

# AROUND THE SQUARE



Following the latest news and views from Serenoa

WINTER, 2023

VOLUME 2.4

## 'Tis the season for SNOWBIRD SIGHTINGS in Serenoa!

The Sunshine State continues to be the top destination for Snowbirds in the United States—and Serenoa has its fair share.

You may be surprised by some of the demographic statistics!

### • Winter Migration

It's estimated that Florida has about one million residents who spend part of the Winter, but at least one month, in the Sunshine State. During this time, the population of Florida is about 5% higher than it is in other months.

### • Trending Older

The majority of snowbirds nationally are retirees, which means they tend to be between 50 and 69 years old.

### • Length of Visit

Because Snowbirds stay in Florida for at least one month of the year, but not the whole year, the formal "season" for snowbirds spans October to April. It's common for them to spend the full six months there.

### • Favorite Landing Spots

Snowbirds can be found throughout all of Florida—usually closer to the coasts, but most of Florida is a short drive from a coast! Some of the most popular destinations are:

- No. 1 - Venice
- No. 2 - Vero Beach
- No. 3 - Fort Pierce
- No. 4 - Naples
- No. 5 - Lake Wales
- No. 6 - Tarpon Springs
- No. 7 - Fort Myers
- No. 8 - Clermont
- No. 9 - Destin
- No. 10 - Sarasota

### • Popular Activities

It's no surprise you'll often find Snowbirds outside—sitting on the beach or boardwalk, swimming, or enjoying Florida's many lakes, rivers and trails.

### • Economic Impact

Snowbird season often means an influx of customers for local businesses. While most snowbirds don't work, they are a huge fuel

for employment in Florida—estimated to have contributed over \$95 billion to the Florida economy. It is estimated that over 1.6 million jobs each year depend on snowbirds. Anyone who works off of a gratuity will tell you that snowbird season is a lucrative time for them because of the higher population!

### • Big Spenders

Snowbirds are a diverse group, so while some will be very frugal, others may spend an extravagant amount to enjoy their time down south. Estimates say that a single season as a snowbird can range from \$10,000 to \$21,000, depending on these factors.



## SERENOANS CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS IN STYLE

On December 9th, The Serenoa family gathered to welcome in the Holiday Season, and ring out 2023. The clubhouse sparkled brighter than ever... with holiday lights, seasonal trimmings, bangles and bling! Old friends shared holiday memories, and new neighbors were welcomed into the Serenoa family.

An ample spread of tasty hors' d'oeuvres welcomed guests, as corks popped and glasses clinked in toasts to the upcoming year. Once revelers settled into the evening, a bountiful buffet dinner was served—a choice sampling of traditional holiday favorites that fully satisfied party goers' appetites and palate preferences. As guests enjoyed dinner and conversation, party

favours and raffle prizes were chosen and awarded. Thanks to hostess Kathi Inzano, who overcame a faulty microphone, as she graciously shouted out winners of the 50/50 drawing, door prize recipients, and instructions to locate the golden ticket placed under a random seat before the proceedings. After several minutes of chair flipping,

and searching for the elusive sticker... a winner was crowned. Congrats to Phil Cervasio who took home a well stocked crate of holiday goodies (courtesy of Francine Figliolo).

Another year... another successful Serenoa Holiday Soiree—thanks to the talents and dedication of Diana Layton, and her team of hard-working elves. **Happy Holidays Serenoa!**

**LEARN CPR. SAVE A LIFE.**  
A perfect New Year's resolution!

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27**  
Save the date for Serenoa's CPR training class at the Clubhouse. 20 person limit. \$20 per student. Details to come.

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**It's a Wonderful Life** is one of the most popular holiday movies of all time. But...even if you've watched the classic dozens of times, there's likely a lot you don't know about this beloved movie. Take a look at some of the surprising stories behind the 1946 film's most iconic moments.

- **It's a Wonderful Life** started out as a Christmas card—"The Greatest Gift," a short story by Philip Van Doren Stern. After failing to find a publisher, Stern decided to print his story as a 21-page holiday card that he sent to 200 of his friends in 1943. An RKO Pictures producer saw the "card" and convinced the studio to buy the rights to the story, which were eventually sold to Frank Capra's production company.

- **Cary Grant** was originally slated to play **George Bailey**. After RKO Pictures sold the movie rights to Frank Capra, he decided to replace Cary Grant with James Stewart in the lead role.

- **At first, James Stewart** was afraid he wasn't up for filming a movie so soon after World War II.

Lionel Barrymore (who played Mr. Potter in the movie) convinced Stewart to be in it. Stewart was also nervous about the phone kiss scene, his first on-screen kiss since returning from war.

- **This was Donna Reed's first starring role.** She would, of course, go on to become arguably the world's most famous TV housewife, thanks to *The Donna Reed Show*.

- **Bedford Falls** was one of the most elaborate sets ever built at the time. *It's a Wonderful Life* had a big budget for the time (\$3.7 million dollars), so it's no wonder that the crew put a lot of time and effort into constructing the town of Bedford Falls. The set took two months to build and included 75 buildings stretched out over four acres in Encino, CA.

- **Seneca Falls, NY** claims to be the inspiration for Bedford Falls. While the fictional town's name combines those of Bedford Hills in New York's Westchester County and Seneca Falls, in New York's Finger Lakes region, the latter claims to be the real deal. Seneca Falls even has a website, [TheRealBedfordFalls.com](http://TheRealBedfordFalls.com), dedicated to pointing out all of the similarities between the two towns.



## Season's Greetings Serenoa



Let's give 'Peace on Earth' a try. All together now.

- You can visit an "It's a Wonderful Life" museum. You guessed it—it's located in Seneca Falls.

- The movie was shot in the summer of 1946 during a heat wave. Look closely—you can see Stewart sweating in some of those snowy scenes. Ah, the magic of Hollywood.

- **A new type of artificial snow was engineered just for the movie.** Capra had the special effects department mix Foamite (a fire-fighting chemical) with sugar and water. A whopping 6,000 gallons of this new "chemical snow" transformed the California set into a winter wonderland.

- **The gym floor that opens to reveal a pool actually exists.** It's located in Beverly Hills High School and it's currently being restored.

- **Carl Switzer** (a.k.a. Alfalfa from *The Little Rascals*) played **Freddie Othello**. Switzer played

leaving the house, it sounds like Uncle Billy stumbles into trash cans and we hear him yell "I'm alright, I'm alright." This wasn't a line in the script—it was a crew member who accidentally dropped equipment during filming and Capra decided to keep it. The crew member even got a \$10 bonus for his off-screen appearance as "Uncle Billy."

- **The original final scene had the cast singing "Ode to Joy" instead of "Auld Lang Syne."**

- **The film didn't do well at the box office—it even put Capra into debt.**

Receiving mixed reviews, *It's a Wonderful Life* only made back \$3.3 of its \$3.7 million budget at first. It placed 26th in box office sales for all films released in 1947—right ahead of *Miracle On 34th Street*.

- **The film actually rose to popularity on TV in the late 1970s.**

- **It's a Wonderful Life** was added to the **Library of Congress' National Film Registry** in 1990. Up to 25 titles are added to this list each year, after being deemed "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant films."

the character who pushes the button that opens the gym floor to reveal the pool—but he is uncredited in the movie.

- **Reed really broke a window on the Granville House.** While a stuntman was standing by to throw a rock at the window, Reed broke it herself on the first try.

- **Uncle Billy wasn't supposed to yell after leaving George's house drunk.** After

- **Capra, Reed, and Stewart have all called "It's a Wonderful Life" the greatest film they had ever made.** "I thought it was the greatest film I ever made," wrote Capra in his autobiography. "Better yet, I thought it was the greatest film anybody ever made."

## Christmas Songs, Holiday Memories, & Classic Comedy



### CHRISTMAS WITH THE RICARDO'S

Lucy and Ricky pack their bags to get away from the cold weather by taking a vacation to Florida. See what kind of mischief and shenanigans ensue with this delightful, one of a kind show for the whole family—performed by the most authentic Lucy impersonator in the world. This comedy musical will have you laughing and singing along to your favorite Christmas songs and comedy skits from the *I Love Lucy Show*. Some highlights of the show are when Lucy performs her rendition of *The Nutcracker*, disguises herself as Santa Claus and when Lucy and Ricky sing and dance to *Baby It's Cold Outside*. With beautiful stage settings and costume changes this is definitely a must see show for the holiday season!

Sunrise Theater, Fort Pierce, December 21 2023 7:30 pm

Smile... you live in Serenoa!



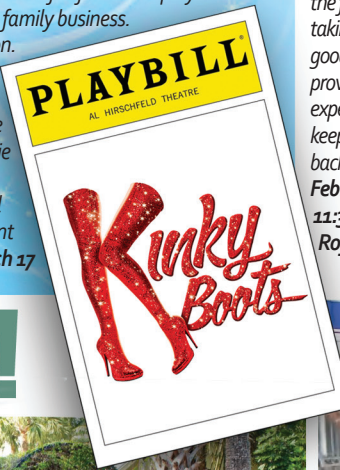
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## VERO IS A WINTER WONDERLAND!

### RIVERSIDE THEATER IS STYLIN' THIS WINTER!

**Tony award winner! Music & Lyrics by Cyndi Lauper, Book by Harvey Fierstein.** When Charlie Price inherits his father's shoe factory, he's faced with a dilemma – file for bankruptcy or find a way to save the family business. Charlie finds inspiration in Lola, a fabulous female impersonator, who is in need of some sturdy boots. As Charlie and Lola work to save the business, they find they are not so different after all. **Feb 20–March 17**



### THE FLORIDA CRAFT BREW AND WINGFEST IS BACK!

Sample hundreds of delicious craft brews, and fill your belly with chicken wings prepared by local chefs and amateur competitors vying for glory in the wing competition. Bring the family to chill on the lawn and jam to the bands, taking in the sun and fun. Pairing beer and wings for a good cause— sure to provide a memorable experience that will keep you coming back each February! **Feb. 17TH, 2024 11:30am- 4:00pm Royal Palm Point**



## THERE'S NOW STOPPING THE FUN!

### CLASSIC WHEELS AT McKEE!

This year's motor car exhibition will feature Rods & Customs...vehicles showcasing the creative work of individual builders. They take an automobile and rebuild it to become their dream car. You will see how imaginative the builders can be with body styling, paint work, engines and interiors. Come see what they have created and talk to the owners about how and why they have built their one-of-a-kind Rod or Custom. In addition, there will be an eye-catching display of pristine motorcycles. General admission rates apply – McKee members and children under 2 free. **Saturday, Feb. 10, 10 am – 3 pm**



### HOME UPKEEP... AND DECOR

Vero Beach 9th Annual Winter Arts and Craft Expo in combo with the Indoor Home and Remodel Show!



Always a crowd please and a Vero Beach Classic! 110 Booths of Creativity & Inspiration by Artists & Crafters from all over Florida. Two Days of Stress Free Fun! FREE Admission & Parking, Food, Adult Beverages, Live Music. The Home Show features options for home improvement, new products and services, and it's a must-visit event. **IRC Fairgrounds & Expo Center Saturday January 6, 2024 10:00 AM Sunday January 7, 2024 10:00 AM - 04:00 PM**

### ART IN THE PARK

More than 200 artists display their works for your viewing and purchasing. Free admission & parking. The highly respected "Under the Oaks" juried show has been voted as one of the Top 200 artshows in the nation and in Florida. The event is a popular crowd favorite, drawing over 50,000 visitors to Riverside Park. **Riverside Park. March 8, 9 & 10 2024 Fri & Sat 9am - 5 pm & Sunday 10 am - 4 pm**



Headliner, Ana Popovic—the chart-topping, award-winning Belgrade-born modern blues guitar slinger and songwriter, who has captivated audiences across the globe.

### A MUSICAL CELEBRATION OF THE BLUES

A two-day Blues Fest experience combining the love of Blues & Blues Rock music talent, delicious food, beer & full liquor bars, makes for an amazing weekend to remember with friends and family. 10 bands on the blues stage with professional sound and lighting. RV Camping on site Too! Plus 120 marketplace vendors in the middle of the event! Stroll through miles of aisles of arts & crafts and local business vendors with a cold beer or cocktail! **February 24 and 25, Indian River County Fairgrounds SAT 10 am to 10pm & SUN 11 am to 6:30pm**



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## FOR THE LOVE OF VALENTINE'S DAY

Valentine's Day is celebrated every February 14th as couples across the globe honor their spouses, partners and sweethearts. Hundreds of years of traditions and customs have made it into the holiday that we observe today. Here are some interesting facts about the holiday dedicated to romance and love.

### Origins to a Bloody Pagan Festival

Some trace Valentine's Day origins to a Christian effort to replace Lupercalia—a pagan fertility festival dating as far back as the 6th century B.C. During the festival, Roman priests would sacrifice goats and dogs and use their blood-soaked hides to slap women on the streets, as a fertility blessing. According to legend, women would later put their names in an urn and be selected to be paired with a man for a year.

### Letters Addressed to 'Juliet'

Every year, thousands of romantics send letters addressed to Verona, Italy to "Juliet," the subject of the timeless romantic tragedy, "Romeo and Juliet." "The city marks the location of the Shakespearean tale, and the letters that reach the city are dutifully answered by a team of volunteers from the Juliet Club. Each year, on Valentine's Day, the club awards the "Cara Giulietta" ("Dear Juliet") prize to the author of the most touching love letter.

### Box of Chocolates

The Valentine's Day tradition of giving a box of candy was started in the 19th century by Richard Cadbury, a scion of a British chocolate manufacturing family. Coinciding with a new manufacturing process to create more varieties of chocolate, Cadbury pounced on the opportunity to sell the chocolates as part of the beloved holiday.

### First Valentine Was Written From a Prison

History's first valentine was written in perhaps one of the most unromantic places conceivable: a prison. Charles, Duke of Orleans wrote the love letter to his second wife at the age of 21 while captured at the Battle of Agincourt. As a prisoner for more than 20 years, he would never see his valentine's reaction to the poem he penned to her in the early 15th century.

### 'Vinegar Valentines'

During the Victoria Era, those who didn't want the attention of certain suitors would anonymously send "vinegar valentines." These cards, also called penny dreadfuls, were the antithesis of customary valentines, comically insulting and rejecting unwanted admirers. They were later used to target suffragettes in the late 19th and early 20th century.

### 'Wearing Your Heart on Your Sleeve'

Smithsonian reports that during the Middle

Ages, men would draw the names of women who they would be coupled with for the upcoming year while attending a Roman festival honoring Juno. After choosing, the men wore the names on their sleeves to show their bond during the festivities.

### 'Sweethearts' Candies began as lozenges

The iconic chalky heart-shaped candies that have been passed out lovingly every Valentine's Day started out as lozenges. According to the Food Business News, pharmacist and inventor Oliver Chase created a machine that would quickly create the lozenges before switching to using the machine to create candy—later known as Necco Wafers.

Chase's brother came up with the idea to print messages on the candy in 1866, and the candies got their heart shape in 1901, appealing specifically to Valentine's Day sweethearts.

### How 'X' Came to Mean 'Kiss'

The idea of using a kiss to sign off on valentines also has a long history, according to the Washington Post. The use of "X" came to represent Christianity, or the cross, in the Middle Ages. During the same time, the symbol was used to sign off on documents. After marking with an X, the writer would often kiss the mark as a sign of their oath. As the gesture grew among kings and commoners to certify books, letters and paperwork, these records were described as



## GROUNDHOG DAY... FLORIDA STYLE

MARATHON, Fla. (AP)—A conch living underwater in a Florida Keys aquarium's touch tank seems to be on the same weather wavelength as Pennsylvania's groundhog... Punxsutawney Phil.

Last Ground Hog Day, the "mollusk meteorologist" emerged from its shell at Florida Keys Aquarium Encounters and saw its shadow, just as Phil did earlier that day in Gobbler's Knob," the tourist attraction's president Ben Daughtry said.

"Our 'conjecturing conch' concurred with Punxsutawney Phil when it saw its shadow and predicted six more weeks of winter" Daughtry said.

The folklore surrounding Punxsutawney Phil

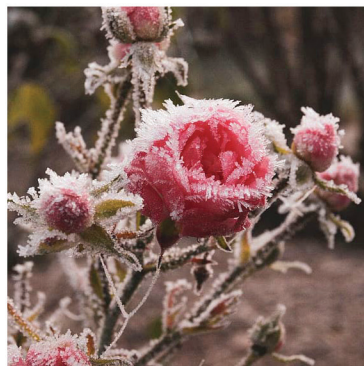
means that when he sees his shadow another six weeks of winter weather is on tap for the U.S. An annual event in Punxsutawney, about 65 miles (105 kilometers) northeast of Pittsburgh, originated from a German legend about a furry rodent. The gathering annually attracts thousands.

Of course, in the subtropical Keys, "winter" temperatures average 77 degrees Fahrenheit (25 degrees Celsius) during the day and 67 degrees Fahrenheit (19 degrees Celsius) at night, according to Chip Kasper, the lead forecaster at the Florida Keys National Weather Service office in Key West. Among guests for the event were members of the Marathon City Council, who wore traditional "Groundhog Day" top hats, but short-sleeved shirts during the ceremony.

## A seasonal potpourri



## TIPS TO KEEP JACK FROST OUT OF YOUR GARDEN



Lawn and garden plants can get damaged by sudden freezes. The temperatures can even sink down "enough to damage tropical, subtropical, and even sometimes temperate plants, especially if they're not acclimated to lower temperatures."

The Florida Department of Agriculture's also said when the temperature drops or there's a cold snap, to wrap blankets and sheets around plants to help save them from frost, keeping them insulated. Adding a "significant layer of mulch" around the plants and above the roots will help keep them warm even if the top freezes.

For plant owners worried about ornamental bushes and flowers, FDACS said during a freeze advisory, you can protect your plants "by sprinkling them with water from the time freezing temperature begins until the water begins to thaw." The department said to take these steps before the temperature hits freezing levels.

While covering plants with fabric, you should make sure not to rest the material directly on the leaves. Instead, use stakes or poles to keep the sheets above the plants, since touching the plant can still allow for cold damage.

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