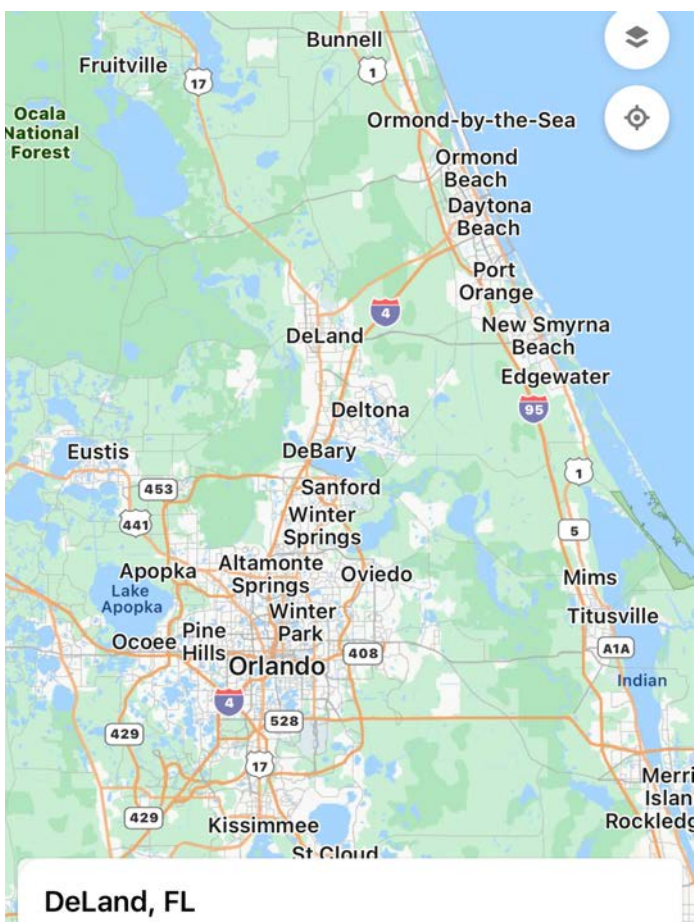


231110 BRA DeLand Florida Hidden Gem

DeLand, Florida. You hear about cities and know of them and many times cannot find them on a map. I certainly had no idea where the DeLand Florida was until I drove through it on US 92. From what we have discovered, it's a quaint, chic, upscale a little town.

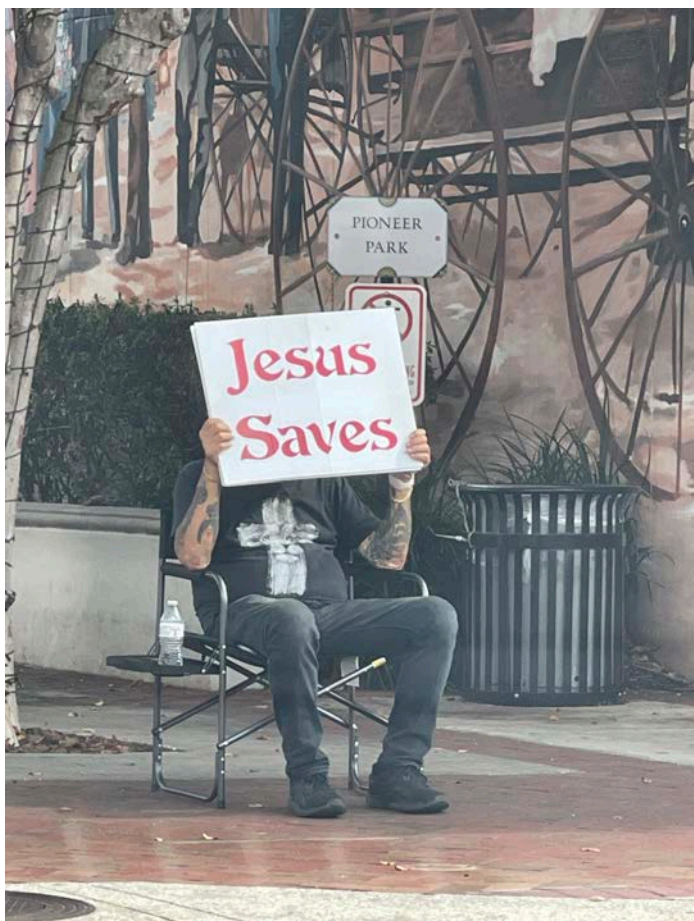


Buy, buy, buy. The motto of the city is clearly displayed on this sign. If you don't want to spend money, then don't stop here. It's very hard to go into any one of the stores and not come out with something in your hand.

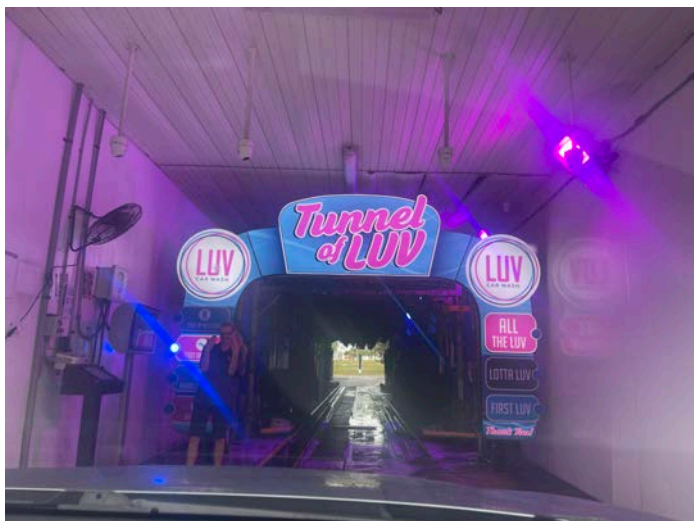
Located on US Route 92 between Daytona Beach and Orlando, Florida, DeLand host, many unique institutions, and attractions worthy of your attention.



Unwanted advise. They say it's a free country, and I hope it stays that way. Everyone has their own story, their own past and future. Anyone of us should tread carefully before we get involved in the lives of others. Unless, of course, you really know what you're doing in which case you don't care.



But first the car wash. We drove on Daytona Beach in salt spray so if you ever do that the first thing you got to do is get all that salt off your undercarriage and especially inside your wheels and break accessory fittings. These car washes in our spring up all over the United States and it's a quick and easy way to get your car cleaned. \$22 was to complete LUV treatment. Can't beat that.



Historic district. Local donuts, handmade

chocolates, boutique restaurants in the mall. The interesting thing about the little downtown area is that there are no boarded up businesses. Every one of the small, quaint, 19 century establishment has a business. That's unusual for a small town like this.



Whatever you do, don't go in that store. You're gonna regret it.



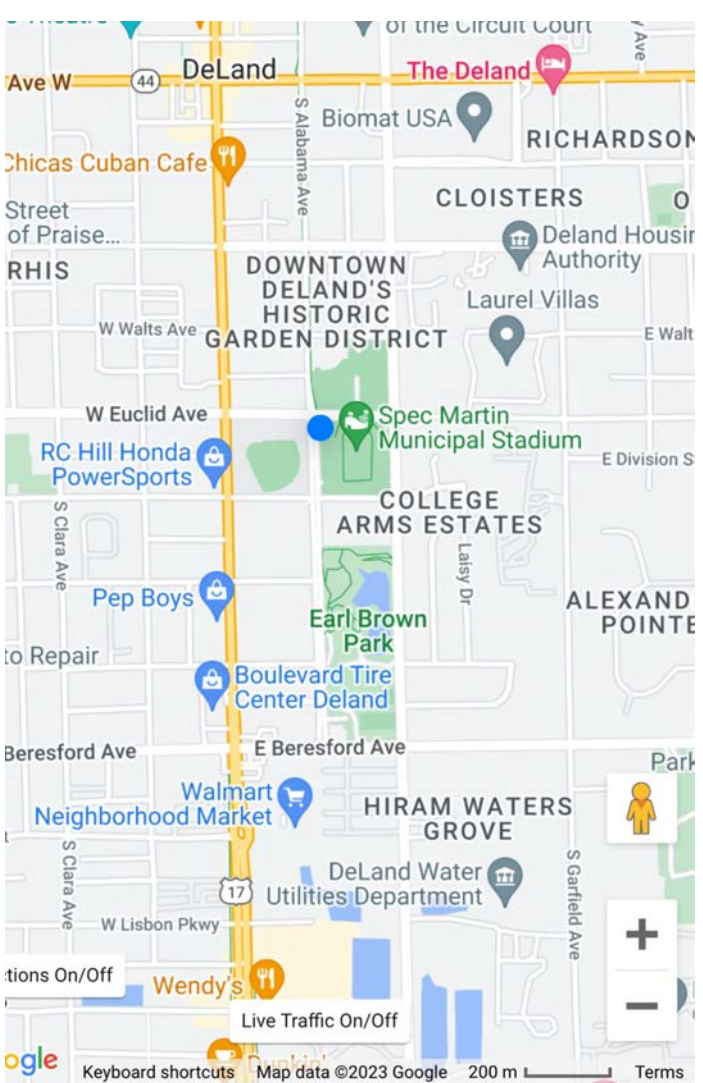
The assortment of chocolates is just amazing. They have an Oreo cookie eyeballs which is a must buy especially during Halloween.



Prices for everything is \$7.82 per ounce.
Whatever you want. Knock yourself out.



You can easily walk to historic area and
parking is free. There are no meters here so
if you could find a spot on the side of the
road, just pull up and enjoy the day.



DeLand Florida

The historic district is spread along several city blocks. It's easy to walk and very compact. There are the classical, typical municipal parks that are scattered throughout. These are wonderful to visit if you just want to sit, feed the birds, or pass some time.

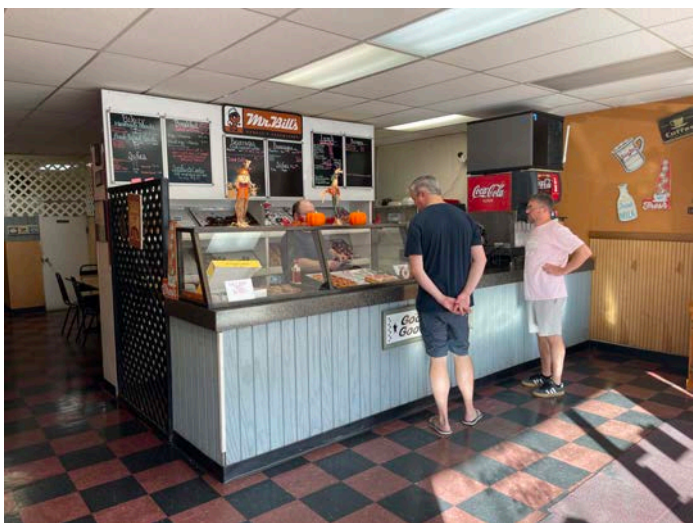


The downtown area is basically captured in time. This is what it would've look like at

the turn of the century in the early 1900s. Most of the buildings are original. The problem is if you want to shop here stores open at 10 or even 11 AM. Time goes slowly here so don't be in a hurry.

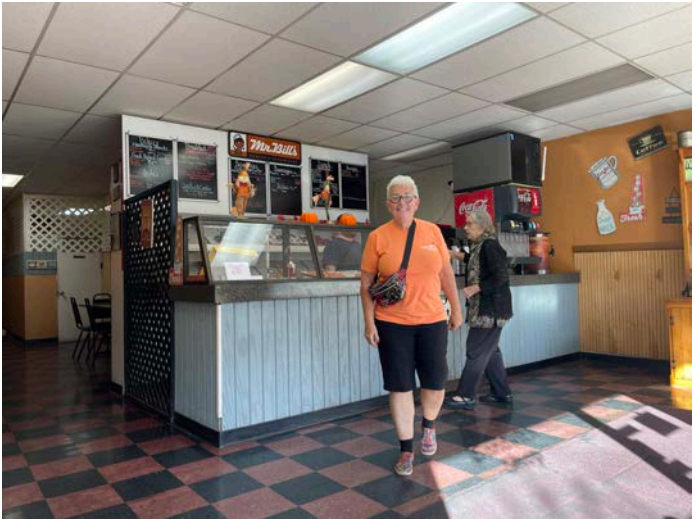


Mr Bills Donuts. These are donuts made the old-fashioned way, frying. All of the donuts that you buy, especially from the national chains, are baked. There's a difference in taste between a fried and a baked doughnut. Nancy argued with me, because there was no grease, but if the oil is hot enough, the donuts float in our instantly cooked with one flip, and they're out. These are really good donuts and they have that authentic, fried taste.



Once again, pricing is interesting in these parts of Florida. You can get a dozen donuts and a nice T-shirt for \$29.99. Typically in most tourist areas a T-shirt

alone would cost that so the donuts are almost free.



Utility box wrap. I've seen these Used effectively in Daytona Beach Florida and nowhere else. These are vinyl wraps. They are printed with different scenes and then they can be applied to any metal surface. This is a standard transformer box. That's been completely changed into a nice artful display by just wrapping it with vinyl. it would be good to have these used more often elsewhere



Wonder how they get away with putting these wraps on these utility boxes without the required OSHA warning stickers. Everyone is aware of those telling people the obvious which is don't open the boxes and don't stick your hands inside. It's nice that they didn't junk them up with these

useless warnings. Who knows maybe common sense is breaking out.



Greco Roman roots. The United States was founded as a republic. And it was founded mostly on the basis of the Roman Republic. And these old buildings remind us of our roots, and remind us of the buildings that used to be built in the classical Roman style.



\$500,000 in 1929. That's a significant amount of money. It's a shame this building is not open for us to see (Veterans Day) . It was deemed as the sign says one of the most beautiful buildings in the south when it was dedicated.



The Athens theater. The Athens Theare in DeLand, Florida is a community-based theater that features straight plays, musicals, theatrical film adaptations, concerts, holiday programs and other forms of entertainment. Tickets are available at the box office and may be reserved over the phone.



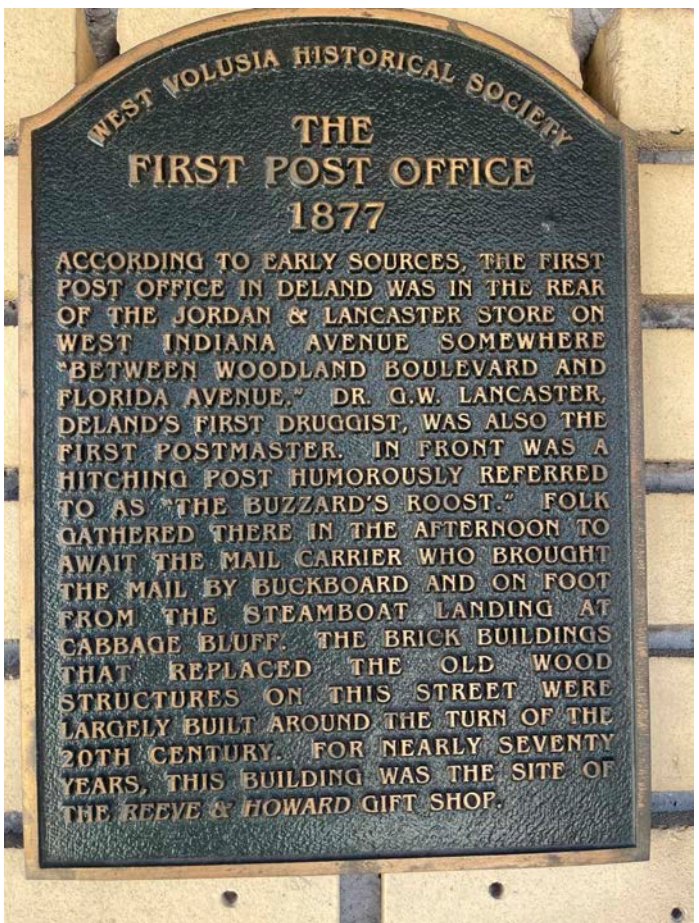
Built in 1921 is a community supported theater with a significant venue available. It's very small but ornate and you can imagine it's easy to fill the space with the assortment of talent that they have lined up for the year.



A reading bench, but not a sleeping bench. An interesting way to build a bench to promote both reading relaxation, but to prevent someone from sleeping on it I suppose. With all the banning of books going on today it was interesting to look at the titles, and hopefully none of them were included in this beautiful work. The banning book should never be considered, because what one person would ban another person would consider art.



First post office. Everywhere you turn in a little town like this, he will see a plaque, a memorial, or some other description of history. Little towns like this, they don't seem like they've changed habit changed, and all you need to do is scratch below the surface and you'll see a rich history revealed to you For the price of a small walk around town.



Municipal parks. Sunflower Park Founders of any city, is early as the antiquities, appreciated community and open space. Nothing makes a city, more livable, more civilized than clean, well-maintained parks. We found this little one a treasure took the way at the edge of Stetson University. It has a functioning fountain, it's clean and well-maintained, it has picnic tables and a gazebo. it's great to see small places like this that are still available to the common person that are in such good shape.



For breakfast, we had yogurt with

pomegranate and granola, which we bought at Publix, fresh, seedless, California, green grapes and organic coconut smoothies. A very light and healthy breakfast to get the day started.



We were able to sit alone in a public park with an absolutely gorgeous, beautiful fountain operating 5 feet from us. Where else but in small town America.



Don't feed the birds? Will try to tell this man. He seems to be enjoying it about as much as the birds do. We asked him what was he feeding the birds and he said cat food! We said, what?

Well he feeds the cats cat food and then has to go sit on a bench 30 feet away and feed the same cat food to the birds so keep them away from the food that he wants to cats to eat. Hope that makes sense. So he goes around town to different places feeding feral cats. Has made sure that the cats are neutered so they are not

reproducing which is good.



Buttercup bakeries. Scanner all over town will find these little places that cater to students from Stetson University. The gentleman that was feeding the birds confirmed that Stetson is the main source of employment and income for the land. It shows they have obviously a very steady source of revenue to keep all these stores open.



Graffiti. Well, there's art. This is a movement in St. Petersburg Florida as well. There are many wonderful murals that are painted throughout town. It's hard to capture them all but we will try to take pictures of some of our favorites.





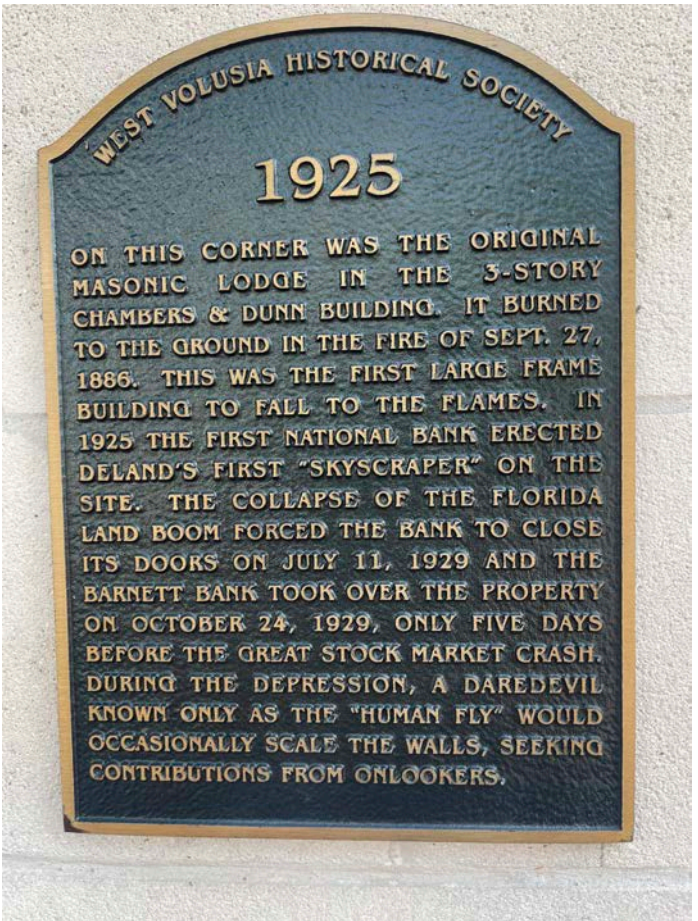
The DeLand opera house circa 1910.



First National Bank of Deland. Wow, and that's considered a skyscraper no less. Impressive for its day. But it looks like this site has been jinxed. One event after another has conspired to close every business and activity that was deemed to fit for its purpose.



You know, things were simple back in the day when a human fly actor would climb this building for attention. Today sadly most onlookers would yell, "Jump!"

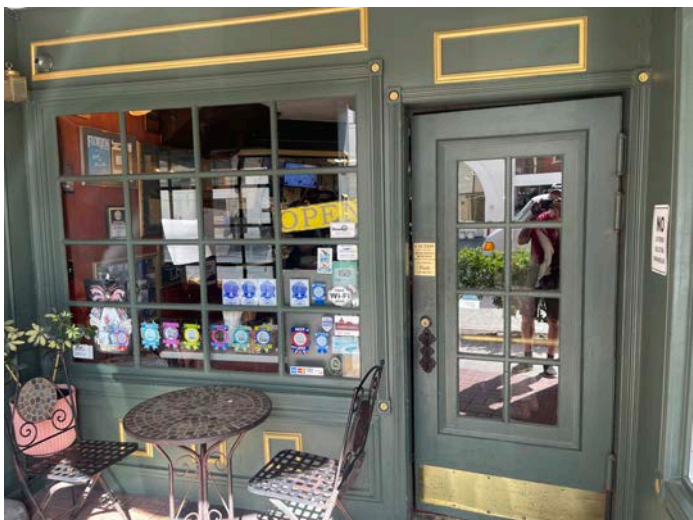


The classic coffee shop. you can't get any

cuter than that. This town is peppered with these places. Just absolutely beautiful. Quaint little spots to stop and have dessert or a coffee.



Step inside, and you'll find a place completely jampacked. Fresh made baked goods, cappuccinos of every variety, and a complete sandwich and soup menu awaits.

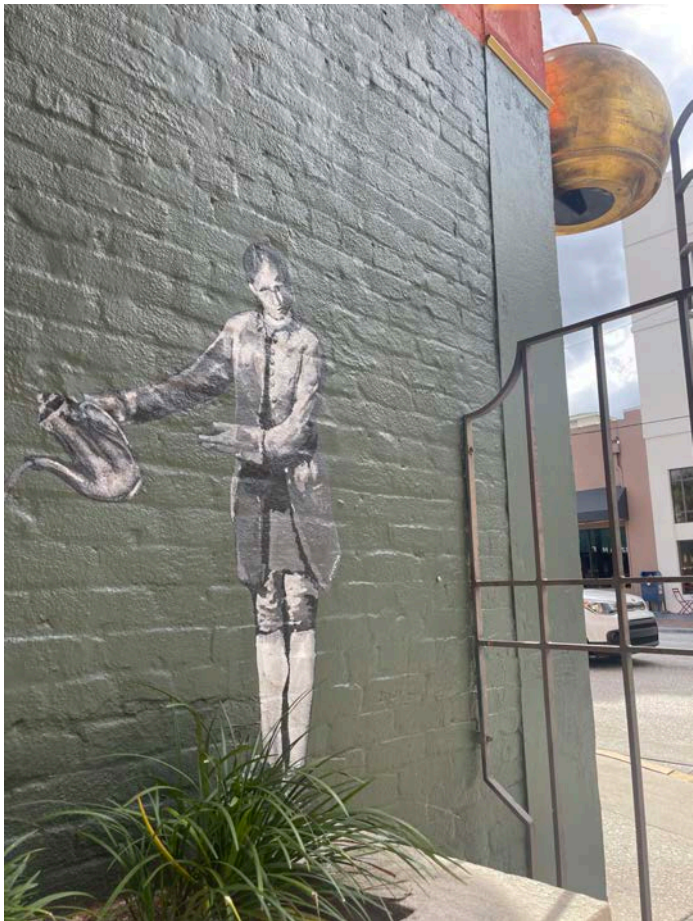


There's a good saying, that says, if locals pack the place it's probably good. Again, you would not think that it's that frequented but once you step inside and you see that it's completely full of locals,

you know it's a good place to eat.



Pick your poison. Believe it or not, these coffee drinks come hot, colder, or iced. With whipped cream. What more could you ask for.



We got a nutty, Irish lady hot, a Boston caramel mocha, cold, and a coconut cake dessert. The total came to \$17.52 again showing that this part of Florida is very economical. And this is for lunch. What a country.



Any drink can be made
Hot, **Iced** or **Frozen**
 Low-Fat, Sugar Free or Decaffeinated
 Milk alternatives are available

Cappuccino or Lattes 3.75 sm. 4.00 med. 4.75 lg.

SPECIALTY DRINKS

	Single 12oz.	Double 16oz.	Triple 24oz.
Cafe' Mocha Espresso, Steamed Milk, & CHOCOLATE topped with whipped cream.	4.65	5.25	5.95
Boston Caramocha Espresso, Steamed Milk, CHOCOLATE & CARAMEL with whipped cream.			
YankeeDoodle Espresso, Steamed Milk, CHOCOLATE , CARAMEL & HAZELNUT with whipped cream.			
Irish Eyes R' Smilin' Espresso, Steamed Milk, IRISH CREAM & VANILLA with whipped cream.			
Nutty Irish Lady Espresso, Steamed Milk, HAZELNUT , IRISH CREAM & CHERRY with whipped cream.			
Mocha Mint Espresso, Steamed Milk, CHOCOLATE & PEPPERMINT with whipped cream.			
Coco Mocha Joy Espresso, Steamed Milk, COCONUT , CHOCOLATE & ALMOND with whipped cream.			
Crazy Colonial Espresso, Steamed Milk, WHITE CHOCOLATE , RASPBERRY & ALMOND with whipped cream.			
Chai Tea Exotic Chai Tea with a blend of spices.			
Hot Chocolate Premium Cocoa in Steamed Milk.			
Other Smoothies			

Cookies, Cream & Chocolate
 Strawberry &/or Banana Fruit Smoothie,
 Power Peanut Butter Protein

Blue Spring State Park. Located minutes outside of Deland going west toward I four along route 92 is a beautiful state park. Is four dollars for one person or six dollars for a carload.



It is home to manatee during the colder parts of the year. There are two hour river cruises available as well as kayaks which can be rented. The springs are constant 72° year-round and about is crystal clears. Water can be.



Maintenance. They really maintain the state parks and things in general are well-maintained.



I know this looks silly me taking pictures of yellow caution, tape tied around these banisters. But they take this seriously here. As you walk along, there are yellow caution tape segments tied around different sections of the banister which need to be replaced. And someone will actually come by and replace these sections. Americans take this type of maintenance for granted. It doesn't happen in many other countries and things just fall apart and are never repaired or restored.



The fish, of course are very happy in these springs. It's been darn near 100 years since anyone can fish for them. So there are plenty of these specimens and they are quite large, easily seen in the springs. It just really wants to make you go get a fishing pole and some bait, but you would get kicked out of the park before you caught anything.



The sign really says it all. Sadly, when you go to municipal spaces, people will just throw their trash on the ground and leave. You always wonder if someone finds a nice picnic area, or park without litter why

would they choose to leave it other than the way they found it. Drives you crazy. But if you follow the precepts of this sign, you can't go wrong no matter where you are.



Manatees are very friendly. They're just a friendly image and they're used a lot with children's books. What better wait to represent one than in a beautiful tile mosaic. Today there were no manatees present at the park. The water temperature is still above 66°F which is the lowest that they can stand. Once it drops to that level or near it, then they'll seek shelter in the state park.



And of course there's the gift shop. Nancy can't help it. For her a gift shop is just like a black hole out in the universe. If we get anywhere near it, we just get sucked inside.

But a good thing about gift shops, which is different from black holes is, that if you spend money you can get back out. We've

never been trapped in one yet.



What gift shop would be complete without every Christmas decoration you could possibly ever think you needed, was ever invented or is available.



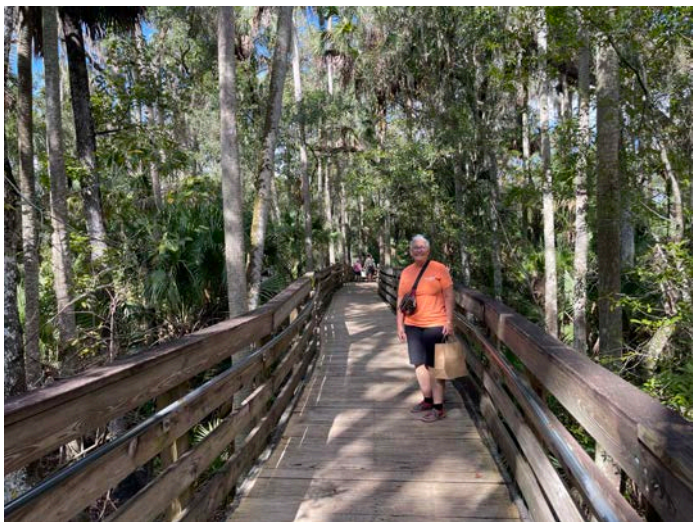
\$6 dollars for one hour, and \$4 dollars for each additional hour. A two hour drift down the spring from the boil would be a great way to spend any hot afternoon.

One thing to note is that the park is closed to all water activities yearly between November 15 and March 14. This has been done since 2007. The reason is that this

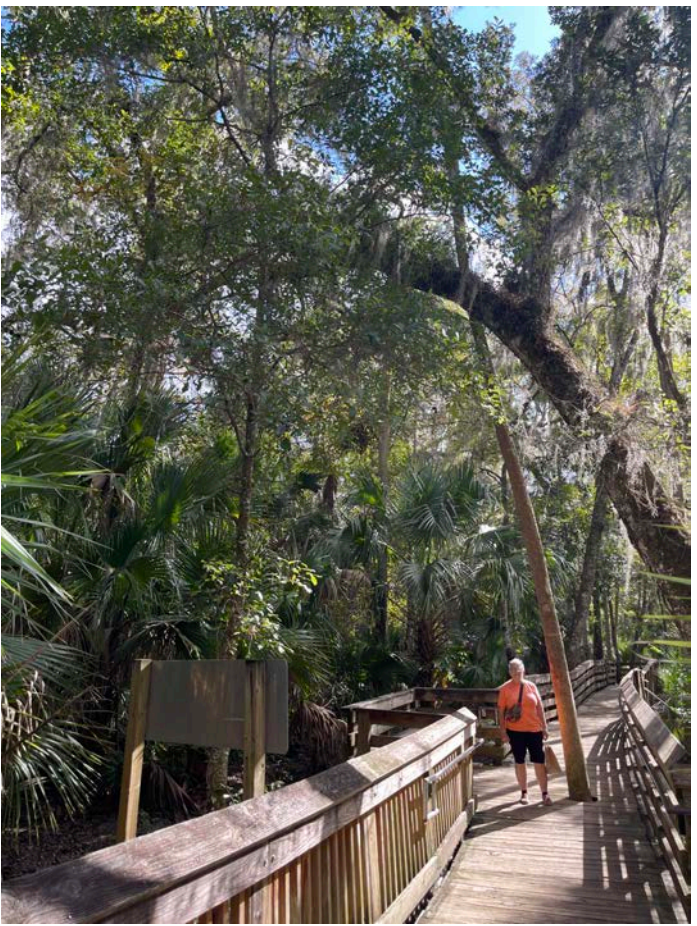
park fills with manatees. It is a main shelter area for manatees during the cold time of the year.



The boardwalk takes you from the gift shop out to the boil. You can then jump in there and float back down to the gift shop or float back down to the entrance and then walk all the way back and do it again. It's a 10 minute walk and the Boardwalk is excellent for a quick stroll and a little bit of exercise. A good way to settle lunch.



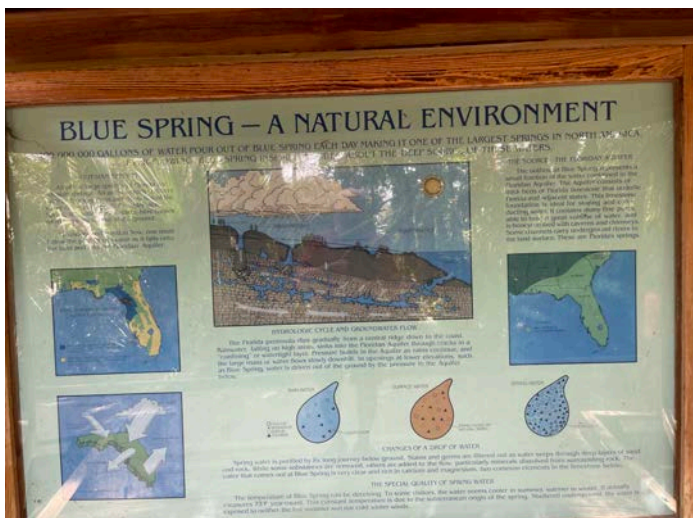
The natural walkways are beautifully done, and they fit these through the forest. Here when a tree is in the way, they just build around it. It really is nature's priority over man's access on display.



The boil is 140 feet deep. The divers are not supposed to go any deeper than 60. The water is a constant 72°F year-round.



Blue Springs is a First Magnitude natural spring. These are the largest artesian springs by type. 100,000,000 gallons a day flow out of this single spring. It makes it one of the largest natural spring, in the United States.



To put this in the scale, the Panama Canal requires 28,000,000 gallons to float one ship through the canal from one end to the other. This means that the spring provides for enough water to float 3 ships through the Panama Canal. The Panama Canal can only handle about 18 ships a day so if this spring provides for 3 this would represent 17 to 20% of the water that the Panama Canal uses in one day. This is simply astounding.



Shortcut bypass Orlando. We have been introduced to another road that we did not know existed, which is Florida route 429. This is a toll road that you can take that completely bypasses Orlando to the north and connects interstate 4 on each side. The toll road on the eastern side will start around Sanford, and on the western side near Celebration Florida.



Apple Maps took us this route completely bypassing interstate 4 through downtown Orlando. Many times I 4 has been called the worlds longest parking lot and that’s not funny when you have to experience it (see above the traffic going into Orlando starting around Celebration Florida). Consider this road if you come this way.

END