



DINING & ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

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The Discovery Channel's Emmy-nominated series comes to life to uncover truths behind popular myths by mixing scientific method with gleeful curiosity and old-fashioned ingenuity in *MythBusters: The Explosive Exhibition*, which makes its way to the Museum of Science & Industry (MOSI) in Tampa on Friday, Feb. 7, 2014 for an exclusive Florida engagement.

The MythBusters exhibit will especially appeal to children, as well as fans of the show. The special exhibit area has been turned into a scientific playground where visitors can try their hand at various experiments scattered around the huge room.

Visitors can test out the theory that toast always seems to fall butter side down. They can swing on a swing set held up by phone books or attempt to slide a table cloth out from under the dishes, like a magician.

Tickets for *MythBusters: The Explosive Exhibition* are \$24.95 for adults, \$21.95 for seniors (60+) and \$19.95 for children (2-12) and include admission to either MOSI's permanent exhibits OR a documentary IMAX film.

For more information, visit mosi.org.

Have you ever wanted to be part of something BIG and set a record doing so? Well, now is your chance. The Florida State Fairgrounds will attempt to beat the current record in the

Guinness Book of World Records for the largest Food Truck Festival. Be part of the history as they break the Guinness Book of World Records and put our area in history.

This two day event will be held at the Florida State Fairgrounds on Saturday March 29, 2014 from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Sunday March 30, 2014 from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Generation Food Truck and the Florida State Fair Authority are teaming together again to create an event to assemble the most food trucks in one area at one time, and we call it the "World's Largest Food Truck Festival "EVER."

They are looking to have over 200 food trucks participate. If you have a food truck and would like to participate, contact Terri Parnell – Longphee at terri.parnell@freshfromflorida.com or call 813-627-4218. The fee is \$100 for the two day event.

For those who just want to come out and be a part of the fun, there will be live music, bounce houses for the kids and a car show sure to entertain.



First Place for Fun – The Florida State Fair Begins on February 6. Read more details on Page 3

Just a Thought...

By: Christine Wynne, Editor



Love is in the air this month. One of my favorite recent stories that gets to the true meaning of the holiday is "The Valentine," written by Ruth McDonald. In it, a shy first grade boy who is not very popular tells his mother that he's going to make valentines for each and every one of his classmates. As he lovingly writes out each card, the boy worries endlessly, fearing that he will inadvertently forget someone.

As the boy sets off to school on Valentine's Day morning with 37 cards in his little hand, his mother begins to worry whether any of the other children in his class have made valentines for her introverted son, and she fears he might come home from school empty handed. "Please God," she prays, "let him get at least a few."

At the end of the school day, her heart breaks as she watches her son exit from the school bus with just one lone card in his hand, probably from his teacher, she thinks. As the boy approaches the house, however, the mother notices that her son's face is not at all sad, but is actually beaming. "Do you know what?" he says excitedly, as he enters the house. "I didn't forget one. Not a single one!"

Maybe we should all try — like this little boy does — to get back to the true meaning of the holiday this year. Let's make tomorrow not just about all the cards and gifts we'll get from our loved ones, but rather let's consider how we can best share our love with everyone and give selflessly of ourselves, especially to those who may feel lonely on Valentine's Day.

"Love's in need of love today," sang Stevie Wonder. "So don't delay. Send yours in right away." Let's keep that in mind this Valentine's Day and throughout the rest of the year. Let this be my valentine to you.

Our young writers continue to share their thoughtful stories in this issue. Skylar Harkless is a recent graduate of Frostproof High School. She started writing at the young age of 7 and has already written five books. Skylar brings a lovely story about a local favorite spot amongst lovers, Bok Tower Gardens.

I hope you enjoy this issue and remember to continue sending in your comments and suggestions. We have enjoyed hearing from you.

I hope to make The Guide as interactive as possible, so don't hesitate to drop me a line.

I'm only a few keystrokes away by email at editor@plantcityguide.com.



Spotlight on Entertainment

Plant City Entertainment will debut its winter musical comedy production of "Tavern Tales," which will include six performances.

Tavern Tales is a raucous, riotous romp of a musical comedy set in medieval times. The story takes place inside a small tavern on a rainy evening. Due to the storm many people from different and diverse walks of life are forced to seek shelter in the tavern. They pass the time by telling tales, singing songs and dancing the night away. Conflicts arise when old prejudices take over. The plots thicken, the music rises and ebbs...and hilarity ensues! Return to times gone by for an experience of story-telling of the highest degree set to spirited Celtic music!

The show, written and first directed by Terry Abbott 12 years ago, debuted to a Valrico audience at the James McCabe Theater, under the auspices of the Village Players. Featuring Celtic music and a Renaissance-era set, the show's popularity led to a "Tavern Tales II," also written by Abbott.

His brother, Derek, assisted by his wife, Michelle, will direct the show's Plant City debut.

The cast is made up of about 15 - 20 actors. Plus many volunteers are helping with set design, costumes and lighting. Cast members will bring the story to life on February 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15. Evening performances at 8:00 P.M. (doors open at 7:00 P.M.), Sunday matinee at 2:00 P.M. (doors open at 1:00 P.M.)

Tickets are \$14 for adults, \$12 for students and senior citizens and \$10 for members or group advance sales. Reservations are recommended and can be purchased in advance by calling Frances Hardee at 813-754-4929.

The Plant City Entertainment Community Theater is located at 101 North Thomas Street. For more information, visit www.plantcityentertainment.com.

"Don't Be Disappointed When They Are Gone"

The Plant City Dining & Entertainment Guide is available for free at various businesses around town. You will also find copies in the Bruton Memorial Library. Copies are limited and run out quickly. Have your copy reserved and delivered directly to your home or business for just \$10 per year, plus we put you on our premium e-mail list for the latest, up to date specials, offers and "what's happening" in the Plant City region.

AREA HOLIDAY FESTIVITIES

The chill of winter is in the air. As if on cue, the heat and humidity of our long summer will give way to cooler weather. This is the time of year when we share our incredible state with many tourists and snowbirds. Why let them have all of the fun?? From the Florida State Fair to The Strawberry Festival, the possibilities for winter fun are endless. These winter traditions, and others like them, can be found throughout our region. There is something for everyone, so pack up the family and enjoy. Here is a sampling of events in our area.

Florida State Fair

The annual Florida State Fair is a salute to the state's best in the agriculture and equestrian industry including an abundance of shows, music, rides and food for 12 consecutive days February 6-17. Excitement is in the air all over the fairgrounds with plenty of free entertainment included with admission. Make sure to plan your day in advance to enjoy all the sights, sounds, and tastes the state fair has to offer. New this year is FMX Extreme Motorcycle Show Parking is free during the Fair and the largest portable roller coaster in North America called the Comet II.

Fairgoers can enjoy a spacious midway that provides more than 100 rides and games and there is nothing like fair food – cotton candy, ice cream, and things fried that you never thought of frying – think fried Oreo cookies or chocolate covered bacon! Exhibitors come from all over the state to continue the tradition of showing off their handiwork, children participating in 4H and FFA are eager to show their skills and animals, and a visit to the Florida State Fair isn't complete without stepping back in time in Cracker Country – a rustic turn-of-the-century village.

Free concerts at the fair include “America” February 6, “Country Gold” February 12, “Sister Hazel” February 13 and “Uncle Kracker” February 17.

Gates open daily at 10:00 a.m. Monday through Thursday, and at 9:00 a.m. Friday through Sunday. Cracker Country is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Monday - Friday

Adults Age 12 & Over: \$9 Advance or \$11 Gate
Senior: \$7 Advance or \$9 Gate
Children Age 6-11: \$5 Advance or \$6 Gate
Ages 5 & Under: FREE

Saturday - Sunday

Adults Age 12 & Over: \$9 Advance or \$13 Gate
Senior: \$7 Advance or \$9 Gate
Children Age 6-11: \$5 Advance or \$7 Gate
Ages 5 & Under: FREE



Florida State Fair

Purchase discounted advance tickets at www.floridastatefair.net or at Walgreens or AAA Motorclub.

Busch Gardens Real Music Concert Series

The Real Music Concert Series returns to Busch Gardens Tuesdays through Fridays January 14 to March 7 with incredible live music spanning the 1930s-1970s to include swing, blues, pop, jazz, disco, and rock 'n roll – a genre for everyone.

Concerts are held at 11:30 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday through Friday. The concerts are free with park admission.

Bay City Rollers – February 4 – 7

Paul Revere and The Raiders – February 11-14

The Osmonds – February 18 – 21

Frankie Avalon – February 25 – 28

Lee Greenwood – March 4 - 7

Florida Strawberry Festival

Each spring, the Florida Strawberry Festival rolls out the red carpet to welcome visitors from throughout the Sunshine State and the world. Guests come from near and far to enjoy exhibits of agriculture, commerce, industry, livestock, fine arts, horticulture, and crafts. The fabric of American life is woven into the Festival through social events, contests, youth developmental programs, top-name entertainment, and parades with glorious floats and high-stepping marching bands.

The 79th annual festival will be February 27 to March 9 and will include 24 headline acts on the Wish Farm Soundstage, an assortment of free family oriented daily shows, more than 80 carnival rides, nearly 400 vendors and of course – plenty of strawberry shortcake.



Friends of the Bruton Memorial Library to Present
An Evening with Patrick Smith, Jr.,
Son of the Author of the iconic Florida story – *A Land Remembered*

Set aside the date – Tuesday, February 11, 7:00 p.m. at the Bruton Memorial Library. This will be a presentation that you will not want to miss and you will not forget.

The Friends of the Library is bringing Patrick Smith, Jr., “Rick”, to Plant City for an action packed multimedia presentation about the life and writings of his father, Patrick Smith, author of the famous historical novel *A Land Remembered*.

Few if any books have captured the spirit and colorful history of Florida as has Patrick Smith’s beloved novel, *A Land Remembered*. It has been said many times that people should be issued a copy of *A Land Remembered* when they cross the Florida state line. Here is your opportunity to get to know the author and his work as Smith’s son, Rick, takes the stage to delight audiences with a multimedia show about his father and the extraordinary experiences he had which were necessary for him to write with such authority of Florida pioneers, the Seminoles, migrant workers, “river rats” of Mississippi, the social injustices of the South and the challenges of the present.

Florida Southern College history professor Dr. James M. Denham said “I don’t think there’s anybody in the whole state ... that has as much ability to reach the general public as Patrick Smith. It’s unbelievable how many people have read his work. That may be the only thing they’ve read about Florida.”

And former state senator Rick Dantzler, of Winter Haven, stated “It’s the greatest book written about Florida.”

Rick Smith’s show combines his own quirky brand of humor and storytelling with videos, family photos, music, sound, and visual effects to bring his father’s colorful life into focus. Through the magic of video, Patrick Smith himself makes several appearances throughout the program to tell in his own words some fascinating and humorous stories about key experiences in his life and his work as a novelist.

Tampa Bay Times staff writer Jeff Klinkenberg wrote the following about Patrick Smith in 2012:

“He knows about telling stories. For many Floridians, in fact, he is the best of all time.”

“A Land Remembered is an action-packed historical novel that takes place between 1858 and 1968. It follows three generations of a plucky family struggling to survive the hostile Florida landscape...It’s a heartstring-tugging page-turner filled with brave and saintly folks and a

wonderful sense of place.”

Gary White, of *The Ledger*, wrote “It’s hard to overstate the ardor many Floridians feel for *A Land Remembered*, sometimes called ‘the cracker Bible.’ For some, the fictional chronicle has become almost inseparable from their families’ own histories.”

Rick Smith, a professional media producer living in California, has taken up the circuit after his father and is touring Florida with a high energy, multimedia and multi-sensory presentation about his famous father, his life, and the experiences that led him to write his books. Rick performs in Victorian clothing, typical of the time of Tobias Maclvey, as he narrates the dynamic multimedia show playing behind him. Audiences are sure to be *amazed, amused, and inspired* at the life of this humble writer that is beloved by readers of all ages. They may even learn a thing or two they didn’t know about the state of Florida.

Patrick Smith, the author, will make video appearances throughout the program to entertain and enlighten the audience about his extraordinary life as a writer and his thoughts about Florida.

- He’ll explain things such as how he broke into the Seminole culture in order to learn about them
- He’ll explain how he worked alongside migrant workers in order to write *Angel City* which helped improve the lives of migrant workers
- You’ll learn how he researched *A Land Remembered* for over two years before he could write it
- He’ll share his thoughts about the “real” Florida.

This program is a sensory delight, with Rick Smith narrating live throughout the show. Come and enjoy an unforgettable journey into a Florida that once was, is no more, and never again will be. Tuesday, February 11, 2014, 7:00 p.m. at the Bruton Memorial Library.

Advertising in The Plant City Guide works. Don’t believe us? You are reading this now, and others are doing what you are doing. We Get Our Papers Out There, All Around The Plant City Area And Surround Towns. YOU Found Us. Others Are, Too.

Let Love Blossom

By: Sklyar Harkless

In the center of Lake Wales Florida is a 50-acre, serene, breath-taking garden by the name of Bok Tower. It was established in 1929 as a gift to the American people by Edward W. Bok; it holds palms, pines, azaleas, and much more, all around the 205-foot Singing Tower of brick and steel, animals carved into the gleaming marble, limestone, and coral. The Biblical story of Creation is found in the brass doors and wrought-iron gates that might also remind a day-dreamer of Sleeping Beauty's tower. On the top, the statues at first look like cloaked people with the hoods pulled over their heads, but with a better, more intent look, you will see that they are in fact not people but birds—standing atop the tower as if to protect it forever.

These gardens represent Bok's love of nature, music, and beauty, for in the tower, on the fifth floor is a carillonner by the name of Geert D'hollander. His music echoes around the gardens, taking you to a place deep in your imaginations—In my experience, I found myself walking through the gates of Hogwarts (Harry Potter's school), when Geert began to play the Harry Potter theme song.

All around the gardens of Bok Tower there are fairy-tales; stop by the Window by the pond, where you can watch nature all around you. Walk to the Sandhill forest, where you will be wrapped in the soft, earthy smell of trees and bark; a quiet, tranquil portal into relaxation. Visit the Saw Palmetto of about 100 years old and see the black fruits that were an important food source for Native Americans but are now used for medicines and are eaten by wildlife.

You can get lost in your daydreams amid these blooms and trees. You can almost imagine women in dresses, delicately twirling umbrellas over their heads, walking alongside handsome men in tuxedos, and hear them share a light conversation about the weather.

Enjoy the café of the gardens—soups, salads, sandwiches, or even just some soft, creamy ice cream or hot, delicious coffee.

Spend the end of your visit in the lawn before the tower, where you can watch the sunset paint the tower in shades of pink and gold as the 5:00 hour strikes and the bells play a melody all for you. Let all of your boundaries go and let relaxation take you gently in its arms, carry you far away, into the twilight.

Valentine's day is just days away. If you are looking for an escape from reality, a day spent



with your special someone, then travel to Lake Wales's Bok Tower (1151 Tower Boulevard, Lake Wales, FL) 8 A.M. to 6 P.M., and get lost in your day dreams—let love blossom.

VALENTINE'S DAY TRIVIA

Americans probably began exchanging hand-made valentines in the early 1700s. In addition to the United States, Valentine's Day is celebrated in Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, France and Australia. In Great Britain, Valentine's Day began to be popularly celebrated around the 17th century.

By the middle of the 18th, it was common for friends and lovers of all social classes to exchange small tokens of affection or handwritten notes, and by 1900 printed cards began to replace written letters due to improvements in printing technology. Ready-made cards were an easy way for people to express their emotions in a time when direct expression of one's feelings was discouraged. Cheaper postage rates also contributed to an increase in the popularity of sending Valentine's Day greetings.

Approximately 150 million Valentine's Day cards are exchanged annually, making Valentine's Day the second most popular card-sending holiday after Christmas.