



6th Annual Iron Girl Race

Hundreds of eager women gathered in Coachman Park early Saturday morning on April 4th to compete in the annual Aflac Iron Girl Women's 10k and 5k race...

[Read more pg. 6](#)



IKEA Now in Tampa

The Tampa IKEA grand opening was held at 9am on Wednesday, May 6th. This is the third IKEA in Florida...

[Read more pg. 12](#)



Lanterns, Taiko Drums and Origami on Cleveland Street

Clearwater, Florida and Nagano, Japan have been sister cities for half a century, and to honor this achievement...

[Read more pg. 6](#)



Latin performers at Ciclovía
Photo by Simaen Skolfield

A DAY OF BICYCLING AND LATIN FUN

by Heidi Lux

CLEVELAND ST. DISTRICT, CLEARWATER

Ciclovía – it means “bike path” in Spanish – but in Clearwater, it means FUN! On Sunday, April 26th, from 8am to 2pm, two miles of Cleveland Street were closed off and declared a “no car zone.” From Coachman Park all the way up to Highland Avenue, bicyclists could be seen riding in the middle of an empty street.

Ciclovía was an event everyone could enjoy. There were bikes of all different varieties, including a bicycle build for two and even a unicycle. Families were out and about, bike enthusiasts rode in their spandex suits, and then there were people like me, who haven't been on a bicycle since they were twelve. Even those who didn't bike at all were included in Ciclovía, and the Clearwater Community Volunteers offered rides

Continued on page 12

PUTTIN' ON THE SUNSCREEN

by Heidi Lux and Ana Livingston

ST. PETERSBURG

The red carpet was rolled out for the 4th Annual Sunscreen Film Festival which had its kickoff on April 29th, at Baywalk Muvico in St. Petersburg.

Seen at the event was famed actor Patrick Wilson, looking suave in a blue blazer. He was there for the southeast premiere of his film “Passengers”, co-starring Anne Hathaway. The Watchmen star has local ties in the form of his brother, Paul, on the board for the festival, and his father, John, a local TV news anchor.

Chris and Victoria Kelly, a couple from Illinois were excited to be on the red carpet. Their film Hampshire was premiering at the festival as well. “I didn't expect half of this,” said Chris. His wife added, “We couldn't have picked a better location. The people are so nice.”

Latanya Potts, a bicoastal talent agent with offices in both LA and Atlanta, was out scouting for talent. She is currently casting a movie, “Get Lifted” which shoots in Miami this summer and was on the lookout for Tampa Bay's next rising star!

Paul Wilson was the charming MC for the standing-room-only awards ceremony at the NOVA 535 Modern Art Lounge on Saturday night. And speaking of rising stars, the awards



Patrick Wilson being interviewed at the Sunscreen Film Festival Opening
Photo by Brad Kugler

presented that evening were bestowed to some immensely-talented directors this year. Alan Mehanna (promising not to cry) was touched and honored when awarded the new Travolta Family Inspiration Award for his film “One Last Stand”. “Validation”, a crowd favorite, was presented the Best Narrative Short Film and Todd Thompson, director of the wonderful “This Man's Life”, picked up the award for Best Florida Film.

Continued on page 2



Volunteers Bring Real Help to the People of Haiti

by Ana Livingston

Global Pioneers, a team of volunteer Scientologists, just returned from their most recent tour to assist the peoples of Haiti...

[Read more pg. 11](#)



A Ghostly Love Affair with the Belleview Biltmore Hotel

by BonSue Brandvik

Uh-oh, an employee of the Belleview Biltmore Hotel is coming to chase me out of the underground tunnels... again...

[Read more pg. 8](#)



“Cinco de Mayo en Clearwater”

by Heidi Lux

On Cinco de Mayo, Clearwater residents had yet another reason to visit the Cleveland Street District...

[Read more pg. 11](#)



(from left) Declan Flynn, Gina Kugler, Brad Kugler, Jeff Donovan (of the TV Series "Burn Notice"), Bill Cobbs ("Night at the Museum"), festival director Tony Armer, Harry Chittenden, Lisa Mansell, Paul Wilson and Corey Janey
Photo by Brad Kugler

PUTTIN' ON THE SUNSCREEN

Continued from front page

Following is a complete listing of the winners at the 4th Annual Sunscreen Film Festival:

- The Travolta Family Inspiration Award was presented to Alan Mehanna (ONE LAST STAND)
- Best Animated Short: LARRY AND ROZ - Directed by Kristen Palana
- Best Music Video: SNOW by the Beauvilles - Directed by Jon Wolding
- Best Documentary: SLEDHEAD - Directed by David McIlvride
- Best Florida Film: THIS MAN'S LIFE - Directed by Todd Thompson
- Best Narrative Short Film: VALIDATION - Directed by Kurt Kuenne
- Best Director: Tao Ruspoli - FIX
- Best Narrative Feature Film: YESTERDAY WAS A LIE - Directed by James Kerwin
- Audience Award: I AM THE BLUEBIRD - Directed by Thomas Verrette

Everyone was buzzing about how hot Sunscreen had gotten. "This year they seemed to have upped their game," said Alan Mehanna, a winning filmmaker.



Sunscreen Board Members Lisa Mansell (left) and Joanie Sigal (right) with Hollywood actor Patrick Wilson
Photo by Brad Kugler



Catherine Cummins, Best Florida Film Winner Todd Thompson, Mariah June and Sunscreen co-founder Tony Armer
Photo by Brad Kugler

Patrick Wilson himself stated it best by saying about the Sunscreen co-founders Tony Armer and Derek Miner: "It's a lot of work and they must really love it to be able to put that much effort into it. I think they're doing a great job, and it will only get bigger."

For complete festival information, visit www.sunscreenfilmfestival.com

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My siblings and I decided it was time to move our elderly parents back North, as they were getting quite forgetful and we were worried about them. I volunteered to get their Clearwater home sold, but was quite concerned about how I'd do that from Massachusetts. When my Dad told me that he had met a nice Realtor and to call her, I didn't know what to expect. Well, my Dad did GOOD! He had me call Pam Ryan Anderson of Ryan Realty, and what a pleasure it was to work with Pam! Although I'm sure she had bigger fish to fry, she always stayed in touch with me to let me know what was happening every step of the way. I'd recommend Pam to anyone that really wants a good Realtor on their side! - A.D.

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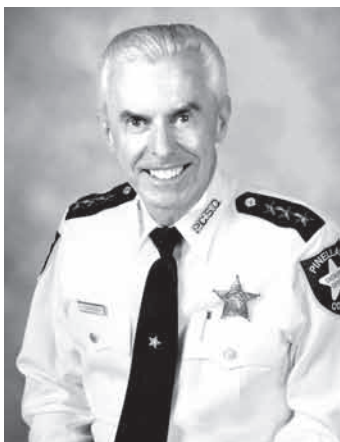
"To improve the community by raising awareness and responsibility and providing solutions to community issues."

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Editor
Angela LeMay



FROM THE DESK OF SHERIFF JIM COATS

from their residence, become disoriented or lost. Frantic family members and caregivers then search for these persons, who many times do not wander far, but may become vulnerable to the elements, their lack of medication and possible foul play.

Project Lifesaver is the latest in technology available to assist law enforcement and caregivers in recovering these persons safely and in a timely manner. Caregivers interested in the program now have the option to register and equip their loved one or client with a special personalized wristband containing a transmitter, which is always emitting a tracking signal. Should the person wander away, caregivers can call 911 and trained search teams will be activated to track the signal with the equipment provided through Project Lifesaver.

I am pleased that our office will be offering and managing

this service on a county-wide basis. Our deputies have been diligently training on the use of the tracking equipment and we have now joined several other agencies around the state in providing this program.

Project Lifesaver International reports the average search time for a missing Project Lifesaver client is 30 minutes.

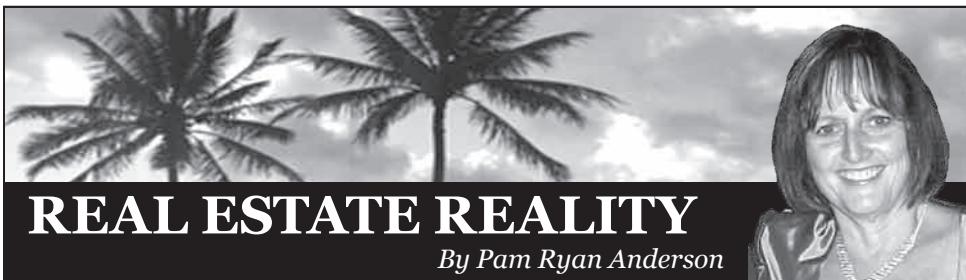
From January 2008 through March of 2009, the Sheriff's Office alone had 310 missing person reports involving adults. Of those, 81 involved persons with Alzheimer's, dementia or autism and who wandered from caregivers.

Without this technology, the recovery time for these cases was anywhere from two hours to over two days.

Project Lifesaver is an international nonprofit program which provides the transmitter and tracking equipment to us. This is not a revenue-generating endeavor, as the fees pay for

the cost of the equipment.

The initial cost to register with Project Lifesaver is \$300, which includes twelve mandatory monthly battery replacements and 12 wristbands. The annual maintenance fee after the first year is \$70. Some assistance for families who might not otherwise be able to afford the service is available and will be reviewed on a case by case basis. For more information and to register with Project Lifesaver, please call (727) 582-6806 for an appointment or email projectlifesaver@pcsonet.com. In addition, you may visit our website at www.pcsoweb.com and click on the Project Lifesaver icon. I am looking forward to working with representatives from the Alzheimer's and mental health community who have endorsed our effort, as well as with Project Lifesaver. Through the program we will work towards ensuring the safety and security of our most vulnerable citizens.



REAL ESTATE REALITY

By Pam Ryan Anderson

CHINESE DRYWALL – WHAT IS IT?

This year will be my 20th anniversary selling real estate in the Greater Tampa Bay area, and just when I think I've heard it all, along comes Chinese Drywall!

Chinese Drywall is a Chinese product imported by the Lennar Corporation and has been found to contain high levels of sulfur. In many cases, the drywall emits fumes that destroy appliances, air conditioning systems, duct work, copper pipes, blackens jewelry and can even make people sick.

Legislation has been introduced in the U.S. House and Senate calling for a temporary ban on the Chinese-made imports until more is known about their chemical makeup.

Lennar primarily used this drywall in homes built between 2005 and 2006 in Florida. An Associated Press review of shipping records found more than 540 million pounds of plasterboard was imported from China between 2004 and 2008 to meet U.S. demand during the national housing boom, with an estimated 35,000 of those homes in Florida alone.

Hundreds of people nationwide are now

complaining that the material emits fumes that make them sick, with the Florida State Health Department logging 265 complaints so far. Lawsuits against the Chinese manufacturers, builders and suppliers have been filed in several states, including Florida, Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana.

Governor Crist's office said the state is already entrenched in a major investigation led by Florida's Surgeon General and is working with the Federal Government, which is also investigating.

Gov. Crist and Gov. Bobby Jindal in Louisiana, where the drywall turned up in some homes rebuilt after Hurricane Katrina, have asked for assistance with chemical testing from the Environmental Protection Agency as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

If you feel that your home is one of the ones affected by Chinese Drywall, contact Florida's Health Department, as they should be ready to begin testing homes in just a couple of weeks.

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“LIGHTS OUT” PROTECT THE SEA TURTLES

Sea turtle nesting season begins May 1st and ends Oct. 31st. Because newly-hatched turtles find their way to the sea by following the natural light reflected by the water, city ordinances determine specific lighting requirements for beach parking lots, streets and promenades.

If you live near the beach, make sure you shut off or dim your lights at night. This precaution can reduce the amount of artificial light that reaches turtle nests and will help hatchlings reach

the water safely. The Tampa Bay area averages about 120 nests each season, and can contain an average of 100 to 110 eggs.

If you find a turtle nest on the beach, don't disturb it. If the nest is unmarked, notify the Clearwater Marine Aquarium at (727) 441-1790. They also will be able to provide more information about sea turtle nesting season.

Visit the City of Clearwater website: www.myclearwater.com

ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS: HOW TO GET RID OF MOLD

by Heidi Lux

Michael Mello knows about mold. This man has been running his own mold inspection business, Environmental Solutions, since 2002. Theirs is a holistic approach to mold inspection and solutions; they find the problems *behind* the mold, instead of just the mold itself. Is it a pet problem? Is it a sanitization problem? Handling the *source* of the mold, instead of just the mold itself, is the best way to fix a mold problem as well as ensuring it doesn't come back.

Mello got into the mold business while working as an air purification equipment salesman. He found himself running into mold again and again, and didn't know what to do with it. Florida, with its moist, warm climate is the mold capital of the world, after all. Mello found he didn't know enough about this problem, so he became a certified mold inspector, then opened his own business, Environmental Solutions. He and his staff of eight professionals currently serve a region including Pinellas, Hillsboro, Hernando, Pasco and Manatee counties. His business is growing; they have a good reputation and are a member of the Better Business Bureau.

A sanitization protocol of common sense items can go a long way in preventing mold from taking over your home. "You'd be surprised that people don't think of them."

Some of Mello's tips include:

- Don't air dry your laundry and dishes.
- Remember to take out your trash.
- Water plants outdoors if possible.
- Open blinds and curtains.
- Keep closet doors slightly open.

There are some signs to watch for, that indicate the presence of mold in the home. There may be visible signs of mold growth, which can be of any color. Mold is a living organism and gets its color from what it lives off of, but in most cases it is black. A musty odor is also a sign. Mold spores take from three to five days to reach maturity, and when they do, they release micro toxins into the air, which is what creates that distinctive musty smell. Also if someone in the house develops breathing problems or is coughing or has itchy eyes or general lethargy, there may be mold in the house. If you see signs you should call Michael Mello right away at (727)-542-5136 or go to his website at www.environmentalsolutions.biz.



Simaen Skolfield Staff Photographer

With a passion for the arts, Simaen Skolfield has won the prestigious Grammy Award with his keen ears for capturing the realism of music and sound. In photography, he brings his uncanny skills to the visual world by framing life in its fullest senses. In photographic moments of all kinds; weddings to family, to portraits, Simaen possesses certain, rare abilities with which to capture our private world. As Simaen puts it, "I want to capture the full beauty of every special moment so our lives will be cherished again and again, the world over."

Mr. Skolfield is an independent professional digital-image-capture photographer, 'writing with light', at home here in Clearwater, Florida.

You can contact him at 727-557-6407





In the second half of this in-depth article, Patrick Valtin presents vital principles of selling in over-competitive, saturated markets. Recognized as an international expert in sales strategies, Patrick has trained over 45,000 sales professionals and executives on the subject of salesmanship. Here, he presents what customers consider as most important in their relationship with you, the sales Pro, and how you can pull them into wanting your product...without pushing!

2. Forget your arguments – that is NOT what makes the sale.

Have an honest look at your best argument as to why your customer should buy YOUR product - the one argument that would beat all. No matter how good or how strong it is, chances are that your competition is using the same argument! Today, when the market becomes more and more driven by the client's "power of choice", you can't rely on any monopoly, or sense of, any longer. Now, what happens when the customer hears the same arguments, again and again, from different sales people? You got it: the customer gets confused and skeptical.

Relying on your best argument does not make you any different from the competition. So then what do you use to make the difference? There is one factor which is much more impinging on the customer's buying process – or call it a major "buying factor": the certainty of making the right decision - or the anxiety of making the wrong one (usually much stronger!).

Can your arguments help in either increasing

CRISIS BUSTER TIPS

THE ART OF "PULL SELLING" PART 2

Three Secrets That Can Help You Boost Your Income... With Your Customers' Blessing!

by Patrick Valtin

his certainty or better yet, decreasing his anxiety/fear related to his decision? Absolutely not. So then, what do you need?

You need ATTITUDE. Because that is the first thing he buys. He buys your conviction and certainty in your ability and willingness to help him. He buys your dedication to find the right solution for his concern or challenge; he buys YOU first. Most salespeople fall in a big trap: they work the customer in a superficial zone: the zone of logic. They do not understand that the major buying factor has nothing to do with logic – where your arguments stand.

Buying is ALWAYS more emotional than logical, in any kind of field or industry. So using logical arguments usually do not trigger the desire; they trigger only "thinking" or counter-arguments (have you ever had a customer asking to buy right after you placed your best argument?).

You thus need to "convert" your arguments into emotional triggers by finding out what emotional subject can be related to your product – or service. For example: as a chiropractor you have a great superfood-based product, known to reduce fat AND environmental toxicity (two good arguments). Your patient is overweight and suffers from respiratory problems – besides having a chronic low back pain. How do these non-optimal body conditions AFFECT your patient in life? In other words, why could it be emotionally important for this patient to use such a product? Well, what impact can his weight issue have on his social life? Could you ask him that? Or: how often does he feel tired during the day, unable to focus while choking on his coughs? These are examples of emotional subjects related to the product. If you can find out what emotional subjects your customer will react to and if you can demonstrate that your mission is to help him handle or resolve these emotional issues, he will

want to buy from you!

3. What is THE most important quality in selling?

We have heard it all: a good salesperson needs to be enthusiastic, convinced about his product, persistent, caring, honest, passionate, dedicated, etc. etc... And he must be able to listen too!

All these qualities are definitely needed and vital to succeed. But today there is one quality required, more than any other. Without that one, you will fail to create the desire to buy...

That quality is: curiosity!

Look up the word in a good dictionary: you will find out that the first definition of "curiosity" is INTEREST. Great salespeople are curious, they are interested. They want to know so many things about their customers or patients, about their need of course, but more importantly, about their personal desires, fears, concerns. They want to find out what makes the patient "go in life". They want to find out all about them. They also want to know all about their past good and/or bad experiences with similar products or services.

In my research and evaluation of all these great salespeople, this is the ONE quality that I found. This is THE difference that I could detect between most sales people and the great ones!

Great salespeople are curious. They want to know. They do not try to bombard the customer or patient with arguments. They try to find out 1) Who is this person I am dealing with? 2) What are his problems, concerns, and what does he like? 3) What are his desires, concerns or fears, related to the subject of my product/service?

As a matter of fact, if you should remember one thing about this article, remember this: the more you know, the more you sell. It is not "the more I talk the more I

sell", as many of us have been educated into believing. Consider this: on average, a salesperson will ask 5 to 8 questions before starting to talk and argue (about his product). An observation of successful salespeople revealed that they would ask up to 5 times as many questions, before presenting and arguing about their product. They are genuinely interested.

So you could write a list of questions that would help you answer this one: "What do I want to know from this customer?" Once you work with that attitude, you will see a big change in your profession – as well as in your life. You will soon realize that "one is as successful as he can grant importance to others".

And for your customers, guess who is the most important person on this planet?

To read part one of this series, visit www.tampabayinformer.com

Mr. Patrick V. Valtin is an international sales & marketing consultant. He has traveled to more than 30 countries over the last 22 years and has trained more than 75,000 people in the areas of sales, marketing, Human Resources Development, organization and leadership. His customers and seminar attendees have come from all industries, from growing businesses to multinational corporations. He is the founder of U-Man, the biggest consulting company in Europe specialized in Hubbard Management Technology™.

He is also the founder of M2-TEC USA, INC. – a management consulting & training company established in Clearwater, Florida. He recently created CrisisBuster.com, an organization dedicated to help professionals of all fields grow stronger out of the current economic crisis.

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HACKER'S CLASSIC GOLF TOURNAMENT

Charity Tournament Held by Clearwater Academy

by Heidi Lux

Clearwater Academy International held their 4th Annual Hacker's Classic Golf Tournament on Saturday, April 11th. The tournament is a non-competitive fundraiser "is designed to be a fun event...designed for players at every level," says Executive Director/Principal of Clearwater Academy International, Jim Zwiers. "That's why it's called 'Hacker's.'"

People come out just to support the school and to have a good time while they are at it. This year saw 50 golfers at the tournament with each hole sponsored by a different family or business. It is also the school's annual fundraiser and this year they are looking to raise money for a new media center.

The school decided to build a media center because they "have a lot of really good student artists at the school, and we felt that is something we really wanted to support more and back that up," according to Principal Zwiers. "Every kid has amazing talent and abilities and we really try to bring those out in the kid."



Doug King



Chris Gurney (left) and Jason Stanard (right)

The school offers a goals-oriented education program where they tailor the curriculum to meet the individual goals of the student. It offers a core foundation in basic scholastics, coupled with specialized study. "We really try to provide many opportunities," says Principal Zwiers. Clearwater Academy International is also the largest and fastest-growing Applied Scholastics school on earth.

With this expansion, the school will also be opening a second campus for their middle and high school divisions. They have already purchased a lot two miles south of their current campus, and the building is currently in the design and permit phase.

In addition to the Hacker's Classic Tournament and regular game nights, future fundraisers for the school will include a bingo night.

Clearwater Academy will be holding their graduation ceremony in May, and hopes to unveil their new media center at the same time.

For more information, visit www.clearwateracademy.org

LANTERNS, TAIKO DRUMS AND ORIGAMI ON CLEVELAND STREET

by Heidi Lux



A performer impresses the crowd with the rumble of Taiko drums
 Photo by Simaen Skolfield

CLEVELAND ST. DISTRICT, CLEARWATER

Clearwater, Florida and Nagano, Japan have been sister cities for half a century, and to honor this achievement on April 25th, the City of Clearwater celebrated the union by holding a Lantern Festival in Station Square Park. The purpose of the festival is to promote cultural harmony and awareness. Nagano has been holding an annual lantern festival at Zenkoji Temple for six years. The festival was originated to honor Nagano hosting the 1998 Winter Olympics.

In Station Square Park, multi-colored orbs could be seen swaying in the breeze. These



An Origami crafting booth
 Photo by Simaen Skolfield

lanterns traveled half-way around the world from Nagano for the occasion, and in exchange, Clearwater sent 22 lanterns for Japan's festival.

People dressed in kimonos could be seen walking to and fro, and a Niten Ryu (a classical Japanese martial arts style) demonstration was presented. The park was so crowded it was almost hard to get to the booths exhibiting different aspects of Japanese culture, like brush painting, origami or anime.

Artist Yoko Nogami, a Japanese woman who now lives in Tampa Bay, erected an installation piece titled "Clouds." Two screens projecting the same cloud images, one representing Clearwater and the other representing Nagano, played different sounds which beautifully illustrated how we are two different cultures under the same sky.

There was also a table where children made lanterns. White paper bags were decorated with messages promoting cultural harmony, like, "Clearwater (hearts) Japan." The lanterns, once decorated, were set aside and then lit during the evening ceremony.



A Kendo exhibition at the Festival
 Photo by Simaen Skolfield

The "sister city" program was started in 1956 by President Eisenhower to promote cultural exchange and awareness, and this year marks the 50th year of Clearwater's involvement in the program. Some of the advantages are economic and community development, tourism and trade development as well as personal friendships. Because of the sister cities program, Clearwater had a "Pavilion in the Sun" during the 1998 Winter Olympics, held in Nagano. As part of an exchange program between the sister cities, middle school and high school students from Clearwater may be sent to Nagano to live for a year and experience Japanese culture first-hand.

The Sister Cities International theme is "bringing the world together...one friendship at a time."



Some dressed in traditional Japanese kimonos
 Photo by Simaen Skolfield



Maria Ghizzoni won 1st place at this year's Iron Girl Women's 5k race.
 Photo by Wayne Cathel

6TH ANNUAL IRON GIRL RACE

by Heidi Lux

CLEARWATER

Hundreds of eager women gathered in Coachman Park early Saturday morning on April 4th to compete in the annual Aflac Iron Girl Women's 10k and 5k race.

Women came from many locales, some from as far as Indiana, Texas and even Canada to run, and ages ranged from 5 years old to 81. Despite the diversity of the participants, most of the women had the same goal: satisfaction. The satisfaction of participating, the satisfaction of reaching the finish line, the satisfaction of knowing they did it for themselves.

For Sandra Calkins, her motivation was self-competition. "I actually just run to beat my past times and not really to compete with others." She enjoyed her race experience and stated, "The food was great, the setup was great, workers were nice and I would totally do it again."

Gina Kugler signed up "Because I've never done a race before." Iron Girl was a good choice for her. "Because it's all girls, I feel it's less intimidating. And it's local." Just the participation in running in the race is her reward. "I'm looking forward to the

end, when I can say I did it."

With all the women lined up at the starting line, the national anthem was sung by Roxy Kerr, a Canadian-turned-Clearwater local. The announcer offered a few words of inspiration: "Today is for you. Have a kick-butt run." The race began at 7:30 with a loud quack from the Aflac duck instead of the traditional air horn. Fathers, husbands, brothers and children were left on the sidelines holding signs of encouragement that read, "You Go Girl!" and "Run, Mommy, Run!"

The winners of this year's race were Christa Benton from St. Petersburg for the 10K (6+ miles), and Maria Ghizzoni, also from St. Pete for the 5K (3+ miles).

The Iron Girl race is in its sixth year and has events in ten cities around the country, including Las Vegas, Seattle and Denver. Iron Girl was created to "empower women to live a healthy lifestyle," says Jessica Weidensall. "Our goal is to provide that competitive platform, offer a challenge that is still fun." Each competitor receives a medal, a complimentary post-race breakfast and a reusable goodie bag. To find out more about Iron Girl, visit www.irongirl.com.

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2ND ANNUAL POETRY WALK

by Heidi Lux



A poetry reading at Tony's Pizzeria by Ron Kule
Photo by David Ziff

CLEARWATER

In honor of Poetry Month, Clearwater Mayor Frank Hibbard declared April 18th to be Clearwater Poetry Day. The second annual “Cleveland Street Poetry Walk”, presented by Artists in Action, International, is a yearly event celebrated by local poets who expound on life in Clearwater and Florida in general.



Local author and poet Barbara J. Sorey at Peter Gillham's Cafe
Photo by David Ziff

At 2:00pm, on the most relaxing Saturday afternoon, the Poetry Walk convened in the newly-opened Station Square Park. It was hosted by renowned poet Larry Jaffe, who introduced the first poet of the

day: Tampa Bay Informer's own Ana Livingston. It was such a serene sitting in the shade surrounded by the beauty of the park and good company. The weather was neither too hot nor too cold – one of those beautiful Florida spring days.

The walk covered five venues in Downtown, and each venue was hosted by a different speaker and featured readings from local poets, each of whom have poems in “The Little Book of Cleveland Street Poetry Volume II.”

After the first series of readings ended, we moved across the street to the Jim Warren Gallery and listened to many accomplished poets including David Ziff who read a touching poem about requited love in Clearwater.

One thing this reporter especially enjoyed was the warm, receptive audience and the strong sense of community. The company was pleasant, and people complimented each other and gave encouraging words. “I’m really pleased to be in this town at this time doing what we’re doing,” said Stazja McFadyen, the MC for the Jim Warren Gallery readings. “We have an incredibly supportive community in downtown.”

We then walked a block down Cleveland Street to Peter Gillham's Nutrition Center, for more poetry readings and delicious smoothie “shots”. People came and went between the venue changes, but the crowd always seemed to grow. I ran into Farin Fisher and Elizabeth Johnson, friends of mine growing

up, and was delighted to find that they were both reading that day.

The group crossed the street to Tony's Pizzeria. I was most surprised when Tony Starova took the floor and read his only English poem for us, cheered on by encouragement from the supportive crowd. Tony was a journalist and wrote poetry in his native Albania, and now serves some of the best pizza in Clearwater!

We continued our “walk” a couple of blocks down Cleveland Street, then turned



Co-founder of Poets for Human Rights Stazja McFadyen at the Jim Warren Gallery
Photo by David Ziff

the corner twice to reach Laura Street, where delicious homemade fudge was waiting for us courtesy of Renee Cornish at the Warehouse Boutique. Shelly Jaffe spoke about her love for downtown business before she read her poem, and the readings were concluded by a wonderful poem about the arts renaissance in Clearwater.

The walk ended up at Artists in Action's Mission: Beautification Gallery with the release of “The Little



Poet Laureate Larry Jaffe and Church of Scientology Community Affairs Director Lisa Mansell at Station Square Park
Photo by David Ziff

Book of Cleveland Street Poetry Volume II.” The book costs \$10, includes 50 original poems and is well worth the price based on the samplings of poems I heard that day.

Artists in Action, International also puts on “Poetry by Candlelight” on the first Friday of every month at their new downtown gallery at 400 Cleveland Street. Aspiring wordsmiths of any age can come and read their work before a receptive audience, much like the poetry walk. For more information, go to www.artistsinactionint.org.



Councilwoman Carlen Petersen reading the “The Little Book of Cleveland Street Poetry”, Mayor Frank Hibbard presents to Larry Jaffe the Poetry Day Proclamation
Photo by David Ziff

2ND FOURTH FRIDAY EVENT IN CLEARWATER

by Heidi Lux

CLEVELAND ST. DISTRICT, CLEARWATER

Clearwater's second monthly “4th Friday” event was held downtown on April 24th, and the street party was bigger and better than ever with more to see and do. The party in the street had not one, but two magic shows, a balloonist weaving through the crowd, a rock-climbing wall, the Clearwater Community Volunteers' bouncy house and well as a street-side photo booth. If this trend continues, who knows what will be in store for May!

From the close of the working day at 5:30pm and lasting until 9:00 that evening on Cleveland Street, delicious smells wafted from booths like Smokin' Out BBQ.



Like-father-like-son mime act
Photo by Simaen Skolfield

Friends ran into each other and others relaxed and unwound after their busy work weeks. Mayor Hibbard was spotted mingling with the crowd. A pirate-mime pretended to scold his son, also a pirate-mime, to the delight of passersby. Kenny McGee was the featured musician that evening and energized the crowd with his performance on the stage set up right outside Dunkin Donuts on Garden Avenue.

Street vendors sold their wares and new Cleveland Street District businesses took the occasion to advertise their presence. It was a perfect opportunity for Bogie's, a restaurant tucked in just behind Station Square Park.



Death-defying act by a street performer
Photo by Simaen Skolfield

Speaking of Station Square, a representative from the Station Square condominiums was seen promoting the condos, which are open and ready to be occupied. She hopes for a strong and growing downtown, which events like 4th Friday, promote.

The evening was, for the second time, a complete success. In fact, the only “complaint” I heard about the event was from M&M Jewelers who said that the evening passed by too quickly!

Proceeds from beer and wine sales benefited a local charity, this time the Clearwater Downtown Partnership (the CDP), who also hosts this event. The CDP is a group of business owners, citizens, developers and civic groups whose purpose, according to their website, is to “promote and foster the economic redevelopment of our downtown.” The CDP is a non-profit group.

Clearwater's next 4th Friday will be held on May 23rd, the fourth Friday of May. For more information, visit www.4thfridayclearwater.com and check back often for updates!

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The Belleview Biltmore Hotel in Belleair

A GHOSTLY LOVE AFFAIR WITH THE BELLEVIEW BILTMORE HOTEL

by BonSue Brandvik

BELLEAIR

Uh-oh, an employee of the Belleview Biltmore Hotel is coming to chase me out of the underground tunnels... again. I know I'm not supposed to go down into the underbelly of the hotel unless escorted by authorized personnel, but I can't help myself. My imagination runs wild when I'm down here, and the temptation to experience this aspect of the fantastic hotel is so great that I'm drawn through the forbidden door every time I

visit. And I visit often.

In the tunnels, it's easy to visualize the staff from past decades, busily working to ensure the elite guests of the resort were treated like kings and queens and were never made aware of the great effort it took to create their exquisite experience. This is where the steamer trunks were hauled in from the railroad cars before being lugged up the hidden staircases to the guest rooms. This is where giant blocks of ice arrived and were stored in

an ice-keep, the size of a small swimming pool. This is where hundreds of wires were strung to light the entire hotel, back when electricity was still considered a luxury. It's where adventurous children played hide and seek from their nannies, and countless workers toiled day and night to keep the hotel running like a fine Swiss watch.

So when the modern-day worker gently "reminds me"

that guests aren't permitted down here, due to liability concerns, and kindly suggests I come back with the daily eleven o'clock tour group, I sigh, apologize (once again) and leave. But I'm really not that disappointed. You see, even though the underground tunnels are enticing, I experience much the same feeling in many other parts of the hotel as well. In fact, it's difficult to wander very far in any direction, without finding something magnificent to stop and examine, including Tiffany glass, chandeliers, intricately carved fireplace mantels, massive iron gates, gorgeous antique furnishings and old photographs.

Ahh... the photographs! As I stop, spellbound, examining dozens of large photographs, some dating back as far as the late 1800s, I wonder about the lives of the early hotel visitors, captured by the



BonSue Brandvik

camera's lens. Who were these people? How did they earn a living? What kinds of pleasures did they find here? What would they think about the hotel and its visitors today? If only the photographs could talk...

In fact, it's so easy for me to imagine that spirits of former guests still inhabit the hotel, trying to interact with modern-day visitors, that I decided to write about them. Blending historical facts with a vivid imagination, stories contained in my "Spirits of the Belleview" series allow readers to experience the glorious history of the Belleview Biltmore Hotel, while at the same time, enjoy fictional tales of romance, trials and triumph. "Pearls", the first of four novels planned in the series, is expected to be published later this year, followed by an additional volume each year while the hotel is closed for major renovations. But that's a "story" for another time.

Today, I must force myself to leave the Belleview Biltmore, so I head for the lobby, speculating about how different this section of the hotel will look in a few years. Although the hotel won't close for reconstruction until the end of May, like hundreds of others, I already miss her terribly and can hardly wait for her to reopen. My fondest hope is that our love affair with the Belleview Biltmore Hotel and the spirits of its past will continue for several generations to come!

For more information on my novels and the history of the Belleview Biltmore, visit my website: www.spiritsofbelleviewbiltmore.com

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STATION SQUARE PARKING GARAGE OPENS IN THE CLEVELAND STREET DISTRICT

by Heidi Lux



CLEVELAND ST. DISTRICT, CLEARWATER

One hundred parking spaces are now available in the Station Square condos, and it's most certainly welcomed! You don't have to live in the condos to park; all you have to do is drive your car downtown.

Most of the businesses downtown have their own lots in back, but there aren't sufficient spaces for the demand. For me, it's great if I'm going to be at the Tampa Bay Informer all day but if I'm going to Starbucks further down on Cleveland, street parking is my only option.

Thank goodness for the Station Square parking! It comes at just the right time, too. Suddenly it feels like everything cool in Clearwater is in the Cleveland Street District.

It's a change from what it was like when I grew up here, but a nice change.

The Station Square Parking garage on Laura Street has reasonable rates of 50 cents an hour (\$5 a day maximum) which is less expensive than the street meters. Monthly permits are also available.

The garage is open 24 hours a day, which is an added plus. Parking is enforced from 8am to 6pm, Monday through Friday. Multi-space Pay & Display parking meters are located throughout the garage for customer convenience. For more information about parking, enforcement, or permits, please call the Parking System office at (727) 562-4704 or visit www.MyClearwater.com.

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NEW VP OF BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Cathy Germer, VP of Business Assistance & Economic Development for the Chamber of Commerce

CLEARWATER

On March 3rd, 2009, Cathy Germer joined the Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce as the VP of Business Assistance & Economic Development.

In her role as Business Assistance, Cathy is part of the Business Assistance Partnership Program which consists of the Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce, the City of Clearwater and Pinellas County Economic Development. Her focus is to assist businesses by providing counseling and resources on

issues relating to start-up and growing a business including business and marketing plans, links to financing and business and education training to develop and enhance business owners' skills.

On the Economic Development side, Cathy collaborates with the City of Clearwater to assist with the strategic goals of the City, identifying business challenges and issues connecting them to the appropriate resources and focusing on the City's business retention and expansion efforts.

Cathy has extensive experience consulting with all types of businesses, large and small. She has over five years experience working in the Business Assistance Partnership Program. She has fifteen years experience in the staffing industry as a manager for a national company responsible for staff development, recruiting, sales, marketing and customer retention. She received awards consistently for annually increasing profitability. Cathy has been an active member of both community and business professional organizations, volunteering her time for several community events.

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Friends of the Riverwalk presents FreedomFest 2009, a free patriotic community festival held Memorial Day weekend (May 23-25) along the southern section of The Riverwalk. The two-day celebration culminates with a 10am Memorial Day salute to those who served and sacrificed for this country.

From the Tampa Convention Center, through the main stage at Cotanchobee Park and extending to the Florida Aquarium, FreedomFest will feature live music, strolling entertainment, patriotic family activities, historical tours and a host of culinary delights



as the community gathers Saturday and Sunday along the river to celebrate our liberty and the return of summer.

Memorial Day, Monday, from the main stage in Cotanchobee Park, the public is invited to join Mayor Pam Iorio, Col. Lawrence Martin, 6th Air

Mobility Wing Commander at MacDill Air Force Base, and Dan Mahurin, chairman of Friends of the Riverwalk to honor and salute those who have served our country as well as remember those who have sacrificed protecting this great nation.

FreedomFest is the inaugural event of a planned series of Riverwalk festivals. Organized and sponsored by Friends of the Riverwalk, the goal is to program the waterfront with entertaining, seasonal celebrations, flavored by Tampa's rich culture.

For more information, visit www.TheTampaRiverwalk.com

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One of the groups of Haitians who have been helped by the Global Pioneers
Photo by Brad Kugler

VOLUNTEERS BRING REAL HELP TO THE PEOPLE OF HAITI

by Ana Livingston

HAITI

Global Pioneers, a team of volunteer Scientologists, just returned from their most recent tour to assist the peoples of Haiti. They have been involved with bringing help to Haiti for nearly two years now, with the latest group including Cary Goulston, Brad Kugler and Mike Campbell.

With 80% of the country unemployed, the living conditions in a majority of Haiti are poor. As Scientologists, they are trained to help. They help in different ways: one is by helping individuals gain knowledge

so they can better change their condition. The Global Pioneers are supplying books and training written and developed by L. Ron Hubbard on how to assist in handling their situation, as well as bringing other resources to the people. This group has already sent computers and have provided 50 pounds of seeds of a fast-growing plant called Kenaf, that when propagated, will go a long way towards staving off hunger.

Haiti needs so many things. If you would like to help with the Haiti project, or would like to help your own state or country, please contact the Global Pioneers at carybg@aol.com or call (727) 488-7988.



Local Clearwater businessman and Global Pioneer Cary Goulston bonds with a Haitian child.
Photo by Brad Kugler



A Global Pioneer in front of an orphanage in Haiti
Photo by Brad Kugler

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“CINCO DE MAYO EN CLEARWATER”

by Heidi Lux

On Cinco de Mayo, Clearwater residents had yet another reason to visit the Cleveland Street District when the 500 and 600 blocks were closed off to hold the Cinco de Mayo celebration.

Cinco de Mayo is celebrated to commemorate the Mexican victory at the Battle of Puebla on the fifth of May in 1862. Under General Ignacio Zaragoza Seguín, the Mexican army was able to pull off an unlikely victory, defeating French forces which greatly outnumbered them. In recent years, Cinco de Mayo has become more of an American celebration of Mexican heritage, sort of a south-of-the-border St. Patrick’s Day.

Last night’s event started with lively mariachi music blaring from the makeshift stage set up on Garden Avenue. Streamers of green, white and red were strung between the lampposts, and booths were set up selling lucha libre masks (worn by Mexican wrestlers), sombreros and novelty horns reading “Viva Mexico!”

The delicious smell of cooking meat drifted from street vendors, free advertising for their tacos, empanadas and chorizos. Also available at stands from restaurants like Los Amigos was guacamole, churros, corn chips and salsa. Multi Mex Marketing offered samples of their products, like Jarritos, a Mexican soda.

The stage for the special events (which seem to be a more and more regular occurrence on Cleveland Street,) was used to hold performances by a mariachi band and traditional Mexican dancers. By the end of the night, the street was packed. The middle of Cleveland Street was thick with a sea of people watching the concert, dancing, and generally enjoying themselves.

In Clearwater, Cinco de Mayo is another excellent excuse to come down to the Cleveland Street District and have fun!



Onlookers were awed by a gorgeous ceremonial dance.
Photo by Randall Gillion



There were festivities for young and old on Cleveland Street.
Photo by Randall Gillion



Traditional dance added brilliant color to the event.
Photo by Randall Gillion

IT’S YOUR BODY, UNDERSTAND IT:™ OMEGA OILS

by Shelley Jaffe



Natural health has become a multi-million dollar industry. These days there seems to be a supplement to do everything from helping you lose your belly fat to growing, well, lots of things. And everyone seems to be publishing another book or designing another diet. So where is a consumer to turn? The best place to start is to learn about your body and its needs, and that is where this monthly column comes in.

Take Omega oils for example. They are very important to the body, but why? There are three different types of omega oils: Omega 3, Omega 6 and Omega 9 and your body needs them all. Omega 3 and Omega 6 are essential, meaning your body cannot make them so it must get them from food or supplements. Omega 9 is made by the body from the other two omega oils, so you don’t need to supplement it, but you do need to make sure the other two are consumed.

Omega 3 oils regulate the body’s production of cholesterol; help carry hormones, strengthen cell walls, improve immune functions, alleviate arthritis symptoms and inflammation, lower the risk for cardiovascular disease and can prevent or delay the development of cancer and related tumors. If that wasn’t enough for you, they are essential in the development of the brain and retina, in infant development and may also improve bone growth.

When most people think of Omega 3 oils, they think of fish oil from deep water fish like tuna or salmon, but there are other

sources for Omega 3 like flax, hemp, olives and pumpkin seeds. I prefer blends of these oils and personally avoid any fish oil which comes from farmed fish, instead choosing oils which come from wild-caught.

Then there are the Omega 6 oils. These are found mainly in evening primrose, sunflower and safflower oils, as well as other various nuts and seeds, meat, poultry and eggs.

Omega 6 is necessary for brain development in infants, to help maintain healthy skin, eyes and joints and, under certain conditions, form an important part of our immune defense.

Ideally a person wants to eat a diet that gives a balance of 50% Omega 3 and 50% Omega 6. But most people are consuming 20 times more Omega 6 than Omega 3 and this contributes to health problems like heart disease and arthritis. Then there are people who are on low fat diets and don’t get enough of both of them. Even vegetarians and vegans can eat far too much Omega 6 and be out of balance.

The best way to get your omega oils is to eat a balanced diet. This would include eating tuna and salmon, adding flax seeds or ground flax meal (which gives the added benefit of dietary fiber, another item lacking in the American diet) olives and pumpkin seeds, along with chicken, nuts, meat and eggs. Failing that, a person should make sure they aren’t consuming too much Omega 6 and supplement with Omega 3. You should talk to your health care professional about the total quantity of fat you should eat each day as it is based on your age, sex and activity level.

Shelley Jaffe is a Certified Nutritional Consultant and the Executive Director of Peter Gillham’s Nutrition Center in Downtown Clearwater.

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Call the store and mention this article to receive a free introductory nutritional consultation. We welcome your comments and questions.

CITY ACTIVISTS, COUNCILMAN AND NEIGHBORHOODS JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS AND CRIME

by David Ziff



Drug-Free Marshalls and North Greenwood Community Coalition members taking back their community Photo by David Ziff

TAMPA

Approximately 70 community activists made their voices heard in the 7th anti-drug and clean-up march on Saturday May 2, 2009, beginning at 4:00 P.M. at a 1300 North Fort Harrison staging area. Their mission purpose: to mount a protest against drugs and crime in the North Greenwood area and keep the pressure on the perpetrators.

The first order of business: briefing and drilling by Mr. Maurice Mickens, a well-known community leader and the deacon of the Mt. Carmel Baptist Church in North Greenwood on Palm Bluff. The march proceeded in an orderly fashion north on Fort Harrison, then east across Myrtle to target and confront key drug hot spots in the North Greenwood area.

A police escort with flashing lights led the way, followed by the leading edge of mostly young marchers carrying a long banner proclaiming: "Up with Hope, down with Dope!" Next came the imposing bulk of a black hearse (donated for the march by Moss Feaster Funeral Home) symbolizing that drug dealing equals death-dealing.

A smaller group of protesters, brandishing placards with the names of casualties of the drug trade, marched behind the hearse, followed by the rank and file of protesters chanting such slogans as, "Drug dealer, drug dealer, you can't hide, we charge you with genocide; "If you keep on selling, we're gonna keep on yelling," and "If you keep selling crack, we will be back."

As the protesters in full voice turned onto Martin Luther King Street in North Greenwood, an incident occurred which no one could have foreseen: two alleged drug dealers who the police had previously sought, flashed by the marchers at high speed, nearly careening into them and the police escort.

The chase was on, as several police cars peeled off from the escort and chased the

runaway car with pulsating lights and sirens screaming. The protesters were quickly herded into a safe building to ensure no untoward incident while the escort was withdrawn. The police returned an hour later and briefed the marchers: the alleged fugitives had been caught and arrested and drugs were seized in their car.

The coincidence that these alleged dealers were suddenly flushed into view at the exact moment the protesters appeared in the neighborhood was not lost on the officers present. After briefing the marchers an officer stated, "This justifies why we are out here." At that point the formation re-assembled and the march continued.

The march was distinguished by the presence of Clearwater's city councilman, John Doran, who not only joined the protest against drugs and crime, but actively participated in the second phase of the march: cleaning up debris and trash along the way. Mr. Doran's presence emphasized a key message of the event: it takes citizen involvement and commitment if the members of this community are to have safe and clean neighborhoods.

The architects of the marches, Maurice Mickens, Jonathan Wade and Sherry Van Hootegem of the North Greenwood Community Coalition emphasized that the protests are effective. The formula? Put pressure on trouble spots identified by the police by confronting them and making it too uncomfortable for them to operate in the area. As a result, violent crime in the neighborhood has reduced and two infamous locations have been shut down.

Mr. Maurice Mickens of the North Greenwood Community Coalition left the assembled protesters with the following message: "One march isn't enough. Consistency is the key. If you do it only one time or twice and think that the situation is going to end, it won't. You need to make a commitment."



Clearwater City Councilman John Doran Photo by David Ziff

A DAY OF BICYCLING AND LATIN FUN

Continued from front page

on their signature trackless train up and down Cleveland Street, while many took to good, old-fashioned walking.

I found my first time back on a bike to be exhilarating. Pedaling my editor's bike in the middle of the street was a treat, getting to do something that wasn't ordinarily permitted. I felt an excitement while coasting down the hill leading to Coachman Park, admiring the scenic view of the Harbor with the wind blowing in my face.

The purpose of Ciclovía is to promote physical activity and health, as well as nurture the sense of community. As part of that, free exercise classes were held in three different locations, one of which was the newly-opened Station Square Park. Each location rotated classes of Zumba, Tai Chi, Yoga, Pilates and Stretch. Additionally, each location had a cooler set up, providing refreshing water. I attended the Zumba class in Station Square Park taught by Debbie Raines, where we learned samba, cha cha

and meringue in the fresh open air.

Lining the street were vendors, many from bicycling stores such as Chainwheel Drive and Clearwater Cycles, as well as businesses catering to the health-conscious, such as the Nedd Health Center and Nature's Food Patch. The organization Create Clearwater gave out banana bread and taught people how to make an instant garden in a container box, while promoting the need for a community garden in Clearwater.

Ciclovía events are held all over the world, the largest being in Bogota, Columbia, where Ciclovía originated in 1976. The movement has since spread across the world to cities such as London, Paris, New York, Chicago, and now Clearwater.

All in all, Ciclovía was a very pleasant experience. It was an excellent use of the City space, and while relaxing, it inspired me into getting four hours of wonderful exercise!



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Bay area residents and new IKEA employees celebrate the opening. Photos by Heidi Lux

IKEA NOW IN TAMPA

by Heidi Lux

TAMPA

The Tampa IKEA grand opening was held at 9am on Wednesday, May 6th. This is the third IKEA in Florida, joining locations in Orlando and Sunrise. Bay Area residents no longer have to make the two and a half hour trek to get their Karlstad lounge chair.

The long-anticipated blue and yellow building was supposed to open in July of this year, but to the delight of many, they were able to open ahead of schedule in May. A large crowd assembled in front of the store, some camping out since Monday to be one of the first 100 people to receive a free Poang arm chair. Jessica McCormick and Alexa White had been there since 4am, just to enjoy the experience of waiting in line. However, Jessica said, "I didn't expect stilt walkers and a juggler." Their friend, Katie, had been talking about the IKEA opening since it was first announced last summer.

The opening ceremony included speeches from IKEA store manager Monica Varela and Tampa Mayor Pam Iorio, who praised

the store as an all-around good idea, as it created 400 jobs, will strengthen the economy of the area "and serves Swedish meatballs." There was a flag-raising ceremony with Council Chairman Thomas Scott raising the American flag, Honorary Swedish Consul B.G. Holmberg raising the Swedish flag as well as Special Assistant to the Governor, Michelle Todd raising the Floridian flag. To finish off the ceremony, Mayor Iorio and Varela sawed a log, which is a Swedish custom to bring good luck. At 9am, the store opened, and the excited customers stormed in.

Swedish furniture store IKEA was founded in 1943, and has since spawned a huge cult following. The store has 297 stores worldwide, including 37 in the United States and offers "affordable home solutions." The store is notorious for its inexpensive, funky furniture which come in flat packs and require self-assembly. It is the world's largest furniture manufacturer.

The Tampa IKEA is located at 1103 N. 22nd Street in Ybor, and the online catalogue is available at www.ikea.com