

CITRUS CHRONICLE ONLINE ARTICLE  
Monday, July 28,2014

Residents, business owners and weekenders have varying perspectives on Homosassa, hard-working men and women mix with retirees enjoying the good life and visitors & Mother Nature's glory or just having a good time. Homosassa is known for its excellent commercial and recreational fishing. Those who know Homosassa are proud to be part of the simple life of the small fishing village.

As the editor of the Homosassa Beacon, and as someone who has spent the last 10 years out in the community and 18 years as a resident of Homosassa, I'm privileged to have the insights of many in the community. In recent talks with a mix of people, not once...any complaints. Homosassa children attend one the best elementary schools in the county — it recently received yet another "A" grade. Many of these same children will attend college because the good people of Homosassa have raised money to provide them with scholarships. And we've seen these same youths return as adults, excited at the opportunity to make an impact in their hometown community.

Homosassa is a world-class fishing destination where world-class tarpon reside, luring sportsmen from far and wide.

The scenic Homosassa River is home to commercial fishing operations and a big draw for recreational boaters, too.

Homosassa is also home to a first-magnitude spring where manatees congregate, especially during winter months, and the Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park, which draws visitors from all over the world.

There's an eclectic mix of people in Homosassa, too. "There's no pretense here. Everyone is treated the same whether you're rich or poor. My son was raised here and now he's an accountant," said Jeff Beeler, a local boat captain.

In Homosassa, businesses were doing well even before the ecotourism boom of recreational scallop harvesting. It's nice when everyone can benefit from a good scallop season, but none of them are dependent on scallops to survive.



That's due to the large number of residents who support their community because these people are our friends and neighbors.

"I live and work in Homosassa. We have everything here — diving, skiing, fishing, golfing and so much more," said Chad Halleen, vice president of Love Honda and Chevrolet. "This is a community that stands behind itself and is a great community to raise kids. As the president of the Boys & Girls Club we have money to operate thanks to donations from many Homosassa residents."

And Homosassa is a friendly and a relatively low-crime hamlet, by comparison to many communities in the Sunshine State. Residents walk down their streets without fear; neighbors still help those in need; and, friendly townspeople are happy to assist lost visitors in finding their way to The Freezer, or any of the other uniquely Homosassa establishments.

"People love it here. When someone from up North comes down here for a visit, the next thing you know they moved here because it's a great place to live," said local resident Doug Bossick. Pete Parker added, "This is a little patch of paradise." This is what the real community of Homosassa is made of.

As with all communities, there are challenges here that are common in today's society, but there are always concerned and caring people working behind the scenes in an effort to help those at risk or in need.

While those in many other communities are in search of "the next best thing," those who know the Homosassa lifestyle, including resident Deb Fick, say they want to preserve their corner of the world just as it is.

That's because the way it is is something special. Homosassa is genuinely a one-of-a-kind place.