

AROUND THE SQUARE

Following the latest news and views from Serenoa

SUMMER, 2023

VOLUME 2.2

Sun, surf, stars & stripes... Serenoa celebrates Summer!



Serenoa salutes this year's winning teams in the Annual Independence Day Corn Hole Tournament. Third place: Bob Shepard (L.) and Mike Keane (R.). Second Place: Eric Hertzog (Center L.) and Wendy Bushong (Center L.). First Place Champions: Richard Baptiste (C.) and John Yates (Center R.)

GO BUILD A SAND CASTLE!



The Top 7 Vero Beaches

1. Round Island Beach Park — Beautiful Park. Nice Trail
2. South Beach Park — White sand. Turquoise surf.
3. Wabasso Beach Park — Great waves. Bring a long board!
4. Golden Sands Park — Hidden Gem of a beach.
5. Treasure Shores Beach Park — Sea life and Birds Aplenty.
6. Tracking Station Beach Park — Beautiful & Off the Beaten Path.
7. Sexton Plaza Beach Park — In the Heart of Ocean Drive.

Serenoans honor Independence Day with brotherhood, burgers, beer and beanbags!

On Sunday, July 2, there was a shared sense of patriotic pride in the air, enhanced by the aroma of hot dogs and hamburgers sizzling on the grill, as the Red, White & BBQ celebration unfolded at the clubhouse... before spilling outside for Serenoa's annual "Fourth of July Corn Hole Tournament".

Serenoans feasted on grilled meats, baked beans, cold 'n creamy salads and



holiday inspired sweets—prepared by attendees, and grillmasters Eric Hertzog and Mike Bushong—and served up by Diana Layton 's fabulous Social Committee.

Members earned a heart felt salute for their beautiful transformation of the Clubhouse—a holiday spectacle of red, white and blue!

Congratulations to Roseanne Marincas,

who garnered the 50/50 winnings—and to the victorious Corn Hole teams, who braved the heat in a grueling test of skill and stamina. Eight teams battled for nearly an hour before champions Richard Baptiste and John Yates claimed the championship crown... plus a few extra bucks for their mastery of the game. All in all... the event was a rousing success. Great weather... great food... and great neighbors... celebrating America's 247th birthday in "star spangled" style.

Come on in. The water's fine!



If you haven't visited the Clubhouse pool lately, the makeover is totally tantalizing. The pumps are primed, the surfaces sparkling, and the lounging luxurious—the perfect antidote for the Summer heat. If water aerobics are your thing... than shape up while you cool down every weekday morning.

Smile... you live in Serenoa!

Instinctively drawn to the sea.

As Floridians, we can personally relate to the powerful magnetism that the ocean holds for all creatures.

Sea turtles are among the world's oldest living creatures. They've roamed the Earth's oceans for 110 million years, virtually unchanged—while the world they inhabit increasingly jeopardizes their very existence. Pollution, coastal development, boat strikes, and by catch from fisheries are just some of the human activities threatening their long-term survival.

The federal Endangered Species Act lists all five Florida sea turtle species as endangered (green, leatherback, hawksbill, and Kemp's ridley) or threatened (loggerhead). This designation makes it illegal to harm, harass, or kill any sea turtles, hatchlings, or eggs. It is also illegal to import, sell, or transport turtles or their products.

Sea turtles are unique in that they play a vital role in the survival of two ecosystems—beach/dune and marine—that are also critically important to humans. Turtle eggs, both hatched and unhatched, provide important nutrients for dune vegetation, which in turn helps stabilize dunes, which are a first line of defense against storms. They naturally erode and accrete with the fluctuation of waves and wind.

According to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 70 percent of Indian River County's 22.4 miles of barrier island beach is considered "critically eroded," meaning that both the turtles' nesting habitat and our own beachfront interests are threatened.

Unfortunately, when beaches erode, it prompts beachfront homeowners to erect seawalls. "Seawalls only expedite the erosion process, and without a beach, turtles don't have a place to nest." Humans also don't have a place to walk, fish, swim, surf, and otherwise enjoy the oceanfront.

Green sea turtles can be found nesting along Indian River County beaches. Their diet includes seagrasses and algae.

Because seawalls are permanent, unmovable structures, they prevent sand from being added to beaches and recovering from storms. They deflect the energy from ocean waves back onto the beach in front of, and along the sides, of the wall—further eroding and lowering the beach at the seawall.

Seawalls prevent turtles from reaching the uppermost areas of the beach, forcing them to nest in areas that are frequently under water. Studies show that fewer turtles nest on beaches with seawalls.

Indian River County's Beach Preservation Plan addresses the beach erosion problem with a strategy that includes adding beach-quality sand as well as planting vegetation to stabilize dunes. Each beach restoration project incorporates a biological monitoring plan to ensure that renourishment efforts consider every aspect of the sea turtles' habitat. That's why, for example, beach renourishment projects are performed outside the prime turtle nesting season.

The county's coordination with Ecological Associates, Disney Conservation, Sebastian Inlet State Park, Sebastian Inlet District, Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge, and Coastal Connections helps ensure that visitors and residents understand the importance of maintaining a healthy habitat for sea turtles. These organizations, all of whom hold Florida Fish and Wildlife marine turtle permits, are reliable sources of information and host regular public turtle walks, hatch success evaluations, hatchling releases, and coastal cleanup days.



The Environmental Learning Center (ELC), a 64-acre, not-for-profit nature center, serves children and adults through school excursions, camps, lectures series, adult education, internships, professional development, family festivals, youth outreach, and numerous partnerships and programs that increase access to nature for people of all ages. ELC offers eco-friendly corporate retreats, weddings, birthday parties and other family and group gatherings.

Its campus includes native plant gardens, an interactive museum with aquaria and touch tank, pontoon boat, canoe and kayak rentals, children's nature play areas, visitor center, gift shop, picnic facilities and more. The campus is surrounded on three sides by the Indian River Lagoon.

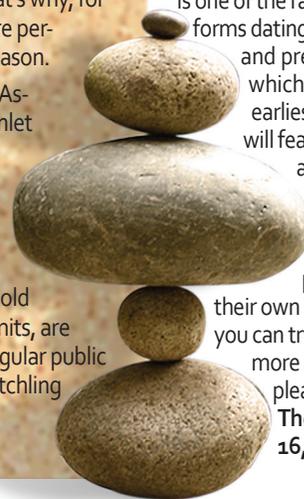
Balance your Chi at McKee!

Local Master Balancer Adam Conard (ZOTO) brings the ancient art of stone balancing to the McKee Botanical Gardens through his "Playing with Gravity" exhibition. This exhibit has never been seen before. Stacking stones is more popular... but done as an art form at the masterly level is very rare. Balancing and stacking stones is one of the rarest and most ancient art

forms dating back to prehistoric origins, and predates 2D cave paintings, which is considered one of the earliest art forms. This exhibition will feature both highlighted balances and surprise balances, including floating in the waterways at McKee.

Visitors will have an opportunity to even attempt their own balance in a sand box where you can try your hand at balancing. For more information about Adam, please visit Zotoart.com.

The exhibition runs from May 16, 2023 – July 30, 2023.



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Have a Great Summer in the Great Outdoors!



But what sets this beach apart from others is its proximity to the Indian River Lagoon. When you want a change of scenery, you can walk across state Road A1A to the beach's sister park: Round Island Riverside Park. This park's amenities include a 400-foot-long boardwalk, nature trails, a fishing pier and an observation tower. Climb up the tower to look for manatees, or go paddle boarding or kayaking to see the gentle creatures up close. Water sports equipment rentals are not available on-site, so remember to bring your own gear or arrange equipment delivery if you want to get out on the water. Visitors loved exploring

For most of the year, those standing on the beach just beyond Sexton Plaza can see old glory rising from the sea. The flag, put in place each 4th of July by Vero Beach residents, marks a significant piece of local history: an ill-fated 19th-century vessel, now teeming with marine life just a quarter mile from shore.



Explore relics under the sea!

Around midnight, the crew on the lookout reported seeing a "dark streak" in the water, which could signal land, but they attributed it to a change in weather conditions and stayed the course set by Captain Taylor. Shortly after, the Breconshire reached the "dark streak", and collided with one of the four limestone and worm rock reefs located along the coast of Vero Beach. The impact damaged the ship's hull, filling the vessel with water, and sinking it 20 feet to the ocean floor.

Luckily, the entire crew was able to escape the nearshore wreck on lifeboats. Sadly, over a century of resting on the ocean floor has taken its toll. The ship has settled further into the sand, eroded by saltwater and waves, and the, once visible, boiler now lies hidden below the surface. However, much of the 300 ft vessel is still protruding from the ocean floor, covered in algae and serving as a habitat for hundreds of marine species, like an extension of the reef that sank it. The hull and girders of the vessel, partially buried in the sand, offer plenty of hiding spaces for tropical wildlife. From May until August, west winds clear the water and unveil the wreck for adventurous visitors. During these months, Paddles By The Sea and Vero Tackle & Watersports team up to offer snorkeling tours of the ship. **To sign up for a snorkeling tour, give them a call at 772-234-9585.**

One of Vero Beach's main draws is its beautiful beaches, and many consider the town's best to be the beach at Round Island Oceanside Park. Located eight miles southeast of downtown Vero, this beach park offers everything you need. You'll find covered pavilions with grills, a playground, and restrooms, among other amenities. Plus, the wide shore offers plenty of space for stretching out, even when there are sections blocked off to protect sea turtle nests.

Mingle with the Manatees at Round Island!



Park goers were also impressed with the number of manatees and dolphins they saw while visiting.

There's no entrance fee, and complimentary parking is available at both parks. If you want to paddleboard or kayak, but don't have your own equipment, you can rent loaner gear from Orchid Island Bikes & Kayaks, and have it delivered.



Smile... you live in Serenoa!

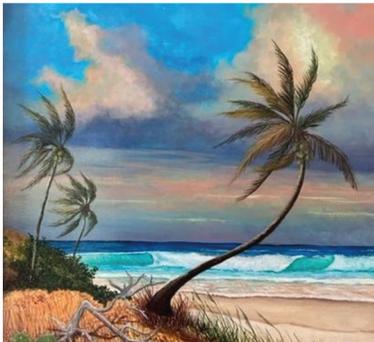
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VERO CELEBRATES OUR LOCAL ARTISTS!

The Vero Beach Museum of Art is featuring the inaugural 2023 juried fine art exhibition of recent works of art by living local artists. Over the years, numerous artists have settled in and around Vero Beach, Florida. The VBMA's mission to recognize the outstanding quality and diversity of work being generated by contemporary artists. With over 350 applicants, and over 800 artworks to consider, Juror Ellen E. Roberts, the Harold and Anne Berkley Smith Senior Curator of American Art at the Norton Museum of Art (West Palm Beach), ultimately selected 137 works for the show, which will run until **September 23, 2023**. The selection categories were assigned as follows: 1. Cityscape, Landscape and Seascape, 2. Abstract, 3. Figurative, 4. Photography, 5. Sculpture, Ceramic and other 3D and 6. Other. The winners were announced, and introduced, at the Opening Reception on May 26.



The Emerson Center is presenting "LAND & SEA"—an exhibition highlighting talented local artists.

This amazing collection of landscape and seascape art can be viewed, and purchased, now through July 22nd. The Emerson Center is located at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Vero Beach at 1590 27th Avenue, Vero Beach.

WHAT IS SARGASSUM... and what's all the fuss?



Chances are if you've ever been on a beach lapped by the Atlantic Ocean or Gulf of Mexico, you've already encountered sargassum, in whatever small amount, along the shoreline or in the water. This naturally occurring brown seaweed floats freely on the ocean's surface, extending as deep as 10 feet below the surface, and sometimes making its way to shore with currents and wind. Visible from outer space, the **Great Sargassum Belt** that's making headlines of late is a 13-million-ton mass that stretches 5,000 miles long and 300 miles wide in an area of the Atlantic Ocean between the Gulf of Mexico and the coast of West Africa—a brown macroalgae, related to kelp, that's always afloat. Sargassum is composed of gas-filled structures that look like berries called pneumatocysts that keep it buoyant.

Sargassum is beneficial when offshore—providing habitat for hundreds of invertebrates, and even endangered sea turtles and surface feeding fish populations. The problem occurs when sargassum comes ashore. It can smell like rotten eggs when it decomposes, due to the production of the hydrogen sulfide gas—and there have been reports of respiratory issues in areas with large amounts of decomposing sargassum is present.

Offshore, depending on how thick the growth is, swimming may require pushing sargassum out of the way to clear a route. And... it can feel scratchy, kind of like a loofah sponge, when it rubs up against you. (Dolphins have been reported to play with sargassum and may even use it to scratch themselves) Some swimmers have reported sea lice and jellyfish associated with sargassum where big mats are present. Irritating stings can cause the skin to erupt in a red, itchy rash.

Just like land plants, sargassum needs the right light environment, the right temperature, and plenty of nutrients to flourish. There's evidence that river runoff (in the form of nitrogen and phosphorus from human activities (sources such as fertilizers, wastewater, automobile exhaust, and animal waste) are feeding sargassum blooms all along the Atlantic Basin.

All of the islands in the Caribbean are feeling the effects. Other areas in the sargassum belt's target zone include the Yucatan (on the Gulf of Mexico coasts of Belize and Mexico), the Gulf of Mexico (from Florida's panhandle west into Texas), and southeast Florida, from the Florida Keys northeast to around Cocoa Beach.

Keeping sargassum at bay from a beach is like fighting a rising tide. And scenes of workers pitchforking and shoveling piles of seaweed into waiting wheelbarrows around the clock have become a somewhat standard oceanfront backdrop in recent years at beaches. It can come in on one day with strong winds and pile up, and the next day the wind may shift and currents can change and will carry this stuff offshore.



HURRICANE FACTS Did you know that...

- Storm surge is the most dangerous aspect of a hurricane?
- The only year when the hurricane storm list ran through its entire catalog of Greek names was 2005 with Tropical Storm Zeta?
- The deadliest natural disaster in American history remains the 1900 hurricane in the island city of Galveston, Texas with a death toll ranging from between 6,000 to 12,000.
- The word hurricane comes from "huracán," the god of evil, according to the indigenous people of the Caribbean.
- Forty percent of hurricanes that hit the United States make landfall in Florida.
- Hurricanes were originally given female names, until male names were added to the annual hurricane name list in 1978.
- The federal government does not require emergency shelters to admit pets during a hurricane.

Come shop & celebrate "Grinchmas in July" at the Indian river mall!

There will be lots of small business vendors, raffles for a cause, and photos with The Grinch!

Saturday, July 8th
10 am - 5pm.



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