



NORTHEAST JOURNAL

Good People ∞ Good Places ∞ Good Things Happening

St. Petersburg, Florida

November/December 2023

Est. September 2004



The Florida Orchestra's Newest Resident Conductor

Gallo started violin and piano at 4, but says she never considered conducting until a torn ACL sidelined her athletic career.

Meet TFO's Chelsea Gallo

Laura Flint

Musician, professional athlete, conductor, a student of language and science. You might think I'm talking about a group of outstanding people, but in fact, I'm introducing Dr. Chelsea Gallo, the newly promoted resident conductor for The Florida Orchestra's 2023-2024 season. Her list of accomplishments is long and all the more impressive when you learn she became a conductor quite by accident after a torn ACL changed her entire path.

Gallo's love of music, however, has always been with her. She began playing the violin and piano at the age of four, and eventually chose to study music in her collegiate and post-collegiate years, earning a master's degree in Vienna, Austria, where she also played professional softball. From there, she went on to earn her doctorate from the University of Michigan, which furthered her career as a conductor.

Gallo's impressive resume includes staff conductor for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, conducting fellow with the Dallas Opera,

Continued on page 22

Shore Acres Rebuilds The Community Learns and Grows

Jon Kile

In 1972, Hurricane Agnes skirted the Tampa Bay area and made landfall near Apalachicola. Newspaper accounts of the flooding Agnes brought to Shore Acres might be mistaken for stories written about the impact of Hurricane Idalia, which followed a similar path



Tim and Taylor Shallenberg's neighbor, Clay, paddled up to give the senior Labrador, Riley, a kayak ride to safety in the wake of Hurricane Idalia.

Photo by Taylor Shallenberg

St. Pete's Historic Cemeteries A Time for Reconciliation

Will Michaels

There has been much news about the Hines-Tampa Bay Rays proposal to build a new stadium in St. Petersburg, just southeast of Tropicana Field. It's not just a stadium, however, but a 20-year \$6.5 billion proposal to redevelop the 86-acre area of the historic former Gas Plant neighborhood. The proposed redevelopment calls for 6,000 residential units, including 1,200 affordable and workforce units both on- and off-site; a hotel; 14,000 parking spaces; a refurbished park along Booker Creek, which meanders through the site; an entertainment venue; and space for and a \$10 million contribution to a new home for the Dr. Carter G. Woodson African American Museum.



View of the Historic Gas Plant neighborhood at its height. At least 500 households, nine churches, and 30 businesses were displaced by development, as well as several cemeteries.

Proponents of the development highlight anticipated jobs creation, economic stimulation of the surrounding area, and, most notably, revival of the African American sense of neighborhood devastated by previous development and failed promises and expectations.

Little noticed in the proposal, however, is a commitment to undertake identification of descendants connected to the former Oaklawn Cemetery, develop

Continued on page 12

at the end of August 2023. In both Agnes and Idalia, residents scrambled to find high ground for cars, appliances, and belongings. The high tide crested seawalls, came up storm drains, filled the streets, and then made its way into homes.

There are important differences between Agnes and Idalia, however. On the June night that Agnes swept past us toward the panhandle, city and county officials thought impact would be minimal. But the water rose, and residents were woken from their beds by police in their cruisers, announcing an emergency evacuation over loudspeakers. Many never heard the warning. Without today's prediction models the water brought by Agnes was a surprise. Most of the homes were built in the post-war boom and hadn't been there long enough to experience a major storm surge.

Continued on page 24

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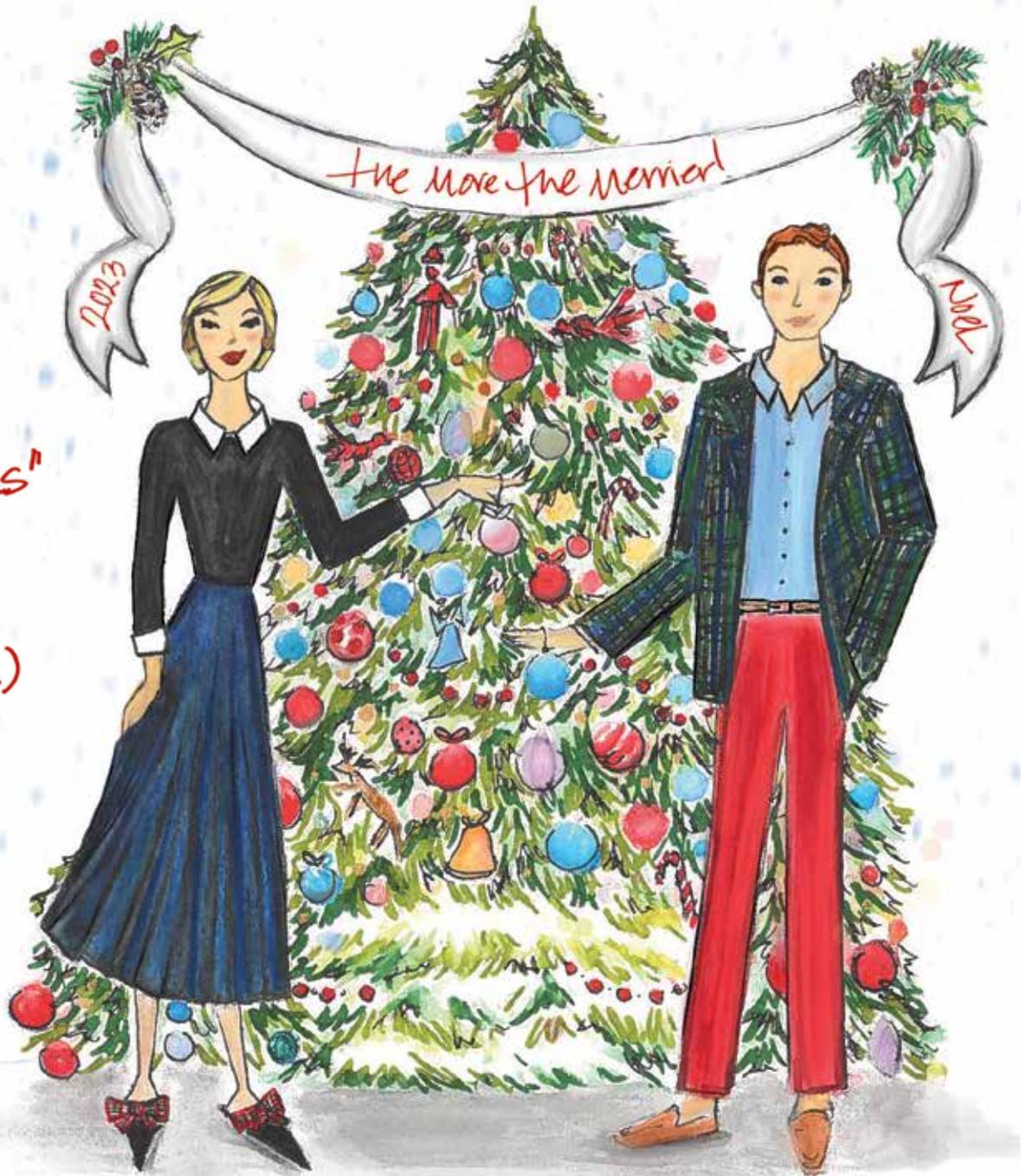
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Gratitude

I knew I wanted to write a note about holiday spirit in this issue, but I'll admit it hasn't come easily. Even a "good news" paper can acknowledge that things are a bit grim in our world today. And longing for "peace on Earth" seems naive in the extreme.

But the holidays are not just "happy times" by default. Drinking a pumpkin spice latte doesn't automatically confer feelings of goodwill toward man. No.

In my experience, the holiday warm-and-fuzzies come from taking stock. Looking around at what we have, and who we love, and remembering to truly enjoy them.

In this issue, that's what you'll find – joy. Joy in making art, making music; in travel, and in service. You'll find joy in the glimpse of a white pelican on the water and yoga in the park, in helping others and in healing communities. You'll even find joy in death-defying feats of aerial acrobatics, if you're into that. Joy takes many forms.

This season let's be joyful. It's the sincerest form of gratitude.

~ Shelly



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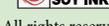
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Shopapalooza Festival Comes to Vinoy Park Thanksgiving Weekend



Kids dance at Shopapalooza 2022.



Four-legged friends are welcome at Shopapalooza!



Owner Maria Aller will promote her Shapeshifter Fish and Friends sun-protection clothing this year.



Festival-goers pose with Santa and Mrs. Claus at Shopapalooza 2022.

Cindy Cockburn

It is the season to shop – and support local business! More than 350 local businesses will take over Vinoy Park on Thanksgiving weekend for Shopapalooza Festival 2023. According to LocalShops1 founder Ester Venouziou, the beloved holiday extravaganza is expected to be one of the largest Small Business weekend events in the nation.

Co-sponsored by the city of St. Petersburg, Shopapalooza is a production of LocalShops1, recognized as Tampa Bay's most active voice for small businesses. "We foster collaborations and organize events to connect businesses with businesses, as well as businesses with shoppers," Venouziou explains. "Our signature event is Shopapalooza, the most popular holiday festival in downtown St. Petersburg."

As the founder of LocalShops1, hundreds of St. Pete residents and shop owners think of Venouziou as their community hero – and for good reason. She has been a tireless champion of local and small business in the Bay Area since 2008, when LocalShops1 grew out of a list she kept to help her parents find local businesses when they visited.

"Shopping local is more critical than ever this year as small businesses are facing economic challenges with staffing shortages and higher cost of goods due to inflation, while still recovering from the pandemic's impacts," she says.

Just in time for the holidays, LocalShops1's shopping/community event returns bigger than ever, this time featuring small businesses from artists to food trucks and nonprofits. Special sections and activities include shopping spree giveaways, holiday-themed vendor decor, beer and wine stations, food halls, live music, aerial performances, the Peace Flag Project, White Lounge seating, and other interactive activities for kids and adults.

The main stage will feature live entertainment throughout the weekend, and pop-up photo-ops will be



Founder Ester Venouziou and Gopali Imports owner Alex Gopali, now in his ninth year at Shopapalooza

scattered throughout the park. Santa will make an appearance both days and on Sunday, there's a Santa rampage.

Says Venouziou, "We want to make it fun and easy for people to do their holiday shopping with local small businesses. And we want people to discover new businesses and reconnect with longtime favorites – and help drive traffic back to them year-round."

In addition to supporting local business, Shopapalooza's nonprofit beneficiaries this year include Jump for Kids and St. Pete Youth Farm.

Worried about parking? Take the free trolley to and from Shopapalooza throughout the weekend from Sundial parking garage.

This year's Shopapalooza Festival is a pet- and kid-friendly event with a spectacular children's zone, sponsored by Imagine Orthodontic Studio and organized by Coastal Dreams Events LLC. Fun for all ages, the zone offers a meet-and-greet with princesses, photo opps with Santa, lawn games, and more.

What's the vibe like on the biggest shopping weekend of the year? "It's not about the hard sell," says Venouziou. "People are there because they're interested in shopping local. Talk and listen to the vendors and ask them about their passions. Many vendors will offer gift bags or boxes if they can. Many people are buying gifts and will appreciate the extra touch."

In addition to the hundreds of hours of work put into making Shopapalooza a reality, Venouziou does a masterful job marketing this event – just ask any of the 300 participants.

"This will be our third year participating in the festival," says business owner Maria Aller. Her company, Shapeshifter Fish and Friends, offers a variety of fun, colorful graphics on sun protective wear for the whole family. "Shopapalooza is a great chance for us who do not have a storefront to meet customers."

Another longtime Shopapalooza vendor, Gopali Imports owner Alex Gopali, has been in business for nine years on Central in the Crislip Arcade. Gopali is originally from Nepal and offers sound healing services every Saturday and Sunday at 9 am and has hundreds of handmade products from the Himalayas at his store. "We can meet so many more people during Shopapalooza and introduce them to our store," he says. "It's best for local shopping and holiday shoppers." ◆

Shopapalooza is free and open to the public November 25 and 26. Find more information at ShopapaloozaFestival.com. Learn more about LocalShops1 and Localshops1.com.



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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. Join our team by contacting editor@northeastjournal.org.

Abby Baker is a Tampa-based journalist for local media. She currently lives in Seminole Heights, but writes stories about Gulfport and St. Petersburg communities. 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). [rickcarson1@gmail.com.]

Cindy Cockburn was born in NYC and has lived in St. Pete for 10 years. As owner of C.C. Communications for over 20 years, she worked with a variety of clients, from the mayor of St. Petersburg to the Mahaffey Theater & Vinoy Resort. As a freelance reporter, she has worked for many local and national publications, and is the author of two Frommer's Guides to Florida.

Mary Fletcher was a *St. Petersburg Times* advertising graphic designer for 20-years. She is president and designer for The Florida Aviation Historical Society; was the Board secretary of Flight 2014; and piloted for the Civil Air Patrol search-and-rescues and Sundown Patrols. Mary is active in the Ninety-Nines and the Florida Suncoast Chapter.

Laura Flint, a Tennessee native, moved to St. Pete in 2017. After obtaining her master's in literature, she began a career in youth sports and recreation. For Preserve the 'Burg, she began spending time with volunteers, planning events, and writing about the special places and neighborhoods in St. Pete. Laura lives in south St. Pete with her husband and two children.

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.

Lynn Lotkowitz spent years in radio in New York, and in business development/management at *Florida Trend Magazine*. She volunteers and enjoys traveling internationally.

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

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

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

Stacie Steinke recently relocated from McLean, VA, and is happy to call The 'Burg her home. Attracted by the vibrant arts scene, Stacie is a singer and voice teacher, and equally happy to apply her curiosity to writing and gardening. She enjoys paddleboarding on Coffee Pot Bayou and meandering the St. Pete waterfront with her dog, Kent.

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]



Pelicans: The Snowbirds and the Locals

Samantha Bond Richman

While the term “snowbird” now often refers to our part-time human neighbors, it originally applied to *real* birds who winter in warmer climes. The general parameters of the snowbird season, both human and avian, are roughly from October through March, and there’s one visitor that’s hard to miss: the American white pelican.

Some may think brown pelicans turn white in the winter. Not true! In fact, the brown pelican, our beloved city mascot, is a smaller, year-round cousin of the white pelican.

Known for their dramatic hunting methods, brown pelicans are uniquely outfitted for catching their favorite meal, fish. Once their target is acquired, typically from an elevated perch or during airborne reconnaissance, the bird engages its diving position. Wings and feet are tucked back, their neck extends creating an arrow-shaped profile as they dive, full-speed into the water toward their target. With its beak opened a second before splashy impact, the pelican envelopes the fish inside its baggy throat pouch. The water is flushed out, and any unlucky prey is tossed back down his throat by throwing his beak into the air. Gulp. The brown pelican has been observed wagging his tail feathers when the catch is good.



Our local mascot, the year-round brown pelican.

Of course, brown pelicans are often found in their other favorite hunting grounds, on docks and seawalls, making sympathy eyes at the friendly fisherman for a free meal. Brown pelicans breed in colonies and, in Florida, largely in the safety of mangroves.

Our seasonal visitors, the white pelicans, stand out distinctly from their local brown relatives. Their brilliant white feathers are flashy, and they have stylish black wing-tip accents. Beak, eye sockets, feet and legs complete the look with a dash of orange flesh. With adult bird wingspans of over nine feet, they are one of the largest birds in North America. They migrate away

known to work together at times intentionally lining up, side by side, herding fish into the shallows to catch them more easily. They are also known to steal fish from other birds, and their size allows them to bully other species like cormorants, a bird very successful at catching fish.

Brown pelicans are found year-round in just about any waterfront space, however good spots to see white pelicans – when they’re in town – include North Shore Park and in larger colonies in Ft. DeSoto. Find a list and maps of waterfront parks at stpeteparksrec.org/parkfinder. ●

from cold climates in North American plains, where they sometimes live inland in contrast to their brown cousins. At the end of the snowbird season, they travel back north to breed. It’s as if they take a winter break ahead of the arduous task of raising their young, usually two at a time, in the spring and summer months.

Much different from the high-flying maneuver employed by brown pelicans, white pelicans feed by dipping their orange beaks in shallows, seeking to snatch up fish, crabs, and other tasty critters. Their beaks have a relatively smaller pouch, and they don’t dive. They are

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Palladium Hopes to Raise \$10 Million for Renovations

Abby Baker

The Palladium Theater may soon go through a multi-million-dollar interior transformation. The Northeast neighborhood icon already received \$850,000 from the Florida senate this summer, and much of those funds will go into the design and consulting teams who will redesign the Palladium interior.

Executive director Paul Wilborn says the organization is applying for another \$850,000 grant from the senate to aid with construction costs. In addition, the Palladium is launching a fundraising campaign with a \$10 million final goal and an end date of 2025.

“It’s a lot of money, but we’re confident we can [raise it],” Wilborn said. “The majority of the money will come from private donors.”

Built in 1925, the building is almost 100 years old and was originally a Christian Science church. The venue holds concerts and musical events weekly and has become a fixture of downtown St. Pete’s arts culture. Today, the main auditorium, Hough Hall, which seats 830, could use a revamp in acoustics and comfort.

Wilborn says he’d like to clear the current seating options and add 800 brand new, larger, more plush chairs. “Each chair will give you a full view of the stage,” Wilborn said. “If someone tall, like my wife, is in front of you – well then it’s going to be hard to see [now].”

Walking into the theater, visitors are immediately met with classic stone walls, high ceilings, and historic flooring, and Wilborn assures that those elements will remain. What will change is the sound and the feel. The potential funding will



With \$850,000 in state funding secured, the Palladium is hoping to raise almost \$10 million for renovations.



The Palladium is launching a fundraising campaign for needed seating and acoustics renovations.

Photo courtesy of the Palladium Theater

hopefully cover adapted curtains that will adjust the sound for amplified music, like guitars and drums.

“The room is good for acoustics, opera, orchestra music, but when we go to amplified sound, it tends to get muddy,” Wilborn said.

Palladium personnel say the theater will have to go dark for 9 to 12 months for all the major renovations. They guesstimate the upstairs, and possibly the smaller downstairs theater, will close at the end of 2024 or possibly early 2025.

The good news? The Palladium does not pay rent – it’s covered by St. Petersburg College, which acquired the theater in August of 2007. However, turning out the lights for nine months to a year poses a significant loss of revenue.

“It’s totally scary raising this amount of money,” Wilborn said. “\$10 million is the goal... and the good news is we’re not tearing it down. We’re not touching the historical nature of this great building.”

Old Northeast residents won’t see much construction from the outside, but they’ll have to go without Palladium entertainment for a spell. Wilborn advises supporters to stay tuned for more fundraising events in upcoming months, adding, “Your Northeast neighborhood theater is making improvements to be a better

neighbor for the community in the long run.”

While the fundraising campaign just kicked off, you can support the Palladium by making an online donation or buying tickets to an upcoming show online at mypalladium.org.



Photo courtesy of Nick Cardello Photography

The historic look of the Palladium will remain, but the seating and acoustics will get an extensive overhaul.

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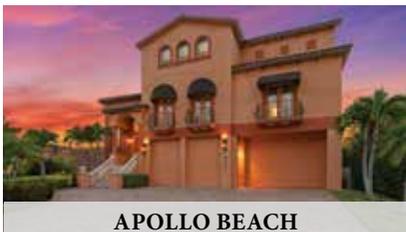
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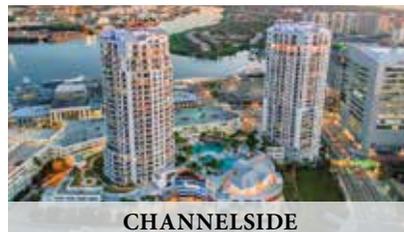
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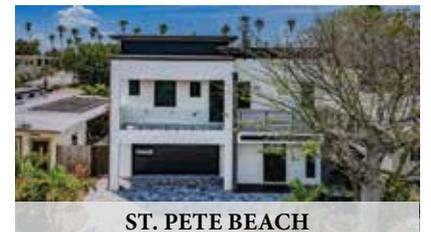
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The Morean's Amanda Cooper Looks Back at 25 Years with the Center

Brandy Stark

There are two names that are intricately linked in St. Petersburg: Amanda Cooper and the Morean Arts Center. A familiar face about town, Cooper has worked tirelessly with the local arts community and is the chief curator for the center, with the daunting task of programming the gallery spaces at the Morean and Chihuly Collection. As part of the Morean's exhibition team, she helps organize over 50 exhibitions each year across three different locations.

Cooper is also preparing to celebrate her 25th anniversary at the Morean this February.

The first incarnation of her job was as the gallery director for the then-named Arts Center. She was hired at the age of 24 in 1999, having newly graduated from the University of Florida with her bachelor's in art history. "I sent my resume (such as it was back then!) to all the galleries in town. I scored an interview for the gallery director position and here I (still) am!"

At the time of Cooper's hiring, the Arts Center had just moved from its Seventh Street location to Central Avenue. There, multiple properties were purchased and rebuilt to form the center as it exists today. She started her new job during these renovations.

"The entire façade was ripped off," she remembers. "The construction crew literally tore down and rebuilt our office space while we were working inside of it. It was a crazy and amazing time to be on staff, and I'm so glad I was there for it."

Both she and the building established themselves as permanent fixtures after that. "I've made lifelong friends here," she says. "For over 100 years, the Morean has been an incredibly special place and holds an important space in our community. The fact that I get to be a small part of that is just amazing, and I never take it for granted."

Cooper recalls many special moments and friendships she's shared over the years:

"There was that time that Lara Shelton and I got in trouble for giggling too much during a board meeting. I had to endure Jonathan Harrison's daily (sometimes twice daily) fart jokes in the office. The late, great Rob Giordano, during his time here, would do spot-on impressions of 'passing people we know in the hallway.' Beth Reynolds, Scott Kirkhuff, and I spent hours discussing the 'bad art' coffee table book we were compiling and going to publish one day. I even learned that Betsy Lester, who hangs many of our shows here, can eat raw broccoli *and* install art at the same time. I also loved working with Mich Sullivan to select submissions of amazing and hilarious student art for our Word + Image program; some of them have stayed in my head for decades."



Chief Curator Amanda Cooper



Cooper, left, with six artists from the center's 2022 Fresh Squeezed exhibition.



The current Morean Arts Center being built in 1999.



Morean staff and members in front of the new center in 2004.

Photos courtesy of the Morean Arts Center

Having seen so much in her decades-long career at the Morean, Cooper encourages artists to embark upon their dreams.

"I feel like right now is a great time to pursue art as a career, especially in the Tampa Bay area," she says. "There are so many museums, arts centers, and galleries around us. It used to be difficult to get your foot in the door but there are more opportunities than ever right now. And on the artist side, more galleries and museums mean more spaces to show your work."

During the holiday months of November and December, the Morean Arts Center is featuring *All is Bright*, an annual member's show featuring hundreds of works from local artists. Also on view is *Remember When*, a solo exhibition of Tampa artist Alex Torres's dreamy landscapes, and the artworks of the Tampa Bay Surface Design Guild.

The Chihuly Collection is hosting *MADE HERE 2*, which features works by Morean Glass studio artists, while the Morean Center for Clay's show, *Alteration Station*, is a national juried mug exhibition with entries from across the country. There is also a solo show of Lindsey Oesterritter's handmade functional ceramics.

Cooper encourages the public to attend these events, especially if you're looking for special gifts. "When you buy art, you're supporting small businesses,

both the gallery and the artist. Living with handmade objects brings so much joy to the user/viewer. You don't have to spend a lot of money, either. We have items in our gallery store as low as \$10."

Few gifts are more personal or unique, Cooper notes, than original art. "When you purchase something for someone else, try to find out about the artist; I think that info really enhances the gift," she explains. "Every work of art I own has a story behind it, and that includes who the artist is."

Nervous about gifting art? You can also give the gift of membership.

"Become a member!" Cooper urges. "Membership has so many benefits, including discounts in our store and on classes, and free admission to the Chihuly Collection and our glass-blowing demonstrations. If you're an artist, your membership guarantees your space in our semi-annual members' exhibitions."

Or, says Cooper, you can always give the gift of time, visiting the centers with friends and family or bringing them to one of the many free events hosted onsite. "Just come see us," says Cooper. "We have so much to offer!"

To learn more about events, classes, workshops, and memberships at the Morean Arts Center, visit moreanartscenter.org.

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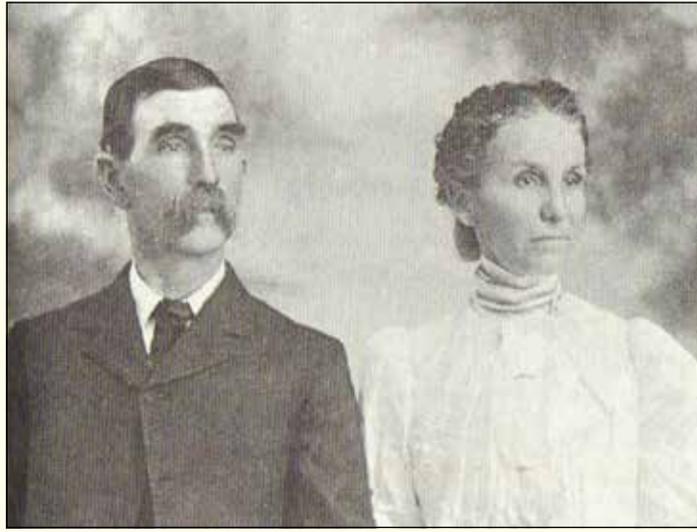


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Undertaker and later juvenile judge Samuel D. Harris at one time owned Moffet, Evergreen, and Oaklawn cemeteries, image circa 1935.



David Moffett, pictured here with his wife Janie, was the first mayor of St. Petersburg. He established Moffett Cemetery – which was originally known as St. Petersburg Cemetery – in 1888.



Among the many African American community leaders buried at Lincoln Cemetery is Dr. Ralph Wimbish who led efforts to desegregate Spa Beach and lunch counters, and integrate schools.

an archaeological work plan for the cemetery, and establish a “garden of remembrance.” What is this latter proposal all about? The short answer is that Tropicana Field is also the site of an early city cemetery known as Oaklawn Cemetery.

Among St. Petersburg’s first cemeteries were Moffett, Evergreen, and Oaklawn. Oaklawn Cemetery was located at what is now the west parking area at Tropicana Field, and Moffett and Evergreen were co-located just south of Oaklawn, largely beneath what is now I-175.

Moffett Cemetery was dedicated in 1888, the same year as the founding of the city, as a burial ground for Civil War veterans. Originally the cemetery included both whites and African Americans. Two Civil War veterans are known to have been buried at Moffett (or adjacent Evergreen), but there may have been many others. Moffett Cemetery was named after David Moffett, an early settler and St. Petersburg’s first mayor. Moffett himself is buried at Greenwood Cemetery, which was established in 1897 (Martin Luther King, Jr. Street and 11th Avenue S.). After the establishment of Greenwood, Moffett became essentially an African American Cemetery. According to the USF African American Burial Ground and Remembering Project, Evergreen Cemetery was informally established as a segregated African American cemetery as early as 1900. It may have been part of a segregated western section of Moffett.

North of the Moffett and Evergreen cemeteries, generally around the Tropicana parking area west of 16th Street S., was Oaklawn Cemetery. Oaklawn was founded by the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) and the local chapter of the Carpenters’ and Joiners’ Union of America in 1906. Oaklawn was primarily for whites but included a segregated area for Black burials. The cemetery also included Civil War veterans. Oaklawn Cemetery was also known as Grandberry Hill Cemetery. Evergreen Cemetery was acquired by S. D. (Samuel David) Harris in 1908. In 1910, Harris acquired Moffett. In 1913, the Carpenters’ and Joiners’ Union conveyed their interest in Oaklawn Cemetery to the IOOF, and in 1917 the IOOF sold the cemetery to Harris.

Samuel Harris is a fascinating but little-known figure in early St. Petersburg history. Born in 1866 in Sumter County, he relocated to Clearwater as a child with his parents. As a young man he became a seaman

and ship master. In 1894 he gave up his seaman’s life and became an orchardist. He next established a general merchandise and feed store in St. Petersburg in 1905. In 1908, after completing training in Macon, Georgia, and passing the State Board of Health examination for embalmers, Harris became an undertaker. His funeral home was located at 674 Central Avenue. He continued in the undertaking profession until 1921, and then became a real estate investor. He also had a distinguished career in local politics and played an important role in the creation of Pinellas County.

In 1921, Harris sold his undertaking business along with Oaklawn Cemetery to James M. Endicott and Sarah K. Cowen, owners of Endicott Funeral Home. Three years later Endicott and Sarah Cowen

Not-So-Final Resting Places

On March 29, 1926, the city of St. Petersburg passed Ordinance No. 440-A. The title of this ordinance reads: “An ordinance declaring that public interest and public health demand the removal of bodies of deceased persons from Moffett, Evergreen, and Oakland cemeteries and be interred in Royal Palm Cemetery and the colored cemetery adjacent thereto, ordering the removal thereof at the [expense?] of the city...” The ordinance goes on to state that the cemeteries concerned are poorly kept and “constantly used by the public as a passage way and are unsuitable for a resting place for the dead...” All persons were to be buried “in a location of equal dignity to the place now occupied by said bodies... and in a manner in keeping with the situation in life of said deceased persons then living.” The “colored cemetery” was not referred to as Lincoln Cemetery in the ordinance and was perhaps unnamed at the time.

An additional reason for closing the cemeteries and relocating the burials was that doing so would open up 4th and 6th Avenues South and “greatly” clear-up “thoroughfares on the south side.” Subsequently a new “Bay to Bay” street was opened on 5th Avenue South relieving congestion on Central Avenue. Fifty burials were removed from Evergreen Cemetery to facilitate the roadway in 1926. The following year, 86 unknown persons were removed from Moffett Cemetery and reinterred in Lincoln.

For unknown reasons only a portion of those interred at the three cemeteries were removed immediately after the 1926 ordinance. The grounds of Moffett Cemetery were actually improved, and as late as 1953 there were still persons buried there. In June 1953 McRae Funeral Home put out a plea for those with relatives buried there

to make arrangements for them to be relocated, as a youth center for African Americans was planned for the site. In 1958, approximately 225 burials were relocated from Evergreen to make way for an apartment complex. Ownership of Lincoln Cemetery was transferred from Sumner to McRae Funeral Home in 1957. In 1958, approximately another 150 bodies were moved from Moffett and/or Evergreen Cemeteries to Lincoln. In 1976, a few human remains were uncovered during construction of I-275 in the vicinity of Evergreen. According to a 1987 *Times* article, after consulting with McRae Funeral Home, a representative of Lincoln Cemetery stated, “It appears that no records



Sign in Lincoln Cemetery requesting visitors not drive on the grass due to unmarked graves.

Masterson sold all the unsold lots in Oaklawn, Evergreen, and Moffett cemeteries to Reginald H. Sumner. Sumner was a prominent St. Petersburg contractor, real estate investor, and county commissioner. Among his business interests was Sumner Marble and Granite, Inc. He also owned Royal Palm Cemetery (1st Avenue and 55th Street S.), which is nearly adjacent to Lincoln Cemetery. Royal Palm was a historically white cemetery; Lincoln was established by Sumner in 1926 for African Americans. Why the name Lincoln was chosen for the cemetery is unknown. Likely it was because President Lincoln was a hero to many African Americans.

were kept identifying any of the burials. They were simply placed in metal boxes, then in wooden boxes..." They were reinterred in an area of Lincoln Cemetery known as "Removals from Evergreen."

In 1967, St. Petersburg's city boundaries were changed to exclude land occupied by Lincoln Cemetery and adjacent areas, and the land was then annexed by Gulfport. This action was triggered by a rezoning application filed to permit a trailer park on 16 acres of land east of Lincoln. The land was owned by Dr. J. C. Benefield, a former St. Petersburg city council member. Rather than accommodate the rezoning request, the St. Petersburg city manager recommended "de-annexing" the property to Gulfport, stating it would be difficult and expensive for the city of St. Petersburg to provide services to the parcel. In newspaper accounts of the matter there is no indication of discussion of the appropriateness of transferring jurisdiction over a cemetery, which was the resting place of primarily St. Petersburg residents, to another city.

Gulfport's mayor did not learn of the proposal until St. Petersburg City Council had already approved it. Gulfport City Council ultimately approved the transfer on a split vote, and only after Dr. Benefield had agreed to pay for sewer and waterline extensions. The dissenting members objected that the proposal was not "economical" and only part of the land would be taxable.

Lincoln Cemetery was sold to Sumner Marble and Granite in 1974 (Reginald Sumner himself had died in 1949). In 2009, Sumner changed the name of its company to Lincoln Cemetery, Inc. In 2017, the cemetery was purchased by the Lincoln Cemetery Society, Inc., which was superseded by the Lincoln Cemetery Memorial Park Corp, and finally superseded by the Lincoln Cemetery Society, Inc. The society is operated by a board of eight Gulfport residents with Vanessa Gray serving as president. Prior to acquisition by the Lincoln Cemetery Society a perpetual care fund of \$109,000 was depleted. The society also inherited a \$30,000-plus debt to the city



The Pinellas Genealogy Society has identified 6,503 recorded burials at Lincoln Cemetery, including three Civil War veterans.



Schematic of cemetery locations, image 1990

of Gulfport for prior maintenance, which has yet to be paid, and the society has struggled to maintain the cemetery primarily through volunteer service. Recent maintenance has been undertaken by the society and the Gulfport Veterans of Foreign Wars. Maintenance is no longer provided by the city.

Dignity for Known and Unknown Burials

In 2018, Cardno Limited, an infrastructure and environmental services company, conducted a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey to facilitate confirmation of any remaining graves under the Tropicana Field parking lots. The survey identified two possible graves and seven "areas of interest." The survey report also noted that it is likely that there are also disarticulated human remains mixed within the soil that could not be detected through GPR.

While development displaced or covered over unknown burials under Tropicana Field, records of persons interred at Lincoln Cemetery are also incomplete. Many records were lost in a fire at McRae Funeral Home. The Pinellas Genealogy Society has identified 6,503 recorded burials at Lincoln Cemetery. Only three Civil War veterans have been identified to date at Lincoln, two of which are African American and one white. It is estimated there are around 4,000 unmarked graves at Lincoln, most of which are graves of persons unknown.

Civic leaders and others of historic record known to be buried at Lincoln Cemetery include Emma E. Booker, William and Thelma Booher, Lewis Dominis, John Evans, Lillie Green, Cora Higgins, Chester James, Sr., Elder Jordan, Sr., Elder Jordan, Jr., Mary Louise McRae, Fannye Ayer Ponder, Walter Postell, Dr. Robert Swain, Parker Watson, and Terrence and Dr. Ralph Wimbish.

The African American Burial Ground Remembering Project (AABG) is based at the University of South Florida. Its mission is to collaborate with Tampa Bay African American communities "to recover histories

Continued on page 14



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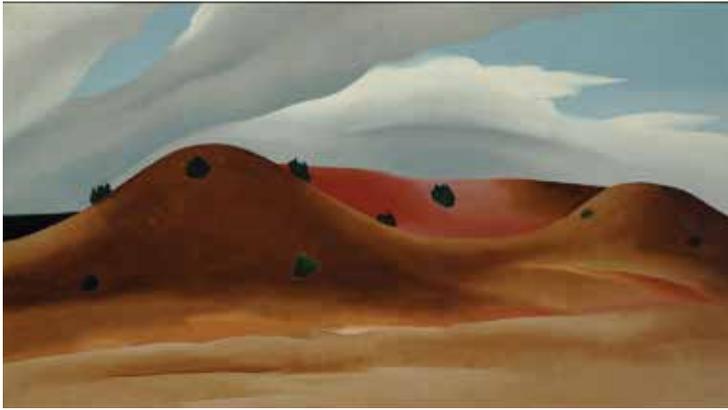
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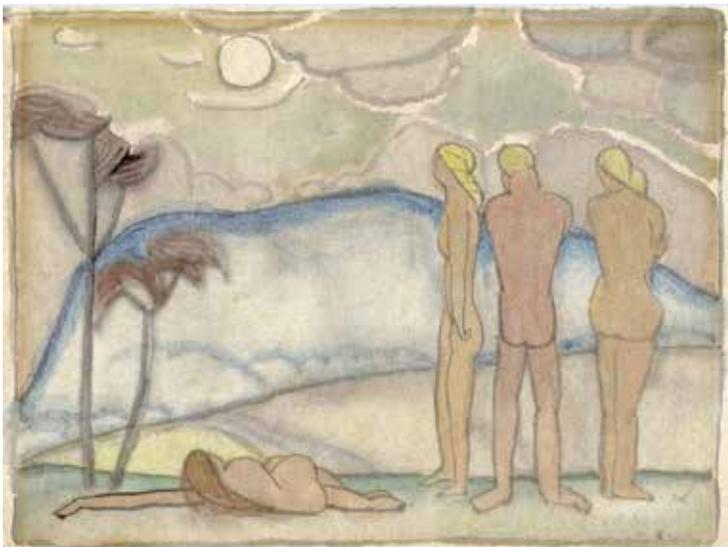
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ST. PETE'S HISTORIC CEMETERIES – continued from page 13

that were paved over.” The project is researching and collecting oral histories and telling the story of Oakland, Evergreen, and Moffett cemeteries. The AABG is in the beginning phase of new genealogical research on African American cemeteries in St. Petersburg, including a master listing of those reported buried in those cemeteries. That effort is coordinated by Drew Smith, associate librarian at USF. He is seeking volunteers to examine early Pinellas County death certificates for people likely to have been buried at Oaklawn, Evergreen, and Moffett. Work on Lincoln Cemetery is planned to follow.

Ownership of Lincoln Cemetery has been in dispute since 2017. While the Lincoln Cemetery Society claims title to the property and has struggled to provide maintenance for the past few years, they have been inhibited from seeking grants as their title to the property is clouded. Title is also claimed by Greater Mount Zion AME Church. Recently the two parties have come together to try and resolve the matter.

Lincoln Cemetery Society President Gray and Reverend Clarence A. Williams of Greater Mount Zion recently have been in discussion about how the title to Lincoln can be resolved and the two organizations work together. She says she is “very excited that we can come to a resolution that’s good for Lincoln.” Pastor Williams states, “Vanessa Gray has done a wonderful job trying to maintain Lincoln Cemetery. She has taken on a monumental task and poured her heart into this work. She reached out to me about this sacred space, and we feel that we can come together and work something out. We are looking at a new oversight board that can develop the necessary resources to maintain the cemetery. This is not just a local matter. This is part of a larger, national effort to restore and honor African American cemeteries.”

As we approach the Thanksgiving season these are hopeful developments that may bring needed dignity to those who were buried at Oakland, Evergreen, Moffett – and particularly to the unknown burials at Lincoln Cemetery – and healing to their families and descendants. ●

Will Michaels is a 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. Reach him at wmichaels2222@gmail.com.

AROUND THE BLOCK



A Meeting of the Mayors

On October 6, there was a recent rare gathering of St. Petersburg’s former mayors to honor the 62-year Sister City Relationship between St. Petersburg and Takamatsu, Japan. Included in the photo first row are former mayor Bill Foster, Mayor Ken Welch, Mayor Heido Onishi of Takamatsu, and former mayor Bob Ulrich. The second row includes former mayor Rick Kriseman and former mayor Rick Baker with other members of the Japanese visiting delegation. All former mayors except Rick Kriseman have visited Takamatsu. Activities have included many teacher-and-student exchanges between the two cities over the years. The visit was coordinated by Kathy Michaels, chair of the St. Petersburg Folk Festival Sister City Visitation.

~ Will Michaels

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The Holidays Are Here

Brandy Stark

Art is in the air! Draw inspiration and recapture your sense of wonder with the myriad upcoming exhibits and events this holiday season. Here's just a sample of the 'Burg's festive flair.

Art Centers

Florida CraftArt: Unwrapped. 510 Central Avenue. November 1 to December 31. Monday – Saturday, 10am-5:30pm; Sunday, noon-5pm. floridacraftart.org
Florida CraftArt celebrates the holidays with its crafters! Come visit a gallery full of unique handmade items, perfect for every person on Santa's list.

Florida CraftArt Festival: November 18 (10am-5pm) and 19 (10am-4pm). The 500 block of Central Avenue. floridacraftart.org/craftart/fcafestival

In addition to the gallery show, FCA hosts its 26th autumn art festival featuring 100 of the nation's best craft artists in ceramics, fiber, glass, jewelry, metal, mixed media, and wood. There will be artist demonstrations, music, a children's MiniMakers activity tent, food trucks, and beer and wine sellers.

Morean Arts Center: All Is Bright. 719 Central Avenue. November 11 – December 30. Open daily, 10am-5pm. moreanartscenter.org

Need a great gift idea? The Morean once again hosts its annual members show, a community favorite and a staple for artists. Find ornaments, sculpture, paintings, and other unique items. Come out and support local!

Morean Center for Clay: First Annual Juried Mug Exhibition. 420 22nd Street South. November 11 – December 30. Open Wednesday – Saturday, 10am-5pm. Contact 727-821-7162 ext. 2311.

This exhibition is designed to "showcase the artist who pushes past the boundaries and barriers of the standard mug." Featuring nearly 150 unique creations by ceramic artists across the country, this show celebrates the diversity of forms created by ceramic artists near and far.

Museum of Fine Arts: Artist Talk | Jose Alvarez 255 Beach Drive NE. November 9, 6-7pm. Marley Room. \$15 MFA Members; \$30 Not-yet Members. mfastpete.org

Born Deyvi Orangel Peña Arteaga, Jose Alvarez (D.O.P.A.) creates "paintings/collages on mica, videos, installations, and performances, through which he breaks down belief systems into intersecting components of science, spirituality, and mysticism. Alvarez has exhibited and performed at numerous venues, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Norton Museum of Art, and The Kemper Art Museum."

Spots About Town

Artlofts: Smokin' Hot. 5th Street North, above Florida CraftArt. Monday – Friday, 10am-5pm; Saturday, 12-4pm, Second Saturday, 5-9 pm. November 1-30.



Artist Lisa Bagley's mixed media Christmas tree at the Morean.

Contact Susan Hess at 727-504-8788.

Fall is here but Artlofts is Smokin' Hot in November! Artlofts artists have used their various mediums to create one-of-a-kind art items using recycled cigar boxes and pipes. Come see this unusual and fun exhibit then visit with the ArtLofts artists in their working studios.

Artists of Christmas Past. December 1 – 31. Artlofts invites a few of its past artists back to show off what they're currently creating. From jewelry to paintings, you can pick up some holiday gifts while visiting with old friends.

Smokin' 19: Cornucopia. 3090 34th Street North. November 17 – December 15. 11am-10pm, daily. smokin19.com

This show asks artists what they are most grateful for as we celebrate the season of Thanksgiving. Is it comrades, creativity, or a certain commodity? Come out and support local with this show and give artists one more thing to be thankful for: you.

Holiday Spirit. December 16 – January 15. Christmas is a time associated with ghost stories; remember Scrooge and Marley? This show asks artists to create concepts related to the holiday spirit – be it spectral, the embodiment of the hope of the season, or even a good cocktail.

The Werk: Category Is... 2210 1st Avenue South. December 1 – January 26. Thursday – Sunday, 12-5pm.

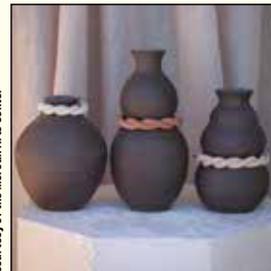
Voguing, ballroom, and 10s 10s 10s across the board! Finish out the year strong with another solo exhibition by John Gascot. For more information, contact 727-289-8685.



Florida CraftArt's Emerging Artist Ashley Burke creates whimsical jewelry.



The Morean Center for Clay presents their First Annual Juried Mug Exhibition.



Olivia Rogowska's braided vases.



Elizabeth Barenis's acrylic work.

Holiday Special Events

Mahaffey Theater: Nutcracker! Magical Christmas Ballet. December 30. 12pm, 4pm, 8pm performances. nutcracker.com/buy-tickets/st-petersburg-fl

Featuring an international cast and Ukrainian principal artists, come and be "transported by the magic of jaw-dropping acrobatics, larger-than-life puppets, and stunning hand-crafted sets and costumes."

Vinoy Park: Shopapalooza. 701 Bayshore Drive. November 25-26. 10am-5pm. shopapaloozafestival.com

Don't miss the biggest Small Business Saturday (and Sunday!) celebration ever! More than 350 small businesses, including artists and creators, will set up shop at Vinoy Park, along with free entertainment, a food hall, activities for all ages and more. (See story page 5.)

Tropicana Field: Enchant. 1 Tropicana Dr. November 24 – December 31. tickets.enchantchristmas.com

The Hallmark Channel once again unveils the "world's largest holiday-themed light event in St. Petersburg!" *Enchant* features an immersive walk-thru light maze with over four million sparkling lights, a 100-foot-tall holiday tree, ice-skating trail, live entertainment, Santa visits, and a holiday shopping marketplace with holiday beverages and cocktails.

Seminole Park: Winter in the 'Wood. December 17, 12-5 pm. kenwoodartistenclave.org/winter-in-the-wood

Do some holiday shopping and enjoy this quaint winter festival with exhibits and performances by Kenwood Enclave artists, activities for children and adults, a visit by Santa, food, live music, and more. ●

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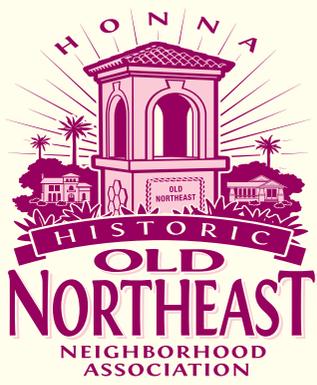
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Rick Carson, editor • rickcarson1@gmail.com

Silver Anniversary Candlelight Tour Tickets



Eight beautiful new and historic homes, live seasonal music, and food and beverages for sale at a "Refreshment Station" will all be featured at this year's 25th annual Historic Old

Northeast Candlelight Tour of Homes. This special event will take place on Sunday, December 10, from 3-8 pm with tickets for this favorite holiday tradition now available for purchase for \$35 at honna.org and the following outlets on 4th Street N. (cash or check only): Marion's, Old Northeast Rally, and Sunken Gardens. The event is once again expected to sell out, so folks are encouraged to purchase tickets early.

"This is a milestone year for the tour, and we've worked especially hard to create an outstanding lineup of homes," notes HONNA President Nick Bell. "We're featuring eight homes ranging from 3,000 to 5,000 square feet vs. six homes last year. Styles include Mediterranean Revival, Colonial Revival, Storybook, Craftsman and traditional four-square." Six of the homes are historic but two are recent builds, giving tour guests a taste of houses ranging from restored 100+ years old to less than two years old.

Tour guests won't go hungry or thirsty this year. A block-long "Refreshment Station" featuring live seasonal music and food and beverages for purchase will be on Cherry Street between 19th and 20th avenues NE. In addition, the Old Northeast Tavern at 7th Avenue N and 2nd Street N will be open for guests and will feature a beverage special. Trolleys will be available to transport guests between nine tour stops. Registration opens at 2:45 pm at Westminster Palms, 939 Beach Drive NE.

November Quarterly Neighborhood Meeting



Lisset Hanewicz

HONNA's final neighborhood gathering of the year will feature St. Pete City Councilmember Lisset Hanewicz, and Evan Mory, city parking director. This annual meeting is set for Monday, November 13, at 7 pm at Westminster Palms, 939 Beach Drive NE.

In addition to voting on candidates for the HONNA Board of Directors, meeting attendees will hear from two city officials. Hanewicz, district 4 councilmember, will address the redevelopment proposal for the Gas Plant District that includes a new stadium for the Tampa Bay Rays. Mory will discuss neighborhood parking issues. Of primary interest is 'round-the-clock parking by "van lifers" on North Shore Drive NE and other streets in the 'hood.

A key component of HONNA's annual meeting is the election of board members for new, two-year terms. Only HONNA members are allowed to vote on the directors, but non-member residents are allowed to join HONNA at the meeting and vote. All ONE residents are encouraged to attend the meeting and hear from our councilmember and city parking director.

Upcoming Porch Party



For Julie Rothfield, the pandemic was a dark cloud with a silver lining. She moved into her historic, 1925 home at 147 21st Avenue NE in February 2020. She moved to St. Pete from Bradenton and didn't really know many people, especially her neighbors on 21st Avenue. "I fell in love with the house," she says, "but I didn't know many people, and then the pandemic hit, and it became hard to meet anyone." But that was the catalyst for Julie's backyard wine parties. She started inviting her neighbors to come hang out in her backyard – socially distancing of course – to get to know one another. The gatherings became a regular occurrence and grew as time wore on. Now, post-pandemic, Julie and her neighbors are close, having weathered the storm together.



Julie's home had been renovated already, complete with a new kitchen. Her most significant addition is a backyard swimming pool, carefully not installed too close to a massive southern live oak that shades her neighbor's home as well as her backyard. With her beautiful backyard now complete, Julie is anxious to host November's Porch Party on Friday, November 17, from 7:30-10 pm and meet more of her ONE neighbors. Light refreshments and water will be provided, but guests are encouraged to BYOB. For more information, visit HONNA.org/events. Porch Parties are a benefit for HONNA members and their guests. Non-member neighborhood residents are also welcome to attend, in which case a small donation at the door or online at HONNA.org is welcomed in order to help defray party expenses.

The annual Holiday Party for HONNA members will take place on Monday, December 18, from 7-10 pm at the Old NE Tavern.

Trunk or Treat at Westminster Palms



Chocolate candy was melting under the blazing Saturday afternoon sun over the Westminster Palms parking lot on October 28, but that didn't deter the kids from having a blast at HONNA's annual Trunk or Treat event. Imaginative and creative decorated car trunks were overflowing with treats, and there were games to test the kids' skills and reward them with prizes. Many thanks to the Westminster Palms residents and others who participated in the day's activities, including Onni Jordan and daughter Onni Grace, Julius Cucci, and Howie & Anita Stein – all who endured the heat with husband John and me to put on a lovely event.

~ Anna Broshears



Halloween Porch Party

Halloween in the 'hood wouldn't be complete without the annual Halloween Porch Party at the home of Steve Deal and Frank Hay that took place on Friday night, October 27. They have been hosting this iconic spooktacular for 21 years – and Frank claims this one was the most amazing to date. With more than 100 crazed and creatively costumed neighbors posing and preening their outlandish attire, HONNA extends its most ghoulish thanks to the devilish duo and all who made it such a frightfully fun and delightful evening.

Please note: Once again, the Old Northeast was decked out with haunting Halloween decorations of all kinds. Four homes stood out and were awarded prizes for "Most Creative," "Spookiest," "Best Lighting" and "Most Interactive." Check out the winners at honna.org.

"Centennial Home" Flag and Garden Banner Now Available



It's taken a while, but the newest Historic Old Northeast flag, honoring our 100+ year old homes, is now available for \$50 on the honna.org store. In addition, this design is also available as a "garden banner" for just \$25.

"We intended to have our latest historic flag available earlier in the summer, but we took a while to make sure we got the colors just right," says HONNA President Nick Bell. "We wanted the color scheme to fit with the other historic flags and so we ended up going with a deep royal blue background and cream and yellow accents."

The flag and garden banner feature a historic "four-square" home, symbolic of homes built in the Old Northeast a century ago and the verbiage "Historic Old Northeast Centennial Home." "A beautiful thing about our neighborhood is the array of architectural styles," Nick notes. "We obviously couldn't feature every architectural style, but we felt the 'four-square' was symbolic of our early homes."

If your home is over 100 years old or if you know someone in the Old Northeast with a centennial home, go to honna.org/store to purchase your flag and/or garden banner.



Waterfront Parks Announce Picnic Land Event

A world record!? The Waterfront Parks Foundation (WPF) invites St. Petersburg friends and families to join them in creating the world's longest picnic blanket record on Saturday, November 18, at Flora Wylie Park from 3-6 pm.

"The Picnic Land event will fill Flora Wylie Park with winding, continuous rows of colorful picnic blankets, each large enough to comfortably fit a family of four," said WPF President Logan DeVicente. "Picnic Land is a co-sponsored city event. Guests will enjoy the family friendly atmosphere with games, food trucks, live music, professional storytellers, a magician, and educational activities."



Tickets for 2023 Picnic Land are now available at picnicland.org or on the WPF website. Each \$40 ticket gives you admission for four, complete with a large souvenir blanket for family and friends. Guests can bring their picnic basket, purchase a special charcuterie picnic box from Lolita's Wine Market (available at the time of ticket purchase) or choose from among food trucks at the park. All proceeds will support the work of the Waterfront Parks Foundation.

For 11 years, the Waterfront Parks Foundation has worked to preserve, protect, and promote St. Petersburg's magnificent, award-winning waterfront parks system in partnership with our city's Parks and Recreation Department. The foundation, together with the unwavering support of the Majeed Foundation, continues to beautify the parks with rotating flower beds, adding new "dark sky" lighting, holding numerous park clean-ups and developing and installing multiple park swings and benches for the enjoyment of all. Picnic Land celebrates over a decade of preserving, protecting, and promoting our waterfront parks. Bring your families and friends together and create another memorable chapter in our shared history.

Stay Connected



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

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).

HONNA Flags

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



HONNA'S SHINING STARS

In an effort to honor Old Northeast homeowners for preserving or updating their home or property and investing to keep the character and history of their homes intact, HONNA recognizes them with the Neighborhood STAR Award.

Here is the STAR for November/December: 217 10th Avenue NE, Michael & Mary Ellen Hussey.

Find new STARS posted monthly with yard signs, on honna.org, and on HONNA's Facebook page. We invite you to be a part of this effort, so nominate a neighbor or a refurbished property you admire in the ONE.

Have a home to honor? Send the information to Charleen McGrath at treasurer@honna.org.



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MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS



Sarah Conrad
17th Street NE

How long have you lived in St. Pete and where are you from?
Born and raised in St. Pete, I moved away for college and jobs. I moved back two years ago to be closer to my mom.

Favorite place to visit in St. Pete?
Sunken Gardens. My kids think it's their own backyard!

Most interesting, enjoyable, or exotic vacation you've taken?
My husband and I traveled to Thailand for a wedding a few years ago and snuck away for three days to a secluded hillside in the Phi Phi islands.

Top two places in the world on your bucket list?
I worked at Greek Village in Seminole for many years and became close with the Greek family who owns it. Ever since, I've loved Greek food and culture. I've been to Athens, but would love to spend some more relaxing time on the islands.

What famous person, current or past, would you like to meet and why?
I read a biography of Winston Churchill a long time back and have been fascinated with him ever since. I was able to visit his war room bunkers in London years ago and would love to hear what he thought of the world today over a cup of tea.

A great movie you'd recommend or current TV series you are watching?
I'm a big fan of both drama and historical fiction and I find *Downton Abbey* to be the best of both. I'm currently re-watching it for probably the sixth time.

If you were a dog, what breed would you be?
My husband tells me I'd be a Doberman because I can be fierce when provoked but am ultimately unconditionally loyal toward my family and loved ones.

Tell us about a situation or a person who has inspired you.
My mom inspires me with her steadfast resilience in the face of whatever challenges come her way. I hope to model her "family first" mindset for my kids.

Current book you've read and would recommend?
Pam Tebow's *Ripple Effects* is a story of incredible courage and faith. She's an inspiring mother and it's not hard to see how her son Timmy became who he is today.

Tell us about an accomplishment of which you are proud.
I am most proud of my children and the role I get to play in their lives as their mom.

Something people might not know about you?
As an aspiring sports reporter in high school, I was fortunate enough to get the opportunity to attend Media Day at Super Bowl XLIII. I got the chance to ask questions to Ben Roethlisberger, Warren Sapp, Roger Goodell, and many others. My favorite memory was asking Bruce Springsteen how he was able to sustain popularity across multiple generations of fans.

What do you do for a living?
I am a now a stay-at-home-mom to our 3-year-old son and 1-year-old daughter. They are sweet and smart and have given me the best career I could've ever imagined.

Tell us something about your family and pets.
I met my husband working at Amazon in Seattle and brought him back to Florida with me. We now live here with our two children and have one sweet baby on the way this spring!



Jeff Riebesell
1st Street North

How long have you lived in St. Pete and where are you from originally?
I have lived in St. Pete for two years now and I am originally from New Jersey.

Favorite place to visit in St. Pete?
So many places I love in St. Pete... I enjoy walking and biking along the bay and going to the pier or any of the restaurants along Beach Drive. I think my favorites are Bacchus Wine Bistro (great happy hours) and Sauvignon Wine Locker on Central. Favorite museums are the American Museum of Arts and Crafts and the Dalí.

Most interesting, enjoyable, or exotic vacation you've taken?
Been on two fabulous bucket-list vacations in the last year. My partner and I went with 16 friends to Greece (Mykonos and Santorini), and most recently we returned from Switzerland where we were in the Swiss Alps, Lucerne, and Zurich.

Top two places in the world on your bucket list?
Next two bucket list places will be Amsterdam and Hawaii!

What famous person, current or past, would you like to meet and why?
Walt Disney! He was such a great entrepreneur and a pioneer of the animation industry. I would find him fascinating to meet and talk to him about his career.

Favorite sport, recreational activity, or hobby?
We like kayaking in Coffee Pot Bayou, and playing pickleball, but the most fun is the shuffleboard league with our friends. Our team name is "Gettin Jiggy Wit It."

A great movie you'd recommend or current TV series you are watching?
One of my favorite movies from years ago is *The Six Sense* with Bruce Willis. Currently have been watching the sitcom *Kim's Convenience*.

If you were a dog, what breed would you be?
Probably a Labradoodle; they are friendly, energetic, and love being around people.

Tell us about a situation or a person who has inspired you.
I am inspired by and respect all individuals who protect this country in the United States Armed Forces.

Current book you've read and would recommend?
Currently reading *The Whistler* by John Grisham and *Spare* about Prince Harry.

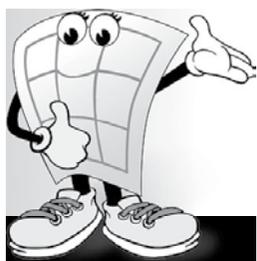
Tell us about an accomplishment, current or past, of which you are proud.
I started as a teacher, got my MBA, and changed careers in my late 20s. I became the corporate marketing director of an \$80 billion dollar banking institution.

Something people might not know about you?
That I hold three professional teaching certifications!

What do you do for a living?
I'm a real estate agent with Southern Roots Realty (St. Pete) and Atlanta Fine Homes Sotheby's International (where I most recently lived before St. Pete).

Tell us something about your family and pets.
I live here in St. Pete with my partner Charles and our dog Hudson. Charles has lived in the Tampa Bay area for over 30 years. I have two children and five grandchildren. ●

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PEOPLE AND PETS

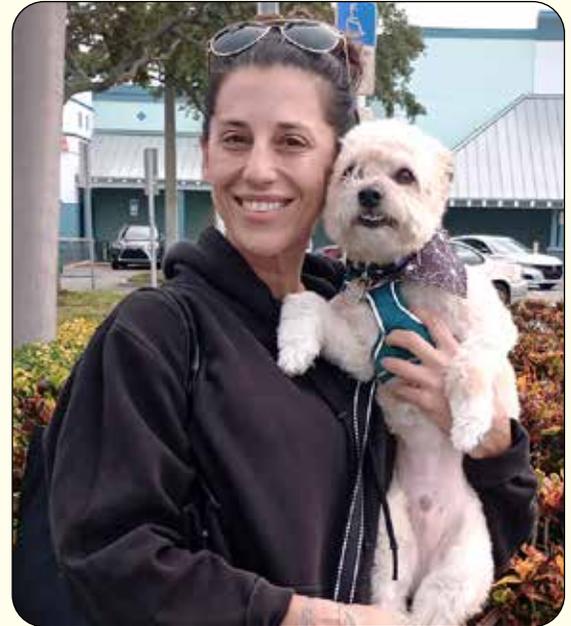
Calling all residents of the Old Northeast, Snell Isle, Venetian Isles, Crescent Lake, Crescent Heights, and Downtown!
 Email your HIGH-RES digital photo to editor@northeastjournal.org. Please include your name, address, phone number, and pet's name.
 Photos by Brandy Stark unless otherwise noted.



Faith with Cupcake
 Downtown St. Pete



Victoria and Alfredo with Ziva
 Downtown St. Pete



Matilda with Chip, fresh from the groomer
 Northeast Shopping Center



Olivia with a shy Nova
 Northshore



Dominico and his cat, Ra
 Roser Park



Leslie and Rick with Brizzy
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Remembering Jessie Woods, St. Pete's Daredevil in the Sky

Mary Fletcher

If you had seen a certain silver-haired senior lady walking around the Northeast Shopping Center in the early 1990s, you would have never guessed she was a famous wing-walker, aerobat, and pilot.

It all started in 1928. Jessie Schultz was bored that summer at her parents' farm in rural Ulysses, Kansas – that is until she met and eloped with charming barnstormer pilot Jimmie Woods. With just enough clothes stuffed into her violin case, she flew off into the clouds with him and never looked back.

They flew back to Wichita where Jimmy had a job at the Swallow Factory selling airplanes and ferrying them to buyers, but they also made extra income from barnstorming – entertaining crowds with novelty flights. Barnstorming meant sleepless nights on the ground under a wing or cramped into the tight leather-seated cockpit. It was tireless work for Jessie selling tickets, managing passengers to and from the aircraft, and mending torn fabric on the plane.

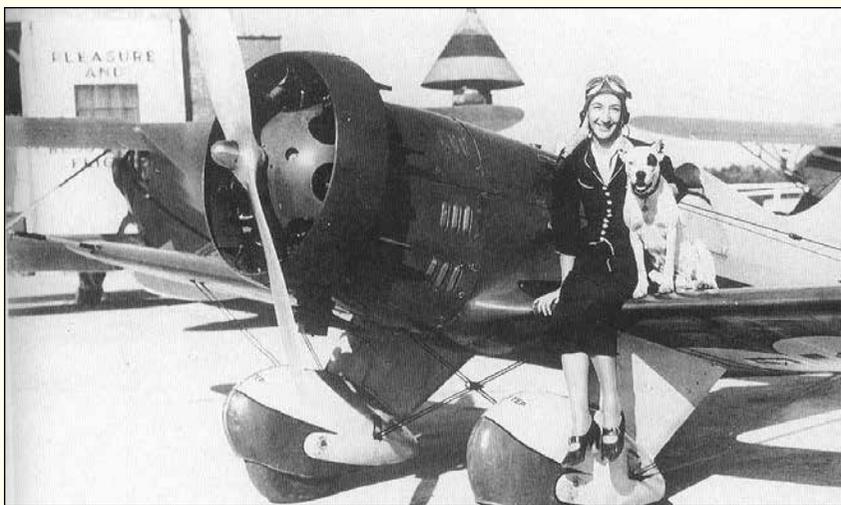
In the fall of 1928 production had slowed at the factory. They were living in a tiny, unheated flat and it was getting cold. With their meager belongings and a little money, they barnstormed their way to Florida. The weather was warmer, but Florida's visitors weren't lavishly spending cash for airplane flights. They lived hand to mouth, sometimes going to bed hungry.

On slow days, if they had enough gas, Jimmy taught Jessie to fly. They were in Lake City, Florida with other barnstormers and their planes when Jimmie, bored with no customers that day, urged Jessie into the cockpit. She made two landings, and they were credible – no ground loops and nothing worse than a bounce or two. She was a pilot. Not bad for a woman, all the men said, teasing her.

Jimmy had been toying with the idea of an air circus for some time. Barnstorming was OK, but it would be more lucrative if customers were lured with daring stunts and thrilling aerobatics. They needed a real attraction. They needed a wing-walker – a woman wing-walker.

Jessie really did not have a choice. She had severed ties with her family by eloping with Jimmy and she did not have enough money to even get back home. She was terrified on that first flight. Jimmy was at the controls of the Swallow; he had showed her where to stand on the wing and hold on to the wires. He tied a rope around her waist and flew directly over the main street of Lake City. The two of them lived through that first wing walk and learned from it. Jessie had a bold demand: If she was going to walk on the wing of an airplane, she was doing it with no rope and no goggles.

For 10 years the Flying Aces Air Circus continued to wow crowds with Jessie performing daring feats of wing



Jessie's dog, Chandelle, was her buddy in the Cub she flew

walking, parachute jumping, and rope-ladder-hanging from her knees. From 1929 to 1938, the Flying Aces performed over 480 air shows, a minimum of one a week.

The show collected a diverse group of individuals who performed stunts, and people eagerly paid \$1 a car to see. Dangerous ground acts included head-on car crashes, and motorcycles crashing through burning boards. Jessie performed parachute jumping with a Switlik chest pack on her back that was too big for her slight frame, and she was often dragged across the rough ground after landing. She succeeded for quite a while on a subterfuge, climbing in and out of airplanes wearing a chute that was clearly visible to any government employee who might see her. Once in the plane she removed it, tying it into the seat belt of the front cockpit during her wing-walking act.

Jessie's dog, Chandelle, was her buddy in the Cub she flew. Jessie would take off as the pilot in command with Chandelle sitting patiently until they were airborne. Then on Jessie's signal they switched seats and at the hint that another airplane was passing them, she would dip as low in her seat as she could get, making it look like her bulldog was flying a Cub at 2,000 feet.

The Air Circus played an important part in aviation history and the tremendous publicity given to aviation. Stunts in the 1930s became increasingly spectacular and influenced aircraft designers to create more agile and stronger machines. The circus brought aviation to a rural public that knew nothing of airplanes and, in many cases, had no other opportunity to see them. Pilots and mechanics developed skills and later went on to the airlines and the military. Struggling aviators banded together in flying circuses as they offered regular pay, professional advertising, and proper maintenance of the aircraft.

By 1936, there was no getting around tightening noose of restrictions and the increasingly hostile number of government requirements. They weren't allowed the dangerous performances of speeding motorcycles through flaming boards. No more dangerous flour

bombing of cars by pilots diving toward them. That danger would not be tolerated. The Flying Aces Air Circus came to an end in 1938 with a final performance was in Charlotte, North Carolina. It had been the longest-running air show in the United States.

It was in Charlotte that Jimmy contracted a mysterious illness and died, leaving Jessie with bills and a decision of what to do next. She became a flight and ground instructor and trained the Army Air Corps cadets for military flying. She joined the Ninety-Nines, an international organization of women pilots, and was their first Governor of the Southeast Section, flying all over the eastern states encouraging women to fly.

She joined the Civil Air Patrol and donated her time as a pilot. The War Training Service programs became essential to the nation's defense during World War II and Jessie threw her energies into seeing that the program was successful.

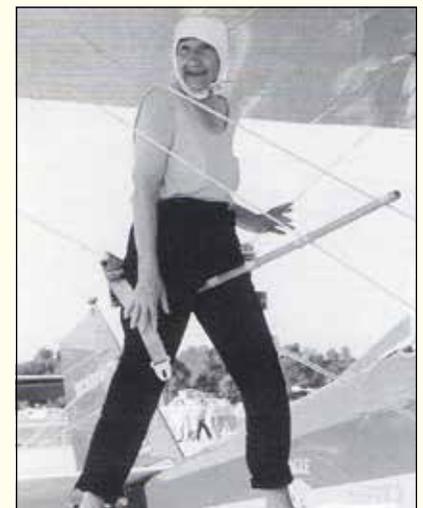
Jessie eventually found her way back to Florida and St. Petersburg, settling down in a one-bedroom apartment in the Old Northeast area. She was always in demand as a featured speaker for the Ninety-Nines and other organizations. In 1991, Zonta International and the Ninety-Nines honored her with an Amelia Earhart Aviation Award with over 100 of her friends present at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club.

Jessie appeared on the Johnny Carson Show and Late Night with David Letterman. She received the OX 5 Aviation Pioneer Woman award in the late 1970s and was inducted into the OX 5 Aviators Pioneers Hall of Fame in 1985. She was inducted into the International Forest of Friendship, Atchinson, Kansas, that honors men and women who have made great contributions to aviation. She was instrumental in getting the OX 5 and the Ninety-Nines a permanent building on the site of the EAA convention and fly-in every year at Sun 'n Fun in Lakeland.

In 1991, at the annual EAA Sun 'n Fun Fly-in, 82-year-old Jessie savored the thrill of one more wing walk. With her pilot friend Steve Oliver at the controls of his 1929 Standard biplane, Jessie



Jessie holding one of the posters that advertised the weekend show



In 1991, Jessie savored the thrill of one more wing walk.



Jessie at home in St. Petersburg.

straddled the javelin on the right wing and blew kisses to the crowd below while hanging on to the wire. The return to the skies was nostalgic and she loved every minute of it.

When day-to-day chores became too much for Jessie, her family brought her back to Great Bend, Kansas, where she passed away in 2001 at age 92. Jessie overcame many obstacles in establishing herself in the male-dominated aviation industry and serves as an excellent role model to young women today. After her death, the Suncoast 99s started a scholarship in her honor for a young girl to attend a weeklong air and space camp of her choice. In 2020, the Florida Aviation Hall of Fame voted in this remarkable woman who was truly ahead of her time... a legend. ●

assistant conductor of the Louisiana Philharmonic and Opera Orlando, and she has guest-conducted for orchestras around the world. She was previously the 2022-2023 assistant conductor for TFO, leading youth and community concerts, conducting Pops and Morning Coffee concerts, as well as assisting Music Director Michael Francis and other conductors.

On top of her new position at TFO, Gallo is also currently conducting with as many as six other orchestras. She graciously took time from her packed schedule to share with us unique insight into her background and creative thought.

For the 2023-24 season, you've got what looks like an intense schedule. How do you balance your time and creative energy?

Making music with others is something that gives us energy! Maybe the travel or the isolation becomes tiring, but certainly not the music. In the words of Taylor Swift: 'I get tired, but I'm never tired of it.' The appreciation I feel for every experience with these marvelous orchestras and musicians is indescribable. And to the other half of your question: Balancing my time is not something I have ever succeeded with. Quite a failure, actually.

Is there a particular work you'd love to conduct? What has been your most challenging piece to date?

When I was 12 years old or so, the Berlin Philharmonic released a DVD for Sir Simon Rattle's debut season: Mahler's 5th Symphony. My parents gifted it to

me for my birthday. I was instantly hooked. Love at first sight and listen. I had no idea what was happening, but I was obsessed – I loved the conductor, I loved the music, I remember thinking that the space they were playing in looked like a church. That performance is one that I think had the most influence. I would love to conduct that symphony someday.

By far the most difficult music to conduct is opera. But it's a fun type of difficulty – a beautiful, symbiotic challenge to align text, voice, music, lighting, acting, sets, and more. When it all works, it's heavenly.

What does a typical day look like for you?

Slightly chaotic. I wish I were a person who regularly ate breakfast or had a morning routine. My days are adventures, but I'm thankful for all of the experiences. Fortunately, our incredible team at The Florida Orchestra keeps everything moving and on track.

What is the most unexpected moment you've experienced during a live performance?

One of the best things about live, living art is you never know what's going to happen! There have been power outages, fires, fights, medical emergencies, broken batons, illnesses, and jump-ins. Every day in the theater is an adventure!

You've lived and traveled all over the world and the states, but where are you from? How did you get started on your path to conducting?

We are from California. I completed

graduate studies in Vienna, Austria, and then my doctorate from the University of Michigan. After that, it was just picking which path to explore as opportunities arose. I never thought I would be a conductor. The whole plan was to go to college to play softball. A torn ACL changed everything.

Who or what inspired you to take up conducting and pursue a career in music?

I have been very fortunate to have guides at every step of my journey. When finishing undergrad, a teacher asked if I had ever thought about conducting. I was quite emphatic that it was not something I wanted to try. He saw something in me that influenced the rest of my life. Turns out, it was everything I needed to make sense of the world.

Conductors hold a sort of iconic place in our culture. What's something that would surprise most people about your work?

Yes, the 'Maestro Myth' or the 'Maestro Mystic' is quite catchy and alluring. The one thing that people need to know, which is both the most obvious and most abstract, is that the conductor makes no sound. We make no music. We share a vision and invite the musicians to give us their sound to paint a temporal picture. We are the first listeners. Conducting is much less about authority and much more about absorption. It's a balancing act of output and input and deciding how what you're receiving fits into a hierarchy of order predetermined by you, the architect. The musical decision-making is filtered through your



Gallo conducting with TFO.

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Photo courtesy of Chelsea Gallo

TFO's new resident conductor Chelsea Gallo says classical music is a mirror of our culture – and what it could be.

concert hall. You'll arrive as you are but leave changed.

You've been involved in musical projects for NASA, the National Institute of Aerospace, the European Space Agency, and other science and technology projects. Tell us a little bit about your connection to this work. What do science and music have in common?

They're both pursuits of truth, beauty, and meaning. They're depictions of teamwork and unified vision. They're our attempts to explore the unknown and bring back answers. They're two sides of the same coin.

What advice would you give to young or aspiring conductors/musicians?

- Just two things:
 1) Freedom is on the other side of discipline
 2) Read

What music do you listen to in your downtime? What's your favorite playlist?

The Smiths... The Killers... Taylor Swift... Bad Bunny.

You've been called a "rising star" in the conducting world, but you're also an athlete who played professional softball in Vienna. How have sports helped your conducting career – and vice versa?

I love sports. Symphonic performance is a sport. I truly mean that. When you're a top-level athlete, at some point you stop competing against an opponent, you ascend to the next level of competition, which is against yourself. After that, you ascend another rung to compete against the game itself. Symphonic musicians already exist on that last rung. We don't have tangible opponents, but we



Gallo as TFO's assistant conductor at the 2022 Pops in the Park

confront the challenge with the goal of achievement through teamwork. It's the greatest sports team to ever exist, really. Eighty people, all synchronized, with one goal – and we're wordless. Through the loss of our most communicable sense, we transmit more than we could otherwise. Come to one of our concerts and see how much work, muscle-flexing, and exertion you see from our athletes – I mean musicians. They train like athletes; they perform like athletes. They just wear tuxedos instead of jerseys.

You're a bit of a language nerd. What's your favorite language to speak and what's been the hardest to study?

At the moment, I'm trying to learn Catalan. My husband is from a town outside Barcelona. As his wife, I would like to be able to speak to him in his own language.

Name one or two contemporary composers we should all be listening to now.

Unfortunately, she just passed away in June, but the music of Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho is hauntingly

beautiful. Her opera *L'amour de Loïen* has a time-bending effect that alters your reality. Also, American composer Missy Mazzoli; she has a very deep and geometric sound. Her opera *Breaking the Waves* is a horrible tragedy with sounds that somehow make the finality far worse than it otherwise would be. We will be performing some of her music in January. Definitely worth hearing.

What is your favorite thing about being in the Bay Area so far?

I love that everyone here calls it the "Bay Area." Every time I hear it, I think of the Bay Area in California. The people are exceptionally kind. Everyone has been so welcoming. The Buccaneers, the Rays, and the Lightning are big highlights, for sure! Too bad about the Rays' playoffs this year. If anyone is feeling bummed about our teams' performances, you still have a world-class orchestra here in "The Bay." ●

Learn more about Chelsea Gallo at chelseagallos.com; explore TFO's upcoming events and more at floridaorchestra.org.



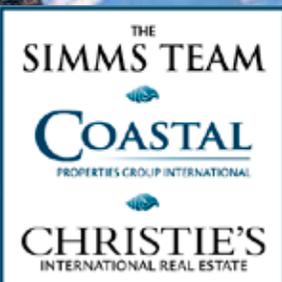
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By contrast, in 2023 residents expected the surge and many spent days filling sandbags, using plastic to create barriers along garages and doors, moving vehicles to higher ground, and preparing for the loss of power.

But no amount of Visqueen and sand can stop rising water indefinitely. As this issue prints, Hurricane Idalia is still a daily presence in many readers' lives. More than 1,200 homes in Shore Acres were damaged by the flooding brought by a storm that some might say "missed" the Tampa Bay area; 82% of the storm damage in St. Petersburg was in Shore Acres.

Yet, in those hot, sweaty days of late summer 2023 emerged the defining quality of Shore Acres that goes beyond its curving streets and shimmering water: the neighborhood's strong sense of community. It's a sentiment repeated often as residents recount the hours and days that followed the arrival of Idalia.

Taylor and Tim Shallenberg live on Ohio Avenue with their two daughters. Their experience with rising water from Hurricane Eta in 2020 prepared them to mitigate the loss from Idalia. They evacuated their daughters to Taylor's mother's home and went about the business of moving their belongings off the floor and wrapping table legs in trash bags. "We even removed all the interior doors, not only to use them as tables, but also to avoid water damage," Taylor said, recalling how expensive and time-consuming it was to replace the doors in 2020.

With the kids safe with grandma, Tim and Taylor stayed to monitor the tides. When it came time to leave, an unlikely rescuer arrived: a neighborhood boy paddled up in his kayak and gave the Shallenberg's elderly black Labrador, Riley, a ride to high ground. Keeping the door fortified against water seeping in, they used their living room window to get out. The time spent preparing paid off. Less than two months later, there's little sign of the storm in the Shallenberg's home. Tim is skilled in construction and his brother owns a busy handyman business.

Social media had a positive influence during Idalia, allowing residents to share information on water levels in real time. Those who evacuated relied on doorbell cameras and remote security systems to track flooding and power outages. Resident John Martin deployed a drone at the peak of the surge and shared the footage on the Shore Acres Civic Association (SACA) Facebook page.



Residents gathered at the "Raise Up Forum" at the Shore Acres Rec Center, to learn how to access federal money for lifting homes above flood level.

Photos by Nicole Vinson unless otherwise noted



From Agnes to Idalia, Shore Acres has proven to be a resilient community where neighbors take care of each other.

Photo by Ray Moore

SACA Vice President Nicole Vinson has a special insight on how the storm affected the neighborhood. She calls herself a "hurricane lawyer," specializing in representing the insured with National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and other property insurance claims. "My first day of law school was the day Hurricane Charley hit [in 2004]," she said, recalling the inspiration for her legal specialty. Pointing out the major difference between flood claims and other insurance claims she said, "NFIP cases are difficult from

the legal perspective because it feels like an insurance case, but you're suing the federal government. They have a different set of rules, and the requirements can change from year to year."

Vinson took to the SACA Facebook page to give neighbors tips on how to prepare for a flood claim, and what kind of documentation they'd need in the event they had to pursue one. She was eager to point out that unlike most homeowners' policies, NFIP does not offer assistance for alternate housing after a flood (FEMA stepped in to assist with this), and if your home has a second story, they expect you to move contents to the upper floor.

Vinson doesn't know all this just because it's her profession; she learned first-hand when her home flooded during Eta. She decided to rebuild a raised home, which is still under construction. Beyond sharing information on how to navigate the NFIP and FEMA bureaucracies she also organized a neighborhood-wide potluck and pool party to bring everyone together several weeks after the storm.

The story of Idalia plays out differently from house to house and street to street, as evidenced by the piles of soggy furniture and building materials that lined some streets and not others. Storms like Idalia reveal weaknesses in infrastructure and Florida's insurance market, and shine a light on old mistakes in neighborhood design. Reflecting on Agnes, the 1972 *St. Petersburg Times* recalled the 1920s real estate boom when "any land dry enough to walk on was dry enough to sell." The paper noted Shore Acres' saucer-shaped contours left many waterfront homes dry, while homes and streets in the middle of the neighborhood were underwater. It wasn't until 1954 that the city required new plats to be 6.5 feet above mean sea level and streets at 5.5 feet; a level still susceptible to frequent flooding, but higher than much of what was dredged in the 1920s. Older lots were exempt from the 1954 rules. Over the years, however, the city has made

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As the cleanup from Idalia commenced, the neighborhood and community mobilized to help the most affected.



Idalia's damage was different from house to house, as piles of soggy debris lined some streets and not others.

numerous improvements to drainage systems to battle issues that were built into the neighborhood's layout.

Another factor in the amount of damage some residents suffered was due to the wake caused by vehicles attempting the streets of Shore Acres. Drivers might be forgiven for moving quickly to avoid stalling, but it causes water to get pushed into otherwise undamaged places. Taylor Shallenberg caught a white truck on video, avoiding the deepest water in the street by driving over the sidewalk and through her front yard. The driver caused a wave that buckled her garage door and toppled tables containing thousands of dollars of tools that were previously high and dry. To prevent further damage, they worked with neighbors to direct traffic away from the flooded street.

And finally, while many Shore Acres residents were prepared to lose power, most didn't realize the insidious effect that saltwater has on electrical systems. In a heartbreaking series of events, when the power was restored, the conductive properties of saltwater caused a half dozen fires, destroying several homes.

As the cleanup from Idalia commenced, the St. Pete community beyond Shore Acres responded. Donation drives produced everything from bleach to diapers. Restaurants and food trucks including Jay Luigi, Longhorn Steakhouse, Fo'Cheezey, Kona Ice, Santa Fe Sausage Company, and The Slammer Shop came in to serve residents free food. The Gathering Church made and delivered meals throughout the area. Magic 94.9 set up a tent accepting and distributing donations and handing out free food. American Signature Furniture offered 20% off for Shore Acres residents. The city of St. Pete offered a free Saturday camp at the rec center so parents could get work done on their day off, and the city made it legal to "driveway camp" in RVs and trailers.



More than 1,200 homes in Shore Acres were damaged by the flooding.

Storms have had a way of bonding the Shore Acres community. As people pause from their work to have a free sandwich, they meet neighbors they've lived near, but never known. Soon they're loaning tools and equipment, sharing information, and making recommendations on reputable professional work. Vinson described the way the neighborhood has supported one another: "I have dozens of new connections. I was blown away by how amazing every neighbor was to everyone and the amount of resources people shared. Everyone was in it together. There was an amazing community effort that you think would be in a Hallmark movie. People who had their own problems were helping others."

Food trucks and potlucks aren't just post-storm activities around here. And it's part of why people rebuild and stay. A few "For Sale, As Is" signs popped up after the storm, resulting in quick cash sales where new homes will be built above flood levels. That's one solution to a problem that no drainage system or seawall can fix. But most show a keen interest in staying in a community they love. Residents gathered at the "Raise Up Forum" at the Shore Acres Rec Center, to learn how to access federal money for lifting homes above flood level. (The Power Point presentation is available at rivierabay.org.) Another forum discussed other mitigation techniques, such as products like water-repellent cabinets and flooring (which the Shallenbergs used successfully after Eta) and waterproof drywall.

From Agnes to Idalia, Shore Acres has proven to be a resilient community where neighbors take care of each other. With each storm, lessons are learned and improvements are made to reduce the risk in future storms. Whether raising homes above flood level, or razing homes and building higher, the community endures, not despite the water, but in part because of it. And that kind of solidarity is hard to beat. ●



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Local Pianist-Author Brings Divas to Life with Operatic Tales

Jeannie Carlson

Traditionally, operatic stories are filled with melodrama, romance, and adventure. Chaim Freiberg's latest book, *Lily Flowers Finds Love (and Other Tales of Passion)*, published by St. Petersburg Press last year, has all those qualities, but with a twist: these opera fantasy stories all take place in now-shuttered opera houses.

"The stories are all inspired by real people, real places, and real opera houses that are no more," said Freiberg, who has given several talks on his book at Studio@620 as well as Barnes and Noble. At these events he invokes some of the mysterious people, places, and opera houses that stirred him to divine these legends. "I also bring in music," says Freiberg, "to share the emotion and passion behind the stories."

Freiberg knows what he is talking about, as music has been the driving force in his life. Born in 1948 in Israel, the year that it became a country, Freiberg loved classical music and playing piano from an early age. He graduated from the Rubin Academy of Music in Tel Aviv, and then from the Julliard School of Music in New York City.

"At the same time, I applied at Julliard [in 1973], I auditioned and was accepted at the Royal Academy of Music in London. I thought I might end up in London, but decided to accept the offer at Julliard instead," says Freiberg. "I had a tuition scholarship at Julliard and taught piano to sustain myself."

Another bonus of the Julliard connection was being taught by international celebrity pianists. "My three teachers were very well-known pianists: Nadia Reisenberg, Felicia Blumenthal, and Eugene List. I played the opening concert to celebrate the opening at the Tel Aviv Museum of the impressive Felicia Blumenthal art collection."

Serendipity continuously underscored Freiberg's growth as a musician. A voice teacher bartered singing lessons in exchange for Freiberg to play piano as her accompanist. The bartering arrangement gave him the opportunity to develop his vocal skills while at the same time fine-tuning his talents as an accompanist.

Freiberg taught piano and voice for 42 years at the Kaufman Music Center in New York City, living in an apartment near Lincoln Center throughout his tenure in the Big Apple. "I was twice officially honored in 1997 and 2003 by the Kaufman Music Center in recognition of my work as a teacher of piano and voice," said Freiberg, "but when I taught piano, I always had stories in my head."

While based in NYC, Freiberg played at Carnegie Recital Hall and Merkin Hall. He also appeared in recitals in many colleges and universities and performed worldwide.

"I was closely associated as a pianist with world-renowned dancer and choreographer Anna Sokolow with whom I performed in Poland, Israel, and South America," says Freiberg.

Frequently speaking wistfully about the past, Freiberg looks off as if apparitions of these once vibrant virtuosos are floating nearby. "[Sokolow] always wore black. I am mentioned in the book about her life."



Freiberg performing with Elisabeth Berkowitz at Merkin Hall in 2002 at a faculty concert of the Kaufman Music Center.



Local author Chaim Freiberg draws from his many years as a professional pianist for his stories.

Rubbing elbows with the musically famous gave him a special appreciation for divas that is reflected in his book. All the protagonists in his stories are female opera singers with soaring voices. The passion each story's diva experiences on stage playing a particular leading opera role is directly paralleled by the character's life off-stage.

Why divas as the central figure in each story? "Women are more complex and nuanced, more interesting," says Freiberg. "I just don't see a tenor being that fascinating."

As it does for many, the mystery of women begins for Freiberg with his mother. In the late 1930s, Freiberg's teenage mother emigrated from Poland

to Palestine, before it became Israel, to escape the Nazis. She fled with a group of teens, and no adults. The rest of her family stayed in Poland and ultimately perished. Later she met and married a Romanian émigré and the couple had Freiberg along with his three brothers.

The trauma and loss Freiberg's mother experienced in her youth haunted her, making her emotionally distant and inscrutable to him. "I could never understand her, but she was beautiful and smart."

Freiberg's heroines have brighter outcomes. Spoiler alert: whatever ghosts these protagonists struggle against, the beautiful and talented divas of *Lily Flowers Finds Love* make it through to find happiness.

In a book, it can be difficult to translate the sound of the music that underscores the story. Freiberg has the music take visual shape with illustrations by artist Saylor Pascoe. There is a vibrant yet dreamlike feel to Pascoe's interpretations of Freiberg's stories that almost seem to transform the music into

physicality – like the manifestation of an apparition.

In 2019 just before the pandemic began, Freiberg retired to downtown St. Petersburg. Shortly thereafter, "A new friend who taught writing locally here in St. Pete convinced me to write my stories and see about getting them published."

Lily Flowers Finds Love is Freiberg's third book, and the second published by St. Petersburg Press. His first book was Ms. *Adelaide's Piano (and Other Tales of Music and Love)* followed by his second, Ms. *Flora and the Squirrel (and Other Tales of Friendship and Gratitude)*. At the end of 2023, Freiberg's fourth book, a trilogy, *Quasi Una Fantasia: "Moonlight Sonata" (and Other Tales of Endless Love)* is due to be published – also by St. Petersburg Press.

Like Freiberg playing his fabulous Baldwin grand piano, his words flow like the notes that echo even after the sound vanishes, as in this excerpt from his forthcoming *Quasi Una Fantasia*:

Called the "sustain pedal," it was described by Chopin as "the soul of the piano" for keeping the strings open, free to vibrate like a singing voice. Pulling her back straight to sit upright, her fingers found their way to the opening chord of the Nocturne in C Sharp Minor. Like a medieval hymn, the overtones of the painfully out of tune piano hovered above her in the air of the cold room, wailing like distant voices from the past, calling her back... ◆

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 Extending an arbor welcome through the open gate ●

~ Jeannie Carlson

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Helping Abuse Survivors Through Yoga and More

Stacie Steinke

The last six years have been a game of lost and found. Feeling a little lost in Northern Virginia, we had the chance to move to Old Northeast in 2017 and found this beautiful community along the water to start a new life. Even in this idyllic location, it can take a while to put down roots, however. I felt a little lost, until I found the yoga community here in St. Pete.

Fast forward with two years of practice at YogaBlu and Body Electric Yoga Company, followed by yoga teacher training, and I was looking for a nonprofit for whom I could offer yoga on a donation basis. Doing good for ourselves while doing good for others! Through neighbor

and friend, Susie Chisolm, I found the League to Aid Abused Children and Adults Inc., or Infinity, which raises funds for local nonprofits. This was exactly the type of organization I wanted to directly support. They said “yes!” and Yoga for Infinity was born.

“Yoga for Infinity is a new way for the St. Petersburg community to share in the fund-raising efforts of Infinity,” says Old Northeast resident Chisolm. We offer this experience of wellness so that more people can contribute to the great organizations supported by Infinity, while experiencing the benefits of yoga for themselves on our beautiful waterfront. It’s a win for everyone!

One in every three women globally experience abuse in their lifetime,



Participants center for practice at Yoga for Infinity.

Photos courtesy of Infinity

according to the World Health Organization. Here in St. Petersburg, Infinity, The League to Aid Abused Children and Adults, Inc. has been

working to improve the lives of survivors of abuse in Pinellas County since 1980. With nearly 300 members, “one of the ways Infinity members work to help



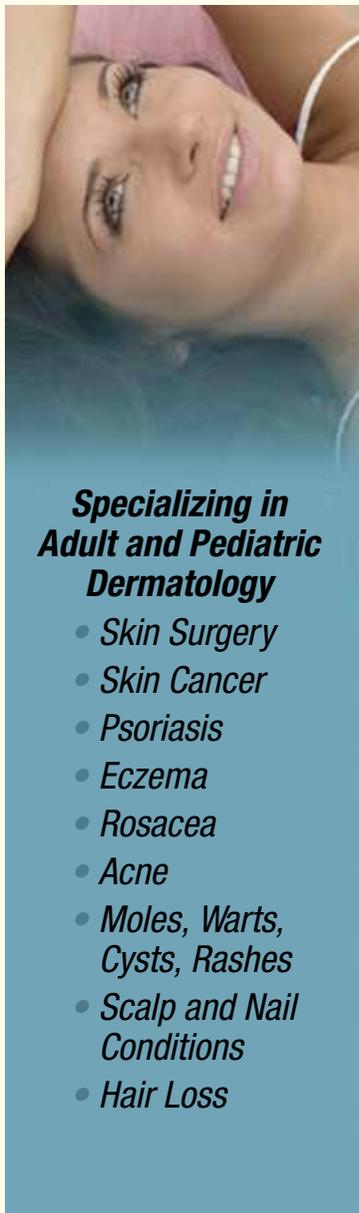
Designer Purse Bingo, Infinity’s signature event, is not to be missed.



Old Northeast residents Susie Chisolm and Dan Shealer enjoy Infinity’s Valentine’s dinner.



Infinity members and Old Northeast residents Jackie O’Brien (center) and Joy Rudnicki (second from right) with Infinity members Jody Morelli (left), Joyce Larson (second from left), and Nancy Westphal (right) at Welcome and New Member Party.



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The author, Old Northeast resident and Infinity member Stacie Steinke, leads yoga on the waterfront Tuesdays at 9 am.

survivors of abuse in our community is by hosting a wide range of events that raise awareness and funds for organizations that work directly with people impacted by abuse,” says Andrea Vilgrass, an Old Northeast resident and Infinity vice president.

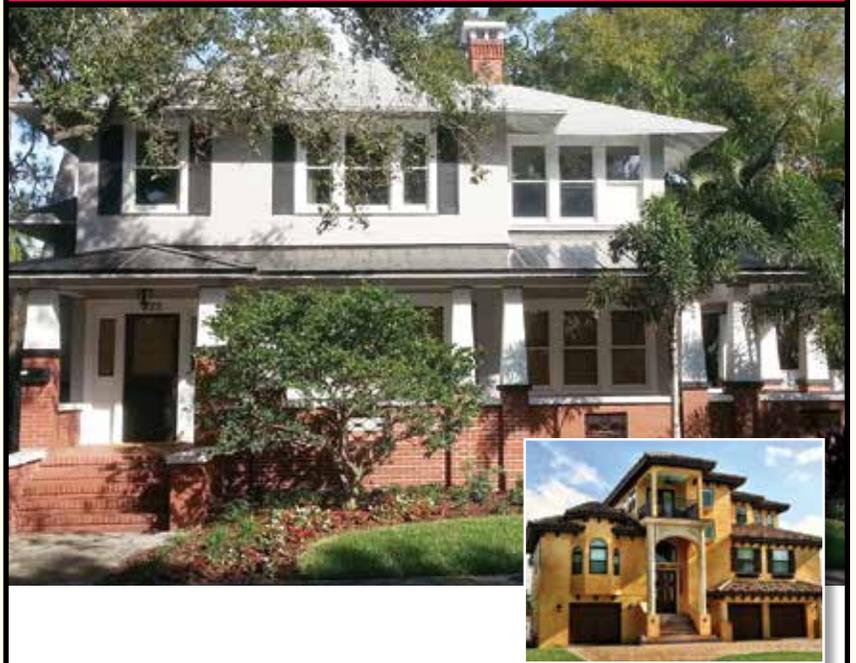
Each year, the organization raises tens of thousands of dollars that support direct services offered by partner agencies CASA (Community Action Stops Abuse), Brookwood Florida, Inc. (a residential home for teen girls) and Suncoast Center Inc., (mental and physical health services related to trauma, substance abuse, sexual assault, and child abuse).

All of Infinity’s fundraising events are open to the public. The main event is NovemberFest, a fun fall festival complete with outdoor games, a beer garden, dinner, and music at Pasadena Yacht & Country Club on November 14. There will also be a silent auction with exceptional items and experiences. If you enjoy eating at downtown restaurants, enter Infinity’s Great Tampa Bay Dine-Out Giveaway, an opportunity drawing to win packages of gift cards to favorite local restaurants valued at \$1,500, \$1,000, and \$500. The drawing is on November 14 at NovemberFest (you do not have to be present to win).

Designer Purse Bingo, Infinity’s signature event, is not to be missed. Gaelyn Thurman, an ONE resident and Infinity’s Agency Liaison, says, “Each year this event grows more fun, and fashionable with luxe purse bingo prizes. Expect high-end brands like Louis Vuitton.” The event is scheduled for April 17 at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club and promises to be more fabulous than ever before. Tickets go on sale in February or March and always sells out. We also meet monthly at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club for a Lunch and Learn series, and always welcome new members. ◆

For more information about Infinity and upcoming events, check out infinitystpete.org. Yoga for Infinity is an all-level flow class, for men and women of all ages, that meets Tuesdays at 9 am at Flora Wylie Park. Classes are donation-based (suggested donation is \$10) with all proceeds going directly to improve the lives of survivors of abuse. Look for the hot pink signs.

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“He Gave Me My Life Back”

St. Pete native John R. had been living with low back and leg pain from spinal stenosis. “My legs and back were in extreme pain and my doctors told me the only solution would be surgery.” Then he met St. Petersburg’s Dr. Matthew Mann.

Spinal stenosis, or narrowing, is often the result of osteoarthritis, or ‘wear and tear’ arthritis, that can pinch the nerves as they come out of the spinal cord. John explained that the first few steps every morning were excruciating. It had progressed to the point that his legs would give out occasionally when he got up to walk to the kitchen for his morning coffee. “I can’t live the rest of my life being scared to get out of bed in the morning.”

John was experiencing sciatica pain and leg weakness which are the most common signs in people suffering from spinal stenosis. The symptoms of spinal stenosis often start slowly and worsen over time. John explains that his symptoms of low back and leg pain started 10 to 15 years ago but were mild and easily managed at the time. By the time he decided to get help with his condition John stated, “it feels like someone is stabbing a hot knife into my butt and then my leg just goes weak.”

Unfortunately, John’s story is all too common. In the U.S. alone, over 2.5 million people suffer with spinal stenosis. This condition mostly affects people over 50, but those over 65 years of age tend to have more severe symptoms.

If you are unfortunate enough to be facing the same disheartening prognosis, the following realities may be familiar. You are scared to get out of bed because you know the pain is just a step away. You have difficulty walking, shopping, or doing activities like running or pickleball. You have changed your life to accommodate the pain or the fear of falling from doing too much at once.

Your doctors have told you the only solutions are either medicines that don’t seem to work or a major surgery that cannot guarantee you’ll feel better. It is important to know that you have proven options that can help without the need for harsh drugs or invasive surgeries.

Dr. Mann, the founder of St. Petersburg Acupuncture and Integrative Medicine uses the science of acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine with other integrative techniques that assist in increasing blood flow and reducing inflammation to help alleviate the symptoms associated with spinal stenosis.

“I’m excited to wake up in the morning again. I’m 80 years old and I’m back to riding my bike and playing drums again. I can join my wife now for her nightly neighborhood walks that I had to stop years ago. I didn’t really have much faith in acupuncture being able to help my pain, but I had to try something. I was scared of getting a surgery that didn’t help my friend with the same condition.” John states, “I regret I didn’t try acupuncture sooner. I lived with the pain for so many years, when in just a couple of months, Dr. Mann had me feeling 20 years younger.”

John’s back to working on his hot rod, playing drums in a local band, and enjoying nightly walks with his wife. She even personally thanked Dr. Mann for giving her husband his life back.



Dr. Mann, DAOM AP, has been practicing East Asian medicine for over a decade. He focuses on using acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine while integrating other scientifically proven techniques to offer non-surgical, non-drug options for people with chronic pain and complex chronic conditions. Dr. Mann specializes in chronic cases of pain and internal medicine, especially cases that have been deemed ‘hopeless’ or ‘untreatable’.

If you’ve missed too many pickleball matches or weekend markets because of pain or other chronic conditions, it’s time to call Dr. Mann and the team at St. Petersburg Acupuncture & Integrative Medicine.

It’s time you erase pain and EMBRACE LIFE! There is so much to enjoy in our beautiful slice of heaven. Don’t let your health hold you back.

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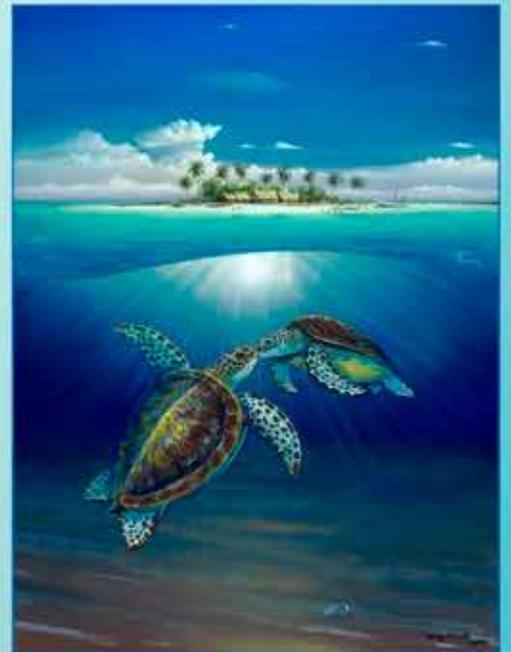
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Yard Oddities Don't Fear the (Virginia) Creeper

It seems like all the fun plants that grow wild in summer are invasive. Good news on the Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) – despite its name, it's actually a Florida native. It's not here to destroy us! This vine can be found covering ground and climbing just about anything, from trees to fences to houses, and is common throughout the eastern United States, from Canada to Mexico. Birds enjoy eating its berries, but humans shouldn't indulge.

Unlike invasive vines like kudzu and wisteria, which Floridians are programmed to quickly remove, Virginia creeper has a few redeeming qualities. First, it adheres with padded tendrils that don't root in a way that damages the host tree or home. Second, it is one of the first plants to begin getting fall color, giving off nice reds and purples. Third, it's easy to grow; in fact, it's probably harder not to grow it.

Keep an eye on it, though. If it gets out of control, Virginia creeper can hinder the growth of other trees and shrubs, and it can blend in before you realize it has taken over. The sneaky plant can wriggle through spaces unseen and pop out in unexpected locations (like the patch that reappears every summer in a certain second-story soffit, despite being yanked out repeatedly).

Virginia creeper is deciduous, so it will lose its leaves, leaving behind spindly vines through the winter that have their own rustic appeal. So, don't fear the creeper, but manage it wisely! ●

~ Jon Kile



The Northeast Journal Travels

A Voyage to the Greek Islands

Lynn Lotkowitz

To celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary this year, my husband, Bill, and I planned a three-week adventure in Greece. We started with two nights in Athens to recover from jet lag and enjoy the very hectic and crowded city. The old town area, Plaka, is like a little village within the city and my favorite part of Athens.

The next phase of our three-week journey was aboard the Star Flyer, a 360-foot clipper ship. With only 130 guests, the experience was casual and very unique. There are no casinos or shows, just a few good talks and the rest of the time you do what you wish. On board, you could don a harness to hang out in the crow's nest 65 feet above the sun deck or relax by one of the two small pools. My favorite was watching the crew raise the sails. The dramatic look of a clipper ship with four masts and white sails against the blue Mediterranean Sea is spectacular.

We visited the islands Patmos, Amorgos, Paros, and Spetses in Greece, and made a stop in Kusadisi, Turkey. These are islands many of the bigger ships cannot reach, with an authenticity that places like Santorini and Mykonos have lost from overdevelopment. The residents are friendly, businesses cordial, and they appreciate your visit. The food is fresh, simple, and delicious.

The second part of our trip was a visit to my father's birthplace, Crete, the largest Greek island, located at the southern edge of the Aegean. The island is a blend of Ottoman/Turkish, Venetian, and Minoan influences. It is still cosmopolitan with plenty of historical sites and beautiful beaches, mountains, and hiking opportunities.

We took a late afternoon trip to the mountain community of Vatulakkos. Since this is the part of Crete my father left in 1917 as a boy, I was particularly interested in the history. My grandfather, Adam, was part of a militaristic team that helped quell civil unrest as Crete transitioned to join Greece after years of Ottoman rule.

As an anniversary present to ourselves, we stayed at Elounda Beach Hotel and Villas, an unpretentious luxury property that has celebrity status as Lady Gaga, Brad Pitt, and others have vacationed there. The location overlooking Mirabello Bay makes Elounda and Agios Nicholas the perfect place to relax. We were there during the peak of Europe's heatwave and the crystal-clear, blue-green water was so inviting we stayed submerged most of the day.

Our final week was in Ammoudara, a small beach community outside the city of Heraklion, Crete's largest and busiest city. I discovered Ammoudara as the base of a Global Volunteers program I participated in about 12 years ago. The focus of the program is helping students with English using native speakers. It was such a life-changing experience, I returned three more times over the next 10 years. Sam, the director of the Crete program, Matina, the then-teacher, and her daughter, a student, Nefeli, have become dear friends. We dined together and caught up on each other's life and families.

As our trip came to an end, we flew from Crete to Zurich, with a four-hour layover, some delays, then a nine-hour flight from Zurich to Tampa. The journey was exhausting, but we would do it all again tomorrow if we had the chance. ●



Lynn and Bill at the Cave of the Apocalypse, a UNESCO World Heritage site on the island of Patmos



Raising the sails on the Star Flyer



The view from our room in Elounda Beach, Crete



Handmade instruments in Plaka (Athens)



Changing of the guard at parliament in Athens



At sea under full sail on the Star Flyer clipper ship

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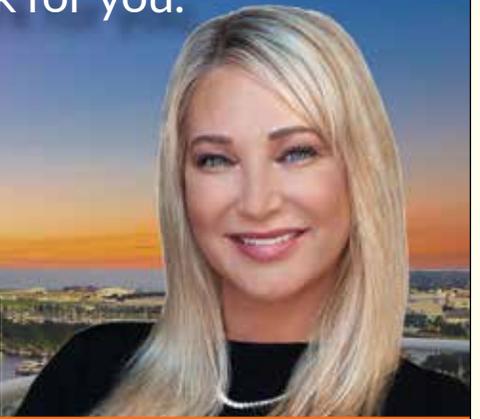
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