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FLORIDA'S OLDEST INDEPENDENT WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

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Wakin' in a Winter Wonderland

By Mason Chambless



MASON CHAMBLESS

The Boca Ciega Yacht Club's annual holiday boat parade returned for its 39th year.

Keeping with holiday tradition, the Boca Ciega Yacht Club's (BCYC) 39th annual holiday boat parade returned the evening of Dec. 13. Club members and the greater local community gathered around Boca Ciega Bay to watch the procession of 15 festively decorated boats.

As early as two hours before the event started, community members staked out spots along the Gulf around Clam Bayou, Gulfport Marina, and Williams Pier to view the parade from. People (and pups!) dressed in holiday attire lined the shore in increasing numbers as the start to the parade drew near. Golf carts and other vehicles decorated in lights graced the eyes of the community spectators.

Some watchers gathered together with family and friends for bayside potlucks and tailgating. If one was to listen closely enough, there may have even been the distinct popping sound of a bottle of sparkling wine being opened somewhere along the shoreline.

Boat Parade **continued on page 9**

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OPINION

A Great Book With a Hard Cover

Free Bananas: Michael Fridovich

By Sam Henderson

On Sunday evening, I lost a friend; a wonderful, engaging, caring, pain-in-the-ass friend. Gulfport also lost a controversial, thoughtful, and widely misunderstood former Ward IV Council member. Michael Fridovich was a polarizing figure, and I am pretty sure he liked it that way. He was an infuriating, lovable character and you never had to ponder what he thought about you. You knew where you stood with him. He was full of compassion as well as venom.

If Michael wasn't your cup of tea, you either knew of him or didn't know him at all. He did not live in the in-between. I respect that his contentment was never contingent on those opinions. I think that if you took the time, and had the patience to know him well, then you discovered a remarkably generous, experienced and adventurous soul. He was a veteran, a poet, a restauranteur, and a traveler. My life is richer for our relationship.

For the last few months, I had the privilege of helping Michael navigate

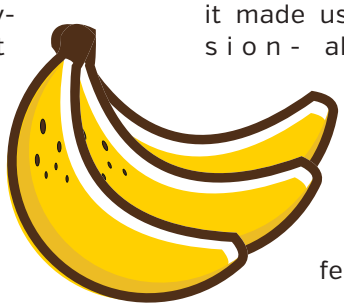

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SAM HENDERSON

This week's Free Bananas goes out to former Ward IV Council member Michael Fridovich, who died on Dec. 14.



FREE BANANAS

his deteriorating health. Don't qualify me for sainthood yet, because I bitched about it from time to time. He was a very particular fellow and his requests for assistance were not necessarily timely.

I recognize it as a privilege in this moment because I am writing this within hours of his death. I missed a call from him on Sunday afternoon, and by doing so I lost the chance to speak with him one last time. I wish I had that opportunity back. It gives me comfort to know that our Gulfport paramedics were with him until the end. You know who you are, and I am grateful to you.

Michael was a solitary man, but one of the most socially adept and affable conversationalists I've ever met. He knew someone from everywhere, and he wanted you to meet them too. All of the things I loathed about local politics – the glad-handing and networking, the schmoozing and name-dropping – it was his bread and butter. I think it made us a good team professionally on many occasions. I loved him as a friend and a colleague.

Michael lived a wild, vibrant, chaotic life. I know we all go someday, but it still feels too soon, because he had so much to offer. He wasn't done and did not go gentle into that good night. He still had engagements highlighted on the calendar. I am going to miss him. His brother Tony is going to miss him. My family and many friends in many places have been marked by his acerbic, unapologetic, and often profane take on the comedy of life. Thank you, Michael, for shooting arrows at the sun and occasionally at us.

To quote my sister, "loneliness is a slow poison," and your helping hand could be the antidote. Michael was not one to readily ask for help, but as his health and capability declined, he did so reluctantly. I am glad there were a few people there for him when things got tough. So many people don't have that luxury

In honor of Michael, and because it is kindness that counts, check in on your neighbors and acquaintances that may be weathering this otherwise joyous season without the benefit of close friends and loved ones. Such little things make all the difference.

And Michael, next time I see you, lunch is on me.

**Michael has two older house-trained indoor cats, Frida and Hemingway, who will need a new home together. They were his best friends. Call 727-744-6186 for information.* ◈

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Boundaries First, Maintenance After

St. Pete Weighs Options To Annex Historic Lincoln Cemetery

By Trei Johnson

During its Dec. 4 meeting, St. Petersburg's Housing, Land Use, and Transportation (HLUT) Committee agreed to pursue a long-term plan to annex Lincoln Cemetery, a historic Black burial ground currently located inside Gulfport city limits.

The HLUT committee unanimously approved a resolution urging Gulfport to begin the de-annexation process. The full City Council will vote on that resolution next.

While symbolic, the action signals a shift toward long-term responsibility for the 16-acre site.



TREI JOHNSON

St. Petersburg Housing, Land Use, and Transportation Committee discussed ways to help repair and maintain Lincoln Cemetery.

Historic Lincoln Cemetery's Conditions

Pastor Clarence Williams, who manages Lincoln Cemetery through Cross & Anvil Human Services, detailed severe storm damage and ongoing safety concerns.

"It costs $5,000 a month to mow the grass," he said. "We have carried this project on with my own private money and my church's money."

He urged the City of St. Pete to become a consistent partner rather than offering short-term help.

"I want you to inherit me as your son," he told the committee. "I want to be part of your budget considerations."

At Gulfport's Nov. 18 city council meeting, Mayor Karen Love described a conversation she had with Williams.

"In his messaging to me, he was very clear. He speaks as clearly as I do, and he said, 'I have not asked you for anything'," Love said. "And I said, 'and I'll hear from you if you want to.' [And] he said, 'yes.' So to me, the ball is in his court."

When *The Gabber Newspaper* asked Williams about this discussion, he said, "I don't remember having that conversation. I do remember talking to her on the phone."

He continued to say, "I do remember... County Commissioner Rene Flowers organizing a meeting between the City of Gulfport, the City of St. Petersburg, and the County, and no one from Gulfport was present. I do remember that."

The meeting he referred to took place Oct. 30.

Williams confirmed he already requested specific assistance from the City of St. Pete.

"We did ask for help with the grant writer. We did ask for surveying," he said. "That's a $25,000 need right there. If I don't get it done now, the graves will be covered again."

St. Pete Council member Deborah Figgs-Sanders pressed staff to identify near-term solutions.

"I'm looking for something more tangible right now," she said. "We've been having this conversation for years. What support can we provide today?"

St. Pete Council member Corey Givens spoke as both an elected official and descendant of someone interred in Lincoln. He questioned why the City could fund programs outside its limits but not support Cross & Anvil, based in St. Petersburg.

"We can't find the money to help an organization located in St. Pete, but we can fund people to travel out of the city for training? That doesn't make sense," Givens said. "Our ancestors are counting on us. We have to stand up for them because they cannot do it for themselves."

Why the City Cannot Fund Repairs Today

Despite visible need, officials stressed that state law prevents St. Petersburg from spending money on property located in another city.

Under Florida Statute Chapter 166, municipalities must:

- Use tax dollars within their jurisdiction
- Avoid improving or maintaining private property outside their boundaries
- Demonstrate municipal control when applying for grants or capital funding

Lincoln Cemetery lies south of the Pinellas Trail inside Gulfport, a fact confirmed by historic plat maps and current municipal boundaries.

Assistant St. Pete City Attorney Isabella Sobel explained "those boundaries matter."

"We cannot apply our funds to land we do not govern," Sobel said.



SIERRA CLARK

On Dec. 4, St. Petersburg's HLUT Committee agreed to pursue a plan to annex Historic Lincoln Cemetery, currently located in Gulfport.

Figgs-Sanders urged staff to think more creatively while remaining within the law.

"I just don't want us to continue to use that boundary as an excuse," she said. "We support organizations here that work outside the city all the time."

Annexation: The Only Long-Term Solution

Annexation allows a City to expand its boundaries. De-annexation removes land from a City's limits.

Since Lincoln Cemetery sits inside Gulfport, St. Petersburg cannot help until the boundaries change.

City staff outlined the required multi-stage process:

1. Gulfport must vote to de-annex the land.
2. Cross & Anvil must give written consent as the property owner.
3. The land becomes temporarily unincorporated Pinellas County.
4. St. Petersburg must vote to annex the property.

Once annexed, Lincoln Cemetery would qualify for:

- Full municipal maintenance
- Capital improvements, such as fencing and road work
- Storm cleanup
- Tree management
- Historic preservation grants

Staff estimated the full process may take 12 to 18 months, though political delays could extend it.

Immediate Needs Still Unmet

Williams warned that the cemetery cannot wait a year or more for help.

"I'm going to have to close the cemetery to repair the hazards," he told the committee.

He reminded officials that Lincoln Cemetery will celebrate its 100th anniversary next year and asked them to move with urgency.

Gulfport City Council discussed this issue at its Dec. 16 meeting, after The Gabber Newspaper *went to print. Check thegabber.com for updates.*

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Approvals and Agreements

Madeira Beach's Dec. 10 Commission Meeting

By Trei Johnson



CITY OF MADEIRA BEACH

Madeira Beach's Dec. 10 Commission meeting discussed a major dredging contract, new zoning standards, and disaster-response agreements.

The Madeira Beach Board of Commissioners moved quickly through a full agenda the night of Dec. 10.

They approved a major dredging contract for John's Pass, adopted new zoning standards, and formalized two disaster-response agreements with Pinellas County.

City Finalizes John's Pass Dredging Contract

Commission officially approved its dredging contract with Bayside Dredging after previously selecting the firm's $1.29 million alternate bid during a November workshop. Staff noted that the contract document was not included in the original action, which required a second vote.

The full project totals $1.55 million, including design, permitting, construction engineering, and a 5% contingency of $64,727.50.

The cost falls entirely within the $1.55 million state appropriation from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Two Post-Disaster Debris Agreements

Along with that, Commission approved two interlocal agreements with Pinellas County to streamline post-disaster debris operations.

Under the first agreement, Madeira Beach may use Pinellas County's pre-selected, FEMA-approved debris contractors instead of conducting its own procurement process. The City will pay only for the services it uses and will remain responsible for applying for FEMA reimbursement.

The second agreement clarifies which agency – city or county – must collect debris in specific areas.

Pinellas County will collect debris only on County roads in unincorporated areas that are not on the City's solid waste routes.

Madeira Beach will collect debris on City roads, City property, County roads inside or bordering the City, and rights-of-way next to unincorporated enclaves.

Both agreements carry no fiscal impact unless a disaster occurs.

Street-Sweeping Contract

Additionally, Commission approved a new contract with Sweeping Corp of America (SCA) for twice-monthly sweeping.

The service costs $2,725 per month, totaling $32,700 per year. This includes one standard sweep and one regenerative air sweep fo-



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cused on pervious-concrete neighborhoods to maintain stormwater flow. The City receives a 3% discount through the Sourcewell cooperative purchasing program.

Commission Opts Out of "Missing Middle" Housing Tax Exemption

Through Resolution 2025-14, Commission voted to opt out of the State's 80-120% AMI "missing middle" property-tax exemption created by House Bill 7073.

Madeira Beach qualifies for the opt-out based on county population and administrative requirements. Staff reported no expected fiscal impact.

Zoning Changes Move Forward

Commission also approved Ordinance 2025-19, which updates setback standards in the C-3 Retail Commercial zoning district to support mixed-use redevelopment in the Town Center.

Key changes include:

- Reducing the front setback from 25 feet to 10 feet
- Reducing side setbacks from 10 feet to 5 feet for lots under 120 feet wide
- Removing the rule requiring 33% of lot width to be used for side-yard setbacks on larger lots

City staff said the updates promote walkability, mixed-use development, and active ground-floor retail, aligning with the Comprehensive Plan and the Town Center Special Area Plan.

Neighborhood Concerns

Although the ordinance passed unanimously, Commissioners addressed broader zoning concerns before the vote. Commissioner Ray Kerr questioned how zoning decisions affect residential areas with different rental restrictions.

"I wouldn't have a problem with this within areas that we already have short-term rentals," he said. "My issue is where that's not allowed, where you have six months or three-month rental."

He emphasized his concern for neighborhood cohesion, adding that he "didn't want to see neighborhoods broken up over this."

Community Development Director Marci Forbes explained how zoning and rental regulations intersect.

"I would foresee the rental aspect of that still would have to meet our code requirements," she said.

She noted that while a property may have a long-term lease, the City cannot regulate how often residents come and go.

City Attorney Tom Trask warned Commissioners against adding restrictions that could conflict with State law.

"I wouldn't want us to get us into a position where we've made it so difficult... that we're found to be in violation of the statute," he said.

Despite these concerns, staff emphasized that the ordinance aligns with the City's redevelopment goals. The Commission approved the measure unanimously.

The next Madeira Beach Commission is Jan. 14, 2026 at 6 p.m. ◈





Remembering Michael Fridovich

Community Reflects on Former Gulfport Council Member

By Trei Johnson

Former Gulfport City Council member Michael Fridovich died yesterday. He leaves behind a legacy shaped by conviction, service, and evolving affiliations. Even when relationships began with disagreements, respect often followed.

Fridovich served on the Gulfport City Council for roughly a decade. His tenure began in 2013 and continued through 2023. That year, voters unseated him in a closely watched race against Ian O'Hara.

However, his public service did not end with that loss.

In December 2024, City Council appointed Fridovich as an interim council member when O'Hara resigned in the midst of scandal. He returned to the dais during a period of transition. That appointment reflected the respect many still held for his experience and institutional knowledge.

CAMERON HEALY



Michael Fridovich, a sometimes controversial figure who served Gulfport's Ward IV, died Sunday, Dec. 14.

Remembrance and Reflections

Throughout his tenure, Fridovich earned a reputation for independent thinking. At times, his positions divided opinion. Still, he held a deep belief in the importance of local government.

Because of that conviction, he approached council meetings as forums for meaningful debate. He pressed difficult issues, questioned prevailing views, and accepted the personal consequences of standing by his principles.

Former Gulfport Mayor Sam Henderson said their relationship changed throughout the years.

"Michael and I didn't really hit it off at first, but over the years we formed a close friendship," Henderson said. "He would move mountains to help the people he cared for. I wish more people had known him the way I got to know him."

That theme appeared again and again. Initial friction often gave way to respect.

The President and CEO of Pinellas Beaches Chamber of Commerce, Barry Rubin, described Fridovich as principled and deeply personal indivdual.

"Michael Fridovich was a devoted public servant and city councilman. But more than that," he said, "he was a good friend, a terrible golfer, and staunch animal and human rights advocate. He loved his community, his country, and his cats – I'm not exactly sure in which order. I'm going to miss the conversations we've had on the things we agreed on and miss more the debates on the things we didn't. Most of all I'm going to miss him.

Cathy Salustri Loper, publisher of *The Gabber Newspaper*, reflected on a relationship shaped by disagreement and reconciliation.

"Michael and I had our issues throughout the years, but I was always impressed that he lived his values and remained true to himself," Loper said. "We made peace with one another earlier this year, and I can truly say Gulfport was better for having him in it."

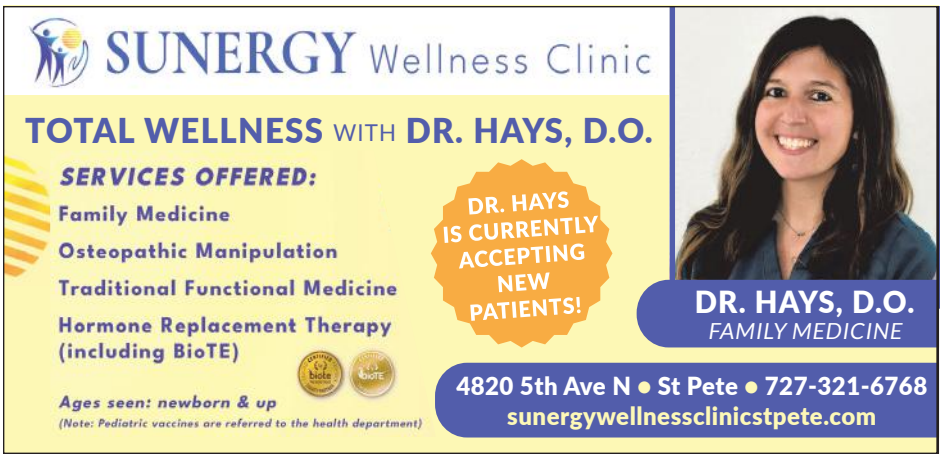
Melinda Shook, who helped campaign for Fridovich, recalled seeing him only months ago at Publix.

"He looked pretty frail, but he was really upbeat," she said. "I probably would have thanked him again for his military service, like I've done a million times before, and I probably would have told him I loved him. You don't always say that to your friends often enough."

A Lasting Civic Imprint

Even after leaving office, Fridovich stayed engaged in Gulfport's civic life. He debated honestly. Showed his deep passion for the issues. And lived his values without apology.

Ultimately, his legacy is not defined by unity. Instead, it is defined by his willingness to question, challenge, and serve. Gulfport is shaped, in part, by that legacy. ◈



Boat Parade continued from cover

Canoers, kayakers, and other boaters even made their way out into the water for an off-shore viewing experience.

As the sun set over the bay, a police boat with a self-proclaimed "skinniest Santa" at its bow sailed into the bay. He signaled the beginning of the parade.

Sailboats, pocket yachts, and fishing boats – all of varying sizes – decked out in dazzling holiday lights passed one after the other as the parade drifted past the captivated spectators. Some blared Christmas tunes from on-board loudspeakers, although one distinctly had its own music blaring from the vocal chords of the ship's crew.

The parade boats then looped around the Marina's harbor, passing by the Yacht Club, before sailing all the way to Gulfport's Pasadena Yacht & Country Club neighborhood. They then moved down to Isla Del Sol before finally returning to the parade's starting point by the Marina.

This, however, wasn't all just for festive fun – there were prizes to be won.

A team of judges rated the passing floats. This team included Ward II Council member Marlene Shaw, Ward IV Council member Nancy Earley, and Jennifer Daunch. The judges crowned the 35-foot catamaran "Knot Responsible" as the final winner.

MASON CHAMBLESS



Many people set up chairs around Clam Bayou, Gulfport Marina, and Gulfport Beach. Some stood along the railings of Williams Pier to view the parade.

This was Earley's first time attending the boat parade. She said she "was so humbled and honored to be asked to be a judge" and that "it was a lovely time."

Shaw, who previously was a member of Boca Ciega Yacht Club, said that "they're really a great organization in many ways." Earley, likewise, said that the club was "so welcoming."

Boat Parade continued on page 10

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Boat Parade continued from page 9



MASON CHAMBLESS

Santa Claus signaled the beginning of the parade with Gulfport PD.



Operation Santa

Continuing a 24-year partnership, BCYC partnered with the Gulfport Police Department to support Operation Santa. It is a program that helps underprivileged children in Gulfport receive a present under their Christmas tree.

For every boat participating in the parade, rather than paying an entrance fee, BCYC encouraged participants to donate two or more gifts towards Operation Santa, or write a check in support of the program.

In total, BCYC collected six overflowing boxes of toys and $600 in cash and gift cards.

"We were all thrilled with the amount of enthusiastic support we received from the community and spectators," said Vice Commodore Beth Berkobein on behalf of the Boca Ciega Yacht Club. "Last year we had to cancel the parade due to the hazards in Boca Ciega Bay resulting from the hurricanes and it seemed apparent that everyone needed us to get back out there this year and celebrate not only the holidays, but Gulfport's recovery." ◈

Books, Breakfast, and Big Cheese

Stay Up-to-Date With Pinellas Businesses

By Ester Venouziou

Big Cheese

Mazzaro's Italian Market kicked off one of its annual holiday traditions. The St. Petersburg market carved into its annual mega-cheese: an 866-pound block of imported Italian provolone.

This year's torpedo-sized wheel of Auricchio provolone aged for 22 months before making its way to St. Pete. A semi hauled it in, and a forklift rolled it through Mazzaro's doors, where crowds lined up for the first cuts. Chunks of the massive cheese remain one of the city's most sought-after holiday gifts.

Beyond the cheese spectacle, Mazzaro's draws daily crowds for its fresh-ground coffee, handmade pasta, baked treats, and huge lineup of sandwiches and ready-to-eat meals.

Mazzaro's Italian Market, 2909 22nd Ave. N., St. Petersburg. mazzarosmarket.com, 727-321-2400.

Central Diner

Central Diner, the downtown St. Pete staple known for no-frills breakfasts and oversized portions, has expanded west. The longtime favorite at 530 Central Ave. now operates a second location at 2525 Pasadena Ave. S. in South Pasadena's Village Plaza.

John and Chris Mangels opened the diner in 1975 as Central Coffee Shoppe. It soon drew downtown workers and long-time residents. Their daughters took over in 2004 and ran it until 2018, and Nidhi Vats purchased it four years later.

The new location occupies the former home of Marquise Café, which moved to Treasure Island last year.

The menu includes burgers, deli sandwiches, and made-to-order omelets. John's Special, named for founder John Mangels, remains a standout with two eggs, cheesy home fries with grilled onions, and a choice of bacon, ham, or sausage.



ESTER VENOUZIOU

There's a new bookstore in downtown St. Pete; The Book Lounge.

The Book Lounge

A new literary hideaway opened last month at 631 Central Ave. in downtown St. Petersburg.

The Book Lounge was founded by mother-daughter duo Natalya and Pamela Calleja. It blends books, bites, and board games in a warm, community-minded setting.

Inside, guests will find soft lighting, curated bookshelves, cozy reading corners and wine on tap. The menu, touted as "Girl Dinner" favorites, includes build-your-own charcuterie boards, coffee from Hogg Batch, and frosé.

Each book features a custom bookmark noting its tropes, spice level, and Goodreads rating, while the Book Matchmaking Help Desk and Blind Date with a Book add a personal touch. Visitors can explore cozy fantasy and spicy romance titles, sip seasonal drinks, and play from a library of games like Uno, Catan, and Wingspan. ◈

Cindy Lou Uncensored

The Off-Central's Holiday Show

By Becca McCoy

A middle-aged woman is getting ready for a Christmas party in her modestly appointed trailer. There's booze, there are drugs, and there's no shortage of colorful language and ribald talk. It's not for children, or for the prudish.

Or for purists… because that middle-aged woman is Cindy Lou Who, who is now more than 2. She is forty years down a path of terrible life choices… so why not make a few more in a 65-minute span in front of a live audience?

Again, to be very clear: *WHO'S HOLIDAY* is ***not for children***. Is the whole thing performed in rhyming couplets? Yes. Will remembering who the McGurkus family and Yertle are help you invest in the story? Sure. But you also have to be ready for a new interpretation of "Who Hash," a gruesome end to a beloved childhood character, and hearing about something other than the Grinch's heart growing three sizes one day.

And if you are thinking, "Gee, how is the Seuss Estate cool with this?" – they are not. But after leveling playwright Matthew Lombardo with cease-and-desists, Lombardo took legal action, insisting the play is parody and protected by fair use and the First Amendment – and the courts sided with him. So, *WHO'S HOLIDAY* is here to stay – and playing now through Dec. 21 at The Off-Central.

The production showcases what makes The Off-Central special: a hyper-intimate space where you can be immersed. Alan Mohney, Jr.'s set design and Thad Engle's light design once again elevate the space and create an experience that belies its budget.

Alan Mohney, Jr. smartly continues the theater's exposed wood ceiling into the paneling of Cindy Lou's trailer – because the main premise we accept as an audience is that we are, somehow, physically in her trailer. How? Why? Eh. Just go with it. Thad Engle manages to design like there are twice the lights available to him and always incorporates elements of genuine surprise.

Cindy Lou Who is brought to life by Alaina Rahaim with a mix of earnestness and affability that I appreciated. Her Cindy Lou is plucky, frazzled, and hapless, but she is trying, sincere and dignified in her own way. She and director Dylan Barlowe lean in when the show plumbs its deepest themes: loneliness, isolation, regret, and connection.



THE OFF-CENTRAL

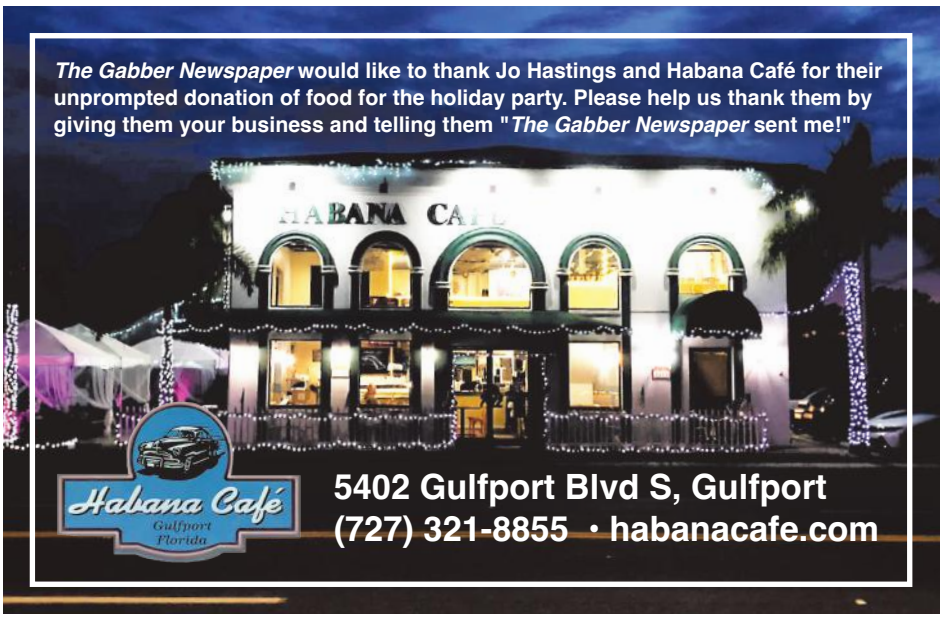
Although this show stars Cindy Lou Who, it is *not* intended for children. *WHO'S HOLIDAY* at The Off-Central runs through Dec. 21.

According to her program bio, this is her first ever solo performance, and she handled it skillfully. Holding a story alone for an hour, plus audience interactions, plus rhyming couplets is a high level of difficulty to start with, but the audience knew right away we were in capable hands.

This show is not going to be everyone's cup of tea. If you prefer your holiday fare nostalgic and saccharine, check out some of the other theatrical offerings in town this month. But if you love an anti-hero, irreverence, and a splash of vulgarity, *WHO'S HOLIDAY* is for you. And the show is its most successful when the audience is down for it: responsive, interactive, playful. So don't go bringing your Grinch energy because Cindy Lou Who has a foul mouth. No squares allowed in this trailer on Mt. Crumpet.

See *WHO'S HOLIDAY* at The Off-Central

The Off-Central, 2260 1st Ave. S., St. Petersburg. Weds.-Fri., 7:30 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., 3 p.m. $21-36. theoffcentral.com, 727-202-7019. ◈



Crisp Sips

Top Tastes: Best Hard Cider in South Pinellas

By Morgan Wujkowski



3 DAUGHTERS BREWING

Hit up 3 Daughters Brewing for the best ciders that highlight Florida fruits.

In most parts of the country, hard cider season arrives with flannel shirts and falling leaves. But in Florida, it shows up with sunglasses, 80-degree autumns, and a hint of sea breeze.

If you're looking for seasonal flavors that aren't heavy with hops or overloaded with pumpkin spice, this edition of *The Gabber Newspaper*'s Top Tastes has you covered for some of the area's best pints (or cans) of hard ciders. Hard cider fits Florida's idea of fall just right – refreshing, bright, and a little unexpected.

Best Sunshine State Standout – 3 Daughters Brewing ($7.49)

Venture downtown to St. Pete and hit up 3 Daughters Brewing for the best ciders that highlight Florida fruits. The brewery features 42 rotating taps (although not all of them are ciders) and all of their bevies, including the non-alcoholic CBD seltzers, are made in house. Cider standouts include the wild berry and raspberry lemonade ciders (both 5.5%) made with Florida fruits. The Key Lime cider (5.5%) is definitely my favorite. It tastes like liquid key lime pie without stinging your teeth from a sugary palate. If there's a cider selection that captures the essence of Florida, it's 3 Daughters Brewing.

222 22nd Ave. S., St. Petersburg. Mon.-Thurs., 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 11:30 a.m.-12 a.m.; and Sun., 11:30 a.m.-8 p.m. 3dbrewing.com, 727-495-6002.

Best Cider Selection – Mastry's Brewing Co. ($5-6)

If you're out on the beaches, stop by Mastry's Brewing Co. in St. Pete Beach for the most eclectic mix of cider options. For a fruity finish, stick with the Peach Party cider (6.5%) and its mix of sweet peach, bold blackberry and mellow apple, or the American Berry cider (8%) which is a little heavier but envelopes the imperial blueberry hard cider body. If you want something off-the-wall, try the El Chavo herbed cider (6.5%) with habanero pepper, mango, and apple. My favorite, however, is the Strawberry Magic (5%) that's a crisp hard apple cider blended with fresh strawberries. It has a delicate hint of tartness and if confetti had a taste, this would be it.

7701 Blind Pass Road, St. Pete Beach. Mon.-Thurs., 12-10 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 12-11 p.m.; and Sunday, 12-9 p.m. mastrysbrewingco.com, 727-202-8045.

Best Pairing Potential – Gulfport Brewery + Eatery ($7.75)

Hats off to Gulfport Brewery + Eatery for having the best menu pairing potential when it comes to their cider. While their current selection of ciders was more limited than the other breweries we sampled, the Original Sin Black Widow cider (6%), pairs with a number of items off the trendy and creative food menu. The cider is fruit-forward yet tart, made with blackberries and freshly pressed apples. Pair it with the Brussels flatbread (it complements the balsamic), pork sliders (sweet and spicy), or my favorite, the Odessy baked sub with extra keef. Grab a can of Zombie Killer (6.5%) with honey and cherry, and pair it with the soft pretzel served with warm beer cheese and IPA mustard. You'll thank me later.

3007 Beach Blvd. S., Gulfport. Mon.-Thurs., 12-10 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 12-11 p.m.; and Sun., 12-9 p.m. gulfport-brewing.com, 727-954-4109. ◈





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OBITUARIES



Iris J. Manley

Iris J. Manley (James) age 91, passed away Nov. 25, 2025 in Hospicare at Orlando Health Bayfront Hospital in St. Petersburg. She was born in Camber County, Kentucky and was the oldest of six children.

Iris enlisted in Women's Army Corps (WAC) as a private in the United States Army, and resided in Okinawa, Japan during the Korean war. She is predeceased by her husband United States Army Master Sergeant Richard Manley, and her daughter Elizabeth Anne Murray.

Iris is survived by her sister Betty Crabbe and brother Steven James, and her children Linda Sue Petsch, Robert Manley, Sr., and Mary Peck. She has four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Iris was a dedicated patriot, supported many military and civilian charities, and volunteered for community service for 40-plus years in her Gulfport hometown throughout her lifetime.

Her memorial service will be held on Friday, Jan. 16, 2026 10 a.m. at Florida Mortuary Funeral Home, 2200 31st St. S., St. Petersburg, Florida. She will be interred at Royal Palm Cemetery (101 55th St. S.) following the memorial service.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to any Disabled Veterans organization, Casa of St. Petersburg, or Suncoast Hospice.

CROSSWORD

Solution on page 19

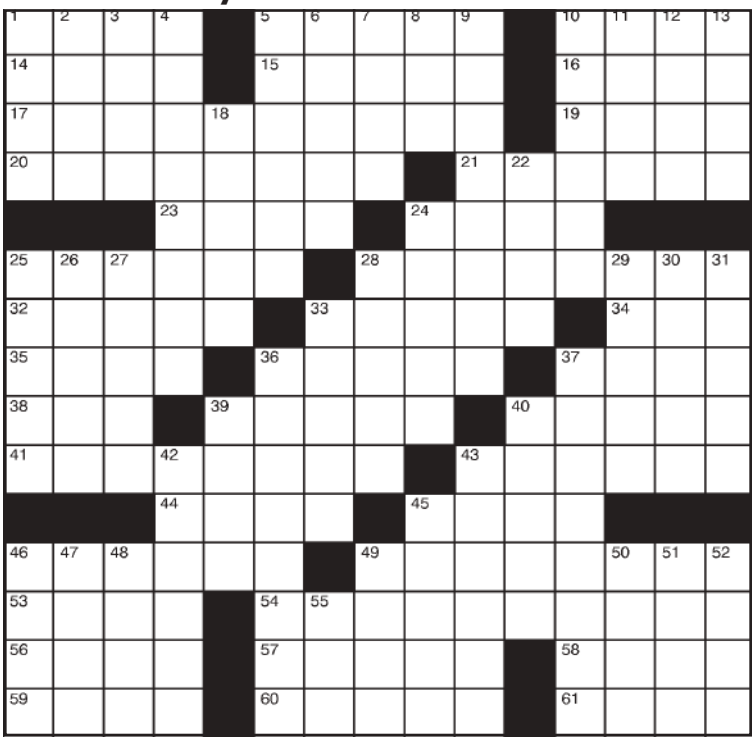
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24 South of France
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28 Provides capital
32 Blood cell destruction
33 More than is due
34 Palm leaf
35 I don't give ___!
36 Merchandise
37 Get out of jail fee
38 New Zealand parrot
39 Specialized speech
40 ___ Brava, Spain
41 Trading center
43 Stuck out
44 Lends a hand
45 Kind of ball
46 Rodeo animal
49 Highlight
53 Excess avoirdupois: sl.
54 NYC thoroughfare
56 Washington office
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58 Assam silkworm
59 Port or rosé
60 Israeli general Moshe
61 Raggedy Andy

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3 Spring period
4 Heed a tout's advice
5 Ninon curtains
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7 Pleasing tune
8 Small land mass, in Montmartre
9 Final goal
10 Comedian Short
11 Russian range
12 Tel ___-Jaffa
13 Fashioned
18 Kilmer poem
22 Harem rooms
24 Actor Sal
25 Quench
26 Glass used in ovens
27 Hayes of pop and soul
28 Valley ___
29 Use a luge
30 Crème de la crème
31 Caesar is one
33 Fireworks reports
36 Fenestrated
37 Hot's partner
39 Secular
40 ___ out!: Stop!
42 Jug appendage
43 "April Showers" singer
45 Island in the Mediterranean
46 Unexpected shock
47 Shankar
48 Algerian port
49 Do in
50 Emporer who fiddled around
51 Overlay
52 "And others" abbreviation
55 Altar in the sky



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Solution on page 19

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Cookies, Pajamas, and Holiday Celebrations

Thursday, Dec. 18

Improv for Mental Wellness Shake off the storm stress and loosen up with a playful improv workshop designed for survivors of recent hurricanes. Volunteers of America of Florida leads this gentle, creative session through Project COPE – helping folks reconnect, breathe easier, and maybe even laugh a little. *Gulfport Public Library, 5501 28th Ave. S., Gulfport. 10:30 a.m-12:30 p.m. mygulfport.us, 727-893-1074.* F

Yappy Hour Beer, dogs, and doing good - elite combo. Swing by Pinellas Ale Works for Yappy Hour, where $1 from every beer goes to Friends of Strays. *Pinellas Ale Works, 1962 1st Ave. S., St. Petersburg. 6-8 p.m. friendsofstrays.org, 727-235-0970.* F DF

Friday, Dec. 19-Saturday, Dec. 20

A Taste of the North Spa Beach Park is going full holiday mode with a two-day celebration packed with northern eats, festive drinks, live performances, and all the sparkly lights. Load up on comfort foods (like lobster rolls and wings) and then swing by the massive toy drive. *Spa Beach, 615 2nd Ave. NE., St. Petersburg. Fri., 4-10 p.m.; Sat., 12-9 p.m. stpetepier.org, 727-822-7437.* F DF

Friday, Dec. 19-Sunday, Dec. 21

Holiday Sparkle Experience big voices and a full 40-piece orchestra at The Palladium. "Holiday Sparkle" blends classic and modern favorites with performances by the Tampa City Ballet for a feel-good, dress-up-worthy holiday night. *Palladium Theatre, 253 5th Ave. N., St. Petersburg. Fri.-Sat., 7:30 p.m.; Sun., 2 p.m. stpeteopera.org, 727-822-3590.*

Friday, Dec. 19

Antique Day Got a mystery heirloom sitting on a shelf? Bring your favorite antique or collectible to the Gulfport Senior Center for a free evaluation and a crash course on how to sell your treasures online. *Gulfport Senior Center, 5501 27th Ave. S., Gulfport. 2:30 p.m. mygulfport.us, 727-893-2237.* F

Gulfport's Holiday Model Train Show All aboard for one of Gulfport's most charming holiday traditions. Resident Bill Drexler transforms his garage into a three-level winter train wonderland, complete with mini scenery and two sizes of model trains running the tracks. Stop by during any of the open-house times to explore the display. Donations support the Gulfport Senior Center Foundation. *5314 10th Ave. S., Gulfport. 5-8 p.m. mygulfport.us, 407-508-5868.* F

Gulfport Cookies and Caroling Gulfport Arts & Heritage is throwing a cozy holiday hang with cookies, cocoa, and carols. Bring a plate of your favorite sweets and a lawn chair; they'll bring the fire pit, hot chocolate, and live music from Gulfport's resident uke queen, Roxanne Cann-Dittman. *Gulfport History Museum, 5301 28th Ave. S., Gulfport. 7-8:30 p.m. gulfporthistoricalsociety.wildapricot.org, info@gulfporthistoricalsociety.org.* F

All Holy Night Candlelight Service One night. Many traditions. This candlelit service celebrates Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, the Winter Solstice, Festivus, and Christmas – with live music from the Voice of Love choir. *Eckerd College, Bininger Theatre, 4200 54th Ave. S., St. Petersburg. 7-8:30 p.m. firstunity.org, 727-344-1515.* F

Saturday, Dec. 20

Yoga & Beach Cleanup Start your Saturday with salty air, and doing right by the shoreline. MAR teams up with Sunstate Yoga and Peoples Lifestyle for a grounding yoga flow followed by a hands-on beach cleanup on Fort De Soto Beach. *Fort De Soto Beach, Pavilion 5, 3500 Pinellas Bayway S., Tierra Verde. 8-11 a.m. wearemar.org.* F

Grinch Pajama Storytime Bring the kids for a cozy courtyard storytime featuring *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* at Tombolo Books! The read aloud is by Ms. Wendy – plus hot chocolate, cookies, and a possible (definite) Grinch cameo. *Tombolo Books, 2153 1st Ave. S., St. Petersburg. 9:30-10:30 a.m. $5 per family (up to five people). tombolobooks.com, 727-755-9456.*

Holiday Sip & Shop Last night market of 2025. Last weekend to shop. No pressure. Swing by Gulfport's Brenda McMahon Gallery for a Holiday Sip & Shop with light bites, live music by singer-guitarist Robert Sutherland, and shelves packed with artful gifts. *Brenda McMahon Gallery, 2901 Beach Blvd. S., Gulfport. 5-9 p.m. brendamcmahongallery.com, 727-454-0453.* F

Treasure Island Holiday Lighted Boat Parade Treasure Island's water-bound parade is lighting up Boca Ciega Bay with decked-out boats and twinkly lights. The parade cruises through the inlets and wraps with a grand finale at John's Pass. No official watch party this year, but find the map online to plan where you will watch from. *Boca Ciega Bay to John's Pass. 5:45 p.m. mytreasureisland.org, 727-547-4575.* F DF

Sunday, Dec. 21

Santa's Market at 3 Daughters Brewing Last minute holiday shopping alert! This festive market brings together more than 50 Tampa Bay vendors, food trucks, live music, specialty beers, and a giant Christmas Village – plus free photos with Santa from 12-3 p.m. *3 Daughters Brewing, 222 22nd St. S., St.. Petersburg. 12-6 p.m. 3dbrewing.com, 727-495-6002.* F

North Pole Express Is the Polar Express part of your holiday tradition? Local families are invited for a Santa visit, a special appearance by the Madeira Beach Fire Department, and a big-screen showing of *The Polar Express*. Pajamas encouraged! *Holiday Isles Elks Lodge #1912, 14111 East Parsley Dr., Madeira Beach. 1-5 p.m. madeirabeachfl.gov, 303-819-7279.* F

Chanukah at the Beach Menorah lighting but make it beachy. Head to Treasure Island for a Chanukah celebration from the Chabad Jewish Center of Greater St Petersburg, There will be music, hot latkes, dreidels, and surprise giveaways. *10400 Gulf Blvd., Treasure Island. 5:30 p.m. chabadsp.com, 727-344-4900.* F

Bananas Holiday Market Bananas Records is turning into a full-blown holiday hangout. Swing by for food, music, Santa sightings, and enough last-minute gift options. There will be all types of vendors, but a heavy emphasis on vinyl, books, and music. *Banana Records, 2887 22nd Ave. N., St. Petersburg. 7-10 p.m. bananasrecords.com, 727-327-4616.* F

Monday, Dec. 22

A Drag Queen Christmas Deck the halls with wigs, heels, and unapologetic holiday chaos. This iconic drag tour rolls into St. Pete with Nina West at the helm and a stacked lineup of fan-favorite Drag Race queens delivering festive performances. *Mahaffey Theater, 400 1st St. S., St Petersburg. 7:30 p.m. $49. themahaffey.com, 727-300-2000.*

Wednesday, Dec. 24

Christmas Eve Service First Presbyterian Church in St. Pete is hosting two Children's and Family Services on Christmas Eve, featuring an interactive nativity story, joyful carols, and music from the children's choir. The 7 p.m. service is by candlelight. *First Presbyterian Church, 701 Beach Dr. NE., St. Petersburg. 4 p.m. & 7 p.m. fpcstpete.com, 727-822-2031.* F







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NEED LAWN SERVICE? Pete Trevino Lawn Service. Licensed & insured, 20 years experience. Weeding, hedges, mowing, or one time clean up. Free estimates. Call 727-432-0523. No texts.

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Flower beds made new again. We install mulch, shells, rocks, sod, plants, and rock gardens. Small tree removed/installed, weeding done. 30 years experience. Free estimates. St. Pete/Gulfport. 407-244-6045. CLEAN UP CLEAN UP CLEAN UP.

GO GREEN WITH US - EMERALD LAWN SERVICE

We do everything! Licensed and insured. Call Emerald Lawn Service, Inc. at 727-698-9599.

TREE WORK Trimming trees including palms and removing big and small trees, all kinds! Cleaning garages, mowing, and hauling. Call Sylvester 727-460-8721 or 727-550-7241 for all your clean up needs!

Miscellaneous Service

NOTARY SERVICES $10

The Gabber Newspaper provides Notary Services, in office only, at 2908-B Beach Blvd S. in Gulfport. Our Notary Public is not an attorney licensed to practice law in the State of Florida, and may not give legal advice or accept fees for legal advice. The Gabber Newspaper does NOT provide witnesses for document signing. Please call 727-321-6965 for appointment.

EARLY AIRPORT RIDES

Furnishing rides to the airports, cruise lines, and wherever you may need. TEXT Nancy at 860-719-5099 to set up your ride to your next destination!

DEPRESSION SUPPORT GROUP MEETS WEEKLY 7 TO 8:30 PM

Tuesdays ~ Allendale Church: 3803 Haines Rd. and Thursdays ~ Life Enrichment Center, Classroom 3C. Pasadena Church: 227 70th St. S. Free, no registration. Call: 727 410-1569 or Google search: DBSTampabay.org

Moving / Hauling

HB HAULING & HANDYMAN SERVICES

House/garage clean outs. Demolition. Shed removal, fence removal, yard clear out, etc. Dump trailer rental. Lowest price guaranteed. Local family owned business. Call Kenny at 727-793-5816.

JUNK REMOVAL FULL SERVICE

Big or Small, We Haul it All. Eviction/hoarder/property cleanouts. Shed/fence removal, carpet removal, garage/storage clean outs. Too much stuff, let us help! Fully Licensed and Insured. Free estimates. Lamys Hauling and Removal Service. 727-501-6464. Lamyshaulingandremoval.com.

Painting

CUSTOM PAINTED KITCHENS, FURNITURE & MORE

Transform the old to new! Serving St. Pete areas, 30 years experience. Call Jeff at 941-321-7098 or visit www.custompaintedkitchens.net

ARNEY'S PAINTING INC.

Expert prep & painting. Interior and exterior work, residential and commercial, plus wallpaper removal. 30 years experience. Lic. #C-9579. Will also work out a trade for a decent used car. Call Arney: 727-900-3459.

Plumbing

PROFLO PLUMBING 727-902-7077

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MISCELLANEOUS

For Sale

MULTIPLE ITEMS FOR SALE

Concept 2 Rowing Machine - like new - $700 OBO. Kayaks - separately $450 each, $800 for pair. Pongo 120 - new seat - equipped for fishing - orange. Pongo 100 - new straps - green. Consoles for each included. Kayaks have been well-used and have some minor signs of love but float and track well. Call or text 727-656-5420.

MOTORCOACH FOR SALE

2019 Thor Elite Motorcoach. Extremely low milage (1,527 miles), sleeps five. Call 727-344-1003 for more information.

General

PASS-A-GRILLE COMMUNITY BEACH THRIFT STORE

Now open at 1606 Pass-A-Grille Way, St. Pete Beach (corner of 17th Ave. & Pass-A-Grille Way). Open Tuesdays, Thursdays, & Saturdays from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Wanted

I BUY USED WATCHES

Anything, from a $10 Casio to a $10,000 Rolex, but especially Hamilton, Omega, Tissot, Longines, Tag Heuer, Seiko, Movado. I can come to you, if needed. Nights, weekends OK. Free appraisals, even by phone. Call/Text Christopher the Watch Guy: 727-223-6904.

ROOMMATE WANTED

Senior female roommate wanted to share a 2bd/2ba furnished condo. A quick walk to downtown Gulfport. Shared expenses. Call Gloria at 414-218-9277.

REAL ESTATE

Furnished Rentals

FULLY FURNISHED 1BR/1BA CONDO FOR RENT $1,400 Close to beaches, downtown & Stetson University. Located in St. Pete on the SunRunner Line. Community pool, laundry room & grills. No pets & no smoking property. Walk-in closet, 2nd floor. Background & Eviction check required. TEXT: 727-417-2960.

FURNISHED RENTAL Small, quiet 1 bedroom, furnished, private entrance, includes large flower garden, lanai, and driveway. Adjacent to Pinellas Trail. Shopping nearby. Text or call 678-488-7152.

Real Estate For Rent

CONDO & HOUSE FOR RENT OR SALE

Available now! Condo:1bd/1ba, 900 sqft. Nice/clean with six pools/covered parking. Cable/utilities included except electricity. House: 2bd/1ba, no smoking. Condo $1,350/mo. House $1,800 + security deposit & last month's rent. Min.1 year lease. Call 727-686-9942 or 727-776-1794.

HOUSE FOR RENT/ AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY

Highly sought after Gulfport, S. Pasadena, St. Pete Beach area. Beautiful 4 bedroom/2 Bath, 11 rooms, split floor plan, fully furnished, custom cabinets/tops, new appliances, washer/dryer, fenced backyard, deck, hot tub, electric fireplace, $2,900/month-to-month. Text/Call 727-804-8914.

STEPS TO GULFPORT PIER & BEACH Tropical 1bd/1ba cottage in Arts District. Includes electric, shared washer dryer, basic trash, water & sewer. No pets, did not flood. Annual rental. Call 207-590-9498 for details.

Vacation Rentals

SHORT TERM SEASONAL RENTAL

Large, quiet 1 bedroom furnished, private entrance, includes large flower garden, lanai, and driveway. Full kitchen, huge bedroom. Adjacent to Pinellas Trail. Shopping nearby. Text or call 678-488-7152.

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Deadline for classified ads is 3 p.m. Friday for the following week's issue.

theGabber.com

Gulfport Real Estate Sales

Find More Home Sales at thegabber.com

Here are some Gulfport homes sold from Dec. 5-12.



CATHY SALUSTRI

5514 Newton Ave. S. (Tangerine)
This four-bed, two-bath home, built in 2025, has 1,176 square feet. It listed and sold for $695,000.

6240 Kipps Colony Court S., #101 (Pasadena Yacht & Golf Club)
This four-bed, three-bath condo, built in 1989, has 2,280 square feet. It listed for $1.295 million and sold for $1,289,900.

6020 Shore Blvd. S., #712 (Town Shores)
This two-bed, three-bath condo, built in 1974, has 2,210 square feet. It listed for $749,000 and sold for $700,000.

5631 23rd Ave. S. (Waterfront District)
This three-bed, two-bath home, built in 1956, has 1,482 square feet. It listed for $350,000 and sold for $225,000.

The Gabber lists real estate sales every week, as space allows. This may not be a comprehensive list of all homes and condos sold in Gulfport, and often does not include commercial properties or business sales.

City of Gulfport Holiday Sanitation Schedule

CHRISTMAS DAY

Thursday, December 25, 2025
Thursday's pickup will be on
Wednesday, December 24th.
No Wednesday yard waste pickup this week
Garbage and Recycling for all other days
of the week will remain on schedule.
The Public Works office will be closed on
Christmas Day, December 25th
& Friday, December 26th.

NEW YEAR'S DAY

Thursday, January 1, 2026
Thursday's pickup will be on
Wednesday, December 31.
No Wednesday yard waste pickup this week
Garbage and Recycling for all other days
of the week will remain on schedule.
The Public Works office will be closed on
New Year's Day, January 1st
& Friday, January 2nd.

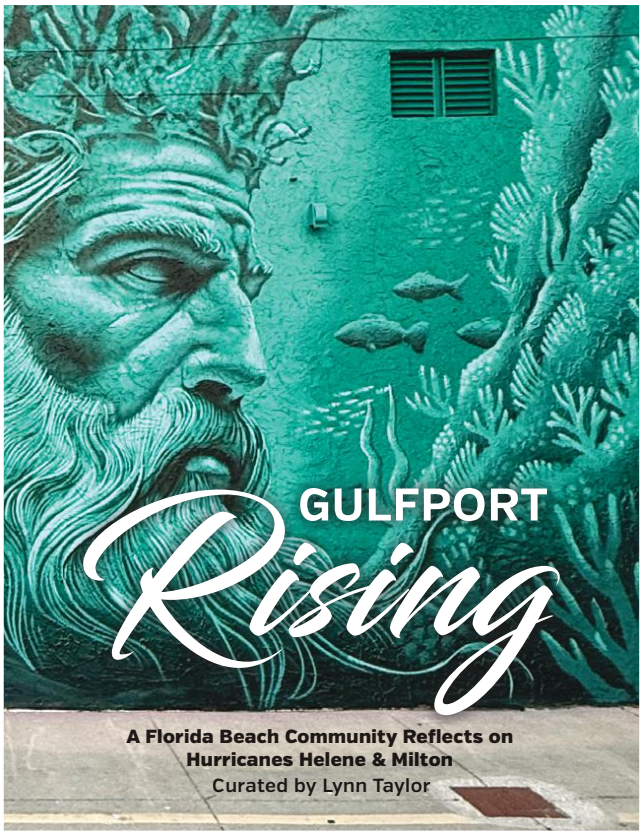
PLEASE RECYCLE YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE

Trees will be chopped and processed into mulch then made available to residents at The Neighborhood Center located at 1617 49th Street South.

TO PREPARE YOUR TREE FOR RECYCLING:

- **Remove all decorations, including hooks, garland, tinsel and lights.**
- **Place tree at curb or alley for regular Wednesday yard waste pickup.**
- **Do NOT bag or place tree in can.**
- **For multiple-dwelling units, place your tree near the dumpster without blocking access to it.**

City of Gulfport Public Works Department • 727-893-1089



Gulfport Rising:

A Florida Beach Community Reflects on Hurricanes Helene and Milton

Created by Gulfportians and curated by Lynn Taylor, with essays and art from Gulfport creatives.

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GOLDEN TICKET

OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE AT ECKERD COLLEGE

Enter OLLI at Eckerd College's Golden Ticket Giveaway for a chance to win a complimentary All-Access Class Pass for Winter Term 2026—unlimited enrollment in all programs; some exclusions apply.

Contest ENDS Monday, January 5, 2026, at 11:45 p.m. ET.

The drawing will be held on Friday, January 9, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. ET at the OLLI main office, located at Eckerd College, Continuing Education Center (CEC), 4200 54th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33711. The winner does not need to be present to win.