‘Micro-Mobility’: The Future is Now
By Laura Mulrooney

From left, Freebee Director of Economic Development John Janusz (inside car), Freebee co-founder Jason Spiegl, The Don CeSar’s Director of Sales and Marketing Todd Gehrke, St. Pete Beach Mayor Al Johnson, Freebee driver Richard Kitson, and Freebee Operation Manager Christopher Walker welcome the micro-mobility partnership shuttle service Freebee on the Beach, St. Pete Beach Edition. St. Pete Beach revealed their “fun, free, and on-demand” two electric-vehicle fleet Thursday afternoon, January 23.

See Freebee, page 9

Beth-El Art Festival at 47 Years and Counting
By Laura Mulrooney

Eva Avenue, Gainesville, stands in front of a self-portrait by St. Petersburg artist Carrie Kilgore.

“I like that she has so playfully and with some restraint and with well-placed pieces of all of the elements made this visual rich with meaning,” Avenue explained. “She does portraits, she does other people, but I find it extra interesting to look at a self-portrait. I think any artist that does a self-portrait puts a little extra magic into it.”

This past weekend, January 25 through 27, Art Festival Beth-El hosted their 47th annual invitational, judged, indoor and outdoor exhibit and sales of original artwork from artists all over the country at 400 Pasadena Ave S.

See Beth-El, page 22
Best Seat in the House Chair-ity Auction

The Second Annual "Best Seat in the House Chair-ity Auction, with a View," a fundraising auction benefiting the Gulfport Senior Center Foundation, happens Saturday, March 21 on the stage at the Village Courtyard in Gulfport. Ten amazing local artists are putting their one-of-a-kind spins on 10 Adirondack chairs, to be auctioned off to the highest bidder. And this year, they’ve added six additional artists who are transforming six vintage windows into beautiful works of art that will be auctioned along with the chairs.

The chairs and windows will be on display at the Third Saturday Artwalk on February 15, the First Friday Artwalk on March 6 and at Scout Hall during the Flamingo Tour of Homes on March 7. The windows will then be on display at the Gulfport Public Library, and the chairs on display at Gulfport businesses, from March 8 through 21.

Phillip Bailey will be making a return as the auctioneer, and to kick off the excitement, DJ Daniel Hodge will be playing music at 5 p.m.

Meet ReadOut Featured Authors

Gulfport Public Library will host a wine and cheese meet and greet event with the 22 authors who will be participating in ReadOut on Friday, January 31 at 7 p.m. There will be author introductions, a preview of the Nia and Ness performance at the Hickman on Saturday Night February 1, and Sheree Greer, keynote speaker and workshop leader will also introduce herself, so come out and give them a warm Gulfport welcome.

You can also join the authors for Saturday night dinner, a no-host buffet event at Peninsula Inn. Pre-registration for Saturday night dinner is required. Go to GulfportReadOut2020@bpt.me for a complete schedule and to register.

St. Vincent’s Church Spring Craft Fair

St. Vincent’s Episcopal Church will host their Spring Craft Fair on Saturday, March 7, from 10 a.m. till 3 p.m. at their Parish Hall at 5441 9th Ave. N.

Their talented crafters will be offering a variety of jewelry, paintings, cards and more. And surprises too! Lunch and snacks will be available for purchase.

Game Night at the Senior Center

Come out to the Senior Center and join the fun every second Monday of the month from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Join an evening of games, food, prizes and fun! Bring your favorite game and some friends or show up, learn how to play a new game and make new friends! Sponsored by UHC.

Must be a registered Gulfport Senior Center member. For more information call 727-893-5657.
Tech Time at Gulfport Library

Need a little help with your laptop, smart phone or tablet? Make an appointment to see a reference librarian for a 30-minute session of individualized tech instruction Tuesdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. They’ll help you start on the basics of using the internet, email, word processing and social media. Call 727-893-1073 to sign up.

Sacred Lands Music and a Meal Night

Sacred Lands monthly “Music and a Meal Night” will be the third Friday, February 21. You can enjoy live music at one of the most unique scenic and historical sites in our county. Sacred Lands is a waterfront botanical garden with live peacocks. Come enjoy food and live music in the air conditioned greenhouse building. Their featured artist will be folk troubadour Doug Spears, who will perform at 7:30 p.m. There is a $15 admission. A healthy homemade meal is available for purchase separately for $8. Gates open at 7 p.m.

For directions and parking info call 727-367-3592 or 727-347-0354. For more information about Sacred Lands’ other events and tours check sacredlandspreservationandeducation.com.

Polish American Club Donut Dance

The St. Petersburg Polish American Club presents its second annual Paczki-Polish Donut Dance on Sunday, February 23, at the club at 1343 Beach Dr. S.E.

A Polish platter dinner will be served from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at a cost of $10. Dancing to the music of the Polka Generations Band will be from 3 to 6 p.m. on their large wooden dance floor.

Admission is $8 in advance and $10 at the door and everyone receives a Polish doughnut.

You can purchase presale tickets at the club or by sending a check and picking the tickets up at the door. For more information contact Ken Jakubowski at 727-360-4939 or kmjak@verizon.net.

Fraud Prevention Forum at Hickman Theater

The U.S. Attorney’s Office and the City of Gulfport would like to invite the community to attend a Fraud Prevention Forum on Wednesday, February 5 at 2 p.m., at the Catherine Hickman Theater, 5501 27th Ave. S.

This course is a collaborative speaker series featuring the U.S. Attorney’s Office, Gulfport Police Department, IRS Criminal Investigation and FBI. It is designed to inform community of concerns of fraud and scam prevention.

Limited seating is available, please RSVP at usaoelimtraining.org/reventionForum. For questions or more information, please contact Joseph Smith, Community Outreach Specialist, U.S. Attorney’s Office at 813-301-3061 or Joseph.Smith4@usdoj.gov.
Dog Park Closing for Maintenance

The City of Gulfport Dog Park will be closed starting Monday, February 3 and scheduled to re-open Monday, February 17. During this time the Parks Department will be re-sodding.

For questions, please contact Parks and Facilities Superintendent Tim Connor at 727-893-1092.

Gulfport Library Grown-Up Movie Series

Gulfport Public Library Grown-Up Film Series is intended to allow adults to enjoy more challenging and complex films in a quiet atmosphere (so they request that no children attend).

On Saturday, February 8 at 1 p.m., they will show a thrilling horror movie in which a new bride spends her wedding night running for her life after her new in-laws insist she play a terrifying game. Stars Samara Weaving, Adam Brody, Andie McDowell and John Ralston. It is rated R.

If anyone has any questions about this title or titles for upcoming months, please contact the library at 727-893-1074.

Come Have Coffee with a Gulfport Cop

Come visit Jax In & Out Neighborhood Cafe while smelling fresh brewed coffee along with casual conversation. This event is hosted by Community Resource Officer Zack Mills. The chat and coffee will occur on Saturday, February 8 from 10 a.m. to noon at 4928 Gulfport Blvd. S. As always during Coffee with a Cop, there is plenty of socializing and meeting old and new friends.
Voter Registration Drive at Senior Center

The Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections will be available at the Gulfport Senior Center, 5501 27th Ave. S., on Friday, February 4 from 10 a.m. till noon. For more information, call 727-464-8683 or VotePinellas.com

Register Now for Gulfport ReadOut!

Twenty-three authors from around the country will descend on Gulfport the weekend of January 31 to February 2 for Gulfport ReadOut 2020: A Festival of Lesbian Literature. The weekend is packed with events which include multiple panels of author readings, a keynote speech and writer’s workshop with Sheree Greer, a wine and cheese Meet-and-Greet, panel discussions and entertainment with renowned performance duo Nia & Ness.

ReadOut will once again kick off with an afternoon of romance authors reading from their works. This year’s group include award-winning author Erin Zak (a Tampa bay local) along with Becky Harmon, Riley Scott, Maggie Robbins, Lynn Carr, Erin Ellen Levy and Tina Michelle. Afternoon tea will also be provided to all attendees.

Tickets to see Nia & Ness are available at the Beach Bazaar or at niaandness.brownpapertickets.com.

All events take place at the Gulfport Public Library (apart from Saturday night entertainment at the Hickman Theater). Register and check out the full schedule at gulfportreadout2020.brownpapertickets.com.

Registration for the free events is not required but is helpful for planning and catering purposes (a generous grant from the Florida Humanities Council will enable organizers to provide free food at several of the events).

There will be a writing workshop titled “You Are the Protagonist. Using Your Experiences to Create Compelling Fiction and Nonfiction” led by Dr. Sheree Greer at 8:30 a.m. on Sunday, February 2. Thanks to a grant from the Florida Humanities the workshop is free. Please register at gulfportreadout@gmail.com.

Preview the Pink Flamingo Tour Homes

Catch a sneak peek of and learn the history of the houses to be featured during the upcoming 15th Annual Flamingo Tour of Homes. The Gulfport Historical Society will present this information at their monthly porch party on Friday, February 21 at the Gulfport History Museum, 5801 28th Ave. S. Museum doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the presentation starts at 7 p.m. Well-behaved children and pets are welcome to attend. BYOB; society members have exclusive access to wine and beer.

The porch party will feature a presentation about several historic homes on the tour. The Gulfport Merchants Chamber, the Pink Flamingo Home Tour sponsor, will sell tickets before and after the presentation.

For further information, and to register for the porch party preview, visit gulfporthistoricalsociety.org. Registration is free, but donations are gratefully accepted. Community members with homes on this year’s tour are especially encouraged to attend.

Historical research on the Flamingo Tour homes was conducted by volunteers John Avery, Lynn Taylor and Melissa Zoda.

Pass-a-Grille Shuffleboard Club

The Pass-a-Grille Shuffleboard Club seeks players. No experience necessary. They play January through March on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 10 a.m. Call 727-460-6317 or 727 367-6937 for more information.
Take the Gabber on Vacation...

Send a picture of you and your Gabber on vacation, with a brief description and your name, to News@theGabber.com.

Town Shores residents Frank Bonnevie, Margie Schulman, Tom and Martha D’Angelo in Cozumel last fall. “The Gabber, the first thing to pack for any vacation!”

Pre-School Storytime Moves to Tuesdays

Through April 28, the Gulfport Library’s preschool storytime will be held on Tuesday at 10:15 a.m. Join them for stories, songs, movement, making new friends and a craft! Open to 3- to 5-year-olds and a caregiver. For more information 727-893-1074 or email library.programs@mygulfport.us

Pancake Breakfast at PAG Church

The Men’s Ministry of Pass-A-Grille Beach Community Church will host the Dave Cramer Memorial Pre-Lenten Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, February 22 from 8 to 10 a.m. The very popular “all-you-can-eat menu” consists of pancakes, sausage, orange juice, fruit and coffee and tea. The centuries-old tradition of eating pancakes and like meals has its roots in the need to eliminate perishable such as eggs and milk from the family larder prior to the beginning of Lent.

Tickets are $6 per person and can be purchased at the door or prior to the breakfast at the church office. The church is located at 107 16th Ave., St. Pete Beach.

For information on this and other church activities, please call the church office at 727-360-5508 or visit pagchurch.org

A New Year at Sophie's Attic

Happy New Year from Sophie's Attic! They're starting off the new year with a whole new batch of freshly laundered clothing. People are moving and housecleaning and that means tons of new items in the shop. Lots of nice new (to you) clothing available. They also have three racks of half-price clothing. And they haven't forgotten the men. There's a rack just for you.

Sophie’s Attic is a mission outreach of First United Methodist Church of Gulfport. You will find them on 53rd St. near 28th Ave. S. They are open Fridays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. till noon. They’ll be waiting for you.
Conservative and Surgical Treatment for Major Joint Arthritis of the Hips, Knees and Shoulders
Thomas Mixa, MD, Orthopedic Surgeon
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4 • 12:00 Noon
Join Dr. Mixa as he discusses treatment options for arthritis and reviews conservative and surgical solutions for hips, knees and shoulders.

A Wound Neglected is a Wound Infected
Thomas Prebish, DO, General Surgeon
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5 • 12:00 Noon
Join our General Surgeon and Wound Care Specialist, Dr. Thomas Prebish, for an interesting and interactive discussion regarding problematic wounds. Attend this seminar and ask the doctor all your questions about wounds!

Palms of Pasadena’s Heart Failure Clinic
Heather Harpe, APRN-C, Outpatient Heart Failure Clinic at Palms of Pasadena Hospital
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18 • 12:00 Noon
The Outpatient Heart Failure Clinic at Palms of Pasadena Hospital assists in the immediate care provided to heart failure patients. The goal of the clinic is to help bridge the gap between hospital discharge and the patient being seen for a follow-up appointment with their primary care physician or cardiologist. Join Heather Harpe, Board-Certified Nurse Practitioner, to learn more about the clinic.

Palms of Pasadena Hospital, Professional Building, Boca Ciega Room
1609 Pasadena Ave. South, St. Petersburg

Call 1-855-245-8328 for an appointment or reservations.
Space is limited so please reserve early. For a physician referral please call 1-855-245-8328.
Gulfport Peace, Love & Pride 2020

Come out to the Gulfport Casino and Beach on Sunday, February 16, from noon until sundown, to see many of your favorite Tampa Bay acts on the same stage for the Gulfport Peace, Love & Pride Festival 2020.

Great live music, vendors and the beach. What else do you need for a fabulous pride celebration? Only a handful of spaces are left for last-minute registration for vendors and sponsors. Pricing is available for profit and non-profit businesses. This year’s festival is a benefit for ProjectFREE.

The main sponsor for the festival is ProSisters Radio, along with the City of Gulfport. Other generous sponsors that have signed on include Compassionate Care Clinics and the Gabber. Metro Inclusive Health will offer free rapid HIV and Hep C testing, and prevention education resources, at its mobile testing center at the event.

There will be a cash bar inside and other refreshments outside near the stage. Attendees will have an opportunity to shop for pride merchandise for themselves and their fur babies. Many of Tampa Bay’s top non-profit groups will also be on hand to educate attendees about their services.

Starting off the event at noon will be a walk-on performance by the infamous Gulfport Gecko Amalgamated Marching Band and a powerful lineup of guest speakers. Gulfport’s own Solar Flair rock band will kick off this fantastic live music lineup.

The lineup will be showcasing some of Gulfport’s local favorites: the Gulfport Troubadours with Mike Thomas and special appearances from Ron Clausnitzer and Jay Kiernan (Art House Goons); award-winning singer-songwriter Colleen Clark and Bluesmama Lynn DiVenuti. The festival music lineup will wind up with powerhouse headliner Tony da band Rock & Soul Revival featuring, the soulful songbird, Julie Van Loan-Bivetto. For information or to volunteer, call festival headquarters at 727-289-9365.

GEMS Getaways in February

On Tuesday, February 4, GEMs will visit Pinellas County South Cross Water Reclamation Facility: This tour and presentation will emphasize the importance of resource recovery from wastewater, describing the facility as a “factory” that produces reclaimed water, fertilizer and energy. Afterwards, they will stop by BJ’s Brewhouse for lunch. $6 for GEMS members/$10 for non-GEMS members. Price includes round-trip transportation. Meals are paid for separately.

On Thursday, February 13, they will visit the International Independent Showmen’s Museum. Learn the history of traveling carnivals, circuses, fairs and see this great collection of carny memorabilia and antique rides. Lunch will be at Ad’s on the River. $25 for GEMS members/$30 for non-GEMS Members. Price includes round-trip transportation, parking, and admission. Meals are paid for separately.

On Thursday, February 20, the Out to Lunch Bunch will head to Café Cibo. Café Cibo delivers an experience in classic Italian dishes and dining. There is something refreshing about this Italian neighborhood joint, come find out for yourself. $4 for GEMS members/$8 for non-GEMS member. Price includes round-trip transportation. Meals are paid for separately.

On Tuesday, February 25, they will visit Pinellas County South Cross Water Reclamation Facility: This tour and presentation will emphasize the importance of resource recovery from wastewater, describing the facility as a “factory” that produces reclaimed water, fertilizer and energy. Afterwards, they will stop by BJ’s Brewhouse for lunch. $6 for GEMS members/$10 for non-GEMS members. Price includes round-trip transportation. Meals are paid for separately.
Early Thursday afternoon, January 23, St. Pete Beach held their official reveal of a two-electric-vehicle fleet of a “fun, free, and on-demand” shuttle service, called “Freebee on the Beach.”

Freebee on the Beach is St. Pete Beach’s leap into the world of “micro-mobility.” According to the American Library Association, “micro-mobility is a broad term for a growing category of transportation vehicles that provide an alternative to traditional transportation (cars, trains, buses) in cities and communities.”

Freebee on the Beach has been fine-tuning their business model over the last eight years, launching in Miami’s South Beach back in 2012, explained Freebee’s Director of Economic Development John Janusz. They currently have 90 vehicles under their title, all electric, but customized for the area they service.

The service initially launched on St. Pete Beach on December 16. Since then daily ridership has increased from 30 passengers to over 100 daily riders.

Residents seem to enjoy the service, according to Chris Core, Pass-a-Grille resident. “Well, not just I, but everybody I know in Pass-a-Grille loves Freebee. It’s better service, it’s friendly, it’s fun and it doesn’t pollute. It’s a quiet form of transportation that gives us better service than what we had with the big busses at a cheaper cost,” said Core. “It’s a lot more of the spirit of the area. They make me smile every time I look at them.”

According to Core, the buses provided prior to Freebee by Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) were underutilized and a nuisance to the streets and environment of St. Pete Beach.

“They were so loud and then would just sit and idle by the water for long periods of time because they didn’t have any riders,” said Core. “Those large buses damaged the roads the city spent so much money to repair and were a safety hazard to bicyclists too.”

As of December 16, 2019, PSTA busses no longer travel south of The Don CeSar hotel at the entrance to Pass-a-Grille.

St. Pete Beach’s Freebee vehicles resemble 6- to 10-passenger golf carts. One is ADA accessible. To utilize this service, patrons need to download the Freebee application onto their cellular phones. The app has a beehive-type design and is easily navigable.

The “fun, free, and on-demand” shuttle service runs within pre-designated boundaries of St. Pete Beach and takes its customers door-to-door, Monday to Sunday 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. The service is 100% funded by marketing campaigns and drivers are strictly encouraged to decline gratuities. If ADA assistance is required, patrons are encouraged to contact the driver via the telephone number provided in the app.

More information can be found at ridefreebee.com or via the “Freebee” app.
Midwinter Message and Special Invitation from the Gulfport Food Forest
By Crea Egan, Gulfport Non-Profit Eat Be Grow

On the wheel of time that measures and divides our year into seasons, this coming Sunday, February 2 will be the midway point between the Winter Solstice and the Spring Equinox. That means the sun’s power is felt in the longer days and the warmth that causes seeds to germinate and sprout. And so the earliest beginnings of spring occur!

Another sign of spring is the red breasted robin. Last year, in our food forest, I was tickled pink to discover not only robins but a group of three thrush hopping from low branches to the ground searching for insects. They are the truest first song birds of spring. I shed tears of joy for our baby food forest when I discovered they appear only in forests that have a mature under story. As a mother of the food forest I felt a true sense of relief that we made it and the birds were letting us know they approved!

What this time of year could mean for Gulfport gardeners is lots, yet it can be as simple as beginning to plant warm season crops like beans, pigeon peas, peppers and squash. I personally see this time as the stirring and quickening of the seeds, I make a seed inventory and and broadcast old seeds into an area of the forest I call the mystery garden, come what may.

In the Gulfport Food Forest in the Clymer Park Greenway, our midwinter plant allies are Spanish needles, broad leaf mustard green, loquat leaf, elderberry flower and rosemary. Stay tuned as our food forest herbalist Jeannette Hess and renowned teacher Bob Linde tell us more about plant medicine this year.

Other midwinter news is that 2020 marks the sixth year I have anonymously created a temporary walking scale labyrinth, usually made out of Spanish moss and pine straw in the southernmost block of the Gulfport Food Forest. I find making and walking the labyrinth to be a powerful and traditional way to honor the coming of spring and put my new year’s vision intentionally into gear. As an ancient symbol that relates to wholeness and the womb of creation with its imagery of the circle combined with a spiral forming a meandering but purposeful path, there is no way to get lost – only one way in and one way out, as is with life. I find this to be encouraging. The labyrinth represents a journey to our own center and back again out into the world. Just like winter represents the cycle of compost and death and spring represents rebirth and renewal. For these and more reasons, labyrinths have long been used throughout time and cultures as a meditation and prayer tool.

This year it is my honor to invite anyone who wants to learn about labyrinths to join me rain or shine on Sunday, February 2 at 10 a.m. in the center block of Clymer Park, near the sculpture made by Tom Pitzen that looks like a green and white orchid woman. If you are so inclined, bring pine straw, Spanish moss, bird seed, flower petals, natural tidings and potted herbs and flowers to plant in the food forest.

Please note this labyrinth will mark the spot for a weekly dynamic and seated meditation meetup group to begin. Time and days will be announced, along with a monthly community art and craft play shop that will explore making tools for meditation and accouterments for plant medicine making and magic that relate to each month of the year.

The first class on Sunday, February 2, at 4 p.m., will be making clay finger labyrinths. Call 727-560-0608 now to reserve your space. See artfulearthscapes.com and eatbegrow.com for more information.