

NORTHEAST JOURNAL

Good People ∞ Good Places ∞ Good Things Happening

St. Petersburg, FL

MAR/APR 2022

EST. SEPTEMBER 2004

Hard Habit to Break Runners Unite with a Shared Passion



JD Dunford (in green tank top) and the New Year's morning group 2022

Photo by Monica Kile

— JON KILE —

In the pre-dawn hours, before the onslaught of morning commuters, the Snell Isle Bridge rests. Long before the first rays of morning sun hit the tops of the tallest palms, figures emerge in the dark distance, one by one. Ghostlike, they come from every direction,

gaining focus as streetlights reflect off the silver strips of their shoes and tank tops.

Who gets up this early?

It's the morning runners. And they do mean runners; call them joggers at your peril. If you don't know them, you might not understand. But if you know one, you probably know most

Continued on page 12

David T. Welch Father of a Mayor and a Life of Service

— WILL MICHAELS —

This year, St. Petersburg welcomes new Mayor Ken Welch, but he's not the first member of the Welch family to play a



Early photo of David Welch as an instructor. Welch was an accountant by profession. Photo courtesy of Ken Welch

starring role in this city's government. David T. Welch was Mayor Welch's father and a three-time city council member. Welch was first elected to the city council in 1981, making him the second African American council member in the city's history. (The first was C. Bette Wimbish in 1969.) As an accountant, he owned Welch Tax Services and Accounting on 16th Street South and served as assistant director of fiscal affairs at St. Petersburg Vocational Technical Institute. He sang in the choir and taught Sunday school at Prayer Tower Church of God in Christ where his brother, Clarence, was pastor.

His obituary by Andrew Meacham in the *Tampa Bay Times* (2013) noted that "Welch was known for arguing unpopular positions forcefully." After fighting for assurances of jobs and fair value for displaced homes and businesses, "He backed redevelopment of the Gas Plant area where he had grown up, resulting in Tropicana Field. He spearheaded interest-free loans by the city to renovate crumbling housing, and he served as co-chair of the Community Alliance which took on substandard housing and lax code enforcement." Welch backed every major city redevelopment project to come before council. Mayor Welch reflected on his

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Crescent Lake and Coffee Pot Bayou's Manatees



Photo courtesy of Florida Fish and Wildlife

In the cooler months, manatees are a common sight in Coffee Pot Bayou.

— MARTHA REED —

As you run, stroll, skate, or bike along the picturesque two-mile path bordering Coffee Pot Bayou across from Bird Island and Snell Isle, you may occasionally see a cluster of rapt spectators peering into the water across from a magnificent flowering tree at the intersection of 23rd Avenue NE and Coffee Pot Boulevard. Visitors excitedly nudge each other and wonder, "Can you see them? Are they there?" in hushed tones usually reserved for a sacred space.

What is going on? Passing traffic stops, children squeal, and adults quickly snap pictures on their phones as great whiskery snouts and paddle-like tails breach the water's surface. Chances are good that during the chilly winter months you'll see them: manatees. The gentle water mammals congregate in Coffee Pot Bayou for several reasons. They need to live in water that is at least 68 degrees to maintain their internal body temperature, which is why they migrate to natural springs where the ambient water temperature stays relatively constant 72 degrees all year. Short term, local manatees like Coffee Pot Bayou's shallower, sun-warmed water over the chillier depths of Tampa Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.

"Manatees are found frequenting Coffee Pot Bayou likely due to the quiet nature of the basin and for potential sources of freshwater," says Kari Rood, a research associate with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute.

Freshwater? But Coffee Pot Bayou is brackish saltwater. Where does the freshwater come from? Upstream, from Crescent Lake, centered in a 48-acre public greenspace park. The Crescent Lake, Riviera Bay, Middle Tampa Bay Watershed drainage basin covers an area of about one square mile. Originally, the lake was much larger with the surrounding area more of a seasonal wetland filled with alligators.

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SPOTLIGHT ON THE ARTS

The Lion Dance Roars into St. Pete with Creative Clay

— JEFF DONNELLY —

While most of us were already a month into resolutions with refrains of *Auld Lang Syne* fading into memory, the Lunar New Year was fast approaching for friends across the Asian world. The Year of the Tiger began on February 1, and to celebrate, Creative Clay partnered with Heart Artlink to perform a Lion Dance on January 22 at the St. Petersburg Museum of History. The event was the latest collaboration between local arts nonprofit Creative Clay and Heart Artlink in Takamatsu, Japan, St. Petersburg's sister city for 60 years.

"This partnership produced a mutual understanding and friendship between Creative Clay and Heart Artlink in Takamatsu," said Creative Clay CEO Kim Dohrman. "St. Petersburg International Folk Fair Society has been a great partner, paying for the professional dancers to lead the Creative Clay artists in their version of the Lion Dance."

Summoning the Lions

Lions turn up as protectors in countless Chinese myths and have come to be cherished as a symbol of power and wisdom. Rising to popularity following the Three Kingdoms period (220–280 AD), lion dances are traditionally performed at festivals and grand occasions, such as new-year celebrations to bring good fortune, prosperity, and to chase away evil spirits.

Choreographers Helen Hansen French and Paula Kramer worked with Creative Clay member artists to bring the January 22 performance together.

"I am honored and thrilled to collaborate with the artists at Creative Clay to bring the Lion Dance to life and continue creating community while celebrating the Takamatsu-St. Petersburg Sister City 60 Year Anniversary," said French, founding member of the St. Petersburg Dance Alliance. French also serves on the board of the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance and co-produces *Beacon*, an annual performance series at The Palladium Theater St. Petersburg, where she is an artist-in-residence. In 2021, she was selected to be the artist laureate for Creative Pinellas.

"Both dancers were incredible and led the member artists in four rehearsals prior to the January 22 Lion Dance performance," said Dohrman. "We weren't sure how many dancers would show up, but we were very impressed we had over 10 dancers and the audience participants as well."

Accompanied by the music of beating drums, clashing cymbals, and resounding gongs, the Lion Dance is unknown for elaborate costumes including



Member artists from Creative Clay performed the traditional Lion Dance at the St. Petersburg Museum of History on January 22

oversized, dragon-like heads. Artists from Heart Artlink and Creative Clay painted pieces of fabric that became the final costume for a lion dance. A large lion head using the Japanese construction method *hariko* – a technique of paper construction with a hollow center – was sent all the way from Takamatsu and painted by Creative Clay member artist Ali V. Artists performed the dance twice; after each, the audience was invited to join for the last minute of the performance.

"It felt like life before the pandemic for a minute – we were all there connecting and dancing (masked, of course!) and for me there really was this palpable feeling of hope and potential for the new year," Dohrman said. "The idea behind the Lion Dance is to invite luck and good fortune, as well as to ward off evil spirits for the new year – I think we accomplished that!"

Creative Clay and the Heart Artlink Program

Creative Clay's mission is to help people with disabilities achieve full and inclusive lives by providing expressive, educational, and vocational experiences in the arts. Its Community Arts Program alone serves 50-to-60 adult artists with neuro-differences each week, and other offerings – including the Artlink employment program, Creative Care Arts in Wellness outreach program, and its Pinellas County Schools' partnership Transition program – help mentor, teach, and empower individuals of all ages and abilities to become working artists who actively create, market, and sell their work.

Creative Clay designed the Artlink community employment program to help individuals with disabilities find meaningful employment in arts-related positions, or within cultural organizations. Participants are chosen for further job development based on their mid-term evaluation and progress in the internship program. Selected students attend

three potential job-site visits and apply to their selected employment opportunity.

60th Anniversary of the St. Petersburg-Takamatsu Sister City Partnership

The idea for a partnership began when Creative Clay representatives traveled to Japan in 2001 to teach the Artlink mentorship program, then raised money to bring Artlink Japan to St. Petersburg for the first Artlink Japan exhibit at the Florida Craftsman Gallery in 2003. Artlink Japan has since trained arts professionals in other parts of Japan, and around the world, in the practice of implementing the Artlink artist-mentor program.

The Lion Dance was the second part of the anniversary celebration between sister cities Takamatsu and St. Petersburg. The first involved the exhibit of pelican paintings created by artists from Creative Clay and Heart Artlink Takamatsu.

"The Consul-General of Japan, Kazuhiro Nakai, was in attendance at the opening of that exhibit on October 14, 2021," Dohrman said. "It was very special to have him there and we were honored he took the time to recognize the wonderful relationship between the art centers across the ocean."

The Lion Dance will be performed on March 9 in Takamatsu and will include the painted pelicans, lanterns, and fans that were part of an arts exchange between Creative Clay and Heart Artlink in Takamatsu.

"The member artists at Creative Clay, as well as our teaching artists, look forward to being a part of this international partnership," Dohrman said. "It's thrilling and gives everyone a unique sense of being connected, working with artists across the world. The arts are just the best connector of humans. We'd all be lost without it." ●



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EDITOR'S NOTE

Good Stories, Well Told

What I admire most about the *Northeast Journal* is the lens through which it views the world. Life is full of heartache. It disappoints, is unjust and unkind. But that's only half of the story. It is also a marvel – filled with people and places that inspire, that awe us and live in us. It's filled with those who never give up – those who rise at 5 am to move their bodies through quiet streets, before children wake for school. It's filled with gardeners who tend the plants we eat; with artists, dancers and music makers who invent new languages; with those who spend their lives in service to their community and who move mountains to heal a child. In short, there is good to be found if you know where to look: You'll find all those stories and more in this issue.

I came to the *Northeast Journal* because – as Mark Twain once wrote – “I like a good story well told.” As a writer and an editor, people often think words are what excite me – that the structure or syntax of language are its own reward. But those are just tools. What I like best is the story. And what good is a story if it's not shared? If it doesn't sit at your table, and burrow inside you as you sip your morning coffee, feeding you through the day, the week? Those are the stories the *Northeast Journal* tells – of joy, hope and community. My favorite things.

I start my tenure as editor with deep respect and gratitude for the *NEJ* team who work so hard to bring you good news, and for the advertisers who make that happen. Special praise goes to the gracious and gifted Janan Talafer who, while she enjoys her retirement, will still be a familiar face among these bylines. It's hard to fill the shoes Janan leaves, but I can't imagine a more inspiring place to be.

My ear is always open to a good story. And the very best thing about stories? Everybody has one. Or two. Or a lifetime's worth. If you want to share – whether it's an organization doing great work or the local retiree who makes birdhouses – all are welcome. Drop me a note anytime and let's keep a good thing going.

Shelly Wilson
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The editor trying out her kayak at home

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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.

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. Shackelford 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. [www.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). [nsnaeditor@aol.com]



Jeff Donnelly is a writer, educator, and co-founder of The Cardboard Sea theatre company based in Asheville, NC. His plays have been produced up and down the east coast and he has taught multiple styles of writing to kids, teens, and adults. When he isn't writing, he's teaching history and directing the service-learning program at a local independent school.



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 dontmakemeturnthisvanaround.com. He's on the board of literary nonprofit Keep St. Pete Lit.



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]



Martha Reed is a multi-award-winning mystery novelist and crime fiction writer. After discovering the Tampa Bay area in 2018, she immediately relocated, making delightful St. Pete her new home. Visit her website reedmenow.com for more.



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.



Victoria Rogers and her husband Patrick moved back to Florida after 25 years in New England. She worked in outside sales, fundraising, and event-planning while raising her daughter Allison. These days, she describes herself as mostly a "victim of my enthusiasms!" [victoria.spofford.rogers@gmail.com]



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.



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, most 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]



Sara Wolski has lived in the Old Northeast since 2010 (and loved every minute of it). She is the Director of Design for Duke University's Corporate Education division (Duke CE), an avid swimmer, and a dog and cat mom. She writes novels and screenplays in her spare time.





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AROUND THE BLOCK



Brent Johnston

First Airline Monument Shines at the Pier

The world's first airline operated between St. Petersburg and Tampa in 1914, and to commemorate the birthplace of commercial aviation, the World's First Airline Monument was erected at the new St. Petersburg Pier this past year.

The monument includes an eight-ton, stainless steel sculpture of the first airliner created by St. Petersburg artist Mark Aeling. The airliner was an "airboat" or seaplane named the "Benoist" after the airline's president, Thomas Benoist. It's a full-sized

replica of the Benoist and includes two busts: Mayor Abe Pheil, the first passenger – who paid \$400 for his seat at an auction – and Tony Jannus, the airline's chief pilot. Called the St. Petersburg-Tampa Airboat Line, it flew two roundtrips daily across the bay, at a more reasonable fare of \$5, making the trip in just 23 minutes – far faster than land or sea options at the time.

Aeling's sculpture – poised about 12 feet off the ground on a wave-like pedestal – has a wingspan of approximately 44 feet, and 25 feet from nose to tail.

It's surrounded by the 5,000 square-foot Benoist Plaza designed by Phillip Graham IV, of Phil Graham Landscape Architecture. The storyboards, written by historian and *Northeast Journal* columnist Will Michaels, describe the airline's history with facts, famous quotes and archival photography. A dedicated wall at the south end of the plaza showcases bronze placards acknowledging those who participated in the making airline history and creating the monument. ●

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SPOTLIGHT ON THE ARTS

A Venue for All: The Palladium Past and Present

— ABBY BAKER —

With its stone arches and towering architecture, St. Pete's Palladium Theater commands attention. What lies inside the historic theater at 253 5th Avenue North is no less inspiring. It's a place for local acts to practice, perform, and entertain at a price dwarfed by the big-time costs of surrounding theaters.

"You're not going to go broke playing the Palladium," says the theater's executive director Paul Wilborn.

Now and Then

The historic space didn't start out as a theater. Built in 1925, the Palladium was originally a Christian Science church, the First Church of Christ, Scientist. Its white arches and cozy, tiled lobby ushered in religious St. Petersburg residents each week for decades. The building itself was designed by Howard Lovewell Cheney, and built by the George A. Fuller Construction, a company responsible for iconic sites in Chicago and New York City, including the Flatiron Building.

It wasn't until 1998, however, that the colossal building sold to a group of visionaries who wanted to create a theater for local talent. The church already boasted theater seats instead of pews, making it an easy sell. Community leaders led by Bill and Hazel Hough purchased the building and completed renovations for around \$1 million – a fraction of the cost of a new venue.

"In the '90s, the Tampa Bay communities came together and built these really beautiful performance art centers," Wilborn said. "But there was nowhere for smaller groups to perform." He's referencing venues like the Straz Center for the Performing Arts, The Mahaffey Theater, and Ruth Eckerd Hall. These theaters brought art and life into Tampa Bay, but typically book touring shows with larger budgets that



The Palladium at St. Petersburg College



James Suggs performing at the Palladium

Photos courtesy of the Palladium

sell out for high ticket costs. "It's great, but not affordable for a single piano player or a local blues group," Wilborn said. "You could go broke doing a show at the Mahaffey Theater or the Straz."

Regardless, the original Palladium never hit critical mass. It needed stability. In 2007, the nonprofit leaders gifted the parking lot and Palladium Theater to the St. Petersburg College with one condition: The theater had to be used for its original purpose, providing accessibility to local musicians.

Today, staff salaries and operating costs come from the theater. It's fully functioning on its own, while the college provides a framework and stability. If the toilets break, or the roof leaks, St. Petersburg College staff steps in, but otherwise the theater is financially independent.

Aftershuttering during the pandemic, however, money is tight. The theater is staying afloat via government grants. Once constantly booked with shows and events, it's been a slow climb back to normalcy for the Palladium. Wilborn remembers a time when the theater was always in the black, always busy.

His favorite room is the one least recognizable in the daytime: the basement of the Palladium, which doubles as a New York-style night club for smaller performances. "It's just intimate and fun down here," said

Wilborn, who hopes a return to normalcy will put the theater back into the spotlight as the home for local music and art once again.

Palladium Paul

In a past life, Wilborn was an old-school newspaper reporter. He worked for the *Tampa Tribune* for 10 years, then the *Tampa Bay Times* for another 10. His last writing gig was with the Associated Press in Los Angeles. The Tampa native covered hard news; in his words: "Horrible stuff: the AIDS crisis, crime, the Gulf War."

He was always a piano player, though, and an artsy type who had one hand in reporting and one hand in the creative world.

"I did a lot of arts stuff and I thought I was just being crazy and young, but it turns out it gave me a résumé," Wilborn said.

When the newspaper business "went south," as Wilborn puts it, he jumped into the arts. He left Los Angeles in 2003 to work as the creative industry manager for former Tampa Mayor Pam Iorio. In short, he threw parties, like what eventually became Tampa's Guavaween. The same year, he played the Palladium as part of a cabaret series. Just four years later, Wilborn was hired as executive director, ending his role as a performer at the theater.

"I fired myself from here," Wilborn jokes. "I thought it was bad form to book yourself at your own theater."

Sporting a sweater in his cozy Palladium office, Wilborn has come a long way from wild nights in Ybor. But he still has the stories, fodder for his fictional autobiographical book, *Cigar City: Tales from a 1980s Creative Ghetto*.

Passion for performance is a family affair. Wilborn's wife, Eugenie Bondurant, who he started dating in LA and "convinced" to move to Tampa with him, is a working actress known for roles in *The Conjuring: The Devil Made Me Do It* and *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2*.

Spotlight on Local Talent

Most of the artists who regularly play the Palladium are regional and local performers such as The Florida Björkestra, St. Pete Opera, and Beacon Dance. Groups from St. Petersburg College play for free, and outlying performers pay relatively low prices to put on shows.

The goal is that these artists continue to create great art, regardless of booking costs, Wilborn said. In 2021, the Palladium sponsored its first Creative Class, a program that put a total of \$30,000 in the pockets of nine local artists – jazz performers, blues singers, dancers, and more. The individual stipends, delivered in \$2,500 chunks, are given to the artists in exchange for a created performance. When that production was canceled due to pandemic precautions, the performers retained the much-needed funds.

"These artists, their money just disappeared when COVID hit. These are not folks that are necessarily working day jobs," Wilborn said. "We want the community to thrive and survive." ●

Find more information about the Palladium, including upcoming shows and events at mypalladium.org.



Nate Najar and John Lamb at the Palladium



Beacon Dance

AROUND THE BLOCK

Kart 4 Kids Tops \$1 Million for All Children's Hospital

— SAMANTHA BOND RICHMAN —

St. Petersburg is home to many great things, including a children's hospital ranked by *U.S. News and World Report 2021* as one of the best: Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital. It's a distinction that benefits the city, but especially its young patients and their families, who come from all over the nation and the world for treatment.

Since 2012, a group of supporters have taken this pride and embraced it, forming a nonprofit enterprise to raise funds for the hospital through an unlikely source: the love of auto racing. The initial idea came about to honor local driving legend Dan Wheldon who perished while racing in Las Vegas on October 16, 2011 at age 33, leaving behind wife, Susie, and two young sons. With the help of professional driver Patrick Long, the first Kart 4 Kids ProAm fundraising event launched with the idea that fans would pay to race against professional race car drivers. Organizers hosted the most recent event on February 23 at the Anderson Race Park in Palmetto, Florida.

The race itself is only part of the fundraising undertaken by this group of local supporters and race enthusiasts. The event is scheduled to coincide with days leading up to the Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg to take advantage of the drivers' schedules, and the racing fever that grips many locals. Over the 10 years since the first event, numerous drivers have donated their time, loaned their star value, and contributed items for auction. With over \$1 million raised for All Children's, the charitable organization is eligible for induction into the hospital's prestigious group known as the 1926 Society, named after the year the hospital was opened. The kind, resourceful individuals behind the Kart 4 Kids Pro-Am include Chris Russick, serving his first year as president and chairman of the event.



Photo courtesy of Karts 4 Kids

"We are looking forward to an exciting time, with all the drivers really competing out there," said Russick a few weeks before the event. "Two of our participating professional drivers from the St. Petersburg area – Tristan Vautier and Sebastien Bourdais – recently won the 12 Hours of Sebring 2021 together as part of a team. Now they will race each other and with amateurs on the Anderson Park track."

The Kart 4 Kids ProAm race begins with what is known as a LeMans-style start, where the waiving of a green flag signals the drivers to literally run in a foot race to their carts. The professionals drive the first portion of the race, followed by the amateurs, then the professionals finish the race with heart-pounding excitement to the end.

"We anticipate our efforts will raise over \$300,000 for the hospital with this year's event and auction," said Russick.

St. Petersburg local and professional sports-car driver Sebastien Bourdais has been a consistent supporter and agreed to headline the 2022 event. Bourdais won the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg race in 2018, further elevating his local celebrity status. Other drivers who've participated include Santino Ferrucci, Tristan Nunez, Oliver Askew, Kyle Kirkwood, Kyle Masson, R.C. Enerson, James French, Glenn McGee, Eric Filgueiras, Selin Rollan, Nabilia Tejpar, Conner Merrrell, Michael Mallardi, and Tyler McIntyre.

Said Russick, "We want to continue to build the brand, increasing the community's awareness of the important work we are supporting at All Children's." ●

Learn more about the Karts 4 Kids organization and future opportunities to get involved at kart4kids.org.

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RUNNERS UNITE *Continued from page 1*

of them – this tight-knit group of elite competitors for whom “going on a run” can mean 15 miles or more.

The one who knows everyone is Old Northeast resident Jonathan Dunford... “JD” to his comrades. The group started in the mid-1990s, and Dunford became a fixture at the bridge shortly after the Cleveland native moved to St. Pete in 1996. Dunford and his wife Sharon are both chefs who trained at the prestigious Culinary Institute of America and work in food distribution. He ran his first marathon when he was an 18-year-old Marine stationed in Okinawa. Four decades later, he’ll run his 25th consecutive Boston Marathon in April. That’s no easy feat considering that to race in Boston – one of the world’s most elite marathons – you must earn the coveted BQ (Boston qualifier) each year by placing in the top tier of your age group at a sanctioned marathon. It’s a goal – or accomplishment – shared by many of his fellow runners, who race on the blood and sweat of the 60-to-80 miles of training they put in every week.

The group has fluctuated in size, from a handful to more than a dozen, with many fresh faces coming and going over the years.

There’s Pila. She’s always smiling, no matter the weather. She’s run over 200 marathons. Naturally, Pia works at a running store, and dispenses shoe advice freely, occasionally recruiting a serious customer to come out to the bridge.

Kerri is the social chair, organizing birthday celebrations and holiday gatherings. She works in IT sales, runs a race travel company and coaches the Canterbury cross-country team. She’s the reason every baby born to the group has a Green Bay Packers onesie and no milestone is missed.

They come from all walks of life. Gilbert works



At the 2021 Boston Marathon, with face masks of Coach Joe Burgasser
Photo by Kerri Dienhart



A big pre-pandemic New Year's morning at Pass-a-Grille
Photo by Kerrie Dienhard

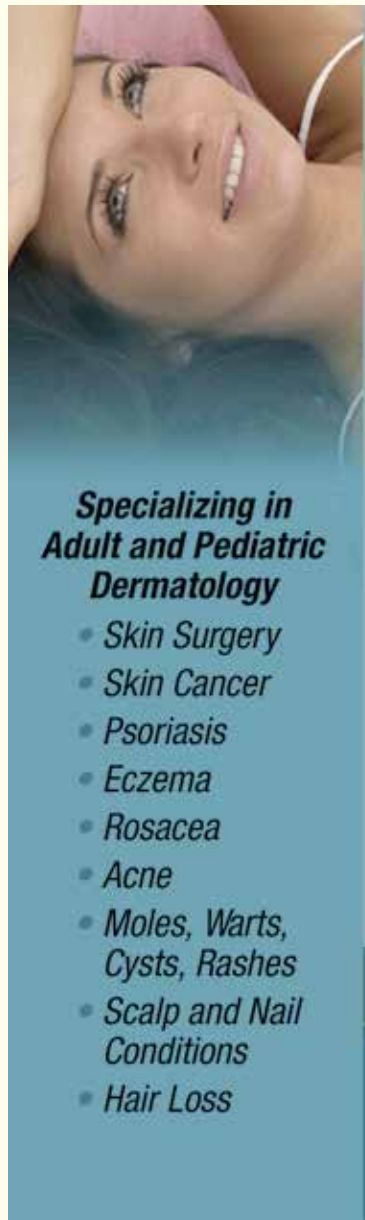
for Amtrak. Jennifer has a Ph.D. in nursing and works in gastroenterology. Aaron owns a growing HVAC company. They all have one thing in common: a love for running.

Tampa may boast the longest contiguous sidewalk, with its four-and-a-half miles of pavement along Bayshore Boulevard, but the contours of St. Pete’s waterfront are said to measure more than seven miles. This offers runners a unique opportunity to cover a lot of ground without encountering much traffic, while enjoying spectacular views and (perhaps equally important) public restrooms. St. Pete’s distance runners know which doors are unlocked and which water fountains are coldest. Intervals between water fountains benefit the group’s cohesion, as runners of different paces and distances regroup periodically along the route.

Dunford is quick to mention how nice it is to have the pier back, saying it “has always been a staple of our running route and the new pier exceeded our expectations.” Their predawn ritual also gives them frequent views of the Janet Echelman sculpture when it is lit and most spectacular. They’ve seen a lot over the years, from cars in Coffee Pot Bayou to serial flashers. They’ve even taken in a couple of stray dogs.

On “long days,” when these elite athletes are going 15 to 22 miles, they find stashes of water and Gatorade in coolers along the route, placed by the man they call “Coach.” Coach Joe Burgasser is the 83-year-old running legend who holds records in more age groups and on more courses than can be counted. Burgasser runs the Florida Forerunners Track Club. Each month, Coach goes over each runner’s training numbers, checks in on any injuries, and gives them their plan for the coming month. Chances are he thinks you can go faster.

Each runner in this loose band has their own motivation and idiosyncrasy. Some also train at North Shore Pool or on the bike for Ironman races. Others are trying to qualify for their first Boston Marathon.



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For most, it's a way of life and an extended family. When one of the group's three Wendys (aka "Wendy Two") had her first baby, the team showered her with gifts at the Shuffleboard Club. Her son was treated to his first "jogging stroller" ride on Christmas morning.

On New Year's Day, they journey out for a beach run and refreshing winter plunge. When they need some hills, they carpool to Pasco County. They do "speed work" in Coach's neighborhood, which sits – perhaps not coincidentally – on a quarter-mile loop. When they run a local 5K, 10K, or half-marathon, they dominate the podium, or they're friendly with the ones who beat them.

As the pandemic turned the country's race schedule on its head, many races have been canceled, postponed, or made virtual, leaving only a few smaller BQ-certified marathons available. And even some of those got called off at the eleventh hour.

In addition to fighting the ever-shifting sands of a pandemic marathon schedule, Dunford also found himself battling injuries in 2021. As the qualifying season for the 2022 Boston Marathon wrapped up, he was still looking for a race to get the time he needed to qualify for his age group. Hot weather didn't favor a fast time at an upstart race in Sebring, Florida, which began inauspiciously when the lead bike took the pack down a wrong turn, requiring a restart for the whole field.

In a true Hollywood-style turn, just as the qualifying window closed, Dunford flew to the Indianapolis Marathon where he crossed the line with a two-minute cushion to secure his 25th straight bib for Boston. Fellow Forerunner Walt Sieg showed his support, joining Dunford on the trip and running his third marathon in two months.

Dunford avoids attention that comes with the milestone. He'd rather talk about someone else's shot at the Olympic trials or their podium finish at an important race. But his consistency is an example to everyone and it's a big reason why people always show up at the bridge.

"Some years there are up to 20 people from The Forerunners in Boston," he says about the group that always stays at The Lenox Hotel, adjacent to the finish line. "There were only three of us the year after the bombing," he added, referring to the 2013 tragedy. For Dunford, his Boston Marathon streak "took on more importance after 2013."

Next time you see runners treading along Coffee Pot during your 7 a.m. commute, and you think, "Boy, wouldn't it be nice if I had time to run this morning," remember that they're probably finishing up mile 10. If you're ready to lace up and see what it's about, Wednesday and Fridays are the best days for newbies. Be warned: You may develop a hard habit to break. ●

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Pickleball Fever: What's All the Hype?

— SARA WOLSKI —

Chances are you've heard of pickleball. Or you know someone who is not just a player, but a fanatic. Perhaps you count yourself among them.

Pickleball is the fastest-growing sport in America. According to *Parade* magazine, "In 2020, 4.2 million people played pickleball in the U.S., up from 3.46 million in 2019... That's a whopping 21.3% increase from 2019 to 2020, the highest of any U.S. sport."

Pickleball is a hybrid of badminton, tennis, and ping pong, played indoors or outdoors on courts half the size of a

tennis court, with either doubles or singles players. Doubles is the most popular option, and the most social. The game is played with a Wiffle ball-type ball (though it is not, in fact, a Wiffle ball – it is a *pickleball*), and paddles larger than ping pong, made of graphite/carbon fiber (though the ones this author used in high school gym class in the early 2000s were made of wood).

According to USA Pickleball, the game originated in 1965 on Bainbridge Island, Washington. Joel Pritchard, who later served in Congress, attempted to set up a game of badminton with two friends to entertain their bored

children, but couldn't find all the requisite gear. So, they improvised and created a new game. The name came later – not in honor of the founding family's dog, as many wondering pickleball enthusiasts cite – but from a rowing term, "pickleboat," a boat populated by leftover oarsmen from other crews. As the rowing pickleboat was a motley crew, Pritchard's wife, Joan, thought "pickleball" a fitting name for her husband's hodge-podge game. (The family dog was named Pickles later, after the sport.)

Pickleball grew steadily in popularity into the 1970s and beyond, with warmer areas sprouting courts and fans as snowbirds introduced their southern neighbors to their favorite sport. Tournaments followed, as did a slew of pro players, and eventually the USA Pickleball Association was formed. Larry Ellison, the founder of Oracle, is one of the sponsors and hosts of the U.S. Pickleball National Championships in California; Naples, Florida hosts the U.S. Open Pickleball Championships.

Naples has been known as a pickleball destination for years, and according to *Parade* magazine, the Naples Pickleball Center trademarked the term "Naples: The Pickleball Capital of the World." The Naples Pickleball Center has 64 pickleball courts and, prior to the pandemic,

attracted over 25,000 visitors for the week of the championships.

"Naples is the destination for pickleball," says June Machala, a frequent visitor to St. Pete who lives in Grand Rapids. "It would be great for St. Pete to become a destination for pickleball, too. As someone who's coming in from out of town, that's the first thing I look for." Machala travels frequently and makes it a habit to pack her pickleball paddle. She started playing pickleball years ago, when her tennis coach asked her to try it out with a few others. She was hooked immediately.

"I've always loved tennis. And I still do. But I also love pickleball," Machala says. "Pickleball is easier on your shoulders and elbows than tennis, and it's fun to do as a couple's activity or even as an individual in a new place. You'll always make new friends."

Local pickleball player Thierry Guerlain agrees: "Pickleball is a huge draw for visitors and for our active residents."

Guerlain and Julie Hendrickson are some of the early advocates of the sport in St. Petersburg. After discovering pickleball in Vermont, where they spend summers, they started teaching the game to friends and neighbors when they returned to St. Pete for fall and winter. Through word of mouth, their



Ehsan Khosroshahi, Elena Schneible, Julie Hendrickson, Caroline Feroletto, Tom Feroletto, Ben Schneible, and Amanda Shaw hit the courts. Photo courtesy of Thierry Guerlain

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Julie Hendrickson, Luke Tanaka, Thierry Guerlain, and Ben Schneible at play

group expanded quickly, and Guerlain found himself organizing a local website so local players could connect with each other and schedule games. He also petitioned the city to create actual pickleball courts instead of repurposed tennis courts (essentially adding additional boundary lines to existing tennis courts). Now, St. Pete lists six outdoor pickleball locations, some with as many as six courts, as well as indoor playing opportunities listed on the city's Parks and Recreation website.

Locals owe thanks to Guerlain for the first, and arguably still the most

popular pickleball courts, at Crescent Lake. He petitioned the city with a CAD drawing for the courts, while his wildly popular St. Pete pickleball player website proved local interest and active participation in the sport – the website currently has over 600 members.

"This used to be thought of as an old person's game," Guerlain explains. "Now it attracts all ages and lots of young, even pro, athletes."

Guerlain and Hendrickson are well known at the Crescent Lake courts. While interviewing for this article, Michael Berger of Shore Acres

approached them, asking, "Do you remember me? You guys showed me how to play pickleball years ago right here on this court." They did. And Michael, not yet 30, went on to say how much he loves the sport and now plays every day.

When Guerlain and Hendrickson are in Vermont, their pickleball popularity continues with an annual tournament that draws approximately 30 players or more each year from the ages of 7 to 82. "It's so rewarding to see entire families playing together," Hendrickson says, "from grandparents to kids to grandkids – everybody together having fun."

Graham D'Amico and his partner Nate Jager are two other well-known pickleball advocates in St. Pete. Graham started playing in October of 2020 after seeing it in action while walking around Crescent Lake and looking for more outdoor activities during the pandemic.

"It was so busy there in the mornings and evenings. There could be crowds of 60 to 100 people playing and waiting for a turn during the busiest times," D'Amico says. "I had to know what this was about."

D'Amico and Jager regularly host tournaments with entrants now numbering more than 500 per event. Jager also teaches clinics for beginners and hosts guest clinics with pickleball pros from all over the world. D'Amico and Jager continue to advocate for more

court space to accommodate the thousands of regular pickleball players in St. Pete: "The athletic department says they get more requests about pickleball courts than all other courts combined."

There may be plans to build more pickleball courts and expand existing ones; pickleball fever knows no bounds.

"There's a great sense of community in pickleball," D'Amico says. "Unlike many other sports, pickleball doesn't take much time to learn. And you can rally and have fun almost instantly. That makes it exciting for people because they're having fun day one, versus three months down the road." ●

Want more pickleball? For meetups and more, follow smashbros_pickleball on Instagram, visit stpetepickleball.playerlineup.com, or find your own court at stpeteparksrec.org/athleticscourts.



Graham D'Amico and Nate Jager

Photo courtesy of Smash Bros Pickleball

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More Changes Underway for the Cordova Inn



Rendering of Cordova Inn (East)

Photos courtesy of the Cordova Inn

— BRANDY STARK —

The Cordova Inn, one of the oldest hotels in St. Petersburg, has long been an iconic building. Established as the Hotel Scott in 1921 by the Scott family, the hotel's Mediterranean architecture is a familiar site to residents and visitors alike. It sold to the Cordova family in 1923 and became Hotel Cordova. While it changed ownership several times since the 1950s, the Cordova name remains. Extensively renovated in 2001, the hotel is now preparing for its first major footprint change.

"The management is obviously making a significant investment in St. Pete. It's based upon the success that they've seen since they bought the Cordova," said Kyle Parks of B2 Communications, spokesman for New Hotel Collection, which purchased the Cordova in 2020 and owns hotels in Indian Shores, Indian Rocks Beach, and Tennessee. "St. Pete is one of the top destinations in the U.S. People want to stay in a building that is distinctive and historic."

The first stage of the renovations was designed to maintain the hotel's character. The original stairwell, hardwood floors, room transoms, and wall moldings stayed, as did the small hallway sinks historically used by hotel staff.

Under the leadership of the New Hotel Collection, headquartered in Pinellas County, the hotel has already been renovated. The lobby was reworked to include The Scott, a coffee bar named in honor of the founding family. It serves



Cordova Inn exterior

locally made HoggBatch coffee, and at night, offers signature cocktails that feature some of HoggBatch's specialty brews.

Now, Cordova is preparing to expand the site from 32 to 95 rooms. The changes will start with the demolition of the adjacent Stanton Apartments and Stanton Hotel, expected to already be underway by press time. This will expand the floorplan from 12,200 to 41,500 square feet. The new space will accommodate different room sizes for larger parties, including suites. A rooftop bar and restaurant are also planned.

Architect Tim Clemons and Greg Glenn of Place Architecture are working on the design. They had hoped to utilize the Stanton sites in the original plans

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Cordova Inn porch

but, according to the owners, it was not to be.

“We hired a forensic architect to check the site and it was confirmed the buildings were beyond repair,” said Parks. While the Stanton sites’ demolition was not without controversy – residents protested evictions last year – Parks maintains it was necessary. “We worked closely with Preserve the ‘Burg to make sure that they were good with what we were doing. The new executive director there spoke on our behalf for the city. We are building something that, in both scale and size, matches not only the Cordova but the neighborhood as well.”

In preserving the hotel’s historic theme, New Hotel Collection worked

with the St. Petersburg Historical Society and the St. Petersburg Museum of History to get photographs documenting the life of the hotel during its first decade. A book documenting the images is also planned in order to allow visitors see the hotel’s – and the city’s – past.

“The Cordova Inn expansion will honor the hotel’s history, while providing the convenience of a modern facility to St. Petersburg visitors,” says St. Petersburg resident and New Hotel Collection chief investment officer Tommy Del Zoppo. “It’s important that our hotel be open to the community, so people can come get a coffee or a drink and hang out, even if they are not staying overnight.” ●

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NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF COMMUNITY ... 1911-2011

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Rick Carson, editor • rickcarson1@gmail.com



With thanks to the hundreds of members of The Historic Old Northeast Neighborhood Association and all our residents who volunteer for, support, and enjoy HONNA's offerings and efforts.

Meetings and Socials

- Continuing to quarantine for COVID-19, the Board held 12 meetings via Google Meet



- Held three of the quarterly neighborhood meetings via Zoom; fourth quarter meeting was held in person at Westminster Palms and also via Zoom with the focus of the meeting for a review of the City's Vision 2050 and new zoning proposals
- Porch Parties resumed in October with the Halloween-themed party; another Porch Party was held in November
- Members Holiday Party was held in December at the Old Northeast Tavern

Historic Preservation

- Continued to pursue acorn lighting project from 5th to 7th Avenues
- Continued STAR recognition program to spotlight homeowners who preserve or update their house exteriors and yards, with eight homes receiving designation
- Three of the six Local Historic Landmark District signs were installed in time for the Candlelight

- Tour on the east corners of the three districts
- Reviewed proposed projects for redevelopment that were forwarded by the city to HONNA for analysis of compatibility with the neighborhood (e.g., setbacks, design elements and conforming characteristics)
- Continued to assist the city zoning department in its review of the Land Development Regulations (LDRs) by attending public meetings and offering input, joining with other neighborhoods to influence a better outcome
- Continued distribution, promotion and sale of award-winning HONNA publication *Souvenir of St. Petersburg: Views from the Vinoy*
- Sold "Preserve Old Northeast" banners for residents to display on their homes



Special Events

- Held a "Cleaning the ONE" event in March in conjunction with Keep Pinellas Beautiful in which 18 participants collected 265 pounds of trash from streets and alleys in the neighborhood



- Celebrated Easter with a drive-thru event with 60 cars participating; the Easter Bunny was there to hand out bags of Easter treats

- Annual neighborhood-wide yard sale was held in May; HONNA members were able to drop off papers for secure shredding and have the Salvation Army collect unwanted goods at the end of the sale



- A neighborhood canned-goods drive was held in lieu of a July 4th event; The Kind Mouse – which delivers daily meals to school age children – was the beneficiary of the canned goods collected
- Children's Trunk-or-Treat returned for Halloween weekend
- Made a donation to the Waterfront Parks Foundation in memory of two long-time HONNA leaders



- HONNA volunteers participated in the St. Petersburg Waterfront Coastal Clean-Up in October.
- Held the 23rd Annual Candlelight Tour of Homes on December 10th with six neighbors generously opening their homes to more than 800 guests; the SPCA Tampa Bay Veterinary Center benefited from this year's event with monies going to the Caldwell Keeping Families Together Fund

Neighborhood Beautification & Infrastructure

- Maintained the median landscaping (with plantings and mulch) of the entryway monuments into the neighborhood
- Updated the neighborhood tree canopy project; planting 19 additional new trees in parkways
- Installed "Drain to the Bay" signs for 26 storm drains throughout the neighborhood
- Continued to identify, document and report neighborhood infrastructure issues to the City



Communications

- Provided a HONNA page in the *Northeast Journal* for the six issues during the year
- Maintained a presence on Facebook and monitored postings on NextDoor Old Northeast for matters relating to neighborhood concerns
- Updated the HONNA store on the website
- Continued monthly updates and notifications via eblasts to members

Crime and Safety

- Received crime updates via email from Neighborhood Police liaison
- Monitored crime reports from the Police Department for number of crimes reported within the neighborhood boundaries
- Began publication of SPPD neighborhood crime summaries on NextDoor

Traffic and Parking

- Posted reminders to neighbors on streets requiring Residential Permit Parking regarding the need to renew permits annually

HONNA is a volunteer, nonprofit organization. If you would like to join and support our neighborhood, please visit HONNA.org.

OUR MISSION

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



Neighborhood-wide Yard/Garage/Attic Sale

It's time to clean out your closets and scour the attic, garage, and storage unit for spring cleaning. Save the date of Saturday, March 19 from 8am-noon for the Historic Old Northeast Neighborhood Association's annual Yard Sale. See details at honna.org and in emails sent to HONNA members.

Quarterly Neighborhood Meeting

The March meeting of the neighborhood association – open to all Old Northeast residents – will be held on Monday, March 21 beginning at 7pm at Westminster Palms (939 Beach Drive NE). Our guest speaker will be Lisset Hanewicz, the newly-elected City Council member representing District 4. She is an attorney in her own private practice and has been president of the Crescent Lake Neighborhood Association. If you can't make the meeting in person, it will be viewable via Zoom. Check out honna.org.



Check out honna.org.

HONNA Flags

HONNA offers a variety of flags that you can purchase to display your love for the ONE. The four choices come in several color combinations: hunter green, burgundy, patriotic and diversity. You can find them at honna.org/shop.



Porch Parties

Upcoming Porch Parties are scheduled for 7:30-10pm on Friday, March 18 and Friday, April 15. Check honna.org for locations. It's BYOB, and light snacks and water are provided. These informal get-togethers are terrific opportunities to meet and welcome new neighbors to The ONE and catch up with friends you've missed seeing.



The Future of Our Waterfront

Two virtual public workshops on Zoom have been scheduled regarding the St. Petersburg Downtown Waterfront Master Plan. One on March 9 will be followed by another on Wednesday, March 16 from noon-1:30pm. Meeting information is available at stpete.org/planning_zoning/current_planning_projects.php. The Downtown Waterfront Master Plan (DWMP) was adopted on June 4, 2015. It is a conceptual planning document reflecting the community's vision for the future of the city's Downtown Waterfront. The workshops will review the status of the key action items completed over the past seven years. The DWMP has a framework that includes six character districts that subdivide the plan area into zones of specific use and focus. These character districts include: Coffee Pot, North Shore, Pier District, South Basin, Bayboro & Salt Creek, and Lassing Park. The city is asking for community comments on the progress of the plan and the need for any updates or changes. Community feedback will be presented to City Council at a Public Services and Infrastructure (PS&I) workshop on March 31, and public hearings before Council on any proposed changes to the plan will be held in May and early June.



Continued on next page



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HONNA's Tree Program

Planting trees in our neighborhood is one of the best things we can do for ourselves, our community, and the environment. A number of years ago, the city stopped its popular program of providing "free trees" to St. Pete residents. Because of the many benefits of a lush tree canopy, HONNA created a "free tree" program of its own. Neighbors Burt and Carol Kline volunteered to head the new tree program, and in its first year they did a survey to identify where new trees were

needed. Now, each spring, they seek out locations that continue to lack trees, and put out a general call to residents via HONNA to sign up for a complimentary tree.

If you would like for your parkway to be considered for a tree this spring, please contact Carol at carol.kline1948@gmail.com.

HONNA's beautiful tree canopy is a celebrated character-defining feature of the Historic Old Northeast. We hope you will help us to maintain and replenish our tree canopy. ~Robin Reed



HONNA'S SHINING STARS: "BEFORE" AND "AFTER"



March: 506 14th Avenue NE "Before"



March: 506 14th Avenue NE "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. Going forward, every month a STAR yard sign will be placed on properties to indicate an award. Here are the STARS for March (506 14th Avenue NE, Brian and Leslie Waechter). Please take note of the teardowns on this street!

Watch for new STARS 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 in the ONE you admire. Have a home to honor? Send the information to Charleen McGrath at treasurer@honna.org. ●

Some of the Many Benefits of Planting Trees

Information adapted from Rochester's Neighborhood Resource Center

- Trees take in carbon dioxide and release oxygen. About 800 million tons of carbon are stored in the trees that make up the urban forests of the U.S. Mature trees can absorb roughly 48 pounds of CO2 a year. The tree in turn releases enough oxygen to sustain two human beings.
- Trees provide habitat for birds and other wildlife. During COVID, many of us bought bird feeders, and have enjoyed watching the different species of birds that inhabit our yards.

- Trees reduce urban runoff and erosion by storing water and breaking the force of rain as it falls. The USDA reports that 100 mature trees can reduce runoff caused by rainfall by up to 100,000 gallons!
- Trees absorb sound and reduce noise pollution.
- Trees shade asphalt and sidewalks, reducing what is known as the "Heat Island" effect.
- Planting trees can also help cool your home in the summer. The National Arbor Day Foundation states that the overall effect of the shade created by planting a healthy tree is equivalent to 10 room-size air conditioners running 20 hours a day!

- Trees shade buildings, streets, and homes. If enough trees are planted in cities, the overall microclimate improves and total energy use for heating and cooling is reduced.
- Planting a tree can significantly increase property values. The U.S. Tax Court recently calculated a value of 9% (\$15,000) for the removal of a large black oak on a piece of property valued at \$164,500.
- Neighborhoods with lots of trees report less crime.
- Houses with trees are also more attractive to visitors, potential buyers, and neighbors. ●

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CRESCENT LAKE AND COFFEE POT BAYOU'S MANATEES *Continued from page 1*

Storm and groundwater drains into Crescent Lake through 12 culverts spaced around the lake's perimeter. The lake's main outfall spillway is located at the northern end by the children's playground. This outflow culvert then continues underground until it discharges the brimming freshwater into Coffee Pot Bayou and the receptive manatees. Since freshwater is less dense than saltwater, it floats on the surface, creating a uniquely separate layer that the manatees delicately sip as a freshwater drinking supply.

Pioneer St. Pete developer C. Perry Snell sold Crescent Lake Park land to the city for \$30,000 in 1919. Workmen dredging the lake in 1924 uncovered a dugout canoe hewn from a single cypress log, which launched a great deal of press speculation about its age until it was noted that the canoe was made using iron tools and that it had "a distinctive keel, a European feature." Ancient or not, the canoe is now on display at the St. Petersburg Museum of History and worth a look.

As for the manatees, their own winter exhibition is always popular.

"I like just about everything about Florida in the winter, but my absolute favorite part is seeing manatees," says St. Pete resident Arin Greenwood, a writer and former animal welfare editor for *The Huffington Post*.

"I paddleboard with them as often as I can. And because I live close by in Crescent Heights, I get to walk down to Coffee Pot Bayou nearly every day to see if I can spot any. It's incredible to see the babies with their moms down there – and there's of course something very melancholy about seeing the babies with their unmarked backs, knowing that if they are lucky to get old enough, they, too, will almost certainly eventually carry the scars of boat collisions. I feel like manatees are there to remind us to be careful and be kind. Slow down. Don't pollute. Do it for the manatees. They are humongous vegetarians with no natural predators who regulate their buoyancy through farting – there is nothing I don't love about manatees." ●



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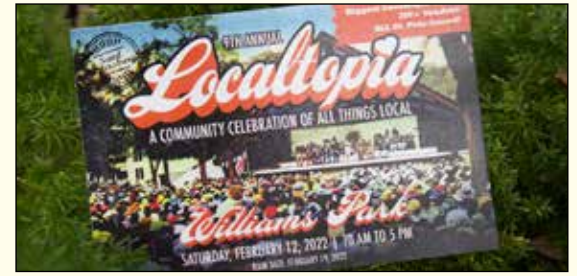
OUT AND ABOUT

Localtopia: A First-Hand Look

— M. SHACKELFORD BURNS —

Since arriving here just over a year ago, my wife Megan and I have witnessed many examples of community spirit – Localtopia was the ultimate. St. Pete’s “community celebration of all things local” showcased more than 300 of our city’s favorite independent businesses and community organizations on February 12. The weather was kind and the sun shone brightly on thousands of residents and visitors to this unique event. The stalls and the food trucks, vendors, and drink stands went on for blocks around Williams Park. The art and plant villages, collectives, DJs, literary corner, clothing and textile booths were jam packed.

Organized by nonprofit Keep Saint Petersburg Local, the festival seemed a resounding success, gathering people from all over the Bay area to share in and support local business, arts, food, drink, and culture. We feasted on culinary delights from plant-based Nah Dogs, Psalms Gourmet Brittle, croissants from Curious Cat Bakery and java from



Kahwa Coffee Roasters. We were treated to music from Boho Sideshow and Shevonne Philidor. The ladies from Sunshine City Roller Derby invited us to come skate with them, and we sampled the delectable How’s Your Day Honey and small-batch ice cream from Churned, while checking out handcrafted jewelry from BeaArtiDesigns.

After such tough years for many businesses, it was a welcome reprieve. Megan and I will be sure to continue supporting our local merchants and look forward to attending again next year. Localtopia made us truly proud to be citizens of St. Pete. ●



Shevonne Philidor on the main stage



Human Shrub, Megan and Butterfly



Family Day with Kevin, Kaileigh, Azaiah and Hannah



Alyssa and Ray from Churned Ice Cream



Kelsey and Elisha from How's Your Day Honey



Guests get in the groove at Localtopia



Destiny and Jasmine of Mermosa



Boho Sideshow on the main stage

Photos courtesy of Mikko Burns

GOODNESS INDEED

Nourishing the Community and Eating the Rainbow



— SARA WOLSKI —
 Along with the rising popularity of baking your own bread during the pandemic, growing your own produce – or at least eating locally sourced, organic produce – has become a trend. But it’s more than a passing fad. More Americans are focusing on gut health as a starting point for better overall health and creating a flourishing microbiome – the good bacteria living on and in us – to boost immune systems, help us sleep, and increase energy. The first step in all of this is eating better.

According to *Time* magazine, up to 90% of Americans don’t eat as many fruits or vegetables as the CDC recommends (especially vegetables). Dr. Kelli Cross of Complete Wellness Pediatrics in St. Petersburg is an advocate for nutrition as the basis of health and healing. She starts many of her presentations with this statistic.

Cross, a long-time Old Northeast resident, volunteers to speak at schools around the community, such as LCC Day School, Shorecrest Preparatory School, and St. Petersburg Primary, talking about the benefits of eating fresh produce that’s locally sourced.

“I tell them to eat the rainbow,” Cross explains. “Kids love this. They get so excited to put fresh foods of all



Dr. Kelli Cross, an advocate for eating fresh, organic produce, volunteers at local schools helping children learn to “eat the rainbow.”

different colors on their plate. It’s important that kids understand our food sources.”

Cross especially focuses on nutritional education in underserved parts of our community. As she explains, “The poorest Americans eat the worst. Many families buy their food at dollar stores to save money.” Those shelf-stable foods are often highly processed, says Cross, and lack the requisite nutrition for healthy adults and growing children.

Each week, Cross – an avid gardener who grows food at home with aquaponic systems and earth boxes – volunteers at Benison Farm on 26th Avenue South in St. Pete. With a name deriving from an Old English word for blessing, Benison Farm is the joint project of two Episcopal churches, St. Augustine and St. Thomas. According to their website: *The purpose of the farm is to provide fresh produce to south St. Petersburg and to engage a diverse group*

of people in serving the community. Through mutual work and learning, groups from various ethnicities, religions, and backgrounds learn to respect each other and work together to support our community.

The farm grows what is needed for the community, with items like mustard greens, collard greens, peas, sweet potatoes, eggplant, squash, onions, carrots, tomatoes in popular demand. They even have a chicken coop with organic eggs.

Volunteers like Cross tend the gardens at Benison Farm before, during, and after the growing season. The work is popular among young adults involved in community organizations logging service hours. Once the produce is harvested, most of it goes to the Mercy Keepers Food Pantry, a local nonprofit that provides food and clothing donations in the Jordan Park area of St. Petersburg. In addition to non-perishable items, their food pantry also offers bread, meat, and the fresh produce from the farm.

“It’s a great way to get fresh produce to people in need,” Cross explains. “These organizations are helping people get and stay healthier through the food they eat.”

Learn more or volunteer at benisonfarm.org or mercykeepersinc.com.

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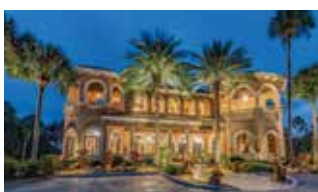
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DAVID WELCH *Continued from page 1*

father at the time of his passing: "He always said you need to move beyond your comfort zone, talk to folks you never talked to, and try to build relationships."

David Welch grew up in St. Petersburg's Gas Plant neighborhood. His father, Flagmon Welch, operated a wood yard. His mother, Gussie Welch, recalled, "We were very, very poor. We had to work hard. We didn't know anything to do but work." David and his brothers pumped and hauled water for drinking, bathing, and washing from a communal pump that was used by five families. He graduated from Gibbs High School, earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Florida A&M University, and later, a doctorate from Nova University. He was also a veteran who fought in an Army Airborne Division during the Korean War.

After election to council in 1981, Welch was reelected in 1984, and won a third term in 1993. In the interval between his second and third terms, he ran for mayor. In 1989, he started a mayoral campaign, but withdrew his name when Mayor Ulrich decided to run for a second term. In 1991, he placed fourth in the primary in an election that David Fischer ultimately won. In 1997, Welch was defeated in a bid for a fourth term on council.

Politics was a family affair for the Welches. David and his wife, Alletha McKenzie, engaged their four children in family decision-making. A "family council" voted on vacation destinations, buying a car, and house remodeling. As a Sunday school teacher, Welch was not reluctant to include current events in his classes. He said, "We're building character. We're building a whole lot of things. We talk about government. My kids right now... can tell you, hey, just about anything. You know we talked about the presidential race going on. They can tell you more about it than the average adult, because I say to them, 'When you come next Sunday, tell me who's running for vice president in the Democratic, in the Republican, you know, tell me all about them'... We teach them, 'Hey, it's okay to be different. It's ok to disagree. It's an individual right to disagree.'"

Like most council members, Welch was deeply involved in city issues prior to running for office. He served as the first co-chair of the Community Alliance, which was established at the suggestion of then-Mayor Don Jones to help heal the community near the end of the 1968 Sanitation Workers Strike. The Alliance was a bi-racial group whose specific mission was to address poor job opportunities for African Americans, renovate slum housing, and expand and improve educational opportunities. Early accomplishments



Photos courtesy of Ken Welch

included getting city council to pass a fair-housing ordinance; helping the school system implement desegregation; sponsoring job fairs and minority business seminars to increase African American involvement; and lobbying for the city's minority business enterprise ordinance, which generated \$5 million in contracts for minority businesses.

Welch and other members also implemented a program of on-site response to community conflicts. In the 1970s and '80s, he monitored a police radio scanner so that he and other volunteers could rapidly respond to incidents in the community that might lead to violence. Welch would arrive on the scene, sometimes still in a three-piece suit, to talk the situation down. Later, after the fatal shooting of 18-year-old TyRon Lewis by a white police officer in 1996 and the riots that followed, he again sought to play a peacekeeping role.

Welch's Nova doctoral dissertation was on reducing crime in St. Petersburg. He recommended government offer more job training; Black ministers to ride with police officers; officers getting out of their cars and talking to people; and police and community leaders spreading the word that the "police department is not just there to arrest you, but to assist you."

In his 1981 campaign for the council, he defeated the incumbent white council member in the citywide general election with the support of white voters throughout the city. The council district in which he ran included much of south St. Petersburg east of 34th Street and north of Lake Maggoire. While the district was predominantly African American, even

without the support of voters in the district he would have won by a margin of 100 votes. His campaign strategy was to stress his qualities as a person, not as an African American. He said he wanted to represent the whole city, not just his district. He was endorsed by the *Times*, which noted that, "He earned the respect of all city residents for his role as peacemaker in helping to ease racial tensions during the 1968 garbage strike and during the desegregation of Pinellas County schools in the early 1970s." Immediately after Welch learned that he won, he and his wife went to his church to pray. Only then did they go to the campaign victory celebration.

County Urban League President Watson Haynes described Welch as a "political godfather." "If you wanted the vote in this community, you needed to see David," he said. "David was what we called our mayor. If there was an issue, [you] called David." Over the years, Welch helped many African American businesses in his district get started with help from his Tax and Accounting service. Former city councilmember and county commissioner Bob Stewart described Welch as the "voice of reason" during his time on the council. "When the debate would get emotional, he would straighten out the council pretty quickly with at least his opinion, and many times carried the day."

During Welch's first term on council, a major focus was on facilitating decent affordable housing. He described this as a "moral commitment," and was instrumental in getting rent subsidies for rehabilitation of rental property and increasing funding and staffing for code enforcement. In his second term, he focused

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on replacing slum housing with affordable new housing. He served as chair of the council's housing subcommittee, which declared a severe shortage of affordable housing and made addressing that issue its priority. Welch said the city had historically ignored bad housing conditions in predominantly African American neighborhoods where housing was demolished rather than rehabilitated. "We are aware of what's happening, this is nothing new to me," Welch said. "I've seen it for the last 30 years, the neglect of code enforcement in certain areas... Houses are beyond repair and we let them get into those conditions by not enforcing the codes."

Welch supported virtually every economic development, jobs, and business growth program that came before the council. These included Pier Park, a \$72 million 1980s proposal for renovation of the downtown pier that was ultimately voted down in a city referendum, and the failed Bay Plaza redevelopment project, which preceded BayWalk and the Sundial. Welch, who served on the Pinellas County Sports Authority, also supported the stadium – built largely by demolishing homes and businesses in the Gas Plant neighborhood – believing it would bring quality jobs and benefit minority business. He later acknowledged that these expectations were a failure.

Initially, he did not support the location of the stadium at the Gas Plant site. He noted that site was being prepared for redevelopment as an industrial park and low-rent housing complex, and said, "When you went into this area and moved out all the people, you said you were going to rehabilitate and create light industry and create jobs. You have a moral obligation to those individuals who were moved out for what you have told them." Two Black churches on the site would need to be razed, including the church he attended, where his brother was pastor. Welch noted that churches are the strongest institutions in the Black community and that their relocation was especially disturbing to residents, many



Young Ken Welch, with his parents Alletha & David, and sister Katrina

of whom also had to move their homes or businesses upon the destruction of their neighborhood. The area also was the site of the Manhattan Casino, an important African American entertainment and cultural venue. Welch initiated action to save the Casino and designate it a city historic landmark. Still, reflecting on the building of the stadium in 2007, he stated, "In all, it was a plus."

After leaving the council in his final term, Welch continued to be active in civic life with much of his energy devoted to his former council district. He had chaired a city management oversight committee to help formulate a comprehensive plan for Midtown development and to make recommendations on allocating a federal grant. He chaired the "Front Porch" Council for the area, which was charged with allocation of state grant funds used to renovate

homes, provide small business loans, and support job training. He remained active in the local chapter of the NAACP and, in 2001, he was appointed a board member of USF-St. Petersburg.

It is said that the more things change, the more they are the same. That seems true of the issues David Welch advocated for and struggled with over his many years of public and civic service: decent affordable housing, economic development, jobs, quality neighborhoods, a new stadium for baseball, and prevention of crime and violence. These sound very much like many of the same issues being addressed by his son as he assumes his duties as mayor. But some things do change. Now we also are grappling with preemption of local government, a pandemic, and the effects of climate change and sea-level rise. And Ken Welch is the city's first African American mayor, an office his father twice aspired to attain. Mayor Welch reflects, "My father loved St. Petersburg and was committed to progress for all. I could not have asked for a better mentor, role model, and father. I'm honored to carry his legacy forward." ♦

Will Michaels is the former Director of the St. Petersburg Museum of History and the author of *The Making of St. Petersburg* and *The Hidden History of St. Petersburg*. Contact him at wmichaels2222@gmail.com or 727-420-9195.

"David Welch was a man of character and integrity. His level-headed approach to deciding issues affecting our community reflected wisdom born of an upbringing of love and discipline... He was the voice of reason and sound judgment and he earned the abiding respect of his fellow council persons. He would have made a dandy mayor."

~ Former St. Petersburg Mayor Bob Ulrich



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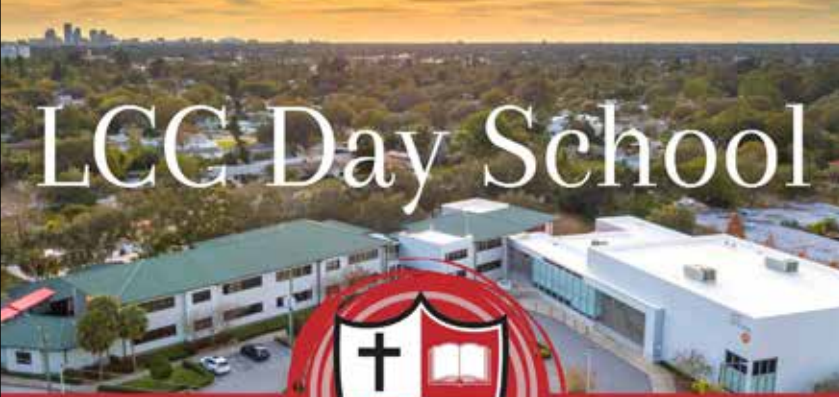
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MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR



Stacey Whitworth

Ricardo Way NE

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

I've lived here my entire life! Born at St. Anthony's Hospital in 1977.

Favorite place to visit in St. Pete?

Dali Museum. It's such a point of great pride for us. Sometimes I miss the old building though!

Most interesting, enjoyable or exotic vacation you've taken?

Denmark!

Top two places in the world on your bucket list?

I have always wanted to go to France and Italy. Honestly, I'd be happy just to go anywhere nowadays!

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

Dave Grohl. I just think he's so cool, talented, and hilarious. A good drinking companion!

Favorite sport, recreational activity, or hobby?

I travel all over the country going to music festivals and concerts. I have met so many great people doing that.

A great movie you'd recommend or current TV series you are watching?

Queer Eye on Netflix. It's always so uplifting to me.

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

I'd be a cat... with hair.

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

My best friend, Shelly. Her resiliency and positivity even in the worst of times has always been an inspiration to me.

Current book you've read and would recommend?

The Storyteller: Tales of Life and Music by Dave Grohl. I think there's a pattern here...

Tell us about an accomplishment, current or past, of which you are proud.

I passed to become a licensed title agent during COVID. Did something productive with my time!

Something people might not know about you?

I love to dance!

What do you do for a living?

I am a real estate paralegal at Skelton, Willis & Wallace, LLP.

Tell us something about your family and pets.

I am a fourth- (possibly fifth!) generation Floridian through my father's side. We have a very long history in Florida. Some people find that incredible!



Betsy Buswell Schott

29th Avenue North

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

I have lived in St. Pete since 1957. I am originally from Avon Lake, OH.

Favorite place to visit in St. Pete?

My favorite is Sunken Gardens, and I enjoy being close to Crescent Lake. I love nature and flowers.

Most interesting, enjoyable, or exotic vacation you've taken?

One of the most exotic places I have been to is Papua New Guinea. It's very primitive, but climbing to the top of Machu Pichu was pretty great. And I must add India... an amazing place.

Top two places in the world on your bucket list?

Austria and China.

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

I would love to be in the presence of the Dali Llama. Just to be in that energy would be amazing.

Favorite sport, recreational activity, or hobby?

I have loved drawing and painting as a child and was fortunate enough to make it my career.

A great movie you'd recommend or TV series you're watching?

For the true romantics, my favorite movie is *Pride and Prejudice*.

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

A border collie because they are so smart.

Tell us about a person who has inspired you.

My father inspired me. He was hard working, dependable, and independent. He served in the Armed Forces, worked for himself, and raised six kids.

Current book you're read and would recommend?

I am just finishing the book *The Lowland* by Pulitzer Prize winner Jhumpa Lahiri. Very thought provoking.

Tell us about an accomplishment, current or past, of which you are proud.

In 1991, I was named Small Business Person of the Year here in Pinellas County – something I never expected – which came about through my art on tee-shirts. I owned and operated Betsy & Co. screen-printed tee shirts for 20 years.

Something people might not know about you?

I have been a meditator and Buddhist chanter for over 40 years.

What do you do for a living?

At this stage in my life I teach yoga classes at Metrix Fitness. I also have continued my art and have painted a collection of spiritual deities, which I have reproduced into 5x7" cards. I also love faux finishing walls, painting murals, and also portraits.

Tell us something about your family and pets.

Besides my family of five brothers and sisters, I have a beautiful daughter and a 13-year-old granddaughter. I'm so fortunate that they live in St. Petersburg.



Kelli Cross

3rd Street North

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

I have lived in St. Pete for 28 years. In the Old Northeast for 22. I am originally from Buffalo, NY.

Favorite place to visit in St. Pete?

My favorite place in St. Pete is Northshore Park at sunrise. I do yoga near the seawall to start the day. We live in paradise!

Most interesting, enjoyable, or exotic vacation you've taken?

Costa Rica, near Quepos, hiking and ecotours; Puerto Rico, El Toro Negro hiking and waterfall rappelling.

Top two places in the world on your bucket list?

Patagonia and New Zealand.

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

Maya Angelou. A brilliant woman who changed the world.

Favorite sport, recreational activity, or hobby?

I love to bike and run, but paddleboarding is my favorite.

A great movie you'd recommend or current TV series you are watching?

Yellowstone on Paramount.

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

A goldendoodle. I have two and they are my spirit animals. Strong-willed and loyal.

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

My husband's grandfather. My son calls him Fishing Grandpa. He is 95 and lives on a lake in Odessa and rides his bike three miles a day. He survived the Great Depression and was injured in WWII. He's the kindest soul I've ever met.

Current book you've read and would recommend?

American Dirt by Jeanine Cummins.

Tell us about an accomplishment, current or past, of which you are proud.

Starting the first pediatric Direct Primary Care practice that offers integrative care in St. Pete with my business partner, Dr. Lyssa Logue.

Something people might not know about you?

I am terrified of heights. I am always going on vacations where I face that fear.

What do you do for a living?

I have been a pediatrician in St. Petersburg for 25 years. I am blessed to love what I do and how I do it.

Tell us something about your family and pets.

My husband is a Pinellas County teacher. He works in the drop-out prevention program. My son is a junior at CCCHS in the IB program. For Christmas, I got a goldendoodle pup named Charlie. He is training to be a therapy dog for my office.

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Our new patient tower is opening soon.

For 90 years, St. Anthony's Hospital has treated the community with extraordinary, compassionate care. That continues with our newest project: a 90-bed patient tower, featuring all private rooms, plus a new lobby and Seventh Avenue entrance. We've also renovated select cardiovascular and respiratory spaces, and moved and upgraded the cafeteria and dining area. This expansion will increase our ability to offer even better care and an enhanced patient experience. As the needs of our community grow, so does our commitment to meeting them at St. Anthony's Hospital, the only BayCare hospital in St. Petersburg.



Learn more: [StAnthonys.org](https://www.StAnthonys.org)



THE HEART GALLERY

Gulf Coast JFCS Heart Gallery of Pinellas and Pasco Program: Increasing the number of successful state-sponsored adoptions from foster care. We recruit potential parents, connect children and families, and provide support.

MADISON (13) Madison is an intelligent 7th grader who would love to be an artist when she grows up. She loves gym class and she enjoys drawing, swimming, and riding her bike. Madison loves pizza and football, especially her Tampa Bay Bucs! Her dreams include a pet dog and skydiving. Madison believes everyone should skydive at least once in their life (even though she hasn't yet). Her ideal family would include a mom or two moms who love her for who she is and who can talk with her about anything and everything.



LSF-103558349 • Photo courtesy of Carol Walker/Thomas Bruce Studio



JOSHUA (17) says he's super nice, respectfully kind, and polite. He just wants people to be happy, and he's an Honor Roll class clown. He likes math and might become an accountant or a counselor for group homes. "I am an old man, not very adventurous, but that's only because I haven't been shown much." He's a homebody and likes to take his time. He loves comic books, which has given him lots of imagination and creativity. Other creative outlets are coloring and writing "clean rap."

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— JEANNIE CARLSON —

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In place
In plumeria pink
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To startled vacationers returning home
To find it thriving
In their private garden ~
Clippings clapped
Down the centuries
From a 16th century Italian marquis,
Flowering across the garland globe
With trunks fingering their way to Florida,
Sifted
Potted
Gifted
By a thoughtful friend.



March, But No Madness

A carriage house
Construction stall
Turned into
Make-shift basketball ~
Foundation concrete
Firm and bare
Became a court
Back over there ~
No playing now
The building's done
Just memories
Of 3-point fun. ●



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GOOD TIMES

Comic Con Crashes the Coliseum



Photos courtesy of Leo Nocedo Photography

— BRANDY STARK —

There is only one place in the 'Burg where Pikachu stands among a crowd that includes Darth Vader, Rogue of the X-Men, and DC comics' Hawkman and Hawkgirl: the St. Petersburg Comic Con.

Walking through the crowd on the weekend of January 8, one could overhear comments such as, "Her power lets her shrink so small that her brother can carry her around in his pocket," or "Do you want to



play Werewolf with us? It's a social role-playing game and it's super fun!"

This convention was the brainchild of Dewey Caruthers, co-producer of Suncoast Comic Con in Bradenton with Kerry Tarpley, who is also co-producing the St. Petersburg Comic Con. Dewey's teenaged daughters, Blu and Scarlet, also helped organize the event. Dewey saw St. Pete, the fifth largest city in the state, was one of the few big Florida cities without its own comic convention – and set about to rectify that.

Generations of science fiction and fantasy fans are familiar with comic cons. The popular TV show *Star Trek* revived the modern science fiction gatherings in the 1970s. As the fandom expanded, so did the themes of new conventions. It was the rebounding of the

popularity of comic books that spawned the term "comic con," and over time this came to be identified with multi-focused fan-based conventions.

The newly born St. Petersburg convention was one with a broad focus. Guests included anime voice actors, comic book artists, and top-notch cosplayers. Cosplay – a portmanteau of "costume play" that involves dressing as favorite characters – has grown in popularity for most modern conventions. Dewey is no stranger to this phenomenon, especially as he also works for Florida Comic Cons, a news media website that covers conventions in the sunshine state.

"In this role, we attend cons throughout Florida. It's a tough job, but someone has to do it," he says, laughing. "Our job includes maintaining the convention calendar for the state. In addition, we also publish *Florida Cosplay Digital Magazine*, which spotlights talented cosplayers throughout Florida. Our goal is to make it easier for avid fans to attend comic cons nearby."

Dewey worked to find a location that was both close to local hotels and that showed off the best of St. Petersburg history. He landed on the Coliseum. In promoting the local history, he invited a local paranormal investigator – me – to talk about the



haunts, legends, and lore of the location. Rumors that the Coliseum is haunted made the site even better in Dewey's eyes.

Multiple panels, or focused discussion groups, focused on anime and comics. One featured animation voice actors including Aaron Dismuke, known for his work as Tamaki Amajiki in *My Hero Academia*; Alphonse Elric from *Fullmetal Alchemist*; Senku Ishigami from *Dr. Stone*; and Erica Schroeder whose roles include Nurse Joy and Eevee in *Pokemon*, Luffy of *One Piece*, and Devos in *World of Warcraft: Shadowlands*. Representing comic books were Alex Saviuk (*Spiderman*), Omar Francia (*Star Wars Legacy*), and Sergio Cariello (*The Action Bible*).

Participants were excited to be there. "I'm impressed. For a small space, they got a lot in here," said Anthony Pernicia from St. Pete's Edge District. "We've been to the Tampa Comic Con for the past few years, but it's so nice not to drive over there."

This sentiment was echoed by Lora Hyphrey and her friend Lauren Hawhee, both from Pinellas County.

"I think that the use of the rooms along the sides of the Coliseum for the meet-and-greet with convention guests is a great idea!" said one. "I'm also thrilled with how convenient this convention is for us here."

Some chose to commute to the convention from out of the area. Ethan and Sophie Pollitt drove down from Brooksville to attend. "We just wanted to come here and have a good time. It's the second convention that we've ever attended. The first was in Salt Lake City in Utah. While it was fun, this is much more intimate. We are learning so much about the local area."

The event was packed with people and, according to organizers, incredibly successful. A second convention has been planned for January 2023 and Dewey is already working on the guest list. Comic book artist, Mike Grell, well known for his work on *Green Arrow The Longbow Hunters*, *Superboy and the Legion of Super-Heroes* and *Green Lantern/Green Arrow*, has already confirmed that he is planning to come.

As the day wound down, people in various forms of dress – from comic-themed t-shirts to elaborate, homemade costumes – revealed in each other's company. Some, like the web-slinging Spiderman, took time to sit down for a little break, while a couple dressed as husband-and-wife Goku and Chi-chi of the *Dragonball Z* franchise, walked hand-in-hand past the food trucks outside.

Excelsior, St. Petersburg Comic Con! We have one year to prepare for that fanfiction fun. ●



The Last Word

St. Petersburg Arts Alliance Gets NEA Grant

Good news for the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance (SPAA) – and local art lovers. The nonprofit has been approved for a \$25,000 Grants for Arts Projects award to support the Shine On Unity Project.

“This project will expand the impact of the Arts Alliance’s

annual SHINE Mural Festival by creating two new projects focused on celebrating diversity, inclusion, and unity,” according to an SPAA release. “One project will consist of four murals celebrating the history and cultural identity of St. Petersburg’s historically Black neighborhoods. Part two of the

project will celebrate St. Pete Pride’s 20th anniversary by using mural art to promote unity, diversity, and visibility for the LGBTQIA+ community.”

The SPAA project is one of 1,248 across the U.S. (totaling \$28,840,000) selected to receive this first round of fiscal year 2022 funding.

“We are thrilled to receive the support of the National Endowment for the Arts for the Shine On Unity project,” said SHINE director Jenee Priebe. “Not only is it an honor to be recognized on a national level, but these funds allow us to provide direct support to local artists while using mural art to continue community building.”

Said NEA acting chair Ann Eilers, “The St. Pete Arts Alliance is among the arts organizations nationwide that are using the arts as a source of strength, a path to well-being, and providing access and opportunity for people to connect and find joy through the arts.”

Learn more at stpeteartsalliance.org.



Jason Harvin’s mural Photos by Jenee Priebe, courtesy of the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance



Artist Ricky Watts’ mural for the 2021 SHINE Mural Festival

First Presbyterian Church Hosts Master Chorale of Tampa Bay

First Presbyterian Church tempts music lovers with two upcoming concerts in March and April. First up is a free show for the church’s 35th annual Festival of Praise, featuring Handel’s Messiah, parts two and three, on March 20 at 4 pm. Voices of the Tampa Oratorio Singers, First Presbyterian Church Chancel Choir and other musicians from across the Bay area join with a full orchestra under the baton of guest clinician Nancy Callahan. On April 1 at 7:30 pm, the church hosts the 150-voice Master Chorale of Tampa Bay as they present Fauré’s Requiem Mass and the world premiere of Guillaume’s *This Too, Shall Pass*. The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay has been praised as “one of the country’s finest choirs” and a “cultural treasure” by critics for their profoundly moving performances. While the first event is free, the second requires a ticket.

First Presbyterian Church is located at 701 Beach Drive NE. Find details at fpcstpete.com or call 727-822-2031.



Master Chorale of Tampa Bay

Photo courtesy of Master Chorale of Tampa Bay

Oceanography Camp



Photos courtesy of USF-St. Pete College of Marine Sciences

Come Aboard USF’s Oceanography Camp for Girls

Do you know a girl who loves the water? Or wants to learn more about marine science? USF-St. Pete’s Oceanography Camp for 8th grade girls in Pinellas County is now open for registration.

This free three-week camp takes place at the USF College of Marine Science, June 6-23 (Monday-Friday, 8 am-4 pm). Campers go on field trips, visit research labs, and get to know what it is like to be a marine scientist.

The mission of this summer ocean science exploration program is to “inspire and motivate young women... to consider career opportunities in the sciences” by providing hands-on, real-world



experiences in the lab and on the water. Professors, research scientists, and graduate students at USF mentor campers to develop communication and leadership skills, as well as give them experience in disciplines where women and minorities are often underrepresented. It’s all about “encouraging a positive sense of self, science, and the environment through ocean exploration,” say organizers.

According to the program website, “Oceanography is a highly interdisciplinary field, combining biology, chemistry, geology, physics, math, and computer sciences and technology. This makes oceanography an amazing discipline for our unified approach to learning, both for girls with very specific interests, and for girls who may not have decided what branch they like best yet.”

Application deadline March 31, 2022. Learn more at usf.edu/marine-science or email ocgoutreach@gmail.com.

Do you know a girl who loves the water?



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The Salvador Condo
Last Listed at \$575,000

ABOUT ME | As a lifelong resident of St. Petersburg, I have in-depth knowledge and appreciation for the history and beauty of the city. This unmatched insight combined with a unique blend of enthusiasm, marketing expertise and negotiating skills make me a perfect fit to **help you with your downtown real estate needs**. Inspired by a family of successful real estate brokers, I believe my success has come from a vital combination of excellent communication, keen interpersonal skills and tireless dedication. I also know that building relationships is just as important, and among the main reasons why I enjoy repeat business and referrals from satisfied clients.

NEW DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As Your Preferred Buyers Agent, Let Me Tell You About New Development Opportunities.



Art House

A sleek, 42-story tower, offering an artful balance of simplicity and sophistication in luxury condominium living, with all the best of downtown just steps in every direction.



Orange Station

The Residences at Orange Station's condominiums offer high-end finishes, spacious living spaces, and a captivating view of Central Avenue and the downtown skyline.



The Nolen

With 31 spectacular residences within 23-stories, in chic St. Pete's most coveted location, your haven at The Nolen is everything you want it to be.

TESTIMONIALS

“Ali helped us with a purchase of our Old Northeast home and sale of our Old Northeast condo. Ali was attentive to every detail and guided us expertly through the process. Her advice was crucial to both transactions. We moved from New York where we own multiple properties. Ali is hands down the most knowledgeable real estate agent we have ever used. We are so grateful to Ali and Smith & Associates. And we love your orange coffee mugs too! Nice touch.” - *Marilyn-Joy C*