The Journal

ARCHITECTURE / HISTORY / PLACES / PERSPECTIVES



Williamsburg, Virginia | Original photograph by Mark Middleton

A World of Connection

From Honduras to historic Williamsburg, discover the people, places, and stories shaping Tampa Bay and beyond this November.

NOVEMBER 2026

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An edition to keep.

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FROM THE EDITOR

A World of Connection



As November arrives and another year begins drawing to a close, I've found myself reflecting on just how much can happen in twelve months, and how the people we meet and the places we experience can change the way we see the world.

October was an especially meaningful month. I traveled to Honduras with fellow Rotarians to help bring clean water to a community in need, then continued to Williamsburg, Virginia, where I spent time with Rotary leaders from across our region. Both experiences reminded me how much we have to learn from one another, whether we're working together on a service project or exchanging ideas about how to make our communities stronger.

Meanwhile, something equally exciting has been happening closer to home. Throughout this year, I've had opportunities to connect with real estate professionals around the world, from international conferences in France, Portugal, and Brazil to conversations about how cities are growing, neighborhoods are evolving, and people are choosing where to build their lives. Now, through the Suncoast Tampa Association of REALTORS® Global Summit, we're welcoming international colleagues to Tampa Bay.

After spending so much time exploring other parts of the world, there's something especially rewarding about introducing people to the place I've called home for more than four decades.

As we approach Thanksgiving, I'm particularly grateful for the friendships, opportunities, and experiences that have made this year so memorable. I'm equally grateful for the clients who continue to place their trust in me, the communities that have welcomed me, and the opportunity to pursue work that I find genuinely meaningful.

This month's Middleton Tampa Bay Journal brings many of those experiences together. We'll visit Honduras and historic Williamsburg, explore another distinctive corner of Tampa Bay, discover a few things worth doing around town, and look at how our region continues to find its place in an increasingly connected world.

I've come to appreciate that no matter how far we travel or how much the world changes around us, the relationships we build and the places we care about are what give those experiences lasting meaning.

Thank you for joining me again this month. I hope you enjoy this edition.

THIS MONTH IN TAMPA BAY

Experience Tampa Bay This November

01

PINELLAS

The City as a Canvas

SHINE Mural Festival | November 6–15

St. Petersburg's public-art scene is one of the things that gives the city its distinctive identity. SHINE celebrates its 12th year with large-scale murals and events, giving readers a reason to explore neighborhoods beyond the usual waterfront destinations.

02

HILLSBOROUGH

Florida Roots

Hillsborough County Fair | November 5–15

A celebration of agricultural heritage, livestock, rides, local traditions, and the families who keep rural Florida alive. This is a wonderful contrast to the glass towers and new development that usually dominate our conversations about Tampa Bay.

03

PASCO

Take the Trail Less Traveled

Take a Hike Day | November 21

At Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park, visitors can enjoy a self-guided hike through one of Pasco County's beautiful natural landscapes. It's a welcome reminder that some of the region's greatest amenities are its protected forests, trails, and open spaces.

Archive correction, November 19, 2026: SHINE dates corrected from November 8–17 to November 6–15 using the official event listing. Other calendar text is preserved from the original issue.

Official SHINE event listing

CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

Williamsburg, Virginia

A Walk Through American History





Photograph: Mark Middleton

I've traveled throughout Virginia many times over the years, and Williamsburg is one of those destinations where American history comes alive in a remarkable way. I was there for a Rotary conference, but fortunately had time to explore and enjoy much of what this historic town has to offer.

I stayed at the beautiful Williamsburg Lodge, right in the heart of Colonial Williamsburg, and I have to admit that waking up to 42-degree October mornings was a welcome change from the Florida heat. The crisp autumn air made walking through the historic streets and gardens even more enjoyable.

One of the highlights was spending time on the campus of the College of William & Mary, founded in 1693 and the second-oldest institution of higher learning in the country. Just a short walk away, Colonial Williamsburg offers an extraordinary opportunity to experience America's past. From beautifully restored and reconstructed 18th-century buildings to historical demonstrations, live performances depicting the events of the American Revolution, and fascinating stories of the people who lived through it, there really is something new to discover around every corner.

What I appreciate most about Williamsburg is how accessible its history is. You can spend hours simply walking the streets, exploring the architecture, visiting museums, enjoying the restaurants, and learning something new along the way. With Jamestown and Yorktown nearby, the entire region offers an incredible opportunity to explore the early chapters of American history.

And here's something my friends in Tampa Bay might appreciate: Williamsburg is much closer and easier to visit than you might think. You can fly nonstop from Tampa International Airport to Richmond in approximately two hours, rent a car, and be in Williamsburg after a drive of roughly 45 minutes to an hour. Norfolk International Airport is another convenient option, also about 45 miles from Williamsburg. For those who enjoy a road trip, it's approximately 800 to 835 miles from Tampa, or about 12 to 14 hours of driving. It's a surprisingly accessible destination for a long weekend, especially in October when the cooler temperatures and changing seasons offer such a refreshing break from Florida.

I certainly could have used another day or two. Between the history, the architecture, the beautiful surroundings, and everything there is to explore, Williamsburg is a place I would happily return to again and again.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Photography. Travel. Service. Life Along the Way.



Image: Middleton Tampa Bay archive

If there's one thing you've probably noticed about me by now, it's that I don't stay in one place for very long. November will take me to New Orleans for NAR NXT, followed by Florence, Italy, in December for an international real estate conference. And in January, I'll return to Washington, D.C., for my annual NAR advocacy meetings. There's always something on the calendar, somewhere new to explore, and a good reason to bring my camera along.

Photography has become one of my favorite ways to document these experiences, whether I'm traveling halfway around the world or discovering something interesting right here in Tampa Bay. I enjoy sharing the places I visit, the people I meet, and the moments that catch my attention, often long before they find their way into this Journal.

My personal Instagram is where much of that journey unfolds, along with the everyday experiences, friendships, and community work that make life so rewarding. If you'd like to come along, I'd be honored to have you follow me. There's always another story just around the corner.

What a Season, Tampa Bay Rays!

What an incredible baseball season! I was excited just to attend a few games this year, but who would have imagined that I would have the opportunity to throw out the ceremonial first pitch during a season that would take the team all the way to the World Series! It was an experience I'll never forget. Congratulations on a remarkable season and a job well done. Thank you for the memories, and I can't wait to be back at the ballpark next year!

Visit My Instagram

THE BIGGER PICTURE

Growing Fast. Living Costly.

I've lived in Tampa Bay for more than four decades, and the transformation taking place across our region continues to amaze me.

New residential developments, expanding business districts, international investment, and growing interest in our communities are changing the landscape in ways few of us could have imagined twenty years ago.

But there's another side to this growth that deserves just as much attention: the cost of calling Tampa Bay home.

A recent report from the Tampa Bay Partnership estimates that Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Pasco counties will need approximately 255,000 additional housing units by 2035 to accommodate projected growth. Perhaps more concerning, roughly one-third of households across our three counties already spend more than 30% of their income on housing.

Meanwhile, the residential market itself is sending mixed signals. September's data showed that the median single-family home price across the Tampa Bay metropolitan area remained near $400,000, while sales slowed compared with a year earlier. Higher mortgage rates continue to influence affordability, and buyers are increasingly attentive to insurance, property taxes, and the overall cost of ownership.

As someone who works in real estate every day, I believe our greatest challenge isn't simply attracting more people or investment. It's ensuring that the teachers, nurses, first responders, young professionals, retirees, and families who make our communities work can continue to afford to live here.

I'm excited about Tampa Bay's future, particularly as we strengthen our relationships with the international real estate community. But successful growth requires more than impressive skylines and new developments. It requires thoughtful planning, housing choices at different price points, infrastructure, and a commitment to preserving the character of our neighborhoods.

The real measure of Tampa Bay's success won't simply be how much we grow, but how well we're able to accommodate the people who want to build their lives here.

Market figures and forecasts are reproduced as originally published. They describe the issue’s historical context, not current conditions.

Explore current Tampa Bay market reports

THE WORLD OF REAL ESTATE

Florida Was Once Underwater

The surprising geological history beneath the Sunshine State.

Long before Florida became known for its beaches, waterfront homes, and year-round sunshine, much of the peninsula we recognize today was beneath the sea.

Over millions of years, changing sea levels repeatedly submerged and exposed portions of Florida. Marine sediments accumulated, eventually forming much of the limestone that lies beneath our feet. In fact, fossils of ancient marine creatures can still be found throughout the state, sometimes surprisingly far from today's coastline.

That geological history helps explain some of Florida's most distinctive features. Our natural springs, underground aquifers, limestone caves, and occasional sinkholes are all connected to the porous rock beneath us. Even Florida's relatively flat landscape tells part of the story of a peninsula shaped by ancient seas.

And here's something particularly interesting: Florida's coastline hasn't always looked anything like it does today. During the last ice age, when sea levels were considerably lower, the peninsula extended much farther into what is now the Gulf of Mexico. As glaciers melted and oceans rose, the coastline gradually moved inland toward its present position.

So the next time you're walking along one of Tampa Bay's beautiful beaches or exploring one of Florida's freshwater springs, consider what's beneath your feet.

Florida's story didn't begin with the first settlers or the first cities. It began millions of years ago, beneath the ocean.

Considering Selling Your Home?

If you, or someone you know, are thinking about selling a home, I'd welcome the opportunity to have a conversation. Every successful sale starts with clarity, and understanding the market is the first step in deciding whether now is the right time to move.

Click the button below to learn more about our proven process and marketing system. It would be my honor to provide insight, guidance, and an honest assessment to help you make the best decision for your situation.

From Listed to SOLD

WORTH EXPLORING | A LOCAL FAVORITE

A Century of Movie Magic



Image: Middleton Tampa Bay archive

Tampa Theatre | Downtown Tampa

711 N. Franklin Street, Tampa, FL 33602 (813) 274-8286

There are few places in Tampa quite like the historic Tampa Theatre. Celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, this beautifully restored movie palace is an experience worth having, whether you're attending a film, enjoying a concert, or taking one of its fascinating behind-the-scenes tours.

Opened in 1926, the theatre transports visitors into another era with its Mediterranean-inspired architecture, ornate details, and remarkable ceiling designed to resemble a star-filled night sky. What I find particularly special is that generations of Tampa residents have worked to preserve this extraordinary landmark. As our region continues to grow and change, places like Tampa Theatre remind us why preserving our history matters.

If you've never stepped inside, I highly recommend making time for a visit.

NEIGHBORHOOD NO. 03

Tarpon Springs

Greek Heritage, Historic Homes, and Life Along the Gulf



Image: Middleton Tampa Bay archive

Tarpon Springs, Florida / Neighborhood No. 03

Explore the Neighborhood

Continue with the complete neighborhood story on Middleton Tampa Bay.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Many Hands. One Purpose.





Photograph: Mark Middleton

One of the most rewarding parts of serving as Rotary District Governor has been witnessing what happens when people come together with a shared desire to make a difference. Our recent trip to Honduras was a wonderful example of that.

I had the privilege of traveling alongside fellow Rotarians who generously gave their time, resources, and energy to help bring clean water to a community in need. Each person brought something different to the experience, but we were united by a common purpose: making a meaningful and lasting difference in the lives of others.

What made the experience particularly special wasn't simply the work we accomplished. It was the friendships strengthened along the way, the relationships we built with the people of Honduras, and the opportunity to see firsthand how much can be accomplished when people are willing to serve beyond their own communities.

I'm incredibly grateful to everyone who made this project possible, especially those who traveled with us and the local partners who helped bring it together. The clean-water project represents a lasting benefit for the community, but I believe the experience also left a lasting impression on every one of us.

Service has a remarkable way of connecting people who might otherwise never meet, and reminding us how much good we can accomplish together.

ONE LAST THING

Thank You

Thank you for spending a little time with me again this month.

As Thanksgiving approaches, I've been reflecting on just how fortunate I am for the people, friendships, and opportunities that have made this year so meaningful. From serving alongside fellow Rotarians in Honduras to walking the historic streets of Williamsburg and welcoming international colleagues to Tampa Bay, I've been reminded that some of life's greatest rewards come from the relationships we build and the experiences we share.

I'm especially grateful for the trust and friendships I've developed throughout my years in real estate. Many of the people I've had the privilege of working with have become much more than clients, and those relationships are something I never take for granted.

My hope is that the Middleton Tampa Bay Journal continues to give you something to look forward to each month. Whether it's discovering a new place around Tampa Bay, learning something about our history, or seeing a different part of the world through my travels and photography, I hope you always find something here worth your time.

As we enter the holiday season, I encourage you to slow down when you can, spend time with the people who matter most, and find opportunities to make a difference in someone else's life. There is so much to be grateful for, and sometimes the simplest moments turn out to be the most meaningful.

As always, I'm here for you and the people important to you. Whether you have a real estate question, need a trusted recommendation, or simply want to catch up over coffee, I'd love to hear from you.

Until next month, I wish you and your family a wonderful Thanksgiving filled with good health, happiness, and time together.

Upward, Mark Middleton

A Conversation About Tampa Bay Real Estate

Whether you're considering a move, exploring a distinctive property or simply curious about the market, I would welcome the opportunity to connect.

Connect With Mark

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THE JOURNAL

Photographs & Credits

Cover

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A World of Connection

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