

AROUND THE SQUARE

Following the latest news and views from Serenoa

WINTER, 2024

VOLUME 3.4

'TIS THE SEASON IN SERENOA!

GOOD CHEER. GOOD FRIENDS. GOOD EATS. Serenosans gather for a Holiday Happening!

On Saturday, December 14th, the Serenoa community joined together, once again, to celebrate the Holiday Season, and the genuine camaraderie of our tight-knit Serenoan family.

The Clubhouse was beautifully adorned in seasonal trappings anchored by a large, eye-popping new tree— fashionably decorated with white lights, yards of white ribbon, and stippled with gold, and silver balls and baubles. Kudos to the social committee, and especially to Colleen Milkowski, who tapped into her artistic skills to create this centerpiece, and help style the beautifully- accessorized

In addition, Serenosans generously answered the call to provide gift cards to this year's seasonal charity— St. Francis Manor—a local organization that offers both studio and one-bedroom apartments to seniors, 62 years of age and over—on limited incomes, and who are able to live independently.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



table settings in keeping with the Christmas theme. The Social Committee team also organized a complimentary smorgasboard buffet that delighted partygoers with the diversity of options, and tantalizing flavors. Naturally, the dessert table was a major hit— offering a spectacular selection of holiday cookies, cakes, pies and candied treats that more than satisfied the sweet tooth cravings of the revelers.

Thanks to a gift from the weather gods, the rain held off long enough for guests to move about, and provide optional dining poolside during the festivities. These casual holiday get togethers provide a wonderful opportunity for neighbors to catch up, raise a toast to the new year, and welcome new Serenosans into the fold.



This year, a late Thanksgiving date created a sudden, and urgent, pivot into the Christmas Season. Serenosans were poised and ready— putting forth an exceptionally festive holiday light show.

SERENOA RESPONDS IN A BIG WAY DURING THE SEASON OF GIVING.



OneBlood's Big Red Buses service Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas. Their dedicated work is especially important during the Holiday Season.

There's no substitute for blood. This critical bodily fluid cannot be artificially manufactured in a lab. Shelf life is limited— requiring inventory to be constantly replenished by generous blood donors. The only source for life-saving patient transfusion is volunteer blood donations. On Sunday, December 8, charitable Serenosans visited the mobile OneBlood Lab near the Clubhouse to give sorely needed blood— especially during this time of year. Generous donors received a \$20 gift card, and a complimentary wellness checkup, which included blood pressure, pulse, temperature, iron count, and cholesterol screenings. Donating blood is a selfless act, and all Serenosans who participated have the gratitude of the Board, and the entire community.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR SERENOA!

THERE'S NOTHING NEW ABOUT NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS!

The ancient Babylonians are said to have been the first people to make New Year's resolutions, some 4,000 years ago. They were also the first to hold recorded celebrations in honor of the new year—though for them the year began not in January but in mid-March, when the crops were planted. During a massive 12-day religious festival known as Akitu, the Babylonians crowned a new king or reaffirmed their loyalty to the reigning king. They also made promises to the gods to pay their debts and return any objects they had borrowed. These promises could be considered the forerunners of our New Year's resolutions. If the Babylonians kept to their word, their (pagan) gods would bestow favor on them for the coming year.

A similar practice occurred in ancient Rome, after the reform-minded Julius Caesar tinkered with the calendar and established January 1 as the beginning of the new year circa 46 B.C. Named for Janus, the two-faced god whose spirit inhabited doorways and arches, January had special significance for the Romans. Believing that Janus symbolically looked backwards into the previous year and ahead into the future, the Romans offered sacrifices to the deity and made promises of good conduct for the coming year.

For early Christians, the first day of the new year became the traditional occasion for thinking about one's past mistakes and resolving to do and be better in the future. In 1740, the English clergyman John Wesley, founder of Methodism, created the Covenant Renewal Service, most commonly held on New Year's Eve or New Year's Day. Also known as watch night services, they included readings from Scriptures and hymn singing, and served as a spiritual alternative to the raucous celebrations normally held to celebrate the coming of the new year. Now popular within evangelical Protestant churches, especially African American denominations and congregations, watch night services held on New Year's Eve are often spent praying.

Despite the tradition's religious roots, New Year's resolutions today are a mostly secular practice. Instead of making promises to the gods, most people make resolutions only to themselves, and focus purely on self-improvement (which may explain why such resolutions seem so hard to follow through on). According to recent research, while as many as 45 percent of Americans say they usually make New Year's resolutions, only 8 percent are successful in achieving their goals. But that dismal record probably won't stop people from making resolutions anytime soon—after all, we've had about 4,000 years of practice.



THE BACKDROP OF THE BALL DROP.

Every New Year's Eve, tradition demands that we prep the snacks, pour the champagne, and turn on the tube—in anticipation of Times Square's iconic ball drop... and the first kiss of the new year. Revelers began celebrating New Year's Eve in Times Square as early as 1904, but it was in 1907 that the New Year's Eve Ball made its maiden descent from the flagpole atop One Times Square. Seven versions of the Ball have been designed to signal the New Year. The first New Year's Eve Ball, made of iron and wood and adorned with one hundred 25-watt light bulbs, was 5 feet in diameter and weighed 700 pounds. It was built by a young immigrant metalworker named Jacob Starr, and for most of the twentieth century the company he founded, sign maker Artkraft Strauss, was responsible for lowering the Ball. As part of the 1907-1908 festivities, waiters in the famed "lobster palaces" and other deluxe eateries in hotels surrounding Times Square were supplied with battery-powered top hats emblazoned with the numbers "1908" fashioned of tiny light bulbs. At the stroke of midnight, they all "flipped their lids" and the year on their foreheads lit up in conjunction with the numbers "1908" on the parapet of the Times Tower lighting up to signal the arrival of the new year.



The Ball has been lowered every year since 1907, with the exceptions of 1942 and 1943,

when the ceremony was suspended due to the wartime "dimout" of lights in New York City. Nevertheless, the crowds still gathered in Times Square in those years and greeted the New Year with a minute of silence followed by the ringing of chimes from sound trucks parked at the base of the tower—a harkening-back to the earlier celebrations at Trinity Church, where crowds would gather to "ring out the old, ring in the new."

In 1920, a 400 pound Ball made entirely of wrought iron replaced the original. In 1955, the iron Ball was replaced with an aluminum Ball weighing a mere 150 pounds. This aluminum Ball remained unchanged until the 1980s, when red light bulbs and the addition of a green stem converted the Ball into an apple for the "I Love New York" marketing campaign from 1981 until 1988. After seven years, the traditional glowing white Ball with white light bulbs and without the green stem returned to brightly light the sky above Times Square. In 1995, the Ball was upgraded with aluminum skin, rhinestones, strobes, and



computer controls, but the aluminum Ball was lowered for the last time in 1998.

For Times Square 2000, the millennium celebration at the Crossroads of the World, the New Year's Eve Ball was completely redesigned. The crystal Ball combined the latest in lighting technology with the most traditional of materials, reminding us of our past as we gazed into the future and the beginning of a new millennium.

In 2007, for the 100th anniversary of the Times Square Ball Drop tradition, a spectacular new LED crystal Ball was created. The incandescent and halogen bulbs of the past century were replaced by state-of-the-art LED lighting technology that dramatically increased the brightness and color capabilities of the Ball.

The beauty and energy efficiency of the Centennial Ball inspired the building owners of One Times Square to build the permanent Big Ball weighing nearly six tons and twelve feet in diameter. The 2,688 crystal triangles are illuminated by 32,256 LEDs. This Big Times Square New Year's Eve Ball is now a year-round attraction sparkling above Times Square in full public view January through December.

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SONG AND DANCE TAKES CENTER STAGE!

Get a taste of nostalgia at Riverside Theatre with *Mystic Pizza*—a fresh new musical inspired by the classic 1988 rom-com! Set to a soundtrack of '80s and '90s hits like Girls Just Want to Have Fun and Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now. **January 7 - 26 / 2025.** The "Greatest Movie Musical of All Time" is filled with every memorable moment from the film and a downpour of unforgettable songs, *Singin' in the Rain* is a guaranteed crowd-pleaser. **February 25 - March 23 / 2025.** For more information visit www.riversidetheatre.com



AN EARLY SIGN OF SPRING, GARDENFEST IS A FEAST FOR THE SENSES!



With top-notch vendors, kids' crafts, delicious food, and fantastic raffle prizes, *Gardenfest* it's one of Florida's largest, free, family-friendly garden shows. Bring a wagon, stroll under the oaks, and discover garden treasures galore! **Riverside Park. February 1 - 2 / 2025.** www.gardenclubfirc.org



CHECK OUT SOME 'STRANGE MAGIC' AT THE EMERSON

Tribute band 'Ticket to the Moon' launches audiences on an unforgettable journey through ELO's greatest hits—including Evil Woman, Strange Magic, Turn to Stone and Can't Get it Out of My Head to mention just a few. Prepare to be mesmerized – with Ticket to the Moon, because the journey never ends. **The Emerson / February 20th at 7:00 pm Price: \$45.00 - \$95.00**

VERO'S WIN-WIN WINTER LINE-UP...

TOP-NOTCH ENTERTAINMENT CHOICES. BOTTOMLINE VALUE FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT DOLLAR.

Striking a chord with every VB music lover!

The Vero Beach Blues Festival is a unique 2 day music festival experience combining the love of Blues & Blues Rock music talent on stage along with delicious foods, beer & full liquor bars, and an amazing weekend to remember with friends and family. 10 bands on the blues stage with professional sound and lighting. **February 15 - 16 / 2025** www.verobluesfest.com



STROLLIN' ON THE RIVER

Celebrate art, music, and community at the *Sebastian Riverfront Fine Art and Music Festival*—set along the scenic waterfront, and showcasing incredible works from local and national artists, live music, delicious food vendors, and a vibrant atmosphere perfect for all ages. Don't miss this unique January tradition along the beautiful Sebastian River! www.sebastianartshow.com. **January 18 - 19 / 2025**



POP ART. GREEN CANVAS.

Explore *Sean Kenney's Nature POP!* Made with LEGO Bricks at *McKee Botanical Garden!* With over 40 colorful sculptures crafted from 800,000+ LEGO pieces, this playful exhibit blends art, science, and nature in striking displays. Perfect for all ages, this unique experience inspires creativity and a deeper appreciation for the world around us! **January 24 - May 4 / 2025** www.mckee garden.org



A match made in Florida!

There's no better pairing than cold craft beer and spicy wings! Join us for a family-friendly atmosphere, the best suds and wings in the state of Florida, live music on two stages, and the top craft beer brewers and wingfest chefs all in one place. There's something for everyone at the *Florida Craft Brew and Wingfest!* **February 22 / 2025.** www.floridacraftbrewandwingfest.com

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UNITED WAY OF IRC

Matching Volunteers with Local Non-Profits
Volunteer Indian River County offers an easy to use platform that matches the right donors, advocates, and volunteers with the right opportunities in our neighborhoods. Use it to find ways to give your unused materials and household items to agencies in need of donations; advocate for causes that require your passionate voice; and volunteer your time in ways that make a real difference.
www.unitedwayIRC.org or (772) 567-8900.

UNITED AGAINST POVERTY

Inspire and empower people living in poverty to lift themselves and their families to economic self-sufficiency.

Volunteers ensure the smooth daily operations of our campus. Some examples of volunteer need:

- AARP Welcome Desk IRC
Greet visitors, provide directions and information, answer incoming calls.
- Member Share Grocery Program IRC
Cleaning, stocking and organizing shelves. Help with bagging at check-out. Bring up shopping carts from parking lot.
unitedagainstopoverty.org/campus/indian-river
1400 27th Street, Vero Beach, FL or (772) 770-0740

HUMANE SOCIETY OF VERO

Enhancing the quality of life in our community through compassionate services to animals and people. 6230 77th Street Vero Beach, FL 32967 / www.hsvb.org

SENIOR RESOURCE ASSOC.

Improves the quality of life and safety of local seniors by offering in-home and community services to meet their individual needs as well as those of their caregivers. 694 14th Street Vero Beach, FL 32960 772.569.0760 / www.seniorresourceassociation.org

VNA OF VERO BEACH

Volunteers interact with patients, lend an extra hand in the VNA Hospice House, offer assistance around the office, and provide support in our Hidden Treasures Thrift Store. **Indian River County Office** 445 24th Street, Suite 300 Vero Beach, FL 32960 772-494-6161 www.vnadc.com

VILLAGE ARTS VB

A non-profit— promoting self-sufficiency skills and community integration for adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities through art-making & marketing. Dedicated volunteers have specialized training working with adults with special needs. 1936 19th Ave., Vero Beach, Florida 32960, (772) 559-1635 / www.villageartsvb.com

COMMUNITY UPGRADES ARE LOOKIN' GOOD!



CLUBHOUSE CHAIRS



POOL DECKING



ENTRANCE SIGNAGE

BOARD BIZ

• 2025 HOA DUES

Beginning January 2025, the HOA dues have been reduced to \$688.00.

COMMITTEES

Social Committee

Check website for Upcoming Events
Blood Drive – December 8 – sponsored by OneBlood

• 17 participants

- The next one is scheduled for April 2025
- Thank you to Warren Miller for coordinating this event!

Holiday Happy Hour – December 14.

Extremely successful event with a tremendous turnout! The weather held out so guests were able to enjoy the pool deck as well! Thank you to the Social Committee for giving up their time and energy for such a great celebration!

Ponds Committee

• There's been a second resignation from the Ponds Committee, so the committee will continue with four members.

- The permit application to St. John's Water Management has been submitted by Elliott Merrill and the Pond Committee. This will allow Serenoa to repair the meter and start using the well again. Serenoa is still looking for other sources of water for the ponds.

FRONT ENTRANCE INFORMATION

- Thank you to Marilyn Kordiak, Jim Kordiak, and Camille Smilen for decorating the entrance gates and entry sign for the holidays – looks beautiful as always!
- Specific plants were replaced on the entrance island.
- New mulch was laid down on the entrance island.

CLUBHOUSE AND SWIMMING POOL INFORMATION

Landscaping

• Thank you to an anonymous resident who donated the container planting outside the clubhouse entrance.

- The inground plants outside the clubhouse entrance were replaced.
- New mulch outside the clubhouse entrance was laid down.

Holiday Decor

- A resident donated an artificial Christmas tree to the Serenoa HOA – we now have two trees for the holidays (one inside and one outside).
- Thank you to Colleen Milkowski for re-designing the original Christmas tree and wreaths— and for decorating the newly donated one!

Ping Pong Table

- Thank you to Warren Miller for repairing the ping pong table in the clubhouse at a minimal cost.

Current On-Going Activities at the Clubhouse / Pool

- Mahjong – every Tuesday and often on Thursdays at 1:00 PM. If you would like to learn, contact Janice at 631.848.3357, otherwise prior notice is not required.
- Canasta – Wednesdays at 1:00 pm. If you would like to learn, contact Janice at 631.848.3357, otherwise prior notice is not required.
- Poker – Wednesdays at 6:00 pm – arrival time 5:30-5:45. Contact Ken at 508.963.3780 if you'd like to sign up.
- Billiards – Monday and Fridays, 1:00-5:00. Contact Terry Johnson at 305.653.0059
- Water Aerobics – Daily at 9:00 am at the pool. Prior notice is not required.
- Mexican Train Dominoes – the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm. Contact Ken at 508.963.3780 to sign up.
- Book Club – the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM. Contact Kathi at 732.710.2655 to sign up.
- Bourbon Club – the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM. Prior notice is not required, however, if you have questions, contact Gerry Smilen at 954.305.0849.

NEXT BOARD MEETING -

January 9, 2025

VOLUNTEER!

Great ideas for New Year's resolutions

LITERARY SERVICES OF IRC

Delivers comprehensive and innovative learning opportunities to local adults seeking English language and literacy skills to achieve their goals.

Becoming a volunteer tutor is easy and rewarding. Prior teaching experience is not necessary. They provide an introductory training for new tutors, then ongoing professional development and support throughout the year. **Main Office: Indian River County Main Library, 1600 21st Street, Vero Beach, FL 32960 Call: 772-778-2223 www.literacyservicesirc.org**

MCKEE GARDENS

Volunteers assure that visitors have a meaningful and enjoyable experience. Occasional or part time hours are available. 772-794-0601 / [email volunteer @ Mckee Garden.org](mailto:volunteer@MckeeGarden.org)



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