



BOCA RATON BEACH & PARK DISPATCH

September 2024 | *Official Newsletter of the Greater Boca Raton Beach & Park District*



Serving Aces, Defying Father Time

Well beyond the age where most have traded their tennis sneakers for orthopedic shoes, 93-year-old Howie Levinson continues to lace his Nikes, swing his racket, and serve aces at Patch Reef Park.

A longtime member and one of the first ever to play tennis at the Patch Reef Park Tennis Center, Levinson still leads a group of retirees onto the courts three mornings per week.

“He’s our mentor,” said Eli Aranya who, at 57, is among the youngest in the group. “He’s our life guide.”

Born a decade before the United States entered World War II, Levinson owned a sweater manufacturing company in New York before retiring to South Florida in the mid 1980s.

Always on the lookout for places to play tennis, Levinson and some friends made their first trip to the Patch Reef Tennis Center in 1987 – a couple weeks before the facility’s official opening.

[READ MORE ABOUT HOWIE’S HOTSHOTS](#)



Strand Saved From Condos

In the early 1990s a developer had plans to build condos and estates on Boca Raton's last undeveloped piece of privately owned beachfront real estate.

Within a couple years the Greater Boca Raton Beach and Park District purchased that land, preserving what many considered Boca Raton's last pristine plots between the Intracoastal Waterway and the Atlantic.

Continental Development Inc. hoped to convert the vacant land between Spanish River Park and the Gumbo Limbo Nature Center into 77 units west of AIA and eight oceanfront estates.

However, an independent survey found that 84 percent of the 354 people surveyed preferred the land be turned into a park.

[CONTINUE READING](#)



North Park In The Zone

The District's North Park design plans received approval from Boca Raton's Planning and Zoning Board during a Sept. 5 public meeting. The design, which covers the area east of NW 2nd Ave., includes walking trails, mountain bike trails, a community garden, a dog park, playgrounds and Boca Paddle's indoor pickleball facility. "This is a very exciting project," Board Vice-Chair Larry Cellon said during the meeting. "I'm thrilled that after all these years with no movement to see something as complete as this design. It's very exciting." North Park is being created on the land that was formerly the Ocean Breeze golf course within the Boca Teeca community.



District Swings With Golf

At first glance a Beach and Park District might not be expected to have much of a relationship with golf.

Looks can be deceiving – especially when it comes to the Greater Boca Raton Beach and Park District.

The connection with golf goes all the way back to the District's creation and weaves throughout the District's 50 years of existence.

Created in 1974 to help the City of Boca Raton retire the debt incurred from the purchase of what would become Red Reef Park, the District came to existence at a time when many – especially northern tourists – identified South Florida as a golfing paradise.

[CONTINUE READING](#)



Year Of The Month: 2005

When the District began designing Sugar Sand Park, then-Commissioner [Elaine Kleinman pushed to include a carousel](#). It took a little while for everything to come together, but in 2005 a carousel finally started spinning at Sugar Sand. Almost instantly the carousel became an iconic part of the Boca Raton community. In the two decades that followed the carousel's popularity continued to grow. As the District celebrates its 50th anniversary, part of that celebration includes free carousel rides for children every September Sunday from 11 a.m.- 4 p.m. Fortunately there's still one Sunday remaining this month. We'll see you on September 29!



More Pickleball Tournaments

Boca Raton pickleballers who crave competitive tournaments will be excited about what the Patch Reef Tennis Center has planned. Buoyed by the success of the July 4 pickleball tournament, Patch Reef now plans to host at least one pickleball tournament per month. The tournaments, aimed at players with skill ratings between 2.5-4.5, will often coincide with whichever holiday occurs that month. Labor Day provided the first such opportunity, with 36 people entering. When rain washed out the originally scheduled date, Patch Reef rescheduled for the following weekend. Joe Greco teamed with Margaret Sclafani (Pictured, with organizer Leminyer Zapata) to win the top division. Rich Lawson and Rob Peterson won the lower division crown. A Halloween-themed tournament is scheduled for Oct. 27.



Boca Boo Coming For You

A spook-tacular October is once again coming to Boca Raton, with several events haunting District parks as part of the heralded Boca Boo Days. Oct. 19-20 brings the Spooky Sounds Science Demo to Sugar Sand Park's Science Explorium. There's also a Lab-Laser Engraved Bat House at the Science Explorium on Oct. 20. The Gumbo Limbo Nature Center will host two events – the Halloween By The Sea children's costume party on Oct. 20 and also the Haunted Hammock – a hair-raising walk through the center and boardwalk – on Oct. 26. The Swim and Racquet Center's Spooky Tennis evening is Oct. 25, followed by a Halloween Mixer on Oct. 27. Patch Reef Tennis Center's pickleball tournament is Oct. 27, as is the Swim Center's Monster Mash (photo). For a complete list of Boca Boo Days events, [follow this link](#) – if you dare...

UPCOMING MEETINGS

MONDAY OCT. 7

**Commissioners' General
Public Meeting, 5:15 p.m.**

MONDAY OCT. 21

**Commissioners' General
Public Meeting, 5:15 p.m.**

MONDAY NOV. 4

**Commissioners' General
Public Meeting, 5:15 p.m.**

**Meetings at Boca Raton Swim & Racquet Center
21618 St. Andrews Boulevard Boca Raton, FL**

Ode To Open Space

"If you have found a quiet bench in a quiet park and sat down, be sure you had a very profitable day!"

— *Mehmet Murat ildan, playwright and author.*



LINKED INTO BOCA RATON

Reside outside Boca Raton city limits but within the District? Beginning Oct. 1, for the first time you will be eligible to receive a Boca Raton Library card for free. With a library card, you can check out, download, or stream over 1.8 million items. Follow the link below to learn how to get your card.

[Library Card Info](#)

**GREATER BOCA RATON
BEACH & PARK DISTRICT**
Phone: (561) 417-4599

[Send Us A Message](#)

Keep in Touch!



Greater Boca Raton Beach and Parks District | 21618 St Andrews Blvd | Boca Raton, FL 33433
US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)