



NORTHEAST JOURNAL

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St. Petersburg, Florida

November/December 2022

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Janan Talafer

Ed Baird was 9, and Allison Jolly was 10 – two local kids looking for something to do on summer vacation – when their parents enrolled them in “learn to sail” lessons at the St. Petersburg Sailing Center. Both would go on to be superstars in the world of sailing. But at the time they were just having fun, hanging out with friends on the water.

“The Sailing Center was our home away from home,” Jolly recalls. “It was a very safe and welcoming environment.”

Continued on page 18

The Historic Partnership of St. Pete’s Jacqueline and Earl Cotman

Will Michaels

Jacqueline Nickson Cotman and Dr. H. Earl Cotman are an amazing couple, gracing our city with their considerable talents and civic activities for many years. They arrived in St. Petersburg in 1981 from East Lansing, Michigan. Earl was



Jacqueline and Dr. Earl Cotman have enriched St. Petersburg with their talent, volunteer service, and devotion to African-American family history.

invited to join the staff of Bayfront Hospital as a radiation oncologist after serving as assistant professor of medicine at the University of Arizona Health Sciences Center, chief of radiation therapy at William Beaumont Army Medical Center while in the service at Ft. Bliss, Texas, and as associate in radiation oncology at Edward W. Sparrow Hospital in Lansing. In addition to his tenure at Bayfront, he established the practice of radiation oncology at St. Anthony’s Hospital and at Palms of Pasadena. Earl is now in private practice.

When Earl was a boy of 12 on the family farm in Archer, Florida, a cow died. Earl dissected the cow to learn more about its anatomy. This was the starting point for a lifetime career in medicine. Earl was one of the first African Americans to graduate from the University of Florida Medical School. He interned at Union Memorial Hospital in Baltimore and completed his residency at the University of Minnesota Health Sciences Center.

Earl was a pre-med senior at Florida A&M when he met Jacqueline Nickson, who was from Tampa. She was Miss Freshman, Miss Sophomore Attendant to Miss FAMU, and in 1966 elected Ms. FAMU. She majored in speech and drama

Continued on page 28

A Lasting Legacy Peter Belmont Receives Key to the City for His Mission to Keep St. Pete Special

Monica Kile

You may not be personally familiar with Peter Belmont, but chances are you’ve come across the fruits of his 40 years of volunteer labor in St. Petersburg. Have you ever attended Movies in the Park? Or taken a walking tour with Preserve the ‘Burg? Maybe you’ve shopped in the Crisp Arcade or sipped a drink on the verandah of the Vinoy. If so, then you’ve had a brush with Belmont’s legacy. Over his decades of activism, Belmont has left such a mark on the city that his recent cancer diagnosis prompted a flurry of efforts by friends and admirers to honor his work. Most recently, he was awarded the key to the city in recognition of the enormous contributions he has made to St. Petersburg.

Robin Reed, a resident of the Historic Old Northeast neighborhood and president of the board of directors of Preserve



Peter Belmont with his partner of 40 years, Laurie Macdonald

the ‘Burg, led the process to have Belmont awarded the key. She said, “For decades now, Peter has been the driving force for preservation in St. Pete. Without his tireless leadership, we would not have many of the historic buildings and spaces that contribute so much to our city’s unique character and sense of place. We owe him a huge debt of gratitude.”

Ironically, like many St. Pete residents, Belmont is not originally from the city he has done so much to preserve. Born in Ridgewood, New Jersey in the mid 1950s, he began visiting the Sunshine State early, spending many a holiday with his grandmother locally.

Continued on page 12

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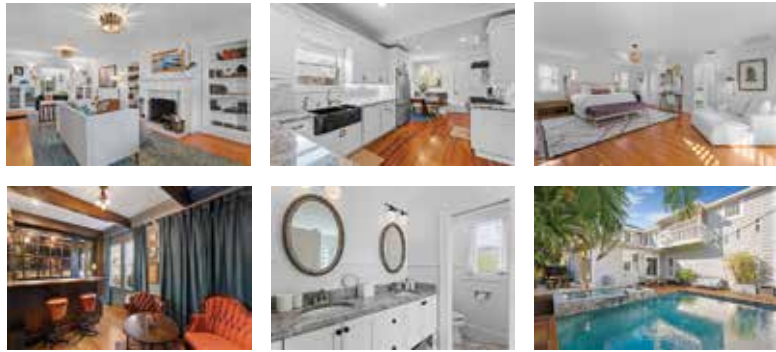
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COMPASS

Every Day is New Year's Day

"I dwell in possibility." ~ Emily Dickinson

The holidays are a lot of things: festive, fraught, joyous, stressful – sometimes all at once. These quirky rituals we do as humans to give us light, hope, and just a little something to look forward to can also be, well, a lot of work.

In our family, after a two-year hiatus, my wife and I are once again hosting our traditional Thanksgiving Day celebration – a party that is weeks in the making, hours of enjoyment, and days of cleanup. Why do we do it? When we are knee-deep in yard work and sleeping arrangements and baseboard dusting – not to mention the Herculean food prep – I don't always have an answer. But seeing my far-flung and lovably imperfect family together in one place for a day, I forget all the pain of planning. I only want for us all to be here, to do it again next year.

While Thanksgiving has long been my favorite holiday – especially when all I had to do was show up and eat – there's another that comes close: New Year.

I know that calendar days are arbitrary, and that other cultures celebrate a new year in their own time and ways. There is nothing substantially different about January 1 than December 31. But for me, and perhaps others, a little magic happens in that clock strike. It feels like a rebirth of sorts, a second chance. Maybe this year, you'll do that thing you want to do. Maybe you'll travel somewhere new, meet someone new, find a new passion. It's all in the possibilities.

Of course, as fun as it is to sip Champagne and make resolutions, the reality is that every day is New Year's Day. You don't need a clock or a calendar to motivate you to live your best life. All you need is the wonder of possibility, and maybe a little inspiration.

This issue of the *Northeast Journal* is full of those things. From the change-makers and community servants of today, to the scholars of tomorrow, we celebrate the people making a difference through their words and work, every day. I hope their stories inspire you on your own path, into the next year and beyond. And I hope they remind you that, no matter what life has in store, it's always better when we're together.

Happy New Year!
~ Shelly

Have a story you'd like to share?
Email me anytime at editor@northeastjournal.org.



New Year's Eve with wife, Maria, on a beach in Puerto Rico. We did not realize her hat was backwards until much later.

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Auguste Rodin, *Eve*, first modelled c. 1881, this cast 1968 (Musée Rodin 9/12), Bronze, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of B. Gerald Cantor Art Foundation, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA

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ADVERTISING

Susan Seta-Williams
(727) 259-3149
northeastjournal@gmail.com

EDITORIAL

Shelly Wilson, *Managing Editor*
editor@northeastjournal.org
Julie L. Johnston, *Copy Editing*

ART DIRECTION/PRODUCTION

Julie L. Johnston, *Ad Design/Layout*
JohnstonGraphicDesigner@gmail.com

DISTRIBUTION

Jamie Mayo, *Distribution/Subscriptions*
distribution@northeastjournal.org

WRITERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Abby Baker	Will Michaels
M. Shackelford Burns	Samantha Bond Richman
Jeannie Carlson	Brandy Stark
Rick Carson	Janan Talafer
Jon Kile	Shelly Wilson
Monica Kile	

PHOTOGRAPHY

Victoria Rogers
Lynn Lotkowitz
NEJ contributors and the community at large

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Your Guide to Yard Oddities in Old Northeast

Jon Kile

Florida is full of colorful plants and the Old Northeast can feel even more exotic with all the decorative flowering plants neighbors add to their yard. But one local shrub isn't just a pretty ornament. The beautyberry is downright magical in that it's not only safe to eat, it'll keep the mosquitoes away.

The beautyberry (*callicarpa americana*) is scattered throughout the area, but specifically noticeable along Oak Street between 16th and 17th Avenues NE. Birds love the bright purple berries, but they're also safe for us to eat. They look a bit like a purple blackberry that you might want to gobble by the handful. In reality, they're bitter, and a little grainy (trust me). Rumor has it, they make a better jam than they do ice cream or yogurt topping. Native Americans are known to have dried them for a medicinal tea.

But if you don't plan on making jars of beautyberry jam for all your friends, or sipping a cuppa beautyberry tea, the plant has another use. Their leaves have a chemical called callicarpenal, which is a natural mosquito repellent. Studies have shown the chemical to be nearly as effective as DEET, though sourcing enough of it to satisfy the bug spray market is a bigger challenge.

Using the beautyberry to ward off mosquitoes has been a folk remedy in the American South for centuries and can be as simple as rubbing crushed leaves on your skin and stuffing a few branches under your horse's harness (for those of you with horses). The internet is full of recipes for making natural sprays by soaking the leaves with a variety of different liquid bases, like rubbing alcohol and coconut oil. Talk about your versatile shrubbery. Eat it, drink it, roll in it! ●

Got an Old Northeast oddity you'd like to know more about? Email Jon Kile at jgkile@gmail.com.



The beautiful beautyberry



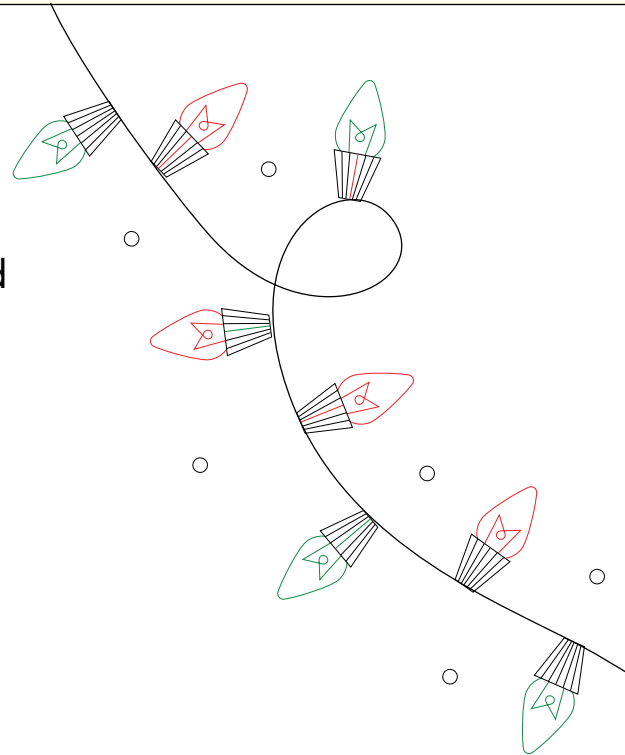
Happy Holidays

With Gratitude, I would like to wish you and yours a *Bountiful Thanksgiving*, a *Joyous Holiday Season* and a *New Year filled with Peace & Prosperity*.



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The Northeast Journal Makes a Rare Request for Your Support

For 18 years, six times a year, the *Northeast Journal* has been delivered to your door **free of charge**. As printing, paper, fuel and related **costs skyrocket**, we, like many other businesses, are taking a big hit. We do not wish to raise our advertising rates as businesses have been **graciously financially supporting** this publication since issue #1, and they are facing similar price increases of their own.

For once, we ask you, our readers, to **chip in what you can** to help ease the burden we have carried over the past year and help us continue on into the unknown climate of 2023.

With your financial support of any denomination (\$6, \$36, \$48) one-time or monthly or whatever feels right to you, we will be able to **continue to deliver to you the good news** – now needed more than ever – to your doorstep as always!

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Your gift helps us give the gift of good news year 'round!



MEET THE WRITERS

We would like to sincerely thank and introduce our contributors. The time and talent they dedicate to writing about good people, good places, and good things happening is what makes the *Northeast Journal* the quality publication that our readers have come to expect and love. Join our team by contacting editor@northeastjournal.org.

Abby Baker is a Tampa-based journalist for local media and a staff writer at the *Gabber Newspaper*. She currently lives in Seminole Heights but writes stories about Gulfport and St. Petersburg communities every week. When she's not on deadline, she likes to paint, travel and spend time with her two very chubby cats.



M. Shackleford Burns is a writer and photographer originally from the northeast of Scotland, now resettled and happy to call the fair city of St. Pete his new home. After a 32-year career as a professional cameraman and filmmaker, he is now pursuing his lifelong dreams of writing, playing music, and eating fresh fruit daily.



Jeannie Carlson is a correspondent for Tampa Bay Newspapers, Inc. as seen in *Tampa Bay Times*, *TBNWeekly.com* and *Beach Beacon*; an adjunct English professor; and a writer at Examiner.com ("Swedish Cooking with a Southern Accent"). She has been a resident of and inspired by the ONE since 2000. [JeannieCarlson.com]



Rick Carson has lived in St. Pete since 2001, after a career journey that took him from national politics to the innkeeper of a B&B – from the cesspools of Washington to cleaning guestroom toilets (ask him if there is any difference). [rickcarson1@gmail.com.]



Jonathan Kile moved to St. Pete in 2001. A rare genetic condition forced him to give up a career in sales in favor of a full-time position as father, husband, and writer. He blogs about his family travels and advocates for awareness of vascular Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome at dontmaketurnthisvanaround.com. He's on the board of literary nonprofit Keep St. Pete Lit.



Monica Kile has lived in St. Pete since 2003, when she came for a master's degree in Florida Studies from USF St. Pete. She has served as Executive Director of Preserve the 'Burg, OLLI at Eckerd College, and the Suncoast Tiger Bay Club, and the Special Projects Director at the Florida Humanities Council. Monica guides historic and cultural tours throughout Florida.



Will Michaels is retired as executive director of the History Museum and has served as president of St. Petersburg Preservation and vice president of the Dr. Carter G. Woodson Museum of African American History. He is the author of *The Making of St. Petersburg*. [wmichaels2@tampabay.rr.com]



Samantha Bond Richman relocated to the Old Northeast in 2014 after living in Tampa for 28 years. She owns Sam Bond Benefit Group, a downtown insurance agency. She and husband Tim enjoy fishing, golf, and supporting family-oriented charitable causes.



Brandy Stark is an artist, writer, and educator who lives in Crescent Heights. She is known for her hand-wrapped wire metal sculptures, fascination with local ghost stories, lore, and legends, and her immense love of all things pug. When not working, she spends time with her pug pack, pocket pets, and bearded dragon.



Janan Talafer A long-time Snell Isle resident, Janan was the editor of the *Northeast Journal* for many years, and still enjoys writing about people and places in St. Petersburg. She loves swing dancing, blues music, and gardening, even when the weeds threaten to overtake the yard. [janantalafer@gmail.com]



Shelly Wilson is (almost) a Florida native who tries very hard to love her state in the summer. She has been a writer and editor for 20 years, recently at the *Gabber Newspaper*, and now as the new editor of the *Journal*. She loves to read, travel, kayak and share great stories. She lives in St. Pete with her wife and an obstinate dog. [wilson.raechelle@gmail.com]



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Voices of Hope for Aphasia Celebrates Its 10th Year

Jeannie Carlson

It is estimated that the number of people living with aphasia in Tampa Bay could populate the entire Old Northeast Neighborhood. “If you add all the family and friends, and other people impacted by the person they know who has aphasia, that would extend the number of people affected by aphasia to all the surrounding neighborhoods and then some,” says Debbie Yones, executive director of Voices of Hope for Aphasia in St. Petersburg.

Until celebrities like actor Bruce Willis and politician Gabby Giffords went public with their diagnoses of aphasia, perhaps few Americans outside of the aphasia community had even heard of the condition, much less knew about its impacts. Aphasia is defined by the National Institute of Health as “a neurological disorder caused by damage to the portions of the brain that are responsible for language production or processing.”

The main cause of aphasia is stroke, but it can also arise from a head injury as well as brain tumors or disease. The onset is usually sudden – individuals could wake up in the hospital to find that, although their intellect is completely intact, their ability to communicate has been short-circuited. The words they try to say come out wrong and sometimes the words they are hearing don’t make sense either. It’s as if they have been dropped in a foreign country where they have no idea how to speak the native language, and no one there knows how to speak theirs. It is an alarming affliction of instant isolation.

Aphasia manifests as an equal-opportunity language impairment since it does not discriminate based on ethnicity, gender, or socio-economic status; and more and more young people are being affected. It’s not just an elder infirmity anymore.

Once speech therapy has reached its conclusion (usually after only a few months, based on insurance parameters), people suffering from aphasia have limited resources to facilitate their communication recovery further. Iterations in how aphasia expresses itself are as individual and varied as the people who have it and can range from severe (no ability to speak) to mild (occasional difficulty in thinking of a word). People living with aphasia need rehabilitation, community programs, and long-term support for an opportunity to improve. That’s why, 10 years ago, a group of people came together locally with the vision of “improving the lives of people with aphasia and their loved ones.”

That group is St. Petersburg non-profit Voices of Hope for Aphasia (VOHA). The organization’s mission statement is to “reconnect people living with aphasia with their lives through innovative programs.” Founders Mike and Kathy Caputo originally came to Florida from New Jersey in 2011 for a course of



Voices of Hope for Aphasia members and Program Coordinator Brooke Oliver thanking donors for their support



In October 2021, Voices of Hope for Aphasia officially opened their center in St. Pete with Mayor Rick Kriseman, community sponsors, and Voices of Hope for Aphasia founder Mike Caputo.

intensive aphasia therapy after Mike had suffered a stroke two years earlier, at the age of 51. They had exhausted traditional physical, occupational, and speech therapy options. Debbie Yones was Mike’s intensive aphasia therapist in St. Pete and, along with a solid board of directors, they got VOHA off the ground in 2012.

In 2014 Dr. Jackie Hinckley joined VOHA as its first executive director when the group was meeting in a spare room of a local church. By 2015 the group’s programming had expanded to include Fridays at the University of South Florida – St. Petersburg, and Mondays and Wednesdays at the Sunshine Center. Yones became VOHA’s executive director in 2019, and navigated the group through the challenges of the

pandemic in 2020 and 2021 with virtual programming. In 2021 VOHA opened its first official home in Gaslight Square in St. Petersburg. Additional satellite locations are at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Tampa and Hale Senior Center in Dunedin. The organization has developed into a community of over 500 people served since its inception.

Today programs are available both in person and online, Monday through Friday. In addition to interactive programs designed to engage those living with aphasia, the organization sponsors day trips to museums, and sports and theatrical venues. Family and friends are invited to participate in workshops, excursions, and First Friday Lunch outings to encourage community engagement.

Brooke Oliver, a resident of the Old Northeast, started as a volunteer with VOHA in 2015. Six months later Oliver became the organization’s first program assistant, responsible for St. Petersburg, Dunedin, and online programs. Oliver changed her grad school focus in speech pathology at USF from kids to adults after her exposure to those living with aphasia. “I came to Voices of Hope and never left,” said Oliver.

People at VOHA may have had aphasia for a few months or as long as 20 years, but Oliver says they can still live fulfilling lives. “The people are amazing; they motivate each other to improve,” said Oliver. “When they get discouraged, they lift one another other up.”

Oliver explains that her days as program assistant at VOHA are filled with “wonderful moments.” Before VOHA Oliver worked in hospitality sales, but didn’t feel that was “making a difference.”

The most gratifying part of the work at VOHA, she says, is “when we have an intake for a new member and four months later to see the hope in their eyes. It’s watching them improve and to have a hand in that.”

One of the most challenging aspects of living with aphasia is the isolation, says Oliver. “They are scared they will not get their words out,” she says. “They lose friends and people don’t know how to talk with them.”

When asked if she has any suggestions for family and friends of people with aphasia, Oliver says, “Lean into it; do some research and/or go to a workshop to understand. [If] your friend, your mom, your grandpa has aphasia, include them.”

Voices of Hope for Aphasia (vohaphasia.org) is located at 6798 Crosswinds Dr. North, Suite B-102, in St. Petersburg. Contact Debbie Yones, executive director, at 727-249-1953 or Debbie@vohaphasia.org for information about available services, volunteering, and/or donating.



During the pandemic, Voices of Hope for Aphasia started a weekly Family Game Night to keep families engaged and laughing together.



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Why American Stage's Production of *The Colored Museum* is Important

Abby Baker

The first few weeks of rehearsals for American Stage's production of *The Colored Museum* were joyful, full of smiles and African-style beats from the drums of Malick Faye, a Senegal-born percussionist. But the script is a dark one, full of hyperbole and racial stereotypes designed to make the audience feel uncomfortable.

George C. Wolfe's *The Colored Museum* is made up of 11 exhibits, or skits, commenting on what it means to be Black in society. In one scene, Jemier Jenkins plays a peppy flight attendant on a "Celebrity Slaveship." She delivers her lines so smoothly, you forget she's demanding you tighten your shackles.

The Colored Museum, a satire performed by an all-Black cast, is



This cast is full of fresh faces telling a 40-year-old story of inequality. From left, Keith Arthur Bolden, Alicia Thomas, Brandon Burditt, Yewande Odetoyinbo, Jermaine Robinson Jr., Jemier Jenkins, Patrick A. Jackson.



"The cast is inspiring me, I'm searching in them," Director Keith Arthur Bolden says. "That's the kind of director I am."

directed by Atlanta-based Keith Arthur Bolen, an actor, director, and Spelman College theatre professor who had roles most recently in the film *TILL*, about the mother of the murdered Emmitt Till, and in the *Cobra Kai* series on Netflix. "I hope people find the time to talk about this," says Bolden of the American Stage production. "I hope there's space to discuss what they just saw, both Black and white people."

The Colored Museum is not the first American Stage production starring an all-Black cast, but the story behind playwright George C. Wolfe's satire is a one that demands justice for people of color. It's not as light and sweet as the all-female, all-Black version of *Steel Magnolias* that premiered in the American Stage theatre circa 2014. *The Colored Museum* is admittedly a bit disturbing. Each of the skits tackles a different racial stereotype, such as natural vs. chemically altered hair, and the "Madea" figure.

Though the piece first premiered at the Crossroads Theatre of New Jersey in 1986, the portrayals still work today. Patrick A. Jackson, the associate artistic producer at American Stage headed casting for the show, and he has a special connection to the meaning behind it.

"Being a Black, queer man growing up in the south, it was easy to connect with Miss Roj as they claim their uniqueness and power with something as simple as a snap. As we have unearthed more and more in the rehearsal process, I find that the exhibit, Symbiosis, speaks to me in such a powerful way. In the piece, the character 'Man' attempts to let go of his former self, his Blackness, the essence that makes him uniquely human," Jackson said.

The question that *The Colored Museum* aims to ask its audiences: Why does "Man" feel the need to shed the parts of him that are Black?

"The reality is that we can't get rid of any part of us, no matter how much the world may tell us they hate it or don't like it...or even may want to claim it as their own," says Jackson. "We are unique, unrepeatably expressions and the more we tap into that uniqueness, the more we can live the life we desire and deserve."

This show marks American Stage marketing director Avery Anderson's ninth show with the St. Pete theater company.

"[*The Colored Museum*] is a show most theater majors study in college and yet it's rarely performed. A lot of shows deal with race but this piece's satire throws it right in your face," said Anderson. "You will laugh, but also ask yourself: 'Am I supposed to be laughing?'"

See *The Colored Museum* through November 27 at American Stage, 163 3rd St. N. More at americanstage.org.

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Belmont jokes with city staff at an event

Belmont's father instilled a love of both nature and activism in him at an early age, as he took him on many outdoor adventures out west, both with the Wilderness Society and the Boy Scouts of America. Together, father and son also participated in workshops in Washington, DC that taught lobbying techniques for the environmental movement, training that would prove handy in later years.

Belmont's liberal leanings brought him to Florida Presbyterian College, which was renamed while he was in school there; he graduated in the first class of the newly christened Eckerd College, where he majored in political science. Knowing that a law degree would be a useful tool for his activism, he attended Stetson Law School and

Florida State University College of Law. An internship at the public defender's office in Bradenton turned into a lifelong career where he developed a reputation for his trial skills and was frequently assigned the most serious cases in the county. Belmont valued the flexibility of his position in Bradenton because it allowed him to pursue the activism that has always been the driving force in his life.

Belmont's activism started early in the Sunshine City. While still a law student living in St. Petersburg's Roser Park, Peter was a founding member of Booker Creek Preservation, an organization working to preserve the neighborhood's historic character. Belmont and the group championed the fight against interstate-related road projects and

expansion from nearby Bayfront and All Children's hospitals that threatened the historic fabric of the neighborhood. Their work saved many historic homes and led to the declaration of Roser Park as the city's first local historic district.

Before he had even passed the bar exam Belmont was called "one of the hardest working environmentalists this city has ever known" in a 1981 profile written by Jeff Klinkenberg in the *St. Petersburg Times*. Klinkenberg noted that Belmont was known as "a hero by some, and a crybaby conservationist" by others. And he was just getting started.

Deeply concerned by the destruction wrought by construction of the new interstate highway system, Belmont and another young attorney successfully argued for changes to the off-ramps near Maximo Park, reducing their scope and helping to save both the Native American Shell Mounds at that site, as well as a local marina. That work also resulted in the creation of a bicycle and pedestrian trail near Frenchman's Creek and the Bayway, and preserved recreational access along the Sunshine Skyway causeway.

In 1977, spurred by the impending demolition of downtown's American Bank and Trust building, a group of concerned citizens formed St. Petersburg Preservation, Inc (now Preserve the 'Burg), an organization in which Belmont has played a lifelong leadership role. Belmont also helped form Save our St. Petersburg, in the late 1980s, which

sought changes to the Bay Plaza Company's plans for redeveloping downtown, while also advocating for the preservation of both the Detroit and Soreno Hotels (where he had spent many happy visits with his grandmother as a child). Around that same time, Belmont also helped lead the fight against the high-rise "monster towers" proposed by a developer on the site of the Vinoy Hotel, representing a citizen's group in a title lawsuit that played into the eventual preservation of the Vinoy. As part of the settlement of that case, the city agreed to create a local historic preservation ordinance, a tool that may be Belmont's most important legacy in the city. It has led to the successful preservation of hundreds of local landmarks, and numerous local historic districts.

St. Petersburg historian Ray Arsenault helped form Save our St. Petersburg alongside Belmont. "I got to know Peter during the SOS battles of the late 80s and early 90s. He was always the rock upon which we operated. I don't know what we would have done without him. He was seemingly everywhere, the most important person in cutting our way through the local ordinances and mobilizing people to save the heritage of the city. He was the indispensable man. I have such enormous respect for him; he has always been there when he was needed."

Efforts to protect the Soreno Hotel from demolition by Bay Plaza were

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One of Belmont's many preservation successes, the Crislip Arcade on Central Avenue



Peter Belmont was given the key to St. Petersburg for his tireless preservation work and activism through the years.

his bicycle or driving one of the first hybrid cars. He has a deep love of bicycle touring and saw the country and the world on two wheels, frequently on the tandem bike he shares with his partner of 40 years, Laurie Macdonald.

Along with several friends, Belmont built his townhome in the heart of downtown St. Petersburg decades before moving downtown was in vogue. It's just one of many examples of his near-prophetic sense of what people are seeking in a community. His arguments against things like superfluous interstate offramps and the demolition of historic buildings to make way for surface parking have proved prescient, and the community is richer for the many historic sites he successfully saved.

Belmont's cancer diagnosis came while he was at his summer home in

Hood River, Oregon. Surgery was not a viable option, and at first it seemed that other treatments would likely prove futile on his aggressive tumor. In recent weeks, however, he has regained strength and stamina and is now undergoing immunotherapy treatments. His many friends, and even detractors who have taken exception to his views on historic preservation and environmentalism over the years, hope to see his bearded, smiling face once more on the streets of St. Petersburg, a city that he has done so much to define. Friend and fellow preservationist Emily Elwyn, speaking at the key-to-the-city event, summed up many people's feelings about him: "We need more people like Peter Belmont in our city, willing to do the hard work to keep St. Petersburg the special place that it is." ●

ultimately unsuccessful, but Save our St. Petersburg's work harnessed significant citizen resistance to the project, culminating in the preservation of several threatened historic blocks in downtown when the Bay Plaza Company abandoned their efforts. The hyper-local renaissance that downtown has experienced over the past 20 years can be seen as a direct testament to the work of Belmont and many others to prevent outside influences from destroying the unique character of St. Petersburg.

One of Belmont's proudest achievements was St. Petersburg Preservation's work to save the historic Crislip Arcade, the anchor of the 600 Block of Central Avenue. Alarmed by a demolition permit filed for the property,

he prompted St. Petersburg Preservation to file a historic landmark application for the arcade, leading to a compromise that preserved the buildings and inspired a renaissance of that section of Central Avenue. It is now one of the most vibrant and charming locations in the city.

A dedicated environmentalist, Belmont has been an important legal advocate for several wildlife and environmental organizations in the state, including multiple Florida chapters of the Sierra Club. Over the years he sought protection for manatees, successfully fought the phosphate industry, and consistently advocated for wetlands protection. He has always practiced what he preached and is often seen whipping around St. Petersburg on



Belmont attends the key-to-the-city event virtually

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Q. HOW IS THE MARKET? IS IT A GOOD TIME TO SELL AND BUY A HOME?

A. This question is one I receive multiple times a day – It is a great time to buy and sell a home in the St. Petersburg market! Homes are selling more quickly than the pre-pandemic days and prices are holding steady at an average increase of 30% since last year at this time. Sellers can expect more days on market than in the first half of the year, but less than the pre-pandemic days. Pricing and presentation of your home are critical in the current market, and a

full marketing campaign is crucial to position your home for top dollar and to reach as many qualified buyers as possible. St. Petersburg continues to remain a top destination spot for buyers looking to purchase a home. As the market normalizes, buyers can expect more standing inventory, higher interest rates (similar to pre-pandemic days) and sellers who are more willing to negotiate than earlier in the year.



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Shorecrest Seniors Recognized by National Merit Program

Shorecrest students Addison Sptaru, Kevin Tang, and Dylan Winer have been named 2023 National Merit Semifinalists by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. The three seniors earned their semifinalist status with their exceptional scores on the 2021 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, which served as an initial screen of program entrants. The nationwide pool of semifinalists, representing less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest-scoring entrants in each state.

To become a finalist, the semifinalist and his or her school must submit a detailed scholarship application detailing their academic record, participation in school and community activities, demonstrated leadership abilities, employment, and honors and awards. They must have an outstanding academic record throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, write an essay, and earn SAT scores that confirm the student's earlier performance on the qualifying test. Finalists will be notified in February.

In addition to the semifinalist seniors, seven other Shorecrest students were recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation as Commended Students in the 2023 National Merit Scholarship Program: Alexander Bean, Becket Foster, Felix Fudge, Jackson McDevitt, Enzo Pagano, Caleb Perez, and Matthew White. The program recognizes outstanding academic promise, and some of these students become candidates for special scholarships sponsored by corporations and businesses.

In addition, Dylan Winer received a National Hispanic Recognition Award from the National Merit program, one of College Board's four recognition programs. To qualify, students must score in the top 10% on the PSAT. Congratulations, seniors! ●



From left, seniors Addison Sptaru, Kevin Tang, and Dylan Winer have been named 2023 National Merit Semifinalists.



Seven Shorecrest seniors were named Commended Scholars by the National Merit Program. Front row, from left are Becket Foster, Enzo Pagano, Felix Fudge, Jackson McDevitt. Back row, from left are Caleb Perez, Alexander Bean, and Matthew White.

Photos courtesy of Shorecrest

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'Tis the Season for Art!



It's a white Christmas at Ekeko Gallery

Mexican art, shows that it is possible to have a white Christmas in St. Petersburg. All works in the show are based on the color white. This event celebrates and promotes local artists. Opening night allows those in attendances to help select the winners of this eclectic show. White attire encouraged!

All The Things Saint Pete, OrnaMENTAL, 4116 8th Avenue S. December 3, 1 pm.

More at facebook.com/AllTheThingsStPete. Not only are they celebrating their first year anniversary as a local art outlet, All Things Saint Pete is offering those quirky gifts for the hard-to-shop-for friend or family member. A variety of local artists have submitted 10 of their best, most unusual holiday ornaments.

Brandy Stark

Though sadly First Night St. Petersburg has been cancelled this year, there are still plenty of creative seasonal events to go around. Here is just a sampling of some artsy stuff to get the good times going during the holidays.

Galleries

Ekeko Gallery: The White Art Party, 290 Dr. MLK, Jr. Street N. December 10 to January 6. Opening reception is December 10, 5-9 pm.

More at facebook.com/ekekogallery. Ekeko Gallery, a local community favorite known for its stock of beautiful gemstones and

There is something guaranteed to appeal to even the most unusual tastes here.

Centers

Morean Art Center: multiple shows and events through December. More at moreanartscenter.org.

Annual Hoiday Show, until December 31. This is the place for gifts, including ornaments, jewelry, functional pottery, paintings, and sculpture, too! here is an emphasis on local art and this is one of the staple shows for downtown every year.

Ruth Philipon: The Planets, until December 31. A self-professed “frustrated sculptor,” Ruth creates dimensional artwork from paper by bending, folding, rolling, and weaving, adding textures and objects, and continually pushing the boundaries of all the materials. Her background in etching and painting led to her studio practice today. She specializes in color, which she says “conveys emotional power, intellect, and passion. It can be subtle, bold, or haunting.”

One Day Tampa Bay, until December 31. On September 17, 2022, over 50 photographers fanned out across the region to document a day in the life of our community. These photographers submitted nearly 500 photos from which the most artistic images were selected to come together into an art show. The resulting exhibition is a snapshot of life in the Tampa Bay region – this beautiful place in which we live, work, and play. See if you can recognize some of your favorite spots!

For gifts that are more action oriented, the Morean also offers a variety of four- to six-week classes over multiple sessions per year. And, yes, they also offer gift cards.

Florida Craftart: multiple shows and events in December and January. **Holiday Boutique**, until December 30. Florida Craftart brings back its annual



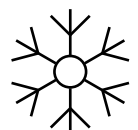
Ornament art by Ann Ross Olivia



Let Kaitlyn Kellin Guide You Home for the Holidays

This holiday season, I want to start by saying “thank you” to my clients that I’ve served for the last 10+ years. I was born and raised in St. Pete. I will never tire of sharing this vibrant, beautiful and welcoming community with my clients. St. Pete has been home to my family for three generations -- to me, my clients aren’t just numbers, they’re future neighbors.

If the New Year has you making a move, I’m here for you.



Kaitlyn Kellin

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Menorah by Terry Andrews

Holiday Boutique featuring handcrafted art and holiday-themed pieces from artists across Florida. FCA also has a wide assemblage of events for January. Start the year out with the Artists of ArtLofts (January 6-15), featuring sixteen artists whose studios are directly above the gallery. See paintings, drawings, mixed

media, photography, sculpture, glass, jewelry, and more. This show coincides with an immensely popular event: the return of the Tibetan Monks! From January 9-15, eight Tibetan Monks bring universal lessons of peace and impermanence. In Florida CraftArt's Exhibition Gallery, they will create a colorful Sacred Sand Mandala. The monks will chant, perform music and dances, as well as share Tibetan culture and traditions.

For more local art, don't forget that there are Second Saturday ArtWalks scheduled for December 10 and January 14. These free events show off our local talent and are a fun way to get that last-minute holiday shopping done or start shopping for next year. Central Arts District, EDGE Business District, Grand Central District, Warehouse Arts District, Uptown Arts District, and downtown Waterfront District come together as one arts destination with many venues hosting the opening night of their latest exhibit. Walk, drive, or ride to the artistic areas that make St. Pete unique. More at stpeteartsalliance.org/experience-arts/artwalk. ●

Are you interested in being a part of future art roundups? Please send press releases with a short description, location, contact information, and an example of the art in the show to editor@northeastjournal.org.

Holiday Boutique

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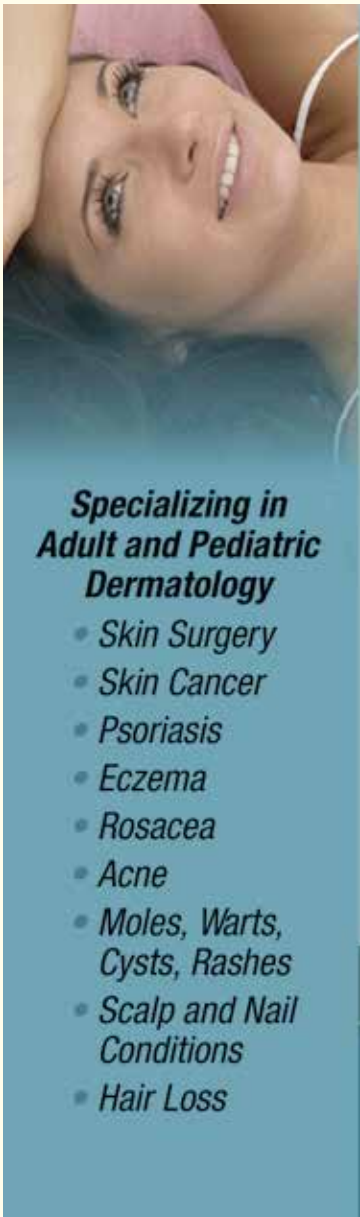
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Grayson and Brianna, his former occupational therapist, at a sailing event



Samantha and her parents are ready to sail thanks to Landon's Legacy



"Mighty" Titus and his family during a sailing event at the Sailing Center

St. Petersburg was still a small town not yet discovered, then. Even the waterfront looked different. "The whole area where the Sailing Center is now was old wooden buildings owned by the railroad," says Baird. "There was no marina on the south side or breakwater out to the bay. No dollies to move the boats around. It took three or four people to step around the sandspurs to pick up a boat."

For young kids, it was paradise. "We were pretty much on our own," says Baird. "Our parents would drop us off in the morning and we'd spend the day. Bring our lunch and 15 cents for the soda machine. We were just playing and learning as we went along."

Jolly admits that sailing wasn't her first choice for a sport. She tried swimming, softball, basketball, horseback riding, tennis, and golf, but wasn't particularly good at any of them. "Finally, my parents suggested sailing," she says. "I liked that I could use my brain and my body while staying cool. This was pre-air conditioning Florida and staying cool was a priority. I thought, 'Oh this works for me.' And it required an understanding of physics, math, the environment, and the weather. It was love at first sight."

For Baird, it was less about staying cool and more about the feeling that sailing gave him. "The independence is amazing," he says. "Growing up, we'd ride our bikes around the neighborhood exploring and only get a couple of blocks before we'd wear out. But on the water, it was totally different. You get to control this vehicle completely on your own and have total freedom to be in nature. It's like new territory every day."

One thing they did have in common was a love for competition. "We were always in competition," Jolly jokes. "Ed was my best friend/worst enemy in sailing. I have to admit that I competed pretty voraciously from the time I was about 10 or 11."

Fast forward a couple of decades. Jolly became the first woman to win a gold medal in sailing at the 1988 Olympics in South Korea, with her crewmate Lynne Jewell. She was named to the Florida Sports Hall of Fame in 2016 and is currently the sailing coach for the USF women's sailing team. She was named to the National Sailing Hall of Fame in 2019.

In 1995, Baird coached the America's Cup winning team from New Zealand and was the helmsman on the winning team for the 2007 America's Cup. He's also coached several world and Olympic champions. He was named to the

National Sailing Hall of Fame in 2016 and America's Cup Hall of Fame in 2021.

Over the years, the Sailing Center grew up, too. The dilapidated shacks that Baird and Jolly remember were torn down and in 1977 the city built a new Sailing Center on Demens Landing. The city entered into an agreement with the St. Petersburg Yacht Club to operate the Sailing Center, which was renewed for an extended 20-year lease in 2019.

It's a win-win for everyone. The Yacht Club operates year-round sailing programs for children and adults, pays the salaries for Sailing Center staff, maintains the facility, equipment and docks, and owns and maintains the fleet of boats. That is in addition to hosting year-round sailing events and regional, national, and international regattas.

"The Sailing Center is a hidden gem," says Corey Hall, who grew up sailing at the Sailing Center and is now Director of Member Relations at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club. "You don't have to be a member of the Sailing Center or the Yacht Club to take a lesson," she says. "You can just come down and sign up."

This past summer 550 youth participated in the Sailing Center's summer camps, which accepts children as young as age five. After completing learn-to-sail lessons, kids can continue to sail after school and on weekends or join a youth

racing team. Teams from St. Pete High, Lakewood, and Shorecrest also practice and race out of the center.

Classes are just as diverse for adults, who can take either group or private lessons. Low-cost community memberships are the next step for sailors who are certified, which gives them the opportunity to take out the Sailing Center boats any time they want.

A Fair Wind for Everyone

"People sometimes have a stigma about sailing, this idea that it's khaki suits and ties, and that is simply not true," says Jolly, who teaches adults in the learn-to-sail program. "It's incredibly rewarding to introduce people to something you love. There are people who are retired and always wanted to sail, young couples looking for something fun to do, and families with teens who enjoy time on the water together."

One of the unique features of the center is the adaptive sailing program. "We were one of the first places in the world to have handicapped-accessible docks, and cranes and lifts to help people get into the boats," says Baird. "We've been a pioneer in this area."

The City of St. Pete Therapeutic Recreation Department regularly partners with the Sailing Center for adaptive sailing. So does Warrior Sailing, a national nonprofit organization for wounded, ill, and injured military service members and veterans. "We would never have gotten off the ground without the Sailing Center's support," says Cory Kapes, a St. Pete resident who is program manager for Warrior Sailing.

In 2013, Warrior Sailing held its inaugural sailing program at the center. Since then, 570 men and women have participated in the three-day basic training camp that teaches them sailing basics and builds their confidence on the water. The Sailing Center hosts the group, providing the facilities and boats; Warrior Sailing coaches provide the instruction.

Sailing provides a unique therapeutic environment, says Kapes. "It requires teamwork and can be physically demanding. Engaging in the sport, alongside men and women who share similar experiences in the military provides them challenge and the camaraderie many miss from their time in service."

For the past two years, Michelle and Michael Schultz have partnered with



The St. Pete Sailing Center is fully equipped to support people with disabilities



Getting hooked on sailing at a young age

the Sailing Center to allow children with medical needs to enjoy a day on the water. The couple sponsors the annual outing through Landon's Legacy, a 501c3 nonprofit they created in memory of their son, Landon, who was born with medical complications and died at three days old. His twin brother Logan, now 2, survived.

"It's an opportunity to celebrate Landon and give back to families who don't have a chance to enjoy doing something together as a typical family," says Michelle. "It takes a lot to bring a child on a ventilator, or a child with a spinal cord injury or cerebral palsy, anywhere. Just getting out the door can be difficult."

Michelle admits that at first she was skeptical about how the Sailing Center

could accommodate a 400-pound power wheelchair rolling down a dock, or lifting a child who is immobile onto a boat. But the Sailing Center "had all the equipment we needed and the sailors were so calm and willing to help," she says. Her favorite photograph from the first event? Seeing all the empty wheelchairs lined up the dock because the kids were out on the boats having fun.

"You can never have a bad day on the water," says Hall. "Sailing empowers people and it helps release the hustle and bustle of the world. We're fortunate. Here in St. Petersburg, there are plenty of opportunities to have that experience." ●

For more information visit sailstpete.org, warriorsailing.org, or landonslegacy.org.



From left, David Lacamera, Rick Erickson, Bill Embree, Ed Baird, and Allison Jolly holding trophies from the 1970 Clearwater Pram US Championships held at Key Biscayne Yacht Club



Allison Jolly coaching a member of the USF sailing team

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NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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Rick Carson, editor • rickcarson1@gmail.com



"Roaring '20s" Candlelight Tour

A variety of historic residential styles from cozy bungalows to Mediterranean Revival mansions will be all aglow during HONNA's 24th Annual Candlelight Tour of Homes from 3-8pm on Sunday, December 11.

This year's Tour will highlight homes built during the Roaring '20s. Period attire, 1920s music and vintage automobiles will help transport Tour attendees back 100 years to when St. Pete and the burgeoning Old Northeast neighborhood were just beginning to "roar." Food trucks will be on-site selling various refreshments.

Do you have a home that qualifies – Craftsman Bungalow, Prairie, Colonial Revival or Mediterranean? If so and you would like to have your home nominated or if you wish to be a Tour volunteer, please reach out via honna.org.

Tickets (\$25 in advance and \$30 day of event) for one of St. Petersburg's favorite holiday traditions can be purchased beginning November 11 online at honna.org or the following businesses: Marion's (1301 4th Street N), Sunken Gardens (1825 4th Street N) and Old Northeast Rally (2131 4th Street N). ●



a garden are the right size for the space, resistant to pests and suited to the climate will usually help the other principles fall into place, Heitzmann explained.

By incorporating the principles into a garden's design, the result will be an attractive, functional, and low-maintenance landscape. It will help save water, reduce pollutants, and provide habitat for local wildlife. With those benefits, what homeowner wouldn't want their garden to be Florida-friendly?

But Heitzmann stressed that it doesn't mean an entire landscape has to incorporate all nine principles. "Start with a small section and then, over time, work them into other parts of the landscape." To get your landscape on the road to being Florida-friendly, check out these very friendly and very helpful resources:

- sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/pinellas/florida-friendly-landscaping
- sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/pinellas
- fll.ifas.ufl.edu/plants

Also at the meeting, Police Officer Fuchs discussed how potential crime can be reduced via environmental design. Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) promotes the use of common-sense practices such as landscape lighting, property access, surveillance, and maintenance to deter potential criminals. More at police.stpete.org/docs/crime-prevention-cpted-brochure.pdf.

HONNA board members provided brief updates that included the new honna.org website and upcoming events.

Get the latest news and updates at honna.org. The last HONNA annual meeting of the year will be at 7pm, Monday, November 14, at Westminster Palms. See you there!

~ Nick Bell



Porch Parties and Annual Holiday Party

HONNA makes it easy and fun for neighbors to get together the third Friday of most months with the ever-popular Porch Parties. Friends and neighbors gather at a resident's home between 7:30 and 10pm to catch up, meet new Old Northeast residents and reconnect with old ones. On Friday, November 18, our host will be Stephanie Nase, 1424 1st Street N. Stephanie has been an Old Northeast resident for several years and will share her beautiful 1920s bungalow and recently landscaped garden. Light refreshments and water

will be provided, and guests are encouraged to BYOB. For more information, visit honna.org/events.

One of the favorite perks of being a member of HONNA is attending the annual holiday party. This year's festive affair will be held from 7-10pm Monday, December 19, at the Old Northeast Tavern, 201 7th Avenue N (pictured below). Come enjoy delicious food and raise a toast to a waning 2022 and to a happy and healthy 2023! Not yet a member? Not a problem! It only takes a few minutes at honna.org.

New Committee to Focus on Old Northeast Beautification

One of the best things about our neighborhood is the lush vegetation that graces our gardens, yards, and public rights-of-way. We are also blessed with beautiful bayside parks on our eastern boundary. But as any gardener will tell you, maintaining these green assets is no small task. To help maintain and promote a more beautiful Old Northeast, the HONNA board of directors is establishing a beautification committee.



OUR MISSION

To promote, preserve and protect the quality of life in our unique corner of the world



Northeast is all about. We believe they need lots of loving care to make sure they are as impactful as possible.”

The tree-planting program has a long history of working with residents to populate our public rights-of-way to maintain the lush street canopy. Over 90 trees have been planted since the program began seven years ago. The committee will work with Burt and Carol Klein to identify and coordinate the planting of various tree species.

In addition to the above, the committee will identify and recommend other potential projects that will enhance the neighborhood’s beautiful landscape. If you are interested in joining the committee or would like to suggest potential projects, please contact HONNA via honna.org.

~ Robin Reed



The new committee will have two initial responsibilities: overseeing the eight “monuments” that mark the entrances to the neighborhood and managing the street tree-planting program. Unlike other historic St. Pete neighborhoods, the ONE does not have street sign markers identifying the neighborhood. “The eight monuments are key to identifying and promoting the Old Northeast,” says HONNA president John Johnson. “They not only mark our neighborhood’s boundaries, but they set the tone for what the Old

Thanks to all the homeowners who participated in the house decorating contest. The winners are...

Most Interactive: *Monsters Inc. (pictured below), Dave & Sarah Richardson, 456 18th Avenue NE*

Spookiest: *Old Northeast Dead and Breakfast 526 18th Avenue NE, Vicky & Manny Vilaret*

Best/Most Lights: *Witches, 246 7th Avenue NE, Donna & Skip Wilkinson*

Most Creative: *Jurassic Park, 655 17th Avenue NE, Scott & Dominique Greene*



**THE OLD NORTHEAST:
HALLOWEEN CENTRAL
IN ST. PETE!**



The annual Halloween Porch Party hosted by Frank Hay and Steve Deal on Friday, October 28, was a howling good time for 120 guests.

HONNA’s annual Trunk or Treat gathering on Saturday, October 29, on the grounds of Westminster Palms entertained scores of kids and their parents with decorated cars, treats galore, and fun games.



STAY CONNECTED

HONNA invites and encourages you to stay connected and on top of programs, events, and other happenings in our neighborhood. It’s a great way to learn more about the neighborhood, become involved, share ideas, learn about events and dates of Porch Parties, and provide feedback. Share/Like us at Facebook. com/honna.org.

Ways To Stay Connected:

- Visit honna.org
- Visit [Facebook.com/honna.org](https://www.facebook.com/honna.org).
- Become a HONNA member. You’ll receive periodic informative email announcements. honna.org/get-involved
- Volunteer for a project, program, or event (th e Candlelight Tour of Homes, Trunk or Treat, Porch Parties, Crime Watch). Contact Anna Broshears at abroshe56@gmail.com.
- Follow Historic Old Northeast Forever at historicoldnortheast-forever.org. HONF works “to preserve and protect our special neighborhood” (HONF is not affiliated with HONNA). ●

HONNA’S SHINING STARS: BEFORE & AFTER



In an effort to honor Old Northeast homeowners for preserving or updating their home or property and investing the extra dollar to keep the character and history of their homes intact, HONNA has been recognizing them with the Neighborhood STAR Award. Every month, a STAR yard sign will be placed on properties to indicate an award.

Here are the STARS for November (235 27th Avenue N, Patrick Sella, house renovated by previous owner); and December (1020 Bay Street NE, Robert & Susan Semmens, renovation by Maureen Stafford).

Watch for new STARS in the neighborhood monthly, and you’ll be able to find them posted on honna.org, in addition to HONNA’s Facebook page. We invite you to be a part of this effort, so please feel free to nominate a neighbor or a refurbished property you admire in the Old Northeast. Have a home to honor? Send the information to Charleen McGrath at treasurer@honna.org. ●

NOVEMBER



DECEMBER



MIZE Gallery: All Good Things Must Come to an End

Abby Baker

Chad Mize, a St. Petersburg artist known for his punchy graphics and mural work, is closing the locally renowned MIZE Gallery this December. The space will become an extension of Uptown Eats, a breakfast and brunch spot next door. In 2017, Mize opened the small space after swearing to never open another gallery again; he previously owned now-shuttered St. Pete gallery Blue Lucy.

"I just got the itch and I had to," Mize said of his change of heart. "So, I opened MIZE. I think it turned out."

For five years, Mize put on one exhibit a month and invited artists, art-lovers, and anyone eager to check out local art to his gallery on MLK Jr Street N. The gallery showcased creators with both big and small reputations, and held exhibits ranging from the famously annual *STUFF & THINGS & STUFF* holiday show, *NUDE*, and LGBTQ+ themed events



Chad Mize and Andrea Pawlisz in front of wall art at 2D Café in downtown, one of Mize's local projects.

The new space from the former gallery will become an additional seating area and storage unit for the restaurant. And yes, there will be art, including a few pieces from Mize himself.

"Even when you're doing well, things need to progress," Mize said.

MIZE Memories

Aside from the artists Mize exhibits in his gallery, his right-hand employee was graphic design artist Andrea Pawlisz. The two met socially at an event in 2010, and Pawlisz began working for him as well as exhibiting her pop-art inspired work. She's sad to see the gallery go, but being one of the first people to know, she understands Mize's position.

"At first, yeah I was sad, but life is about certain cycles," Pawlisz said. "The gallery took up a lot of time, and I respect his personal aspirations and goals. He's wanted to do this for years; it wasn't like I was left out in the cold."

Pawlisz has been with MIZE through 30 shows, including her own solo show, and worked at the gallery through the COVID-19 closure. The artist says it wasn't uncommon to see 500 people pooling in and out of the gallery on an opening night, typically Friday.

Always-on Mize was the man who put together marketing, promotion, and front-of-house work. Pawlisz jokingly calls herself "the bad cop" and was more hands-on with the physical work behind each exhibit. "What makes it special is that Chad never pushed sales; he just has a knack for bringing people together," she said.

The building's lease is up December 31, and Mize plans to enter 2023 with a fresh start, and a heartfelt goodbye. "The uptown neighborhood has changed so much since we opened," Mize said. "It's a powerful community."

The gallery's last show will be the *STUFF & THINGS & STUFF* exhibit this December. Mize says he'll end the era with a block party outside MIZE, which sits in St. Pete's historic uptown neighborhood at 689 Dr M.L.K. Jr St. N.

What's next for Mize personally? It's open ended, but it's likely he'll keep creating magic in Tampa Bay. "Anything he touches turns to gold," said Pawlisz. "Chad's thing at the gallery was the fact that it was approachable, it was for everybody. I'm sure he'll carry that feeling on." ●



MIZE employee and artist Andrea Pawlisz says the closing is bittersweet.



After five years, Chad Mize announced the closing of his uptown gallery.

such as 2021's celebratory Pride show, *Rainbow*.

Rhys Meatyard, a nonbinary graphic artist and painter in St. Pete, says the MIZE Gallery owner got them back into the art scene. "The first show I participated in at MIZE was *Sup Cones 2* in 2019, which was the first show I'd been a part of in many years," Meatyard said. "I'd been encouraged by Chad to participate in his shows for years, but I felt for the longest time that I didn't have what it took. If it wasn't for the encouragement of people like Chad in the community, I'm not sure I would have gotten back into it."

Mize, What's Next?

New Orleans-born Mize grew up in Tampa Bay, lived in Boston for a brief bit, and moved back to the Pinellas area in 2003. He's been creating art here ever since.

The gallery's closing is, more than anything, a much-needed change for Mize. On top of running the gallery, he is a muralist and is responsible for many public art pieces in the city, including the famed "Twiggy" mural downtown.

"I did hit fatigue after about four years," Mize said in October. "But I wanted to keep the gallery open for at least five. I didn't want to flake. I

wanted a community space to be established, where emerging artists could be displayed next to people like Nancy Cohen."

Though the gallery is closing, its location is staying in the family. The space that once housed MIZE will be absorbed by Uptown Eats, a popular breakfast spot owned by Dan Schmidt, Mize's fiancé.

"I look at it all very positively, knowing that Chad knows exactly what is right for him and will succeed in whatever his future path is," said Schmidt. "For the restaurant space, it's natural growth, giving us more space to work and serve people."

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Kevin Hendrick: Meet Pinellas County's New School Superintendent

Jon Kile

When former Superintendent Michael Grego retired after 10 years on the job, the Pinellas County School District didn't have to look far for his replacement. New Superintendent Kevin Hendrick has been a fixture in the school district for 25 years. Hendrick is a local. He grew up in Belleair and Largo, graduated from Largo High School, and went to USF. He began his career teaching math at Pinellas Park High School before spending six years at Dunedin High School teaching social studies and coaching basketball.

Hendrick moved to the Old Northeast 11 years ago to shorten his commute when he took a position as assistant principal at Palmetto High School in Manatee County. It wasn't long before he was working in Pinellas County again when he became principal at Northeast High School in 2008. He developed a solid record of success and held a wide variety of leadership positions in academics and athletics.

Hendrick's experience made him a key administrator for much of his predecessor's tenure. If there was a moment that he knew he could be the district's next leader, he says it was

when COVID created a challenge unlike anything schools had ever faced.

As chief academic officer during the pandemic, Hendrick spoke of long days and nights in March of 2020, working virtually with his team to set up something that teachers and students of all types could use to resume teaching. "Nothing was perfect, but comparatively speaking, we put together a system that allowed

teachers and students to continue their work."

During the hiring process, Hendrick emerged as a frontrunner because of his familiarity with the district's teachers and the confidence they have in him. "Teachers are the most important piece, obviously," he said. "You can have great buildings, on-time buses, but if your teachers are terrible, no one cares about the other things. Great teachers are the key."

Making a home with his wife Melissa, also a teacher, and their son Jackson on 22nd Avenue and Bay, Hendrick is well acquainted with the schools in the Northeast area. He has been a familiar face making visits to North Shore Elementary and Shore Acres Elementary. "Our emphasis is on neighborhood schools after many years in the 1990s and 2000s focusing on the choice programs," he said, referring to the lottery system for fundamental and



Hendrick at cafeteria table with students

Photos courtesy of Pinellas County Schools

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New Pinellas County Schools Superintendent Kevin Hendrick



Hendrick shows his playful side in a drum class

magnet schools not zoned for a specific neighborhood. The system created a high demand for certain programs.

Hendrick wants families to know that the district's high quality isn't limited to its well-known specialty programs, but also extends to the neighborhood schools. "We have a \$1.8 billion budget. We're always going to have more ways to challenge kids in a neighborhood school versus other options."

A big focus for Hendrick is on the middle school experience. And having a son attending Thurgood Marshall Fundamental Middle School has given him an up-close look from the perspective as a parent. "Our middle schools have always been set up like mini high schools. We'll be making some changes so that the transition is more gradual, so sixth grade will look more like 5th grade, and 8th grade looks more like high school."

Much of Northeast St. Pete is zoned for John Hopkins Middle School, which is also home to an arts magnet program. "We've made significant improvements at John Hopkins. We've added a new gifted program, and nobody will ever have a better arts program."

Hendrick also talked about how the new middle school under construction on 62nd Avenue east of 1st Street will impact families in Northeast St. Pete. The facility is a partnership with the YMCA. "It'll be a choice school, with a proximity preference." The school will open in August of 2024.

Hendrick didn't enjoy a long

"honeymoon" phase in his new position. Less than two months into his first full school year, he saw to the opening of 22 shelters in Pinellas schools, staffed by 700 employees, during Hurricane Ian.

When it comes to hot button issues that dominate the statewide and national conversations about education, Hendrick is focused. "I stick to what we are actually doing. I taught high school civics and took pride in the fact that my students didn't know my politics. The noise is just noise."

Hendrick is forward looking when discussing the district's challenges and keeping teachers in the profession. "A big challenge is the shift in the workforce," he said. "You don't have to live on Wall Street to work on Wall Street. The teaching profession has become politicized, and we have to elevate teaching as a profession."

With 25 years under his belt right here in Pinellas County, Hendrick exudes a stability that is refreshing in a high-profile leadership position. "Dr. Grego was a great mentor. I've always enjoyed every position I've had so I was never about the next job."

That's good for our schools and our neighborhood, because Superintendent Hendrick has a long view of what our schools can accomplish. And even though he has his plate is full as an administrator, he has a youthful side. Whether he's coaching baseball, watching his son's middle school golf match, or jumping into a game of Wiffle ball in the alley, Superintendent Hendrick shows he's in it for the kids. ●



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Safer Sun: Local Company on a Mission to Protect Vulnerable Skin

Brandy Stark

The holidays bring about a sense of community. In sunny St. Petersburg, we are fortunate to have just that: a local region of small businesses, the arts, and localized charities that allow residents to connect with one another. This is well exemplified by ShapeShifter Fish and Friends, a small business with ties to Coffee Pot Bayou. Maria Aller and Andrew Hill co-founded the organization in October 2020, a time when they felt the world needed more positivity.

“I lived in an apartment for five years, but fell in love with the neighborhood,” Aller says. “When I decided to buy a house, it took me one and a half years until I found the right one. I bought my forever home here in 2018.”

Putting down roots in St. Pete also inspired Aller to start up her own small business, which she describes as producing “multiFUNctional sun protective wear featuring Tampa Bay marine life.”

She and Hill found that they loved the outdoor life in Florida, but were also wary of the damage our ever-present sun can cause. That’s when they came up with the idea of sun protective clothing, reflecting the natural elements of Florida life. Aller designs each image, which is then screen printed onto UPF50+ long sleeve shirts.

“We hope that by making this line, those wearing it are motivated to go outside and enjoy, but to do so in a manner that is more health conscious,” she says, adding their hope that the pieces also help to “inspire friendship and support diversity” by allowing for cultural interactions.

The clothing line was originally launched for youth, passing the message “to be yourself, to be different, and embrace this idea that friends, like our clothing line, come in all shapes, colors, and sizes.” Popular designs include a puffer fish image on bright pink shirts, the lovable manatee design, and local favorite “the GOAT,” which features a #12 on the back of the shirt as a nod to the Bucs and Tom Brady.

But it’s not all business for Aller and Hill. They also created their own charity, Project FIN – short for “Friends in Need.” Launched in 2021, FIN is an outreach “to get UPF50 sun protection shirts out to the local homeless community to help combat the risk of skin cancer.”

Aller says that when she lived in her apartment, she noticed people who would walk the alleys looking for food and clothing. She knew that she wanted to help.

“The idea truly came to life when I started a friendship with a local homeless man named Gary,” she said. “He is often seen in his wheelchair in our neighborhood



Maria Aller and Andrew Hill



Joe Pondolfino and Andrew Hill, donation to Pinellas Hope, April 2022



Maria Aller at a Project FIN kickoff benefiting Tampa Homeless Outreach, May 2021



Maria Aller and staff at Reach St Pete in August 2021

and through the years we’ve provided him meals, blankets, umbrellas, and clothing.”

Then, she says, Gary vanished for about two months in 2020. “We had no idea what had happened to him or how to find him,” says Aller. “When he reappeared, we found out that he had been hospitalized with skin cancer. It was then that we realized how little the disease is addressed or talked about for the homeless communities, who have an extremely high-risk lifestyle for skin cancer.”

It seemed like an issue uniquely suited for Aller and Hill to help address. “I did research to see if any of the other sun protective clothing lines were doing this in Florida, and I could not find a single one. There is definitely a need, and Andrew and I agreed that we were fated to help.”

They started to set a portion of the proceeds of every ShapeShifter Fish and Friends shirt sale to fund Project FIN. “In May 2021, we went to the International Harley Women’s Ride event and donated our first batch of sun protective shirts to the Tampa Homeless Outreach,” Aller says. “We were blown away at the positive response from the event organizers and other participants.”

Aller says that the idea was also embraced by their local customers. The company soon started donating to St. Pete Reach, Meet Me in the Street Ministries, Pinellas Hope, Homeless Leadership Alliance of Pinellas County, St. Vincent de Paul CARES Center of Hope – even walking around the city to hand them out. In the wake of Hurricane Ian, they also were recently able to send protective wear to people in Southwest Florida.

“Thus far we have donated over 800 shirts and are about to send out another batch,” says Aller. “We are always looking for new organizations to donate our shirts to so they can pass them out to others in need.”

In addition to providing the clothing, the project aims to bring skin cancer awareness to homeless people and works to provide more free public skin health checks. In October 2022, the company also started to donate to local breast cancer treatment centers as patients going through chemotherapy often have greater skin sensitivity to the sun.

“Recent data has shown a link between breast cancer and skin cancer,” Aller said. She was recently diagnosed with breast cancer and knows firsthand how challenging it is to deal with skin sensitivity due to treatments. “I want to live life outside, but I also want to be safe. I am so happy to be able to help my fellow fighters and thrivers do the same.”

For more information visit ssfishandfriends.com or contact Maria Aller at ssfishandfriends@gmail.com.



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and minored in language arts. Jacqueline completed college in a little over two years and was selected to Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities. She later became a distributor for a national corporation and owned her own clothing business. Jacqueline is also a lecturer, writer, author, poet, and artist. Her daughter, Sochitl S. Cotman, is also an author.

Both Jacqueline and Earl have been in the mainstream of St. Petersburg's social and cultural scene over the past 40 years. They originally lived at Bayfront Tower downtown, but later moved to Snell Isle, where they still reside. Jacqueline was the first African American member of the Pinellas County Medical Society Auxiliary and was the first African American Floridian member of the Association of Junior Leagues. She has also served on the Pinellas County Arts Council, the Mahaffey Theatre Foundation, and the Board of Trustees of Eckerd College. Both she and Earl have been strong supporters of the Museum of Fine Arts, the Dali Museum, the Florida Orchestra, and the Bayfront Center Foundation. As if their accomplishments were not impressive enough, both Cotmans are also pilots and sailors.

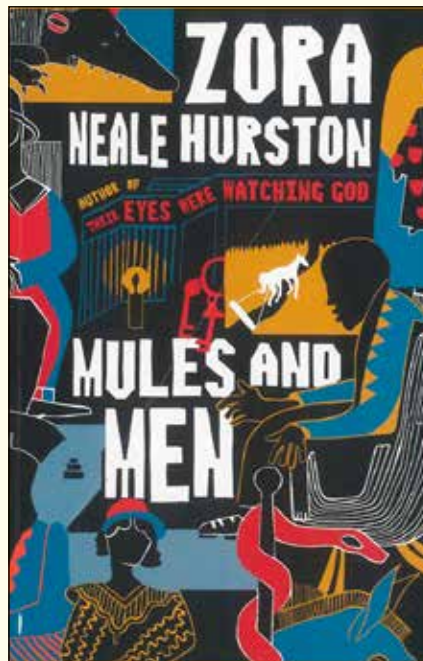
Jacqueline traces her roots back to the Reconstruction period of Florida history and beyond. The family name has been spelled both "Nixon" and "Nickson." "My great grandfather, John William ("Cubit") Nixon, came to Florida from Perquimans County, North Carolina, with his half-brother Thomas D. Nixon about 1842. Cubit was of Cherokee heritage and Thomas was white. Cubit originally lived in Gadsden County and later moved to Polk County about 1913. He had three wives and over 30 children, dying in Homeland, Florida at the age of 107." She recalls Cubit had six aspirations for his children. "He wanted his children to live forever with dreams of the world. He wanted them to go to school and be educated, paid for their work, and own property. He wanted them to have the right to vote and to be treated humanely. And lastly, he wanted them to have a greater world."

In 1892, Cubit was able to help his son Jessie gain entrance to the Florida Normal School for Colored, which later became Florida Agricultural and Mechanical School (FAMU). FAMU was founded by Jonathan C. Gibbs, Florida's first African American Secretary of State and Superintendent of Public Instruction, and namesake of Gibbs High School. Attendance at FAMU was to become a



According to family history, Jacqueline Cotman's great-great grandfather John William ("Cubit") Nixon was greatly involved in Florida Reconstruction Era history. Shown here: "First Colored Senator and Representatives in the 41st and 42nd Congress of the United States." From left, Senator Hiram Revels of Mississippi, Representatives Benjamin Turner of Alabama, Robert DeLarge of South Carolina, Josiah Walls (Florida's First African American Congressman 1871-77), Jefferson Long of Georgia, Joseph Rainey, and Robert B. Elliot of South Carolina.

By Currier and Ives, 1872. Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Jacqueline Cotman is inspired by anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston and particularly her classic work Mules and Men, which tells the stories of African Americans, including family members, living in Eatonville and Polk County.

tradition in the Nickson family. Jacqueline recalls that she wanted to attend Fisk University, but her parents insisted that she attend FAMU. She says, "As it turned out, that was the best decision because that is where I met Earl."

Jacqueline has explored her roots extensively. She has found anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston's books about the South an invaluable resource, particularly her 1935 autoethnographic book *Mules and Men*. An autoethnographic style is the use of self-reflection and writing to explore anecdotal experiences connecting them to wider meanings. *Mules and Men* documents African American folklore and the lives of residents in Eatonville and Polk County, Florida. Eatonville was one of the first self-governing, all African American municipalities in the United States. The book includes the names of many early settlers, including some related to Jacqueline. Hurston also wrote the historical novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* based on the Okeechobee Hurricane

of 1928 in which the storm surge caused a breach in the lake and many deaths.

The Nixon family was active in Florida politics during the era of Reconstruction. Jacqueline calls the Reconstruction period "the first period of Affirmative Action in the United States. The second period was represented by Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s."

Among Jacqueline's literary works is a soliloquy entitled "Harmonies of Liberty" (unpublished) in which she assumes the persona of her great grandfather, Cubit, and her great grandmother, Henrietta, imagining the story of their lives and reflecting on Reconstruction and Jim Crow Florida. It is a variation of Zora Hurston's autoethnographic style.

She writes in her grandfather's voice: "President Lincoln had died a whole generation ago but the people never ever wanted to forget him.... The south continued his causes with the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments. The colored man's greatest achievement in American history will probably end up being misunderstood because we do not have notebooks on this yet. It took years for us to speak up on every issue, get the results written down and send to Washington for approval."

Jacqueline strives to reconstruct that missing history. ●

Will Michaels is the author of *The Making of St. Petersburg and the Hidden History of St. Petersburg*. He may be contacted at wmichaels2222@gmail.com.

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MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR



Matthew Szidik
Emerson Ave

How long have you lived in St. Pete and where are you from originally?

I've lived in St. Pete for almost three years now. I'm originally from Marion, a small city in Southern Illinois.

Favorite place to visit in St. Pete?

My favorite place is Sunset Beach, especially if there are waves, because I love to surf and skim board!

Most interesting, enjoyable, or exotic vacation?

In 2016, I visited the Collegiate Mountains in Colorado. This was my first time seeing mountains in person and my mind was absolutely blown by the grandeur of it all!

Top two places in the world on your bucket list?

That's a tough question. There are so many places I want to visit. The Great Barrier Reef would be up there on the list, and New Zealand.

What famous person, current or past, would you like to meet and why?

I would have liked to have met Leonardo da Vinci. I figure the conversation would be incredibly fascinating with his broad range of knowledge.

Favorite sport, recreational activity, or hobby?

I grew up playing soccer and swimming, with a little bit of gymnastics on the side. I enjoy most any recreational activity. If I'm outdoors I'm happy! Soccer, or "futbol," is my favorite sport to play and to watch.

What do you do for a living?

I work as a glass artist in St. Petersburg, doing commission work and educational demonstrations for the public. I also help out at Duncan McClellan's Gallery, taking care of various jobs.

Tell us something about your family.

My family is awesome! We are a very active bunch; we love to bike ride and hike together. All of us enjoy being outdoors. My brother Luke has created an amazing garden back home, and both he and my mom make delicious food from it.



Samantha Bond Richman
Beach Drive

How long have you lived in St. Pete and where are you from originally?

Eight years in St. Pete, 28 in Tampa. First 20 in College Park, Maryland.

Favorite place to visit in St. Pete?

The Vinoy.

Most interesting, enjoyable, or exotic vacation?

Belize was cool, though we went on a cruise in Europe and visited 11 countries in 14 days.

Top two places in the world on your bucket list?

Hawaii and... too many.

What famous person would you like to meet and why?

Madeleine Albright. Eleanor Roosevelt. Helen Keller. All amazing women.

Favorite sport, recreational activity, or hobby?

In order of the question: golf, playing with grandkids, reading.

A movie you'd recommend or TV show you're watching?

O Brother, Where Art Thou?

If you were a dog, what breed would you be?

I wouldn't; I'm a cat person.

Tell us about a situation or a person who has inspired you.

Anytime anyone has ever said to me, "Pretty good, for a girl."

Current book you've read and would recommend?

Watership Down by Richard Adams. We could learn a lot from rabbits.

Tell us about an accomplishment of which you are proud.

My two children, Matthew and Natalie.

Something people might not know about you?

My sister is an artist who lives in St. Petersburg part time.

What do you do for a living?

Owner of Sam Bond Benefit Group where I primarily help business owners reduce liability and pay less for employee benefits by joining a larger group.

Tell us something about your family and pets.

I am happily married to Tim. I have a highly neurotic (though thoroughly lovable) kitty named Louie.

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AROUND THE BLOCK

Free Concerts at First Presbyterian



Daniel Urbanowicz will perform baroque at FPC



Classical and holiday-music lovers have something to celebrate this holiday season as First Presbyterian Church, 701 Beach Drive NE, offers two free upcoming concerts. First up, on November 20 at 4 pm, it's Daniel Urbanowicz and the talented artists of St. Pete Baroque performing their early music repertoire on historical period instruments. These musicians bring new life to old masterpieces and give a voice to newly discovered works while bringing audiences the eccentric and improvisatory nature of baroque music.

On December 9 at 7 pm, join FPC for a free "Concert by Candlelight" featuring student musicians from the Pinellas County Center for the Arts and the First Presbyterian Church Chancel Choir. This holiday tradition supports the St. Petersburg Free Clinic and will include "A Ceremony of Carols" by Benjamin Britten accompanied by harp. ●

Learn more at fpcstpete.com.



Music by candlelight

Photos courtesy of First Presbyterian Church

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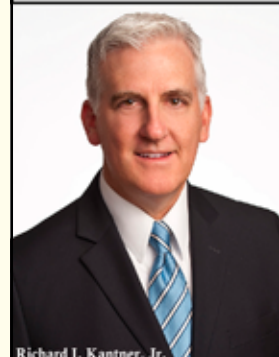
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“Living my best life in St. Pete”

Downtown St. Pete resident Michael D. was suffering from leg and foot pain from peripheral neuropathy, “I was in extreme pain and aside from a handful of daily pills, I was out of options.” Then he met St. Petersburg’s Dr. Matthew Mann.

Pain is often seen as just another inevitable experience in life, but most people expect it to be a brief transition phase while recovering from an injury. Unfortunately for some people with peripheral neuropathy, the painful sensations of burning and tingling never seem to end. Often, after suffering through years of shooting and stabbing sensations, the pain eventually fades to numbness. While that may seem like a relief, it is at this point when the balance problems and risky injuries begin.

St. Pete retiree, Michael D. was dealing with one of the most painful stages of peripheral neuropathy. “I was in constant pain that just made me want to cut my feet off. When the burning started 15 years ago it was mild. Over time I grew used to the annoying nature of the mild burning and just let it go. About 5 years ago the pain started to really increase and I finally talked to my doctor who referred me to a neurologist. She sent me to a pain specialist to find relief. I tried medications like Gabapentin, and it did nothing to help the pain. My doctors told me there was nothing else they could do and that this was something I would have to live with. I just couldn’t imagine living the rest of my days feeling like my feet were on fire.”

Peripheral neuropathy is a result of damage to the nerves from poor circulation in the hands or feet.

Poor blood circulation reduces the delivery of nutrients to the nerves and causes nerve degeneration. As peripheral neuropathy progresses, lack of blood flow to the feet results in numbness leading to an increased risk of falls, scrapes, and cuts. Lack of good blood circulation also slows the healing of minor cuts increasing the risk of dangerous infections, the worst case scenario being the possibility of an amputation.

Michael had given up on finding a solution. “I didn’t know anything about acupuncture and how it could help me, but a conversation with my neighbor led me to Dr. Mann at St. Petersburg Acupuncture & Integrative Medicine. I tried many other options that did nothing so I honestly did not have much hope that acupuncture would help me either, but the pain was unbearable. My dream of enjoying retirement in beautiful sunny St. Pete was fading away. That picture I had in my head started to come back in focus after starting treatments with Dr. Mann. The pain has decreased so much that I can now sleep peacefully through the night. That was impossible before I started getting acupuncture.”

Dr. Mann, DAOM AP, explains that “acupuncture is incredible at improving blood flow and helping to stimulate the nerves to prevent them from completely dying. We focus on using acupuncture and integrate different modalities such as Chinese herbal medicine



and ATP Resonance BioTherapy into our treatments for peripheral neuropathy depending on what will benefit the patient most throughout their care. All these techniques assist in improving blood flow to the hands and feet to nourish the local tissue and help repair the nerves.” The number of treatments needed to allow the nerves to recover will vary from person to person and is determined by performing a detailed neurological and vascular evaluation. As long as the nerves have not been completely severed or have greater than 85% nerve damage, St. Petersburg Acupuncture & Integrative Medicine offers hope where there once was none.

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Hurricane Ian Brings Out the Best in Neighbors

Samantha Bond Richman



A large downed tree on Coffee Pot. Photo by Arin Greenwood



Coffee Pot Bayou at low tide during the storm



The North Shore Park Chalker and helpers constantly chalk along the seawall with colorful graphics and uplifting messages.



Here's how they used tree debris after Hurricane Ian for decorative purposes.

It was a dark and stormy night when Ian came to town. High winds of 75 mph and rain gusts buffeted the Bay area, after devastating communities in the southwest. Wednesday night, September 28, was a long one for those who chose to stay put, many in light of the adjusted forecast slightly shifting the storm's projected landfall to Lee County. When the worst had passed, and the weather slowly cleared on Thursday, residents began assessing the damage to their homes and property.

The rumble of chainsaws, the whining of leaf blowers, and the screeching of metal rakes against concrete began early Thursday. The cooler temperatures and lower humidity seemed to invigorate activity. Neighbors were helping neighbors throughout the storm cycle, beginning with advance storm preparation assistance, through evacuations, providing shelter, supporting each other through the storm's passing, and aiding with post-storm clean up. The ready responses to Hurricane Ian show that commitment to kindness is strong in the Old Northeast and surrounds. It was a slow-moving storm, and it was joked that waiting for Hurricane Ian was like "being stalked by a turtle." Nerves were frayed; humor helped.

Just prior to the storm, anyone venturing out Wednesday afternoon may have witnessed the tremendous power of wind and outgoing tide on our waterfront. Canals were reduced to a trickle, and boats lay askew on muddy bottoms where water once was. Docks seemed to lead to nowhere, suspended on spindly oyster-covered pilings 10 to 12 feet above mud where the water typically flowed. Some adventurous souls even walked on tidal mudflats hundreds of yards out into the Bay with the wind whipping their hats and tearing at their jackets.

Following the storm, damage was everywhere, though it could certainly have been much worse. There were branches, palm fronds, and other debris strewn on streets and lawns. Pool motors were jammed with leaves. Rooftops were tested. On balconies and in yards, potted plants were spilled, and early Halloween decorations were carried off into the night by the savage wind. Some signs and awnings were downed, and more than a few trees crashed to the ground, not just the small ones. Freezers were emptied everywhere after power outages. (What was in that Tupperware anyway?)

Neighbors Felix and Donna Fudge on 14th Avenue once again provided shelter to friends living in evacuation zones, as they have done through a number of storms since purchasing their beautiful brick home in 1998. In the relative quiet of the morning, they surveyed the damage in their front yard. They lost a large, 60-year-old laurel oak to Hurricane Ian, and as Donna explained, "It was a miracle. The tree fell in a direction that spared all structures, and the branches caught and held the tree trunk just above our son's friend Jake's car, like a canopy." When the branches were removed by another neighbor, the car didn't have any damage at all. "Truly miraculous!" beamed Donna.

Tom Golden, a neighbor on 11th Avenue and operator of local restaurant The Lure, immediately began clean-up of his own yard after Ian, and then that of an elderly neighbor. "I just went over with my Sawzall and began cutting branches and helping clear the big stuff." While loss of power was spotty here, areas around Ft. Myers were devastated and very few had power after the storm. "My brother was heading down to check on property there, and we loaded as much as we could into his truck, including several generators, cans of gas, and tools," said Tom. As was made clear in the days following the storm, many people lost everything – some their lives.

On the neighborhood social media site Nextdoor, friendly neighbor Andrew Orr offered the following for folks who fled the storm, shared here with his permission: "I live on 10th Avenue NE and Locust. After Hurricane Irma I rode around on the e-bike taking pics for people who wanted an assessment of any storm damage to their home. This time I will be riding around the Old Northeast neighborhood after the storm again. If anyone wishes me to ride by their home to assess any damage, please just shoot me a text with your address and I will put you on the list. I can ride by, take some pics, and then text them to you. No charge!" Surely Andrew gave peace of mind to many who evacuated.

On a morning walk, two ladies in a golf cart were overhead speaking to a neighbor the day after Hurricane Ian. The apparent homeowner, and his pixie-sweet daughter, were standing together on their small bungalow porch, while he greeted the two in a golf cart. "...it got a little tight with five adults, five children, and two dogs in a two-bedroom, one-bath house. We made it," he said with a sigh and a smile. Maybe that's why he was outside on the porch, getting some air and space. The daughter poked her head between the balusters of the porch, looking a bit like a tiny prisoner. Her hair in twiggy pig tails, she looked like the child nicknamed Boo in the animated movie *Monsters Inc.*

While the Old Northeast and the rest of the Bay area have mostly moved on from the storm, our neighbors to the south still need our help. Contribute your time, money, talents, or all three. Here are just a few organizations supporting survivors of the storm: American Red Cross.org; World Central Kitchen at wkc.org; MercyChefs.com, whose mission is "just go feed people;" FeedingTampaBay.org; Samaritanspurse.org; and help for pets at humansociety.org/hurricane-ian-response. ●

It was a slow-moving storm, and it was joked that waiting for Hurricane Ian was like “being stalked by a turtle.” Nerves were frayed; humor helped.



Iconic pavers disheveled by a downed tree



Felix and Donna Fudge's home before the storm



One very lucky car



Felix and Donna Fudge's home after the storm



The Pier in high winds with low tide



Old palm trees fall victim to Hurricane Ian on Coffee Pot Bayou. Photo by Arin Greenwood.

Gloria Muñoz is St. Pete's New Poet Laureate



Gloria Muñoz

In October, Mayor Ken Welch and the St. Petersburg City Council named Gloria Muñoz the city's poet laureate. Muñoz, who was featured in the May/June issue of the *Northeast*

Journal, is local poet, teacher, lyricist, and all-around multi-genre writer who has garnered an impressive roster of local and national grants, fellowships, and awards. Her book of poetry, *Danzirly* (pronounced "Dawn's Early"), which explores the American dream from a Latinx perspective, won the Academy of American Poets' 2019 Ambroggio Prize, and the Gold Medal Florida Book Award.

Muñoz told St. Pete Catalyst in October that she is "thrilled to be the first Latina in this position," adding that she expects to be a "champion of poetry for the city," and is particularly interested in highlighting more diversity, from BIPOC to inter-generational voices. Muñoz succeeds Helen Pruitt Wallace, who was named St. Petersburg's Poet Laureate in 2016.

"It's important to give voice to the unique and inclusive experiences in St. Pete," Celeste Davis, the city's director of arts, culture and tourism said, "and Gloria Muñoz will do just that."

In addition to her extensive literary resume, Muñoz is the co-founder of Pitch Her Productions, a nonprofit that promotes the advancement of women in the film industry. She and husband Mark Feinman, of the trio La Lucha, also co-founded Moonlit Musica, a creative business combining music, lyrics, songwriting, and TV projects. ●

More at gloriamunoz.com.

St. Pete Pier Wins Global Award for Excellence

In October, the City of St. Petersburg announced that the St. Pete Pier was selected as one of six winners of the Urban Land Institute's 2022 Global Awards for Excellence, a top honor recognizing the best new urban designs in the world. This year's winners include two from North America, two from Europe, and two from Asia Pacific. The St. Pete Pier was one of just two designs in the United States to be awarded.

"This is an incredible, meaningful accomplishment for our city and our iconic waterfront," said Mayor Ken Welch. "The ULI Global Awards for Excellence win puts the St. Pete Pier on the map as a world-class destination for residents and visitors alike."

Former Mayor Rick Kriseman, whose administration oversaw the Pier's development, said, "I am incredibly proud of the recognition the Pier has received, culminating in this award from the highly respected ULI. The Pier project was a great example of what happens when a community and dedicated, committed staff come together to create a place that is open and inviting to everyone, residents and visitors alike. The St. Pete Pier is a place where lasting memories are created. Congratulations again to the entire city team."

In 2022, 152 projects and programs were submitted across the three ULI regions. Of those submissions, 26 were named as winners across the regions and were then considered as global finalists. From this impressive field, the jury ultimately selected the six winners.

ULI began the Awards for Excellence program in 1979 to recognize superior development efforts in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors. Winning projects represent the highest standards of achievement in the land use profession. The St. Pete Pier was named a winner of the ULI Americas Award for Excellence and then became a finalist in the 2022 ULI Global Awards for Excellence, competing against projects from Europe and Asia.

"Across the three regions, ULI honored finalists who displayed an exemplary commitment to best practices and to building more inclusive cities with exceptional and contextual design," said Sophie Henley-Price, principal and managing director of STUDIOS Architecture, Paris, France, and one of the 2022 jurists. "The winners exhibited a unique level of excellence both at a regional and global scale, along with a dedication to promoting community engagement and innovation within their respective projects." As part of this program, ULI will also recognize the Pier in a case study for ULI's Park Profiles and Case Studies webpage. ●

Find more on each of the finalists at uli.org/gae.



Courtesy of the City of St. Petersburg

A Fresh Season for Saturday Morning Market



Photo courtesy of Saturday Morning Market

After a delay from Hurricane Ian, the Saturday Morning Market launched its 2022-23 season on Saturday, October 8. The popular weekly event offers more than 100 vendors of fresh and organic produce, meats and seafood, fresh breads, prepared food items, ready-to-eat foods, and more, including works by local artists and makers.

The market is open from 9 am to 2 pm on Saturdays through May at Al Lang Stadium, with live music starting at 10 am. Well-behaved dogs are welcome.

Now in its 20th year, the market is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that "strives to be the 'heart' of our community, supporting fresh, healthy food options and educating market-goers about the importance of Florida's Agribusiness." The market participates in the "Florida Fresh" program that doubles SNAP dollars for access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Sponsors for this season include the St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership, The Simms Team at Coastal Properties Group International, Print Sponsor the Tampa Bay Times, and Stage Sponsor Duke Energy Center for the Arts at Mahaffey Theater. ●

More at saturdaymorningmarket.com.

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Photos by M. Shackleford Burns unless otherwise noted.



Heather with Toccoa
 North Shore Park



Rene with Rome and Keira
 Vinoy Park



Sean with Mr. Shelby
 Downtown St. Pete



Ellie and Marley sit with "sibling" Sanka, 13th Avenue N
 Courtesy of Jenna Hasbrouck



Scott Rosenberg with Silvi, Monterey Blvd NE
 Courtesy of Scott Rosenberg



Danielle Armstrong with Winnie
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Charles with Tejward
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Sunshine Street Team Returns

In November, the Downtown Business Association of St. Petersburg (DBA) officially rebooted the Sunshine Street Team, a volunteer visitor experience program, after taking a break during the pandemic.

The Sunshine Street Team mobilizes volunteers in the downtown waterfront parks on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from November through mid-May to provide directional, entertainment, and cultural center guidance to city visitors. The goals of the program include enhancing the St. Petersburg visitor experience, building lasting relationships between visitors and St. Pete establishments, and generating metrics surrounding the visitor experience.

Kicking off season five is newly hired Director Nicole Roberts, a well-known community member who brings her experience and enthusiasm to restart the momentum of the Sunshine Street Team. The program is funded by the DBA, and community and business sponsors, including The Simms Team at Coastal Properties Group, the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority, and the St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership, with additional support from the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce.

Street Team Visitor Guides are easily identifiable with new, yellow high-visibility vests inviting tourists and locals alike to “Ask Me!” Training is provided, and new volunteers are always welcome. ●



Photos courtesy of the Downtown Business Association of St. Petersburg Shorecrest

More information at sunshinestreetteam.org.

Second Time Arounders Adult Marching Band Gears Up for New Season

Who doesn't love a marching band? And second chances? The Greater St. Petersburg Area Awesome Original Second Time Arounders Marching Band enters its 41st season with a new band director and “a renewed focus to provide former high school, college, and military band members the opportunity to march one more time,” according to a recent release.

Mark Deen took the helm at the close of the band's historic 40th season, which included a performance in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Dublin, Ireland. A member of the Second Time Arounders since 2018, Deen is a retired band director with more than three decades of experience as a music ministry educator and director at large congregations around Tampa Bay and in Georgia. Deen is an avid composer and arranger of both choral and band music, and has designed marching band half-time shows.

“I'm honored and humbled to be the new director of the Awesome Original Second Time Arounders,” said Deen. “The ‘Rounders culture is fueled by passionate volunteerism, teamwork, and a commitment to excellence. I look forward to preserving that culture and history while providing



Photo courtesy of Second Time Arounders Adult Marching Band



fresh creativity for our both our returning members and our next generation of members.”

The Second Time Arounders welcomes new adult members with marching band experience who crave the thrill of performing one more time. In addition to musicians, the group includes a color guard (flags and rifles), twirlers, dancers, and an honor guard. The organization draws members aged 18 to 80 from all over Tampa Bay, Sarasota, Orlando, and other parts of Central Florida.

“The only requirement for all members is a desire for excellence and a willingness to attend rehearsals and performances,” according to the group.

Rehearsals for the 2022–2023 season – which runs through December and includes five performances and parades, including the Universal Studios Holiday Parade in Orlando – began in September, but new members are always welcome, and auditions are not required. The band is especially looking for low brass, clarinet and saxophone players, and percussionists. ●

Learn more at secondtimearounders.org or email rounders2022@gmail.com.

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