



Transformative Staycations - Finding Respite and Adventure Close to Home

by April Thompson

Staycations — sticking close to home for new travel experiences—was a growing trend even before the COVID-19 pandemic turned it into a practical necessity for many of us. Staycations reduce costs, minimize travel time and also lower our carbon footprint by eliminating international travel. Happily, they don't reduce the pure pleasure of finding new adventures, exploring untrammelled nature, seeing the familiar with fresh eyes and meeting people from all walks of life. All of that is close at hand, and especially when compared to foreign jaunts, the price is right.

A good place to start is by checking out state and regional parks, often overlooked gems offering scenic miles of trails for hiking, biking, birding, fishing, picnicking and other activities. "Whether mountains, prairies, rivers, forests in the country or heart of the city, there is always a state park waiting to welcome you, no matter what kind of recreation you enjoy," says Jason Clay, spokesperson with Colorado Parks and Wildlife. In Colorado parks, people can, for example, river raft in the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area; boat, fish and hammock camp in Jackson Lake State Park; and rock climb in Eldorado Canyon.

Parks can be discovered and trail maps downloaded by visiting [TrailLink.com](https://www.trailink.com), run by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. It provides searches for nearby trails using parameters such as distance, types of activity and wheelchair accessibility. Its smartphone app TrailLink is free to download and \$30 a year for unlimited customized use.

State, local and regional parks across the country offer rich educational opportunities for kids and adults alike, including naturalist-guided activities, bird and botany walks, lessons in local history, ecology and geography, and more. Several states offer free admission to all state-run parks, including Hawaii, Tennessee and Illinois. State-by-state listings of fees and policies can be found at [Tinyurl.com/StateParkPasses](https://tinyurl.com/StateParkPasses).

Making a Quick Getaway

Weekend forays into natural and rustic settings can be ideal escape valves for people needing a simple, quick change of venue. Camping, of course, is always an option, but for those that want to be in nature in a more comfy fashion, using "cabin" as a search word works well in websites like [Airbnb.com](https://www.airbnb.com) and [TripAdvisor.com](https://www.tripadvisor.com). The option of glamping—or glamorous camping—offers surprisingly luxurious stays outdoors in tents, pods and domes; check out [Glamping.com](https://www.glamping.com).

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Time to review your risk tolerance?

Provided by RBC Wealth Management and Thomas J. Powers

As you know, investing always involves a certain degree of risk. But it's how you respond to that risk that may well determine your success as an investor.

And that's why you need to be sure of your risk tolerance. If you have a high tolerance for risk, you may be willing to accept significant price fluctuations in exchange for potentially higher returns—keeping in mind that risk and reward are directly related. But if your risk tolerance is low, you probably want greater stability in your investments—and to achieve this stability, you can live with lower returns.

Unfortunately, many people misjudge their own risk tolerance. This can lead to problems, such as these:

- *Too much stress*—Over the long term, financial markets have trended upward. But over the short term, the markets will fluctuate, with downturns that last weeks, months and even years. If you believed you could tolerate a high degree of risk, but you found yourself losing sleep over these market slumps, then you may need to re-evaluate your risk tolerance and possibly rebalance your portfolio so that it's somewhat less susceptible to market volatility.
- *Too little growth*—Just as you can over-estimate your risk tolerance, it's also possible to underestimate it. If you think you simply can't take much investment risk, you're likely to load your portfolio with certificates of deposit (CDs), money market accounts and other fixed-income vehicles that offer strong protection of principal but little opportunity for growth. However, if you're going to achieve your long-term financial goals, such as a comfortable retirement, you will unquestionably need some growth potential in your portfolio. To combat your perceived low tolerance for risk, you may want to diversify your holdings to include growth vehicles such as stocks along with more conservative investments, such as bonds and CDs.

Thus far, we've discussed risk tolerance in relation to the risk of losing principal when the value of your investments drops. But you also need to consider another type of risk: the risk of losing purchasing power.

Purchasing-power risk largely applies to fixed-rate investments such as CDs and money market accounts. To illustrate: If you purchase a CD that pays 2 percent, and the inflation rate is 3 percent, you are actually losing purchasing power. Over time, these losses can seriously erode the value of your savings.

So if you are concerned about fighting inflation, you may want to look for investments that have the potential to offer rising income, such as dividend-paying stocks. (Be aware, though, that companies can reduce or eliminate dividends at any time.)

You can't totally avoid all the risks associated with investing. But by being aware of your risk tolerance, diversifying your portfolio and taking steps to stay ahead of inflation, you can improve your chances of making steady progress toward your financial objectives.

This article is provided by Thomas J. Powers, a Financial Advisor at RBC Wealth Management. The information included in this article is not intended to be used as the primary basis for making investment decisions. RBC Wealth Management does not endorse this organization or publication. Consult your investment professional for additional information and guidance.

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Time to review your risk tolerance?

It's how you respond to risk that will determine your success as an investor. I can help you identify your risk tolerance, diversify your portfolio and make plans to stay ahead of inflation, so you can improve your chances of making steady progress toward your financial objectives.



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Charlie Justice
Pinellas County
Commissioner

Two years in making, PIE's new Airport Master Plan is about to come to fruition

By Pinellas County Commissioner Charlie Justice

This month, I'm pleased to bring you an update on a critically important process that is underway at St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport (PIE).

Did you know that PIE began as Pinellas Army Airfield, a military flight-training base during World War II? In 1946, it was granted to Pinellas County to operate as a commercial airport. It operates as an Enterprise department, generating its own revenues and, moreover, with no debt. PIE is ranked ninth largest among 20 commercial airports in Florida, with just a few governed by a Board of County Commissioners (BCC). As a County Commission, we are proud to oversee this valuable asset.

Job creation and economic development are of primary importance to your Board, and PIE is a big driver for our economy. Airports directly create above-average wage aviation jobs, as well as generate growth for our No. 1 industry, tourism. Airports are also continually modernizing, stimulating construction job growth.

On Nov. 17, the BCC will review a new Airport Master Plan (AMP), developed over the last two years, to replace its 2004 AMP. This short-, mid- and long-range plan provides the blueprint for future capital projects and shapes the growth of the aviation industry in Pinellas. With more than 2.2 million passengers in 2019, one of the busiest general aviation operations on the west coast of Florida, an Army Reserve station, and the nation's busiest US Coast Guard Air Station, the importance of a well-managed and maintained airport is vital.

The AMP serves several important purposes for airport management, airport users, and the local community. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) require airports to conduct periodic updates of their planning documents to remain eligible for future grants. The primary goal is to create a 20-year development program to maintain a safe, efficient, economical, and environmentally acceptable airport facility for the Tampa Bay community. The AMP will provide the guidance to satisfy the aviation demand in a financially feasible and responsible manner, while at the same time addressing the aviation, environmental, and socioeconomic issues of the community.

Throughout the process, reviews were conducted to insure input is received from key stakeholders, including the BCC, Airport Noise Abatement Task Force, County staff, airport traffic control management, FAA, FDOT, airport tenants, and the public. The individual steps in the AMP process are built upon information and decisions made during previous steps. The AMP process began in the fall of 2017 and three public workshops were held and a dedicated website www.piemasterplan.com provided updates. PIE will be bringing the AMP before the BCC for approval through a Board resolution.

The AMP serves as a blueprint for the Airport Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The County has a 6-year CIP planning tool as part of the budgeting process. After the AMP is approved, each individual CIP project must be approved by the BCC in the annual budget.

With the annual budget process, changing conditions and grant opportunities allow the airport to plan and manage with flexibility when needed. With a 195 percent increase in passenger traffic over the past decade, PIE has adapted its strategies. Currently underway is the rehabilitation of its primary runway 18-36, a \$24.1 million project. PIE's secondary runway 4-22 was extended and is temporarily serving as the main runway for a four-month period. The construction project was phased in a manner that would minimize the use of Runway 4-22 to reduce potential aircraft noise exposure to surrounding communities. Once this phase of construction is completed, all airline operations revert to Runway 18-36, permitting use of established noise abatement procedures.

With more than \$1 billion runway-dependent economic impact generated by commercial airlines serving over 50 non-stop destinations, substantial general and corporate aviation, and critical U.S. Coast Guard operations, PIE looks to the future while striving to meet community demands.

I'm proud to have the chance to share this progress with you. As always, if you have questions or comments, you can reach me at (727) 464-3363 or cjustice@pinellascounty.org.

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SHINE Presents Sea Walls - November 7-14, 2020

The sixth annual SHINE Mural Festival in partnership with PangeaSeed Foundation's Sea Walls: Artists for Oceans presents *Sea Walls: St. Petersburg*. Sea Walls' ground breaking public art program brings the ocean into the streets around the world. By collaborating with renowned contemporary artists, Sea Walls uses mural art to foster an emotional connection to our oceans and a drive for positive action to protect them. This year's artist lineup features Florida-based artists with an emphasis on Tampa Bay to support the local artists who make St. Petersburg pulse all year long.

The St. Petersburg Arts Alliance is proud to announce our mural artists for this year's SHINE X Sea Walls: St. Petersburg.

Alex Yanes (Miami) www.alexyanes.com

Miami artist Alex Yanes is known for his vibrant 3D installations inspired by his Cuban roots, his hometown Miami and skateboard culture. With bold colors and complex layers, his work is sophisticated yet approachable. Yanes has worked with Adidas, Red Bull, Sony, Vans and has been exhibited in galleries around the world.

BASK (St. Petersburg) www.instagram.com/knownasbask

St. Petersburg artist Ales "BASK" Hostomsky returns after painting a SHINE mural in our first year. The artist's work is immediately recognizable for its rich textures and "anti-iconic" imagery inspired by the similarities between communist propaganda and American consumerism. BASK's work has been featured in galleries nationwide and in the blockbuster movie Iron Man 3.

Elle LeBlanc (St. Petersburg) elleleblanc.com

St. Petersburg based artist Elle LeBlanc creates modern contemporary designs with playful shapes and minimal color palettes. Finding inspiration in everyday objects, her work reimagines what is often seen as mundane, creating beauty from the ordinary.

modern contemporary designs with playful shapes and minimal color palettes. Finding inspiration in everyday objects, her work reimagines what is often seen as mundane, creating beauty from the ordinary.

iBOMS (St. Petersburg) thisisiboms.com

St. Petersburg artist Jabari Reed-Diop, known as iBOMS, uses original characters and thought-provoking symbols to bring viewers into his world. Through a variety of mediums, he challenges perceptions and creates a new narrative through the lens of his own life experience as a young African American male.

Kenny Coil with Marc Berenguer (St. Petersburg) www.breakmaiden.com

St. Petersburg graphic designer Kenny Coil, along with business partner Marc Berenguer, are the creative powerhouses behind Break Maiden, the award-winning studio specializing in brand identity and packaging design. Both USF graduates, Kenny and Marc designed many of St. Pete's favorite brands like MADE Coffee and Green Bench Brewery's Webb City Cellar.

Lili Yuan (Jacksonville) www.instagram.com/oliiooolio

Jacksonville based artist Lili Yuan uses her photography to create hyperreal paintings, often inspired by the dichotomy of Eastern and Western cultures. Originally from China, Yuan uses her natural proficiency for art to explore the contrasting viewpoints she's experienced.

Mason Schwacke (St. Petersburg) www.instagram.com/masonschwacke

St. Petersburg artist Mason Schwacke creates illustrative designs with playful colors and imaginative characters. As a longtime staple in the local creative scene, Schwacke has been active in many galleries, art shows and streets throughout the Tampa Bay area.

Nneka Jones with Bianca Burrows (Tampa) www.artyouhungry.com

Tampa based visual artist Nneka Jones is best known for her highly detailed embroidery work which was recently featured on the cover of TIME magazine. Jones is also an accomplished painter, photographer and mixed media artist. Inspired by her native country, Trinidad and Tobago, her art work reflects rich Caribbean tones and often advocates for issues of social justice. Jones is collaborating with Tampa based mixed media artist Bianca Burrows.

Tatiana Suarez (Miami) www.tatisuarez.com

Miami based visual artist Tatiana Suarez is known for her ethereal feminine creatures brought to life in pop surrealist style. Suarez's work has been featured in galleries across the country, including San Francisco's Spoke Art. She's collaborated with brands like Reebok and L'Oreal. Her murals can be found in countries all around the world.

Brian Butler (Miami) theupperhandart.com

Miami based muralist and designer, Brian Butler, is known for his playful, illustrative style, bold color palettes and his passion for music. In addition to creating merchandise, album art and promotional materials for many labels and musicians, he has "Show Drawn" over 2000 live concert performances. For this special Sea Walls project, Butler has created Carbon Punishment, an "enviro-METAL" project that unites a group of musicians and muralists based on his mural concept.

Brain Storm (St. Petersburg) brainthegenius.com

St. Petersburg multimedia artist Chris Roberts, known as Brain Storm, is an accomplished painter, designer, cinematographer, tattoo artist and owner of Urban Ink Tattoo Company. For this community Bright Spot project sponsored by NOAA Fisheries, Brain Storm is partnering with the St. Pete Youth Farm to create a mural focused on diversity and inclusion in STEM professions. Look for this Bright Spot mural in the Innovation District.

The Happy Mural Project (St. Petersburg)

www.thehappymuralproject.com

The Happy Mural Project: Hands for Change mural is bringing the community together in an act of collaboration and unity to paint a 'color-by-number' sunflower wall representing happiness, joy and love for all. The project will take place during the first week of November with the St. Pete City Theatre as the canvas. Follow [@thehappymuralproject](https://twitter.com/thehappymuralproject) on social to learn more.

#OneShareOne Pair: Supporting Vision Through Art

www.glazervisionfoundation.org/one-share-one-pair

The Glazer Vision Foundation is committed to providing Glasses For All Children and ending the silent vision crisis, where one in four children are affected by vision impairment and one in five can't afford eye care. These super-sized glasses are one way the foundation supports vision through art! Take a photo with the frames, or a selfie wearing any glasses, tag [@glazervisionfdn](https://twitter.com/glazervisionfdn) and #OneShareOnePair and the foundation will provide a free eye exam and pair of prescription glasses to a local child in need. Follow [@glazervisionfdn](https://twitter.com/glazervisionfdn) on social and visit GlazerVisionFoundation.org to learn more.



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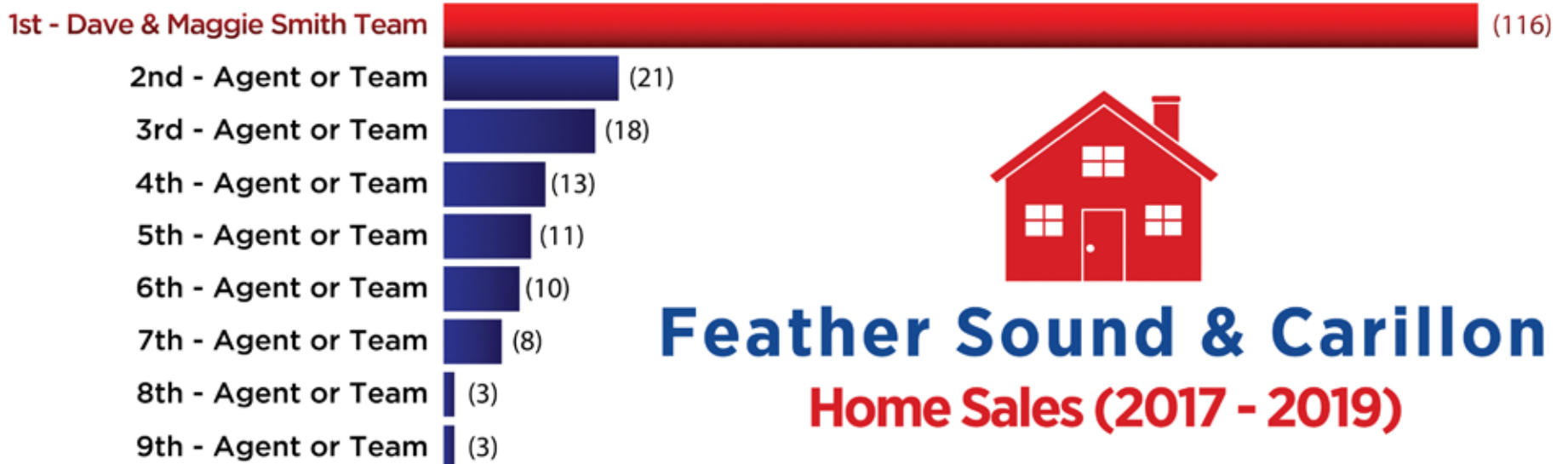


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"Due to their professionalism and expertise, we have worked with Dave and Maggie buying and selling multiple properties over the past 20 years. We would not consider using anyone else. They have helped us navigate numerous situations and have demonstrated complete commitment to us and remain in constant communication throughout the process. While there are other very talented and dedicated Realtors, you will not find any who are more professional, competent, courteous and considerate than Dave and Maggie Smith."



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Statistics provided by My Florida MLS sales from Jan 1st 2017 through Dec 31st 2019



Have A Pet-Safe Thanksgiving

By Dr. Rizal Lopez, DVM

The holidays are upon us! If you're like our household, you like including your pets in holiday celebrations. We may think that giving them their own special dish of food to enjoy for Thanksgiving is a good idea, and it can be a great bonding experience but you need to be very careful with what you feed them and how it is prepared. The last thing you want to be doing in the middle of Thanksgiving is visiting an emergency vet or waiting on hold with the Pet Poison Helpline.



Pet poisonings and stomach upsets spike every holiday season. This is because pets often get their paws on something they shouldn't be eating. Even if you know something is safe to give your cat or dog, even "safe" foods can upset their stomach if it's a deviation from their normal diet—especially if your pet already has pre-existing sensitivities.

Generally, it's best to avoid giving your dog or cat food that is intended for humans but with some planning and your veterinarian's approval, a small Thanksgiving treat may be a nice way to bond with your pet this holiday. Of course there are all sorts of safe gourmet, Holiday-themed pet food and treats you can buy, but with some planning and care you can make your pet's holiday meal special at home.

Some good "people food" choices you may offer your pet are a little bit cooked turkey without seasonings, skin or bones. A small dollop of canned, pureed pumpkin can be a sweet addition to some dry kibble.

Some things to avoid are:

1. Chocolate
2. Coffee and Soft Drinks
3. Alcohol
4. Onions
5. Garlic
6. Sauces, like gravy
7. High sodium foods (yes, that means bacon)
8. Anything containing Xylitol (an artificial sweetener)
9. Grapes or raisins
10. Yeast dough
11. Avocados

The lists above are NOT complete. Check out reputable sources like the American Veterinary Medical Association for safe options as well as things to avoid. Always do your research first!

Including your pet in your holiday celebrations is wonderful. It shows them that they are a special part of the family, too. If you choose to share a Thanksgiving treat with your pet, make sure you know what they are eating and that it is healthy for them. After all, you don't want to be worrying about both of you overindulging in all the tasty treats this Thanksgiving!



Dr. Rizal Lopez

Dr. Rizal Lopez is Chief Veterinary Officer for SPCA Tampa Bay. He and his staff have completed over 8,000 procedures since opening the St. Pete Veterinary Center in late 2016, and Dr. Lopez, since joining the organization in 2011, has performed over 19,000 spay/neuter procedures for the community. He held several positions with the organization before taking the lead veterinary role at the center.

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Continued From Cover

Getaway.House offers woody outposts in 10 locations equipped with “tiny house” cabins designed for quick escapes from cities. “If you were at your desk in need of an escape, you could cut out early and be there by 6 pm,” says Vice President of Marketing Rachel Mansfield. The private experience, with no check-in desk and no communal areas, enables it to continue operating safely during the pandemic. The cabins, designed to blend in with their natural surroundings, are equipped with food for purchase, stove, books, radio, firewood, fire pit and Adirondack chairs, as well as a map for local hikes and adventures.

“I did a getaway at a point in my life where I wanted some time alone, away from commitments, to figure out what my next chapter in life was going to be,” says Paige Conner Totaro, of Alexandria, Virginia, the founder of Unquote Travel, a web-based tour agency focusing on small group, off-the-beaten-track adventures. “You can change your environment without going very far, and that in turn can change the way you think about things. Little things like sleeping on the other side of the bed can help you shake up your brain.”

Local Attraction

Local-led excursions are another way to see our home turf through a new lens. Airbnb Experiences, offered virtually everywhere that Airbnb lists lodging, are one-of-a-kind tours and classes designed and hosted by locals with unique expertise. Experiences run the gamut from neighborhood tours on foot or bikes with athletes to museum tours led by local artists or art historians. Many include a hands-on learning component, like how to make mosaics in a community art space or cook a local delicacy from a family recipe. Similar tours and experiences can be found on TripAdvisor’s Things To Do listings. *WithLocals.com*, whose mission is “to break down the barriers between travelers and locals worldwide,” also offers foodie fun and off-beat adventures.

Kelly Kniewel stumbled onto tour guiding after experiencing burnout in her previous career in the beverage industry. An Airbnb Experiences host, Kniewel now leads small group tours of Chicago, introducing locals and visitors alike to many of its little-known facets. “I’ve fallen in love with my city all over again doing these tours,” says Kniewel, a self-proclaimed history geek.

She loves to take guests inside Art Deco and Beaux Arts buildings they may have passed before without realizing the gorgeous art and architecture that exists inside, such as the library-turned-cultural center, Chicago Cultural Center, boasting two impressive glass domes, one designed by Tiffany Glass. Another favorite excursion is taking guests on a water taxi tour. “It’s a cheap and unique way to see Chicago. The water, both the Chicago River and Lake Michigan is so much a part of who we are as a city.”

During the limitations imposed during the COVID-19 period, Airbnb and other websites began offering experiences online, allowing people from all over the world to connect and make pastries with a Swedish baker, draw with a Mexican cartoonist, learn about apartheid from a South African or experience the day in the life of an American Olympic bobsledder.

Traveling the World Without Leaving Home

Hosting travelers can bring new meaning to a staycation, offering a rich opportunity for cross-cultural exchange without any exchange of currency. The popular CouchSurfing.com connects travelers with locals offering free use of a couch, air mattress or spare bedroom. Available in more than 200,000 cities worldwide, it has 14 million members and sponsors local language exchanges, dance classes, hikes and dinners, so there are opportunities to make new friends and have new experiences even without offering a place to sleep. (During COVID-19 restrictions, these activities were moved online.)

Similar organizations that offer opportunities for local hosting (including low- or no-cost lodging) include *Servas.org*, established in 1949, which stresses world peace and cultural exchange, and pre-interviews potential guests and hosts to ensure safety; *GlobalFreeloaders.com*, a free registry for hosts and guests that do their own online screening and matching; and *EvergreenClub.com*, in which hosts provide a bed-and-breakfast homestay for travelers over age 50 for \$20 a night. An exciting option for homeowners is HomeExchange.com, a \$150-a-year service that allows people in far-flung places to switch homes, either directly or through a staggered point system so they can truly live like locals.

John Fackenthal, of Rockville, Maryland, has hosted more than 100 couchsurfers from 29 countries, and loved every experience. “I had a big apartment in the heart of Washington, D.C., when I first started hosting, but lived alone and felt a little isolated. I wanted to bring back the youth hostel feel from travels in my younger days, where you’d hang out with fellow travelers and go hiking, share a meal, or play cards,” he says.

A web developer, he recalls such memorable guests as a carpenter in his 60s from the Pacific Northwest that helped him with fixer-upper projects, a pair of pro volleyball players from the Czech Republic and two young women from China that prepared him a massive traditional Chinese feast “with all four burners going,” he says. “It’s restored my faith in humanity. I’ve encountered nothing but wonderful people, all with such different personalities and backgrounds.”

Be a Weekend Farmer

Agrotourism, in which working farms open the barn doors to visitors for day or overnight trips, has the added advantage of supporting local agriculture. AgritourismWorld.com and FarmStayUS.com provide listings for farm stays worldwide searchable by type, such as Christmas tree farm, vineyard, orchard, dude ranch or alpaca farm.

The 40-acre Taos Goji Farm and Eco-Lodge Retreat, in Taos, New Mexico, is one such venue. “My husband and I returned to the land nine years ago after many years working as professionals in stuffy offices. The farm has been developed for our family and others who wish to be close to nature and to live off of the land,” says co-owner Elizabeth vom Dorp.

The farm is open for paid guests, as well as to the volunteers known as “Wwoofers” that come through Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms to help raise goji berries, fruits, vegetables and free-range chickens. All cabins date from the early 1900s, including an old dairy barn converted into a duplex and five sheep herder cabins. The farm is surrounded by a national forest, so many guests visit to enjoy hiking, biking, fishing, rafting and ballooning. “Families with children love to come and pick berries, collect eggs and pet the animals. We have rescue alpacas, sheep, goats, chickens and turkeys,” says vom Dorp.

While the world may still be at the mercy of unfortunate circumstance this season, travel is ultimately a state of mind. By staying open, curious and present, there are always new encounters and discoveries underfoot, very close to home.

**Connect with Washington, D.C., freelance writer
April Thompson at AprilWrites.com**





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Florida CraftArt Festival IS HAPPENING! ...With a Twist!

November 21 and December 5, 2020

Florida CraftArt's 23rd Festival celebrating fine craft is happening! But with a twist – it will be a smaller version of Tampa Bay's highly anticipated annual fall festival that typically showcases 100 fine craft artists and attracts collectors and enthusiasts alike each fall in the heart of downtown St. Petersburg.

This year's festival, free to the public as always, will be held outdoors by the Florida CraftArt gallery at 501 Central Avenue and directly across the street in the parking lot of Regions Bank. Jurors for the 2020 festival selected 36 artists total, 18 of which will be displaying and selling their award-winning work on each of the two bookending Saturdays before and after the Thanksgiving holiday.



“Thanks to major support from The Red Apple Group and Regions Bank, we are thrilled to be able to move forward with our 23rd festival of fine craft,” says Tyler Jones, Board President of Florida CraftArt. “It ‘takes a village’ to stage our annual two-day festival, and this year, that village was adversely affected by Covid. However, as our mission is to help fine craft artists, we were determined to not let our artists down, and ultimately found the way forward with creating the smaller event we are calling ‘CraftArt With a Twist.’ The event spotlight artists and their work and it presented to festivalgoers in a safe, responsible way.”

Long dedicated to engaging and mentoring the next generation of fine craft artists, Florida CraftArt also features the talents of six emerging artists (representing ceramic, mixed media and glass) with the support of the DMG School Project. Showing and selling their work at the festival alongside the nation's best fine craft artists, each “Emerging Artist” receives a free booth, a professional photography session sponsored by Brian James Photography, and postcards sponsored by Color Concepts. Additional Emerging Artists sponsors are Kevin Beck, Michael and Andria Graham, Kathryn Howd and Edward Rucks, David and Becky Ramsey, and Robert F. and Alexandria Welker.

Continued On Page 14

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Once I was blind but now I can see!

I did part of my medical training in South Africa and I remember very clearly how one of my professors would discuss a case and he would start with the effect of the disease the patient had on the person's anatomy, and how the disease affected him biochemically, physiologically and even genetically. That really impressed me! That is one of the reasons I have been studying the genetics of a number of diseases. Recently a lady came in to see me who was quickly losing her vision. She had no night vision at all. Her husband had to lead her to the bed. At night she had to be guided to her bedroom because she could not see. She did say her bed looked like a pile of leaves. During the day colors were drab, she had light flickers in her eyes and she was going blind quickly. She went to a number of specialists and no one could find out the cause of her blindness. Finally, one eye specialist did a test and saw she had little to no Vitamin A in her body. She was eating a healthy diet with plenty of vegetables rich in Vitamin A but to no avail.

Something was wrong and she was very worried she would be completely blind very quickly. So there she was in my office looking for help. So I decided to start with the anatomy and biochemistry of vision and had her bring in her 23 and ME genetic work up. I went through page after page of genetic code and there it was. The problem was she had a genetic defect at the BCMO, VDR-TAQ and the GC genes. These genes are all code for metabolism of fat soluble vitamins of which Vitamin A is one and for the ability to absorb specifically Vitamin A! So what we did was take large amounts of liquid Vitamin A and had her mix it in a Young Health Protein concentrate. We made an emulsion by hiding the Vitamin A in a protein (basic Bio-Chemistry). This way I could sneak Vitamin A around the intestinal wall and into the blood stream. I saw her the other day and after 4 weeks of doing this, colors were vivid and her night vision had returned. No need to lead her around her house as her sight had come back and the flashes of light in her eyes are gone. The rods and cones in the eye which detect color and provide night vision need Vitamin A to work. We were able to restore them and with that her vision!

That South African professor who taught me how to heal a disease down to its anatomical, physiological, biochemical, and genetic parts. I never thought I would need that to treat a patient. Yet, it was his teaching me those years ago gave me the ability to help a person in the U.S. restore her vision. It goes to show how things we think are not significant and just academic experience can really make a life time difference in a person. Once she was blind, but now she can see!

John Young M.D.

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Common Sense Caregiving - Gary Joseph LeBlanc

Why Me?

Who hasn't looked up at the sky and muttered, "Why me?"

Whether we're suddenly caught in a downpour or find ourselves stuck on the side of the road with a flat tire, that question seems to arise.

However, for us caregivers, the question may be more related to "Why has everything been loaded upon my shoulders and mine alone?" or "Why is my life turned upside down and others' isn't?"

Is there really an answer to the "Why Me" question? If there is, it's probably not a very satisfying one, at least not at the moment it's being asked. We all go through the school of hard knocks. Unfortunately, it takes some of us longer to graduate than others.

When you're smack dab in the middle of caregiving crisis, you may find yourself questioning all kinds of things. Then after the loss of your loved one, while you are experiencing what feels like an emotional vacuum throughout your days and nights, some may find themselves questioning things all over. Question not. Try to find guidance from other caregivers. Our characters strengthen with every positive resolve to disentangle our most frustrating dilemmas.

I know this may sound a little bit cold, but maybe we should be asking "Why not me?" After all, our world is not perfect. Is it? We live in a realm full of trials and tribulations, and some of them are bound to have a resounding impact on us.

Take heart, my friend. There is a reason why you were the one called to faithfully be there to help your loved one. Call it a mission for your life, a part of the plan. It is a great responsibility, but try to embrace the fact that you were chosen for a purpose.

We can overcome almost anything. As terrible as things may seem at the moment, we have to keep fighting and scratching our way through.

You're right when you say that nobody deserves to be stricken with a terminal illness and no one should have to deal with the hardships that can come with caregiving, or with the aftereffects. But it is an oft-times indigestible chunk of that imperfection we call life.

Look at all the good you have accomplished by single-handedly assuring that your loved one received a better quality of his or her life. Please realize that is where you need to concentrate: on the difference you have made by loving and caring.

Gary Joseph LeBlanc, Director of Education
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Creative Clay artist's work selected for First Night St. Pete button

By **KERRY KRISEMAN**, Public Relations Manager

Words aren't needed when beauty is conveyed through an artist's brush strokes. Life's truths are revealed in the colors they choose. What is unspoken, is told on the canvas. Bold colors summon our attention to look, study, discern.

Art transports us to familiar places and distant lands. We dare to dream and are called to study, taking in the landscapes, images and figures we see.

An artist is called to interpret what is crafted in the mind and heart. Inspiration pours onto paper, like ingredients carefully measured to make a scrumptious sauce.

Transition Artist Aaron F. heeded such a call when he submitted his piece, "Sunshine Skyway," for consideration as the First Night St. Pete button. First Night is the largest family-friendly New Year's Eve Celebration of the Arts in Florida. The event is a collaboration between local venues, artists and performers who showcase their music and art throughout downtown St. Petersburg. The First Night button is worn by patrons for admission to each venue.

On the button is usually a recognizable image that symbolizes the St. Petersburg community. A few moments spent browsing through images on his iPad sparked the idea to paint the Sunshine Skyway Bridge.



Painting is Aaron's favorite medium, says his mom Christiane Vinet. "Aaron feels happy when he is painting and will often smile and laugh through the whole process," Vinet said.

The Sunshine Skyway Bridge connects Pinellas County to Manatee County, spanning the waters of Hillsborough County. Most have traveled the bridge with trepidation as they climb the peak, while others are awed by the yellow spans that reflect the sun or colored twinkling lights that sparkle at night. Aaron has demonstrated his natural talent and passion for the arts. Birds, especially pelicans, are a favorite subject. He also finds inspiration from iconic buildings and landscapes.

Aaron has attended Transition for two years and has thrived in the program. His face lights up as he shows a completed painting to a friend or loved one.

"I am not surprised that his painting of the Skyway was selected," said Amanda Drewes, Lead Transition Instructor. "I love that our program allows our students to express themselves in unconventional ways, as well as provide an opportunity to learn job skills that will benefit them in future endeavors."

The Transition Program, a partnership with Pinellas County Schools, provides vocational arts training for 18-22-year-olds with learning, developmental and/or emotional disabilities. The program focuses on easing the transition from the school environment to post-secondary education that includes the goals of independent living and employment readiness. Creative Clay Transition's vocational training consists of lessons in art fundamentals, sales, marketing, customer relations, and the over-all business of being an artist.

Aaron also works in different mediums, and his work is often in demand in Creative Clay's Good Folk Gallery and at Transition art markets. He also earns a paycheck for all works sold, which validates his authenticity as a working artist. There are other lessons, too. Transition students learn life skills they can use in the workforce. The class often collaborates, which contributes to a team feel, strengthening bonds that create success for everyone. Before Covid-19 necessitated the temporary closure of Creative Clay's Good Folk Gallery to the public, Aaron was learning the Square point of sale system.

When viewed, art is transformative. In practice, it's lifechanging. It inspires growth and can be a catalyst for bridge building. Not the kind we drive across, but the kind that creates a community of acceptance, where differences aren't merely tolerated, but celebrated. Drewes has witnessed the transformative power of art, not just in Aaron, but in all of her students.

"Creating art transforms students into confident, motivated, independent and successful adults who are ready to make their mark on the world," she said. "I am honored to be a stop along the way to so many bright and promising futures."

Bridges connect communities. Art does the same. In viewing and appreciating art, we are connected to others. We find common ground. We travel to places previously unknown. We learn about others, and ourselves. For that, no words are needed.

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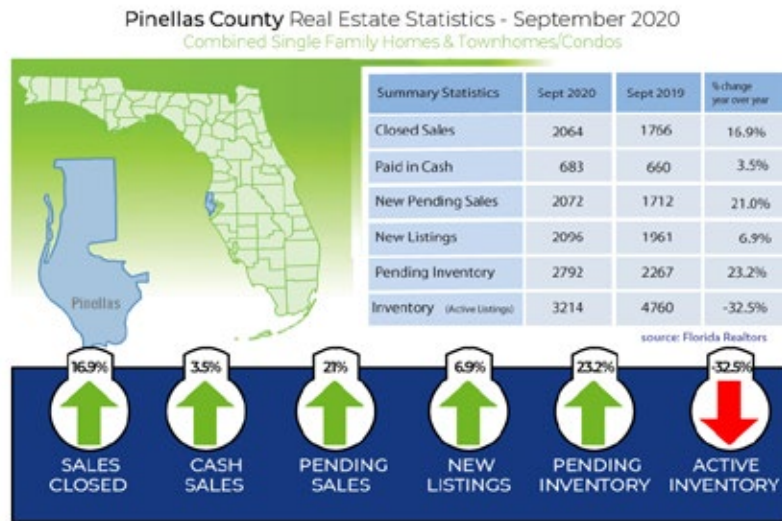


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The biggest statistical change in the market, number of active listings, saw expected decreases because of COVID-19. Single Family Homes and Townhomes/Condos were selling at higher prices year-over-year. The Average Sale Price for Single Family Homes increased 19.7% from \$354,098 in September 2019 to \$424,021 in September 2020. The Average Sale Price for Townhome/Condo was up 31.2% from \$236,438 in September 2019 to \$310,194 in September 2020. The Median Sale Price for Single Family Homes was up by 17.5% from last year at \$272,250 for September 2019 to \$320,000 for September 2020. The Median Sale Price for Townhomes/Condos increased 26.3% from \$174,250 in September 2019 to \$220,000 in September 2020.

Dollar Volume for Single Family Homes saw a 33.9% increase from \$386.7 million in September 2019 to \$517.7 million in 2020. Closed Sales for Single Family were up 11.8% year-over-year from 1,221 in September 2020, compared to 1,092 in September 2019. The Months Supply of Inventory for Single Family Homes decreased 41.7% from 2.4 months in September 2019 to 1.4 months in September 2020. The Active Listings for Single Family Homes decreased 43.3% from 2,697 in September 2019 to 1,529 in September 2020. The Median Time to Contract for Single Family Homes was down 64.0% from 25 days in September 2019 to 9 days in September 2020. New Listings for Single Family for September 2020 were 1,254, up 8.0% from September 2019 at 1,161.

Pinellas County Real Estate Statistics for September 2020



Dollar Volume for Townhome/Condo increased 64.1% year-over-year from \$159.4 million in September 2019 to \$261.5 million in September 2020. Closed Sales for the Townhome/Condo segment were up 25.1% year-over-year, at 843 in September 2020 versus 674 in September 2019. Paid in Cash sales for Townhome/Condo increased 12.8% from 337 in September 2019 to 380 in September 2020. The Months Supply of Inventory for Townhome/Condo decreased 11.1% from 2.7 months in September 2019 to 2.4 months in September 2020. Active Listings for Townhomes/Condos were down 18.3% from 2,063 in September 2019 to 1,685 in September 2020. The Median Time to Contract for Townhome/Condo market decreased 33.3% from 36 days in September 2019 to 24 days September 2020. The Median Time to Sale for Townhome/Condo market decreased 19.5% from 77 days in September 2019 to 62 days in September 2020. New Listings for Townhome/Condos for September increased 5.3% from 800 in 2019 to 842 in 2020.

Information provided by Pinellas Realtor Organization

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Continued From Page 8

On Saturday, November 21, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., the work of these fine-craft artists will be featured:
 Ceramics: William Kidd, Suzy Pease, Harry Welsch, Andrew Wender
 Fiber: Leeann Kroetsch, Robert Stadnycki:
 Jewelry: Marc Aune, Charles Bahringer, Linda and Carl Caristo, William Carlie, and Lynn Hardesty
 Metal: Javier Dones
 Mixed Media: Artists of ArtLofts, Anne Ross Oliva
 Sculpture: Terry Andrews
 At the dawn of their career, these artists are mentored and exhibiting for the first time in an outdoor art festival.
 Emerging Artists: Tyler Quintin (ceramics), Diana Hirschhorn (jewelry), and Janna Kennedy-Hyten (mixed media)

On Saturday, December 5, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., the final festival day will feature the work of these fine craft artists:
 Ceramics: John Kellum, Sarah King, and Glenn Woods
 Fiber: Nneka Jones
 Jewelry: Trina Cahlander, Kristie MacGregor, Luis Perez, Wendy Thurlow, and Barbara Umbel
 Mixed Media: Holly Apperson, Cindy Hirt Pardue, and Artists of ArtLofts
 Sculpture: John and Sandie Formato, Randy Pardue, and Benjamin Peterson
 Emerging Artists: Esther Aall (ceramics), Robyn Crosa (mixed media), and Mary Ann Ziegler (glass)

To learn more about the festival, become a sponsor or become part of Florida CraftArt's partially tax-deductible Collector's Circle starting at \$250, visit Florida CraftArt online at www.FloridaCraftArt.org, or call (727) 821-7391. Admission is free to Florida CraftArt which is located at 501 Central Avenue in St. Petersburg. Hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Florida CraftArt is a nonprofit organization founded in 1951 and headquartered in St. Petersburg.





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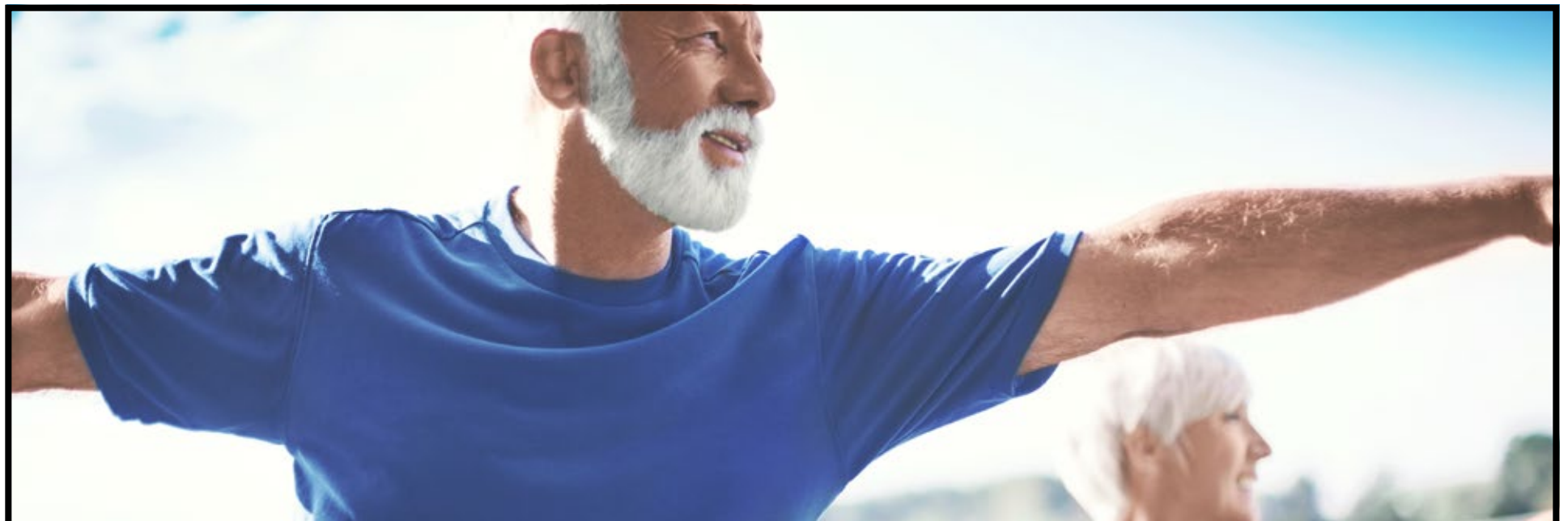
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“Shoetober” is Clothes To Kids month-long collection drive for new and gently used shoes. It has been so popular we are extending it through November – ShoeVember. Each year Clothes To Kids provides more than 13,000 pairs of shoes to kids in our communities. Too often families cannot afford shoes and much too often these children go to school with shoes too tight or too big. Don’t be spooked, we need Y-O-U-R help with Shoetober!

160,000 kids in Hillsborough and Pinellas cannot afford school shoes. You’ve Been “Shoed” helps Clothes To Kids fulfill our mission is to provide new and quality used clothing, which includes shoes that fit, to low income or in crisis school aged children (PreK4-12th grade) free of charge. We need children sizes 9 thru adult size 14. Please check you closets or visit our links to buy some shoes.

Want To Help? Here is how you, your family, friends, neighbors and business associates can help:

1. Purchase shoes! The cost for shoes is \$12/pair. Please visit the CTK Donation site and buy one or two pairs here.
2. <https://clothes-to-kids-inc.networkforgood.com/projects/107355-we-ve-been-shoed>
3. Keep it going! Shoe a colleague, family or friend.
4. Run a shoe drive for us to help collect kids school shoes (see attached).
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HOW TO HELP THE FAMILY OF A HOSPICE PATIENT

Do you have a friend or family member with someone they care about going through hospice? This time can be difficult for not only the patient but their close loved ones as well. Understanding how to be compassionate and caring in your communication with them can go a long way. Here at Center for Hospice Care, we understand the importance of whole family wellbeing when caring for our patients. Our hospice nurses and staff are trained in assisting our patients and their families.

What to say to the family/friend of someone who is dying?

The most important thing to remember when speaking to someone who has a loved one in palliative care or hospice is to listen. Listening and giving people time or space to discuss the things they are comfortable with is essential to offering support. Secondly, ask questions like:

- “How are you feeling right now?”
- “What can I do to help?”
- “How does that make you feel?”
- “Are you getting your needs met?”



Many times family and friends of someone who is dying are solely focused on their loved one and can forget to care for themselves. Showing sympathy for them by listening and helping where you can, can truly make a difference in helping them cope. Often times they will not want to talk about the realities of their loved one dying. Just listening and giving them space to process, you can give them the support they need.


Ways you can help friends and family of someone in hospice

If you want to help ease the pain of your friend or family member who has someone in hospice, you can do a number of things. Offer to cook a meal, help clean their home, take care of some yard chores, give them a hug, and remind them of the wonderful job they are doing caring for their loved one. If you are close enough, you can even suggest becoming the liaison for people who would like to call or get updates about the person in hospice. Anything to allow them to focus on their loved one while still being able to care for themselves will be a huge help.

At Center for Hospice Care Southeast Connecticut, we focus on covering many of the basic amenities to allow the space and time for people to connect and grieve together during those last days. Having a shoulder to cry on or lending an ear can sometimes be just the thing people need. Our staff is experienced in helping everyone involved go through this transition in a caring and compassionate way.




Courtesy : www.hospicesect.org



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