



Photo courtesy of BRUCE SOBOT

The Indian Rocks Beach Rotary's pancake breakfast cleanup crew enjoys its work at Beauty and the Beach.

BEAUTY, from page 1A

was celebrating the environment and the same is true today. The Little Miss Beauty and the Beach contestants were all asked questions about the environment. The contest was about the beautiful beach and how we can continue to keep it that way."

The Little Miss Beauty and the Beach contest was one of the highlights of the afternoon. Thirteen young women, ages 12 and under, took part in the contest and each had to answer a question about ways to make the beach more beautiful and safe.

The winner was 6-year-old Lorena Lumia of Indian Rocks Beach. When asked what she would do to make the beach better she replied, "I would get a crew and clean up the beach and keep it clean."

There was also a sand sculpture contest, which was won for the second year in a row by 12-year-old Seely Bevan of Indian Rocks Beach. His sculpture was a giant Easter bunny head. Success didn't come easy for Seely, however.

"I was out here last night practicing over and over to see if it would work," he said.

Obviously practice paid off for Seely, who will be too old next year to enter the contest again.

A big part of the Beauty and the Beach event is the food. Several vendors were kept busy serving a variety of foods to the hungry crowd.

Among those enjoying the fare was the Flitt family, seasonal residents of Indian Rocks Beach from Buffalo, N.Y.

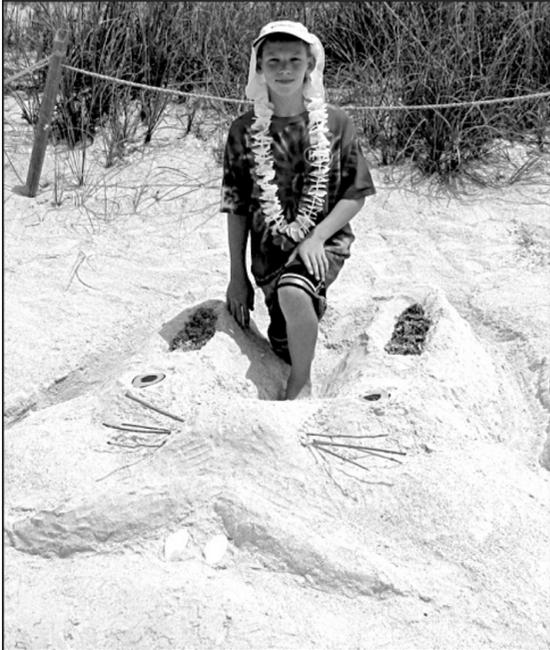
Linda Flitt said this was their third time at the event. "We're lucky it is always at

this time of the year and it coincides with our trip here," she said. "And the food is great. We're from New York and we are picky pizza people, but we can't wait to come here and get some of that Pajano's pizza."

Nearby Kolb Park was the site for the annual Beach Art Center Arts and Craft Festival. Mayor Johnson noted that at one time the festival stood on its own, but then the decision was made to tie it in with the beach festival and it has been a success ever since.

For the mayor, Beauty and the Beach is an important event for the city.

"It brings people together to socialize and to just chill out," he said. "It also raises awareness of the importance of the plants and animals to our beach. This year has been great, there was an excellent turnout."



Photos by BRIAN GOFF

Seely Bevan, 12, of Indian Rocks Beach is the winner of the sand sculpture contest. He sculpted a giant Easter Bunny head in the sand.



Little Miss Beauty and the Beach, 6-year-old Lorena Lumia, celebrates with last year's winner, Morgan Harms, 9. Both girls are from Indian Rocks Beach.



A large crowd fills the beach at the IRB county park beach access for the annual Beauty and the Beach event.



Photos courtesy of BECKY GRIFFIN

Participants in the Guppy's Gulfside Gallop get starting instructions from Phil Wrobel of the Indian Rocks Beach Homeowners Association.



Overall winners of the Guppy's Gulfside Gallop are Jessica Sebor of St. Petersburg (Women's 5K division) and Louis Poene of Ocean City, N.J. (Men's 5K division).

PSTA, from page 1A

always responsibly managing the public investment that supports the system," Miller said. "The tax swap bill was a legislative initiative that we believed would have given PSTA an option to effectively manage that public investment. While the Governor disagreed, PSTA will remain focused on doing our job: to manage a successful system for Pinellas County while continuing to explore all transportation investment options."

Opponents of the surtax most likely are pleased by Scott's move.

David McKalip of St. Petersburg told Pinellas County Com-

missioners March 27 that residents don't want to pay a penny tax for light rail. He said the tax swap would mean PSTA would collect about \$120 million a year compared to the \$30 million it receives now. He said PSTA had a history of wasting money.

"We don't need light rail or rapid response buses," he said. "We need a good bus system."

He said rail systems throughout the country had low ridership and were not successful. He said any change in funding for PSTA should be cost neutral to provide the same level of funding.

"It doesn't help the poor to put another penny tax," he said. "It takes the money out of the economy."

About a dozen speakers spoke before the commission voicing opposition to plans for light rail in Pinellas and the tax swap for a variety of reasons. One was the cost.

"This is too much burden to put on our grandchildren," said Connie Fitzgerald.

Betsy Burgess said not enough people used the buses to justify more funding. She said even at peak times, many ran with few or no riders.

"When I'm out protesting (light rail), I see a lot of buses," she said.

Opponents say only 3 percent of the county's population ride the bus.

Bob Lasher, manager of PSTA

Community Relations, said in an April 6 email that 3 percent is a conservative estimate based on regular daily riders. He said PSTA studies show that 36 percent of county residents have used PSTA.

"What's more, after three years of service reductions and all-time (four consecutive months) record ridership, our undersized agency is actually running into capacity issues on many routes, especially during rush hour," Lasher said. "We even have several that are standing room only at lunch."

Only two people spoke in support of light rail and a new tax. David Babb of Seminole said he came from school at Gainesville to tell commissioners his vision

for the county's future.

"Cars are not the choice, or suburbs or interstates," he said.

He talked about the county's growth, saying, "Density does not have to be congestion."

Light rail would mean fewer cars on the roads. He said a plan for the future needed to include the ability to walk and bike to destinations.

He said senior citizens should want an improved transit system.

"When you're 92 and can't drive, you'll be dependent on the bus system," he said. "You won't like it when it takes two hours to get where you're going."

He also said Florida has the lowest tax rate in the union.

"We can afford to pay more tax," he said.

According to 2009 figures from the National Transit Database, Pinellas County spends less than the average of service areas with a population between 500,000 to 1 million residents. The average is \$99.77 per capita. PSTA spends \$62.58.

To people like Tony Caso of Palm Harbor comparisons against other places makes no difference. He objects to the county's involvement with the regional transit authority. He said decisions should be made locally, not regionally.

"We don't want big government," he told commissioners. "We don't want rail."

BEATLEMANIA, from page 1A

Russ Saylor as Paul McCartney, Burt Scheel as Ringo and Kropinak as John Lennon.

"It kind of started like it did with the real Beatles," Kropinak said. "I first met Russ when he approached me for an audition."

Kropinak said he recognized right away how talented Saylor was. In fact, according to Kropinak, within a year, Saylor had learned to play left-handed bass to better emulate McCartney — something that a lot of true Beatle fans notice immediately, Kropinak said.

"A friend referred me to Burt (Ringo) and Burt brought Mark

(George) into the band," Kropinak said. "We've been playing together with this lineup for about five years. It's tough to find band mates specific to a tribute, as you need to not only be a musician, but an actor, and you also have to love what you are doing. This lineup is all of that."

One difference between Kropinak and Lennon is that Kropinak was a "late bloomer," not starting in his music career until about age 30. The Beatles formed in 1960, when Lennon was just 20 — and prior to that Lennon (along with McCartney) had been involved in The Quarrymen for several years. What Kropinak lacked in ex-

perience, though, he made up for with his enthusiasm.

"I knew all the Beatle lyrics before I ever played a guitar and then had to learn to play them on guitar, harmonica and keyboard," he said. Kropinak and Beatlemania Magic have evolved into a dedicated group of professionals known for delivering stellar performances that mirror the energy and essence of an early 1960s Beatles concert.

"The Belleair audience can expect to be taken back to a happy time when the Beatles created Beatlemania," Kropinak said. "We will take the audience on a 'magical mystery tour' of some of their favorite songs performing them live

with a minimum amount of production, just like the Beatles did. We also make sure to add the humor and wit that went on between The Beatles on stage. Both young and old will enjoy the show."

Guests will be treated to songs from "I Want to Hold Your Hand" to "Let It Be."

The Thorn Collection and Coldwell Banker are presenting the concert. Call 518-3728 or visit www.sundaysinbelleair.com.

Tickets are available at Dimmitt Community Center, 918 Osceola Road, Belleair; Bella Vino, 100 Indian Rocks Road N., Suite F, Belleair Bluffs; and Beans and Bacon Cooking, 100 Indian Rock Road N.,

Suite G, Belleair Bluffs. For information on group ticket sales, email sborger@townofbelleair.net

No pets or animals will be permitted on-site with the exception of service animals. Cameras will be permitted for personal use. Professional cameras (detachable lenses) and live A/V equipment, without the artist/promoter's permission, are strictly prohibited. Smoking is not permitted on-site.

Attendees may bring blankets, sheets, towels, chairs, small strollers, small umbrellas, binoculars and personal recording devices (flip cameras, personal cameras, mobile phones, etc.).

The following items will not be

permitted at the event: Outside food or beverage (including alcohol), coolers, weapons of any kind, fireworks or explosives of any kind, large backpacks (framed, hiking backpacks, full hydration pack), glass containers or aerosol cans (including sunscreen in aerosol cans, spray paint cans), skateboards, bicycles, scooters or any motorized vehicle, professional recording equipment, air horns, gas canisters of any size, megaphones, portable laser equipment, laser pointers or strobe lights, illegal drugs, narcotics or drug paraphernalia, unauthorized solicitation, handbills, giveaways and large strollers.

POND, from page 1A

permits. The city was caught in the middle with no solution in sight, he said.

Meanwhile, both Swiftmud and city officials have been concerned the pond sediment was affecting wildlife and fish habitat in adverse ways, and allowing nuisance species to flourish.

While pleased with the decision allowing the city to move ahead with the dredging, Arbutine said he wanted to present the issue and the city's plans at an upcoming commission meeting, with the concerned residents

present.

"I want this put on the agenda, and have all of the affected residents in one room, where we can discuss the easements and the dredging process, so there is no misunderstanding," he said.

Arbutine said the residents should be told that the project "takes the burden of cost off of them and puts the responsibility and maintenance on us. This is good news, and we need to tell everyone how hard we have been working on it."

Public Works Director Robert David said the city is ready to move forward to dredge both

ponds as soon as he gets the word.

"We are good to go," he said.

Arbutine told David he wants to see a long-term fix for the problem, "like 20 years out."

Fourth of July event set

The city's annual July 4 celebration will follow the tradition of the past years, despite talk of changes, Commissioner Suzy Sofer reported. The event will take place on Wednesday, July 4, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the city hall/community center. Burgers

and hot dogs will be served. Attractions will include the dunking of the mayor and a spacewalk for kids.

Changes to the event had been discussed, such as having a pancake breakfast format, and moving the date because of some objections from the sponsoring Bluffs Business Association. All of that has been scrapped for now, and the celebration will go forward as it has been, Sofer said.

The extent of the Bluffs Business Association's involvement is still in doubt, City Clerk Debra Sullivan said, as only four or five

volunteers from that organization have agreed to come.

"We'll continue to try to get the businesses involved," she said.

Robocalls urged to inform residents

The city should use robocalls more often to inform residents of the progress of city projects, such as the ongoing street resurfacing and drainage job, Arbutine said.

The calls would be a better way than the city newsletter of letting people know about construction projects and improvements going on in the city, he said.

Sullivan said the robocalls are less expensive than the newsletter, costing only about \$200 to \$300.

The residents will pay attention to the robocalls if they are done outside of election season, Arbutine added.

The mayor was responding to a comment by Commissioner Jack Nazario that some residents were not aware of what was going on with the street project. Residents in the project area were notified by letter, Arbutine pointed out, but he said others living nearby would benefit from a robocall.