

AROUND THE SQUARE

Following the latest news and views from Serenoa

WINTER, 2025

VOLUME 4.4

'TIS THE SEASON FOR CHILLIN' OUT IN SERENOA!

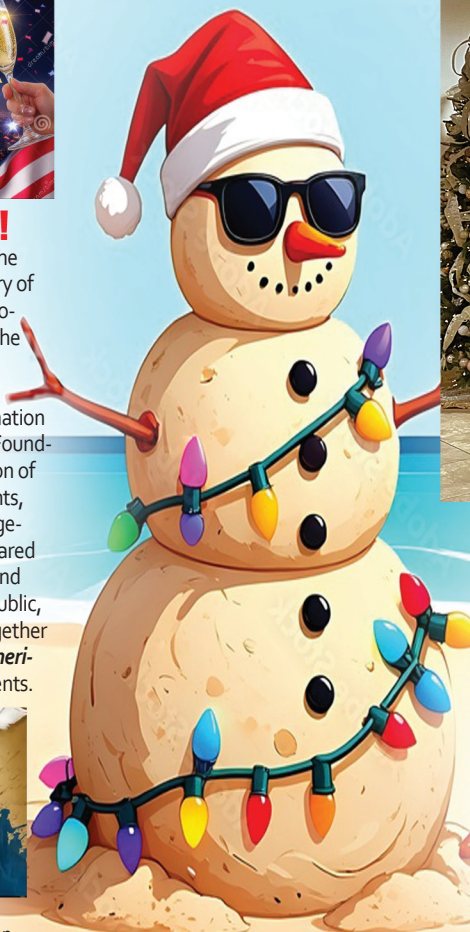


AMERICA IS TURNING 250!

In 2026 every Floridian will celebrate the 250th (semiquincentennial) anniversary of our nation's founding. As we journey toward July 4, we hope you'll reflect on the unique and influential role that Florida played in the establishment of our country. Together, let's celebrate the nation of freedom and opportunity that our Founders set into motion with the Declaration of Independence. Through inspiring events, educational programs, and civic engagement, we seek to spark pride in our shared American values, honor the courage and service of our veterans, revere our republic, and encourage neighbors to come together in the spirit of patriotism. Log onto americaz50fl.com for a calendar of local events.



Be sure to view Ken Burn's tour de force... "The American Revolution"...which aired on PBS in November. Log in to pbs.org to stream the six-part documentary, or order the DVD.



SERENOA SPARKLES WITH HOLIDAY MAGIC AT YEAR END CELEBRATION!



On December 14, the Serenoa family gathered at the Clubhouse for a festive evening of great food, drink and friendship filled with the spirit of the Holiday Season. The setting was adorned with shimmering baubles and beads, incredible balloon sculptures (thank you Patty Hays-Graves), exquisite tableware, and anchored by our radiant Christmas tree centerpiece.

After Holiday greetings were exchanged and Serenoans caught up on neighborhood news, a delectable dinner buffet was served courtesy of the Social Committee, and Salt & Pepper Caterers—and that scrumptious

Apple Crisp dessert warmed the soul. Delish! Guests settled in for a lovely evening... making merry with their Serenoa family, sharing stories, toasting the new year, and snapping selfies at the glittering photo station.

Congrats to Linda Yates, who claimed half of the hefty 50/50 prize drawing, and kudos to the generosity of the the Serenoa community for their tremendous monetary contributions to St. Francis Manor, who provides local seniors with safe, affordable housing right here in Vero Beach.

Once again... our tireless Social Committee, chaired by Colleen Milkowski, exceeded our Holiday Wish List. **Merry Christmas & Happy New Year Serenoa!**

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**“Happy Christmas to all...
and to all a good night!”**



A Visit from Saint Nicholas

The origin of the classic holiday poem.

On December 23, 1823, a poem called “A Visit from Saint Nicholas” was published anonymously in the *Sentinel*, the local newspaper of Troy, New York. This piece offered a different take on Santa Claus, a figure who was, until that time, traditionally depicted as a thinner, less jolly, horse-riding disciplinarian, a combination of mythologies about the British Father Christmas, the Dutch Sinterklaas, and the fourth-century bishop Saint Nicholas of Myra. But the poem in the newspaper painted a different picture: it gave Santa eight reindeer, and even named them; it described a Santa who could magically sneak in and out of homes via chimneys; and it created the venerated, cheerful, chubby icon that is everpresent in holiday cards, movies, television shows, and malls everywhere. The poem, of course, is now known as “’Twas the Night Before Christmas,” after its famous first line. Thirteen years after it was published, Clement Clark Moore took credit for its authorship, though his claim to the poem is now in question. Many believe the poem was actually penned by New York writer Henry Livingston.



Clement Clarke Moore was born on July 15, 1779, in New York City. He was the author of *Poems* (Barlett & Welford, 1844), which included the poem “A Visit from St. Nicholas.”

How to handle the “Holiday Hangover”.

The obvious answer to avoid inebriation is to not drink at all, or to drink moderately—which, according to the Mayo Clinic, means up to one alcoholic drink a day for women and up to two drinks a day for men 65 or younger. However, if you’re planning to drink more than usual this holiday, one of the best ways to reduce your hangover chances is to stay hydrated, starting at least 24 to 48 hours before you start drinking.

If you have a hangover, what should you do? If you wake up with a hangover, the Mayo Clinic recommends drinking lots of water and some fruit juice, which can help replenish vitamin C and build up energy. Take pain relief medication for your headache and eat “bland foods” like toast and crackers, which can boost your blood sugar and settle upset stomachs, the clinic says. Remember that aspirin can also irritate your stomach.

Keep in mind what your body can, and cannot, handle—and adapt your eating and drinking habits accordingly. Some people are prone to hangovers if they drink red wine, for example. And as you get older, your body changes. So the number of drinks you could handle at 21 might not be the same at 50 or 60. Stay safe, and drink responsibly.

Happy New Year Serenoa!



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COLD BEER & HOT WINGS!

Take a break from your daily routine and come experience something totally different. **Florida Craft Brew & Wingfest** is so much more than just an ordinary Food Festival. Creative organizers bring their passion and knowledge into the event, with the intention of making it unique and unforgettable year after year. There is something for everyone to enjoy, so plan your visit today.

There are a limited number of discounted tickets so get yours today! **February 14, 2026, Royal Palm Point.** Use Promo Code ROTARY10 & Save \$10.00 off your beer tasting bracelet on or before February 20, 2025.



THE PIANO MAN'S BAND... AT THE EMERSON

Before they were **The Lords of 52nd Street**, you could find them playing local clubs, under different band names, around Long Island. Richie Cannata on sax and keys, Russell Javors on guitar, Doug Stegmeyer on bass and Liberty Devitto on the drums played the NY circuit for years. When up and coming performer Billy Joel sought a band with the "New York sound"... a musical match was made on Long Island. They continue to perform their legendary hits still to this day, and their unique sound is coming to Vero Beach! **The Emerson Center/Thursday February 12, 2025 / 7:00 pm.**



A Potpourri of Wintertime Pursuits



BEACHY BLUES!

The Vero Beach Blues Festival is a unique two-day music experience combining the love of Blues, and Blues Rock, music talent on stage along with delicious foods, beer and full liquor bars and an amazing weekend to remember with friends and family. Ten bands on the blues stage with professional sound and lighting.

February 28- March 1, 2026! Indian River County Fairgrounds / Sat-Sun 10:30 am to 9:30 pm / First Band Starts 11:30 am both days! For discount tickets and full info log on to verobluesfest.com.



A SHOW THAT NEVER STOPS GROWING

Gardenfest is one of the largest free, and family-friendly, garden shows in Florida. Visitors come from far and wide to stroll under the oaks and enjoy the amazing vendors, food, children's crafts, and raffle prizes. Many visitors arrive with wagon in tow, and fill them with garden treasures.

February 1st & 2nd, 2025 at Riverside Park. gardenclubofirc.org/gardenfest/overview/

SINNERS & SAINTS ON STAGE AT RIVERSIDE!



Winner of the Tony® Award for Best Musical, **A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder** is a murderous romp filled with unforgettable music, non-stop laughs and scene-stealing characters who meet their ends in the most creative and side-splitting ways. **January 9 – February 1 / Riverside Theater.**



Jesus Christ Superstar follows the last week of Jesus' life and explores the personal relationships and struggles among Jesus, his disciples, his followers, and the Roman Empire. The first musical by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber to be produced for the professional stage. The award-winning show contains such well-known numbers as "Superstar," "I Don't Know How to Love Him" and "Gethsemane." A true global phenomenon, **Superstar** continues to enthrall audiences of all generations. **February 26 – March 22 / Riverside Theater.**

AN OVER THE TOP ART SHOW... UNDER THE OAKS!

For 75 years, **Under the Oaks** has brought together over 200 exceptional artists from across the nation and beyond—showcasing fine art and quality crafts under the majestic oak trees.

Each year, over 50,000 art lovers flock to this iconic event to experience inspiring creativity, connect with artists, and enjoy a scenic community atmosphere.

Come celebrate the milestone year—where tradition, talent, and timeless beauty meet Under the Oaks. Save the date for **March 13, 14, and 15, 2026.**

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Atmosphere. What's not to love about it!

If you Google local Vero Beach restaurants with music and a romantic vibe... the first name you'll see is "Atmosphere" on Old Dixie Road downtown. The beautiful decor and upscale vibe lends itself to an intimate "Five Star" dining experience. Excellent wine choices, and a select, yet reasonably priced, menu served with impeccable style. The food is perfectly prepared and presented. And... the entertainment is phenomenal—featuring live jazz, solo artists and themed nights... like Valentine's Day. Make your reservations early.



SERENOA ASKS RESIDENTS TO SERVE AS BOARD MEMBERS.

Serenoa's Board elections are just around the corner. Now's the time for all residents with valuable business management skill sets, and an urge to make a difference, to throw your hats in the ring. Reasons to run for the HOA board include protecting your investment by ensuring property values remain high, getting involved in your community to solve problems and make decisions, and developing your professional skills in leadership and negotiation. Serving on the board is also a great way to meet neighbors, build relationships, and take an active role in shaping your community's future. If you're interested in running, review the recently e-mailed Notice of Intent, and contact Community Association Manager (CAM) Ani Pesquera—phone: 772-569-9853 x115 / email: anilysp@elliottmerrill.com



BOARD BIZ

BUDGET FOR 2026

- At the 11/13/25 Board meeting, the proposed 2026 budget of \$620,392.00 was adopted.
- Effective January 1, 2026 the HOA dues will be \$702.00 per quarter.
- The HOA reserve fund is now fully funded.
- The 2026 budget includes an updated Reserve Study to be scheduled. This is needed to ensure our reserves continue to be fully funded.

LANDSCAPING COMPANY

- At the 11/13/25 Board meeting, the Board approved a contract with Palm Island Landscape Services to be Serenoa's official landscape company effective January 1, 2026 in the amount of \$315,304.00.
- A "Meet and Greet" with representatives of Palm Island convened at the clubhouse in early December.

PRESERVES

- Four proposals were received for a preserve maintenance company.
- At the 11/13/25 Board meeting, the Board approved a contract with Allstate Resource Management Inc. to maintain Serenoa's preserve areas effective January 1, 2026 in the amount of \$15,900.00.

DON'T COUNT ON YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD GROUNDHOG TO PREDICT AN EARLY SPRING!

There's a very simple reason why. Groundhogs don't exist in Florida. They're not native to the state, and sources suggest that if a homeowner is having issues with a large burrowing animal, they are likely dealing with an armadillo instead. Groundhogs are found in states north of Florida, with their range extending from Georgia and the Carolinas north to Canada.

If you see large holes around your property, it's a common mistake to think it's a groundhog. Likely, in Florida, it's our armor-plated, poorly-sighted friend the armadillo who's digging up your garden. The natural range for groundhogs is in the eastern and northern parts of the United States and Canada, not the southeastern United States.



- Allstate will visit the preserve sites once per month, working on ridding invasive plants (including spraying in a controlled manner).

PONDS

- Quotes are being obtained for pond landscaping to include dirt for berms, littoral plantings, and sod—all to assist with erosion prevention.

CLUBHOUSE / POOL / ENTRANCE

- A new treadmill has been purchased and installed at a cost of \$3,734.30. The original treadmill (approximately 15 years old) was on borrowed time.
- An irrigation valve leak at the front gate has been repaired.
- At the last Board meeting, the Board accepted a donation of a 2015 elliptical which will be installed sometime in December. The current elliptical is also approximately 15 years old.
- At the 11/13/25 Board meeting, the Board approved CW Willis to clean, and upgrade the 5th Street SW area at our entrance by installing cocoa plum bushes, at a cost not to exceed \$4,000.00. Sunshine Irrigation will install drip irrigation in the amount of \$1,500.00.
- Current activities at the Clubhouse / Pool —
- Mahjong — every Tuesday at 1:00 pm. Contact Janice Shepard at 631.848.3357 for instruction. Otherwise prior notice is not required.
- "Hand and Foot" Canasta — Wednesdays at 1:00 pm. Contact Janice Shepard at

631.848.3357 for instruction. Otherwise prior notice is not required.

- Samba — Thursdays at 1:00 pm. Contact Janice Shepard at 631.848.3357 for instruction. Otherwise prior notice is not required.

- Poker — Wednesdays at 6:00 pm—arrival time 5:30-5:45. Contact Ken Fensin 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. Prior notice is not required.

- Mexican Train — the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm. Contact Ken Fensin at 508.963.3780 if you'd like to sign up.

- Book Club — the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM. Contact Kathi Inzano at 732.710.2655 to sign up

COMMITTEES

- The Social Committee is looking for additional volunteers. Interested? Contact secretaryserenoa.org — fresh ideas are always welcomed!

ELLIOTT MERRILL INFORMATION Contact Information—

- Community Association Manager (CAM) is Ani Pesquera — phone: 772-569-9853 x115 / email: anilysp@elliottmerrill.com
- Hannah Morrison is Administrative Assistant — hannahm@elliottmerrill.com

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