



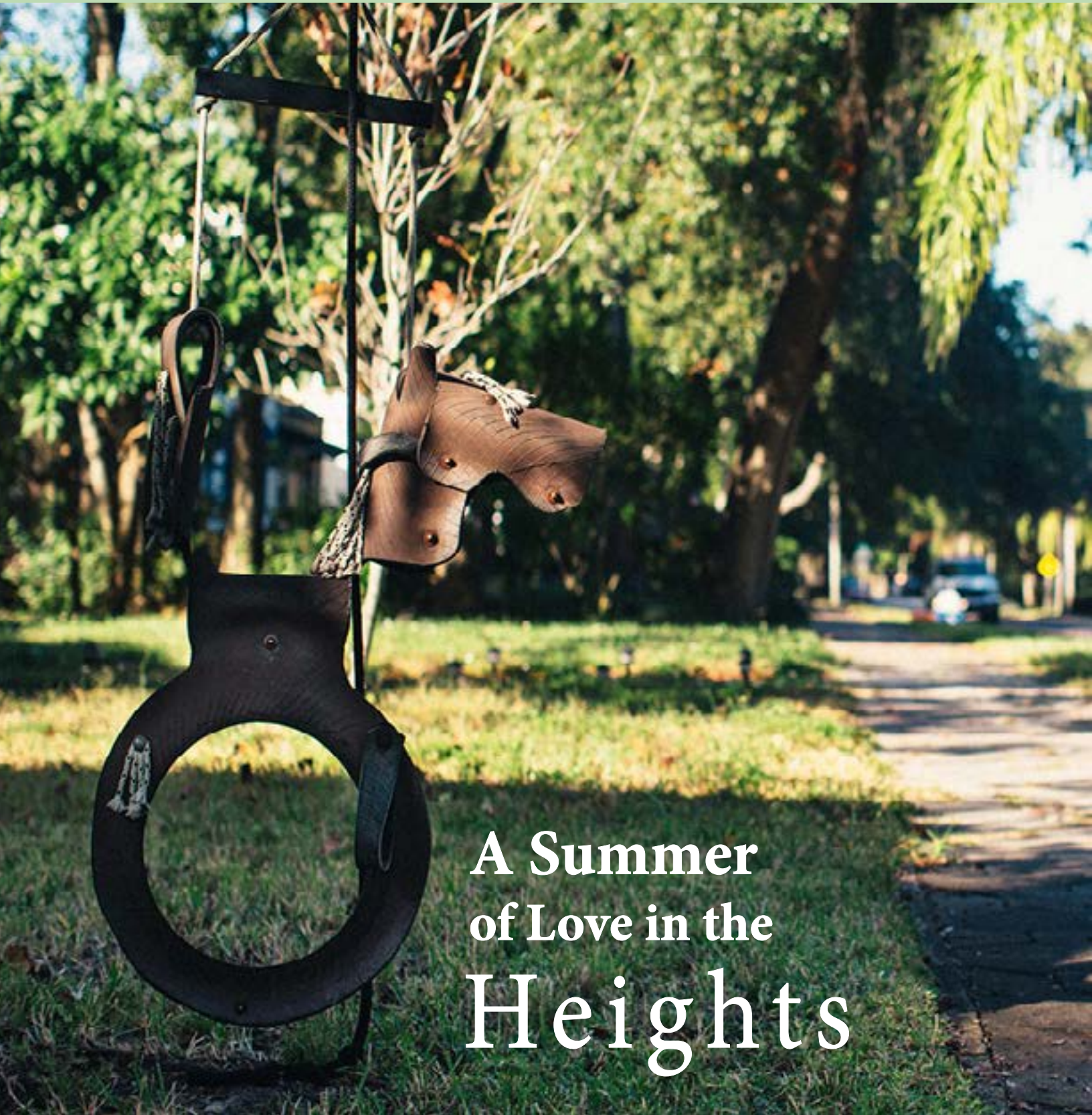
Summer Edition 2025

June • July • August

# newsletter

**CHNA**

Crescent Heights Neighborhood Association Newsletter



A Summer  
of Love in the  
Heights



**Support Crescent Heights by becoming a CHNA member today!**

Attention all homeowners and renters in Crescent Heights! Everyone who calls this wonderful neighborhood home can help sustain its natural beauty, livelihood and sense of community by becoming a member of the Crescent Heights Neighborhood Association (CHNA).

For \$25 a year, you can take delight in knowing your contributions will help foster a safe, vibrant and engaging place to live for people from all walks and stages of life.

As a member, you'll receive exclusive invitations to special neighborhood events such as porch parties, family-friendly celebrations and business socials. You'll also be the first to know about important neighborhood and city news and have chances to meet local leaders and vote on critical issues that impact Crescent Heights.

Join online at [crescentheightsneighborhood.com](http://crescentheightsneighborhood.com), or bring cash or check made payable to CHNA to any neighborhood meeting or event. We accept PayPal and additional donations. Questions about CHNA Membership? Contact Ziba Mohammadi, membership chair, at [membership.chna.ziba@gmail.com](mailto:membership.chna.ziba@gmail.com)

**Stay in the know! Subscribe to CHNA emails.**

Each month, CHNA emails subscribers important information about neighborhood news, happenings and events. If you are not currently receiving these monthly updates and would like to, please contact Laura Lorenzen at [lauriam5@gmail.com](mailto:lauriam5@gmail.com) or text 813-431-0478.

**Crescent Heights Neighborhood Association, Inc.,**

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**CHNA Merchandise**

Show off your neighborhood pride with CHNA merchandise! Visit [crescentheightsneighborhood.com](http://crescentheightsneighborhood.com) to shop flags, t-shirts and tote bags.

**Summer is here!** And with it comes the reminder that many in our community are in need—of food, of support, and of care. I'd like to share my experience in two areas where you can make a difference: food and blood donations.

Since January 2025, I've been volunteering weekly at **Daystar Life Center** as a "Runner," gathering food, toiletries, and clothing for individuals and families and handing it to them directly. I've seen working parents with young children, older adults, and veterans. Not all are homeless. I've met a young woman who needed an outfit for a job interview and a mom with two children living in a hotel who needed only shelf-stable food that could be stored in a mini fridge and microwaved. People come to Daystar to use the phone, access computers, get help with rent or utilities, or simply pick up their mail. It's humbling to realize how many things we take for granted.

Not everyone is comfortable in a client-facing role, and that's okay. For me, the joy comes in knowing I helped make someone's day a little better, and I choose to focus on that over the sadness of their circumstances.

### **You'll have a chance to help on**

**June 14**, when Daystar's truck will be in Crescent Heights. Pantry shelves are often full during the holidays, but by summer, supplies run low.

Please consider donating shelf-stable food, toiletries, and other essentials. Learn more: <https://daystarlife.org>

**Blood donations** also decline in summer. I've been donating for many years—over 18 gallons so far! If you're eligible, please consider donating. Every donation can save three lives, and you can give every 56 days. Find locations and current promotions: <https://www.oneblood.org>

### **Lastly, think about giving your time to your neighborhood.**

We're currently looking for a President for 2026, as I'm term-limited per our by-laws. To kick off the process, we need three people to serve on a Nominating Committee. The immediate past President helps support the new one through their first year—and I'll always be available to help. If you or someone you know is interested in joining the committee or running for President, please reach out.

Thank you for being part of this wonderful community.



CHNA President Amy Kelso

## A Letter from the Editor • by Thomas Paterek

Hi neighbors,

I'm Thomas, your editor of the Crescent Heights Neighborhood Association newsletter and I'm honored to bring you this special issue, themed Summer of Love.

We put this issue together with care, knowing how much love really matters right now. In the wake of the recent hurricanes, many of us are still processing, cleaning up, or supporting friends and neighbors who were hit hardest. These storms reminded us how fragile things can feel, but also how strong we are when we show up for each other. That's the heart of this issue. It's filled with stories of kindness, connection, resilience, and joy, because those are the things that carry us through tough times and help us rebuild, stronger and more connected than before. Neighborhoods like Crescent Heights are more than just rows of homes, they're the frontlines of community care, and neighborhood associations like ours are more important than ever. We're not just a newsletter or a meeting once a month, we're a voice, a resource, a place to organize and uplift.

I also want to take a moment to thank our talented newsletter designer, Wendy Smith, for her years of service and creativity. Wendy has been instrumental in bringing each issue to life, and after 10 years as our designer, she'll be retiring at the end of this year. If you or someone you know might be interested in taking on the design role (experience with InDesign is a plus, but not required), we'd love to hear from you. The new designer would start with our next issue and have time to transition with Wendy before taking over fully in 2026.

So let this issue be a love letter to what we have and a call to keep it going. Got a story to tell? A neighbor doing something inspiring? Ideas for how we can show up even better? I want to hear from you. Crescent Heights is full of heart. I see it in every front yard flower bed, every block party, every wave from a porch. Let's keep that energy alive, through the storms and the sunshine.

With deep gratitude,

Thomas Paterek

Editor, CHNA Newsletter @ [editor.chna@gmail.com](mailto:editor.chna@gmail.com)



## Campbell Skatepark: A Hidden Gem That Deserves More Hype

by Sully Suits

Most people in our area don't even know that one of the best skateparks in the region is in our own backyard. Campbell Skatepark isn't just a local spot—it's a seriously underrated place where real skateboarding culture lives and breathes. I've been skating there since I was 11, and I can honestly say it's shaped who I am and what I want to do with my life.

Campbell isn't some cookie-cutter park. It was designed by local skaters who knew what the community needed, and you can feel that when you ride it. The layout has flow, and just the right mix of challenge and creativity for pros or beginners.

I've met skaters at Campbell who've moved from across the country just to have the accessibility to this skatepark. Big names like Kris Markovich, Jake Ilardi, and Clyde Singleton have made St. Pete home because of its influence. And when skating with them, it's not about ego—it's about love for the sport and lifting each other up. The skate scene at Campbell is tight-knit, super encouraging, and honestly the best kind of underground. It feels like we're all in on something special that most people don't even realize is happening.

If you know skating in Tampa Bay, you've probably heard of the SPOT. It hosts the Tampa Pro—basically the Super Bowl of skateboarding competitions. It's one of the most respected contests in the world, and being around that kind of energy has inspired me big time. I don't just want to skate—I want to be part of the culture, the art, and the history that comes with it.

That's why I've started filming. I saved up for two of the most iconic skateboarding cameras out there (with fish-eye lenses, of course). I've already had the chance to film some insane tricks from pro skaters I've looked up to for years. Every clip I shoot teaches me more about timing, style, and how to tell a story through skateboarding. My dream is to keep learning and eventually make a living doing what I love—whether that's skating, filming, or creating content that pushes the scene forward.

Skating isn't just a sport to me. It's an outlet, a lifestyle, and a way to connect with people who share the same passion. Campbell Skatepark has given me all of that and more. I hope more people find out about this place and come see what makes it so special. But even if it stays low-key, I'll be there, pushing my limits, filming every chance I get, and always thankful for the crew that made it what it is.

So yeah—Campbell Skatepark might not have the flashiest reputation, but to me, it's legendary. And if you ever want to see real skateboarding culture in action, you know where to find us.



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Sully Suits filming Kris Markovich at Campbell Regional Skatepark

As we are enjoying those last few cool days of our spring season before the summer heat arrives, I find myself doing spring cleaning, enjoying the smell of my gardenias in full bloom, and thinking about fresh starts. I watch my daughter anticipate the freedom of summer and the thrill of new adventures - going to a sleepaway camp for the first time! It seems like yesterday I was dropping her off for her first day in preschool while we were both crying. I do not suspect there will be as many tears this time given that she is extremely excited about camp.

This time last year, many believed we knew where St. Petersburg was headed: a deal had been made with the Rays keeping the team in St. Petersburg for another 30 years with a new stadium and a redevelopment plan of the Historic Gas Plant District. A fresh stadium deal that would reshape our city. Then the storms came - literally and figuratively.

Hurricane Helene flooded our infrastructure and many of our neighbors' homes. Helene exposed the vulnerabilities of living on a peninsula surrounded by water and the damage that a hurricane passing 100 miles west of us can leave behind. Hurricane Milton, although making landfall near Siesta Key, swept the roof right off the Trop foreshadowing the abrupt end of the Rays' stadium deal.

So, what happens now with the deal not going forward with Rays/Hines? The Tampa Bay Rays have requested that the city repair Tropicana Field pursuant to the terms of current Use Agreement. The city is obligated to repair Tropicana Field based on the terms of that agreement. Once Tropicana Field is repaired, the Rays are contractually obligated to return and play at Tropicana Field until the end of the current Use Agreement now extended through the 2028 season. At this time, it is unknown what the future holds for the Rays after the 2028 season.

As to the land surrounding the stadium, we have the chance to move forward thoughtfully. In fact, moving forward with intention — one step at a time — allows us to respond to the needs of our city and community. I've advised the Administration that before considering any new plans, we must first think carefully about the city's future needs.

. With so little undeveloped land remaining, we should not sell the land without an analysis of the city's long-term needs. We need to think about land that may be needed for public purposes whether it be a fire station or another city facility. There will be growth in our city just like any other city and we need to make sure that we have the capacity as a city to support our residents with the services that they expect.

Looking ahead, we may not know exactly how this will unfold. We do know that the path ahead will require transparency, patience, flexibility, and above all, a shared vision for a St. Petersburg that remains a great place to live, work, and play. The process must involve everyone—residents, city leadership, and all stakeholders—working side by side. In the end, great cities take time to build. They are built slowly, piece by piece, neighborhood by neighborhood. Our city is a great city because the fabric of our community is strong. We saw it firsthand when neighbors were helping neighbors after the storms. Not only do I believe the storms have made our community more resilient, but it has provided us an opportunity to focus on our infrastructure needs. We have an opportunity to refocus and prepare our city for the future. We have a chance to take the lessons learned from the hurricanes to guide us in future decisions. Our future is still bright and the opportunities are endless. I would love to hear from residents any thoughts or ideas they have as to the future of the land surrounding the Trop.

Vice Chair Lisset Hanewicz represents District 4 on the St. Petersburg City Council.





# BOOK NOOK



The CHNA Book Club has two Book Groups, each with its own distinct membership. Participation is open to any resident of Crescent Heights. If you are interested in joining one of the book groups, please contact the email address listed below. In the event that the membership is full, you will be placed on the waiting list.

**Group 1** meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month from 7:00-9:00 pm  
Leader: Joanne Beckman - Contact: [ejbeckman88@gmail.com](mailto:ejbeckman88@gmail.com)

## *The Mighty Red*

by Louise Erdrich - June 2025

In Argus, North Dakota, a collection of people revolve around a fraught wedding. Gary Geist, a terrified young man set to inherit two farms, is desperate to marry Kismet Poe, an impulsive, lapsed Goth who can't read her future but seems to resolve his. Hugo, a gentle red-haired, home-schooled giant, is also in love with Kismet. He's determined to steal her and is eager to be a home wrecker. Kismet's mother, Crystal, hauls sugar beets for Gary's family, and on her nightly runs, tunes into the darkness of late-night radio, sees visions of guardian angels, and worries for the future, her daughter's and her own. Human time, deep time, Red River time, the half-life of herbicides and pesticides, and the elegance of time represented in fracking core samples from unimaginable depths, is set against the speed of climate change, the depletion of natural resources, and the sudden economic meltdown of 2008-2009. How much does a dress cost? A used car? A package of cinnamon rolls? Can you see the shape of your soul in the everchanging clouds? Your personal salvation in the giant expanse of sky? These are the questions the people of the Red River Valley of the North wrestle with every day.

## *Erasing History: How Fascists Rewrite the Past to Control the Future*

by Priya Guns - July 2025

Abstract: From the bestselling author of *How Fascism Works*, a searing confrontation with the far right's efforts to rewrite history and undo a century of progress on race, gender, sexuality, and class. "The human race finds itself again under threat of a rising global fascist movement. In the United States, democracy is under attack by an authoritarian movement that has found fertile ground among the country's conservative politicians and voters, but similar movements have found homes in the hearts and minds of people all across the globe. To understand the shape, form, and stakes of this assault, we must go back to extract lessons from our past. Democracy requires a common understanding of reality, a shared view of what has happened, that informs ordinary citizens' decisions about what should happen, now and in the future. Authoritarians target this shared understanding, seeking to separate us from our own history to destroy our self-understanding and leave us unmoored, resentful, and confused. By setting us against each other, authoritarians present themselves as the sole solution. In authoritarian countries, critical examination of those nations' history and traditions is discouraged if not an outright danger to those who do it. And it is no accident that local and global institutions of education have become a battleground, the authoritarian right's tip of the spear, where learning and efforts to upend a hierarchal status quo can be put to end by coercion and threats of violence. Democracies entrust schools and universities to preserve a common memory of positive change, generated by protests, social movements, and rebellions. The authoritarian right must erase this history, and, along with it, the very practice of critical inquiry that has so often been the engine of future progress.

# Book Nook

**Group 2 - The CH Bookniks**, meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month from 6:30 to 8:30 pm  
Co-leaders: Melinda Borthick & Darlene Asselin  
Contact: [chreads@gmail.com](mailto:chreads@gmail.com)

## *A Gentleman in Moscow*

by Amor Towles - June 2025

A richly layered novel that follows Count Alexander Rostov, a Russian aristocrat sentenced to house arrest in the Metropol Hotel in Moscow after the Bolshevik Revolution. Over the course of three decades, Rostov navigates the challenges of his confinement with wit, grace, and an ever-expanding circle of relationships, from hotel staff to fellow guests. As the world outside the hotel changes dramatically, Rostov's inner life deepens, revealing his quiet resilience and philosophical reflections on time, friendship, and the meaning of freedom. With its lush prose and historical depth, the novel explores themes of survival, dignity, and human connection in times of upheaval.

## *All Fours: A Novel*

by Miranda July - July 2025

This novel follows a 45-year-old artist who, amid perimenopause, embarks on a transformative journey. Intending a cross-country trip from Los Angeles to New York, she stops at a nearby motel, leading to an unexpected affair with a younger man. This encounter prompts profound self-discovery and challenges her perceptions of marriage, motherhood, and identity.

## *Wandering Stars*

by Tommy Orange - August 2025

*Wandering Stars* is a powerful and evocative collection of interconnected short stories that explore the lives of contemporary Native Americans navigating life in urban environments. With vivid prose and rich character development, Orange captures the complexities of identity, belonging, and survival as his characters grapple with the legacies of colonization, displacement, and the ongoing challenges faced by Indigenous communities. Each story in *Wandering Stars* weaves together themes of family, tradition, and the search for meaning, offering a poignant and often raw portrait of modern Native experiences. Orange's writing masterfully reflects the diversity of voices within Native American culture, blending humor, heartbreak, and resilience.

## Summer Safety Tips from Community Service Officer Schweiger

As the summer season brings longer days, more travel, and increased neighborhood activity, it's a great time to revisit a few simple safety habits that can help keep our community secure. Officer Jon Schweiger, Community Service Officer, shared three important reminders for Crescent Heights residents as we head into the warmer months:

### 1. Always Lock Your Vehicles

It might seem like common sense, but unlocked vehicles continue to be one of the most common targets for theft. Make sure your car is locked every time you leave it—whether it's in your driveway, on the street, or even just for a quick errand. And be sure to remove all keys or key fobs from the vehicle.

### 2. Remove Valuables—Especially Firearms

Don't leave any valuables visible inside your car. This includes bags, electronics, wallets, and especially firearms. Even a brief stop can be enough time for a thief to act if something tempting is in plain sight. If you must leave items in the car, secure them out of view or take them with you.

### 3. Lock Doors and Windows at Home

Whether you're heading out for the day or just taking a stroll, make it a habit to lock all doors and windows. Summer weather often leads to open windows and doors, but it's also an opportunity for burglars. A few extra seconds of precaution can go a long way. Stay safe and have a great summer!

## Fire Safety in Older Homes: A Message for Crescent Heights Residents

Advice from the St. Petersburg Fire Department and Lt. Joseph Caldarelli, Northeast Station #4-C

Living in one of St. Petersburg's most historic neighborhoods comes with charm and character—but it also brings unique fire safety challenges. Our neighborhood has seen two tragic fires deprive our neighbors of their home over the past two years, while luckily, no one was seriously injured. Crescent Heights is filled with homes built in the early 1900s, many of which feature aging infrastructure and outdated construction methods. The St. Petersburg Fire Department, along with Lieutenant Joseph Caldarelli from Northeast Station #4, on of the first responders on the most recent fire, shares important tips to help homeowners protect their families and properties.

### Start with Regular Inspections

Older homes are more susceptible to fire hazards, especially if key systems haven't been updated. Residents should do the following:

- Have electrical systems professionally inspected to identify outdated or unsafe wiring. Many older homes still use knob-and-tube or aluminum wiring, which can easily overheat.
- Install and test smoke detectors regularly—monthly checks and annual battery replacements are recommended.

- Keep fire extinguishers in critical locations, such as the kitchen and near space heaters or fireplaces.
- Address pest infestations promptly, as rodents can chew through wiring and increase fire risk.
- Check for structural weaknesses, including dry, brittle wood that may ignite more easily.

### Modernize Where Possible

If you haven't already, consider upgrading electrical systems to meet modern safety standards. Installing Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) in kitchens, bathrooms, and laundry areas can help prevent electrical fires. Additionally, Lieutenant Caldarelli points out that many Crescent Heights homes feature balloon frame construction, common in two-story homes built in the early 20th century. "This type of construction allows wall studs to run uninterrupted from the ground floor to the roof," he explains. "There are no fire stops between floors, which creates a vertical chimney-like path for fires to spread quickly into the attic."

### Exterior Fire Risks

Another concern in the neighborhood is wood siding, which is often original and vulnerable due to Florida's harsh climate. "Over time, it becomes rotted or termite-damaged, making it highly flammable," Lt. Caldarelli warns. "Many homeowners are now upgrading to vinyl or fiber cement siding, which have much better fire resistance." He also recommends keeping clutter, firewood, and debris away from exterior walls to prevent fires from starting or spreading along the home's outside.

### Safe Use of Heat and Flame

Residents should be extra cautious when using space heaters, candles, or fireplaces:

- Use only UL-listed space heaters, keep them three feet from anything flammable, and plug them directly into outlets.
- Extinguish all candles before leaving a room, and consider flameless LED alternatives.
- Clean chimneys annually, and use metal containers for ash disposal.

### Resources for Homeowners

The City of St. Petersburg offers several support programs:

- The Housing Rehabilitation Assistance Program helps with critical repairs, including electrical work.
- The N-Team provides free minor repairs for eligible homeowners.
- The Evacuation Assistance Program is available for elderly and disabled residents needing emergency support.

Lt. Caldarelli, who has served the Crescent Heights area for 13 years, emphasizes the importance of awareness: "I hope this advice helps answer your questions and provides the neighborhood with useful ways to stay safe."

For more information or to reach out with questions, you can contact:

Lt. Joseph Caldarelli

St. Petersburg Fire Rescue, Northeast Station #4-C

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## Summer Rituals • by Jim & Ava Tomlinson

It was during 1950 that the Tomlinson family would arrive in St. Petersburg. This was a time before air condition, TV, cell phones, interstate highways, condos, high rise buildings, and neither the Howard Franklin nor Skyway Bridges existed in St. Petersburg. At this time St. Petersburg was a much smaller town and that the surrounding area was mostly woods, citrus groves, fields, creeks and ponds. It was this environment that shaped my childhood from age 4 to age 16 and for the rest of my life for love of the outdoors and nature. I could write many articles of this era, but for the purpose of this article it's necessary to fast forward past the marriage and family years that included camping all over the lower 48 states, the Algonquin Province in Canada, Costa Rica, and Honduras until the year 2020. At this point in time our 4 children are independent adults, our parents have passed, and I've retired from the St. Petersburg Fire Rescue Department. We were experiencing a new era in our lives and with Eva having a similar background of semi rural childhood and our love of the outdoors we chose to seasonally relocate to Wyoming County, NY.

Our "Summer Ritual" for the last 20 years consists typically from May to October living at an 1898 two story farm cottage on a 50 acre property of hardwood forest, pond, creeks, and meadows. The county forest is across the road and for miles around are woods, fields, ponds, and farm land.

In 2 square miles we have 4 wonderful neighbors. Here we escape the 21st century pace, news, social media, metro traffic congestion, and the summer heat in St. Petersburg. It's here life becomes much more peaceful while we till and plant the soil for two large vegetable gardens, tend to the 103 apple tree orchard, blue berry, raspberry, black berry and strawberry bushes, fish and kayak the pond, and enjoy the frequent wildlife encounters. Deer, turkey, beaver, and occasional bear along with smaller animals, dozens of bird species from owls to geese that give us joy and wonder to see and experience in a natural setting. The gardens produce cabbage, beets, Swiss chard, tomatoes, pumpkins, squash, radishes, garlic, potatoes, corn, sunflowers, and rhubarb. This is accented with various flower gardens and fields of wildflowers. The days of the warmest months being July and August are typically temperature highs of about 74-75 and lows of about mid 50's. Clear nights hundreds of fireflies hover about while the night sky exhibits an infinite amount of stars. The Milky Way appears to be a sparkling swath of glitter from horizon to horizon. Full moon nights become spiritual in the forest shadows. We are a natural in this environment and are reinforced with the awareness of how fortunate we are to have each other and how much we need each other. While we love St. Petersburg, our neighborhood, and our wonderful neighbors we would live here year round if not for the severe winters. Therefore, it remains our seasonal ritual, the best of both environments.

## Nature Watch South

### Backyard Escargot, Anyone? • by Bill Richkus

Many of my neighbors know that I am an avid gardener and manage a local community garden. I, and many of my fellow gardeners, take great enjoyment in beginning our gardening adventure each year by starting plants from seed rather than purchasing started plants from a garden center. Despite the many years that I have been gardening, I remain in awe that I can produce large, productive plants from tiny specks of seed.

With great anticipation and care, I insert the tiny seeds into suitable starting medium, carefully water them, and wait for the tiny shoots to rise out of the soil. Many types of seeds first open with seed leaves (called cotyledons). Then, days later, these shoots start producing regular leaves, giving me visions of harvesting plump tomatoes or glossy zucchini in the not-too-distant future. You might understand, then, how disheartening it is to go out in the morning to water my “babies,” only to discover they are gone—save for tiny pieces of green sticking out of the soil. It takes some detective work to identify the culprit of such mass murders. Lubbers, those voracious black and green grasshoppers, are an obvious suspect. However, when lubbers are engaged in plant devastation, they are oblivious to their surroundings and easy to find and remove.

Here in St. Pete, we don't have the scourge of rabbits and deer that I had to deal with at our home in Maryland, so those suspects can be dismissed. I have learned from past experience that some birds, such as starlings, will nip off small seedlings, apparently using them to line their nests. But here in Florida, the most likely culprits responsible for seedling destruction—as well as the most unseen—are snails and slugs.

You might not be aware of the many different species of snails and slugs that may be residing in your own backyard. Your lack of awareness is undoubtedly because these critters are totally nocturnal, emerging from their cool, moist refugees after the sun has set and returning before sunrise. Just by looking at them, you would realize that they are nothing like insect pests that have legs and hard outer skeletons, but more like creatures of the sea—appearing damp and slimy. They are in the phylum Mollusca, and thus distant cousins of clams and squid. But their closest relatives, the many species whose shells everyone loves to collect, are in the class Gastropoda, all of which have large “feet” on which they glide along. Their terrestrial gliding provides the most common evidence of their presence: glistening slime trails on flat surfaces like sidewalks or even smooth walls.



If you look for these trails, you will realize how abundant these critters may be, despite not seeing them frequently. You would have to turn over stones, flower pots, or brush in your yard to find them, since they spend daylight hours in any place that is shaded and moist.

Some non-native terrestrial gastropods, such as the Cuban brown snail and Giant African land snail, have been in the news because of the devastation they can wreak on vegetation in South Florida. However, I haven't seen any mention of these unwelcome immigrants being present in St. Pete, and their large size makes them very visible wherever they occur. I am not a snail taxonomist, but the most common backyard snail that I have seen, I think, is the milk snail. I have found them lingering on my seedling flats after what appeared to be full meals. I also was shocked to find a dense concentration of juvenile snails, perhaps a quarter inch in size, consuming leaves of a Brazilian cloak plant I had given my sister-in-law, who had asked that I diagnose what was causing the plant to lose its foliage!

There are fewer native or invasive slugs than snails in Florida, and I have only seen one species in my yard and garden: the Florida marsh slug. I found a large black adult, perhaps 2–3 inches long, climbing up the garage wall one day. And I have often found small juveniles beneath pots and planters. I suspect, based on the width of many of the slime trails I have noticed, that the adult slugs may be more abundant than we might think.

The extent to which slugs and snails are garden pests is evidenced by the shelf space devoted in hardware stores to bait and pellets created to attract and poison them. But for those disinclined to use such toxic controls, there are some natural methods that may or may not be effective. The one I find most amusing is placing beer traps in the area being attacked. Slugs appear to be attracted to the yeasty, fermented odor of beer and supposedly get intoxicated, fall in, and drown. Scattering diatomaceous earth or crushed eggshells in areas being affected seems to interfere with the gliding ability of both snails and slugs and thus discourages them from entering.

We gardeners also can benefit from having healthy ecosystems in our yards. Predators of snails and slugs include snakes, like the black racer, lizards like anoles, and even birds like blue jays and thrashers. So, like everything else in nature, all the living things that surround us have multiple interactions—some to the good and some to the bad. We just need to accept that and do the best we can at controlling the bad without harming the good.



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## A Home You Love • by Orshi Paterek

As we settle into routines, it's easy to stop noticing the spaces around us. We get used to things—relationships, habits, even the very roof over our heads. This is your invitation to pause and take inventory.

What have you been quietly putting up with at home? An overstuffed garage where nothing can be found? A stained rug from a party five years ago? An overgrown yard that no longer brings you joy?

As an interior designer, one of the first questions I ask my clients is: **How do you want to feel when you walk through your door?** Your entry point—whether it's the garage or front porch—sets the tone. A cluttered entrance can feel like we've given up. But a clean, welcoming front door with a plant or two, maybe a small fountain, invites calm and clarity. In Feng Shui, this is where abundance begins.

These small, overlooked details can block energy—or "chi"—from flowing freely. And let's be honest: a cluttered home often reflects a cluttered mind. If we want more peace, love, or ease in our lives, it starts with the space we wake up in every day.

What about the things we once dreamed of and purchased that now fade into the background? What if we could fall in love with our homes again, simply by being more intentional?

Take a look at your rooms. Do they still serve you? Maybe the kids are out of the house, or that guest room is now mostly used for storage. Don't be afraid to rethink how you live.

In our home, we turned an awkward dining room into a peaceful "zen room" with floor pillows, plants, and a fountain. It's where we sip tea, pull tarot cards, and have real, heartfelt conversations. The space invites stillness—and somehow always brings connection, too.

We also transformed our rarely used guest room into a beautiful, minimal home gym, complete with a hidden bed for visitors. It supports our daily routines and still welcomes guests when they're in town.

When we prioritize intention, and our home reflects that, something shifts. We feel lighter. Clearer. Happier. More at ease. Maybe one day, you'll come over, sit in the zen room, and we can ponder life over tea—or break a sweat in the back "guest room." Until then, I hope this inspires a fresh look at your space. You deserve to live in a home you love.

### About the Author

Orshi Paterek is the founder of Astral House, a St. Petersburg-based interior design studio known for its Organic Modern style. With over a decade of experience and a background in mindfulness and Yoga Nidra, Orshi creates spaces that blend beauty, function, and well-being.



# Exploring the Sober Curious Life: A Natural Shift Toward Wellness

by Sarah Suits

In recent years, more people have started asking themselves a powerful question: What would life look like without alcohol? The “sober curious” movement isn’t about strict rules or labeling yourself—it’s about being intentional. For many, it’s not even about hitting rock bottom. It’s simply about exploring a better way to feel good, connect with others, and live more mindfully.

Personally, I never set out to “quit” drinking. But over time, I realized that alcohol just wasn’t serving me anymore. What started as occasional reflection turned into a lifestyle change—one that came with unexpected benefits. I’ve naturally stopped drinking, and I don’t miss it. In fact, I feel more energized, in control of my weight, and confident in the example I’m setting for my son.

One of the biggest surprises? I didn’t have to give up the ritual of socializing or the comfort of a drink in hand. All-natural alternatives like kava and kratom have made the transition not just easier—but genuinely enjoyable. These plant-based options offer calming, mood-lifting effects without the hangover, the fog, or the regret.

Kava, traditionally used in the South Pacific, promotes relaxation and a sense of well-being. It’s known for helping with anxiety and social ease, making it a great option for winding down or connecting with others. Kratom, sourced from Southeast Asia, can offer an energizing or soothing effect depending on the strain. Both provide a grounded, mindful experience that doesn’t derail your health or goals.

Being sober curious doesn’t mean never drinking again—it means making space to explore your relationship with alcohol and how it fits into your life. It’s about choosing how you want to feel and being okay with that evolving over time.

What I’ve learned is that clarity is powerful. Waking up without the weight of alcohol in my system has given me more than just physical energy—it’s helped me be more present, more productive, and more aligned with my values. Especially as a parent, I know the habits I model matter. This shift has brought me closer to the kind of person I want to be—for myself and for my family.

If you’re sober curious, start by asking yourself how alcohol makes you feel—not just in the moment, but afterward. Try swapping your usual drink for kava or kratom, and see how your body and mind respond. You might be surprised by what you don’t miss.

This isn’t about perfection. It’s about possibility. And with natural, mindful alternatives at your fingertips, it’s never been easier to redefine what a good time—and a good life—looks like.

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"Leah, Amanda, and Merris were all an absolute pleasure to work with! Throughout the whole process they were very professional, responsive, patient, and knowledgeable. Beyond all those great qualities, what stands out the most is how caring they are. We always felt like they had our backs and truly wanted the best for us. Moving can be very overwhelming, but they went above and beyond to make it as seamless as possible! They were great negotiators and maximized our profit. My husband and I cannot recommend Leah and her powerhouse team enough!" - Michaela K.

"What can we say! Leah exceeded all our expectations and more. We would consider ourselves real estate veterans in terms of houses bought and sold as we've had MANY. Leah was by far the most creative, energetic and professional agent we have ever worked with. Her attention to detail, her approach to showcasing the home and her delivery via social media channels and neighborhood canvassing are clearly difference makers. In addition, her communicative approach to the process of keeping us informed and abreast of every issue during each phase of the process was truly exceptional. We cannot say enough good things about Leah and her team. We strongly recommend her to anyone looking to buy/sell a home in the Tampa Bay area as she will give 100%!" - Cheryl H.

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## The Golden Life of Cannoli: Chaos and Cuddles • by Kevin & Remi Salter

After losing our beloved dog of 14 and a half years last November, we were heartbroken and missing the sound of paws pitter-pattering across the floor. We knew we needed to fill that void with a new pup, and with so many young nieces and nephews in our lives, we knew our next dog had to be playful, gentle, and predictable. A Golden Retriever checked every box. That's when we found Brookins Golden through some Instagram stalking of cute Golden Retriever pages. We instantly fell for their pups, and as luck would have it, they had a litter on the way. After gently pestering them (okay, maybe not so gently), we got the call—we'd be getting the last pup of the litter, known then as Green Boy.

From the moment we saw him on the breeder's live stream, we were hooked. We watched daily as he and his 12 siblings (yes, 12!) tumbled around. Cannoli officially became a Crescent Heights resident when we finally got to bring him home 8 weeks later.

Cannoli has always had his quirks. As a puppy, he was inexplicably terrified of frozen carrots but obsessed with splashing water everywhere—it was the only thing that helped him fall asleep. That water obsession hasn't faded, especially when it involves boat rides. He recently snoozed soundly to reggae music while we boated around the bay during Reggae Rise Up, totally at peace.

Now, he's grown into a sweet, perceptive goofball. He curls up on your feet while you cook, hoping for crumbs. Just as you're winding down for bed, he kicks off a nightly zoomie session with full-throttle sprints through the yard. His sleeping positions are pure comedy—pretzeled around table legs or belly-up with a paw over his eyes.



Kevin and Remi with Cannoli

He's incredibly intuitive, too. Cannoli is calm around new people and dogs, somehow knowing how to be gentle with toddlers or shy pups. At Crescent Lake, he quietly sat beside a 91-year-old woman while she pet his head and shared stories. He's even helped reactive dogs relax with his balanced demeanor.

A perfect day for Cannoli? It starts with hogging the bed. After breakfast—and hopefully a banana slice—he's off to greet the neighborhood on a long walk. Late mornings are for napping, followed by a trip to our aunt's house just down the street to play with Tater (Cannoli's bulldog cousin) and some pool time. Evenings include dinner at Juno and the Peacock, people-watching on the patio, and a scrambled egg topper for dinner. Then it's zoomies and snuggles before bed.

He still adores his stuffed animal from his first night home. Though he's got all the toys, sticks and leaves still reign supreme. He follows his dad around all day, especially if the freezer opens... because ice cubes are a top-tier treat.

Cannoli has brought joy, calm, and laughter into our lives. He reminds us to be present, stay playful, and appreciate the gift of a fresh start. If you see him around the neighborhood, please stop and say Hi! :)



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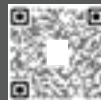


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## Be Ready Together: How Rebuilding Together Greater Florida Helps Our Neighborhood Prepare for Storm Season • Sharon Painte

As we head into hurricane season, it's more important than ever to look out for one another—and Rebuilding Together Greater Florida (RTGFL) is helping make that happen.

You might know Rebuilding Together for their work repairing homes and supporting local families in need. But they also play a big role in helping neighborhoods across St. Pete become more resilient and prepared for storms. Through their Disaster Readiness and Recovery program, RTGFL offers free, practical resources that help residents prepare before, during, and after a hurricane hits.

The heart of this effort is the Disaster Readiness Guide—an easy to follow tool packed with checklists, tips, and information that makes preparing less overwhelming. Whether it's how to safely store water, prep your home, build a go-kit, or stay connected during a power outage, the guide covers it all in plain language. It's especially helpful for seniors, families with young children, or anyone who might need a little extra support getting ready.

RTGFL also holds community events where they distribute free hurricane prep kits and walk residents through important safety measures. These events are designed to be hands-on, helpful, and neighbor-friendly, because getting ready for a storm shouldn't be something you have to do alone.

### Here's how you can get involved and help your neighbors prepare:

- Download the Disaster Readiness Guide at [rtgfl.org/disasterreadiness-recovery](http://rtgfl.org/disasterreadiness-recovery) and share it with your household.
- Check in with neighbors, especially elderly residents or those who live alone. Ask if they have a plan and if they need help.
- Attend a local readiness event if one is happening nearby. If not, talk to your neighborhood association about hosting one.
- Sign up to volunteer with RTGFL or one of their community partners. Even a small act can make a big difference.

Preparedness is a team effort, and we're stronger when we plan together. Thanks to Rebuilding Together Greater Florida, we have the tools—and the community—to do just that. Let's keep St. Pete safe and ready, one neighbor at a time.



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## • Neighborhood Events •

### CHNA General Membership Meeting

Monday, June 2nd; 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Blush Tea & Coffee

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Join us for our quarterly general membership meeting. Stay informed about neighborhood developments and share your ideas with fellow residents.

### Fill a Truck, Feed a Family-Support Daystar Life Center

Saturday June 14, 10:00am - 12:00pm

Near the Little Free Library

(corner of 25th Ave. N. & 7th St. N.)

When school lets out for summer, many students lose access to daily meals. Help CHNA support Daystar Life Center by donating pantry items that may otherwise go unused or expire. Drop off donations and help fill the Daystar truck!

## • What's Up Around Town •

### CHNA General Membership Meeting

Monday, August 18th; 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Blush Tea & Coffee

2382 Dr M.L.K. Jr St N

Mark your calendar for our August meeting. Engage with the community and contribute to the ongoing growth of Crescent Heights.

### Monthly Community Night at Outcast Brewing -

1776 11th Ave N - every 3rd Tuesday of the month beginning March 18th at 6 PM. Connect with your neighbors and receive 10% off!

### Lights in the Heights

Saturday, December 6th, 2025 5:00 PM – 9:00 PM

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Kick off the holiday season with our annual Lights in the Heights celebration. Enjoy a walking parade starting at 5:00 PM, festive lights, and holiday cheer with neighbors.

## From Garage Gardeners to Urban Farming Pioneers: The Story of Shannon and Brad •by Thomas Paterek

Before Brick Street Farms became a local fixture in sustainable agriculture, it started with two determined people, a garage in Crescent Heights, and a vision to grow cleaner, better food—right in the city.

Shannon O'Malley, an electrical engineer and lifelong gardener, had always loved growing her own food. But when she moved from Pennsylvania to Florida with her husband Brad, they quickly discovered that gardening in the Sunshine State came with serious challenges. "Sandy soil, salinated water, and tons of pests—it's tough down here," Shannon says. "I give so much credit to farmers in Florida."

Determined to find a better way, Shannon & Brad converted their garage into a hydroponic growing space. They added climate control, tested different lighting setups, and began fine-tuning a system that could grow leafy greens and herbs year-round—without soil. That experiment, fueled by curiosity and a passion for better food, became the seed of something bigger.

In 2016, the couple officially launched Brick Street Farms, transforming a once-blighted lot in the Warehouse Arts District into a high-tech, climate-controlled farm built inside 40-foot shipping containers. Each container is outfitted with vertical growing racks, LED lighting, and hydroponic systems that use 90% less water than traditional farming. "We're creating the ideal, rainbows-and-unicorn version of environment that all of the plants are looking for," says Shannon.



Thanks to the precision of the controlled environment and the thoughtful infrastructure they helped develop, Brick Street Farms can produce a tremendous volume of leafy greens, herbs, and edible flowers—without pesticides, herbicides, or long-distance shipping. Their produce now feeds local restaurants, fills subscription boxes for nearby residents, and is available directly through their on-site farm store.

But Brick Street Farms isn't just about produce—it's about reimagining the entire food system. With their unique blend of tech, engineering, and passion, Shannon and Brad have shown how cities can play a bigger role in feeding themselves sustainably. What began as a personal challenge in a garage has grown into one of Florida's most exciting models for urban agriculture. Shannon and Brad didn't just build a business—they built a movement, one container at a time.

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