



July - September 2007

Volume 4 issue 3

BANYANbanter

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CRESCENT LAKE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Informing residents of issues and events in and around our neighborhood

Mark Your Calendar

Please join us at neighborhood meeting July 23

Please mark your calendar now for Monday, July 23, at 7 p.m. – and plan on joining fellow neighbors for a Crescent Lake Neighborhood Association meeting. The meeting will be held at the Huggins-Stengel Field Clubhouse at 1320 5th Street North, located on the southeast part of the park, adjacent to the baseball field...

While our General Meetings have suffered from low attendance in recent history, our first General meeting of the year, held April 30, was attended by about 20 neighbors, and included good updates on a number of interesting issues.

So it is the hope of the your neighborhood board members that with good advance notice, and with our continued positive momentum, as many of you as possible will make time to attend the meeting, meet fellow neighbors and hear the latest on the various projects that are under way in our great neighborhood.

At our meeting, our discussion will include:

- 1) An update on our Healthy Lake Project
- 2) An update on our Neighborhood Marker and/or Observation Deck Possibilities (allocation of 1994 Neighborhood Plan Tax Dollars)
- 3) A visit by one of our community police officers, who will update us on the new program and be available for questions
- 4) An update on the effort for the Street Pedestrian Safety on 4th Street
- 5) Drawing for 2 St Petersburg City Suite Devil Rays tickets for the August 4 game against Baltimore (must be paid association member to be eligible)

So, again, please mark your calendar for 7 p.m. July 23 and plan on joining us. We look forward to seeing you there!

MEMBERSHIP ENVELOPE ENCLOSED

Annual dues are due

Neighbors, we need your help.

Our membership is half of what it was in 2006, and we're not sure why.

The good news is, it's easy to fix. In fact, we're making it really easy.

Inside our newsletter is a self-addressed envelope. All you have to do is complete the information, put in a check for \$15 or \$20, stick on a stamp and mail it.

Can you help us, and our neighborhood, keep all the momentum we've been building over the past couple years?

But wait ... that's not all!

We're even kicking in an incentive. If you've paid your dues before July 23, you have a chance to check out a Devil Rays game in one of the best seats in the house – in the city's luxury suite. The game is Aug. 4 against the Baltimore Orioles. Just by paying your dues, you have to a chance to see big league baseball in style.

So you know, as a neighborhood association, our primary source of revenue is the annual dues that Crescent Lake neighbors pay to the association.

So, please, help us. If you haven't paid your dues, please take a moment and send in your dues with the enclosed envelope. If you already have, we thank you.



EARTH DAY AT CRESCENT LAKE: Local volunteers get their feet wet during the April 21 Earth Day event at Crescent Lake. The plants, all Florida Native species, are part of a large initiative to make Crescent Lake a healthier, more bio-diverse body of water. *See pages 8-9 for an update and photos of our neighborhood's major 2007 project.*



Paid annual dues? If not, we made it easy (and cheap!)

By Carolyn Fries, President,
Crescent Lake Neighborhood
Association

It's hard to believe the summer months are upon us already. At the beginning of the year, I was excited to look back and see the progress the neighborhood association had made in the past year. Paid membership had increased to over 100 households, response to the newsletter was positive and neighbors were getting active in the association again.

President's Perspective

Interest in the association's activities and newsletter is still thriving, but I'm sorry to report that for the 2007 year, we only have 48 paid members to date (see published list). I'm uncertain of the reason, other than we're all busy people and forget to send in our dues. The annual cost is only \$15 a person, or \$20 a household, which we hope everyone agrees is a very modest fee to support our wonderful neighborhood.

To combat that issue, we're offering two incentives to join. Our City Council Representative, Leslie Curran, has provided the association tickets — in the St Petersburg City Suite — for the Aug. 4 game at 7:10 p.m., with our hometown Devil Rays playing the Baltimore Orioles. All paid members as of July 23 will be eligible for a lottery-style drawing for two of these tickets. We're also including a pre-addressed envelope in this newsletter for your convenience.

Your association uses the membership dues to cover:

- Council of Neighborhood Association (CONA) dues
- Event costs (Easter Egg Hunt, Fall Harvest Festival and Luminary Walk)
- Printing and mailing of the newsletter (advertising does not cover all costs)
- Reimbursement for Porch Party hosts (\$30 for each party)

With membership support, the neighborhood association could consider more opportunities, including sponsoring interested member residents to attend local leadership events such as the CONA Leadership Program, Florida Neighborhoods Conference and Leadership St Pete. These programs are a great opportunity to learn about your community, its government and to meet its leaders and business people.

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Even if you're not a baseball fan, please take a moment to complete the membership application in this issue and use the pre-addressed envelope to send in your dues.

On another note, November elections will be upon us soon and several board members have announced they will not be returning next year.

Participating as a neighborhood board member/officer is a great way to give back to the community, get to know neighborhood residents, learn more about city government *and* attend fun events like the Grand Prix, Devil Rays baseball and Neighborhood Partnership Awards!

This year, our board represents the Northwest (5 members) and Southeast (1 member) quadrants of the neighborhood. Our goal is to have all areas of the neighborhood represented for 2008, but we won't be successful without *you*. If you think you might be (even a little bit) interested in participating on the board or as an officer for next year, please contact me. And don't forget to send in your dues!



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See Devil Rays in style: Pay dues before July 21 and you're eligible!

As of May 30, 2007, the neighbors below have paid their annual dues – which is the primary way our neighborhood association has for covering its expenses. If you're not on the list, can you please use the envelope included in this edition of the Banter to send in your \$15 or \$20 in dues? It would be much appreciated!

All neighbors who have paid their dues by July 23 will be entered in a drawing to watch a Devil Rays baseball game in a luxury suite – a small token of appreciation for supporting our great neighborhood.

Below is the list of neighbors who have paid their dues for 2007 through May 30.

Rob & Lisa Apple
Mike & Debra Bingham
Juliene Bollaert & Robert Gibson
Jim Brennen
Joan Brennan
David Brock
Kelly Brockstedt
Phil & Kathryn Celli
Gary & Michelle Crosby
Kelly Connelly and Sarah Miller
Jason Diviki
Ray & Victoria Easterlin
Gene Egg
Diane Ferris
Dan & Pat Finn
Mike & Jennie Flanagan
Chuck Ford & Allison Messina
David & Carolyn Fries
Lisset Gonzalez & Wayne Hanewicz
Sally Gronda
Bill & Carol Henderson
Michael & Tracey Herman
Jim & Jody Kenrick
Katy Kline
Jennifer Brazzeal & Jeff Freedman
Matt Crum & Jessica Franklin
Scott & Cher Drury

Gail Knight
Fran Kramer
Tom & Lori Lawery
Bobbie Lemonopoulos
Doug & Heather Mason
Joe Morrissey & Mark Montgomery
Gene & Susan Nice
Brian & Shawn Overcast
Terry Reeb (Hardwood Specialists)
Eugene & Emeline Schneider
Covington & Janice Sharp
Andy Smith
Dave & Tina Spangler
Colin Sue-A-Quan & Kristen Lagor
Sunshadow Partnership
Jeff & Tara Thiel
Richard & Susan Tribolet
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Crossing 4th street a matter of public safety

There are more reasons than ever for people to cross 4th Street between 9th and 22nd Avenues. But according to local neighbors and business owners, it has also become a dangerous endeavor.

By Dave and Tina Spangler

Spurred by the tragic death of a neighbor, killed last winter while attempting to cross Fourth Street, a volunteer committee of local neighbors has formed to persuade state transportation officials to make the street safer for pedestrians.

Derrick Calandra of Old Northeast has joined with Dan Finn and the writers of this story, Dave and Tina Spangler, of our own Crescent Lake Neighborhood Association to seek answers to two questions.

Why aren't there more pedestrian crossings between 9th Avenue and 38th Avenue?

What can be done to remedy the situation?

Inquiries have revealed that neighborhood associations, business groups, city officials and city council representatives favor improved crossings along this stretch of Fourth Street. Recent resolutions have been passed supporting, at the very least, an additional crosswalk at Sunken Gardens.

The obstacle is getting the state's Department of Transportation (DOT) to agree to changes. Since Fourth Street is a state highway, city officials cannot override state authorities to make safety improvements.

A study of correspondence with DOT officials suggests to those of us involved in this issue that they do not understand the gravity of the problem. Their priority seems to be the rapid movement of vehicles into and out of St. Pete, with the safe transit of pedestrians seeking to cross the busy five-lane road a secondary consideration.

Those of us on our volunteer committee have a different view.

From our perspective, after looking at the various issues surrounding the situation, we believe facilitation of the use of Crescent Lake and the bayfront parks, as well as encouraging local neighbors to patronize existing and growing new businesses on opposite sides of Fourth Street, should be given higher priority.

We understand it is important to maintain a good flow of traffic in and out of downtown St. Pete along Fourth Street, but we also believe that safety and traffic flow are goals that can both be achieved.

On the above point, our fellow committee member, Derrick Calandra, speaks from personal experience: He must cross Fourth Street to use Crescent Lake Park with his young son, and he has seen how dangerous it can be to cross Fourth Street. That experience, and the knowledge the several people have lost their lives over the past few years crossing Fourth Street near his and our neighborhoods, has motivated him to take a lead role in focusing attention on this important issue.

"I see this as an important issue for the city, not just the individual neighborhoods," Calandra says. "We hope to gather as much support as possible to push this issue forward, and help all pedestrians cross 4th Street safely."

The committee is working to organize a public forum on the matter. The purpose of such a meeting would be to give local residents a chance to voice their concerns and ask state transportation officials to help prevent more needless death and injury by taking action that many people familiar with the situation strongly support.

Our neighborhood will publicize the time and location of the forum, and we encourage all of our neighbors to join us in helping make our neighborhood a safer place to live.

If you have questions regarding the issue, you can contact Derrick Calandra at derrickcalandra@yahoo.com.



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Saving the turtles

While enjoying our park's playground, 9-year-old Katherine Kersten becomes a savior, building barrier to protect nest of turtle eggs.

It was a beautiful spring day in late May, and like a lot of kids, 9-year-old Katherine Kersten was enjoying a day of fun at the Crescent Lake playground.

But then Katherine, a Crescent Lake neighbor who lives on 12th Avenue, saw something that inspired impressive life-saving action.

She noticed a soft shell turtle laying eggs near the playground equipment. Concerned for the safety of the mother turtle's eggs, she flew into action, building a barrier around the nest of eggs. For good measure, she posted a sign alerting visitors to the playground to watch their steps.



When Katherine Kersten saw a mother turtle laying eggs near our neighborhood playground, she built a barrier to protect the eggs, as well as a warning sign.

Katherine was protecting the Florida softshell turtle (officially known as the Apalone Ferox), an aquatic freshwater turtle that prefers lakes and slow-moving rivers. Female turtles lay six to 30 round eggs in the spring or late summer in holes dug in sand or banks.

The incubation period is about 70 days, so look for baby turtles in early August. Thanks, Katherine, for caring about the wildlife who call Crescent Lake their home!



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Update on Crescent Lake Drive Project

With resurfacing complete, speed humps will be next

By Michael Frederick

Manager, Neighborhood Transportation
Department of Transportation & Parking
City of St. Petersburg

The Crescent Lake Drive traffic plan is now nearing completion.

A couple of issues have delayed the construction of three speed humps on Crescent Lake Drive and the raised intersection at 12th Avenue North and Crescent Lake Drive.


With the completion of the resurfacing project on Crescent Lake Drive, which is expected to have been completed by the end of June, we will be able to install speed humps north of 20th, north of 16th and north of 14th avenues. With the high cost of asphalt, we are unable to fund the raised intersection at 12th Avenue N and Crescent Lake Drive. We have therefore received approval from the Crescent Lake Neighborhood Association to install speed humps on all approaches.



Home owners where each of these features will be constructed have signed the petitions and will be contacted prior to construction.

We are reviewing the current budget now to determine if sufficient funds are available. If there are sufficient funds, we will schedule construction this summer. If not, we will have to wait for the next fiscal year's budget, starting Oct. 1, 2007.

For details, the approved traffic plan can be viewed at <http://www.stpete.org/trafficplans.htm>.



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Crescent Lake Project: Plantings take root

By Gary Crosby

During Earth Day weekend, April 21-22, more than 50 residents of Crescent Lake neighborhood and the surrounding community spent Saturday morning installing over 1,000 individual plants within Crescent Lake.

This ongoing and exciting project is part of the neighborhood's Crescent Lake Restoration and Beautification Project funded by the Tampa Bay Estuary Program. For most, this was their first experience in lake planting. Many were hesitant and somewhat perplexed as to how to go about properly planting a water lily in three and a half feet of water!

Through the guidance of our own resident lake biologists – Kerry Illiff and Jim Bays live in Crescent Heights – and other project team leaders, the art of using a dibble (or shovel) to wedge an opening and patting the plant securely into the lake bottom became almost second nature.

Others found the planting of the cana lilies and blue flag iris in water depths less than 12 inches rewarding as the placement of the root was apparent and the young plants emerging from the water surface was a satisfying visual. The machine-like repetition of planting the bulrush held the interest of others. By 2 p.m. the task was complete.

For those not present at the planting, you may be curious as to why a majority of the plants are within wire cages.

We call them excluders. This describes their intent – to exclude – or to at least limit damage to the plants due to predation (eating), or the uprooting or damaging of the plantings by fish, turtles and waterfowl before the plants can become established enough to hold their own.

The same reasoning is behind the colored flagging strung through the plantings. It is anticipated the cages could remain through the summer.

However, the two colorful pinwheels placed within the plantings at the south end probably serve no other function but to add a bit of levity and whimsy to the plantings.

The three and a half inches of rain as a result of Tropical Storm Barry on June 2 was challenging to the plantings.

At one point, the lake level was two and a half feet above its normal level, causing the plants to become completely submerged.

The volume and velocity of the storm water run-off entering the lake dislodged some of the plantings on the south end. As disturbing was the amount of trash and debris carried into the lake through the storm drains.



Unfortunately, a large portion of the debris passed through the lake and on to Tampa Bay during that storm event. The city's Stormwater and Parks staff removed more debris from the lake during the following week and an emergency volunteer workday (tune-up) occurred on June 9.

As of this writing, the lake planting is doing well.

Exceptional growth has occurred. The original plants have increased significantly in height and added noticeable foliage.

Some species have already begun to propagate. Already the white flowers of the fragrant water lily and the arrowhead, the yellow blooms of the cana lily and spatterdock, and the blue flowers of the pickerel weed are present. Waterfowl have made roosting nests within some of the pickerel weed stands offshore.

As the project progresses through the year, additional plantings are planned along the northern shoreline, in addition to the ongoing monitoring of and occasional maintenance on the existing plants.

Storm drains will be marked to dissuade the dumping of litter and pollutants into the storm water drain system.

Please plan to attend our next neighborhood meeting, July 23, to receive an update on this project.

For those who have already contributed to this project, we extend a hearty thank you. I do hope you stay involved and informed on how you can continue to assist in making a positive difference in the biological health and aesthetic character of Crescent Lake, the jewel of our neighborhood and park.

For more information or to learn how you can become involved in some fashion, contact Lucy Trimarco at 821-2133 or lucyt@ij.net.



50 volunteers, 1,000 plants make for priceless project

Jumping in with both feet was the only way to go when it came to the April 21 planting of Florida Natives plants in Crescent Lake. The wire cages, known as excluders, remain in place as the plants adjust to the lake. The waterfowl seem to enjoy the added vegetation, and new growth and blooms abound since the April 21 plantings. A full update on the project will be given at our neighborhood's July 23 meeting.



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If you're looking for dedicated young athletes, then be at Crescent Lake Park on a late summer afternoon. That's when you can catch the St. Petersburg High crosscountry team and its coach, Lee Fictum (shown in these photos), gathering in the northeast corner of the park, near Fifth Street and 22nd Avenue. Their ritual includes warming up and stretching Monday through Friday at 4:30 p.m. in the park and then taking up to an hour-long run through our surrounding neighborhoods. Also using our park as a starting point for a long run is the Northeast High crosscountry team, which meets Tuesday and Thursday at 6 p.m. Go Green Devils! Go Vikings!





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- Pinch ground cloves
- Pinch salt
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In a bowl, cream together the butter, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, and salt. Refrigerate until almost firm. Spoon about 2 tablespoons of the butter mixture into 12 small mugs. Pour about 3 ounces of rum into each mug (filling about halfway). Top with boiling water (to fill the remaining half), stir well, and serve immediately. Enjoy!

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Want some early holiday spirit? Volunteer for Luminary Walk

Want to join your fellow neighbors to help organize one of the best holiday events in St. Pete?

Then please let us know if you and any of your family members and/or friends from in or outside our neighborhood could spare even a little time to help with our highly popular annual luminary walk, which will be held on Sunday, Dec. 9, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Crescent Lake Park.

Michele Crosby, a Crescent Lake neighbor who organized the event last December, has graciously agreed to be a co-organizer for this year's event. However, she is looking for a neighbor or interested party to join her as co-organizer, and for a handful of others to pitch in.

The event was a big success last year, as hundreds of people from around the city came to stroll around the lake circled by dozens of candle fires and to enjoy a number of local musical performers. Of course, our event included a visit from Santa Claus, as well as the ever-popular urban hayrides.



Want to help plan a cool holiday event, featuring lakeside luminaries, local musicians and hundreds of visitors enjoying the holiday scene? Here's your chance – just call or email Michele Crosby at 823-8014 or mgmccrosby@tampabay.rr.com. Happy holidays!

It's a fun event to be a part of, and volunteers of all ages are welcome to join our planning team.

If you are interested, contact Michele Crosby at 823-8014 or by email at mgmccrosby@tampabay.rr.com. Or you can contact Carolyn Fries at 823-0050 or cfries@tampabay.rr.com.

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Home Beautiful Award

From blizzards to smooth sailing

By Doug Mason

Larry and Joyce Wissing are comfortable in their 1937 tudor on 13th Avenue.

It took a wicked winter blizzard that dropped more than eight feet of snow in 1979 to get them here but they would have it no other way. Growing up in Chicago and Wisconsin, they decided to move to Florida that very next year. Joyce wanted a three-bedroom home on the water but when they drove past the lake on 5th Street and turned on 13th Avenue, they gazed upon a stone tudor-style house and knew they could live out their days there.

The rounded brick stoop inlaid with mosaic tile leads up to the solid arched front doorway. Creeping fig ivy climbs lazily up and around the entry.

Inside, the original oak flooring still gleams from the light that passes through the four-over-one windows. A sun porch just off the living room has the same mosaic tiles throughout the floor.

The center piece of the living room is a fireplace framed from wood found in an old railroad station. All of the oak doors have the original glass globe doorknobs and are in good working order.



Fig ivy and mosaic tile highlight the brick stoop of Larry and Joyce Wissing's stone tudor, built in 1937. The inside of the home has as much character as the outside.

The kitchen has been remodeled with cherry cabinets, black granite counter tops and stainless appliances. In the hallway between the bedrooms a spiral staircase climbs to the loft. This house has as much character on the inside as it does on the outside.

Larry, Joyce and Patty (their snoodle dog) are avid sailors and spend much time on their 37-foot motor sailer docked at the St. Petersburg Municipal Marina. Both put in many hours years ago to help form what we now call the Crescent Lake Neighborhood Association.

We are grateful to them for helping make our community what it is today. For now they just enjoy Crescent Lake, our fantastic city and the beautiful Gulf of Mexico.

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Update on Community Policing

Months later, police report good feedback on program

By Andy Smith

The city of St. Petersburg's community policing program dates back to the early 1990s, originally developed to respond to changing demographics and emerging community problems. Many of its initial provisions were responses to specific concerns raised by citizens.

Perhaps the best known feature of the program has been the assignment of a specific police officer to individual neighborhoods.

The intent was to give residents the opportunity to become personally familiar with their officer, making residents more comfortable in reporting concerns. Officer Ray Merritt has had this role in the Crescent Lake neighborhood for a number of years.

It has enabled the easy reporting of many types of non-emergency concerns, often long-term in nature, including littering, barking dogs and particular ordinance violations, and also has given neighbors a specific officer to look to for eventual problem resolution. The method of notifying the police department of emergency situations has been and remains to call 911.

Several months ago, a change was made to the program to make it more of a collective responsibility among several specific St. Petersburg police officers. As a result, some citizens expressed concerns this might reduce the expertise that a singly-assigned officer might have, and might make service that police officers provide somewhat less personal.

Since the change, police officers are reporting that changes to the program have generated positive feedback from citizens who have contacted the program under its new procedures, with officers reporting that citizens are telling them the new program is an improvement.

The most important change is the manner of contacting the program. The phone number to call, and keep handy, is 551-3182.

This is not a phone number staffed by a live officer; instead, callers leave a message with an overview of the concern. A return call is promised within 24 hours.

Under the earlier procedure, where the single-assigned officer would be called, the sometimes non-availability of that officer due to training or other special assignments might delay the officer being able to return the call for several days.

Contact Info for Our Community Officers

Crescent Lake neighbors wishing to contact the police department for community policing services should call 551-3182. Leave a message explaining the nature of the concern. Calls will be returned within 24 hours, and will be responded to by one of the four community police officers assigned to our neighborhood: Jason Deary, Jennifer Lich, Joe Troung or Ray Merritt.

Mark it down: Want to hear more about the new community policing program? Then join us at our July 23 General Meeting, where one of our community police officers will be on hand to provide a first-hand update and answers questions from us.

Officers interviewed for this story say the changes in the program reflect a greater emphasis on community policing throughout the city. Every St. Petersburg police officer is being trained in community policing procedures, including those whose current assignments are as patrol officers, who compared to community police officers are more likely to be assigned to respond to 911 calls and other incidents requiring immediate attention.

One of the key goals is that the observational and corrective action aspects of effective community policing has the potential to keep some 911 calls from ever taking place. Success in the program may eventually lead to some patrol officers being assigned community policing responsibilities.

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Request from water officials: Follow water restrictions

Editor's note: To provide information on watering policies, the information below, from local water officials, is being published as a courtesy and reminder to neighbors.

Because the continued lack of significant rainfall has increased demand for water in the Tampa Bay region, the Southwest Florida Water Management District has declared a water shortage. These restrictions went into effect Jan. 16, 2007, and are scheduled to end July 31, 2007.

Irrigation with potable (city) water, private well water or private connections to surface water sources (lakes, ponds, etc.):

- House numbers ending in an even number or the letters A through M may irrigate on Saturday only.
- House numbers ending in an odd number, or the letters N through Z, or at locations with no address may irrigate on Sunday only.
- Irrigation is allowed between 5 to 9 a.m. and/or 7 to 11 p.m. on the assigned days.

Irrigation with Reclaimed Water – Water-Wise Practices:

Lawn and landscape irrigation using reclaimed water is not currently restricted. However, residents are asked to be “water wise” and conscious of their use of this valuable resource. Voluntary restrictions for reclaimed water request no more than three days per week by property address:

- Even numbers should irrigate on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.
- Odd numbers should irrigate on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.

Other Water Conservation Restrictions:

- Hand watering of landscape plants is not restricted; however, an automatic shutoff device must be installed on your hose and used at all times.
- Hand watering of lawn and turf is restricted to one day a week during designated hours on assigned day (see chart above).
- Micro-irrigation of non-lawn landscape material is not currently restricted.

For more information on water restrictions, applying for variance for new plantings or to report a violation, please visit: <http://cms.stpete.org/default.asp?page=1426>.



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Upcoming Board Meetings:
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4th of July Saturday, July 4, 7:00pm In the Park

General Meeting Monday, July 23, 7:00 pm The Clubhouse

Board Meeting Monday, August 6, 7:00 pm Panera Bread Meeting Room

General Meeting Monday, Sept. 24, 7:00pm The Clubhouse

Fall Harvest Festival Saturday, Oct. 27, 5:30pm The Park

General Meeting, Elections & Holiday get together Monday, nov. 26, 7:00pm The Clubhouse

Luminary Walk Sunday, Dec. 9, 6:30pm Crescent Lake perimeter sidewalk

General and Board meetings are open to all Crescent Lake neighbors.

Neighborhood Events are posted at
www.neighborhoodlink.com/stpetersburg/clna

St Petersburg City events are posted at www.stpete.org.