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Snow **BIRDS**

Gulf Coast-South

A Winter Visitor Publication
January 2011



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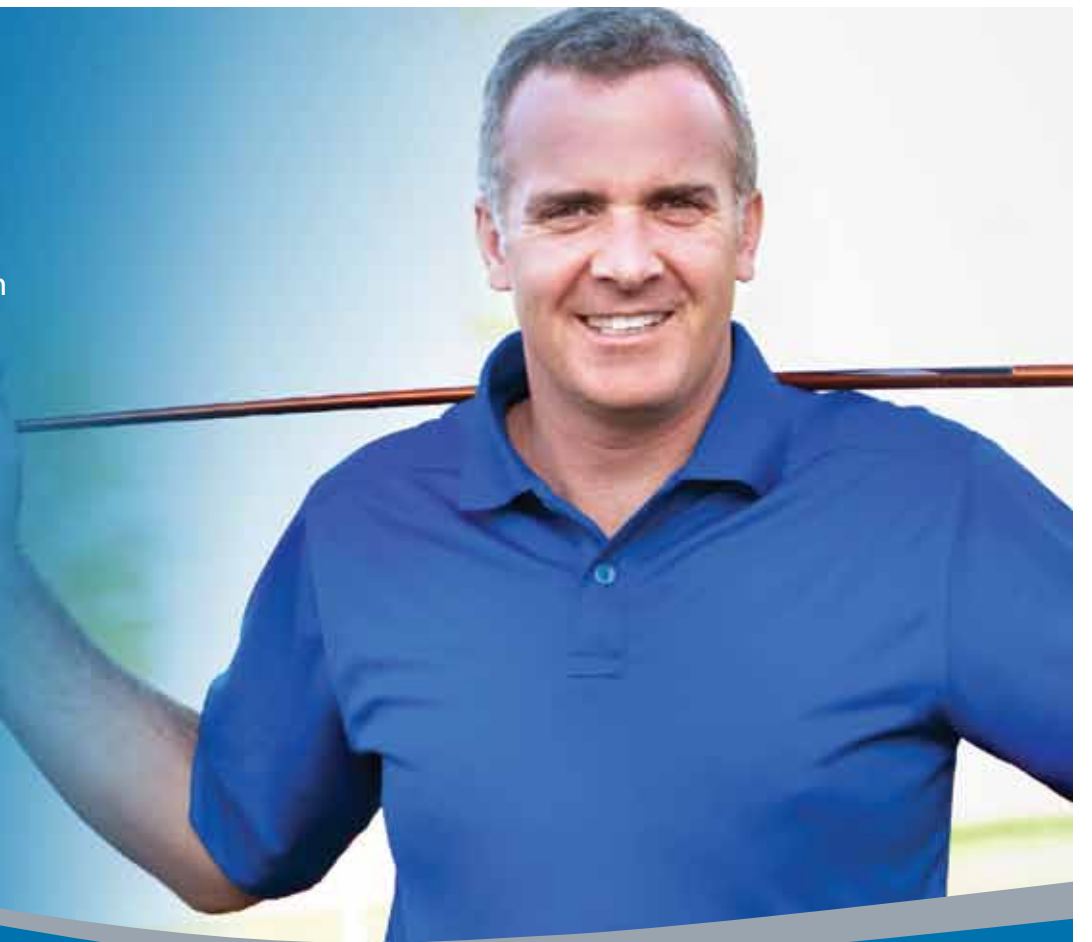
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ON THE COVER

Lois and Bob Slack keep busy playing golf and volunteering with the Canadian Snowbird Association each year. Bob is the president of the organization and helps organize the CSA Extravaganza in Lakeland page 8



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Welcome!

We are glad you are back!

This is my fifth season to welcome back the Snowbirds – my second year for our South edition - and I am happy to mark the milestone with a true feeling of optimism. It was tough to be optimistic for most of last spring and summer.

I was on a cruise to the Bahamas celebrating my 50th birthday when the BP Oil Disaster first started unfolding last April. After a few days passed and the first effort to cap the well failed it became apparent that this was not going to be an easy fix.

As the weeks and months wore on and the summer tourism season was lost, many in the area turned their attention to winter.

They started asking me questions. Will the Snowbirds come back?

Yours truly was even interviewed recently by *USA Today*.

My answer always was the same.

Yes, the Snowbirds will be back because they do not want to contend with winter weather. Plain and simple. And, recent holiday weather gridlock proves my point!

This season is shaping up to be one of the best according to my vacation rental sources. So, dare I say that I was right?

In this edition we have added a new feature called “Destinations” pages.

These are little tidbits of information that I hope many of you find interesting, particularly as you look to take day trips around the region.

Our cover couple, Bob and Lois Slack spend their winters in Winter Haven where they are part of the expansive Four Lakes Golf Club community but they don't have much free time: Bob is the president of the Canadian Snowbirds Association. He and countless others have been busy planning the Snowbird Extravaganza Jan. 25-26 in Lakeland and many other events.

Be sure to check out the entertainment lineup in our two-month calendar and read about Easy Breezy Florida Cooking authored by Tampa area veteran broadcaster Jack Harris and his wife, Joy.

If you already are an RVer or are thinking about becoming one don't miss the Tampa Supershow or one of the smaller ones held around the coast. Our pet columnist, Michelle Harrell, shares memories of her beloved Cupid.

And our final word, as always, comes from popular syndicated columnist Frank Kaiser who tells it like it is in Suddenly Senior.

As always, we are glad you are here! Enjoy your winter stay.

Karen Harrell

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Resources

We have put together a resource list on a variety of topics as a service to our winter visitors. This list is is meant to be helpful to our readers and is not comprehensive.

AIRPORTS

Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport

Sarasota Bradenton International serves over one million passengers a year as a gateway to the southwest Gulf coast of Florida. Major domestic and commuter airlines provide daily scheduled service, as do seasonal international and domestic charter carriers. Located at 6000 Airport Circle, service is provided by Delta, AirTran, US Airways, Northwest, Jet Blue and Air Canada. 941-359-2770 x4260

St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport

The St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport provides direct service to convenient destinations throughout the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean. The Airport also provides various chartered services to exciting domestic and international destinations including new service to Biloxi, Miss. Located at 14700 Terminal Blvd in Clearwater. 727-453-7800. Flights are provided by Allegiant Air, Vision Airlines, USA3000 Airlines, Locair, Sunwing Airlines, Transat Holidays, SeaCoast Airlines

Tampa International Airport Over the last 35 years, Tampa International Airport has strived to become the world-class facility we know today and it has grown to become one of the preeminent airports in the world.. Located at 4100 George J. Bean Parkway, 813-870-8700, Tampa International hosts the following airlines: Air Canada, Air Tran, Air Wisconsin, American, Atlantic Southeast Airlines, British Airways, Cape Air, Cayman Airways, COMAIR, Continental Airlines, Continental Connection, Continental Express, Delta Air Lines, Freedom Airlines, Frontier, Gulfstream International,. Jet Blue, KLM, Midwest Airlines, Northwest Airlines, Republic Airways, Southwest Airlines, Spirit Airlines, United, US Airways, WestJet

FRESHWATER FISHING

Hillsborough River State Park

15402 N US Highway 301, Thonotosassa, (813)-987-6771

Lowry Park Tampa

7525 North Boulevard, Tampa, 33604, 813-274-8184

Edward Medard Park

5726 Panther Loop, Plant City, 33567, 813-757-3802

Al Lopez Park

4602 North Himes Ave, Tampa, 33614, 813-348-1172

St Petersburg Park

Dr Martin Luther King Jr St, St Petersburg,Walsingham Reservoir, Ulmerton Rd & 122ND Ave, Boca Ciega

Myakka River State Park

13207 State Road 72, Sarasota, (941) 361-6511

Bradenton - Manatee Recreation Area

20007 E State Road 64, Bradenton, 941- 741-3028

Saltwater Fishing

Rod & Reel Pier, 875 North Shore Drive

Anna Maria, 941-778-1885

Redington Long Pier,17490 Gulf Boulevard,

Redington Shores, 727-391-9398

Hart's Landing Inc, 920 John Ringling Boulevard, Sarasota, 941-955-0011

City of Clearwater Marine Dept Beaches

Harbormaster: Pier 60, 25 Causeway Blvd Slip 57, Clearwater Beach, 727-462-6466

Merry Pier, 801 Pass a Grille Way, St Pete Beach, 727-360-1400

South Skyway Fishing Pier

7900 US Highway 19 S, Palmetto, 941-729-0117

Redington Long Pier, 18298 Sunset Boulevard, Redington Shores, 727-399-2573

State of Florida: Skyway Fishing Pier State Park, 19th Street North, Saint Petersburg, 727-865-0668

HOSPITALS

Tampa Area

South Bay Hospital Acute Care 813-634-3301

Town & Country Hospital Acute Care 813-888-7060

University Community Hospital-Carrollwood

Acute Care 813-932-2222

Tampa General Hospital Acute Care 813-844-7000

H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Ctr & Rsrch Inst Acute Care 813-745-4673

St. Joseph's Hospital, Inc. Acute Care 813-870-4000

South FL Baptist Hospital Acute Care 813-757-1200

Memorial Hospital of Tampa Acute Care 813-873-6400

Brandon Regional Hospital Acute Care 813-681-5551

Ocala Area

West Marion Community Hospital Acute Care 352-291-3000

Munroe Regional Medical Center Acute Care 352-351-7200

Ocala Regional Medical Center Acute Care 352-401-1000

St Pete Area

Morton Plant Hospital Acute Care 727-462-7000

Mease Hospital/Dunedin Acute Care 727-733-1111

St. Anthony's Hospital Acute Care 727-825-1100

Palms of Pasadena Hospital Acute Care 727-381-1000

Bayfront Medical Center Acute Care 727-823-1234

St. Petersburg General Hospital Acute Care 727-384-1414

Northside Hospital and Heart Institute Acute Care 727-521-4411

Helen Ellis Memorial Hospital Acute Care 727-942-5000

Edward White Hospital Acute Care 727-323-1111

All Children's Hospital Acute Care 727-898-7451

Largo Medical Center Acute Care 727-588-5200

Sarasota Area

Englewood Community Hospital, Inc. Acute Care 941-475-6571

Venice Regional Medical Center Acute Care 941-485-7711

Doctors Hospital of Sarasota Acute Care 941-342-1100

Bradenton Area

Blake Medical Center Acute Care 941-792-6611

LIBRARIES

Bradenton

Braden River Library 4915 53rd Avenue E., 941-727-6079

Manatee County Public Library

1301 Barcarrota Blvd. West, 941-748-5555

South Manatee County Branch

6081 26th Street W., 941-755-3892

Talking Book Service 6081 26th Street West, 941-742-5914

Ocala

Freedom Public Library 5870 S.W. 95th St., 352-438-2580

Marion Oaks Public Library 294 Marion Oaks Ln, 352-438-2570

Ocala Public Library 2720 E. Silver Springs Blvd,352-671-8551

Sarasota

Fruitville Public Library

100 Coburn Road, 941-861-2500

Gulf Gate Library, 7112 Curtiss Ave., 941-316-1213

North Sarasota Library

2801 Newtown Blvd., 941-861-9830

Selby Public Library, 1331 First Street, 941-861-1100

St Petersburg

James Weldon Johnson Branch Library

1059 18th Ave South, 727-893-7113

Mirror Lake Branch 280 5th Street N, 727-893-7268

North Branch Library 861 70th Ave North, 727-893-7214

South Branch Library 2300 Roy Hanna Dr. S., 727-893-7244

St. Petersburg Public Library 3745 Ninth Ave. N, 727-893-7724

Tampa Bay Area

78th Street Community Library

7625 Palm River Road, 813-612-9123

Charles J. Fendig Library 3909 Neptune St, 813-273-3680

College Hill Branch Library

2607 East Martin L. King Dr., 813-273-3681

Egypt Lake Partnership Library

3403 W. Lambricht St, 813-554-5106

Hillsborough County Talking Books

3910 S. Manhattan Ave., 813-272-6024

Jan K. Platt Regional Library

3910 S. Manhattan Avenue, 813-272-6000

Jimmie B. Keel Regional Library

2902 W. Bearss Avenue, 813-264-3831

John F. Germany Public Library

900 North Ashley Drive, 813-273-3652

New Tampa Regional Library

10001 Cross Creek Blvd, 813-903-2284

North Tampa Branch Library 8916 North Blvd., 813-975-2111

Port Tampa Branch Library 8611 Interbay Blvd.,813-301-7001

Robert W. Saunders, Sr. Branch Library

1505 N. Nebraska Ave., 813-307-3211

Science Library At Mosi/Museum Of Science

4801 E Fowler Avenue, 813-958-7678

Seminole Heights Branch Library

4711 Central Ave., 813-273-3669

West Gate Branch Library 7609 Paula Dr., 813-554-5031

West Tampa Branch Library 2312 W. Union St., 813-273-3674

Ybor City Branch 1505 Nebraska, 813-272-5547

RECREATION CENTERS

Bradenton

South Branch YMCA, 3675 53rd Ave E 941-755-4606

Ocala

Marion County YMCA Family Center

3200 SE 17th St, 352-368-9622

Sarasota

Babe Weiller 1991 Main Street Ste 200, 941-366-6778

Evalyn Sadlier Jones 8301 Potter Park Dr., 941-922-9622

Frank G Berlin Sr, 1075 South Euclid Ave, 941-955-8194

St Petersburg Area

Clearwater YMCA 1005 South Highland Ave, 727-461-9622

Bardmoor Branch 8787 Bryan Dairy Road, Largo, 727-394-9622

Hernando Branch 1300 Mariner Blvd, Spring Hill, 352 688-9622

High Point Branch 5345 Laurel Pl, Clearwater, 727-507-9622

North Pinellas Branch

4550 Village Center Drive, Palm Harbor, 727-772-9622

James P. Gills Family Branch 8411 Photonics Drive (in Trinity), New Port Richey, 727- 375-9622

Greater Ridgecrest Branch

1801-119th Street North, Largo, 727-559-0500

Greater Palm Harbor Branch

1600 16th Street, Palm Harbor, 727-787-9622

Harbordale YMCA, 2421 4th St. S., St. Petersburg, 727-821-9348

Jim & Heather Gills, 3200 1st Avn S., St. Petersburg, 727-328-9622

Tampa Bay Area

Bob Sierra Family YMCA Family Branch

4029 Northdale Blvd., 813-962-3220

Bob Sierra Youth & Family Center 4015 Ragg Rd., 813-269-9404

Brandon Family YMCA 3097 S. Kingsway Rd., 813-685-5402

Campo Family YMCA 3414 Culbreath Rd., 813-684-1371

Bob Gilbertson Central City Family YMCA

110 East Palm Ave., 813-229-9622

Dade City Family YMCA 38035 Meridian Ave., 352-521-0484

FishHawk Ranch YMCA Express

16144 Churchview Dr., Suite 201, 813-651-4200

Interbay-Glover Family YMCA 4411 S. Himes Ave., 813-839-0210

New Tampa Family YMCA 16221 Compton Dr., 813-866-9622

Downtown YMCA Fort Brooke 104 S. Franklin St., 813-229-1305

Downtown YMCA 100 North 100 N. Tampa St., 813-222-1334

East Pasco Family YMCA 37301 Chapel Hill Lp., 813-780-9622

Northwest Hillsborough Family YMCA

8950 W. Waters Ave., 813-249-8510

Plant City Family YMCA 1507 YMCA Pl., 813-757-6677

Tampa Metro YMCA Administrative Offices

110 E. Oak Ave., 813-224-9622

The First Tee of Tampa Bay

7746 Temple Terrace Hwy., 813-984-8655

West Park Village YMCA Express

9878 W. Linebaugh Ave., 813-792-7838

Senior Centers

Bradenton

Meals on Wheels Plus 811 23rd. Ave. East, www.

mealsonwheelsplus.org, 941-747-4655

Clearwater

Golda Meir Kent Jewish Center

2010 Greenbriar Blvd.. 727-736-1494

Senior Citizens Services

1204 Rogers St, seniorcitizenservices.org, 727-442-8104

Kent Jewish Community Center

2010 Greenbriar Blvd, 727-736-1494

Largo

Largo Community Center, 65 4th St NW, www.

largo.com, 727-518-3131

Bethlehem Center

10895 Hamlin Blvd, 727-596-9394

Ocala

Harvey Fellowship Dining

1415 NW 5 Street, 352-622-2480

Multi-Purpose Senior Center

2001 SE 32nd Avenue, 352-401-3919

8th Avenue Senior Center

830 NE 8th Avenue, www.ocalafl.org 352-629-8545

Sarasota

Senior Friendship Center Inc.

1888 Brother Greenen Way, www.friendshipcenters.org/sarasota, 941-955-2122

St. Petersburg

Bay Vista

7000 4th St. S, www.stpete.org/recreation/seniors.asp 727-893-7124

Roberts

1330 50th Ave. N., www.stpete.org/recreation/seniors.asp, 727-893-7755

Sunshine Senior Center

330 5th St. N., 727-893-7190

Lakeview House

465 7th Ave. N., 727-898-3948

Enoch Davis Center,1111 18th Ave. South, www.

stpete.org/recreation/seniors.asp, 727-893-2237

Azalea, 1600 72nd St. N., www.stpete.org/recreation/seniors.asp. 727-893-7150

Tampa

Life Enrichment Senior Center 9704 N. Blvd.,

www.lifeenrichmenttampa.org, 813-932-0241

Social Security Offices

Ocala

217 SE 1 Ave, Ocala, Fl 34471, 352-629-1850, 800-772-

1213, Tty 1-352-401-0088

Sarasota

Suite 301, 2001 Siesta Dr, Sarasota, Fl 34239, 800-772-1213, Tty 800-325-0778

St Petersburg

391 34th St North, St Petersburg, Fl 33713, 800-772-1213, Tty 800-325-0778

Tampa

3415 E Frontage Road, Tampa, Fl 33607, 800-772-1213, Tty 800-325-0778

Visitor Centers/Chambers

Tampa Bay Visitor Information Center, 615 Channelside Drive, Tampa, 813-223-1111

Canadian Snowbird Extravaganza



Canadians live the Florida Lifestyle

By Karen Harrell

Lifelong educator Bob Slack knew he wanted to keep busy in retirement.

A former Catholic school principal, the Athens, Ontario resident quickly became involved in the Canadian Snowbird Association and is today the president of the prestigious organization.

"We saw an ad in the (CSA) magazine that said they were looking for volunteers," said Slack, who along with wife, Lois, (also an educator) was able to retire when they were both in their mid-50s. "We liked the organization and decided to put our names forward."

Ten years after they retired from their day jobs, the Slacks and hundreds of others will be among the volunteers helping the 30,000+ attendees at the annual CSA Snowbird Extravaganza Jan. 25-26 in Lakeland.

The two-day event helps traveling Canadians and others connect with vendors interested in making their winter stay more comfortable and enjoyable. The Extravaganza also provides Canadians an opportunity to ask questions about travel health insurance, length of stay requirements and other issues that often arise.

Bob's job as president of the organization often requires long hours. There are numerous board meetings to attend throughout the year plus additional Extravaganzas in Arizona and Texas along with numerous educational day events to plan and promote.

But he has no regrets.

"I knew (serving on the board) would take quite a bit of time," Bob said. "You could make it a full-time job if you wanted to but the CSA has a great staff and they help out a lot and stay on top of everything."

The Slacks chose Winter Haven as their ultimate retirement destination and Four Lakes Golf Club where they have found a home.

"We looked at a lot of places but there was just something about Four Lakes," Bob said. "We can't keep up with everything they offer here. There is everything from

bingo to cards, line dancing and other kind of dances. We like to golf four or five times a week."

Staying healthy is not only a mission for the Slacks but a lifestyle and a reason they decided to move south for the winter.

"We are prolonging our lives is the way we look at it," Bob said. "Back home we are bound up for the winter. Here we are out and about and have a whole social network."

Be sure to say hello if you see Bob or Lois in Lakeland.

If you go

What: Canadian Snowbird Extravaganza
Dates: Jan. 25-26
About: The fun-filled event includes hundreds of exhibits, keynote speakers, interactive feature areas, and world-class entertainment.
Where: The Lakeland Center, 701 West Lime St, Lakeland, Fla
Details: 863-834-8111, www.snowbirds.org

CSA Winter Meetings

2/23 1 p.m. Port Charlotte Cultural Center, 2280 Aaron St. Port Charlotte, FL.
2/25 1 p.m. Largo Cultural Center (Tonne Theatre) 105 Central Park Drive, Largo, FL

ROBERT (BOB) SLACK

CSA President

Bob Slack has served in a number of capacities with the CSA and is the organization's president. Bob had a long and distinguished career in education as a teacher, principal and later supervisor of student teachers. He also worked with the State University of New York. Bob was actively involved in the establishment of classes and programs for dependently handicapped students. For over 10 years Bob was a presenter of retirement planning workshops for the Ontario Teachers' Federation. He and his wife Lois reside in Athens, Ontario and spent the winter months in Winter Haven, Fla.

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Easy Breezy Florida Dining

Perhaps it should be no surprise that Joy and Jack Harris collaborated on a cookbook called “Easy Breezy Florida Cooking.”

The couple’s first meeting came on the set of a television show that Jack was hosting, with Joy as a guest expert on Florida seafood. They met briefly before the show’s cooking segment.

Now married for 24 years, the couple has been a team ever since.

Jack, a veteran broadcaster of television and radio, is widely known throughout the Tampa Bay area. Joy, whose background and education is in home economics, began experimenting in the kitchen when she was a young girl.

Joy mostly makes the dishes in their home and Jack is her chief taster. His observations are sprinkled throughout the 101-page cookbook published by Seaside Publishing.

Joy introduces the cookbook this way: “Call it a love affair with food: My cooking, Jack eating – each of us doing what we love.”

Throughout its pages, “Easy Breezy Florida Cooking” features recipes using fresh Florida ingredients, such as Ruskin tomatoes, Zellwood corn, Plant City strawberries, Florida seafood and fresh Cuban bread.

Joy traces her passion for cooking to family reunions she attended as a girl.

She describes the foods served at those gatherings in the book: “...farm-fresh eggs and vegetables from the garden were served alongside all my aunts’ scrumptious cakes and pies.

“This was the education of my senses – the basis of my appreciation for fresh, wholesome, delectable food,” Joy writes.

During a recent interview, she recalled bartering with her mother, who was an excellent seamstress: Joy would cook the meals; her mother would sew Joy’s clothes.

Half of recipes contained in “Easy Breezy Florida Cooking” were created just for the book, Joy said.

She spent about a year working on the book, and Jack, dutifully tasted each recipe. A chore, by the way, he said he thoroughly enjoyed.

This isn’t the first time that the couple has shared the pages of a book. Joy contributed 35 pages of recipes to “Jack Harris unwrapped!” a book by Jack that was published Seaside Publishing.

Cooking is Joy’s sanctuary.

“I love to cook,” she said. “When I’m under stress, I cook. When a hurricane is coming, I cook.”

Indeed, when Hurricane Charley was barreling toward Tampa Bay, Joy was in her kitchen making a soufflé.

It was a recipe she had tried and failed when she was young. She was determined to master it, and she did.

“I knew I could do it,” she said, triumphantly.

In creating the recipes, Joy sought to include ingredients that were readily available. “I didn’t think about price or calories,” she said.

Joy said she has a knack for figuring out combinations of ingredients that work well in a recipe. When she tastes a dish, for instance, she can usually tell what’s in it and has a good sense for what ingredient could be added, reduced or eliminated to improve the flavor.

“There is chemistry to it,” she said, adding that once you’ve figure out the basics, it is easier to determine which combinations will taste good.sJoy said she had fun creating the recipes and giving them names.

Her “Flamingo Pink Lime Pie,” is her variation on a key lime pie. “It’s just pink,” she said. “It’s easy to make.”

Joy did let Jack name one of the recipes.



If You Go

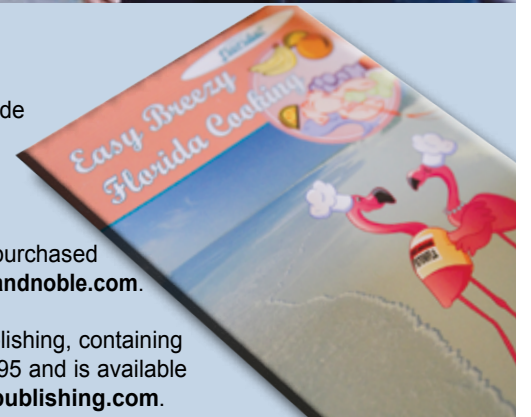
“Easy Breezy Florida Cooking,”

a 101-page cookbook is published by Seaside Publishing. The book sells for \$8.95 and is available through Seaside Publishing, www.seasidepublishing.com;

At the Henry B. Plant Museum Gift Shop, 401 W. Kennedy Blvd., Tampa and can be purchased online through Barnes & Noble, www.barnesandnoble.com.

“Jack Harris unwrapped!”

a 127-page book published by Seaside Publishing, containing 35 pages of recipes. The book sells for \$12.95 and is available through Seaside Publishing, www.seasidepublishing.com.



He came up with “Ruskin Aurora,” to describe a dish that combines a sauce featuring Ruskin tomatoes and rotini, an Italian pasta.

The book includes recipes for appetizers, sandwiches, side dishes, entrees, soups, stews, salads and desserts.

Its recipes for appetizers include Tampa Bay Black Bean Relish, Citrus Bruschetta, Kumquat Salsa, Mango Meatballs, Sunshine Scallop Skewers, Easy Florida Guacamole and Gators in a Blanket.

Its salads include Frosty Florida Fruit Salad, Hot Lime Slaw, Orange Grove Romaine Salad and Taste of Florida Tomato-Lime Salad.

Like the other recipes, many entrees feature local ingredients. They include Sunshine State Shrimp Kebobs, Floridian Oven-Fried Grouper, Snapper Au Gratin, Chicken and Yellow Rice, Kumquat Chicken Kebobs, Citrus Rubbed Steak, Orange Cream with Tenderloin and Sweet Orange Rubbed Pork.

There’s a section on soups, stews and sandwiches which includes a Quacamole Chicken Salad Sandwich, a Y’All Come Avocado Provolone Sandwich and a Cuban Reuban, to name just a few.

Soups include Taste of Tampa Ham and Bean Soup, Zellwood Corn Chowder and Southern Florida Lime Chili. There’s also Jackson’s Black Bean Chili, named in honor of the couple’s son.

There are plenty of recipes for side dishes and desserts, too.

Side dish recipes include Collard Greens Florida Style, Cuban Garlic Bread, Ginger-Orange Carrots, Ginger-Lime Broccoli, Orange-Roasted Apples and Oven Fries with Zesty Orange Catsup.

The book includes a nice variety of desserts. Those recipes include Creamy Lemon Pie, Kumquat Sweet Tarts, Strawberry Coffee Cake, Lemon Tea Cookies and Peanut Butter-Banana Parfait.

The cookbook even has a recipe for a Gator Cake, but don’t worry – it’s named for the University of Florida’s colors, not for containing ingredients from the state’s slithering reptile.



Recreational Vehicle

Lifestyles

By Karen Harrell

Each year tens of thousands of people browse, shop and research the latest innovations in recreational vehicles at a variety of Florida shows.

But the largest is the 2011 Florida RV SuperShow set for Jan. 12-16 at the Tampa Fairgrounds which draws upward to 50,000 people over the four-day event.

There dealers and manufacturers show off the more than 1200 brand new RVs. Products, accessories, RV parks and destinations are featured in the more than 300 booths at mammoth event. Manufacturer representatives also offer seminars throughout the show.

"The basic idea is to show every product side by side," said Dave Kelly, marketing director for the Florida RV Trade Association. "You get a comparison of every size and shape RV available on the market."

Kelly said Snowbirds and other winter visitors constitute about 50 percent of the show's attendees and they often arrive educated about the products they will see.

"Many have done their homework and are ready to pull the trigger (on buying)," Kelly said. "It's very competitive and dealers are in a sales mode."

Sales trends in the last couple of recession years show that smaller and lighter weight models are the most popular and nine of 10 are travel trailers. Many often upgrade to larger models depending on their needs.

Kelly said Snowbirds often buy in Florida where they use the RV for the winter and then put it in "mothballs" until the first snowflake falls the next year.

Among the many accessories popular in recent years are upgraded flat screen high definition televisions, satellite TV, surround sound, Blu-ray players. RVers also have embraced more outdoor-style stove tops and sinks and outside televisions so they can cook and be outside to enjoy their neighbor's and the great weather.

And along with updated features, many of today's RVers are migrating to amenity-filled parks that feature heated swimming pools, walking trails and golf courses. Florida also offers a wide variety of state and national parks with stunning natural landscapes.

Kelly has worked in the business for 14 years and has seen first-hand the attractiveness of the RV lifestyle.

"RVers are the nicest group of people you will ever want to meet," Kelly said. "Can you imagine going to a hotel and your next door neighbor comes over and introduces himself and invites you over for stew later?"

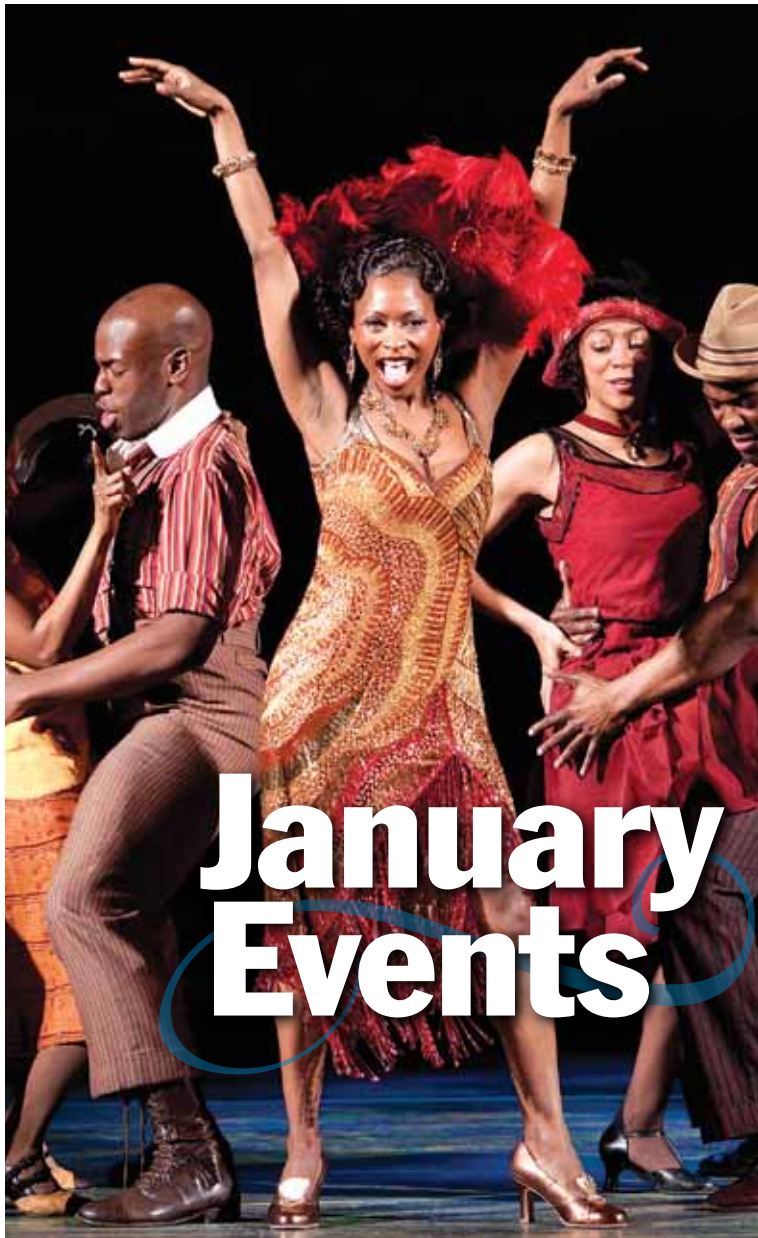
"It's a big part of why people embrace RVing."



If you go

- What:** 26th Annual 2011 Florida RV SuperShow
Dates: Jan. 12-16, Thurs – Sat. 9 a.m. -6 p.m. Sun. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Admission: Adults \$10 (2 day pass) Children under 16 free
Discounts: Wednesday is Senior Citizen's Day - \$1.00 off
RVs: More than 1100 RVs will be set up inside and outside and 300+ booths with vendors offering information on everything from accessories, campgrounds, finance and insurance and more.
Location: Florida State Fairgrounds - Interstate 4 and U.S. Highway 301 – Tampa
Seminars: Bob Marx (tips for buying an RV and extended and full-time RVing).
Getting around: There is free shuttle service inside and outside the show.
Fun: Live entertainment, children's area, concessions and dining area
Other show dates and locations:
 Jan. 20-23, Ft. Myers RV Show;
 Jan. 27-30, Ocala RV Show;
 Feb. 11-13, Germain Show – Estero;
 Feb. 24-27 Central Florida – Deland;
 Feb. 24-27 Jacksonville;
 April 7-10 Tampa Spring Show, Plant City.
Details: (813) 741-0488 or www.frvta.org.





January Events

The Color Purple – there are three opportunities in the region to enjoy the legendary show made famous by Oprah Winfrey. See calendar for dates, locations and times.

1/1–2/1 Tampa Bay

Lightning. Tampa Bay's NHL franchise has home dates in January vs. Rangers (1), Capitals (12), Devils (14), Blue Jackets (18), Thrashers (23) and Maple Leafs (25). February matchups include Flyers (1), Capitals (4), Blues (6), Sabres (8), Hurricanes (12), Flyers (15), Red Wings (17) Panthers (19), Coyotes (23), Devils (25). Details: 813-301-6600 or www.tampabaylightning.com.

1/1-2/1

Tampa Bay Downs. Tampa Bay Downs offers full, competitive fields, some of the most dynamic trainers in America, and thrilling live racing action as well as simulcast racing. Tampa Bay Downs also features a Poker room and other activities. Located at: 11225 Racetrack Road, Tampa, Fla. Details: (813) 855-4401 or (866)-TBDOWNS,

Saturdays

Downtown Bradenton Farmers' Market. Healthy choices of fresh local produce, organic food, plants, flowers, green-themed goods, and original creations by local artists and craftspeople. Downtown Bradenton Farmers' Market, 12th Street W, Bradenton, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., 941-840-0017, www.bradentonfarmersmarket.com

1/1

Salute To Vienna. Inspired by Vienna's world-famous Neujahrskonzert, this holiday tradition is a New Year's bouquet of glorious music that goes down like a glass of champagne! Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941-953-3368, www.vanwezel.org

1/2

Elvis Birthday Bash. Celebrate the "King's" birthday with a number of talented Elvis tribute artists as they shake, rattle and roll and provide a wonderful nostalgic afternoon of entertainment and fun. Largo Cultural Center, 105 3rd St SE, Largo, 727-587-6751, www.largoarts.com/

1/2

Elvis Birthday Bash. Number of Elvis tribute artists shake rattle and roll and provide a nostalgic. Largo Cultural Center, 105 Central Park Drive, Largo, Fl. Details: 727-587-6793

1/4

The Color Purple. The unforgettable and inspiring story of a woman named Celie, who finds her unique voice in the world. The Lakeland Center, 701 West Lime St, Lakeland, 863-834-8111, www.thelakelandcenter.com

1/4-5

Flea Market and Collectors Fair 50 plus dealers display the merchandise for sale to include: antiques, books, collectibles, coins, jewelry, stamps, discount postage, and much, much more! Municipal Auditorium, 801 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941-954-4165

1/4-8

Celebrity Autobiography, featuring a first rate comedic ensemble performing from the actual memoirs of a wide range of celebrities. Murray Studio Theater, Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Rd, Clearwater, 727-791-7400, www.rutheckerdhall.com

1/5

Super Scientific Circus starring Mr. Fish and Trent the Mime prove that science can be fun and funny. Largo Cultural Center, 105 Central Park Drive, Largo, Fl. Details: 727-587-6793

1/6

Louie Anderson. Known as a "clean" comedian, Two-time Emmy award winner Louie Anderson is one of the country's most recognized and adored comics. The Lakeland Center, 701 West Lime St, Lakeland, 863-834-8111, www.thelakelandcenter.com

1/7

The Florida Orchestra: The One and Only Louis Armstrong, Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center, 1010 North W C MacInness Pl, Tampa, 727-892-3337, www.floridaorchestra.org

Village Of The Arts ArtWalk. On the first Friday of each month over 40 galleries, shops, and restaurants in the Village of the Arts open for the evening. Food, refreshments, live music, and work by local artists

—many who live in their gallery/residence in this artists community. Downtown Bradenton, 941-747-8056, www.villageofthearts.com

Todd Oliver's Dogs Gone Wild Tour, 7 – 8 p.m. Meet a real talking dog. Irving, Lucy and Elvis are making crowds across the country howl. Largo Cultural Center, 105 Central Park Drive, Largo, Fl. Details: 727-587-6793

1/7-9

Jerry Seinfeld. Hailed as "the master stand-up comic of his generation" Seinfeld has an uncanny ability to joke about the little things in life that relate to audiences everywhere. Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Rd, Clearwater, 727-791-7400, www.rutheckerdhall.com

1/8

Rapunzel. An enticing classic complete with the long-haired beauty, Prince Charming and the evil witch. Largo Cultural Center, 105 Central Park Drive, Largo, Fl. Details: 727-587-6793

1/8,9

Orchid Show and Sale. Municipal Auditorium. Visitors will have the opportunity to interact with the growers, to purchase orchids and related items, and to immerse themselves in the beauty of orchids, Municipal Auditorium. 801 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941 954-4165

14th Annual Downtown Dunedin Art Festival

A short drive from Tampa, along the Dunedin's Main Street, you will meet 150 of the nation's most talented artists showcasing life-size sculptures, spectacular paintings, one-of-a-kind jewels, photography, ceramics and much more. Main Street, 271 Main Street, Dunedin

1/9

TFO - One/Only Louis Armstrong. Revisit the magic and the music of the great Louis Armstrong with Byron Stripling. Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Rd, Clearwater, 727-791-7400, www.rutheckerdhall.com

Oshogatsu, A New Year's Celebration. Now in its 33rd year at the Morikami, Oshogatsu is celebrated with games and entertainment throughout the museum and its gardens. Morikami Museum & Japanese Gardens, 4000 Morikami Park Rd, Delray Beach, www.morikami.org/ 561-495-0233

1/10

Toronto Symphony, Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941-953-3368, www.vanwezel.org

2/10-21

Florida State Fair. Excitement is at the fairgrounds with plenty of free entertainment included with admission. 4802 N US Highway 301 Tampa, www.floridastatefair.com/

1/13,14

The Color Purple. The Musical About Love. The inspiring story of a Celie, who finds her unique voice in the world. Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941-953-3368, www.vanwezel.org

1/15

The O'Jays. A finger-snappin', foot-tappin' soulful night of musical memories. Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941-953-3368, www.vanwezel.org

Mainly Art. Free monthly arts and crafts sale supporting local artists and artisans. Old Main Street, 12th St W, Bradenton, 941-840-0017

1/16

Bill Cosby. Back by popular demand, Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941-953-3368, www.vanwezel.org

The Classic IV had 13 consecutive chart singles. Largo Cultural Center, 105 Central Park Drive, Largo, Fl. Details: 727-587-6793

1/17

Garrison Keillor. American author, storyteller, humorist, columnist, musician, satirist, and radio personality, Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941-953-3368, www.vanwezel.org

1/18

Kenny Loggins. Two-time Grammy winner Kenny Loggins has been one of music's most popular singer-songwriters for four decades. Loggins offers "a tasty musical gumbo, full of flavors." Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941-953-3368, www.vanwezel.org

1/19

The First Arctic submarine Expedition to the North Pole. Selby Public Library, 1331 First St, Sarasota, 941-924-2446

Michael Bolton, One World One Love 2010 Tour. The Lakeland Center, 701 West Lime St, Lakeland, 863-834-8111, www.thelakelandcenter.com

1/20-21

Spencer's Theatre of Illusion. Kevin and Cindy Spencer dazzle the world with their engaging personalities. Largo Cultural Center, 105 Central Park Drive, Largo, Fl. Details: 727-587-6793



1/21

Michael Bolton. Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941-953-3368, www.vanwezel.org

1/21-22

Music of the Knight, The Songs of Andrew Lloyd Webber & Friends, Glenridge Performing Arts Center, 7333 Scotland Way, Sarasota, 941-552-5325

1/22

Diva Nation...Where Music, Laughter and Girlfriends Reign. A musical revue and a state of mind. Largo Cultural Center, 105 Central Park Drive, Largo, FL. Details: 727-587-6793

1/22-3/20

Visions of The Gulf: Paintings by Christopher Still and Photography by Carlton Ward Jr. View more than 35 paintings of the Sunshine State's waterways and natural environs by well known Florida artist Christopher Still, plus wildlife photographer Carlton Ward Jr., Appleton Museum, 4333 E Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala, 352-291-4455, appletonmuseum.org

1/22

Diva Nation. Let your sense of humor be your ticket to a magical place where chocolate is a vegetable, wine is in the food pyramid, shoe shopping is medicinal, and a girl can admit she wears 100% cotton underneath! Largo Cultural Center, 105 3rd St SE, Largo, 727-587-6751, www.largoarts.com/

1/23

Tribute to Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons. Let's Hang On! features four guys, two gals and a swingin band, who sing and dance their way through Big Girls Don't Cry, Walk like a Man, and many more. Largo Cultural Center, 105 3rd St SE, Largo, 727-587-6751, www.largoarts.com/

Dionne Warwick, Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941-953-3368, www.vanwezel.org

1/24

Philharmonic Of Poland, Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941-953-3368, www.vanwezel.org

1/25

Kenny Loggins & Christopher Cross. Enjoying one of the most enduring careers in pop music, both musicians bring their hits and toss in a few surprises. Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Rd, Clearwater, 727-791-7400, www.rutheckerdhall.com

1/26-27

13th Annual Lido Key Art at the Beach. Join more than 70 fine artists and craftspeople from around the country as they exhibit their original work at Lido Key. Lido Key Beach, 400 Ben Franklin Dr, Sarasota, 508-737-0998

Regis & Joy Philbin. A night of talk, song and good fun! Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941-953-3368, www.vanwezel.org

1/26

Patsy Cline the Concert starring CJ Harding. Your eyes and ears will deceive you the moment CJ Harding takes the stage with her soulful recreation of Patsy Cline. Hits include: Crazy, Sweet Dreams, I Fall To Pieces, Walkin After Midnight and Just A Closer Walk With Thee. Largo Cultural Center, 105 3rd St SE, Largo, 727-587-6751, www.largoarts.com/

1/26

Glenn Miller Orchestra, There is nothing quite like the Big Band sound. Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Rd, Clearwater, 727-791-7400, www.rutheckerdhall.com

1/28

Don Rickles & Joan Rivers. What could be better than an evening of laughs with an iconic comedian? Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Rd, Clearwater, 727-791-7400, www.rutheckerdhall.com

An Evening with Merle Haggard.

The Lakeland Center, 701 West Lime St, Lakeland, 863-834-8111, www.thelakelandcenter.com

1/28-29

Sarasota Native American Indian Festival. Experience the traditions and culture of the Native American people, Sarasota Fairgrounds, 3000 Ringling Blvd, Sarasota, 941-924-2784

1/29

103 Years of Broadway. Relive Broadway's greatest moments as an all-star New York band and five dazzling stars re-create the magic of Broadway. Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Rd, Clearwater, 727-791-7400, www.rutheckerdhall.com

1/29-3/27

Beyond Soho: The Abstractions of Michael Fellerman. More than 45 works by New York artist Michael Fellerman. His sculptures, drawings, paintings and reliefs represent 20th century American abstraction. Appleton Museum, 4333 E Silver Springs Blvd. Ocala, 352-291-4455, appletonmuseum.org

1/29-4/10

Pan Magazine: 1895-1900. On exhibition will be 80 remarkable original art nouveau prints from the late 19th century. Appleton Museum, 4333 E Silver Springs Blvd. Ocala, 352-291-4455, appletonmuseum.org

2/01

Patti LaBelle, simply one of the most exciting live performers today! Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941-953-3368, www.vanwezel.org

2/01

SNOW, is a tough, comic and poetic roundup of political reality in the olden days. Art Center Sarasota 707 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941-365-2032, www.artsarasota.org

2/3

Lovers and Other Strangers, Jewish and Italian worlds collide in a classic romantic comedy. Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Rd, Clearwater, 727-791-7400, www.rutheckerdhall.com

2/4

Village Of The Arts ArtWalk, On the first Friday of each month over 40 galleries, shops, and restaurants

in the Village of the Arts open for the evening. Food, refreshments, live music, and work by local artists residence in this artists community. Downtown Bradenton, 941-747-8056, www.villageofthearts.com

2/5

International Beer Festival and Chili Cook Off. Benefitting the Susan G. Komen Foundation. Sarasota County Fairgrounds and Robarts Arena, 3000 Ringling Blvd, Sarasota, 941-925-7581, www.serendipityforthecure.com

2/8,9

Michael Flatley's Lord of the Dance. A mesmerizing blend of Celtic music and dance. The Lakeland Center, 701 West Lime St, Lakeland, 863-834-8111, www.thelakelandcenter.com

2/10

Shirley MacLaine. A montage of memorable film moments with private revelations about her extraordinary life, career, and spiritual journey. Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941-953-3368, www.vanwezel.org

2/11

Peking Acrobats. Demonstrating awesome entertainment by transporting unique and timeless tradition into the 21st Century. Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941-953-3368, www.vanwezel.org

2/13

Jazz at the Glenridge. Glenridge Performing Arts Center, 7333 Scotland Way, Sarasota, gpactix.com

Rocky Mountain Memories, 2 p.m. A John Denver Tribute Featuring Ron Rich. Largo Cultural Center, 105 Central Park Drive, Largo, FL. Details: 727-587-6793

2/16

John Davidson, entertaining audiences of all ages for nearly 40 years. Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Rd, Clearwater, 727-791-7400, www.rutheckerdhall.com

Willie Nelson. This iconic Texan is the creative genius behind the historic recordings of Crazy, Red Headed Stranger and Stardust. Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Rd, Clearwater, 727-791-7400, www.rutheckerdhall.com

2/17,18

Frankie Valli & Four Seasons. His songs have been heard in movies, he influenced artists including Billy Joel and Brian Wilson, and both Frankie and his music appeared in The Sopranos. Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Rd,

Clearwater, 727-791-7400, www.rutheckerdhall.com

2/19

Bright Stars Senior Talent show Come out and support our Senior Stars. Three performers will be chosen by the audience to go on to perform in the Tampa Bay Senior Idol! Largo Cultural Center, 105 3rd St SE, Largo, 727-587-6751, www.largoarts.com/

2/19,20

23rd Annual Downtown Sarasota Festival of the Arts. Downtown Sarasota, Meet some of the best artists in the nation, 1592 Main St, Sarasota

2/23

CSA Winter Meeting, 1 p.m. Port Charlotte Cultural Center, 2280 Aaron St. Port Charlotte, FL.

2/24

Bob Newhart with Special Guest Deana Martin. Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941-953-3368, www.vanwezel.org

2/25

CSA Winter Meeting, 1 p.m. Largo Cultural Center (Tonne Theatre) 105 Central Park Drive, Largo, FL

2/26

Paul Anka, Anka will entertain you with great songs he wrote and recorded like, "Diana," "Lonely Boy," "You're Having My Baby," "My Way," and many more pop classics. Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941-953-3368, www.vanwezel.org

2/27

Peter & Paul, No American folk group outlasted or amassed a more loyal following than Peter, Paul and Mary. Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Rd, Clearwater, 727-791-7400, www.rutheckerdhall.com

2/28

Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra. Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 941-953-3368, www.vanwezel.org

Paul Anka puts on a show like no other. This one-time teen idol has become a superb vocal musician and prolific, talented songwriter. Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Rd, Clearwater, 727-791-7400, www.rutheckerdhall.com

3/1

The Oak Ridge Boys, Theirs is one of the most distinctive and recognizable sounds in the music industry. The Lakeland Center, 701 West Lime St, Lakeland, 863-834-8111, www.thelakelandcenter.com

The Oaks Golf Course Welcomes Snowbirds

Casino slots, poker and craps aren't the only games that are attractive to winter visitors.

The Oaks Golf Club in Pass Christian, Miss., offers golfing Snowbirds another "gaming" option while they are visiting the Mississippi Coast.

Management at The Oaks is happy to have the Snowbirds each year.

"Snowbirds are a big portion of our winter season," said Russ Bloom, general manager of the club. "From the end of February to early April, the course is filled with them."

The course is only 10 minutes from the Island View Casino Resort in Gulfport and 25 minutes from a half dozen casinos in Biloxi. It's also just an hour away from New Orleans and Mobile, Ala., for other side trip options.

The Oaks offers competitive rates, including a "best rate guarantee" on its website, www.theoaksgolfclub.com.

Rounds may also be booked through casino packages.

"We pride ourselves on the overall experience," Bloom said. "Our level of service is higher than most. We provide Southern hospitality. We remember their names. It's not a stifling place. We do our best to make sure they have a great day."

The course received 4 1/2 stars from Golf Digest magazine and is ranked in the top 10 in the state, including sixth in 2009.

"We don't have a lot of elevation in Mississippi, but here we have wetlands that run through the property, so we have elevated changes that makes gives the course a lot of character," Bloom said.

The live oaks come into play on about a half-dozen holes. Three of the par-3 holes are over water.

The signature hole of The Oaks is the par-5 sixth hole, which has a creek that runs in front of the green. Behind the green is the course's signature oak tree.

"The rolling terrain makes it fair for all level of golfers," Bloom said.

The back tees play from 7,000 yards; 6,300 yards from the blue tees; and 5,700 yards from the white tees. The greens, a hybrid Bermuda, are medium-sized, averaging around 5,000-6,000 square feet. A few of them are tiered greens, but not severe around the hole, Bloom says.

While the golf course receives top billing, an added attraction is the beverage cart attendants double as servers at the local Hooters restaurant.



If You Go

DIRECTIONS;

The Oaks Golf Club is located in Pass Christian, Miss., 1 mile South of I-10 at the Menge Avenue exit (#24). Turn right into The Oaks golf community. From Highway 90, turn north onto Menge Ave. The course will be 4.5 miles north, turn left into The Oaks golf community.

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\$500 drawing at **2:30PM**, and a **Bonus**
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you can still swipe in to get 1/2 off at our lunch buffet.

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Destinations

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The rolling hills and temperate climate around Ocala attracts horse breeders from around the world. Visit the Florida Horse Park. The park offers an exciting schedule of world-class events drawing top competitors from every horse sport discipline, locally and globally. Dressage, eventing, combined driving, polo, endurance, fox hunting, hunter/jumper and even non-equine outdoor events take place here.

MUST DO Silver Springs

Enjoy a day at one of Florida's oldest attractions, Silver Springs. Take a ride on the world-famous glass bottom boats. Cruise down the Silver River to a wildlife rehabilitation outpost. And enjoy reptile and bird shows, feed a giraffe, stroll through animal habitats and learn about their origins.

FLORIDA FRESH

Farmers Market at Circle Square

Visit the weekly Farmers Market at Circle Square Commons, 8405 SW 80th Street, Ocala, FL. Thursday 9 a.m. – Noon Vendors vary and may include fresh caught Atlantic seafood, crafts, flowers, fruits and vegetables.

BEACHES

Either Coast

From Ocala you can visit the Gulf Coast and Atlantic Coast beaches in under a two-hour drive. Enjoy a day trip to Clearwater or other St. Petersburg-area beaches with plenty of time to be home for supper or visit Daytona Beach, one of the few that still allows motor vehicles on its beaches.

LANDMARK

Appleton Museum of Art.

Take a guided tour of special exhibitions, permanent collections and themed topics. The tours are conducted by a trained guide and available in several languages. Guided tours last approximately one hour. The museum collections tour introduces visitors to some of the treasures in the Museum's permanent collection.

GREAT DRIVE

Ocala National Forest

The Ocala National Forest is a must for all nature-loving visitors. Within its 383,000-plus acres are streams and lakes for canoeing, kayaking or tubing, along with trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding.

Alexander Springs, Juniper Springs and Salt Springs are just three of the areas that offer swimming, boat rentals and hiking trails. The drive through the forest is popular among Baby Boomer motorbike enthusiasts who take trips to Daytona Beach.

DAY OUT

The University of Florida campus and Gainesville

Visit Gainesville's historic Downtown where you can browse the shops and dine in a number of restaurants. Nearby is the expansive University of Florida campus. Winter months sports fans will enjoy SEC basketball played at the Stephen C. O'Connell Center, home to many university and community events. The Gators play a rare afternoon game Jan. 15 at 1:30 p.m. against SEC rival University of South Carolina.

LITTLE KNOWN FACT

Jumbolair

The area has its own exclusive fly-in community called Jumbolair. Among the reported homeowners in the private community is John Travolta who is a commercially licensed pilot.

ON THE WATER

Lakes

Ocala is home to "too many lakes to count." Numerous tours are offered by charter and airboats. Join Capt. Bob Jewett for a custom airboat tour on the Withlacoochee River and Lake Rousseau areas. Or take a Lazy River cruise with Capt. Mike.

TRAVEL

Regional Air

The Gainesville Regional Airport is a convenient choice for many travelers to the Ocala area. Carriers including American Eagle, Delta Connections and US Airways Express offer connecting flights to most destinations. The Orlando International Airport is served by dozens of major carriers.

WHAT'S NEW

Florida Carriage Museum

Visit the latest additions to The Florida Carriage Museum, home to one of the world's finest collections of carriages, featuring more than 150 European and American carriages. See the 1850 Armbruster Dress Chariot once owned by Franz Joseph, Emperor of Austria, and dozens of other beautifully restored carriages.

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Destinations

Clearwater, Tampa, St. Petersburg

NOTED FOR

Snowbird Haven

Early in the 20th century visitors from the snowy north began arriving in this part of Florida looking for their piece of paradise.

MUST DO

St. John's Pass Fishing Village & Boardwalk at Madeira Beach

Here you will find more than 130 shops, restaurants and attractions. The tin roofs of the commercial fishing village/entertainment center line the north side of the pass that connects the Gulf with Boca Ciega Bay.

FLORIDA FRESH

The Clearwater Farmers Market

Visit one of a half dozen Farmers Markets open just about any day of the week in the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area. The Clearwater Farmers Market located at Cleveland Street and N Fort Harrison Ave., is open Wednesdays through May 18, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Features fresh produce, cheese, fresh baked goods, flowers and plants. Free two-hour parking at Garden Avenue Garage with ticket validation.

BEACHES

Caladesi State Park

Just two years ago the beach at Caladesi State Park was named the No. 1 beach in America and Fort Desoto State Park earned the same honor in 2005. The annual list is compiled by Dr. Stephen Leatherman, a Professor and Director of the Laboratory for Coastal Research at Florida International University. The rankings are based on a number of criteria including softness and color of the sand, bathing conditions, number of sunny days, seaweed, red tide, trash and litter and much more.

LANDMARK

Don Cesar Beach Resort

A member of the luxury Loews brand and you can't miss the "pink palace" on St. Pete Beach. A member of the Historic Hotels of North America, the Don Cesar is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and named a historical monument by the National Archives. Originally opened in 1928, the "Don" was appropriated by the Military during World War II and eventually abandoned. It was restored to its original glory and reopened in 1973.

GREAT DRIVE

Sunshine Skyway Bridge

Take a ride across the 5.5 mile Sunshine Skyway Bridge across Tampa Bay. The bridge connects St. Petersburg with Sarasota. Park and shoot pictures or walk or fish the Skyway Fishing Pier State Park. The cable stayed bridge features a vertical clearance of 191 feet above the 1,200-foot wide shipping channel over Tampa Bay. This is a toll road and there are fees for the fishing bridge.

DAY OUT

Ybor City

Century old cigar rolling area of Tampa. Ybor City takes its name from Vicente Martinez Ybor, who started things rolling with a cigarmaking business in 1850s Cuba. In 1885, after one Cuban revolution too many erupted, he bought 40 sandy acres near Tampa and turned it into the cigar capital of the world. The National Historic Landmark District features a lively Latin Quarter with distinctive architecture and atmosphere. Enjoy the wrought-iron balconies, brick streets, globe street lamps, boutiques, coffeehouses and nightclubs.

LITTLE KNOWN FACT

The editor of this magazine lived in the St. Petersburg suburb of Seminole in the mid-1970s as a teenager. She remembers trips to Walt Disney World when you still had to utilize coupons for rides and attractions.

ON THE WATER

Cruise Port

The busy Port of Tampa not only handles millions of pounds of cargo each year but it also has become a popular cruise gateway. It is the home-port to four vessels and three cruise lines including Carnival Cruise Lines, Holland America, and Royal Caribbean featuring 4, 5, 7, and 14-day cruise itineraries. Bon voyage!

TRAVEL

Two Airports

Longer stay visitors usually drive to the area but there are two convenient airports for those who need a trip back home or when guests arrive for shorter stays. The Tampa Bay International Airport features all the major carriers and the low-fare AirTran which is expected to merge with Southwest Airlines in the coming months. The St. Petersburg-Clearwater Airport features several low-cost carriers including Allegiant Air Lines, Frontier Air Lines and Vision Air Lines.

Let the Journey Begin...

MASTERWORKS

Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto

Concertmaster Jeffrey Multer performs Tchaikovsky's rhapsodic *Violin Concerto* on this all-Tchaikovsky program featuring his *Symphony No. 2*, *Little Russian*, full of rich colors and spirited Ukrainian folk tunes. Stefan Sanderling conducts.

Jan 28 - 30

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Times
St. Petersburg/Clearwater

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Feb 11 & 12

Sponsored by:

Times
St. Petersburg/Clearwater

MASTERWORKS

Gershwin's Concerto in F

Stewart Goodyear plays Gershwin's high-energy and blues-laced *Concerto in F* on a program with Osvaldo Golijov's new work, *Sidereus*, and Dvorak's *Symphony No. 8* with its sparkling Bohemian-inspired melodies. Stefan Sanderling conducts.

Feb 18 & 20

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Jeffrey Multer - Credit: Thomas Bruce Studio



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Destinations

Sarasota, Bradenton, Siesta Key

NOTED FOR

Cultural Coast

A strong arts community anchored by first-class performance facilities including the Van Wezel Performance Arts Hall, John and Mable Ringling Museum, Arts Center Sarasota, Asolo Theatre, Banyan Theater Company, Sarasota Ballet and more.

MUST DO

Circus Sarasota

Circus Sarasota is based on a European-style circus, with its one ring, and it features tightrope walking, balancing acts, juggling and everything else you'd expect to see at a world-class circus.

FLORIDA FRESH

Sarasota Farmers Market

Visit the Sarasota Farmers Market. Main St. and Lemon. Saturday 7 a.m. – 1 p.m. Established in 1979, this is a full market with 55 vendors and 5,000 square feet of produce and plants. Includes organic products, plants and floral, specialty seafood and meats, German baked goods and a variety of craftsmen. Also, the Siesta Key Farmers Market, 5124 Ocean Blvd. Davidson's Plaza is open Sundays 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. and features raw foods, fresh fruits and vegetables, home-baked pastries and breads, fresh cut flowers, specialty cheeses, coffees, soaps, jellies, and seafood, together with music, entertainment and more.

BEACHES

Siesta Key

Where do you feel like going today? The laid-back atmosphere at Siesta Key and its eight miles of beach attract thousands each year. There are almost 50 miles of canals and waterways inside Siesta Key which is also surrounded by water, the Intracoastal waterway, Sarasota Bay, Roberts Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.

LANDMARK

Sarasota's Cà d'Zan Mansion

Part of the Ringling Estate, Sarasota's Cà d'Zan Mansion is a vast building containing 32 rooms, many with views of Sarasota Bay. Featuring an interior court, spectacular Venetian architecture modeled on Venice's Palace of the Doges, a tower measuring 60 feet / 18 meters, and a lavish interior, the Cà d'Zan is one of the most important historic landmarks in the USA.

GREAT DRIVE

Get off busy I-75 in Bradenton and travel the Tamiami Trail along the beach communities stopping off to visit each one. Or, start at Anna Maria Island and take Gulf Drive winding along the beach.

DAY OUT

Key West Express

Travel to Marco Island or Fort Myers Beach and catch the Key West Express, a clean, modern, air-conditioned high-speed ferries - Features sundecks, snack bar, cocktails, and big-screen TVs - and you'll be in Key West in just a few hours. Spend a day or the night and catch the ferry home! One way rates are \$85.50 and round-trip for seniors start at \$109 from Marco Island.

LITTLE KNOWN FACT

People often refer to Sarasota when they actually are visiting one of eight surrounding islands including Longboat Key, Lido Key, St. Armands Key, Manasota Key, Siesta Key, Casey Key, Englewood, Nokomis, North Port, Osprey and Venice.

ON THE WATER

Several tour operators offer kayak tours through the mangrove tunnels. Tour boats are also widely available for those seeking a less strenuous outing. Be sure to look for Florida's gentle sea creature, the Manatee.

TRAVEL

Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport

The Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport is serviced by a variety of airlines including discount carrier AirTran which helps keep fares low to some destination. Air Canada is a popular carrier, particularly in the winter months.

WHAT'S NEW

Dr. Beach

Siesta Key Beach was named No. 2 on Dr. Stephen Leatherman's rankings of top 10 beaches. The rankings are based on a number of criteria including softness and color of the sand, bathing conditions, number of sunny days, seaweed, red tide, trash and litter and much more.

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Destinations

Lakeland and Vicinity

NOTED FOR

Lakes

The City of Lakeland encompasses an area of approximately 45,000 acres and contains 38 named lakes and numerous smaller lakes, ranging in size from 2.5 acres (Lake Blanton) to 2272 acres (Lake Parker).

MUST DO

Lakeland Center

The Lakeland Center is central Florida's entertainment, sports and convention complex. The Center plays host to over 500 events each year including conventions, Broadway shows, concerts, sporting events and consumer shows. The Canadian Snowbird Association hosts its annual "Extravaganza" there each January.

FLORIDA FRESH

Lakeland

Downtown Farmers Curb Market, 200 N. Kentucky Avenue, in the plaza of the Peterson Building, across the street from the Downtown Crispers. Saturday 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. and Wednesday 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Features homemade products such as soap, stained glass, home-sown bags and purses, leather goods, fresh fruits and vegetables, grass-fed beef and lamb, honey, pastas and more.

BEACHES

Clearwater/St. Pete

The beaches at Clearwater/St. Pete are the closest to Lakeland giving inland visitors a wide choice of options. A little farther are the many beaches in the Sarasota area.

LANDMARK

Lake Mirror

Lake Mirror Park is located on Lake Mirror in downtown. It is a historic structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The park is undergoing a master-planned transformation to increase the size and add amenities. Features include a public amphitheater, walking promenade, gardens, parks and more.

GREAT DRIVE

Take a drive through Lake Wales and its historic district. Visit The Lake Wales Art Center, The Grove House, The Depot, Historic Downtown, Chalet Suzanne and more. Download a driving map at: www.cityoflakewales.com/area/tour.pdf

DAY OUT

Plant City

Take a trip out to Dinosaur World in Plant City. This is heaven for a dinosaur lover and a great place to take visiting grandkids who want to grow up to be a paleontologist. The 12-acre park contains over 150 well made and creative dinosaur replicas. Visit the museum, where they can learn even more about their favorite prehistoric creatures and see artifacts such as dinosaur eggs and the claws of a velociraptor. Another popular part of the park, and one of the newest additions, is the Skeleton Garden, where you can see a variety of full-sized dinosaur skeletons.

LITTLE KNOWN FACT

The Detroit Tigers and Lakeland, Florida have had a longer continuous relationship than any other major league baseball team and its spring training home. The Tigers first came to Lakeland for spring training in 1934 and, except for a three year interruption during World War II, have been here ever since. Prior to their arrival in Lakeland, the Tigers had led a nomadic spring training existence, training at 10 sites in eight states during the previous 30 years.

ON THE WATER

The area's 38 named lakes are popular for recreational boating and fishing. A number of airboat operators will help you find gators.

TRAVEL

Tampa Bay International Airport

Most convenient to Lakeland is the Tampa Bay International Airport which features all the major carriers and the low-fare AirTran which is expected to merge with Southwest Airlines in the coming months. The St. Petersburg-Clearwater Airport features several low-cost carriers including Allegian Air Lines, Frontier Air Lines and Vision Air Lines that offer flights to popular destinations.

WHAT'S NEW

Downtown Lakeland

If you haven't visited lately, park and walk Lakeland's Downtown, home to dozens of retail shops, restaurants, banks and government with a feel of downtowns of yesteryear.

SNOWBIRD SPECIAL

While you are wintering on the Gulf Coast, come play at the Palace Casino Resort in Biloxi, Mississippi. We're the closest casino to Gulf Shores, Alabama and the Florida Panhandle.



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Gulf Coast Lighthouses

By Jahna Jacobson

Lighthouses guide ships through stormy seas and help us navigate our shores.

And they often stand as a symbol of hope and guidance.

Along the Gulf Coast, lighthouses were a critical part of the development of not only the regional but the national economy.

These “points of light” have marked safe passage for mariners since the early 19th century and helped push forward state-of-the-art in technology, optics and coastal architecture.

This year, Pensacola PBS affiliate WSRE-TV produced an hour-long documentary about several of the Gulf Coasts most historic, impressive and endangered lighthouses, “Lighthouses of the Gulf Coast: Sand Island to St. Marks.”

Producer and director Mark Bowen had the idea for a lighthouse documentary over 15 years ago. While working as a cameraman for a local television station more than 15 years ago, he was one of the first people to climb the Pensacola lighthouse when it was opened to the public in 1994.

“I was given the opportunity to do a two-minute video essay,” he said. “It was such an interesting subject, I knew there was a lot more to be covered.”

The lighthouses of the Gulf coast are some of the oldest in the country.

“When you look back at the history of the region how vital the sea lanes were, before the advent of railroad, you couldn’t move by any means other than ships,” Bowen said. “Before what is now Highway

98 was established in the 1920s, the ship traffic from Pensacola to Panama City or Camp Walton was the only way to travel. Larger ships would move goods and commerce, prior to the Civil War this area was huge in terms of the United States commerce.”

During that time, most of the federal government revenue came from tariffs, so protecting and providing tools for maritime trade was vital to the nation’s overall health, Bowen said. In the wake of the war of 1812, protecting the nations beaches was also of vital importance. It was these factors that combined to aid in the construction of the Gulf Coast lighthouses.

But the real challenge is a familiar one: Trying to build tall, substantial structures in areas where storms are frequent and the sands are shifting.

The lighthouses on the Gulf Coast faced the additional challenge of the area’s flat landscape. Lighthouses along the Atlantic Northeast have the advantage of high, rocky sites while the southern lighthouses needed to add extra high to overcome site challenges and the notoriously hazy weather along the southern shores. Vital inlets such as the bays at Mobile and Pensacola were difficult to spot from the gulf. Marking their entrances was critical for trade and military vessels.

For daytime sighting, each lighthouse is painted or arranged in a distinctive way, so you can see it during daylight hours and use it for navigation, Bowen said. At night, they used their specific light patterns to guide ships through the Gulf and inlets.

Learn more: <http://www.wsre.org/lighthouses>

The full documentary will be available for viewing on the WSRE website in January. Or, visit the site to order the DVD, which includes a travelogue that can help you plan a trip to visit the historic sites.



Lighthouses of the Gulf Coast Florida

Boca Grande Lighthouse

Gasparilla Island State Park, on a barrier island off Florida’s Gulf shore, is home to Boca Grande Lighthouse. This unusual “lighthouse on stilts” has been completely restored by a local historical society and offers tours and events year-round. One more fascinating Florida Gulf Coast lighthouse to visit is on Egmont Key, accessible only by private charter boat. Having been struck by lightning, pounded by hurricanes and fought over by Union and Confederate forces, this quiet monument now stands as a reminder of Florida’s early history.

Pensacola Light House

Built in 1859. Climb 177 steps for a spectacular view of the Pensacola, Fl. Area. Located on Pensacola’s Naval Air Station. www.pensacolalighthouse.org



St. George Lighthouse

Built in 1852; destroyed in 2005; reconstructed and opened to the public in 2008. Located on Little St. George Island, Fl. www.stgeorgelight.org

Cape San Blas Lighthouse

The first lighthouse at Cape San Blas, near the town of Port St. Joe, was erected in 1849. Several other structures have been destroyed and rebuilt on the site. www.visitgulf.com/cape-san-blas-lighthouse.cfm

Crooked River Lighthouse

Built in 1895. This iron and steel structure replaced the lighthouse on Dog Island, which was destroyed by hurricane in 1873. www.crookedriverlighthouse.org

St. Marks Lighthouse

Built in 1831, but replaced in 1842 and post Civil War following battle-related damage. www.fws.gov/saintmarks/lighthouse.html

Alabama



Sand Island Lighthouse

Built in 1884. Located three miles off Dauphin Island at Mobile Bay, Ala. www.sandislandlighthouse.com

Middle Bay Lighthouse

Built in 1885. Middle Bay is a prefabricated hexagonal wood lighthouse standing on stilts in Mobile Bay, Ala. www.lighthousefriends.com/light.asp?ID=650

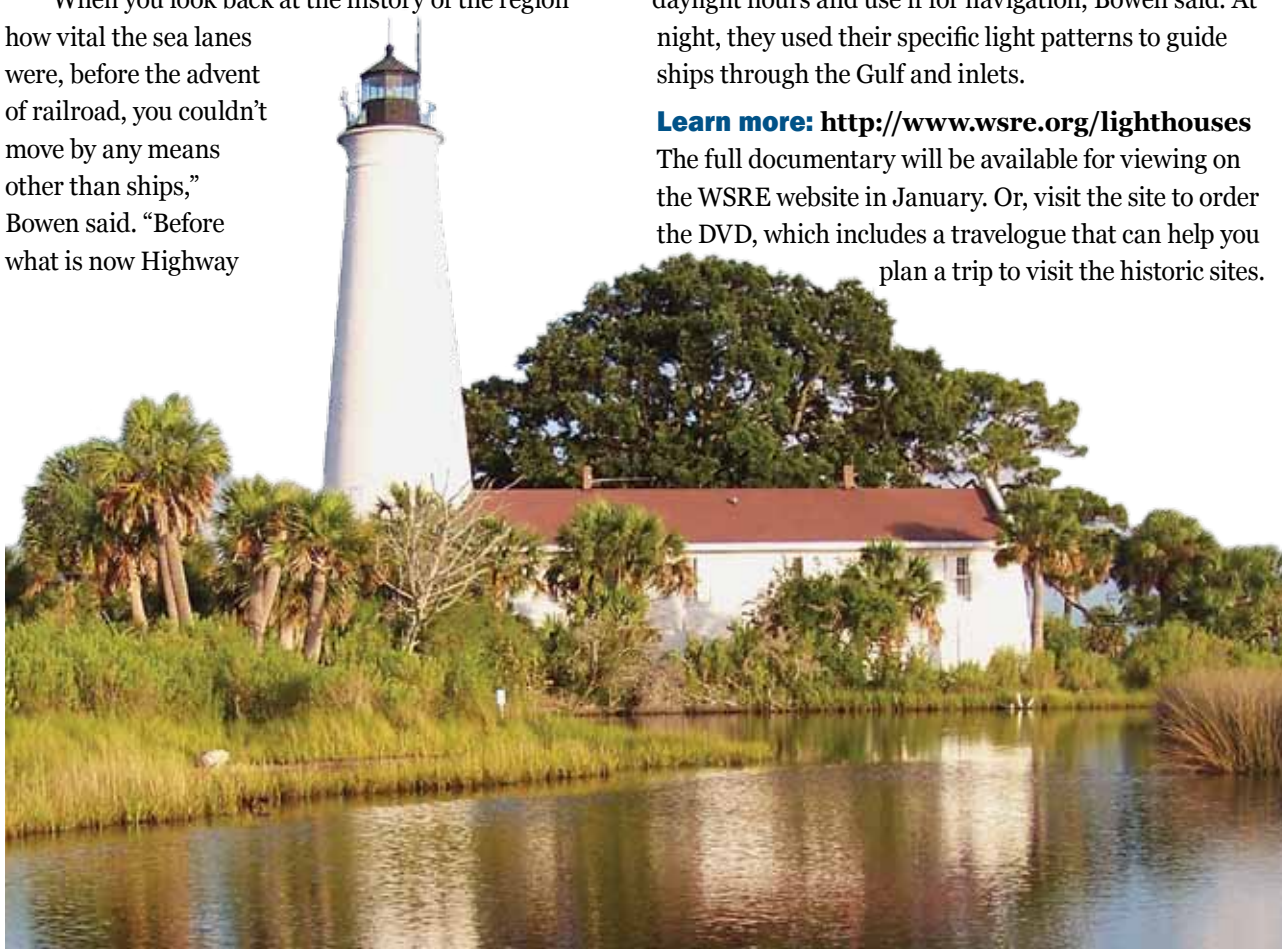
Mississippi Lighthouses

Biloxi Lighthouse was completely refurbished following Hurricane Katrina and is even featured on a US postage stamp.

Louisiana

Port Pontchartrain Lighthouse

Now on the grounds of the University of New Orleans, the Port Pontchartrain Lighthouse is closed for tours, but you can hike the shoreline and photograph to your heart’s content. On the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain, you’ll also find historic Tche-functe River Lighthouse, best reached by lake excursion boat.





Cupid’s Gift

By Michelle Harrell

I’ve sat down many times to write this article and finally am able to gather my thoughts and emotions to do so.

Having finally faced that decision that many of us have and will face, I put my beautiful Senior Poodle, Cupid down this past June.

He was around 13 or so, fought hard for his last 4 years against chronic bronchitis, which eventually turned into a case of pneumonia. He was my first poodle, and first dog I ever trained.

Cupid was also one of the most-kind hearted souls I’ve ever encountered.

He never snapped, growled or was mean to another dog or human. He was the ultimate example of how to live, peacefully and with tolerance. He came into this world with so many imperfections, ended up homeless, was found, and turned into a star with me.

I thought it appropriate to spread his ashes in some wonderful places either that he performed, or that I thought he would like. Cupid ended up in GA, WI, IA, TN, AL, NC, NM, OH, IN, CT and we’re not done yet.

I made a promise to all of my dogs/performers that they would be spread a little at time in places that they made a difference. How lucky they are to reach such a wide range of people and places. To spread happiness, joy and love everywhere they go. We should all have such a grand purpose. And to think, they chose to come to earth as a dog and yet accomplish something so significant.

And so, their purpose will live on in the memories of so many children and adults. And their Ashes will be spread far and wide, just like they should be. Bon Voyage Cupid.

Until next time, happy trails and tails.....

Michelle Harrell travels to special events around the country with her kid-friendly “Michelle’s Magical Poodles” act. She also performs as Living Statue. If you see her at a local event in your home state this year stop by, snap a photo and say hello. Her website is www.statueviva.com.

Where Pets Go



Pet Resources

BRADENTON

Happy Trails Canine Park
is located on 51st

St. West at G.T. Bray Park
about half way between Manatee Avenue and Cortez Rd.

De Soto National Memorial
is located at the northern terminus of 75th Street North West in Bradenton, Florida

OCALA

Millennium Dog Park
Located at 2573 SE 32nd Ave, Ocala, FL

SARASOTA

Red Bug Slough Preserve
Located at 5200 Beneva Road in Sarasota. This 72-acre wildlife refuge is dog friendly, but dogs MUST BE leashed.

Sarasota Paw Park
Located at 4570 17th Street, east of Beneva Road, west of Honore Avenue.

Lakeview Park
Located at 7150 Lago Street.

Bird Key Park
Located on the John Ringling Causeway, on the way to St. Armands Circle, just east of the bridge. The kind reader who informed us about this dog-friendly beach says it's Sarasota's only beach allowing dogs and cats!

Oscar Scherer State Park
Located at 1843 South Tamiami Trail in Osprey, just south of Blackburn Point Road.

Sun Circle Park
Located in the city's Indian Beach Sapphire Shores neighborhood

Woodmere Park
Located on Jacaranda Boulevard, 2 blocks north of U. S. 41

Ken Thompson Park
Located at 1700 Ken Thompson Parkway, on City Island by Mote Marine Laboratory.

Bay Front Park
Located at U. S. 41 & Ringling in the Marina Jack area

Gillespie Park
Located at 710 N. Osprey, Downtown at Gillespie and N. Osprey

Arlington Park
Located at 2650 Waldemere Street pets are allowed on trail area only and must be on leashes.

TAMPA BAY AREA - OFFICIAL DOG PARKS WITH BEACHES

Ft. DeSoto Dog Park, 3500 Pinellas Bayway S., Tierra Verde FL 33715

Davis Island Dog , 1002 Severn Rd., (near Peter O. Knight Airport), Tampa FL

PARKS WITH WATER ACCESS

Bicentennial Park, Tom Stuart Causeway, Madeira Beach, Florida

Abercrombie Park, 3800 Park St. N., St. Petersburg, Florida

Honeymoon Island Pet Beach, 1 Causeway Dr., Dunedin, Florida

OFFICIAL DOG PARKS WITHOUT BEACHES

Walter Fuller Park, 7901 30th Ave. N., St. Petersburg, Florida

Chase Dog Park, Bounded by 28 and 27 Ave. S. and 53rd and 54th St. S., Gulfport FL

Boca Ciega Millenium Park, 12410 74th Ave. N., Seminole FL

North Shore Dog Park
often called “Vinoy Dog Park”, 901 North Shore Dr. N.E., St. Petersburg, Florida

Freedom Lake Park
9990 46th St. N., Pinellas Park, Florida

Walsingham Park
12615 102nd Ave. N., Largo, Florida

Sand Key Park and Paw Playground
1060 Gulf Blvd., Clearwater, Florida 3767

Crest Lake Park,
201 Glenwood Ave., Clearwater, Florida 33755

Happy Tails Dog Park
3051 Garrison Rd., in the Louis A. Vanech Recreational Complex, Dunedin, Florida

Lake Vista Park
1401 62nd Ave. S., St. Petersburg, Florida

GOOD PARKS FOR DOG-WALKING AND PEOPLE-WALKING

War Veterans’ Memorial Park at Bay Pines
9600 Bay Pines Blvd. N., St. Petersburg, Florida

Abercrombie Park,
3800 Park St. N., St. Petersburg, Florida

Walter Fuller Park
7901 30th Ave. N., St. Petersburg, Florida

Crescent Lake Park
1320 5th St. N., St. Petersburg, Florida

Pinellas Trail and Seminole City Hall Park
7464 Ridge Rd., Seminole, Florida

Lake Seminole Park
10015 Park Blvd. N., Seminole, Florida

Taylor Reservoir Park and Pinellas Trail,
1100 8th Ave. SW, Largo, Florida

Walsingham Park
12615 102nd Ave. N., Largo, Florida

SUDDENLY SENIOR™

By Frank Kaiser



Put a Touch of Class into your Retirement

So many seniors tell me that college was one of the best times of their lives.

I agree. Perhaps that's why I continue to find myself in class — usually at least one a semester — even at age 71. Of course, all those cute coeds don't detract from the experience. And when they catch me staring, they generously dismiss it as an old man's harmless antics.

College men, too, treat us fogies with respect, even deference. I've often been asked advice on life issues. How refreshing it is to be taken seriously by youngsters! We seldom get that from our grandchildren.

Most of all, I enjoy learning. Learning what I want to learn.

There's freedom in taking courses without worrying about grades, credits, or graduation. Learning something just for the sheer pleasure of it is a joy.

I've taken computer software courses, art courses — my three-foot nude sculpture won an award — ethics, public speaking, philosophy, graphic design, and enough photography classes to merit several PhDs. As a serious amateur, from 1980 until recently I took photo courses every semester at whatever college I was near, just to have access to darkrooms.

With today's digital technology, that's no longer necessary.

Twenty-five years ago, I was considered a "non-traditional student." Today, with so many geezers taking classes, we're just "one of the guys." Or gals.

Looking for new friends? Search no farther than your local community college. You'll find folks of all ages, many interested in matters that matter to you.

And in these days of "use it or lose it," what better way to keep your mind and body active than to attend classes that you enjoy.

Old Dogs, New Tricks

Many institutions, like St. Petersburg College near my home, offer free courses to students age 60 and over. I simply sign up, pay \$35 for a student card, and take whatever courses are available and not filled.

Then I leverage my student card for discounts at concerts, lectures, even buying software where the savings are huge.

If you must pay, and your purse is thin, check out the billions of dollars in grants and scholarships available.

Concerned that you're too old and can't learn? It's simply not true. We old dogs are readily taught new tricks. Half the students enrolled in college today are 25 or over.

We bring rich life experience to class. One student told me that he was thankful I was there because "You give me hope for my old age." (Getting old has got to be good for something!)

No wonder, according to the New York Times, more than 500 colleges and universities offer elderly learning programs. We enhance discussions, providing new angles of insight.

Who else is there to prove to younger generations the virtues of aging?

Retire to Your Alma Mater

In June, when I returned to Indiana's DePauw University for my 50th Reunion, I briefly considered what a joy it would be to live on or near my college campus again.

Think of the intellectual stimulation, the cultural events! Then I thought of the snow, blizzards, and tornados and decided not to leave Florida after all.

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