

18 Δεκεμβρίου 2009

The first known Greek to arrive in America after with a statue at Clearwater



Stories about the Greeks and Pinellas

County often begin with the arrival of Greek sponge divers in Tarpon Springs around 1905.

But Michael Servos thinks the history of the Greeks in Pinellas should start much earlier – nearly 500 years ago.

Servos, 57, of Belleair Beach is president of the Panhellenic Federation of Florida.

This Saturday at Clearwater Beach, the federation will dedicate a statue of Theodoros or Theodore, a Greek crewman in an ill-fated Spanish expedition that arrived in Florida in the spring of 1528.

The federation, a nonprofit umbrella group for more than a dozen Greek organizations, donated the 900-pound bronze statue to Clearwater. Clearwater city commissioners voted to accept it in September 2003.

“We’re delighted to have it,” said Art Kader, Clearwater’s assistant parks and recreation director.

The statue stands at Pier 60 Park. The federation chose Clearwater as a home for the monument after learning that a Spanish expedition that included Theodore came through the area on its way to North Florida.

“We were doing a lot of research for the first Greek who came to America,” Servos said. “After a long search that we did (learn) that the first Greek came to the Clearwater area. ... We were very surprised, very pleased and very blessed, too.”

The statue, made in Italy, cost the federation \$75,000, Servos said. The base, shaped like the prow of a ship and sheathed in sparkling black granite, cost another \$25,000.

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