a canvas for his own growing sense of displacement.

That displacement soon echoed in his personal life. In 1850, Stephen married Jane Denny MacDowell. Though they had a daughter, Marion, their marriage was a tempest of financial strain and emotional distance. Stephen was a genius of melody but a tragedy of business. In an era before copyright laws protected songwriters, he sold his masterpieces for flat, meager fees, watched publishers make fortunes off his heartaches, and slowly watched his own world crumble.



Statue outside Stephen Foster
Museum, Bardstown KY

By 1860, desperate to spark his career, Stephen moved to New York City. But the city was cold, and the specter of the Civil War dampened the nation's appetite for his sentimental ballads. Depressed, estranged from Jane and his daughter, and battling a worsening dependence on alcohol, Stephen retreated into the shadows of Manhattan's cheap lodging houses.

On a freezing January morning in 1864, the music finally stopped. Confined to a cheap room at the New England Hotel, burning with a severe fever, a weakened Stephen stood up to wash his face. Dizzy, he fainted, collapsing heavily against the ceramic washbasin. The basin shattered under his weight, its sharp shards cutting a deep, terrible gash into his neck.

He was found bleeding and barely conscious by a chambermaid. Though his friend George Cooper rushed him to Bellevue Hospital, Stephen was too weak from the fever and the catastrophic blood loss to fight. On January 13, 1864, America's first great troubadour died peacefully at the tragic age of thirty-seven. When they searched his meager pockets, they found only thirty-eight cents in coins. Alongside the change was a scrap of paper carrying a penciled line, perhaps a lyric for a song he never got to write: "Dear friends and gentle hearts."

The Pennsylvania Railroad attached a special car to a train to carry his body back home to Pittsburgh. He was laid to rest in Pittsburgh's Allegheny Cemetery, buried to the gentle, weeping strains of "Old Folks at Home" played by a brass band. He died penniless and far from home, but his music drifted south, finding the very river he had only ever visited in his dreams. Stephen Foster is credited with 286 total works written over a career that lasted less than 20 years.

As the years went on, his songs basically turned into folklore. “My Old Kentucky Home” evolved from a mournful ballad into a soaring anthem of state pride, while “Old Folks at Home” became synonymous with the romanticized, sunny vistas of a Florida he only ever visited in his mind. In death, Stephen Foster achieved the ultimate artistic irony: he became the foundational voice of American song, forever wandering the beautiful, imagined landscapes of the home he always longed for.

To visit the Rowan Mansion and Stephen Foster Museum, find My Old Kentucky Home State Park at 501 E. Stephen Foster Avenue, Bardstown, Kentucky (VisitMyOldKyHome.com).



*Vintage Curteich postcard featuring
a scenic view of the Suwannee River
near White Springs, Florida*

MEDICARE PILOT EXPANDS ACCESS TO GLP-1 WEIGHT-LOSS DRUGS

Millions of older Americans could soon find it easier to afford a new generation of weight-loss medications as Medicare evaluates expanded access to Glucagon-like Peptide-1 (GLP-1) drugs for beneficiaries with obesity and prediabetes.

The demonstration program, scheduled to run through 2027, would allow eligible Medicare beneficiaries to obtain certain GLP-1 medications, including Zepbound and Wegovy, at a reduced monthly cost. Many patients currently pay hundreds of dollars out of pocket, placing these medications beyond the reach of many retirees living on fixed incomes.

An estimated 3.8 million Medicare beneficiaries could qualify, making it one of the largest federal efforts to evaluate broader insurance coverage for anti-obesity medications. The program is designed to help determine whether expanded access to these drugs can improve health outcomes while reducing long-term healthcare costs.

Originally developed to treat Type 2 diabetes, GLP-1 medications mimic a naturally occurring hormone that regulates blood sugar, slows stomach emptying, and increases feelings of fullness. As a result, patients often eat fewer calories and experience significant, sustained weight loss when the medications are combined with healthy eating habits and regular physical activity.

Clinical trials have shown average weight loss of 15 to 20 percent of body weight over approximately 15 to 17 months, surpassing results achieved by earlier generations of prescription weight-loss medications. Researchers have also found that weight reduction can lower the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, sleep apnea, and other obesity-related conditions. For older adults, losing

excess weight may also improve mobility, reduce the risk of falls, lessen joint pain, and make chronic illnesses easier to manage.

Supporters believe broader access to these medications could improve quality of life while reducing future Medicare spending by preventing expensive complications associated with obesity and diabetes. Critics, however, point to the high cost of GLP-1 drugs and question whether improved health outcomes will be enough to offset billions of dollars in additional federal spending. Health experts caution that GLP-1 medications are not appropriate for everyone. Common side effects include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, and abdominal discomfort, particularly during the first weeks of treatment. The medications are intended to complement—not replace—healthy eating and regular exercise, and many patients regain weight if treatment is discontinued.

The demonstration program will provide Medicare with valuable data on patient participation, health outcomes, medication adherence, and overall costs. Those findings could help shape future decisions about whether Medicare permanently expands coverage for anti-obesity medications. For millions of older Americans who have struggled to afford these therapies, the program could represent an important step toward broader access to treatments that may improve both health and quality of life.







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Community News



BELLEAIR GARDEN CLUB

Submitted by Carol Mears

The Belleair Garden Club has been busy all summer bringing people together through gardening, education, volunteer service, and community events. From beautifying public spaces to hosting hands-on workshops and welcoming new members, the club continues to make a positive impact throughout the Belleair community. As summer continues, residents are invited to join in the fun with several upcoming events designed to educate, inspire, and connect gardeners of all experience levels.

The club is planning an engaging August workshop celebrating the connection between gardening and wellness. Participants can look forward to exploring herbs for tea, mindful movement, and practical ideas for incorporating nature into a healthier lifestyle while enjoying an interactive, hands-on experience. Find event details, registration information, and updates at BelleairGardenClub.com.

Mark your calendar for an opportunity to swap plants, share a meal, and enjoy time with fellow gardeners at the September Plant Swap & Potluck on September 12th. These gatherings have become a favorite way for members and guests to exchange plants, ideas, inspiration, and gardening tips.

Recent club activities included a successful Patriotic Birdhouse Workshop, where guests painted decorative birdhouses while learning simple ways to make their landscapes more welcoming to birds and other wildlife. Belleair Garden Club member volunteers have also been busy sprucing up the Town of Belleair's pollinator gardens, helping keep these beautiful spaces healthy, colorful, and inviting for residents, visitors, and pollinators alike.

Whether you're an experienced gardener or simply looking to connect with others who enjoy nature, learn new skills, or give back through community service, the Belleair Garden Club welcomes you. Membership is open to everyone, and guests are always encouraged to attend a meeting or event to discover what the club has to offer.

The Belleair Garden Club is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to gardening, conservation, education, and community involvement. To learn more about upcoming events, membership, volunteer opportunities, and clubhouse rentals, visit BelleairGardenClub.com.



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Community News

ROTARY CLUB OF INDIAN ROCKS BEACH

Submitted by David Kline

The Rotary Club of Indian Rocks Beach has completed another year of service to our local, national and global communities. The Rotary International year starts on July 1st and concludes on June 30th. For over 35,000 Rotary clubs and over 1.2 million members in more than 220 countries and geographical areas it's the chance for new leadership, new projects, and new ways to 'do good in the world' and in our local communities. The Rotary Club of Indian Rocks Beach is no exception. June 30th marked the end of club president Mark Arnold's year of leadership and the beginning of our 2026-2027 club president Shawn Barklow's leadership.

A new year is also a chance to reflect on what our club has accomplished during Mark's presidency. Our fundraising efforts from 2024-25 culminated last summer and made it possible for our club to provide more than \$45,000 in relief funds to our local non-profit organizations after the devastation of Hurricanes Helene and Milton. We were proud to assist in the recovery of the Beach Art Center, Calvary Episcopal Church and the IRB Public Library.

Our Interact Club, composed of student members at Richard O. Jacobson Technical High School, supported a project that impacted the lives of many needy people. The Rise Against Hunger Project packed more than 20,000 meals destined for distribution in Haiti and the Philippines last fall.

With our partners of many years at Publix and the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, we distributed over 110 full holiday meals at Thanksgiving and Christmas to local families that needed support during the holidays.

During the 2025-2026 year, our members raised more than \$90,000 by running our major projects (Big Game Raffle, Rotary Runs the Beach, Pancake Breakfast, and Flags for Service) as well as through direct community and member donations. Those funds are distributed to a multitude of local programs, such as the ones mentioned above, and also include scholarships, educational opportunities, veterans organizations, and global Rotary initiatives such as polio eradication, temporary shelter and clean water.

Everything that IRB Rotary accomplishes through the years could not happen without the support of all of you, our friends in the community. By way of that support, you all become partners in the improvements of the lives of those who struggle with life's adversities. For all of that support, we sincerely thank you! We celebrate Mark's leadership and thank him for his 'service' to the community.

Our Rotary Club in IRB is a special group of people dedicated to these core values -- service, leadership, friendship, integrity, and diversity. If you share these values and want to make a difference in your community, we invite you to sample our hospitality by joining us at one of our weekly meetings. We meet every Wednesday morning at Crabby Bill's main restaurant, starting at 7:15am. Please consider joining us in our efforts to "do good in the world."

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RAISING THE LANDSCAPE: THE TRANSFORMATION AFTER A HOUSE LIFT

By Randy Lee, Landscape Designer

In our last article, we explored the process of house lifting and why more Florida homeowners are choosing to elevate their homes to protect their properties from future flooding and storms. While raising a home is an impressive engineering achievement, what happens after the lift is just as important — reconnecting the home with the landscape that surrounds it. A house lift changes the relationship between a home and its outdoor spaces. Once the structural work is complete, thoughtful landscape design helps restore balance, beauty, and functionality to the property while creating a seamless connection between the home and the outdoors.

One of the biggest challenges after a house lift is creating a natural transition from the newly elevated home to the surrounding property. Driveways, walkways, patios, stairs, and planting areas must all be thoughtfully redesigned to accommodate the new elevation while maintaining a welcoming flow. A successful landscape design does more than simply adjust to the changes—it enhances them. Layered plantings, carefully designed hardscapes, outdoor lighting, and intentional pathways help soften transitions and create a property that feels cohesive and inviting.

Many homeowners discover that a house lift provides an opportunity to rethink their entire outdoor environment. Instead of simply restoring what existed before, they can create spaces that better reflect how they enjoy their homes today. New landscape features may include updated patios, outdoor entertaining areas, improved drainage solutions, pool enhancements, and gardens designed specifically for Florida's climate. And don't forget about the extra garage and storage space!

Florida landscapes face unique challenges, including intense heat, heavy rainfall, coastal conditions, and storm exposure. Choosing the right plants and materials is essential to creating a landscape that is both beautiful and resilient. Florida-friendly plants, proper drainage, and thoughtful grading can help protect the property while enhancing its overall appearance.

The final details are what transform a construction project into a home. Well-designed stairs, pathways, lighting, plantings, and outdoor living spaces help the property feel complete. A thoughtfully designed landscape bridges the transition between the original home and its new elevation while preserving the character homeowners love while creating a stronger foundation for the future. A successful house lift does not end when the home is raised; it is completed when the landscape brings everything back together.

Summer Checklist

- Inspect irrigation systems** – Check sprinkler heads, adjust coverage, and look for leaks to keep plants healthy during the hottest months.
- Refresh mulch and planting beds** – Add fresh mulch to conserve moisture, regulate soil temperature, and keep landscapes looking polished.
- Prune strategically** – Remove dead or damaged branches while avoiding heavy pruning during extreme summer heat.
- Prepare for storms** – Trim trees, secure outdoor items, and address drainage concerns before summer storms arrive.

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



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ROCKIN FOR HEROES RETURNS TO VFW POST 10094

By Steve Kalnasy

On Saturday, November 7th, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 10094 will host the Second Annual Rockin' for Heroes, a Veterans Day celebration honoring America's veterans while commemorating AMERICA 250, the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Combining legendary classic rock with patriotic purpose, the event celebrates the service and sacrifice of America's veterans while raising funds to support VFW Post 10094 and several local veterans' organizations. Following the tremendous success of last year's inaugural event, organizers expect another large crowd for what promises to be one of the area's premier Veterans Day weekend celebrations. Guests can look forward to an afternoon filled with outstanding live entertainment, patriotic tributes, food and beverages, and opportunities to connect with veterans, military families, and members of the local community in a festive and meaningful setting.

The first Rockin' for Heroes exceeded expectations, drawing nearly 900 attendees to the grounds of Indian Rocks Beach VFW Post 10094. The event honored military service while paying special tribute to the 250th anniversary of the United States Marine Corps, creating a memorable afternoon that blended live music, patriotism, and community pride.

This year's concert features an impressive lineup of nationally



recognized classic rock performers alongside artists with distinguished military backgrounds, making for a unique Veterans Day experience that celebrates both American music and the enduring spirit of those who have defended our freedoms.

Co-headlining the event are Atlanta Rhythm Section and Firefall, two legendary bands whose music has remained a staple of classic rock radio for decades.

Few Southern rock bands have enjoyed the longevity and influence of Atlanta Rhythm Section. Formed in Doraville, Georgia, in the early 1970s, the band became known for its distinctive blend of Southern rock, blues, country, jazz, and melodic pop. Their catalog includes timeless hits such as So Into You, Imaginary Lover, Champagne Jam, Spooky, Do It or Die, and I'm Not Gonna Let It Bother Me Tonight.

Firefall, formed in Boulder, Colorado, helped define the soft rock sound of the late 1970s by combining rock, country, and folk influences into a style uniquely their own. Their string of radio favorites—including You Are the Woman, Just Remember I Love You, Strange Way, Mexico, Cinderella, and Headed for a Fall—continue to receive regular airplay



on Classic Rock and Yacht Rock stations.

Returning by popular demand is The Derek Stoner Band. Led by retired U.S. Army Special Forces veteran Derek Stoner, whose 20-year military career included multiple combat deployments, the Nashville-based performer delivers authentic country music inspired by artists such as George Strait, Alan Jackson, and Travis Tritt. His heartfelt songwriting and energetic performances have earned him a growing national following.

Opening the afternoon is Detroit-based Two-Toned, featuring vocalist SolSong, whose appearance on NBC's The Voice introduced his powerful voice to a national audience, along with Melissa Kalnasy, former lead vocalist of Arbor Reign. Together they will kick off the festivities with an energetic set of classic favorites.

Doors open at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, November 7th at VFW Post 10094, 14450 Walsingham Road, Largo. Tickets are available now through Eventbrite, with additional event information available at VFWPost10094.com.

Founded in 1899, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is one of the nation's oldest and largest veterans service organizations. Established by veterans returning from the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection, the VFW was created to advocate for benefits and medical care for wounded service members at a time when few resources existed. Today, the organization and its Auxiliary include more than 1.4 million members dedicated to serving veterans, military families, and their communities.

Proceeds from Rockin' for Heroes help support the mission of VFW Post 10094 and several organizations serving veterans throughout the Tampa Bay area.

As America celebrates its 250th birthday, Rockin' for Heroes offers an opportunity for the community to come together through music, patriotism, and gratitude, honoring those who have served while supporting vital, life-changing programs that continue to make a profound and lasting difference in the lives of our cherished veterans today and for generations to come.





JULIE MARCUS, SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS, PINELLAS COUNTY

AUGUST 18, 2026 PRIMARY ELECTION

3 WAYS TO VOTE



Vote By Mail

- All mail ballot requests expired in 2024!
- Deadline to request a mail ballot is August 6 by 5 p.m.
- Request a mail ballot at VotePinellas.gov or call 727-464-VOTE (8683).
- Mail back your ballot or take it to any one of our mail ballot return locations. (Return location days and times vary - check locations at VotePinellas.gov.)



Vote Early

- Vote early at any one of our 3 Early Voting locations: August 8-16.
 - Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
 - Saturday-Sunday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Bring your photo and signature ID to avoid delays.



Vote on Election Day

- Voters are required to vote in the precinct where they live.
- Polls are open 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Bring your photo and signature ID to avoid delays.
- Visit VotePinellas.gov or call 727-464-VOTE (8683) to find your Election Day precinct and polling place information and a list of acceptable forms of ID.

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Community News

CLOTHES TO KIDS

Submitted by Carolyn Stroud

The countdown to the first day of school is on, and Clothes To Kids is hard at work preparing our shoppers for a confident start to the school year. As children across Greater Tampa Bay shop for their free school wardrobes, we need your help keeping our racks stocked. Donations of new or gently used clothing ensure every child can head back to the classroom feeling ready to learn. Our most-needed items include:

- Tops for little boys and little girls (youth sizes S-XL)
- Shorts and pants for little boys and little girls (youth sizes 4-14)
- Little boys' and young men's boxer briefs (new only, sizes S-XXL)
- Jackets (all sizes)

Our annual Shoetober shoe collection kicks off October 1st. Throughout the month, our community comes together to collect new and gently used shoes for local school-age children. Start setting aside those shoes now and help us put confident feet in the classroom this fall.

For information on shopping, donating, and volunteering, visit ClothestoKids.org.

CASA PINELLAS

Join CASA's Scavenger Hunt on November 7th and explore downtown St. Pete in a whole new way. \$35 gets you more than just a ticket, it's your pass to a full day of fun with a purpose. Grab your friends, build a team, and race through the city completing challenges, earning points, and discovering fun, cool spots around St. Pete.

Your ticket includes an exclusive t-shirt, entry to the hunt, and an after-party at Good Night John Boy with a DJ, a drink, and lunch. It's the perfect mix of adventure, teamwork, and giving back, helping support survivors in the community while making unforgettable memories.

CASA is the official domestic violence center for Pinellas County and has provided lifesaving services to women, children, and men living with domestic violence for over 40 years. For more information, visit CASAPinellas.org.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER BRIAN SCOTT

Submitted by Coleen Chaney

Floridians have made one thing abundantly clear: affordability is pushing many families to their breaking point. Rising housing costs, insurance premiums, and everyday expenses have made it harder for people to get ahead. We hear you loud and clear.

This November, voters will decide whether to approve a constitutional amendment that provides significant property tax relief while also limiting how local governments raise and spend property tax revenue. This proposal has the potential to provide meaningful tax relief for homeowners, but it will also require local governments to adapt to reduced revenues. Both of those things can be true at the same time.

If the voters approve this amendment, Pinellas County Government will honor their decision. We will adapt, continue to provide the core functions of government, and remain focused on delivering essential services efficiently and responsibly.

At the end of the day, this decision belongs to the people. Whatever the outcome, we will respect the will of our voters and continue working every day to earn their trust.



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Community News

PINELLAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Submitted by Richard Butler

Registration for Ride and Run with the Stars (RRWTS) is now open signaling a new era of our signature holiday event at Safety Harbor Waterfront Park!

For 32 years, RRWTS has been the largest law enforcement sponsored holiday fundraiser in the Tampa Bay area. This year we're thrilled to announce the event is being reimagined with a new date, new venue, and new races.

Join us on Saturday, November 21st at Safety Harbor Waterfront Park to kick off giving season with a brand-new catalog of events. The traditional 5K Run, 1-mile Family Fun Run, and 10-mile Bike Ride will return. The new venue allows for the addition of a 10K Run and 62-mile bike ride.

An early bird rate of \$50 will cover the individual registration for the 5K Run, 10K Run, 10-mile Bike Ride, or 62-Mile Bike Ride through August 31st. The rate increases to \$60 September 1st through the day of the event. The Family Fun Run is priced at \$45 for adults and \$35 for children 12 years of age and under.

Over the years, thousands of Pinellas County children and families have received assistance thanks to RRWTS, which funds the Sheriff's Christmas Sharing Project. In 2025, participants raised enough money to provide food, clothing, books, and toys to 482 children and 201 families.

Visit RideandRunwiththeStars.com for more information and to register.

HERITAGE VILLAGE

Pinellas County residents gathered to celebrate two historic anniversaries at the All-American 50 at 250 Bash at Heritage Village Museum & Park on Saturday, June 27th. The free community festival honored Heritage Village's 50th anniversary along with America's 250th anniversary. Attendees dressed in patriotic attire explored the 21-acre park, which featured live music, food trucks and classic vehicles, and historical demonstrations. The festival's "Red, White & Woof Zone" drew large crowds as local pups competed for top honors in the Patriotic Dog Costume Contest.

The event also marked the grand opening of two new exhibitions: 50 Years of Collecting, Preserving, and Sharing in the Roy Helms gallery, and the opening of the Many Voices, One Nation: Stories of Democracy in Our Parks exhibition in the Madeira Beach Cottage.

Many Voices, One Nation: Stories of Democracy in our Parks is created by Heritage Village and students at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg. Developed by the Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street and the National Museum of American History, this collaborative exhibition is made possible through the support of the Ford Foundation, Florida Humanities and Pinellas County Parks & Conservation Resources.

For more information about 50th anniversary events and exhibits, visit HeritageVillageFL.org/50thanniversary.

Heritage Village is a 21-acre history museum and park in Largo. As part of Pinellas County's Parks & Conservation Resources Department, it is home to some of Pinellas County's oldest historic structures and offers a window into the culture and history of the region. Learn more at HeritageVillageFL.org.

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Community News

MORTON PLANT HOSPITAL

Submitted by Janet O'Harrow

Morton Plant Hospital announced the appointment of Casey Childers, New Director of Operations, in May. Childers also received his Ph.D. in organization and strategic management from Liberty University that month. For Childers, the timing felt especially meaningful because Morton Plant is already part of his family's story.



His wife was born at Morton Plant, and earlier this year the couple welcomed their third child at Morton Plant, making his new role feel like a full-circle moment for the Childers family. A graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, Childers began his career as an officer in the United States Army, where his leadership style was shaped by service, discipline and responsibility.

During a 2018 deployment to southern Afghanistan, Childers suffered a back injury while making sure every member of his team made it out safely. That life-changing moment led him to a new path in not-for-profit health care, where he continues his leadership journey and impact.

Volunteers Needed - Morton Plant Hospital is seeking volunteers to help in the Attic Resale Shop and the hospital gift shop for weekly four-hour shifts. The Attic has been a staple on Fort Harrison Avenue for 37 years. Call (727) 461-8010 to learn more about volunteering.

CLEARWATER YACHT CLUB

The Clearwater Yacht Club (CYC) announced plans to move forward with a new clubhouse initiative, replacing the Club's current facility with a purpose-built, modern waterfront destination. The approximately \$15 million project represents the Club's largest capital investment in its 115-year history.

For more than a century, CYC has been a beacon of excellence, camaraderie, and maritime tradition on Florida's Gulf Coast, fostering friendships, celebrating local culture, and hosting memorable events for generations. The new clubhouse will be a significant upgrade in both form and function. Key features of the design include modern dining and bar areas, a large pool with a dedicated family pool area and a resort-style pool bar, enhanced waterfront and dock access, covered parking, and dedicated event space.

Construction is planned to begin next Spring with a Grand Opening targeted for Fall 2028. CYC will remain fully open and operational throughout the construction period, ensuring members can continue to enjoy the Club without interruption. CYC invites members, guests, and the broader Clearwater community to be part of this historic chapter, where tradition meets innovation and the spirit of Clearwater sails on. For more information, visit ClearwaterYachtClub.org.

MILITARY ORDER OF WORLD WARS

The Clearwater Chapter of the Military Order of World Wars meets the first Tuesday of each month at the Dunedin Golf Club, 1050 Palm Blvd, Dunedin. Social hour is at 11:30am followed by lunch and a short program. Active duty, retired or former Military Officers and their spouses are invited to attend. The MOWW Clearwater Chapter invites those interested to RSVP for lunch by emailing Col. Brian K. Smith at SmithBK@comcast.net.



Community News



BELLEAIR BEACH LADIES LUNCHEON CLUB (BBLC)

All set for the upcoming year, BBLC looks forward to a new year filled with great food, friends, and programs. The charity for this year is The Kind Mouse, which ensures that children receive food, as many go without. Not just during the school year, but all year. We are looking forward to working with this charitable organization.

Don't let the name fool you- not just Belleair Beach, but all surrounding areas are welcome. There is a \$25.00 yearly membership fee; each luncheon is \$37.00 and includes bread, salad, a hearty meal, dessert, and a glass of wine. We meet at local restaurants on the second Tuesday of the month (one exception), October through May, and have a different program each time. The group is a wonderful mix of ladies enjoying a lovely lunch together.

If you would like more information or to join, contact Treasurer Deborah Hendricks at (727) 453-2193 or dsbrown55@yahoo.com.

SHEPHERD'S VILLAGE

Submitted by Sherry Chandler

You may not have known Shepherd's Village has quietly served this community for 35 years, but chances are you know a single mom. She might be your sister, coworker, daughter, neighbor, or the mom cheering alone at the soccer field who never quite lets on how much she's carrying.

For 35 years, Shepherd's Village has walked alongside single moms and their children — offering housing, support, and Christ-centered encouragement so families can face their future with confidence. What began with one single mom and a step of faith has grown into a village where women find stability, community, and hope.

We've often been called the best-kept secret in town, not because lives weren't being changed, but because the work has always been quietly happening behind our doors. As we celebrate 35 years, we believe it's time the secret is shared. When a single mom is supported, her children are strengthened, and when families are strengthened, our entire community becomes stronger.

For 35 years, single moms and their children have been finding hope and rebuilding their futures right here in your backyard; now we're inviting our community inside the story. Join us as we celebrate 35 years of impact at our Annual Gala on September 25th at the Opal Sands on Clearwater Beach, including a Sunset Social, Silent Auction, and Dinner Program. A limited block of rooms is available at the resort for our gala guests.

Visit ShepherdsVillage.com/2026gala for event information and tickets. We've been in your neighborhood for 35 years, it's time to meet your village.

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