



# NORTHEAST JOURNAL

Good People ∞ Good Places ∞ Good Things Happening

St. Petersburg, Florida

May/June 2022

Est. September 2004



Dave and Pam Bennet's home in Old Northeast

## What's the Story Behind Your Home?

Monica Kile

What do a wealthy real estate speculator, a Confederate veteran, and a holocaust survivor have in common? They all called the same corner of the Old Northeast their home.

The house at 1630 Locust Street had been in Dave Bennett's family since his mother bought it in 1974. Back then, it still featured two apartments on the second floor, remnants of its years as a guest house. Dave and his wife, Pam, bought it in 1996 when the large home became too much for his mother to care for. They'd done some cursory research as they renovated the home over the years, but like many residents in St. Pete's charming historic neighborhoods, they were curious to learn more. Having gazed admiringly at their home from my front window over the past seven years, I was eager to help.

Continued on page 12

## When the "Monkey Trial" Stars Came to St. Petersburg

Will Michaels

I recently had occasion to watch Stanley Kramer's 1960 classic film *Inherit the Wind*, about the 1925 Scopes "Monkey Trial." Frederic March plays William Jennings Bryan, defending the Tennessee law prohibiting the teaching of evolution in public schools. Spencer Tracey plays Clarence Darrow,

defending the high school teacher John T. Scopes, who is charged with violating the law. Bryan, known as the "Great Commoner," was a three-time presidential candidate on the Democratic ticket and served for two years as Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of State. Darrow was perhaps the most famous trial lawyer of the time.

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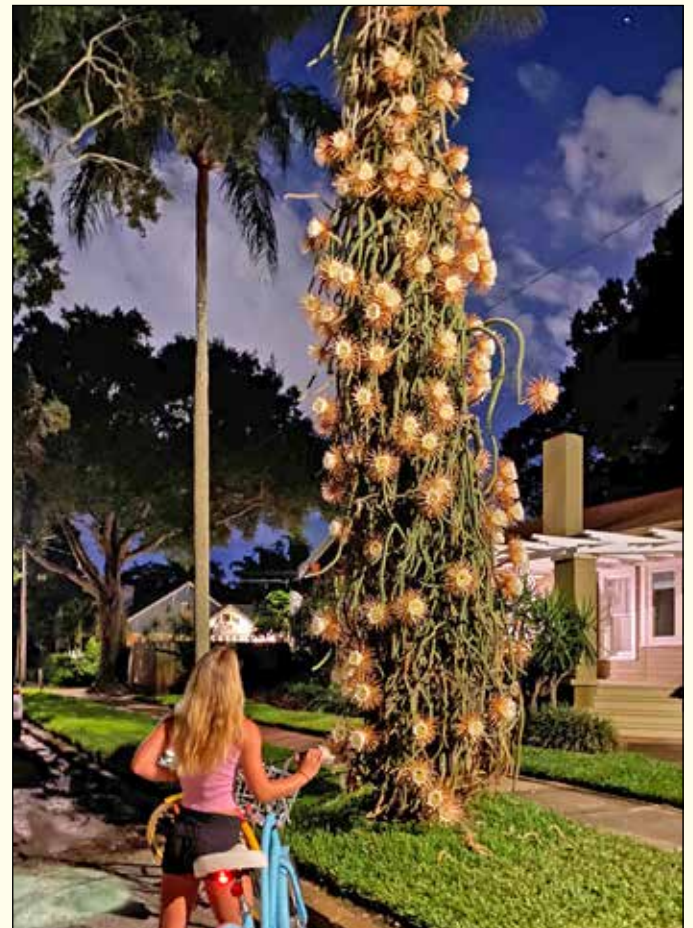


Clarence Darrow questioning William Jennings Bryan on the witness stand after the trial was moved outdoors due to the heat

## One Night Only Our Elusive Nightblooming Flowers

Cathy Salustri

Emily Elwyn's on a mission, and she won't be stopped. Not by a pandemic, not by the summer heat, and certainly not by the elusive nature of what she seeks – the nightblooming cereus. You may have seen one, but probably not in bloom.



The elusive nightblooming cereus

Photo courtesy of Emily Elwyn

Unbloomed, the nightblooming cereus looks like a cactus and a vine had a spiky love child. When it blooms, though, it's a spectacle of light and majesty, a post-twilight celebration. The white chalice-shaped blooms unfurl from the spiny cactus vine that can climb 30 feet into the air. For only a few hours – on just one night each year – they turn trees, telephone poles, and fences into summertime Christmas trees.

Continued on page 8

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- Fabulous contemporary cable railing staircase with a suspended pendant light
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- The master bath is designed to mimic a private spa with a large two-person walk-in shower, dual sinks, beverage bar and beautiful freestanding tub with a water view
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**EDITOR'S NOTE**

**The People Make the City**

*"There are only two places in the world where we can live happy – at home and in Paris."*

~ Ernest Hemingway

In April, we did something I've been dreaming of for years: We went to Paris. There's nothing I can write here that hasn't already been said – and with far greater panache – about the City of Light. I can only say that I agree with all of it.

I anticipated the art, the architecture, the phenomenal food. (I was shocked, however, by the kindness of French waiters!) But what delighted me most – more so, even, than my capacity for baguettes and French wine – was the history. In preparing for my trip, I took a deep dive into the history of Paris. But my kind of history is not rooted in wars and dates and monuments – my favorite history is the quirks of the people who lived it. Did you know that Louis XIV's vanity over his baldness led to men wearing wigs for the next 100+ years? Or that American ex-pat Sylvia Beach published James Joyce's *Ulysses* out of her little bookstore, Shakespeare & Company, on the Left bank? Did you know Victor Hugo was such a devoted (ahem) patron of brothels, they closed for a day of mourning when he died?

People are fascinating. As I walked many miles in Paris, that is what I thought about. But that's hardly peculiar to Paris. What is any city, if not the sum of its people?

This issue of the *Northeast Journal* is predominantly about people. A feminist artist, an environmental activist, a bilingual poet, a ballerina, Scopes trial celebrities and many more – all have had an impact on this city we love. You can read their stories and more in this issue, and long-time readers might also notice something new: *NEJ* graphic designer Julie Johnston has refreshed our look. It is still spring, after all!

I hope you enjoy this issue as much as we enjoyed creating it. And, as ever, if you've got a story, I'd love to hear it.

~ Shelly Wilson  
[editor@northeastjournal.org](mailto:editor@northeastjournal.org)



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# Making a Difference, Wherever You Live



Josef Tatelbaum

Samantha Bond Richman

It is not unusual to meet someone who left home to study at a university. Some boldly leave their home state; some move across the country or even travel abroad for a semester. Then there are those who go to school halfway around the world and decide to stay...for 30 years. Josef Tatelbaum, a neighbor on Snell Island, has lived the adventure.

In 1982, Tatelbaum was an undergrad at Northwestern University near Chicago. "I wasn't a great student," he admits, and while his grades weren't bad, he lacked a clear direction. Tatelbaum heard about an international student exchange program, applied, and was accepted to attend Fudan University in Shanghai, China – one of the top three universities in the country. His father agreed it was a good opportunity to expand his horizons.

Tatelbaum eventually graduated from Fudan University with a master's degree in Beginning Chinese, and he decided to stay in Shanghai. Even before graduating, he put together buyers and sellers of goods, honing his negotiation skills, and he flourished. He eventually became a manufacturer of many consumer goods, including gloves, hats, and other gear for outdoor activities like skiing or camping. His work led him to meet a job applicant in 1994, who later became his wife. But for Tatelbaum, life isn't all business.

"I like to have a positive impact on where I live," says Tatelbaum. This is not just lip service. In Shanghai, a friend introduced him to Roots and Shoots, a program for youth supported by the Jane Goodall Institute. Roots and Shoots is a phrase that refers to the start of most plants. Typically small at first, they take root, grow shoots, and mature. This is the concept behind the activities of a worldwide fraternity of 9000 chapters, whose model is for "making positive change happen for people, other animals, and the environment."

Intrigued, Tatelbaum became active in the local Roots and Shoots chapter and served as a board member of the Jane Goodall Institute from 2006 to 2012. He met the iconic Goodall, and quoted her as saying, "If you don't do something, nothing happens."

While with Roots and Shoots in Shanghai, Tatelbaum recalled a project in a virtual desert – over hundreds of thousands of acres of over-farmed, environmentally kaput land north of the city. Tatelbaum contacted a scientist from Oregon State University who came to China to help the local volunteers, aged 10 to 18, successfully plant over two million trees in 10 years. After the first four years, birds returned to the area, officially giving it the blessing of being livable again.

The impact grew when the Chinese government joined in the efforts to regenerate the forest, planting even more trees, impacting not only the local flora and fauna, but also bringing farmers to the area with new skills and agriculturally sound ways to produce much-needed food.

After his success, Tatelbaum sold his manufacturing business in 2016, bringing his wife, Wang Xiubin (friends know her as Grace), and son to the States. They bought a house in Snell Isle in 2020 where Tatelbaum continues to do things that have a positive impact where he lives. On March 30, he helped bring together respected scientists and guests to the St. Petersburg Women's Club for an opportunity to make change. In conjunction with the international Ocean Conservancy, the *Our Bay, Our Future* event was about finding new solutions to help preserve Florida waters.

"Guests are inspired to act," says Tatelbaum, "in the way that suits them best. We present the problems, solutions and actions." Next on his agenda for change: targeting the aging septic systems that pollute Tampa Bay.

"It is the one single line item that can be addressed by our legislators to have the greatest positive impact on cleaning Tampa Bay," he said. The outdated systems leach into the ground water, adding to high nitrate levels that fuel algae growth; this reduces healthy sea grasses, and fuels larger and more persistent instances of red tide.

Tatelbaum is like a bit of sand in the oysters that are his surroundings: He digs in, brushing and rubbing the material around him until a pearl begins to form, creating treasure. ●

*Get involved yourself at [oceanconservancy.org](http://oceanconservancy.org) or [rootsandshoots.org](http://rootsandshoots.org).*

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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.



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



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



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



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



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



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



**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]



**Cathy Salustri** writes about Florida. The *New York Times* featured her book, *Backroads of Paradise*, a travel narrative retracing the 1939 WPA Florida driving tours. Her next book, tentatively titled *The Florida Spectacular*, is undergoing edits. She and her husband live in Gulfport and own *The Gabber Newspaper*. Find her at greatfloridaroadtrip.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.



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



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





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## SPOTLIGHT ON THE ARTS

# Gloria Muñoz on Writing and Building Community

Sara Wolski

Gloria Muñoz knows a thing or two about the road to becoming a published author. The local poet, lyricist, screenwriter, and all-around multi-genre writer has garnered an impressive roster of local and national grants, fellowships, and awards. And her book of poetry, *Danzirly* (pronounced “dawn’s early”), explores the American dream from a Latinx perspective. Its timely themes include immigration, the #MeToo



During her own path to publication, Muñoz found Las Musas, a national network of Latinx writers, which brought her confidence, new friends and fellow writer colleagues, and additional ideas for grants, fellowships, and prizes. Actively participating in writing communities helps writers build a professional network, in addition to making new friends, and it can lead to new mentors.

“It takes a long time to publish a book, and there’s a confidence-building process to call yourself a writer,” she says. “Not everyone has the same road to being a writer like an MFA program. It’s great to have a writing community as you navigate the publishing process.”

The support Muñoz felt from her writing communities and mentors inspired her to give back as a mentor and teacher herself. She is also dedicated to fostering our local St. Pete literary communities and bringing access and equity to the writers within them.

“I always advise writers to find and keep mentors,” says Muñoz. “That’s how you learn about the industry. We have lots of working writers here in St. Pete, like Sheree L. Greer, Sam Obeid, Maureen McDole, Yuki Jackson, Eleanor Eichenbaum, Nicole Caron, Tenea D. Johnson, Helen Pruitt Wallace, Chelsea Catherine, Yuly Restrepo, Wally B. Jennings, Gianna Russo, Sylvia Curbelo, Peter Meinke, Pedro El Poeta...honestly the list goes on.”

Despite her busy schedule writing, mentoring, teaching, and raising a young daughter with her husband – local musician Mark Feinman of the trio La Lucha – Muñoz also makes time for new creative pursuits. She is the co-founder of Pitch Her Productions, and she and Mark co-founded Moonlit Musica, a creative business combining music, lyrics, songwriting, and TV projects. When asked what’s next, she says, “I’m thinking of writing that’s more malleable – like music lyrics. Writing in different mediums makes you a better writer.”

More from Muñoz at [gloriamunoz.com](http://gloriamunoz.com).



Gloria Muñoz

movement, climate change, gender, and more. Instead of separate editions of the book in English and Spanish, each copy includes both language versions of the poems, side by side.

“My dream was to publish bilingually,” Muñoz explains. “I am bilingual, my family is bilingual, and lots of people in the world are bilingual.”

Muñoz teaches creative writing at Eckerd College and teaches workshops for adults and children through Keep St. Pete Lit, where she is a former board member. She’s also taught creative writing summer camps for children, ages 6 to 12 (a complimentary program for community youth). She is dedicated to mentoring writers, especially women and BIPOC writers.

“I began writing stories at an early age,” says Muñoz, “and I attribute my love of literature to my parents who introduced me to Isabel Allende and Carl Sagan just as I was starting to fill notebooks with poems and stories.”

Part of Muñoz’s focus is to get her mentees in touch with a writing community, either through the local community of Keep St. Pete Lit or other literary groups, or on a larger scale.

“My dream was to publish bilingually,” Muñoz explains.  
 “I am bilingual, my family is bilingual,  
 and lots of people in the world are bilingual.”

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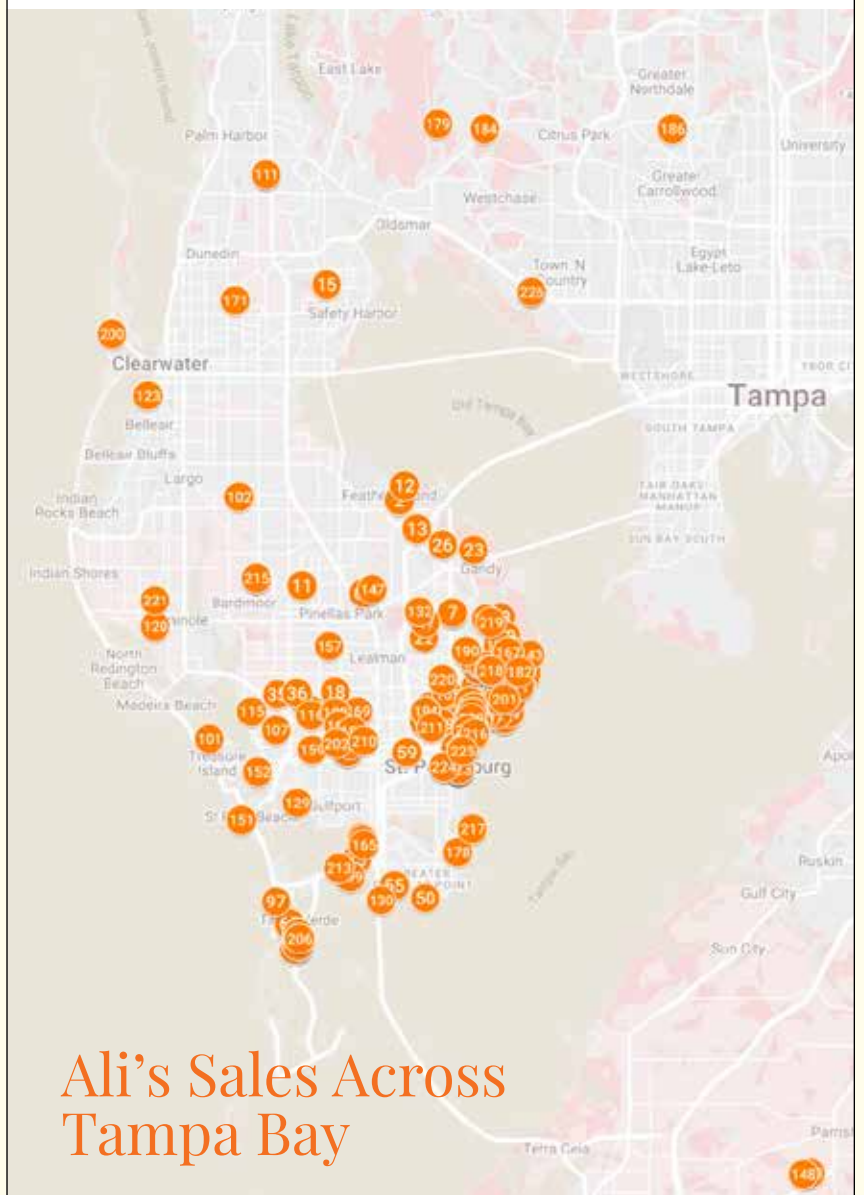


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Elwyn, the past president of Preserve the 'Burg and an Old Northeast resident, learned about this sturdy, yet somehow delicate plant, as an undergrad at Emory.

"I had a roommate at Emory who was from Mississippi and a [writer] Eudora Welty fan," Elwyn says, "who introduced the plant to me and the motto of Welty's nightblooming cereus-watching friends: 'Don't take it to cereus, life is too mysterious.'" (Welty even started the "Night-Blooming Cereus Club" in Jackson, Mississippi.) "I have always been obsessed and tracked some blooms. Things changed in the summer of 2020." That's when she realized she wasn't the only one paying attention to the nightblooming cereus. While not unique to Old Northeast, the neighborhood boasts its share.

"During [the] first pandemic summer, I noticed I was not alone in my love for the plant," says Elwyn. "I think because we were so starved for entertainment and lots of folks who travel in the summers were home, I kept running into groups of people gathering around the night bloomers."

A group chat grew into a Facebook group that helped neighbors track the plants, when they might bloom, and – the best part for those who missed the fleeting blooms – photos of them in their full, white-night glory. Her fascination deepened, and she scoured the web, looking for historic references to the blooms in St. Petersburg – and found several mentions of newsworthy blooms, the earliest of which dated to 1908:

"The night blooming cereus are in bloom now. Dr. Ambercrombie has a large number of them and N.P. Hayes at his Central Avenue house has many," the *St. Petersburg Times* article read, continuing on with a scientific description of the luminous blossoms and the vine. Although the article doesn't give addresses, it does suggest that those who can find the homes should attempt to visit the flowers. A 1929 article in the same paper lists a night blooming cereus at 2770 1st Avenue



North, and in 1937, a photo of the nightblooming cereus appeared – finally! – in the paper.

Elwyn calls them magical. "The night blooming cereus are one of the many things that makes St. Pete so special: Where else can you gather with a group of friends on hot June nights and watch the flowers open?"

Where else indeed. Technically, the plants are invasive, although not invasive enough to demand their removal. "I like to think they are the nice kind of invasive," Elwyn says. "Like an exotic friend who found love in St. Pete, and decided to stay." ●

Join the hunt at [fb.com/groups/148790450605784](https://fb.com/groups/148790450605784).

# Gio Swaby

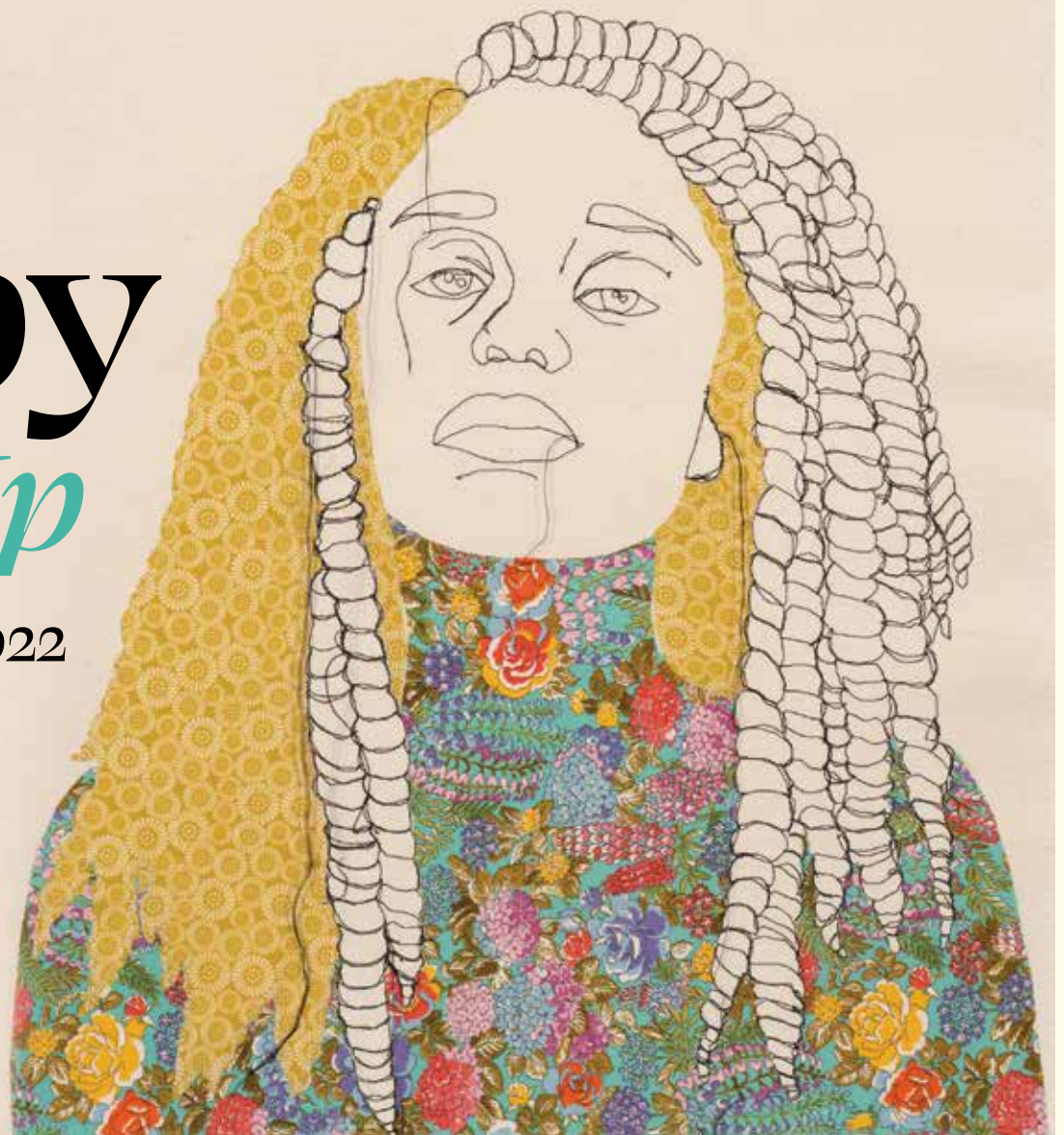
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Gio Swaby, *My Hands Are Clean 4* (detail), 2017, Thread and fabric sewn on canvas, Collection of Claire Oliver and Ian Rubinstein







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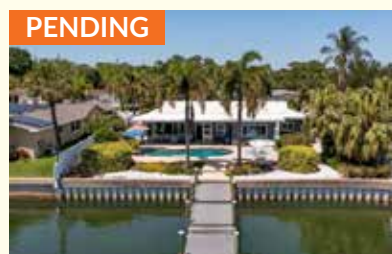
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# Shorecrest Student: *TIME* Magazine Finalist for 'Kid of The Year'

Janan Talafer

Miles Fetherston-Resch may only be 9, but he's already an entrepreneur with a mission to save the world's oceans. In February, the Shorecrest fourth grader was named one of the top 20 finalists for the annual *TIME* magazine "Kid of the Year" Award. Miles was the only student finalist from Florida.

Sponsored by *TIME* and the kids' TV channel Nickelodeon, the competition drew some 5,000 young people ages 8 to 16, all of whom are hoping "to change the world in unique ways, big and small." The finalists were selected based on five key attributes: determination, passion, kindness, bravery and innovation.

How does it feel to be selected for this tremendous honor?

"It feels amazing," says Miles with a grin. Miles won the recognition for his business, Kids Savings Oceans, which he started when he was in first grade.

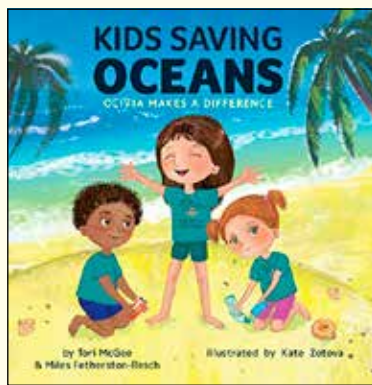
His company sells stickers, sustainable T-shirts and hats, both online through his website [kidsavingoceans.com](http://kidsavingoceans.com) and at St. Petersburg-area events. Miles donates all proceeds to an ocean conservation organization he selects after doing the research. Some of his favorite causes: The Marine Mammal Center, Tampa Bay Waterkeeper, Loggerhead Marine Life Center, Surfrider Foundation, Keep Pinellas Beautiful, and Mote Marine Laboratory.

"We're really proud of him," says mother Libby Fetherston-Resch. "For someone so young, he is very passionate and works really hard. He is committed to making the world a better place."

Miles says the idea for his business came from a trip to Amelia Island where he was distressed to find



Miles and his mother Libby Fetherston-Resch



plastic bottles and Styrofoam containers littering the beaches.

"He was very upset about it and talked about what could be done," says Libby. "Even at home, he didn't stop thinking about it."

At first they talked about creating a nonprofit organization, but there were already so many great marine conservation groups in existence. "We thought, 'What about a business?' Then all the profits could be donated to those groups working to save the oceans," says Libby.

Over a few weeks, Miles came up with the business name and, with his mother's help, began working with an illustrator to create a logo. "Miles' favorite class at school is art," says Libby. "He has a very creative mind." The next step was to set up a website, get the word out on social media, and begin creating products that kids and adults would be interested in buying. The first year Miles made \$6,000; last year he made \$23,000. His goal is to make \$1 million by the time he is 18 – and, of course, to donate all of it. On his website, Miles notes: "I believe a polluted, empty, lifeless ocean shouldn't be my generation's inheritance."

Customers local and global have been inspired by this remarkable young entrepreneur-philanthropist. "We've had people in New Zealand, South Africa, Peru and Germany make purchases," said Libby. The spare bedroom at their Kenwood home serves as a storage space for the business.

Miles isn't just raising money for ocean conservation; he's also getting out there to do his part to keep the beaches clean. So far, he's organized five beach clean ups and participated in over 50. He's even published a book, *Kids Saving Oceans: Olivia Makes a*



Miles with his "check" after winning the St. Pete Pitch night competition

*Difference*, with co-author Tori McGee and illustrator Kate Zotova.

A big break came in 2019, when Miles was invited to participate in the 1 Million Cups St. Petersburg Pitch night, where small start-ups compete for prize money in a Shark Tank-like event. Miles won the competition and got \$5,000. "Miles was going up against adults and he crushed it," said Libby.

But that wasn't the first time Miles spoke up in public. In 2018, when St. Petersburg City Council was voting on whether to ban straws, Miles stepped up to address council members about why he thought it was an important initiative. "Miles was just getting good at reading at the time and he was nervous about reading in public," said Libby. "So he wrote out what he wanted to say on cards first. He did a great job. He really overcame his trepidation about public speaking." Last year the City of St. Pete named Miles a Sunshine City Ambassador.

What's next? He's working on a new sticker and shirt design. There might also be a second book in the future. Big dreams for anyone, especially a 9-year-old. Congratulation, Miles, for your commitment to helping save the planet! ♦

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Fortunately for today's amateur researchers, there's a wealth of tools to explore the history of your home. Almost all can be found online, though some sites require memberships. Other resources are free at the public library, or at the St. Petersburg Museum of History for a membership fee. (See sidebar for details on resources mentioned in this article.)

I started my research on the Bennett's house with a sidewalk survey, taking a good hard look at the house from the

outside. I pulled out my copy of *A Field Guide to American Houses* and identified the house's gabled roof, porch supports, wide eaves, and decorative canoe brackets as classic features of a Craftsman Bungalow, an architectural style that swept the country in the early part of the 20th century. The Bennett's home features a lovely, wide, wraparound porch on two sides. Vinyl siding covers the upper story, over the original wood and cedar shake, but I recognized the first floor building material as rusticated

block, an early form of concrete block designed to resemble stone. With a lack of natural stone available in Florida, rusticated block was an economical alternative and had the added advantage of being poured into forms on the construction site. It became popular in St. Pete after the turn of the century, a clue to the age of the Bennett home.

My next step was to consult the Sanborn Insurance Maps, a series of maps created after the Civil War and updated every few years to help fire insurance agents determine the level of risk to properties in a rapidly developing nation. Drawn using symbols that resemble hieroglyphics, the maps include details like size, shape, and construction material (brick, wood-frame, etc.), street names, lot lines, house numbers, and even details on prevailing winds – important information when assessing fire risk! The St. Petersburg maps go back as far as 1899, though many of the houses in our reading area won't appear until the 1923 map. That's where I found the Bennett's home, the lone house on the corner of 17th Avenue NE and Locust Street. In 1923, the maps show the porch wrapped around three sides of the house.

Next was a visit to the St. Petersburg Public Library to review the Polk City Directories. Named for Ralph L. Polk whose company sent enumerators door-to-door, this precursor to the phone book is a researcher's dream.

Information is not only sorted by name, but by street.

The earliest directory available at the public library is from 1916. In that year there was only one home located on Locust Street north of 12th Avenue, at the corner of 17th Avenue North. It was listed as the home of Alva Wright and his wife Lula. Boarding with them was their son Ed Wright. This was a research jackpot! As a St. Pete historian, Ed Wright is a name I'm familiar with – by the 1970s, he was the richest man in Pinellas County, owning more than 50,000 acres of land. But in 1916, Ed Wright was just a 24-year-old retail clerk working at the Lewis Central Grocery, and still living with his parents. His father was a character in his own right, having earned local notoriety during a 1911 scuffle – at the annual Washington's Day Parade of schoolchildren, of all places. At the request of veterans from the Grand Army of the Republic, the school superintendent asked the local Confederate veterans not to carry the Confederate flag in the parade. Alva Wright, who was with Robert E. Lee during the surrender at Appomattox Court House, was incensed, and responded that he would carry the Confederate flag even if he had to "wade up Central Avenue in Yankee blood!" The melee would mark the end of the parade and the tenure of the superintendent.

Curious to know if the house dated to earlier than 1916, I called Jessy



Dave and Pam point out some of the original features of their home



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Original homeowner, Confederate Civil War veteran Alva Wright

(formerly the *St. Petersburg Times*) and the *Tampa Tribune*. The Bennett's house and its residents appear in the paper many times over the years (it was here I found the story of Alva Wright and the flag), but the address vacillates between 1620 Locust Street, 356 17th Avenue North, 356 17th Avenue NE, and the current 1630 Locust Street. I found an explanation for this in the book *Perry Snell: His Place in St. Petersburg, Florida History* by Judy Lowe Wells. This local history is packed with revealing details about the development of St. Petersburg, and in particular the neighborhoods of Old Northeast, Snell Isle, Mirror Lake and Crescent Lake. The book describes deed restrictions in the Old Northeast, which dictated, among other things, that homes must cost a minimum of \$5,000 and that livestock could not be kept on premises. A sad reminder of that chapter in our history, they also stated that no person of African descent could reside in the primary residence. Deed restrictions required all houses to face north or south (i.e., fronting an avenue, not a street) *unless* you were on a corner lot, in which case your house could have two fronts; this explained the dual addresses found for the Bennett house over the years. The book also explained that houses east of 1st Street were renumbered between 1918 and 1920 when the avenues were divided into "North" and "Northeast" (a bane for mailmen and visitors ever since), so researching the



Dave and Pam Bennet, enjoying the front porch, which used to wrap around three sides of their home

Breckenridge, archivist at the St. Petersburg Museum of History. The museum has city directories dating back to 1908, and Jessy happily checked the 1915 directory where she did indeed find Alva Wright living at the corner of Locust and 17th Avenue North. She also checked the 1914 directory, but found no record of the Wrights, or a house at that location, meaning that the house was likely completed in 1914 or early 1915.

Next, I turned to archival newspaper research to learn more about the house and its residents. I used newspapers.com, which provides searchable archives for more than 23,000 newspapers, including local papers like the *Tampa Bay Times*

area's oldest houses often means figuring out its original address.

From old newspapers, I also learned that members of the Wright family occupied the home for more than 15 years, selling it in the late 1930s to settle the estate after the passing of Alva and Lula Wright. Throughout the late '30s and '40s, the house was advertised in various forms as a guest house, a common practice in St. Pete during the Depression when homeowners rented out spare bedrooms for extra income to tourists still wanting to enjoy St. Pete's sunshine. In 1943, the house on the corner of Locust and 17th was advertised as an ideal rental for Army or Navy

officers and their wives – seeking to capitalize on the huge numbers of military members stationed in the city for training during WWII. Sure enough, the city directory lists a James Collins of the US Navy living there in 1944. Later that year, rooms were once again advertised, but this time for "girls only." In 1949, it was advertised as a "private home for elderly folks" boasting a nurse on staff. By the 1960s, the home was marketed as three separate apartments, which is how it was arranged when Dave Bennett's mother bought it in 1974.

To determine when the home was converted into a multi-family unit, I

*Continued on page 14*

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visited the City of St. Petersburg's property cards database. Historic property cards record any permitted work done on a house – things like plumbing, electrical work, additions, even installing a water heater. Record keeping can be spotty, but in the best of circumstances, it's a great place to find out when a house had significant modifications. The property card for the Bennett's home revealed when their garage was originally built, when a bathroom was added, when the aluminum siding was installed, and that the house was converted into three apartments by the 1960s. Dave remembers a memorable tenant who lived in one of those apartments in the late '70s: Vilis Gegeris, a Latvian Holocaust survivor who lost his mother and daughter in a concentration camp. Vilis had a fervent love for his adopted country, and a naughty streak – on occasion slipping the teenage Dave a shot of liquor.

I uncovered a rough timeline of Dave and Pam's house with just a few hours of research, but I wondered if there were stones still unturned. I called upon Emily Elwyn, an architectural historian and longtime board member of the historic preservation advocacy organization, Preserve the 'Burg. Emily noted the importance of familiarizing yourself with local history to place your house in context of the city's development. For example, knowing St. Pete's tourism history, Emily speculated as to whether the

front dormer on the Bennett's house was a later addition added to provide space for boarders. She also reminded us that asking your neighbors is one of the best ways to get a sense of whether a home has had interesting residents or major alterations. Emily added, "and nothing beats crawling around in your attic to see what you might find. I found movie scripts in my attic from the era when Weedon Island had a film studio!"

You can learn local history on walking tours Emily conducts for Preserve the 'Burg; she's happy to answer any questions a tour-goer might have about their house. YouTube also has dozens of videos on the city's history, including I Love the 'Burg's *History Half Hour* virtual tour series, hosted by me and my husband, Jon Kile.

Researching your home's history is a rewarding journey. Dave and Pam enjoyed learning about the many interesting people that once lived in their house, and have a renewed appreciation for the responsibility of caring for one of the oldest houses in this part of the Old Northeast. They are compiling copies of key materials and news clippings and putting together a narrative that can be passed along to future owners of what will certainly be referred to as the Wright/Bennett Home in future histories. So, grab your laptop or your library card and find out the story behind your house...but be careful, it can become an addiction. ●

## Resources for Researching Your Home

### Sanborn Maps:

- Accessible online at the University of Florida website: [ufdc.ufl.edu/collections/sanborn](http://ufdc.ufl.edu/collections/sanborn). Search for St. Petersburg and then click on one of the thumbnails, and then determine the page that your street would be found on. Make sure to click on the option to make the map "zoomable."
- Through the Library of Congress: [loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps/about-this-collection](http://loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps/about-this-collection).

### Polk City Directories:

- Available in the reference section of the St. Petersburg Public Library, currently housed at the Johnson Library on 18th Avenue South due to renovations.
- Also available to members at the St. Petersburg Museum of History.

### Property Cards:

- Current Property Cards: Pinellas County Property Appraiser: [pcpao.org](http://pcpao.org). Click on "Search our database" in left sidebar and search by home address. Make sure to use appropriate abbreviations as spelled out on the site.
- Historic Property Cards: [onlinedocs-propertycards.stpete.org/search](http://onlinedocs-propertycards.stpete.org/search).

### Architectural Style Guides:

- *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Virginia Savage McAlester and Lee McAlester

### St. Petersburg Design Guidelines for Historic Properties:

- Google this for a detailed PDF with clues to local styles along with tips on maintenance and preservation of historic homes.

### Northeast History Books Referenced in Article:

- *St. Petersburg and the Florida Dream*, Raymond O. Arsenault
- *Perry Snell, His Place in St. Petersburg, Florida History*, Robe Lowe Wells
- *Souvenir of St. Petersburg, Florida: A View from the Vinoy*, Robin Robson Gonzalez

### Historic Photographs:

- St. Petersburg Museum of History: Contact Jessy Breckenridge, Manager of Archives and Collections, with questions, 727-894-1052 ext. 202 or [jessica@spmoh.org](mailto:jessica@spmoh.org)
- Burgert Brothers Photographic Collection: [hcplc.org/research/burgert](http://hcplc.org/research/burgert)
- Florida Memory (State Archives): [floridamemory.com/discover/photographs](http://floridamemory.com/discover/photographs)

### Archival Newspaper Research:

- [Newspapers.com](http://Newspapers.com)

## Keeping Up with Life

Apart from surgery or heavy medication, there've been few options that truly help chronic back pain sufferers until now. Dr. Matthew Mann, DAOM provides his patients at St. Petersburg Acupuncture & Integrative Medicine (St. Pete AIM) with much needed relief from debilitating pain.

If you're suffering from chronic pain, you understand this sentiment all too well. Local resident Ed J. found himself at a turning point when he noticed his condition had started to take a toll on his family and friends.

"I was frustrated at times because I couldn't do the things I've been doing my whole life anymore. I've taken care of myself since my teens, and was responsible for my family not long after that. It's been difficult to be on the sidelines now because things such as walking on the pier with Jo, my wife and camping during spring break with all the grandkids has become impossible. My body just couldn't keep up but I'm not ready to be benched!"

Chronic pain affects practically all aspects of a person's life beginning with their ability to perform functional tasks at work or around the home. This often leads to associating anxiety and emotional distress with activities that aggravate their symptoms. It ends up isolating and preventing them from engaging in social activities.

"I grew up biking, fishing, and camping all around town, now I can barely stand up from a bed much less a sleeping bag," explains Ed.

This is what it's like to suffer from chronic pain. Symptoms make participating in and enjoying life incredibly difficult. Daily tasks are nearly impossible.

Too often, the situation is made worse from the extra side effects of the pain medications. Then even more medication is prescribed to help with those side effects, increasing the possibility of drug interactions. It gets to the point where your life is no longer ruled by just pain. It's now ruled by a difficult routine and pill regimen too. Specialists commonly recommend surgery but it can come with risks, sometimes complications, and there are rarely any guarantees except a minimum recovery time.

Ed put it this way, "I couldn't accept that. There had to be something else I could do besides surgery or letting pain and pills control my life."

On one sleepless night, Ed began searching online and found his answer: acupuncture. It kept showing up as an effective, drug-free treatment for chronic pain. Determined to find a local acupuncturist experienced in treating complex chronic pain conditions, Ed discovered Dr. Matthew Mann, Acupuncture Physician at St. Pete AIM.

Dr. Mann has successfully treated difficult-to-manage, chronic pain cases. He uses the time-tested science of acupuncture and integrates it with proven modern medical advancements that encourage healing and recovery.

Acupuncture is a form of Chinese medicine that has a long-proven history of being used to reduce pain. By reducing inflammation and stimulating the body to release endorphins, acupuncture can offer much-needed, effective relief for pain. Dr. Mann also skillfully layers non invasive therapies like ATP Resonance BioTherapy™ and other regenerative therapies for amplified, long-lasting results.



Sunset at the St. Pete Pier with the grandkids

"I feel great! The good days far outnumber the bad. We even went out to the pier with the grandkids. Dr. Mann helped me get back on my feet. I took Jo dancing and now she's been telling all our friends to try acupuncture."

If you're looking for a doctor and a practice that not only understands your diagnosis but also has a proven solution for chronic pain, look no further than St. Pete AIM.

Ed describes the St. Pete AIM clinic almost as enthusiastically as he does Dr. Mann's treatments, "Even Jo loves it here while waiting on me!"

Additional information about Dr. Mann and his integrative treatments can be found by visiting [www.stpAIM.com](http://www.stpAIM.com) or call 727-235-0435 to schedule a consultation and learn more.





# On Flora and Florida: 'Father Gary' Holds Court



Gary and his wife, Lynne

Cathy Salustri

Spending an afternoon with Gary Mormino is like going down a rabbit hole of all things Florida – starting with his garden.

“Scratch a Sicilian,” he says, “and you’ll find a peasant.” With that, he’s crouching over his garden, talking about various plants and their personalities, when he planted them, and then, perhaps, a related tale about an uncle or cousin. Since moving here 19 years ago as part of USF’s effort to boost its St. Petersburg campus, Mormino has turned his fenced garden in Old Northeast into a Sicilian’s paradise.

Where to start with “Father Gary,” as some former students affectionately call him? He’s not a priest; he’s a Florida scholar, although, just this moment, with his hands in the dirt, it’s hard to picture him as a staid academic, droning on about citations and literature reviews. It’s not hard to picture him drinking a cortadito, clad in a guayabera shirt, playing checkers outside a cafeteria and talking about the latest bolita-related murder.

But this is Old Northeast in 2022, not Ybor City in 1922 – though Father Gary’s equally comfortable in both worlds. His life’s work thus far embodies writings on the rich histories of Ybor City immigrants; Florida’s transformation from subtropical frontier into sunshine-soaked paradise that tempts more than 130 million visitors a year; and co-founding a program of distinction at the University of Florida, St. Petersburg. His next book, *Dreams in the New Century: Instant Cities, Shattered Hopes, and Florida’s Turning Point*, tries to make sense of 21st-century Florida.

Sporting a Columbia fishing shirt instead of a guayabera, he leads me out

of his garden to meander to Uptown’s Flatbread & Butter, where we drink coffee and talk about Old Northeast, Florida, and countless other things.

“That reminds me of a story,” he says more than once over the course of the afternoon. This is, as his students would say, “classic Gary.”

“He’ll have a story and a historical fact for everything, anything, anywhere and that’s an inspiring trait,” says Joey Vars, a local historian. Conversations with Mormino evoke memories of the ’90s classic, *Mr. Show*, where one skit segued into the next, so logically and so seamlessly that, at the end of an hour, you hadn’t realized you’d even left the first topic, but here you were, 77 topics away. Father Gary’s mind can barely contain not only the things he *knows*, but the things he’s *done*.

The conversation moves from the history of Round Lake to the time Patrick Smith, author of the Florida frontier classic, *A Land Remembered*, passed out – after a little too much, ahem, frontier juice – in Mormino’s arms. He carried Smith back to his hotel room. Mormino laughs at the story, but confesses he’s never been the biggest fan of Smith’s work.

“I’m a Marjorie fan,” he says. He means, of course, the Florida author who also wrote mostly fictional tales of the Florida wilderness: Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. In between talk of Jono Miller’s tome about the cabbage palm, he explains how his passion for Florida and its history brought him to Old Northeast.

We start with his 2003 arrival, when he moved here to create one of five “Programs of Distinction,” designed to help boost what Provost Ralph Wilcox called a “starving” USF St. Petersburg. Alongside professor Ray Arsenault, the duo created the Florida Studies Program, an interdisciplinary MLA program.

“You could go back in time to 2003 and most people would say, ‘There’s no way it will work,’” Mormino says. Now, though, he adds, “Most people will say it’s had the greatest impact.” The aforementioned Miller, of cabbage palm notoriety, is a graduate, and several alums of the boutique graduate program, he notes, have published books about Florida.

USF houses the program in the Snell House, an historic home moved to campus from 106 2nd Avenue North. It’s more reminiscent of something you’d find on campus at the University of



Gary Mormino holding court in Old Northeast

Tampa or Flagler College than at a public school. Since its inception, it’s produced not only published authors, but historians and community leaders. It attracts people as passionate about Florida as Mormino.

To get the nascent graduate program off the ground, the Morminos would have to move from Temple Terrace to St. Petersburg. Gary and his wife, Lynne, looked at houses separately, agreeing to choose only three, from which they’d pick their new home. When the time came, one stood out for them both: their current home at the corner of 2nd Street and 10th Avenue North.

“We both loved the house,” he says. Rehabbed just before they bought it, neighbors told the Morminos stories of the former owners using toothbrushes to remove paint. They bought just before the first real estate boom of the 21st century. “The neighborhood was pretty good,” he remembers, and as Father Gary turned his attention to the burgeoning Florida Studies program, students flocked to him.

“I met Gary a few years after I’d been assigned his book, *The Immigrant World of Ybor City*, in college. So, I knew that he was a brilliant historian who wrote with insight and compassion,” says Monica Kile, one of the first program graduates who now lives in Old Northeast. “What I wasn’t prepared for was how charming he would be, in a disarming, absent-minded professor kind of way. His love for his chosen

subject of Florida history was infectious, and he brought everyone along for the ride, showing up one day with fresh-squeezed orange juice from a local grove, and the next with a hand-picked clipping on a subject he knew interested you. He made all of his students love Florida as much as he did.”

Mormino would walk to campus, where he adorned the massive desk in his equally massive first-floor Snell House office with printouts of microfilm newspaper clippings; decades of Florida history, documented by legions of Florida reporters, unearthed after daily searches at the campus microfilm machines. When Kahwa opened a coffee shop at the edge of Old Northeast, he made it a stop on his walks, and, in 2012, had at least one student defend her thesis at the shop’s sidewalk table.

When Mormino retired from USF, he moved the clippings and books to his home office, the detached studio behind his home. Today, the office looks much like his office at USF once did, and it seems the only difference retirement has made for him. He still teaches; in addition to teaching graduate seminars for the Florida Studies program, he occasionally lectures for OLLI at Eckerd, most recently about how historians can reconstruct history using clippings. He continues to publish and that, he says, is when his garden really flourishes: “It’s good,” he says, “when I’m struggling with transitional sentences.”

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# The Gift of Art: Finding What Inspires Mom and Dad



Bayou Anchorage by Richard Whalen



Earrings by Karen Kozak in the ArtLofts



Eric Folsom in the ArtLofts



Chevron necklace by Julie Dye



Jewelry by Renee Davis in the ArtLofts



Artist Julie Dye in her studio

**Brandy Stark**

As the warmer months come along, so do two family favorite holidays: Mother's and Father's Day. And while it may be daunting to find gifts for some of the most important people in our lives, we locals are fortunate to live in one of the best centers for arts and culture in Florida.

Terry Marks, the CEO of the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance, couldn't agree more. As a member of one of the premier arts organizations in this area, she notes that there are many different ways to show love to parents this year. Take, for example, the visual arts. "Wearable art might be a great idea," she says, "such as jewelry or handmade fabric work."

Based on her belief that everything

we wear should impart life, business owner and jewelry designer Julie Dye says wearable treasures enable people to blossom and shine. In her studio at ArtLofts, she creates highly personal necklaces, bracelets and rings designed to express individuality.

"A great way to get ideas...would be to attend an art festival, [like] Saturday Morning Market," Dye notes, adding

that taking your parent on a trip beforehand could prove useful. They might point out art that they like, "and then you will have some ideas for which artist to go to. If you plan ahead, you can even have something custom created, which is my favorite type of gift to give."

Marks also recommends finding what your parent is drawn to. She describes watching an older gentleman



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To my 577 clients I've served over the last 10 years, THANK YOU from the bottom of my heart for trusting me with this important chapter in your life. To my family and friends who have cheered me on to sell over \$228.7M, I wouldn't be here if it weren't for your support. I am so so grateful.

**HERE'S TO 10 MORE YEARS.**

**Kaitlyn Kellin**  
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 Kaitlyn.Kellin@compass.com



at an art show who was drawn to a painting of an ocean scene, overlooked by an empty lifeguard stand. He said he didn't know why he was so struck by the image, but that he saw both the potential and the mystery of the work. A gift that captures the imagination, she says, is always welcome.

Richard Whalen, who also has a studio at ArtLofts, uses his wisdom as a father of three to consider what to purchase. "I do a lot of seascapes, landscapes, and cityscapes, which I love, love, love to do, and while both men and women buy them, men do seem especially drawn to them," he says. "But, I would be sure to ask any parent what kind of subject matter that they like... and then surprise them with one!"

If your parent isn't into wearable or visual art, there are other inspiring options. Marks suggests checking out performance art, such as a trip to the symphony or a local play. In the Bay area, performance venues abound, with something just about any parent would love – from small-scale productions to big shows.

Michael Roberts, artistic administrator of the nonprofit Saint Petersburg Opera Company, notes that a special event, like their Moulin Rouge-themed annual fundraiser featuring French food, drink, and entertainment, might fit the bill as the perfect gift experience.

For both parents, he offers a viewing at the Palladium of the *Daughter of the Regiment*, a "really hilarious opera written by Francois Roussillon. It's about a baby girl who is found and raised by a French regiment out in the mountains.

Throughout the opera, which is sung in French but that has English dialogue, we find out who she really is. It's quite delightful."

Of course, "let's not forget literature," Marks says. "Books are a personal thing." Local bookstores abound with helpful staff who can help you find just the right gift for your book-loving parent.

"We think that signed books make excellent choices," says Candice Anderson, co-owner of Tomolo Books. "We can also match books for potential purchase based upon the descriptions that patrons give of their parents. It's one of the best reasons to support local independent bookstores!"

Attending one of the upcoming Second Saturday Art Walks in St. Pete gives the public access to multiple art and cultural venues across the city. It also allows for time to view various works and meet artists and performers from our community. There are walks on the Saturdays before each holiday this year.

For those wanting to do a little homework before hitting the sidewalks, Marks recommends the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance website with pages, such as Curate St. Pete, that feature virtual tours of local art studios. The section on Member Moments offers interviews with creators from various backgrounds for a personalized touch.

"Sometimes when I purchase art," says Marks, "I'm attracted to the story of the individual who made it." ♦

*For more on the suggestions in this article, visit [stpeteartsalliance.org](http://stpeteartsalliance.org), [saturdaymorningmarket.com](http://saturdaymorningmarket.com), [stpeteopera.org](http://stpeteopera.org) and [theartlofts.com](http://theartlofts.com).*



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# Putting the Recreation Back into Shore Acres Rec Center

Brandy Stark

A hub for the Northeast neighborhoods, Shore Acres Recreation Center is getting a makeover – from the ground up.

“The Shore Acres Rec Center is the last center to be renovated,” says Brian Simonson, supervisor of the center. “The community has been awaiting this for a long time.”

The wait looks to be worth it. The new space is impressive, with the recently opened building spanning 20,924 square feet. The structure is refreshingly modern with an L-shaped floor pattern and, in keeping with Floridians’ love of all things sunshine, tall windows fill the walls, letting in the light without the heat. One part of the second floor even creates an overhang, which allows for a bit of outdoor space with shade.

The new building also features something that was missing from the original Shore Acres Rec Center, built in 1964: a gymnasium. Located on the second floor, the unique placement of the gymnasium was planned as “our overall footprint has limited space,” Simonson explained. This will also



protect the gym from flooding.

The new, open courts create a great place to play basketball and the increasingly popular pickleball. A multipurpose green space invites visitors outside, and new classrooms and multipurpose rooms have also been opened to the public.

“We now have rental play space for events, such as birthday parties, baby

showers, local meetings, and more,” says Simonson. Current classes include Tai Kwan Do, dog obedience, yoga, and a Stitch-and-Sew course that includes lessons on quilting. Plans are in place to start new summer programs for elementary and middle school children as well.

In keeping with the city’s mission to promote arts, Shore Acres has installed



the interactive art piece, *Tidal*. The rectangular glass-like work is self-illuminated, and it responds to user interaction. As explained by creators, The Urban Conga, on their Instagram posting featuring the piece, “As one walks by the work, each unit begins to react to their movements by lighting up to showcase a series of perforations translated from tidal patterns of the

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area. This playful interaction allows the user to see how their actions can cause a reaction.”

For the youngsters and the young at heart, there is a new, covered playground on site, complete with brightly colored blue-and-yellow equipment. Kids can burn off energy running up stairs, enjoying swings, slides, tunnels, and monkey bars. There is even a small rock-climbing wall.

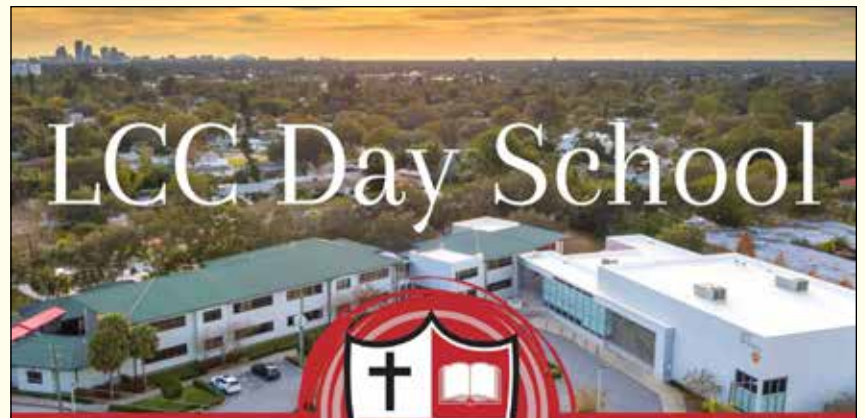
“We’re extremely happy of the outcome and grateful for the collaboration between the City of St. Petersburg’s Parks and Recreation Department, the Shore Acres Civic Association, and Mayor Kriseman and his team,” said Simonson.

Though much of the center is completed, the final phase of construction is currently underway: the swimming pool. This is an important part of the center, as Shore Acres will become the first hybrid campus, integrating both a pool and the recreation center at the same site. To accommodate this, Shore Acres has its own aquatics department, and will feature future programs in both aquatics

and recreation, with plenty of space for classes and fun with its six swimming lanes and two spiral waterslides. The city plans to officially open the new pool over Memorial Day weekend.

“Our primary goal is to be able to serve and meet the needs of the community,” said Simonson. “With the new center we’ll be able to serve more children in our before and after school programs and during school breaks.”

More at [stpeteparksrec.org/shoreacresrec](http://stpeteparksrec.org/shoreacresrec).



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# NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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## ST. PETE'S JEWEL ON TAMPA BAY

Rick Carson, editor • rickcarson1@gmail.com



### Spreading Joy

Summer is approaching and the butterflies are fluttering about at

566 13th Avenue NE. Susanne Kneeland's love for butterflies inspired her to spread their "JOY" while they spread their wings in her front yard butterfly garden. The vibrant colors of Monarchs, Julias, Skippers, Cloudless Sulphurs, Swallowtails, and Gold Fritillaries add beauty to the neighborhood, while these gardens give



the butterflies a safe spot to lay eggs and pollinate plants.

Susanne and her husband Paul moved

here from Annapolis in 2018 when they fell in love with the diversity of Old Northeast architecture, the waterfront, and downtown. So on your next stroll, make sure to pass along a warm welcome to our new neighbors and maybe spot a butterfly ready to take flight. Visit [tampabaybutterflyfoundation.org](http://tampabaybutterflyfoundation.org) to learn more about protecting our butterflies and how to start your own certified butterfly garden.

~ Sharon Kantner



### Quarterly Neighborhood Meeting

The March meeting of the neighborhood association took place on Monday, March 21, beginning at 7pm, at Westminster Palms. President John Johnson reported that the Candlelight Tour of Homes brought in approximately \$18,000, and he presented a check for \$4,565 to the Tampa Bay SPCA Veterinary Center and Pet Hospital, chosen as the local non-profit to receive a percentage of the proceeds. The guest speaker was Lisset Hanewicz, the newly-elected City Council member representing District 4. She spoke as a person who served in a neighborhood association before joining the Council and therefore is very understanding of the types of issues we face: zoning, affordable housing, and homeless problems. The audience numbered about 50 with 18 persons attending via Zoom. The next quarterly meeting will be on Monday, June 20 at 7pm with plans to hear about what is taking place with our waterfront parks.



special toddler section for the littlest children as well as a bigger area for the older kids. The crowd was joyous as the annual Easter Egg Hunt had been cancelled the past two years due to COVID. Adults enjoyed the morning as much as the children; it was refreshing to once again watch the children squeal with delight as they were greeted by the Easter Bunny himself while enjoying the playground and snacks.



Special thanks are in order for HONNA Board members Onni Jordan and Anna Broshears, who supervised neighborhood children as they stuffed the more than 1,400 plastic eggs with surprises for the annual event. St. Pete High School students Justin Jordan and Miles Cabral earned community service hours with this project, and they were joined by sisters Onni Grace Jordan and Sophie & Annie Cabral.

Plans are being made for the annual 4th of July Parade on Monday, July 4. While you're marking your calendar, the annual Candlelight Tour of Homes is set for Sunday, December 11.

~ Anna Broshears

### Giant Yard Sale

HONNA's annual neighborhood-wide yard sale took place on Saturday, March 19, with 42 homeowners having signed up to participate, and dozens more taking advantage of all the shoppers looking for good deals. Many thanks to our neighbors who put in a lot of hard work and effort to make the event so successful!

Special thanks to Joanne Stottlemeyer and Tim Mahler from the Louise Graham Regeneration Center for providing a document shredder truck for HONNA members. The not-for-profit organization provides employment for developmentally disabled adults through the recycling and sale of paper products. Over 600 pounds of paper was shredded that morning.

Thanks also to Goodwill for providing a collection truck to accept leftover items that residents weren't able to sell, and the semi was completely full by 3pm. HONNA would also like to say thank you to the wonderful staff and residents of



### Clean Up

In collaboration with Keep Pinellas Beautiful, HONNA organized two dozen volunteers on Saturday morning, April 2 to clean portions of North Shore Park, the bay along the seawall, and the nearby streets and alleys. In three hours, almost 400 pounds of trash was collected, much of which was small items – including lots of cigarette butts. If you missed this chance to help clean the Old Northeast, watch for another such opportunity in the fall.

~ Doug O'Dowd

### Picnic in the Park

HONNA invited neighbors to show up at 17th Avenue NE and North Shore Drive with blankets and picnic baskets for an informal Picnic in the Park on Saturday afternoon, February 26. Some 50-or-so people showed up over a period of several hours to enjoy the beautiful weather and good times.



Westminster Palms for providing space for the shredder and Goodwill truck. Your generosity is deeply appreciated by HONNA and neighbors in the ONE.

~ Anna Broshears



### Easter Egg Hunt

On Saturday morning, April 16, area children gathered at the Northeast Exchange Club Coffee Pot Park to meet the Easter Bunny and hunt for 1,400 hidden plastic eggs – three of which were "golden" and entitled the finders to special prizes. There was a







### Porch Parties

HONNA makes it easy for neighbors to celebrate with one another on the third Friday of most months with the ever-popular Porch Parties. Friends and neighbors gather at a neighbor's home for fun and lively conversation. On Friday, April 15, John and Anna Broshears hosted that month's evening event (pictured), which was BYOB; light refreshments were provided. The May Porch Party will be held on Friday, May 20; check honna.org for details. There are no Porch Parties in June or July, and the August PP is tentatively planned for August 19 at Sunken Gardens and Great Explorations.

~ Anna Broshears



### Park Swing

The new swing recently installed in North Shore Park near the Sundial was officially dedicated on April 20. The ribbon cutting (attended by three City Council members) noted the partnership between the City's Parks & Recreation Department, the Majeed Foundation, and the Waterfront Parks Foundation. Kamal and Najla Maheed (third and fourth from the right), who are St. Pete residents, are eager to support more such swings and local projects. Thanks to all responsible for this delightful enhancement to the waterfront. Let's hear it for more swings! ●



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

Visit honna.org and become a HONNA member to receive periodic informative email announcements. Volunteer for a project, program or event (such as the Candlelight Tour of Homes, Trunk or Treat and Porch Parties).

### Ways To Stay Connected:

- Visit [honna.org](http://honna.org)
- Become a HONNA member. You'll receive periodic informative email announcements. [honna.org/get-involved](http://honna.org/get-involved)
- Volunteer for a project, program, or event (the Candlelight Tour of Homes, Trunk or Treat, Porch Parties, Crime Watch). Contact Anna Broshears at [abroshe56@gmail.com](mailto:abroshe56@gmail.com).
- Follow Historic Old Northeast Forever at [historicoldnortheast-forever.org](http://historicoldnortheast-forever.org). HONF works "to preserve and protect our special neighborhood" (HONF is not affiliated with HONNA).
- HONNA offers a variety of flags that you can purchase to display your love for the Old Northeast. The four choices come in several color combinations: hunter green, burgundy, patriotic, and diversity. You can find them at [honna.org/shop](http://honna.org/shop). ●

## OUR MISSION

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

## HONNA'S SHINING STARS: BEFORE & AFTER

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



Here is the STAR for May: 311 27th Avenue N; August West Management.

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



## ONE Properties Threatened with Demolition

### Westminster Sanctuary and School, an Historic Landmark in Old Northeast

Belleair Development is proposing to redevelop the former school building and apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the structure for large single-family homes. Their plan includes preserving the Sanctuary if they determine it is economically feasible.

The Sanctuary has been a cornerstone of our community since 1925 and the school since the 1950s. For many years the property has served as a "community center" for the neighborhood. HONNA meetings and annual events have been held there, further strengthening the community's relationship to the property. The historic designation as a local landmark reflects the importance of this relationship as well as its architectural significance.

Adaptive re-use of a landmark property provides a degree of certainty about what can be located on the site. But if Belleair succeeds in gaining permission to demolish this important Old Northeast landmark instead of re-purposing it, the result will likely be homes almost twice the size and scale of the surrounding homes and in a style incompatible with the existing houses. Many residents have already voiced their concerns.



The HONNA Board does not support Belleair's desire to demolish the landmark and construct large, single-family homes. We strongly believe Belleair should be required to retain the structures and re-purpose them, possibly creating approximately 10-12 apartments within the existing structures and including off-street parking on the site. See below for how you can help protect this important landmark.

### Redevelopment of 100 23rd Avenue NE in the Granada Terrace Historic District

Canopy Builders, the current owner of the property, is planning to seek a COA for demolition of this non-contributing property for new construction.

This house is an important resource for the District. Its construction in 1941 was part of an important second wave of development for the Granada Terrace neighborhood. Had the designation occurred more recently – so that the home in question had been at least 50 years of age at the time of designation – the structure would have been designated as contributing to the district, making its demolition more difficult.

In order to be entitled to a COA, the developer must establish that no reasonable beneficial use can be made of the existing home. City preservation staff will review the proposal and prepare a report and recommendation for the Community Planning and Preservation Commission (CPPC). After holding a public hearing, the CPPC will determine whether to grant or deny the request for demolition.

If demolition is approved by the Commission, Canopy will then need to get a COA for the new construction. The new structure will have to meet compatibility requirements so that it fits in with the size, mass and scale of its neighbors. Keep in mind, however, that the current code would permit a house much larger than the existing one.

### Redevelopment of 321 28th Avenue North and 2831 4th Street North (former Alcove Assisted Living Facility)

Belleair Development is proposing to rezone the property at 321 28th Avenue North in order to demolish the existing house for a parking lot. In addition, they are requesting approval of a special exception for a drive-through to service a Panera restaurant to be located at 2831 4th Street North.

Neighbors on 28th and 29th Avenues are adamantly opposed to both of these proposals. They have cited the following negative impacts which include loss of privacy, noise pollution, light pollution, air quality, traffic congestion, loss of tree canopy, exhaust from idling cars at the drive-through and dangerous ingress/egress located on 29th Avenue North. for the drive-through. HONNA supports the residents in opposing both portions of the proposal.

### We urge Old Northeast residents to voice their concerns about these upcoming redevelopment proposals

(Note that none of these proposals has been officially submitted to the City; the developers have selectively contacted HONNA and individual homeowners.) Please e-mail the following City departments with your comments, and copy HONNA ([honnapresident@gmail.com](mailto:honnapresident@gmail.com)): [Derek.Kilborn@stpete.org](mailto:Derek.Kilborn@stpete.org) (Manager, Urban Planning and Historic Preservation Division); [Elizabeth.Abernethy@stpete.org](mailto:Elizabeth.Abernethy@stpete.org) (Director of Planning and Development); [Dave.Goodwin@stpete.org](mailto:Dave.Goodwin@stpete.org) (Zoning Department); [HONNAPresident@gmail.com](mailto:HONNAPresident@gmail.com) (John Johnson, President HONNA).

~ Robin Reed



# Gretchen Warren: From Ballerina to Blooms

Jon Kile

The unassuming house at 2nd Street and 27th Avenue North was once the residence of Pinellas County's wealthiest man. But he isn't the most interesting person to call this shaded corner home. Gretchen Warren is a woman who takes on her passions with a single-minded goal of excellence. From her life as a young dancer on some of the world's biggest stages, to her second careers as a costume designer and a professor, to a champion in the world of flowers. It was, in fact, her latest passion that brought her to the Old Northeast.

But Warren's story starts with her upbringing in middle-class Princeton, New Jersey. She was the oldest of four children. Her father was a professor, though not at the town's renowned Ivy League institution; Herman Ward trained English teachers at Trenton State Teacher's College. He was once the state's Poet Laureate and creativity flourished in the home.

"He wrote a poem every single day," Warren recalled over coffee on her patio surrounded by orchids. "He loved art. He instilled a love of classical music and practiced his violin religiously. We

weren't rich, but we felt rich in the environment. My mother tended a huge and magnificent flower and vegetable garden alongside our house. It fed us year round. Fresh veggies in the summer and at other times from all the fruit she canned – peaches, plums, apples from my father's trees – that filled the shelves in our cellar. My love of gardening and flowers definitely came from my mother."

The family also loved to travel, and Warren's life changed when her father was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to study in Iceland. While she was initially dismayed to leave her hometown to spend a year of high school abroad, it was an experience she cherished. A talented dancer, Warren continued her training at the National Theatre of Iceland. But when their time in Iceland ended, she shocked her family when she decided to join several of her elite Icelandic colleagues at the prestigious Royal Ballet School in London.

Warren spent 15 months in the Royal Ballet's program for international students. "It completely changed my life," she said of her time training at the school where she regularly crossed paths with legends like Soviet sensation



Photos courtesy of Gretchen Warren

Warren dancing in *The Nutcracker* with Pennsylvania Ballet 1970



Warren working in her Cape Cod garden

Rudolf Nureyev and Britain's Margot Fonteyn. "We performed with the opera ballet, and I had Franco Zeffirelli directing me and wore costumes by Lila De Nobili. I had no idea who they were at the time." Indeed, Zeffirelli's illustrious career in stage and film direction included an Oscar nomination for his adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*. De Nobili was known for her work with French *Vogue*, once having Warren photographed for the magazine in an elaborate satin costume De Nobili designed for *Rigoletto* that weighed 30 pounds.

Returning to the United States, Warren earned a scholarship at the school of The National Ballet of Washington, D.C. under the direction of Frederick Franklin, an icon of twentieth century ballet who lived to be 98. As she finished her schooling, she was unsure of her future when she was offered a contract with the newly formed Pennsylvania Ballet where she spent 11 years, eight as a soloist. The company was in its heyday, and they performed in venues from coast to coast.

But professional dance careers can be painfully short. Beset by injury, Warren stepped away from performing and opened a costume design company in New York. She laughs about the struggle of starting a business. To deal with financial woes, she began to teach ballet again. This led to her being offered the position of Ballet Mistress for American Ballet Theatre II (ABT II) where she spent five years coaching some of America's most talented future

ballerinas while continuing to hone her creativity with costume design. At that time, Mikhail Baryshnikov was the Artistic Director of American Ballet Theatre, and Warren remembers with fondness the many opportunities she had to observe him in rehearsals and performances.

Her travels on tour with ABT II brought her through Tampa where she made contacts who later reached out to her when the USF dance program had a faculty opening. She spent the next 26 years there as a professor. Aside from the intensity and commitment required of teaching in the collegiate setting, there were two things that defined her time at USF. One was the book she authored, *Classical Ballet Technique*, a comprehensive volume containing more than 3000 photographs of ballet positions that was published through the University Press of Florida. Creating the book was a huge challenge. Nothing like it existed in the dance world, and it quickly became popular in schools across the country. To this day, it is still an essential tool for ballet instructors.

The second project came from a seed planted by her father. She applied for a Fulbright Fellowship to work and study Aboriginal dance in Australia. Upon her arrival, the plans she set into motion were dashed when the dance company she planned to study ceased operation. The story of how she adapted to adversity, culminating in a unique collaboration with Native American and Australian Aboriginal dancers, is the main subject of a memoir that she is writing.



Warren could be forgiven if she didn't pursue any hobbies. But an artist at heart with a passion for beauty, she got involved in growing roses while she lived in Temple Terrace. It spawned an immersion into the world of rose competitions. Observing how flowers consumed her time, her partner, Edward Lafontaine, asked her if it was something she'd always have the energy to do. She said she'd give it up the day she won "Queen of Show" at the Tampa Rose Show – which she accomplished in 2009.

Roses led Warren to her next passion, and to her home in St. Petersburg. She became curious about ikebana – the art of Japanese flower arranging. She connected with a master teacher in St. Pete, making the 150-mile round-trip trek twice a week from her home in Dade City. Eventually she rented a garage apartment on 25th Avenue to reduce the travel days. Walking every street and alley, clipping overhanging branches to practice arranging, she was drawn to the large oaks, lush foliage and variety of architecture. She convinced

Ed to move. They found their home in the Old Northeast on their first day looking and set about adding a master bedroom and garage, and turning the landscape into a veritable botanical garden of tropical specimens.

Warren recently chaired the annual exhibition of Ikebana International Chapter 65 here in St. Petersburg. And, tireless as she is, she enjoys teaching Silver Sneakers fitness classes to students who might not all know that they're learning their moves from a highly accomplished ballerina.

"I'm positive that had I not become a dancer, I would have become some kind of artist," says Warren. "I actually had much more natural talent in art class than in ballet class. So, it wasn't surprising that after retiring from dance, I went into costume design, and then after retiring from USF, that I went to ikebana. For me it's like making sculpture with organic materials, and I can't imagine living without it. It's just me. I have to do something creative every day. I always have." ♦



Warren and koala in Australia 1997



Warren and her partner, Ed



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# Poet Peter McNamara Calls Old Northeast Home

Abby Baker

It's rare to catch Peter McNamara without a pen and notebook nearby. At 84, McNamara has published 10 collections of poetry in varying styles, though he says he didn't really "become" a poet – he's just written poetry his entire life.

McNamara's most recent collection, *Eating Up Light*, was published by St. Andrews Press this January. Like his other works, it's a blend of poems as natural as jotted down consciousness. While some poets establish a theme in their collections, McNamara says he's never done that.

"I don't want to say [the theme is] philosophy," McNamara said. "But I'll call it the challenge of knowing what we know."

Intertwined with his writing career, McNamara spent 35 years teaching literature and a chunk of his life traveling and calling places like New York City, Mobile, Alabama, and small Vermont towns home. He's translated the poetry of Pablo Neruda, Garcia Lorca, and Blanca Castellon, and wrote a libretto for the opera East River Bridge, a choral ode for victims of AIDS for the NYC's Gay Men's Chorus. He's got stories to last a lifetime.

But long before he collected a trove of traveling tales and published works, McNamara was a young boy growing up in the same house he lives in now – a typical St. Petersburg home in the Old Northeast on 16th Avenue NE. The Taylor-McNamara family has owned the Old Northeast house since 1942. McNamara has filled the sun-dappled home of his youth with art and books to make it his own. "I don't think there are many people in this neighborhood who have lived in their home for 80 years," he said.

Today, he's the only family member left in the residence, but McNamara remembers his childhood neighborhood differently than the coffee-shop-loaded, trendy community it is now. For one, says McNamara, there was no air conditioning, and the St. Petersburg summers were "unbearable." They didn't have a car

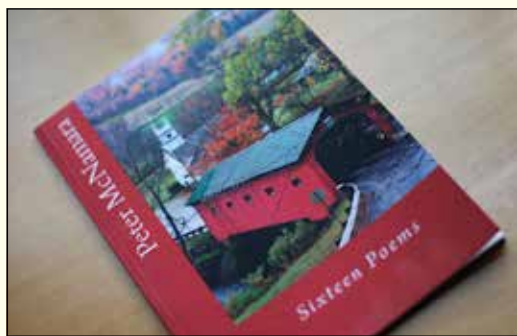


Peter McNamara is a former professor, longtime St. Petersburg resident and lifetime poet

Photos courtesy of Peter McNamara



Poet Peter McNamara in his younger, traveling days



"I don't write the kind of poetry that is fashionable now," McNamara said. "But I'm always writing."

– most people didn't, he adds – and Pinellas Park and other northern neighborhoods consisted largely of orange groves and Florida air. Young McNamara went to a high school that no longer exists, St. Paul Catholic School, which now only goes up to eighth grade. For him, the neighborhood and its small-town feel was everything at the time.

McNamara was born in Troy, New York, one of eight boys. Overwhelmed, his mother eventually sent him as a toddler to live in St. Petersburg with his aunt and her family.

"Life was different. The best way I can explain it is that we were less aware of the elaborate things that went on in the world," McNamara said. "We lived relatively simple lives, which gave you the urge to leave." It wasn't long after

high school that he moved first to Mobile for college – but also for a change of pace. Then, he lived in Milwaukee while getting his master's degree, and New Orleans for his Ph.D.

McNamara traveled, taught literature, and wrote in his notebooks, which eventually became published works. His first book, *Rhinoceros*, was published in 1966. And, like generations of artists searching for inspiration, he moved to New York City. "I needed New York, physiologically," McNamara said. "I took a sabbatical and went."

The writer spent more than five years in the city, where he wrote, taught, and briefly worked as a financial editor for a Wall Street investment office, PaineWebber & Co. It was the Big Apple in the '80s, and he was in his late

40s. "It's a city for people of a certain age," McNamara said with a smile. "Your pulse seems to increase."

Eventually, he grew tired of closing train doors and his racing pulse. It was time to move home. McNamara taught at Berkeley Preparatory School in Tampa, and St. Petersburg's Shorecrest Preparatory School. He still occasionally lectures at Eckerd College's OLLI Program, but his passion is poetry.

Early in his career, McNamara says he wrote a good deal about places and how they made him feel. He walked in nature (still does) and many of his previous works feel like a reflection of human consciousness. "Poetry, to me, is always about what the poet would like to communicate to other people," McNamara said.

Communicate what, exactly? "Something people probably already know, but they are resisting," he answered. "You're conveying thoughts that may jog people's thoughts, feelings, emotions."

McNamara's later poems are a bit less literal than his previous works, such as "that end/not end," and "Recurrent Dawn." In one poem, McNamara describes an encounter in a St. Petersburg post office where a visitor is thrown into a sense of existential dread after finding his postal code no longer exists. It's eccentric, and far from the descriptions of rural life in his earlier work. Yet the writing is still characterized by the descriptive, sometimes irreverent thought patterns that make McNamara, McNamara.

From the most recent, *Eating Up Light*, McNamara shares a quick, humorous poem from the perspective of a modern-day infant Jesus. He calls it "Jesus as a Baby Complaining Because He's at the Motel 6."

After confirming that I know what a Motel 6 is, he's quick to read it to me: "Lord, if only I could speak, not just lie on this lumpy mattress. I know we're poor, I know we're late to the census, I realize my birthday has something to do with that... but this, to land in this shabby room with its chintzy wallpaper, it's enough to make a God cry." ♦

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## New Little Free Library Comes to the Northeast



Artist Ronn Johnson and Pastor Ginny Simmons Ellis open the Little Free Library at First Presbyterian

Photos courtesy of Ronn Johnson

First Presbyterian Church is bringing books to the people with a new Little Free Library for neighbors and friends in the northeast area of St. Pete. Located near the public sidewalk at Beach Drive and 8th Avenue NE, the library features architectural elements inspired by those of the First Presbyterian Church building. Artist and church member Ronn Johnson oversaw the project from early design, to working with the builder, Dimitri Gruszka, and finally to painting the intricate artwork on the exterior of the library.

True community treasures, Little Free Libraries have become wildly popular, with scores of them sprouting up in the Bay area over the past few years. To find more places where you can take a book, or leave one, check out [littlefreelibrary.org](http://littlefreelibrary.org).

See more about the making of FPC's library at [ronnjartist.weebly.com/blog](http://ronnjartist.weebly.com/blog).



Little Free Library stewards Ronn Johnson and Mary Johnson

## Notable News

### Williams Park Bandshell Makeover?

St. Petersburg's Williams Park bandshell may soon get a makeover. The city's parks and recreation department is looking for \$1.5 million to repair and modernize the stage and facilities, which were built in 1954. A 2019 study of the site revealed nearly \$800,000 in needed repairs – including to the iconic roof panels – as well as over half a million in potential improvements.

According to St. Pete Rising, possible upgrades might be collapsible stage platforms and noise-control features, as well as improvements in handicap accessibility. The city hopes that the proposed repairs and upgrades would provide a more modern and useful space for concerts and other community events at the park, from fitness classes to festivals.

To get a better idea of what residents would like from the space, the city is working with St. Pete DNA, the downtown neighborhood association. Though still in the early stages, if it moves forward on the proposed timeline, the project will be funded by Penny for Pinellas and possible grant money, according to the city.



Williams Park Bandshell circa 1950s and today

### Summer Meals in St. Pete

It's almost summer, and while most kids look forward to vacation, summer break also means food insecurity for children who rely on school-based food programs. To help in the interim, May 31 marks the beginning of St. Petersburg Parks and Recreation's Summer Food Program.

In partnership with the Summer BreakSpot and the St. Pete Library System, the program gives free meals to kids 18 and under at multiple spots throughout the city during the summer break, including Shore Acres Rec Center. The program offers meals Monday through Friday until August 5. There is no application or registration required, and meals are completely free. Some locations serve breakfast and lunch, while other locations only serve lunch. For more information visit [stpeteparksrec.org/summerfood](http://stpeteparksrec.org/summerfood) or call 727-893-7441.



### Keeping up with Mental Health

May is Mental Health Awareness month, and the City of St. Pete has multiple resources and support if you or a loved one struggle with mental health. Healthy St. Pete, with NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, offers education and support for residents and families with mental health needs.

NAMI, the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization, is dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. They provide advocacy, education, support, and public awareness. Visit [healthystpetefl.com/mental-health-awareness](http://healthystpetefl.com/mental-health-awareness) or call the NAMI help line, 800-950-NAMI, for more.



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# Feminist Artist Creates a Community



The Crescent Lake-based artist moved to Maryland from Italy when she was 19 years old.

Abby Baker

Maria Saraceno isn't afraid to take her time. After all, it took her 14 years to complete one of her most prized pieces: a 10-foot-wide, pearl-embroidered tablecloth simply titled *The Tablecloth Project*.

But she didn't do it alone. An Italian native and resident of St. Petersburg's Crescent Lake, Saraceno has a team of close friends who aid in her art. Many of them she met while doing community art projects, where she collects stories and clothing from people, mostly women. Her creations are centered around the struggles and stories of these people, once strangers.



The pearl tablecloth is displayed at Hillsborough Community College Ybor City.



This pearl-embedded tablecloth took Maria Saraceno 14 years and over 50 connections to complete.



Saraceno's sculpture, *Misconduct*, uses pantyhose from women who have been sexually harassed.

Her St. Petersburg studio is packed with dangling birds made from women's garments, entrapping corsets, pantyhose, and pearls. She's shown her installations and sculptures in places like the Tampa Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Art in St. Petersburg, the Contemporary Art Museum in Tampa, and Florida CraftArt.

But before she was an artist, Saraceno was a 19-year-old immigrant from Italy who moved to Maryland to be with a man she met while he was visiting Italy. They are still married today, but back in 1970, she says, it wasn't easy.

"I left my parents, my friends, hardly spoke any English and had moved to another world," Saraceno said.

She raised two children and worked as a hearing specialist for 18 years in Maryland, and then in Florida. It made sense, considering her husband was an

ear-nose-and-throat doctor. But when her oldest of two children left home to go to college, she decided to go back to school and get her MFA from the University of South Florida in Tampa.

"I had a big empty spot in my heart and my home," Saraceno said. "It was something that lay dormant in me, the interest in art. So that's when my passion just exploded."

## A Piazza on St. Pete Beach

In 2004, Saraceno began her career as an issue-based community artist by simply hauling a table, four chairs, and pasta to the often-empty corner on Pass-a-Grille Way and creating a makeshift piazza.

It was the beginning of her "Spontaneous Civility" project, and her master's thesis. Every Sunday for four months, she would cook pasta for anyone who stopped. She'd hail down curious cars and stop those that strolled by for a little conversation and a bite to eat.

"I thought, 'This is a place that is always kind of empty'... in Italy, a public space is a place where people come to play cards, gather," Saraceno said. "I wanted to recreate that Italian setting here in America." She soon found that in America – especially on a desolate Florida corner near a Circle K – random kindness isn't the norm.

"I got a lot of funny looks from people wondering what the heck I was doing," Saraceno said. "It was an

unusual project." At the end of four months, the Italian cook had expanded to seven tables and was met with a crowd of eager eaters every Sunday. Still, making a community on that corner wasn't enough. She needed something physical for her thesis.

After the piazza project ended, some of the close-knit members of the piazza group stayed in touch. They met for dinners, and supported each other when there was a crisis or death. It was that group that embroidered the tablecloth with pearls.

Saraceno's friends also decorated coffee filters they used to make mugs of coffee during their meetings. Eventually, she sold each decorated filter for \$50 to benefit a scholarship at Hillsborough Community College. For Saraceno, it was full circle. She gave pasta to the community, and the community helped her give it back to students in need.

Andrea McDonald was one of those early people who stopped for a plate of pasta in 2004. McDonald, also an Italian woman, saw a hint of home in what the artist was doing. "I saw it and I loved it," McDonald said. "It was so welcoming and warm on that ugly little corner."

McDonald, among others, has participated in several of Saraceno's art projects. Her daughter, Caitlin McDonald, also joined in another of Saraceno's long-term street-corner community art projects, *Willful Encounters*.



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**Housekeepers & Hand Massages**

While living in Pass-a-Grille, Saraceno often drove by a group of Don Cesar workers waiting to catch the bus. To her, they looked tired from working for tourists in St. Pete Beach's giant pink castle all day long.

“Who are they? Where do they go home everyday?” she asked herself. So, she applied for a grant from the Pinellas Arts Council in 2006 and got her piazza table ready for *Willful Encounters*. Twice a week for four months, Saraceno – and sometimes Caitlin – would set up at the bus stop and offer hand massages with lotion and refreshments.

“Of course, people were very suspicious again,” she said. “They would question me: ‘Why are you doing this?’ I won their confidence eventually.”

She found that most of the workers were from other places – Central America, the Caribbean Islands. According to Saraceno, the Don Cesar would house four people in an apartment offsite and they would work on a contract.

She visited their apartments, collected stories, and filmed them talking about their lives. Eventually she created a sculpture in the shape of the bus stop, made from discarded Don Cesar sheets, and projected the workers' stories over it. It was displayed in Miami and also at St. Petersburg's Studio 620.

**The Garments**

It's been years since Saraceno's last street project, but she's still creating, using stories and items from people she meets. One of her more recent installations, *Mconduct*, is constructed from the pantyhose of women who've experienced sexual harassment and have openly talked about it. She enclosed colorful balls made of yarn into the stretched pantyhose, hanging long – meant to emulate male genitalia because, “the sexual harassment happened by men,” Saraceno explains. “I wanted them to be enclosed, trapped.” Like much of her work, it's a bright, playful piece with a much deeper message.

“I've experienced sexual harassment, my mother has; I've lived a lot of life, so yes, I speak from the heart,” Saraceno shared.

Her dangling birds, used in several art pieces, are created from given garments and also from clothing she purchased from the Community Action Stops Abuse (CASA) thrift shop. While the artist also creates ceramic sculptures and metal installations, using garments is a contrast for Saraceno, and she doesn't plan to stop.

“Our garments contain our essence; they have our sweat and ideas and dreams,” Saraceno said, gesturing to her bird sculpture. “Birds are meant to fly and women are meant to be free.”

*See more from Saraceno at [mariasaraceno.com/artistBio.html](http://mariasaraceno.com/artistBio.html).*

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This summer marks the 97th anniversary of that historic trial, one that has surprising St. Petersburg connections. Both Darrow and Bryan were visitors to St. Petersburg at one time or another. Bryan, who was originally from Nebraska, later became a Florida resident and was active in state politics. He is reported to have first visited St. Petersburg as the guest of real estate broker, and later mayor, Noel Mitchell around 1907 or 1908. Mitchell tried to get Bryan to make St. Petersburg his home, but the Commoner elected to live in Miami instead, where he also was an elder in the First Presbyterian Church and active in the church nationally. During his visits to St. Pete, Bryan was banqueted at the Detroit and Floronton Hotels. The Detroit is St. Pete's first building and a protected city landmark; The Floronton was demolished a few years ago.

Darrow visited St. Petersburg several times, on one occasion speaking at Williams Park where a crowd of several thousand turned out to hear him. In 1931, he addressed the local bar association and engaged in a debate on Prohibition with State Senator Don McMullen in Tampa.

During the 1920s, Christian fundamentalists argued that the texts of the Bible were literal fact, while "Modernists" advocated that the texts were subject to interpretation. At the center of this debate was the theory of evolution, as put forth principally by Charles Darwin. At its core, Darwin's theory held that species of organisms arise and develop through the natural selection of small, inherited variations that increase the individual's ability to compete and reproduce over millions of years. The theory came to be misstated that people derived from monkeys, rather than a common, early human ancestor.

In 1925, Tennessee outlawed the teaching of evolution in public schools either as fact or theory. It was declared unlawful "to teach any theory that denies the story of the Devine Creation

of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals." This action actually went beyond Bryan's personal position, which did not prohibit the teaching of evolution as theory.

The Tennessee law was soon challenged as a violation of academic freedom. John T. Scopes, a high school coach and biology teacher in the small town of Dayton, Tennessee, was asked to stand as defendant in testing the constitutionality of the law. Bryan was asked to join in support of the law

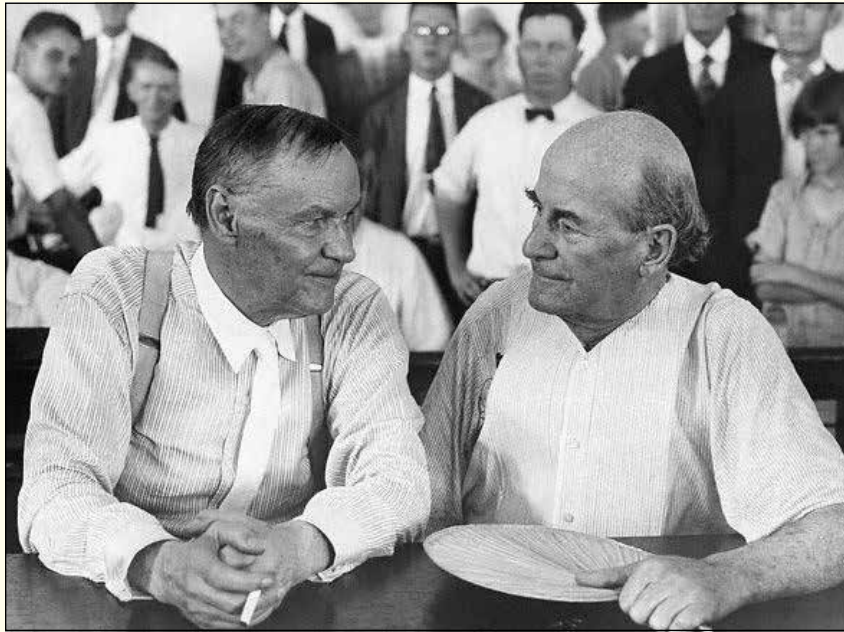
witness on the Bible, and Bryan surprisingly agreed to testify.

Darrow asked Bryan if the accounts of Jonah being swallowed by a whale and Joshua commanding the sun to stand still were to be taken literally. Bryan asserted in the affirmative, although he changed the story of the sun revolving around the earth. Asked about the age of life on earth, Bryan asserted that only fish and those aboard Noah's ark were older than 2348 B.C., the assumed date of the Great Flood. But when Darrow asked if Bryan believed the earth was

called the *St. Petersburg Daily Times*, predecessor of the *Tampa Bay Times*. William L. Straub was the *Times* great editor and wrote many of the paper's editorials. While the *Times*, like papers across the country, splashed the Scopes Trial across its front pages and reported developments in detail, we have not been able to find a Straub editorial addressing this clash between fundamentalism and evolution. However, there are numerous, lengthy columns entitled "Today's Feature" on the opinion page written by a mysterious "Sigma Chi." It turns out that Sigma Chi was a Presbyterian minister by the name of Dr. David Dwight Bigger, who wrote for the *Times* for 17 years starting out as a sportswriter and evolving into an opinion columnist on local, national, and world affairs. He followed the 11-day trial closely and wrote several columns about it. His accounts, written in the folksy style of Mark Twain, Bret Harte, and Artemus Ward are engaging:

"It is in the air – a bug – folks are breathing evolution, smelling evolution, seeing evolution – and land sakes! – only the totally deaf are to be felicitated on not hearing the echoes of the strife with reference to evolution... Seems like the varmint evolution had gripped the whole American nation by the ears – and won't let go." Commenting on Bryan and his noted oratorical abilities, Sigma Chi wrote, "Now he's up to his amplifying throat in an altercation with reference to the determination of fundamentalism or modernism as a theological proposition." Regarding Scopes, he wrote, "The big frog in the evolution puddle is not Bryan, not Darrow, not the presiding judge, not Darwin, not evolution nor the monkey – it is the Schoolmaster Scopes." He took a sympathetic view of Scopes, noting that he taught "what he found in his books, as were authoritatively in use in the little school in which he was pedagoging."

Sigma Chi lampoons Darrow, summarizing his account of the evolution of man: "You had to go back millions and billions of years... Nothing there was



Clarence Darrow and William Jennings Bryan sitting together at the Scopes Monkey Trial

along with other counsel. Darrow served as co-counsel for Scopes' defense. The defense did not deny that Scopes taught evolution – using a state-approved textbook that included brief explanations of evolution and Darwin's role in its development – but argued that teaching evolution did not necessarily involve denying the divine creation of man. The judge denied a defense request to call expert witnesses on the issue, but written versions of their testimony were permitted. Darrow then called Bryan himself as an expert

made in six days, Bryan replied, "Not six days of twenty-four hours." He went on to say it was not important whether God made the earth in six days or in "six years or in six million years or in six hundred million years." This was a startling statement for one defending a literal reading of the Bible. The judge ordered Bryan's testimony to be stricken, and Scopes was found guilty and fined \$100 (approximately \$1,500 today).

How the Scopes Trial was perceived in St. Petersburg is of course mirrored in the local papers, notably what was then

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Clarence Darrow, at the Scopes trial, was America's most famous trial lawyer in the 1920s. He visited St. Petersburg on several occasions, once speaking to a huge crowd at Williams Park.

*Clarence Darrow*



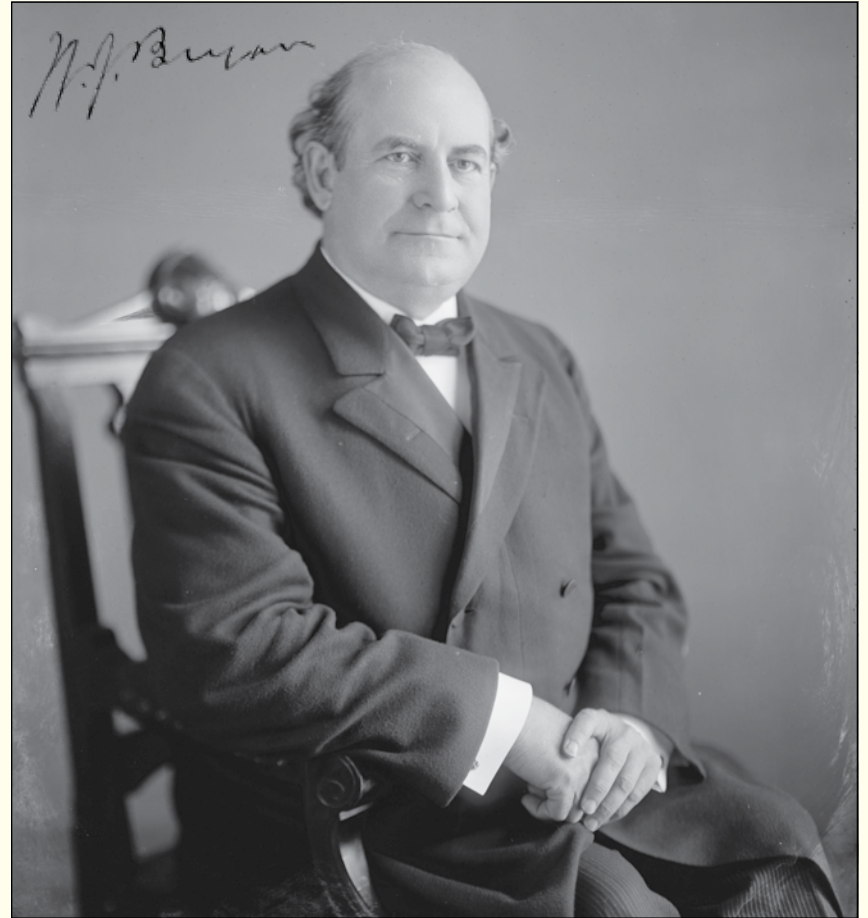
"John Thomas Scopes" by Henry Major, 1925, pencil on paper, from the National Portrait Gallery



John T. Scopes was a high school coach & teacher who challenged the 1925 Tennessee law banning the teaching of human evolution.

down to brass tacks that there can be no antagonism between revealed religion and true science – but not everything that is palmed off for science.” ●

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.



William Jennings Bryan defended the state of Tennessee's ban on teaching evolution in the Scopes Monkey Trial. St. Petersburg real estate broker and mayor Noel Mitchell tried to entice Bryan to make his home in St. Petersburg.



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# A Girl Scout Adventure



Jaidyn demonstrating the science lab microscope



Ally Decker and her mother, troop leader Brittany Decker, with co-leader Holly Rotlewicz and daughter Sasha



The media scouts at Camp Wai Lani



Janan Talafer

Growing up in a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio, Girl Scout camp was the highlight of my summer. Two weeks away from home living in the woods was a dream come true. It's where I learned to sail a Sunfish, paddle a canoe, and never leave my sleeping bag unzipped after finding daddy longlegs taking a nap inside. Camp is also where I landed my first journalism "job" as a reporter for the little newspaper we published each week.

When an invitation came from the Girl Scouts of West Central Florida to visit Camp Wai Lani in Palm Harbor, enjoy some of the activities and sample this year's lineup of Girl Scout Cookies, I jumped at the chance.

Kendra Abraham, the camp director and a former Boyd Hill Nature Preserve park ranger, said Wai Lani's summer program is highly sought after by Girl Scouts from throughout the Southeast since it's one of the few camps with direct waterfront access. Founded in 1971, Wai Lani is a beautiful oasis with 47 acres of natural Florida woodland and a small sandy beach on the shore of St. Joseph Sound, perfect for water sports.

Rather than tents, there are cabins, along with a swimming pool, enormous climbing tower with zip line and a marine science lab for the girls to work on their STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) skills. The camp is not just open in the summer; it operates year-round, with Kendra and staff overseeing a variety of programs.

On a recent media visit, Girl Scouts Jaidyn, Zoe, Shea, Violet, Sloan and Jada escorted us and served as spokespersons to promote the Girl Scout experience. Ranging in age from early grade school to high school, the girls are members of the West Central Florida Girl Scout Media Team, which gives them the chance to hone their public-speaking and leadership skills while interacting with local media and at community events.

Our first stop was the arts and crafts room where Shea, from Troop 33018 in Hillsborough County, took the lead helping us pick paint to decorate tiles. Next up was the science lab, with a quick demonstration at the microscope by Jaidyn, a budding scientist from Troop 50534 in Pasco County. Her mom, Fawn, co-leader of the troop, was along for the tour and described the range of activities the girls engage in, including learning to use a saw, screwdriver, hammer, as well as paint and varnish a wood-working project. I was impressed.

From there, we stopped at the climbing tower and zip line, which we politely declined to experience. But we were happy to hear about a nearby obstacle course and tire swing made from tires fished out of the Gulf of Mexico, an ocean conservation project that won a local troop a Girl Scout Gold Award. An additional camp ocean conversation project – a small batch of mangroves growing in an outdoor container – is part of a partnership with the Florida Aquarium, Kendra explained. Last stop was the boat house to pick up life jackets and kayaks for a quick paddle – an activity for which I earned my first Girl Scout kayaking badge.

The day ended with the girls offering samples of their iconic cookies. It's always a hard choice, but according to Stephanie Adamo, vice president of marketing and communications for the Girl Scouts of West Central Florida, Thin Mints continue to be one of best sellers. Stephanie noted that 84 cents from every box of cookies sold goes back to the troop, giving them funds for activities and trips. One local Tampa Bay troop has been saving and planning for three years for a trip to several European cities – how cool is that!

Back in St. Pete, I was invited to be a guest speaker for a Brownie Troop at Shorecrest Preparatory School where I helped the girls, aged 7 to 9, earn their Celebrating Community badge. I even wore my sash full of badges from back in the day when I was a member of Troop 699 in the Lake Erie Council.

Unlike when I was a scout, girls today earn badges in computer technology, career exploration, robotics, and even space science. But one tradition hasn't changed: Troop leader Brittany Decker and co-leaders Holly Rotlewicz and April Cabral kicked off the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the Girl Scout Promise, which I was surprised to find I still remembered, word for word.

All three leaders have girls in the group – and all are former scouts themselves. Brittany's daughter, Ally, is a troop member, as is Holly's daughter, Sasha, and April's daughter, Annie. The Shorecrest troop is new and this is Brittany's first year as a leader.

"Shorecrest didn't have a troop before, so we decided to start one last August," she said. "We love doing fun activities and learning new skills. I just completed a training so we could take the girls on their first camping trip overnight at Camp Indian Echo in Hudson."

The Shorecrest troop is part of the Girl Scouts of West Central Florida, which includes Pinellas, Hillsborough, Pasco, Polk, Hernando, Marion, Citrus and Sumter counties.

March 12 was the official Girl Scout birthday – the day that Juliette Gordon "Daisy" Low founded the first troop in Savannah, Georgia in 1912. I was surprised to learn that the second troop in the country was started in Tampa. Jessamine Flowers Link, a friend of Juliette Gordon Low's, organized a troop at her local church in Hyde Park in 1913. Another fun fact: Professor Walter J. Hoxie, a St. Petersburg resident, wrote the first Girl Scout Handbook in the U.S. in 1933. His daughter, Mary Russel Day, started Pinellas County's first troop in 1924.

Today, Girl Scouts are global. The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts has chapters in 145 countries, and some of the world's most notable women are Girl Scout alums. Astronaut Sally Ride, tennis star Venus Williams, actress Lucille Ball, journalist Katie Couric and former Attorney General Janet Reno are among the many who are proud to say they, too, were once Girl Scouts. ●

Learn more about the Girl Scouts at [gswcf.org](http://gswcf.org).



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**Carol Fasick-Joyce**  
22nd Avenue NE

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

I grew up in Western Maryland, but spent the majority of my life in Annapolis, by the Chesapeake Bay. I moved to the Old Northeast in St. Pete almost four years ago and have never looked back.

**Favorite place to visit in St. Pete?**

I am in love with the Florida lifestyle, everything outside in the sunshine works for me! Pass-a-Grille is my favorite beach location. I play a lot of tennis, and I enjoy spending time at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club overlooking Tampa Bay and the sailboats.

**Most interesting, enjoyable or exotic vacation?**

I recently returned from Palm Springs, California, attending my daughter's wedding. Nothing can beat the joy of a destination wedding combined with a lovely family reunion. A perfect "win-win" vacation!

**Top two places in the world on your bucket list?**

I would love to explore the Greek Islands on a catamaran with good friends. I also want to visit Big Major Cay, an island in the Exumas where the only swimming pigs in the world live.

**What famous person, would you like to meet?**

Andy Warhol.

**Favorite sport, activity or hobby?**

Tennis. Sailing. Biking. Repeat.

**A movie you'd recommend or current TV you're watching?**

*Ozark* on Netflix. I find it very motivating.

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

My dog, Agnes. She is a sweet 19-pound Bijon/Schitzu mix, bred to be a companion, and she excels at her job.

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

I am so inspired by the talent, energy and integrity of Alexis Logan. I choose her to be my real estate associate and together we formed The Dynasty Luxury Group because she is not just an outstanding realtor, but an attorney as well, with as much passion for living in St. Pete that I have.

**Current book you've read and would recommend?**

*A Land Remembered* by Patrick D. Smith, about early settlers in Florida in an epic portrayal of the American pioneer and the will to survive against all odds.

**Tell us about an accomplishment of which you are proud.**

I am so proud to say in this tight luxury real estate market, I currently have three listings in Snell Isle.

**Something people might not know about you?**

I am shy by nature, but with a wicked sense of humor.

**Tell us about your career.**

I'm the Broker Associate/co-founder of The Dynasty Group at Coldwell Banker, with over 20 years of experience in real estate. We handle both residential and commercial, and meet the needs of individuals and entities providing concierge level service.

**Tell us something about your family and pets.**

I am a proud mother, with a son in Maryland and a daughter in California – both are getting married this year! You will often find me along Coffee Pot Boulevard watching the sun rise or set while walking Agnes. Please say hello next time you see me! ●



**Jose Martinez**  
Beach Drive NE

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

Seven years. I am originally from Trinidad and Tobago, home of the best carnival celebration in the world, and – as Desmond Tutu called it – “the rainbow that is real” for its multi-cultural nature.

**Favorite place to visit in St. Pete?**

Academy Prep of any school, where I'm reminded of the vitality of the possibility of our youth. It's rewarding to empower them to transform their lives and impact communities. It's also a great place to nourish your soul.

**Most interesting, enjoyable, or exotic vacation?**

Here we come back to Trinidad Carnival. The energy, vitality, creativity is still unmatched.

**Top two places in the world on your bucket list?**

Not a big one for bucket lists (as it takes me away from spontaneity and limits the future in an odd way). However, a safari in Serengeti and the northern lights would be cool.

**What famous person would you like to meet?**

Gandhi. I have always seemed to resonate with his simple, fair and uncomplicated approach to hate and life's struggles.

**Favorite sport, recreational activity, or hobby?**

Cricket and golf.

**A movie you'd recommend or current TV you're watching?**

*Wonderous Oblivion* is simply a beautiful movie set in South London in the 1960s, about the son of European Jewish immigrants, and his new next-door neighbors who are Jamaican immigrants.

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

Whippet. Clean, warm, friendly, and energetic.

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

Frederick Douglas. When I have a trial or tribulation, I remember his approach of “I glory in conflict for that one day I shall exalt in victory.” My challenges are dwarfed by his and I need to adopt his approach.

**Current book you've read and would recommend?**

*Good to Great* by Jim Collins... and yes, it's a 20-year-old book now, but a must-read and reread for those who need to understand or be reminded of the benefits of change and evolving in business.

**Tell us about an accomplishment of which you are proud.**

Raising two wonderful children, Naadia (33) and Jelani (28). Nothing gives me more joy than seeing them achieve or accomplish something. Gets me every time.

**Something people might not know about you?**

I always expect the best of every person I meet.

**Tell us about your career.**

Jelani and I created Sartorial Inc., the premier men's fashion boutique downtown. I'm president of the St. Pete Downtown Business Association, a member of the Dali Guild and St. Pete Chamber. I was in business development in telecom and technology in NY/NJ/FL.

**Tell us something about your family and pets.**

Wife Natalie is retired from the pharmaceutical industry, a St. Pete Chamber Ambassador, and a member of the Dali Guild. Daughter Naadia is an education consultant in Chicago with a 4-year-old girl and is expecting a baby boy in April. Jelani is an exceptional talent, very well respected within the haberdashery industry, and is our Creative Director and Chief Stylist at Sartorial, Inc. ●



**Cindy Cockburn**  
Beach Drive NE

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

Born in NYC, grew up in Ocean Grove, NJ. Worked in Manhattan and Newport, RI; moved to Florida and became a Regional PR Director for Starwood Resorts Worldwide. Moved to St. Pete ten years ago.

**Favorite place to visit in St. Pete?**

The Mahaffey Theater! I love show biz. Can't beat the entertainment options from concerts to the best of Broadway, ballet, and jazz.

**Most interesting, enjoyable or exotic vacation?**

The South of France has my heart. Nothing like walking the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival – I interviewed Nicole Kidman! – or exploring the Picasso Museum in Antibes.

**Top two places in the world on your bucket list?**

I'd love to research my ancestry and find relatives in Ireland, England, and Germany.

**What famous person would you like to meet?**

Joni Mitchell. What a talented poet, artist and musician. I have loved and admired her since the *Blue* album.

**Favorite sport, recreational activity or hobby?**

I'm passionate about theater, dance, jazz, and Broadway. My hobby of travel writing turned into two book contracts to write the *Frommer's Guide to Florida* and a column called *Travels With CC*.

**A movie you'd recommend or current TV you're watching?**

*This Is Us* on NBC. Who can't relate to family drama?

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

A golden retriever.

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

Talking to Lester Holt on St. Pete Beach a few years ago was an inspiration. This most respected American journalist for *NBC Nightly News* is doing a fantastic job during this complicated time in our history.

**Current book you've read and would recommend?**

*The Last Florida Boy*, written by local musician-turned-author Tom Gribbin. A fun read and you may even recognize a few of the characters!

**Tell us about an accomplishment of which you are proud.**

My son Michael and I are a writer-photographer team, traveling around the world and producing magazine articles featuring top destinations from Barcelona to Monaco and covering events from Art Basel in South Beach to the America's Cup Races in San Francisco.

**Something people might not know about you?**

I handled the publicity for Andy Warhol's art exhibit one hot summer weekend a very long time ago in Newport, RI. The paparazzi was surreal.

**Tell us about your career.**

I've owned my public relations consulting firm called C.C. Communications for over 20 years. Clients include the Dali Museum, luxury real estate firms, the Ritz-Carlton resorts, Grammy award-winning musicians, and Hallmark films. I spent four years working with the mayor's office, representing the City of St. Pete to the local, regional, national and international press.

**Tell us something about your family and pets.**

My son lives in Tampa with my loving pit bull “grand puppy” Irma Rose, born in Hurricane Irma and named after my grandmother. My mom and sister's family are in Raleigh. My brother and his family are in Largo. ●



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# Tracking Trash: New Eckerd App Aims to Curb Plastics

Abby Baker

We track our calories, our daily steps, even the frequency of our snores when we sleep. Eckerd College professors are working on the next app obsession: tracking plastic waste. The future application is still in the prototype phase, but in February the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded \$499,638 toward its creation.

Before there was an app, there was the Reduce Single-Use project funded by NOAA and initiated by Associate Professor of Marine Science Dr. Amy Siuda and Professor of Marine Science and Biology Dr. Shannon Gowans. The professors worked with students and organizations to evaluate the Eckerd campus plastic consumption and use. Students indicated that cutting back on plastic use would be an easier feat if there was a smartphone app available.

At the same time, they are still studying



Eckerd Associate Professor of Marine Science Amy Siuda tests Tampa Bay waters for microplastics in 2021

microplastics in Tampa Bay, and – news flash – there’s quite a lot of microplastic in our waters.

The future app builds off the marine science research done in Tampa Bay waters, studying the concentration of these tiny plastics since 2018 and regularly checking in at seven stations, from Boca Ciega Bay to one at MacDill Air Force Base.

“Most of that plastic, we can’t see.... It’s eaten by organisms and will be around for generations,” Gowans said. “Once the plastic is in the environment, it’s extremely hard to remove.” She describes a microplastic as anything smaller than 5 mm. “They just get smaller and smaller. Some of these plastics can easily rip and shred apart into small pieces.”

According to Gowans, there’s no single source for plastic; Tampa Bay is a well-mixed estuary, and high rainfall adds to the spread. “I tell my students *Finding Nemo* has it right: All drains lead to the ocean,” she said. It’s a cute analogy, but an alarming one. Based on student research, the team decided that the best long-term approach is to reduce the amount of plastic used in St. Petersburg and the surrounding area. That’s where Eckerd’s app comes in.

The app will allow people to track their plastic use and also compete with friends and family also using the app. On the back end, scientists get plastic-using data while people are encouraged to use less. “It’s a thought process,” Siuda said. “Every time you go to enter something in the app, it’s a reminder of what you’re using.”

It’ll be like a Fitbit – fun and trackable, says Gowans. “It takes planning, but reducing plastic use is doable,” she said. “It’s tough, but you can be out and about and make it work.” She sees it in her students,



Eckerd student Alex Gordon picks up trash in the mangroves near the school

who often carry reusable water bottles and utensils.

Right now the prototype app doesn’t have a name, but once it’s up and functioning it will be free on Apple and Android. And it won’t just be geared toward Eckerd students – the plan is to get all St. Petersburg residents to actively use it. Eckerd plans to partner with City of St. Petersburg, Keep Pinellas Beautiful, Tampa Bay Estuary Program, Tampa Bay Watch, Suncoast Rise Above Plastics Coalition (SRAP), St. Pete Youth Farm, and Arts Conservatory for Teens (ACT) to get the word out.

“Our dream from the beginning is to make this globally available,” Siuda said. “But first, we’d like to engage 10% of the population of St. Petersburg.”

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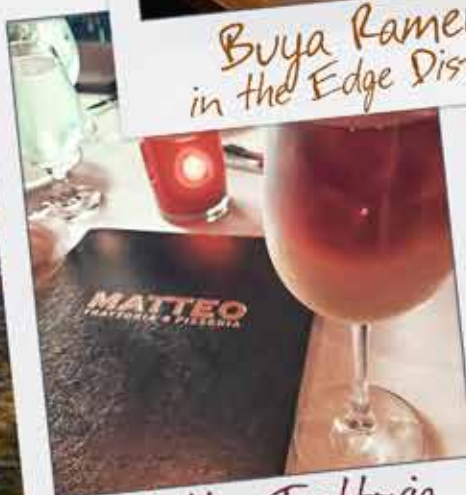


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