

St. Petersburg Times

Chalk it up to a real big shuffle

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On Saturday, 64 lanes of the St. Petersburg Shuffleboard Club transform into a patchwork of pastels.

The all-day and all-evening I Love St. Pete party starts with a chalk art contest that adults and children can enter.

Several artists are already registered to compete - expect to see Christmas-meets-the-tropics themed drawings - and many entrants will sign up Saturday at the quaint recreational complex on Mirror Lake Drive and Fourth Avenue N downtown.

In addition, there will be an exhibition of local fine art, a fashion show (8 p.m.), crafts and local bands.

Free pastels and hand wipes will be distributed to adults and the first 100 children younger than 12. Artist-volunteers provide tips and demonstrations on how to draw on concrete, so folks who register can feel less intimidated.

It has become a cliché to say there's something for everybody, but there really does seem to be something for everyone here.

By day, you get family-friendly fun with interactive booths, food and tunes by local teen jazz, salsa and funk band New South Whales (5:30 p.m.) and Bluegrass Southern Style (3 p.m.). At night, it takes on a more grown-up feel, when beer and wine are sold and people stream through the clubhouses to check out the photography, paintings and sculptures on display from local artists Hugh Williams, Carrie Pratt, Carrie Waite, Josh Sullivan and others.

St. Petersburg music acts Rebekah Pulley (7 p.m.), Auditorium (9 p.m.) and Human Condition (10 p.m.) - a solid mix of acoustic and alternative rock - perform outside in the main court amid the chalk art contest entries.

The inaugural I Love St. Pete last year attracted about 600 people.

People's choice awards will be given for adults and children. An overall winner for artistic merit will be chosen by judge JoEllen Schilke, host of WMNF-FM 88.5's local arts show Art in Your Ear.

The people's choice winners will be elected in an ingenious manner: paper bags will be placed by each drawing, and voters drop coins into bags by their favorites. The winners get to keep the loot as a prize, along with the collected change of all the other competitors. The overall artistic merit winner gets a \$200 cash prize.

The I Love St. Pete festival is an offshoot of the weekly St. Pete Shuffle. Every Friday, organizers put on games and socials at the courts aimed to draw a more diverse audience to help preserve the charming, historical property.

"It's a little bit different every week," says Phillip Clark, one of the organizers. "Once a week a band comes to play, everyone from parents to kids to punk rock kids. It's where you can be able to socialize and play a game and not be in a smoky bar, and people find that refreshing."

FAST FACTS

Preview

I Love St. Pete, 9 a.m.-11:30 p.m. Saturday, St. Petersburg Shuffleboard Club, 559 Mirror Lake Drive N, St. Petersburg. Admission: free. (727) 385-1990.

Contest rules

Each artist gets a 9- by 5-foot area of shuffleboard lane to draw on. Illustrations must be inoffensive; no political or commercial advertising statements. One lead artist per entry, but supporting artists are allowed. Stenciling is permitted. \$5 per entry.

Schedule

8:30 a.m.: Chalk Artist registration

9 a.m.: Drawing with chalk refresher course

1 p.m.: Chalk Art judging begins

6 p.m.: People's Choice award tally begins

[Illustration]

Photo: PHOTO, LARA CERRI; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY LUIS SANTANA - SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

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Abstract (Document Summary)

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