

Reflections of Manatee

August 2026

The Executive Suite



Summer has flown by in a flurry of activity and it's already back to school. Pretty soon we will be welcoming our winter residents back to town. We have been thinking ahead here at the museum and have an exciting line up of lectures and events planned to start in late September and early October. We continue to celebrate America's 250th anniversary with an emphasis on the unique ingredients, flavors, and cuisines of the Sunshine State. **Join us for a variety of topics** including the foods of the **Columbian Exchange**, the introduction of **ice cream and ice houses**, and **the impact of sugar**. We will also be offering some ticketed events including **"Tastes of the African Diaspora: Episode 3"** and **"Delights of the Rum Runners"**.

Our **Conversations on the Porch** series continues through the fall. We are also adding opportunities to participate in a drum line (no experience needed). **Join us for yard games, music, and sunsets on the fourth Friday of the month starting October 23.** Stay tuned for more information!

If you haven't stopped by in a while, come on over. We've updated our Visitor Center interpretation to reflect the diversity of Florida and Manatee County's past honoring the contributions of the **Native Floridians, Cuban Ranchos, Freedom Seekers, and White settlers**. We are open **Thursday and Friday 10am-3pm and Saturday 12pm-5pm**.

Our Community Museum



YOUR OPINION

MATTERS

WE NEED – AND WANT – YOUR OPINION! To better **create programming that serves the needs of our members** and local community Reflections has created a community survey. We need you to **complete our 10 minute survey** about programming, landscaping, educational opportunities, member services/benefits, and general museum atmosphere. This is your big opportunity to **tell us exactly what you would like** to see coming up next at Our Community Museum. If you complete the survey by the end of August and leave your email address you will be **entered to win one of four \$25 Amazon gift cards!** If you have already completed the survey, you are already entered to win. Please only complete the survey once.



[Survey Link](#)



Tastes of the African Diaspora

At the Back to Angola Festival in 2026 we met **Chef Durrell Thompson and Anna-Maria Galvez of Filet of Soul**. Chef D brings the ingredients and flavors of Gullah Geechee cuisine to the Sarasota Bradenton community with a stunning blend of flavor and passion. Reflections has been **hosting private dinner parties** featuring Filet of Soul and each meal has been a delight. If you are interested in hosting a small dinner party at Reflections please contact us for more information. If you would like to **participate in our next planned ticketed event with Filet of Soul**, stay tuned for information about our November 9th “Tastes of the African Diaspora: Episode 3”.



Meet the Board

Board member Stephen Oliver’s passion for Manatee history was ignited when he learned about the Angola archaeological site and saw the potential for Bradenton’s riverwalk and renovated Mineral Spring Park to offer cultural tourism experiences and public art. Stephen finds it profound that this can all be traced to a small group of people dedicated to preserving the area’s history and layered cultural legacy. Stephen joined Reflections to honor the work already done and help build on it. To that end, he has assisted in creating a campus masterplan and built new welcoming entry portals to greet visitors from both East 4th Street and Mineral Spring Park.

Stephen brings a wealth of training and experience including a BFA in Architecture at New Jersey Institute of Technology and an MFA in Furniture Design from Rhode Island School of Design. In graduate school his path branched to include public art and urban planning. Stephen currently works as a multimedia artist with several public art commissions in Florida. He feels an inherent sense of justice being served in celebrating each culture that drew life and embraced freedom around Bradenton’s Mineral Spring. He is looking forward to Reflections of Manatee growing as a place that welcomes both the local community and international visitors to explore our shared history.



Comic Update



Comic Book 2 “Fighting as Colonial Marines” and **Comic Book 3** “Andrew Jackson Attacks” are **now available in the gift shop or at Bat City Comics**. That’s 1-4 published. We are anticipating Book 5 “Escape through the Everglades” soon!



PBS

We Made PBS!



PBS interviewed **Sherry Svekis, Daphney Towns, Uzi Baram, Ph.D, and Vickie Oldham** for an episode of “Greater” featuring the story of the Angola Freedom Seekers and discovery of the archaeological site. The program is 18 minutes long. Watch it using the included link.

PBS Greater Bradenton Series

Upcoming Events

We have many events planned for 2026-2027 and will be publishing a calendar as soon as we finalize dates with lecturers, performers, and guests. Our first lecture will feature **Ofelia Uribe-Diaz** sharing information on the **foods of the Columbian Exchange**. This lecture will take place **October 10 at 11am** in the Visitor Center. Stay tuned for more details.

We have more lined up including : Lectures, Music on the Porch with yard games, Reflections of Manatee Drummers, Pokémon Go Meet Up Group, Community Holiday Party/Open House, and our Friends, Family, and Members Early Bird's NYE on the Riverwalk East.



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