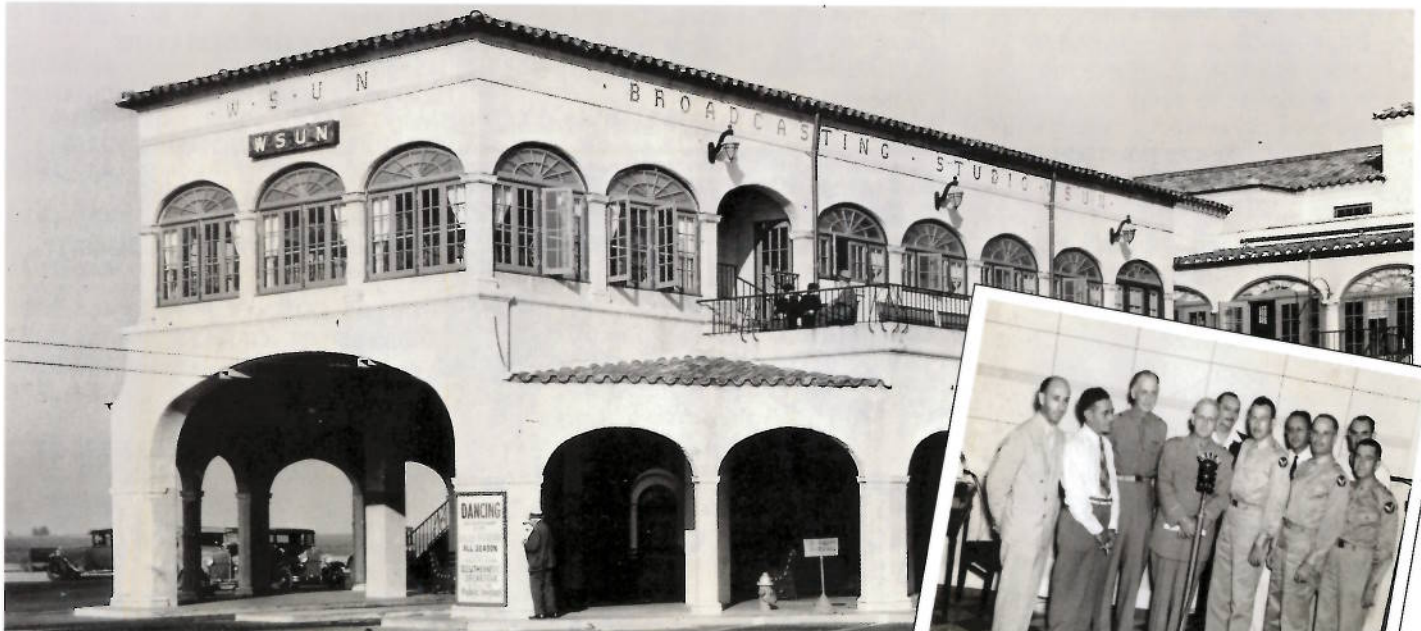


## CLEARWATER BEACH

## NEIGHBORHOOD

including Sand Key and Island Estates

Newsletter 20-25



## WSUN—A Bright Spot in Our Radio History

A new AM radio station was created in July of 1927 when as partners, the City and the St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce bought half ownership in a station owned by the Clearwater Chamber of Commerce. St Pete's half was named WSUN-AM, which unofficially stood for "Why Stay Up North." Clearwater's half became WFLA-AM.

The sales agreement called for a crazy "shared" broadcast arrangement. WSUN and WFLA would each operate three nights per week and alternating Sundays. Both stations used the same transmitter and frequency, but had separate offices and studios.

WSUN-AM began broadcasting on 590 kHz — with its own identity—on November 1, 1927. The inaugural 4-hour broadcast from 7:30 - 11:30 pm originated from their new \$40,000 studios on the second floor of the St. Pete Municipal Pier—a.k.a. the Million Dollar Pier and Casino. Excited crowds surrounded the station listening over the outside speakers.

Due to a major reshuffling of Florida radio frequencies, the station moved to 580 on the dial in January 1928 and to 900 in November before finally settling at 620 in 1929.

In 1932, the stations installed a directional antenna near the Courtney Campbell Causeway. It became the first directional antenna system used in commercial broadcasting in the United States. The tower configuration of two relaying towers, straddling

what is now Route 60/Gulf-to-Bay Blvd., overlooking Tampa Bay, are today on display in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C. as they literally revolutionized AM radio engineering.

The dual WSUN/WFLA relationship lasted through decades of costly infighting between the St. Pete Chamber and the St. Pete City Manager, until 1941 when the City of St. Petersburg acquired "both halves." WFLA moved to 940 kHz (and later to today's 970). WSUN stayed on the 620 frequency and began broadcasting full-time.

This was radio's Golden Age...the early days before television. WSUN, as part of the NBC/Blue Network (later ABC), and aired *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, *The Green Hornet*, *The Lone Ranger*, and *Ted Mack's Original Amateur Hour*. By the mid-1950s with the growth of television, radio wisely began focusing more on music. WSUN turned its attention to St. Petersburg's senior citizen crowd, airing music-oriented shows and local programming hosted by its own staff DJs.

"You could go anywhere in St. Pete or Tampa or Clearwater at 5:45 in the afternoon and hear Amos 'N Andy coming out of every radio," a WSUN employee told the *St. Petersburg Times* in 1957. National commentator Paul Harvey even made a surprise visit to the station in the early '60s.

In 1966, after nearly 40 years, the City of St. Petersburg sold WSUN to Detroit broadcaster Hy Levinson. The same year, the Municipal Pier, where WSUN had broadcast from for decades, was closed and demolished and WSUN moved their studio and offices to 201 2nd Avenue North, across from today's Sundial.



Airmen & civilians at WSUN microphone. Identified are Louis Link, Glen Leland, W.E. McEachern, Joe Frobole. circa 1943

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## and More...

**GOLF TOURNAMENT** The Clearwater High School Football Program along with the Tornado Strong Football Booster Club is hosting their 6th annual golf tournament Saturday, April 14 at Bardmoor Country Club. It includes a \$10,000 hole-in-one, a full hot lunch, goodie bags, and many prizes. All proceeds are used to support the entire football team so that the safety, security, and well-being of all students who participate in the Clearwater High School Football Program are enhanced. In the past two years, they have a record number of kids receive college football scholarships, including Florida Gators, UCF, Indiana and Tennessee. For information, visit [tornadostrong.org/golf-tournament](http://tornadostrong.org/golf-tournament) or call 727-222-3479. Sponsorship opportunities are available.



**SAND KEY MEMORIES** Do you remember Sand Key before the condos were built? If so, we would like to hear from you. We are working on a story about Sand Key—in the 1960s and '70s when it was a party spot. If you have a story to tell, call or email [Bob@GriffinDirectories.com](mailto:Bob@GriffinDirectories.com).

**GROUNDWATER REPLENISHMENT** Did you know Clearwater Utilities delivers more than 11 million gallons of drinking water and nearly 7 million gallons of reclaimed water to customers each day? Water is one of our most precious natural resources, and city leaders have some high-tech ideas on how to make the most of our water through a process called groundwater replenishment.

Working with a team of water engineers, the city has studied and tested a two-step process of purifying recycled water to better-than-drinking-water standards. The Clearwater Groundwater Replenishment Project, co-funded by the Southwest Florida Water Management District, uses a three-part cleaning process to remove impurities and kill germs and viruses in the water, then reintroduces it into the Floridan aquifer to provide a safe, clean water supply to Clearwater and the surrounding communities. Clearwater is one of the first cities in the state to explore and implement this technology in water recycling.

**LOOKING FOR PARKING ON THE BEACH?** Don't forget the new North Beach Parking Plaza, that opened on north beach last year at 483 Mandalay Ave. It offers 450 new parking spaces for \$2 per hour on levels 3 to 6. The garage is near the Clearwater Ferry, and multiple Jolley Trolley stops. Beach-goers have quick access to the beach via Baymont Street, and the garage is a pay-as-you-leave facility, so you can stay as long as you would like. Overnight parking is available.



During spring break, city officials also encourage you to park in downtown Clearwater and take the Clearwater Ferry or Jolley Trolley to Clearwater Beach.

For beach parking information, visit [myclearwater.com/parking](http://myclearwater.com/parking). For ferry or trolley information, visit [clearwaterferry.com](http://clearwaterferry.com) or [jolleytrolley.com](http://jolleytrolley.com).

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