



NORTHEAST JOURNAL

Good People ∞ Good Places ∞ Good Things Happening

St. Petersburg, Florida

September/October 2023

Est. September 2004



Photo courtesy of Elza Zherzhiduk

The St. Petersburg concert will feature only female musicians, as their male counterparts must stay in Ukraine.

The Good, the Bat, and the Bugly: Florida Bats Make Great Neighbors

Amanda Hagood

Ask most folks about their favorite neighborhood wildlife and you'll probably hear about birds, butterflies, or adorable squirrel antics. One critter you probably won't hear much about is the bat. Legends swirl around these nocturnal mammals: that they'll flap blindly into your hair, drink your blood, give you rabies, or even destroy your home. On reflection, maybe we've all been watching a bit too many horror movies.

Whatever the source of these frightful fantasies, says Shari Blisset-Clark, president of Florida Bat Conservancy, they unfortunately mask the true value of a remarkable animal – one we should

The Sounds of Ukraine Come to St. Pete

Abby Baker

This September, a group of 30 female musicians will fly from Ukraine to Tampa to embark on a Florida tour that will donate its profits to humanitarian causes in Ukraine. They are the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, a nonprofit, Ukraine-based spiritual group that is touring the Sunshine State as part of their Southeastern United States tour. They often travel to raise money through spiritual concerts, and their members are graduates of the Tchaikovsky National Music Academy in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Several host churches are on the list, including St. Pete's First Presbyterian Church at 701 Beach Drive.

The Ukrainian group normally consists of 52 members, but they are leaving behind their male counterparts. Ukrainian men aged 18 to 60 have been banned from leaving the country in anticipation that they may be called to fight against Russia's invasion.

Kyiv orchestra conductor Viktoriya Konchakovskaya says she feels it's her responsibility to do what she can for her country. "We

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Photo courtesy of the Florida Museum

Bats take flight in the evening.

'Rise Early, Get to Work' The Extraordinary Activism of Katherine Bell Tippetts

Will Michaels

Katherine Bell Tippetts was certainly one of the most remarkable woman leaders in St. Petersburg's history. She grew up in Somerset County, Maryland. She married an international newspaper correspondent and newspaper owner, Col. William H. Tippetts, and arrived in St. Petersburg with her husband in 1902. She lived here until her death in 1950.



Courtesy of the St. Petersburg Museum of History

Tippetts was instrumental in having the mockingbird named the state bird of Florida and the orange blossom the state flower. Image circa 1930.

Following the death of her husband in 1909, Tippetts took control of her husband's business interests, including the Belmont Hotel, located at 575 Central Avenue. Financially successful, she sent two sons to Princeton, a third son to the Georgia Institute of Technology, and a daughter to Florida State College for Women. She was a talented writer, fluent in five languages, who published scores of essays, short stories, and novels under the pen name Jerome Cable. But her greatest love was conservation, and in particular the preservation of birdlife. She once witnessed a boy shoot a cardinal. When she approached him she discovered four other birds beheaded and skinned. "Five beautiful songbirds killed in one short afternoon and no means of redress," she later reflected. "It was at this crisis I resolved to organize the Audubon Society..."

Continued on page 12

welcome into our communities. "I think bats make wonderful neighbors!" she opines.

Doug O'Dowd, a Historic Old Northeast Neighborhood Association board member who has lived in the neighborhood since 1993, agrees. In fact, he's trying to persuade a colony of bats to move into a specially designed bat house in his backyard.

What's so great about these furry fliers? Let's start by separating bat-fact from bat-fiction: first, all three of the Tampa Bay region's most common bats – the Brazilian (or Mexican) free-tailed bat, the evening bat, and the Seminole bat – are insectivores. They use echolocation to seek out moths, mosquitos, and other creepy crawlies, but not human blood. While we can breathe a sigh of relief, woe unto the arthropods: according to the Florida Fish and

Continued on page 24

Hurricane Idalia Recovery Help

If you've been impacted by Hurricane Idalia, these sites can help.

Local resources for recovery at stpete.org/residents/public_safety and pinellas.gov/emergency-information

FEMA assistance for Pinellas residents at fema.gov/assistance/individual

Pinellas County Economic Development offers business relief at pced.org

Photo by Brittny Vicente

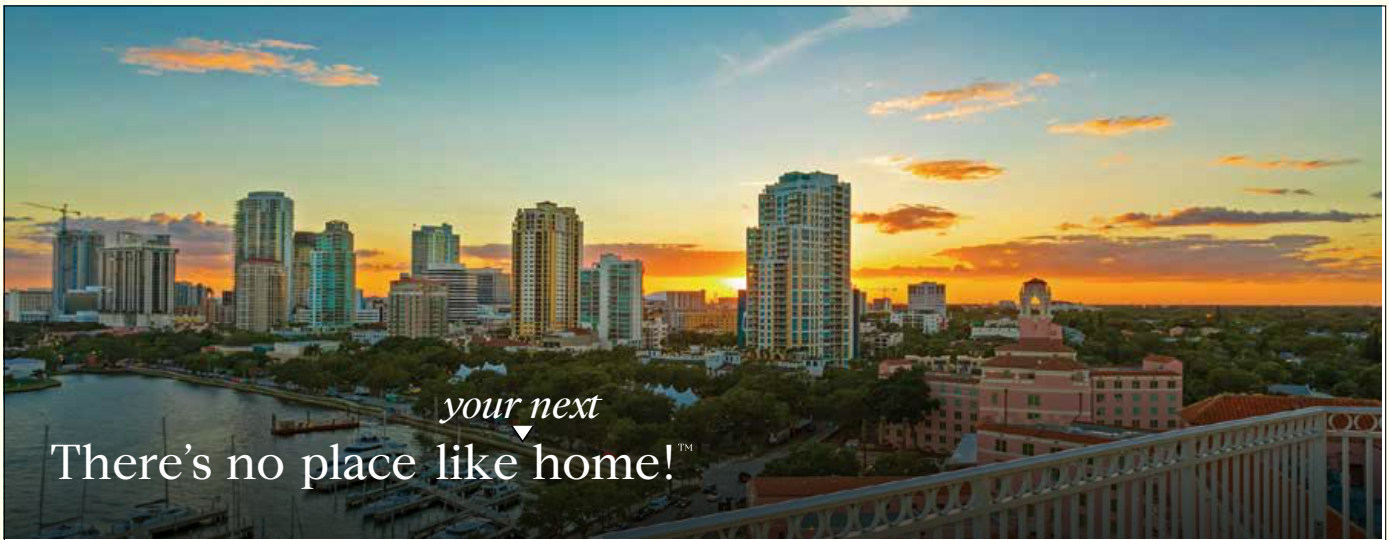
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Be the Helpers

I'm writing this note in the days following Hurricane Idalia, a storm that, even though it made landfall hundreds of miles to the north, had a big impact in parts of the Bay area. As we watched videos of paddleboarders on Coffee Pot Boulevard and canoes in the streets of Shore Acres, we realized not all of us "got lucky" again with this storm.



According to local law enforcement, at least 75 people were rescued from flooded properties immediately after the height of the storm. Significant flooding was reported in Riviera Bay, Shore Acres, Snell Isle, Yacht Club Estates, and Coquina Key. Some residents lost nearly everything.

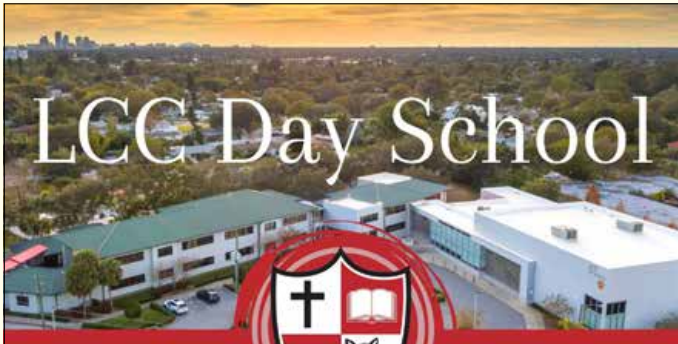
Mister Rogers famously told children to "Look for the helpers" after disaster. As adults, we are the helpers. Most of us were lucky in the wake of this storm. We didn't experience so much as a power outage, and now is the time to give back.

In the days since Idalia, neighbors, local businesses, and organizations have already come out to help flood victims deal with the sometimes-extensive damage, but there's still more to be done. Plenty of folks are facing a long recovery. If you are able, there are a number of local resources where you can donate supplies, money, or your time to help our neighbors get back on their feet.


Donate to...

- Salvation Army: stpetersburg.salvationarmyflorida.org
 - Florida Disaster Fund: volunteerflorida.org/donatefdf
 - Metropolitan Ministries: metromin.org
 - United Way of Florida: uwof.org/disaster-recovery-fund
 - American Red Cross: redcross.org
 - Feeding Tampa Bay: volunteer.feedingtampabay.org/disaster-response
 - Local community diaper bank gathering toiletries & hygiene products: babycyclefl.org
- Our community is strong, and our neighbors are resilient. But sometimes we all just need a little help.
- ~ Shelly


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Local Group Is a Dream Come True for Sick Children and Their Families



Children's Dream Fund Executive Director Amanda Griffin



Izuel dreamed of a trip to the Magic Kingdom.



Rosie's dream of a puppy came true.



A horse dream come true for Remi

Hannah Heilman

Swimming with dolphins or seeing snow for the first time, meeting Taylor Swift or having a superhero bedroom makeover – these are just a few of the dreams a team out of St. Petersburg regularly makes happen for children with life-threatening illnesses.

For more than four decades, the Children's Dream Fund has been making dreams come true for children right in our own backyard. Headquartered near Crescent Heights in St. Petersburg, the fund has served more than 3,500 children, ages 3 to 21, since its founding in 1981. "The people working in the children or young adult medical field, they're dealing hands-on with some very tough situations," Director of Dreams Lisa Hawk says. "We have this gift where we get to step in during that pain. Sometimes kids don't have a long life ahead of them. But it is truly the best feeling in the world to know that they found us, and we can bring lasting memories and joy to the kids and their families."

A child may be referred to the fund by anyone – medical professionals, family, friends, social workers. Once they've been referred, that's when the dream process begins.

"We let them think about what they want to do, what could bring them joy during this time," Executive Director Amanda Griffin says. "Some kids know right away. But some kids like to really, really absorb that dreaming process and think, 'If I could do anything, what would it be?' It's almost like a healing element to be able to have that dreaming process."

Children can dream up anything. As the organization puts it, they can dream "to be, to go, to have, or

to meet" – to be a paleontologist, to go see snow, to have a shopping spree, to meet the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

After volunteering with the Children's Miracle Network at Florida State University, St. Pete resident Griffin knew she wanted to continue fundraising and working with children after graduation. That's when she began interning at the Children's Dream Fund. During that summer, she worked closely with the Dream Coordinators, planning dreams from start to finish. Her favorite dream was planning a Disney trip for 4-year-old Jamie.

"We had this beautiful party for her and celebrated her," Griffin said. "I will never, ever forget how excited she was. She just wanted to be a princess for the day and meet Minnie and Mickey and really just be able to step out of her day-to-day treatments."

The Children's Dream Fund celebrates each child with a dream delivery party where their itinerary or gift is revealed. "We invite them to our dream house here in St. Pete," Griffin said. "We decorate the room, put up balloons, have cake, give them a gift basket related to their dream or with their favorite things in it. They can invite anyone they want, and we all just get to celebrate them."

Having grown up nearby in South Pasadena, Griffin said she has never thought of leaving St. Pete. "It's literally the best place to live, and it keeps getting better all the time." But when a child is diagnosed with a life-threatening illness, she said it has a ripple effect on the community.

"It's so hard on not only the child who is receiving the treatment and has the illness, but also the family

because it affects everybody – siblings, parents, grandparents," Griffin said. "When we're able to provide joy for 200 kids every year, that is such a beautiful thing to be able to have a little pep in your step when you're going through something so terrible."

Attesting to this, Hawk said she started at the Children's Dream Fund because her own son was born with an illness. The support her family received from the community during his treatments was critical for them.

"We were always in and out of the hospital, watching him struggle for 12 years," Hawk said. "Through that time, different organizations or people in the community would do maybe what they thought were small things to cheer us up, or to bring him some hope. From a parent perspective, we couldn't fix his medical side, but we realized that the emotional and social support was more critical, honestly, than anything."

To continue making children's dreams a reality, the fund relies on monetary and in-kind donations, as well as volunteers, interns, and sponsors. "People would be very surprised to know how many children right here in our community are actually sick and receiving dreams," Hawk said. "When people support any type of thing that we do, they're supporting their own community. It could be a child three doors down from them that they're helping. And that support, it really makes us feel like a small town even though we aren't. We couldn't do what we do without the community we live in." ●

To learn more about the Children's Dream Fund, visit childrensdreamfund.org.



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MEET THE WRITERS

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



Amanda Hagood teaches courses in environmental humanities at Eckerd College. She also contributes to *The Gabber Newspaper*, *Creative Loafing Tampa Bay*, and *Bay Soundings*.



Hannah Heilman is a recent graduate of Indiana Wesleyan University, where she majored in writing and communications and was the editor of the newspaper. When she's not writing, she's trying a new coffee shop, baking, or traveling with friends.



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]



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



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



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



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Old NE Tavern, 718 2nd St N	Sotheby's Real Estate, 102 2nd Ave NE	Sam Bond Benefit Group, 200 Beach Dr NE
Westminster Palms, 939 Beach Dr	History Museum, 335 2nd Ave NE	Hollander Hotel, 421 4th Ave N
	American Spirits, 280 3rd St S	



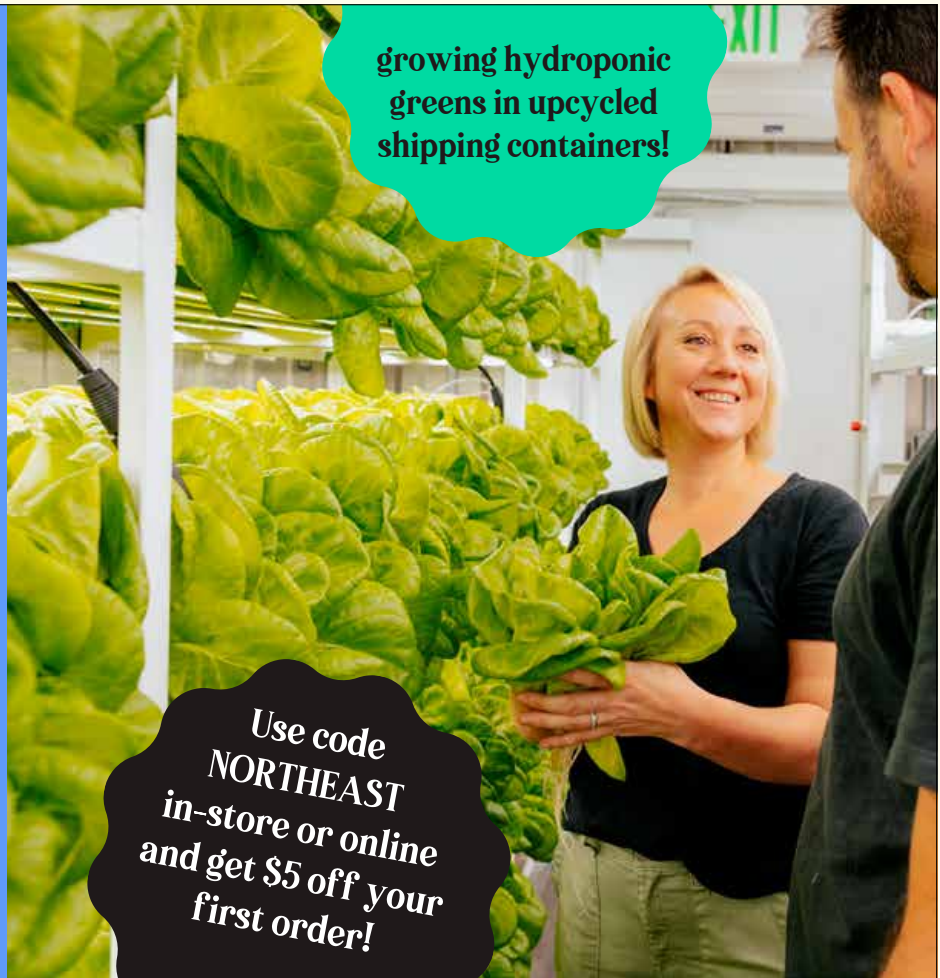
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More Than Music: Neighborhood Vinyl Collector Shares the Love

Abby Baker

Wade Stolze is a hard-core vinyl fan who moved to the Old Northeast neighborhood in 1993. He puts the NPR-listening, record-playing indie kids of St. Pete to shame with his vintage collection of vinyl, some of which he's been preserving for 30 years. Really, Stolze says, he just doesn't want to see the past thrown away.

A retired insurance professional, Stolze shares his home with more than 1,000 records – the vast majority live in his music room and remain in as close to mint condition as possible. “I collect mostly jazz from the ‘50s and ‘60s. It’s not just music; it’s history,” Stolze said. “A lot of people don’t have knowledge of that type of music.”

Stolze moved from famously frigid Michigan to the sunny and, at the time, obscure St. Petersburg in 1985. He was 28 years old and a student at the University of South Florida. Back then, he says, it was cheaper to go to college at USF than many Michigan schools, even with out-of-state costs tacked on.

Stolze says he grew up buying and playing records like any other kid of his time, but in the ‘90s, his love for vinyl was reinvigorated when he bought a record player at an estate sale in St. Pete. It was \$20, and was broken, of course.

“I had a friend who was able to fix it; it was just a belt that needed replacing,” Stolze said, reminiscing. “So, I started looking for records, but at the time it was mostly CDs.” Then he bought a box of vintage records to match his new machine. “That sort of set me off,” he said.

It’s been more than 30 years since that estate sale, and Stolze has now collected a house full of records, along with his pride and joy, a rare British turntable. But he doesn’t collect just any old thrift store record. For Stolze, it’s about preserving history. There are no yellowing, mildewed sleeves, or warped records in his collection. He’s quick to spot imperfections on a vinyl surface, and he’s choosy when it comes to purchasing, or even trading his treasures – some of which are easier to get your hands on than others.

“Primarily, I like to collect the blues,” Stolze said. “And the old blues are very, very, hard to get. There’s some that I would never let go.” At the top of the list, his valuable Charlie Parker pieces, horn players, and jazz collectors’ items – some of which cost upwards of \$2,000. For one of his prized jazz records, he drove all the way back to Michigan.

Like many people who share his love for collecting, Stolze says the search for his favorite vinyl requires a mix of buying, selling, and trading. Not often from thrift stores, but private sellers online. “You don’t find too much in the thrift stores, not what I’m looking for anymore,” Stolze said. “It’s all about sound quality. In the store, they keep the records flat on top of one another, sometimes bugs eat the corner or the records if they’re not in the sleeve.”



Stolze hopes to leave his growing vinyl collection to his young niece, Kamryn Sims.



Stolze's home holds more than 1,000 records, and he's always looking for more.

Once he makes a find, he says, he doesn't tend to sell his bounty. “I never really got into pimping out my records. But I’m always looking for records to buy, collections to consider.”

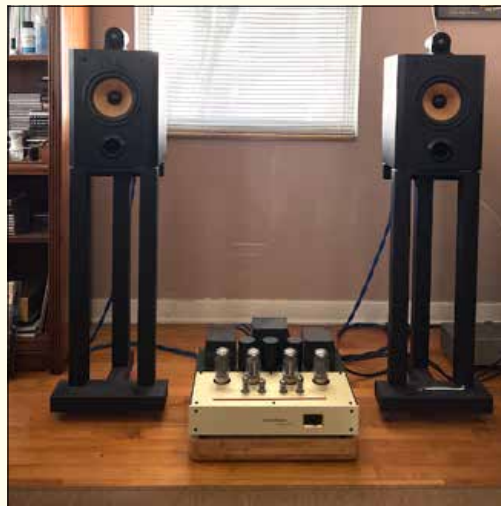
The records decorating Stolze's music room receive frequent and gentle care. They take turns rotating on his pristine record player, and he takes the time to clean them individually. He even has an heir to his collection in mind.

Last summer, Stolze bought his niece Kamryn Sims a “decent record player” and some albums, mainly folk. Not his favorite, but a favorite of hers. “She had this goofy little record player, but I bought her something decent,” Stolze said. “I set it up for her. Once I’m gone, these records have a place to go. I hope she enjoys it as much as I do.”

Sims, a 25-year-old Michigan resident, says her uncle has been like a father to her. “I’ve always seen his passion for music and his love of jazz, but it wasn’t until I became an adult that I realized what it takes to have a passion like that,” Sims said, adding that the shared interest has made them closer. “It’s a neat way to connect, and I hope he passes that love and effort to me through the years. I love that he trusts me to do that.”

Stolze figures his love for music, especially the sounds of the ‘60s, was triggered by his young mother, who played similar music through his childhood. “Music is emotional, and it triggers us all of a sudden,” he said. “You hear a song and you’re reminded of your first boyfriend, girlfriend, a vacation here, another moment in history.”

The Old Northeast resident urges anyone looking to get rid of their aging but still-in-good-condition vinyl to contact him, rather than give it or throw it away. Records from the 50s and 60s, jazz, blues, classic rock, and even classical from that time are preferred. Readers, local or otherwise, can contact Stolze at wade.stolze@gmail.com. Your old records may just have a place to live on. ●



“Music is emotional, and it triggers us all of a sudden,” Stolze said.

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St. Pete Gets Ready to SHINE

Brandy Stark

Fall in St. Petersburg isn't just jack-o'-lanterns and spiced lattes. It's also the backdrop to the annual SHINE Mural Festival, produced by the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance. This unique art festival has added nearly 150 murals across the city since 2015, and shows no sign of slowing down.

Jenee Preibe volunteered with the festival in 2016. Three years later, she was hired as its director. "As a community volunteer, I aided artists with their works. I was so blown away by the experience that I knew I wanted to be a part of it," she says. "These murals are very accessible. Anyone can see them 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and for free. It fits a range of tastes and there is something for everyone to like."

The excitement has not dimmed for her. And while the activity comes to a head in October, the festival is really a year-long process of curating and organizing. While some artists may send in an application to be a part of the program, SHINE also reaches out to directly invite others.

What does it take to be a SHINE muralist? "We are looking for diversity of artists' styles and backgrounds," she says. "We consider where they are from, and how they add new voices to the larger scope of the murals that we have done over the years. To me, it illuminates the power of art in public spaces. We are celebrating artists in their creative art and freedom."

Unlike other mural festivals, says Preibe, SHINE allows the artists to have creative freedom without elements of branding or marketing the businesses that they adorn.

"The murals truly celebrate the artist's voice in the landscape of the city," she adds.

The artists also get the same amount of funding, providing equal financial footing for all involved. There are a variety of sources that finance the event, including a grant from the city, the state's art and culture department, a Nation Endowment of the Arts grant, corporate sponsorship, and individual donations.

Chris Dyer, an internationally known mural artist who was born in

Canada and spent his childhood in Peru, recently moved to St. Petersburg. He's excited to add his work to the city he now considers home.

"I came here by intuition, and I like the area because it's big enough to get your city fix, but small enough to still find nature," he says. "It's an artsy place augmented by the museums. It's a relaxed place with sun, a lot of culture, and a great place to be. I have been well received here."

Dyer's pieces, he explains, feature inter-dimensional beings – creatures that reside in some other realm. "I



SHINE artist Tracey Jones' work on a Tampa wall.

believe that there is a lot more than what we perceive in this dimension... supernatural ideals, cluster consciousnesses, plant medicine. I learn a lot about the nature of reality through my art and it manifests in my works."

Dyer also ties the pieces to the locations where they are painted. In this case, his mural is designated for the Warehouse Arts District. "I like to sit with the wall, feel it out. I let the energy flow out through the mind ... it's more like a channeling of what's supposed to be there, kind of intuitive. There is a diversity of races, people, and cultures that live here, and it's like a cultural stew; I am coming to throw in my own ingredients into the mix."

Tracy Jones is a mural artist hailing from Tampa. She's been a graphic designer for 20 years and started painting 13 years ago. For SHINE, she's



Artist Chris Dyer stands in front of his previous work.

preparing to work on the PTSA ticket booth building at Williams Park.

"I want to do something that shows that it is a ticket booth, but also coat it in vibrant colors, cool textures like those found in fabrics, and add little pops of park history," she says. "I just want to bring a little happiness to the place."

Jones ties the SHINE experience to another mural festival she did last year. It was a community mural and she was assigned helpers from a girls' group home. "My whole goal was to give them something to be proud of when they saw the finished mural. Then, and now for SHINE, I want the place to be beautiful, I want everyone to be able to enjoy artwork in that area, and anyone who is facing hardships to see something bright and vibrant to help them feel better."

However, Jones does remember what it's like to do outdoor mural painting in

Florida in October. "It's very taxing on your body when you are doing these things in the sun. I will be hydrating a lot for that. I will call for help from fellow artists if needed. It's a lot for one person to do by yourself for one week."

The labor of love is appreciated on multiple levels, however, as the murals do more than just liven up city walls.

"We have had economic impact studies done in the past and are preparing to do another one," Preibe explains. "We know that the festival brings people here – 65% of event attendees come from outside of Pinellas County. The murals have also drawn attention to different parts of St. Petersburg – for example the Grand Central District – and helped to bring positive change."

Even in the last of the summer heat, organizers know people are excited to come out and watch the artists in action.

"We'll have bike tours going the first and second weekend," Preibe adds. "I encourage people to come out, especially that last weekend."

As a bonus, this festival is the first in the world to have an accessible audio tour and technology to connect viewers to the art. Online contact information can be found via PixelStix which is accessible through a free downloadable app. Visitors can touch the app to the available plaques and learn the history of each unique creation, past and present.

Preibe says they have one more addition to look forward to in 2024, for SHINE's 10th anniversary: "We are putting together a book for release that will show the decade of mural paintings – all that we have created."

For artists and visitors alike, SHINE is often an unforgettable experience, and one that leaves a massive, lasting presence in the city.

"I really want to express my gratitude to the folks of SHINE and other creative folks who make sure that St. Pete is a beautiful place to come to," says Jones. "Visitors can come and see just how many talented people are here just by looking at the walls. I'm grateful to anyone giving a spotlight to local arts."



SHINE 9 Concept Poster



SHINE artist Sarah Sheppard's work.

This year's SHINE Mural Festival runs October 13 to 22, with special events during the October 14 Second Saturday Art Walk. The closing reception is slated for Chad Mize's Space gallery on October 22. For more, follow @shineonstpete on social media or visit stpeteartsalliance.org/shine-mural-festival. ●



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She helped found the St. Petersburg Audubon Society in 1909 and served as president for 33 years. Early in her tenure as president she led a campaign to protect robins. The Florida Audubon Society developed a bill outlawing the killing or capture of robins, and the St. Petersburg Chapter sent the state legislature a petition with supporting signatures some 70 feet long. The robin protection bill was duly approved in 1913. The sponsoring senator later stated, “That robin protection was given the whole state of Florida for sake of the good work in St. Petersburg.” It also came to Tippetts’ attention that young boys were being solicited by a major national publication to purchase air rifles that were frequently used to kill robins and other birdlife. It just so happened that the owner of the publication wintered in St. Petersburg, and after hearing the Audubon Society’s appeal, he agreed to pull the ads.

During its first decade the St. Petersburg Chapter made annual excursions to Bird Key, now known as Indian Key, to promote public support for bird sanctuaries and protection. Indian Key, located just south of Maximo Park, was designated a federal bird sanctuary by Theodore Roosevelt in 1906 at the request of Roy S. Hannah, Sr., a St. Petersburg conservationist who was also instrumental in founding the St. Petersburg Audubon Club. Designation of Indian Key as a federal sanctuary was not in itself sufficient for the protection of birds as hunting and poaching continued. Again, the Audubon Society under Tippetts’ leadership did much to provide the protection needed through the provision of game wardens and other measures. Roosevelt also designated nearby Passage Key a bird sanctuary in 1905. Passage Key is today a low-lying sandbar between Egmont Key and Anna Maria Island.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries birds were often killed for their feathers and used to decorate women’s hats. Hat feathers became so popular that vast rookeries of birds were decimated to obtain them. At one point a snowy egret’s fluffy mating feathers fetched 32 dollars an ounce. In 1917 the local Audubon Society sponsored a hat show where not a single lady’s hat had a feather. Proceeds were donated to the Red Cross. A year later the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act was passed making it illegal to kill many bird species. By 1920 because of the work of Tippetts and the Audubon Society, 11 cities in Pinellas County were declared bird sanctuaries.

The St. Petersburg Club sponsored a bird house contest in 1919 as a way of calling attention to the importance of protecting birdlife and promoting

appreciation of birds, especially among young people. Some 129 entries were received from boys attending the Manual Training School (which still stands as a city landmark adjacent to City Hall). All the bird houses were put on display at the Harrison Hardware Company. Prizes ranging from a gold watch to a “Yankee screwdriver” were awarded for most practical, best workmanship, most natural, and most ornamental. Additionally, there was a prize for the first bird house to be occupied by a nesting bird. “The birds will judge this themselves, and each boy putting up his bird house in the parks or elsewhere, will please watch the same and report its occupancy at once to Mrs. Tippetts at the Belmont.”

In addition to continuing as president of the St. Petersburg Chapter of Audubon, Tippetts became state Audubon president in 1924, fighting successfully for the establishment of bird sanctuaries and animal protection legislation. She persuaded the legislature to require bird study in public education and to name the mockingbird the state bird and the orange blossom the state flower. Tippetts wrote of the mockingbird’s “matchless melody not only by day but in the moonlight, along the very edge of silence.” Tippetts seemed to have a great gift for persuasion and was even instrumental in establishing the wild rose as the national flower in her role as an American Flower Commissioner.

By the 1920s, Tippetts was nationally known as an environmentalist and had a vigorous life of activism and leadership. At one time or another, in addition to serving as president of the state’s Audubon Society, she was vice president of the American Forestry Association; a founding member of the Florida Legislative Council, which advocated for legislation in support of women’s interests; a member of the Florida State [Water] Reclamation Board; a trustee of the National Park Association; board director of the National Camp Fire Girls; chairman of education for the Florida Chamber of Commerce; a member of the state Board of Illiteracy and the National Board of Finances of the YWCA; and national chair of the General Federation of Women’s Clubs Committee on Nature Study and Wild Life Refuges. She played an instrumental role in establishment of what is now the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and in the enactment of a law to protect certain endangered wild plants, shrubs, and flowers.

In 1923, Tippetts ran unsuccessfully for a seat in the state legislature – one of the first two women in Florida to do so. While she ran far ahead of two of her



This 70-foot-long petition sent by the St. Petersburg Audubon Society to the Florida Legislature helped pass a law prohibiting killing of robins in 1913. Tippetts is third from left.



Tippetts came to St. Petersburg with her husband Col. William H. Tippetts, a noted journalist, in 1902. They operated the Belmont Hotel on Central Avenue.

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Tippetts built her home in Pinellas Point near Tampa Bay, an area brimming with wildlife at the time.

rivals, a third candidate narrowly beat her. But Tippetts was undeterred.

In addition to her work with the Audubon Society in St. Petersburg, locally she was a member of the influential Woman's Town Improvement Association; chaired the city War Savings Stamp Drive; volunteered for the local Chamber of Commerce; served on the St. Petersburg Parks Board; took a lead role in the founding of what is today Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital; was a member of the Woman's Club; served as president of the League of Women Voters; served as treasurer of the Pinellas County Board of Trade; was a charter member of what is today the St. Petersburg Museum of History; and helped organize the city's first Boy Scout troop in 1919. As a member of the Park Board, she changed the name of Reservoir Lake to Mirror Lake in 1915. She amazed and thoroughly exhausted nearly everyone who encountered her.

Perhaps her only recorded failure was her effort to get the city to establish an ordinance requiring the licensing and tagging of cats. Cats without tags were to be done away with, on the grounds they killed birds and were disease carriers. This idea was a little too advanced for 1915. All sorts of fun was poked at the new ordinance and many residents rose up against it, and consequently it was tabled by the city council.

In 1928, as a principal of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, she and other club directors were invited to the White House where she then invited the President and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge to visit St. Petersburg. It was not until after Coolidge left the White House that he famously visited St. Pete, staying at the Vinoy Hotel. (He preferred to eat simple meals in the kitchen rather than the formal dining room.) However, there is no record that he or his wife met with Tippetts during that visit. Tippetts also lobbied President Warren Harding on behalf of conservation needs in Florida as well.



Katherine Bell Tippetts as she appeared on the front page of the St. Petersburg Daily Times, December 22, 1912.



Katherine Bell Tippetts in 1922.

Courtesy of the State Library and Archives of Florida

Will Michaels is a former director and trustee of the St. Petersburg Museum of History and a member of the City Community Planning and Preservation Commission. He is the author of *The Making of St. Petersburg* and *The Hidden History of St. Petersburg*. Reach him at wmichaels2222@gmail.com.



A waterfront park at Pinellas Point, not far from her home, was named in Katherine Bell Tippetts' honor in 2009.

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Winton and Ailey with Lincoln
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Photo courtesy of Wilton Munch



Kyle with Finn
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Gail and Chug
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September Quarterly Neighborhood Meeting



The upcoming neighborhood meeting will provide an update on the city's water, sewer, and street management plan. St. Petersburg is in the midst of a population and development boom with high-rise condominium towers radically altering the city's skyline. With new residents moving to the Sunshine City from various points north, what's the impact of all this growth on the city's infrastructure? Can our historic streets weather the increasing traffic? These topics will be the focus of the Monday, September 18, HONNA quarterly meeting featuring St. Pete Public Works Administrator Claude Tankersley. The meeting will be at Westminster Palms, 939 Beach Drive NE, at 7 pm. In addition, residents will get updates from our police department liaison and HONNA board members on other news affecting the neighborhood. All Old Northeast residents are encouraged to attend.

Upcoming Porch Parties



After a summer hiatus, Porch Parties are back starting with a renovated 1946 Florida ranch house on

Friday, September 22. #3 Residents will be able to gather at the home of Kerry Converse and Jerome W. Magnifico, III, 311 28th Avenue N., and catch up on the latest news and exchange summer stories. Neighbors will gather between 7:30 and 10 pm to meet new residents and reconnect with ones we've missed. 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 to help defray party expenses.



It wouldn't be Halloween without the October Porch Party at the home of Steve Deal and Frank

Hay, 116 18th Avenue NE. The couple has been hosting the iconic event for 21 years – and they always find a way to make the party bigger and better. It might have to do with the fact they buy out all the decorations at regional Home Stores each year! This year's party will be Friday, October 27, from 7:30–10 pm. And it's never too early to start planning your Halloween costume!

Trunk or Treat

One of the favorite annual events for the younger residents of the ONE will take place Saturday, October 28, from 3–5 pm in the parking lot of Westminster Palms. It's Trunk or Treat time! The kids will be able to



show off their Halloween costumes, play games and get a head start on their Halloween candy. All participating cars need to be in the parking lot by 2:30 pm. Hope to see all the little ones there! Additional Halloween happenings include HONNA's house-decorating contest that recognizes the neighborhood's outstanding decorations.

Candlelight Tour Silver Anniversary

HONNA's Candlelight Tour of Homes will mark a significant milestone this year with its 25th anniversary. One of the area's most popular home tours and a major fundraiser for HONNA, it promises to be extra special this year. For more than two decades, tour guests have enjoyed the historic neighborhood's holiday charm of decorated houses that have ranged from cozy bungalows to Granada Terrace Mediterranean mansions.



“One of the Old Northeast's most unique characteristics is its amazing array of historic architecture,” explains HONNA President Nick Bell. “We have over 2,500 homes built from the early teens to the mid-20th century. Our guests get to tour these beautiful homes and experience the historic neighborhood during the holiday season.”

The Candlelight Tour Committee is still accepting nominations for tour homes. If you would like to have your home (or a neighbor's home) considered, please contact Nick at president@honna.org. The silver anniversary homes tour will take place Sunday, December 10, from 3 to 8 pm. Tickets will be sold at honna.org and several retail outlets beginning in November. Watch for more tour details coming soon.

Large Crowd Turns Out for July 4 Parade

It was a typically hot July morning in St. Pete, but that didn't stop Old Northeast neighbors from marching in the annual Children's Fourth of July Parade on Coffee Pot Boulevard. Residents young and old began gathering at Coffee Pot Park at 9 am Tuesday morning to enjoy cookies and liquid refreshments. Kids also mingled with firefighters and their big red firetruck from the Old Northeast 4th Street Station, and a local

police cruiser. The two-block parade kicked off promptly at 10 am. Besides the Old Northeast residents decked out in red, white, and blue, the parade included the music and marching prowess of the St. Petersburg ROTC (Righteously Outrageous Twirling Corps), along with the Florida Fife and Drum Corps.



Cocktails and Content at the History Museum

Nearly 200 people filled the St. Petersburg Museum of History auditorium on Friday, August 18, for the Old Northeast Evening at the Museum. They were treated to cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and an informative lecture about the history of St. Petersburg and, specifically, the origins of the Historic Old Northeast. The singular event was the first of what HONNA President Nick Bell hopes will be a rewarding partnership between HONNA and the 100-year-old museum. “The enthusiasm displayed by our residents for this event is proof that there's a desire to understand how the Old Northeast was founded, who founded it, and the colorful stories that have helped make it one of the city's premier neighborhoods,” Nick said. Future events, he added, could include guided and self-guided tours of the National Historic District neighborhood.

After guests treated themselves to drinks and appetizers, they filled the auditorium where Rui Farias (pictured), the museum's executive director, took them on a virtual tour of St. Pete's colorful past and the founding of the Old Northeast by developer Perry Snell. The “tour” included historic images of the city and aerial photos of the neighborhood in its early days. Rui also encouraged residents to utilize the museum's vast



archives to gain an understanding of their home's background, including former owners and significant events involving the property. Following Rui's presentation, guests were encouraged to refresh their beverages and visit the museum's galleries.





Beautification Updates

Notice anything different lately as you drive through the Old Northeast? The city and HONNA's Beautification Committee have been hard at work lately. Two years ago, HONNA submitted a request to replace Moroccan Date Palms on Coffee Pot Boulevard that had died. Then, last fall Hurricane Ian claimed an additional half-dozen of the majestic palms. The city has now replaced all 16 palms along the scenic waterway. In addition, the city is in the process of repainting the yellow curbs on neighborhood medians.

The Beautification Committee has repainted all five "headstone" markers and has just about finished painting the large neighborhood "monuments." Note the "signature" monument at Beach Drive and 5th Avenue NE where renowned local artist Chad Mize has added his creative touch. The next phase will be relandscaping and repairing the lighting of the monuments.

The five monuments marking the Old Northeast have been getting a facelift recently as noted in previous communications, but the monument at 5th Avenue NE and Beach Drive – arguably the premier location of the five – has been given a unique facelift thanks to Chad Mize (chadmize.com). The HONNA Board of Directors hired the well-known muralist to put his touch on that monument. "St. Pete's residents are very attuned to the vibrant arts scene in our city," said HONNA President Nick Bell. "We wanted to contribute to the scene in a way that made sense for our neighborhood. So, when we decided to update our historic markers, we tapped Chad to do something different with the Beach Drive monument."

"I've always loved the vibe of the Old Northeast," Chad noted. "So, when HONNA reached out to me about painting the monument, I of course said yes. I love using mural art to beautify outside structures. My recommendation was to match the color palette being used on the other four monuments and integrate a hex block pattern that's associated with the sidewalks of the neighborhood and St. Pete." Residents can check out Chad's work at Beach Drive near the Vinoy Resort. "We're thrilled with the result," Nick said, "and hope that it becomes more than a neighborhood monument, perhaps a new Old Northeast landmark."



A World Record!

The Waterfront Parks Foundation is going for the world record of longest Picnic Blanket. This will take place in North Shore/Flora Wylie Park on Saturday, November 18. Watch for details and how you can be a part of this fun event.

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 get periodic email announcements. Volunteer for a project, program, or event (such as the Candlelight Tour of Homes, Trunk or Treat, and Porch Parties).



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 September/October: 356 18th Avenue NE, Jen Tully.

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are the faces of Ukraine, and if we can help, it's our responsibility, and a significant one," Konchakovskaya said. "It's heartening to feel how we can go and receive support from the people who understand us."

For many of the Kyiv Symphony musicians, this isn't just their first time in the Sunshine State – it's their first time in America. And the journey will not be easy. They will leave their homes in Ukraine and take a 19-hour train ride to Poland, where they'll have to wait five days to obtain appropriate visas, and then board a trans-Atlantic flight to Florida.

The concert will feature a mix of religious classics and traditional Ukrainian music, with the musicians adorned in sacred Ukrainian clothing. Without the group's male voices to support them, their program will sound significantly different from their performances in Ukraine.

Ukrainian-born soprano and chorus member Maryna Zubko lives her day-to-day life in Kyiv. "My hometown is not a safe place, but I know I'm in the right place," Zubko



The concert will feature a mix of religious classics and traditional Ukrainian music with the musicians adorned in sacred Ukrainian clothing.

Photo courtesy of The Kyiv Symphony Orchestra and Chorus



The Kyiv Symphony Orchestra and Chorus is a Ukraine-based spiritual group coming to First Presbyterian Church.

said. "I want to be where I can be useful and support my people by doing what I love."

Matt Clear, director of Traditional Worship Music and the Arts at First Presbyterian Church, says the Kyiv concert is not the typical programming the church sees, but he's overjoyed to be involved with their mission.

"We're happy to be part of their contribution to freedom," Clear said. "When I first heard about their mission, I was a little hesitant due to the scale of this undertaking. But the more I learned, the more we wanted to be involved."

The 1,200-seat church is the orchestra's second stop on their Florida tour. They are providing lodging and dinner for the group members. Clear hopes to raise \$20,000 for the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. One hundred percent of the funds generated from the concert tour will benefit a humanitarian aid mission for widows, orphans, and war victims.



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Photo courtesy of Eba Zheerobchuk

The Kyiv Symphony Orchestra and Chorus is a mixture of spiritual and uplifting music.

“When we see news on television or read articles about the atrocities taking place in Ukraine, I think we all feel somewhat powerless and ill-equipped to help the impacted people,” he said. “I believe this concert-mission project creates a tangible way that we can provide assistance through the power of music and the humanitarian aid these funds provide.”

Even if you can offer only emotional support or a small donation to the traveling Kyiv musicians, everyone is welcome to be part of their journey this September. “We know how much God loves Ukraine,” Konchakovskaya said. “So, we believe they will bless us.” ●

The concert takes place at First Presbyterian Church, 701 Beach Drive on September 17 at 4 p.m. Admission is free, but donations are appreciated. Find more information about Music Mission Kiev at musicmissionkiev.org.

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MEET YOUR WRITERS



Amanda Hagood
Northeast Journal writer

Where are you from originally?
Birmingham, Alabama

Favorite place to visit in St. Pete.
Maximo Park – I love the “old Florida” feel of the beaches, pines, and hidden shell mounds.

Most interesting/enjoyable/exotic vacation you've taken.

New Zealand. I couldn't believe the extraordinary scenery, the kind people, the endless variations of outdoor amusements.

Top two places in the world on your bucket list.

I want to go mountain hiking in South Korea and my partner wants to eat smoked fish on the shores of Lake Baikal.

What famous person would you like to meet and why?

Flannery O'Connor or Zora Neale Hurston – two writers whose wit and voice I admire, both on and off the page.

Favorite sport, recreational activity, or hobby.

I like anything that involves arranging and piecing different elements together – so quilting, collage, doing puzzles, or of course writing.

A great movie or TV series you'd recommend.

I'm a fan of *Detectorists*, the show about two metal detectorists searching for buried treasures but usually find buttons or pull tabs. Great characters and countryside.

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

I want to want to be a dog, but I'd almost certainly be a cat.

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

My seven-year-old just floors me every day with some new idea or turn of phrase that makes me fall back in love with the world. (When he's not loud or making a mess!)

Current book you've read and would recommend.

Hollow Kingdom is kind of like *The Walking Dead* but zanier, narrated by a plucky pet crow with his loyal dog sidekick, as they mourn the loss of their human and try to save what's left of the world. It's funny, I promise!

Tell us about an accomplishment of which you are proud.

For three years, I've run a delightful Pet Mayor of Gulfport fundraiser for the Gulfport Historical Society. I organize nominations, promote the candidates, and host a formal wagging-in ceremony at the close of the race.

Something people might not know about you.

I once landed an 85-pound halibut in Kachemak Bay in Alaska. As a southern belle from Alabama marrying into a homesteading Alaskan family, I had some preconceptions to overcome. But I think that helped.

What do you do for a living?

When I'm not writing, I teach in the Animal Studies program at Eckerd College.

Tell us something about your family and pets.

I am lucky enough to live with two excellent humans, my partner, Dan, and son, James, two superior cats (Admiral Byrd and Maxwell Perkins), and, as of July, a peahen and peabiddy who have claimed our yard as their own.



Abby Baker
Northeast Journal writer

Where are you from originally?

I was born in Baltimore, but my family moved to Tampa when I was a toddler. I consider this my home.

Favorite place to visit in St. Pete.

I love Caddy's on Treasure Island. I know that's not technically St. Pete, but when I visit, it's the first place on my list.

Most interesting/enjoyable/exotic vacation you've taken.

I stayed on a houseboat in Key West for about a week right before COVID hit. The island started quarantining when we were docked on the boat and completely off the grid. When we finally realized this, we were shocked, and we had to road-trip all the way back to New York.

Top two places in the world on your bucket list.

Italy and Japan

What famous person would you like to meet and why?

I feel like meeting a famous person would be really awkward. That being said, I'm a huge fan of drag and I've always wanted to meet Bob the Drag Queen. I'm a longtime fan and I've listened to every podcast she's put out.

Favorite sport, recreational activity, or hobby.

I just joined a kickball league and I'm hooked!

A great movie or TV series you'd recommend.

I just rewatched *Everything, Everywhere, All at Once* and I cried the entire time. It was beautiful.

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

I would hope to be a French bulldog in another life.

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

My mother continues to inspire me every day. I think I'm always trying to grow up to be like her. She is a teacher and is so selfless and so accepting with her students.

Current book you've read and would recommend.

I just finished *Bunny* by Mona Awad and it shook me to my core. It's shiny, pink, and horrible, and I love the trope of a disturbed young woman getting revenge.

Tell us about an accomplishment of which you are proud.

I just learned to drive stick shift and I feel like it's the best thing ever. Plus, in the event of an apocalypse, I can hijack any getaway car.

What do you do for a living?

I work in marketing, and I write freelance when I can. I started my career at *The Gabber* right out of college and have continued to write for print and online publications since. My marketing gig pays the bills, though.

Tell us something about your family and pets.

For the past six years, I've lived with my best friend, and we've traveled the country together. It's unorthodox, but I wouldn't want to live with anyone else.

ACTIVITIES THIS FALL

Wed Night Supper	9.13
Ukraine Concert	9.17
Beach Drive Forum	9.20
Senior Luncheon	10.11
Wed Night Supper	10.11
Beach Drive Forum	10.18
Heritage Sunday	10.22
TRUNK-or-TREAT	10.28
MissionSunday	10.29

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Built in 1925 by prominent pioneer architect Edgar Ferdon, who also designed many of St. Petersburg's landmark buildings, such as the Crisp Arcade during Florida's Golden Age, this elegant home is a designated historic building. Known in the 1920s as the Godsey House, this iconic home was the site of many society events through its philanthropic owners, CJ Godsey, a prominent plumbing contractor and businessman, and his wife, a trained soprano who sang locally on the radio and at numerous society events. They widely entertained in the home which was designed specifically for that purpose. The Godseys purchased the land from Perry Snell, which also includes a waterfront lot across the street, and spared no expense on the design as the estate was considered one of the most ambitious Mediterranean Revival homes in the area with architectural features such as tiled cathedral ceilings in the baths, reflecting old world Florida grandeur.

Looking at the estate while standing on the brick-lined streets of Coffee Pot Boulevard in the historic district of the Old Northeast, it is easy to imagine this gracious home as it was first constructed with four bedrooms, three full baths with two half baths and 3,637 heated square feet with spectacular views of Coffee Pot

Bayou. Built with superior hollow tile construction, tile roof, exemplary millwork, 11-foot ceilings and graceful arches, many of the original elements of the home are still in place, including the wood floors with Cabin Corner pattern, chandeliers and sconces, gas fireplace with faience tile (the same tile used in the Vinoy Hotel, also built in 1925), custom-built stairwell railing and spindles, bath tile and fixtures that harken to another time, and hand-stenciled pecky cypress clad ceiling that was installed in a one-of-a-kind intricate pattern.

Renovations to this stately home were carefully completed to enhance the space for modern living while maintaining the historical qualities of the home. The eat-in kitchen was updated to an open design concept with custom wood cabinetry milled to match the period, a large island and breakfast bar that showcases beautiful water views.

Step outside and experience tropically landscaped grounds with a resort-style pool with pergola, courtyards, basketball court, detached two-car garage, spacious yard, circular drive and masonry wall surrounding the estate on this 14,693-square-foot lot. Also included is a deeded water lot across the street.



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Charles Dew Talks Unravelling a Racist Past

Janan Talafer

Some things can never be unseen. How true that was for Dr. Charles B. Dew, who was a professor of history at Williams College in Massachusetts, when he was handed a document in the college's rare book and manuscript collection.

It was a price list from Betts & Gregory, auctioneers in Richmond, Virginia, with the monetary value of enslaved men, women, and children. They were graded and priced by categories based on factors such as health, age, and physical appearance – or in the case of children, their height.

The paper was initially dated August 1, 1860, but that was scratched out and August 2 was written instead. Overnight the “Negro Market” had changed and gone up in value, information that those who bought and sold enslaved humans needed to make their “business” decisions.

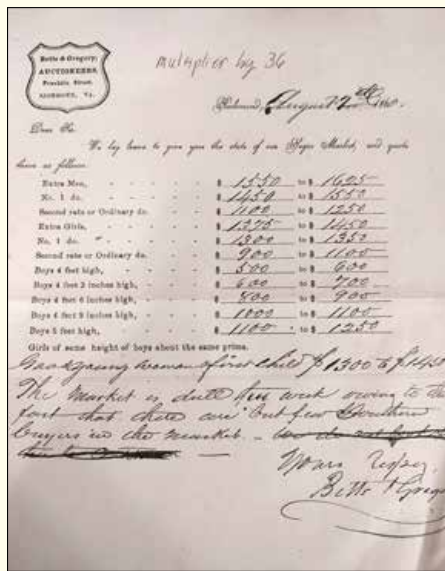
“I felt like I had been slugged in the stomach when I looked at that auction sheet,” said Dew. “Space was left to fill in the daily high and low prices, just like the stock market. Clerks on a daily basis filled these forms out; probably had a stack of them. It spoke more powerfully than anything else I had seen as to what lay at the core of the South’s slave system – human beings as property, as commodities.”

A St. Pete native who grew up in the Old Northeast, Dew was the featured speaker this summer at the Museum of History’s popular “Happy Hour with an Historian.” His talk centered on his 2016 book, *The Making of a Racist: A Southerner Reflects on Family, History, and the Slave Trade*.

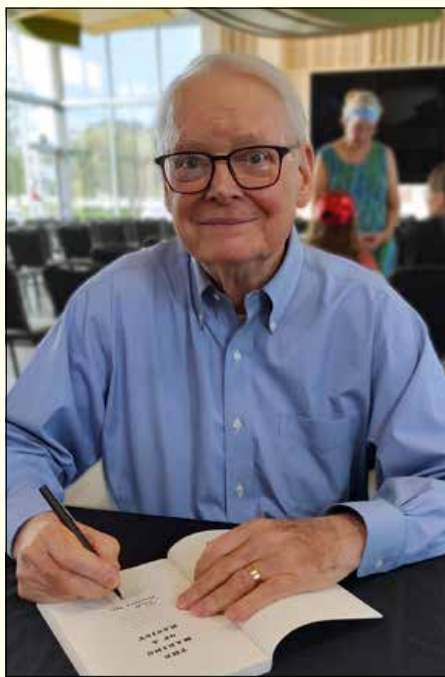
Part memoir and part historical documentation, the book is an eye-opening account of Dew’s experience growing up in the Sunshine City in the 1940s and ’50s, when the city was strictly segregated and very much part of the Jim Crow South.

The book is also a dark, disturbing look at the extensive correspondence and records he found in researching the very lucrative slave trade in Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy. In his book Dew notes that throughout the South, the slave market was the second biggest industry after cotton. It was the engine of antebellum prosperity.

“Undertaking a book about the slave traders and their customers was the darkest research project that I ever undertook,” said Dew, now professor emeritus at Williams College. “It was the matter-of-fact way in which traders, their agents, and their customers spoke about the buying and selling of men, women, and children. It was as revealing as anything I have encountered in all the years I have been trying to understand the place in which I was born and raised.”



Betts & Gregory auction sheet from 1860



St. Pete native and historian Charles B. Dew

Dew told the audience that it took him years to confront the reality of racism and how it had affected every aspect of his life. It can be hard for those who benefit from a system to see injustice when it is so firmly entrenched. “The process of absorbing the culture was passed on to me with all the certainty of a genetic trait,” said Dew. “I had grown up a good Confederate son in the Jim Crow South. It was part of my DNA, just my reality. I honestly believed what I had been taught.”

Like most Southern cities at the time, St. Petersburg stores had “white” and “colored” water fountains. Spa Beach and Spa pool were off-limits to Black people, as were the famous green benches and many other historic aspects of our city. Central Avenue became the color barrier, with white families living north of Central and Black families, south.

Dew pointed out that he learned the “etiquette” of race relations at an early age, simply by observing his parents. These unspoken rules meant never shaking hands with a Black person, and never addressing them as Mr. or Mrs., always by their first name. His family, like many other white families, had a separate bathroom off the back porch and a separate set of dishes in the corner of the cupboard for the Black “help” to use.

One racial incident in 1945 is forever “seared in his mind.” The owner of a shoeshine had come to his house to apologize for a conversation that Dew’s father had overheard while he was getting his shoes shined. His dad had stormed off in anger and the shopkeeper was hoping to make amends. But the exact opposite happened. “All of a sudden Dad went volcanic,” said Dew. “Bill had approached our house from the wrong door, the side door. The unspoken rule was African Americans were only allowed to use the back door.”

Despite stories that he shared with the audience, Dew saw his parents as “good, decent, educated people. But like the rest of the South, [they] had pervasive notions of white superiority.” His father Jack was a lawyer. His uncle Roy owned the Cadillac dealership in St. Pete and his uncle Ralph owned a furniture store. His grandmother was an active member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. And she told him that his father was named Jack, not John, for Stonewall Jackson, a leading general in the Confederacy.

When it came time for Dew to attend college, his father, ironically, encouraged him to apply to Williams College, a small, private liberal arts school in the solid New England Yankee town of Williamsport, Massachusetts. His father had heard of the college’s reputation and wanted his son to have a first-quality education. But what he didn’t

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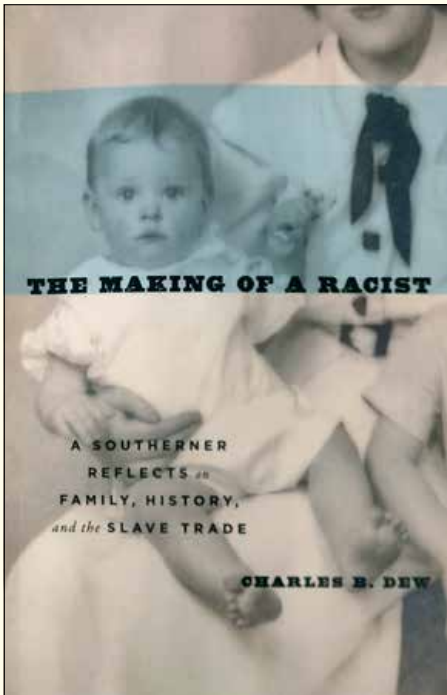
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The cover of Dew's book, The Making of a Racist

realize was how transformational that experience would be.

"I enrolled in a history class on the Old South and to have the myths that I absorbed over the course of my life about slavery, the Old South, and the Confederacy exposed – it just blew me out of the water," said Dew.

A major turning point came for him in 1954 when he was going home for Christmas by train. Dew joined other white travelers in the dining car and after the meal, one of the waiters drew a curtain across the middle of the room. It was at this point that the Black passengers began to enter the car, all seated on the other side of the curtain. "I had never noticed that Jim Crow curtain before," said Dew. "Then

it hit me: Ted Wynne, my classmate at Williams who was African American, someone I considered a friend, could not be seated with me. 'That is not right,' I remember thinking. I think this was the first time I had questioned what I had taken for granted, what had been invisible to me before."

Dew admits that it was a gradual, "one-step forward, one-step back" process that eventually allowed him to break free of his early training. He wrote his book, he said, in part to understand the culture of the South that he had grown up in. "Generations of us became blind to what was right in front of us: slavery in the nineteenth century, segregation in the twentieth," said Dew. "Going forward requires building a multi-racial society. It is the only way we are going to survive." ●



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Wildlife Conservation Commission's website, a single one of these two- to six-inch critters may eat hundreds of insects in a night! "There is nothing in the world that can outcompete bats in consuming insects," adds Blisset-Clark.

Moreover, contrary to popular myth, bats can both see and hear quite well. If you peer closely at their tiny little mugs, you'll find an incredible variety of nose, ear, and eye shapes, each adapted to their particular species' foraging patterns and preferences – much like a fluffier version of Darwin's famous finches. So, when Florida bats seem to be swooping threateningly in your direction, it's more likely they are using these finely tuned senses to capture insects drawn to the carbon dioxide in your...um...exhalations.

It is true that bats can bite. And it's also true that some bats – about one in every 200, according to the University of Florida – can transmit rabies. But while most infected mammals tend to become more aggressive, rabid bats become more sluggish, often falling to the ground. Stay on the safe side and never handle a bat, especially with bare hands. Always call your local FWC office or a wildlife care facility if you find one on the ground.

What about bats in the belfry? Local bats tend to roost in mature or dying trees but have also adapted to manmade structures such as bridges or buildings – including houses. But unlike other stowaway critters, bats do not chew or burrow; in fact, they can only be found in attics where other animals, or a lack of routine maintenance, have created an entryway they can exploit. The biggest issue a bat infestation creates is typically their pungent poop – or *guano* – which can accumulate in large quantities before it is discovered. At that point, a homeowner may perform a humane exclusion, a process that gradually prevents bats from reentering the roost site. Good to note: it is illegal under Florida law to poison bats or intentionally harm their nesting sites, or to exclude a colony during bats' mid-April to mid-August maternity season.

Ok, so maybe bats aren't the red-eyed, blood-thirsty, screeching menace that popular culture makes them out to be. But why would you *want* them in your yard?

For O'Dowd, who can remember watching bats come out growing up in Clearwater, it's about making his yard and his neighborhood more sustainable. Alongside the beehives on his carriage house roof and the native plantings in his yard, he hopes the bat house he and his neighbor installed on their property line – designed to shelter about 150 bats – will enrich the local biodiversity, while helping to naturally control mosquitos. With Florida's human population increasing at a steady rate, he thinks all residents should be mindful of what they can do to decrease their impact on the state's strained ecosystems. "If everyone could do this," he says, "it would be awesome!"

Blisset-Clark, whose organization has built and installed 1,600 bat houses across the state, sees providing habitat for bats as a critical part of rewilding, a process of restoring natural systems that have been damaged by the last century of Florida's development. As she points out, large-scale changes we have made – clearing forests, ditching waterways, heavy use of pesticides – have all challenged natural mosquito predators such as dragonflies, turtles, salamanders, mosquito fish, and, of course, bats. Helping bats regain their toehold – or, more appropriately, their clawhold – on the landscape can replace some of that natural pressure on mosquito populations.

Putting up a bat box is a great way to help, though it can take some trial and error to get right. Whether you build your own, purchase a kit, or buy one readymade, there are detailed instructions on design, placement, and maintenance available on Florida



Large bat houses on the University of Florida campus.

Photo courtesy of the Florida Museum



Photo courtesy of the Florida Bat Conservancy

Even a small bat house can shelter hundreds of bats, and a roost may be shared by more than one species



Photo courtesy of the Florida Bat Conservancy

Palmetto bugs are just one of the many pests that Florida bats like to eat. A single bat can eat hundreds of insects in just one night.

Bat Conservancy's website. Or motor on up to Gainesville to see the world's largest occupied bat houses at the Florida Museum, home to an enormous colony of 500,000 bats that was excluded from the bleachers at James G. Pressly Stadium and Scott Linder Tennis Stadium in 1991. (Indeed, bat houses are often used in combination with a humane exclusion to rehome nuisance bats...though not usually on this scale.)

If you're not ready to host a cute little bat-galov in your yard, you can still help support local bat populations. Allowing aging trees to stand as long as you safely can and leaving a few dead fronds when you trim your palms preserves habitat. Avoiding the use of pesticides leaves plenty of healthy forage for bats, while reducing artificial lighting helps them navigate the night sky more successfully.

Next time you step out into the night, as your eyes adjust to the darkening sky, let your ears tune in to the subtle chirps, croaks, rustles, and wooshes of the night orchestra tuning up for another nocturnal performance. Watch and listen for the subtle swoop of Florida bats intercepting their prey, high ropes artists on wires of ultrasonic sound. You might just discover a new favorite neighbor. ●

Learn more about bats and bat boxes at floridabats.org.

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A Surreal Soirée: Sueños de Dalí

Cindy Cockburn

When we said “welcome” to the Princess of Spain to help launch the opening of the new Dalí Museum on January 11, 2011, the festivities were like a surreal dream. The building design by Yann Weymouth was spectacular and reporters from around the world gathered to congratulate Museum Director Hank Hine.

As their publicist, I was juggling interviews from CNN, USA Today, the New York Times, and the Associated Press. The museum was named one of the 10 most interesting museums in the world by Architectural Digest. St. Pete was forever enshrined to residents and visitors alike as the home of the new Dalí Museum.

Today, the Dalí Museum houses one of the most acclaimed collections of a single modern artist in the world, with over 2,000 works representing every moment and medium of Salvador Dalí’s creative life. This October, the museum will throw another gala and invites one and all to celebrate.

Sueños de Dalí is the annual surreal soirée where the museum’s spectacular building and gardens morph into a world of whimsical delight. Guests are invited to float through the gallery and grounds while enjoying gourmet bites, themed open bars featuring curated cocktails, live entertainment, and more – all to support the museum’s mission as a nonprofit arts and education organization.

Beach Drive resident and Dalí Museum Guild Member Jose Martinez says, “The best way to describe the Sueños de Dalí fundraiser gala? It is always extravagantly surreal and elegantly sublime. Tampa Bay comes out to show off their various interpretations of this themed event while celebrating Dalí and generously supporting the museum’s vital mission.”

He and his wife, Natalie, have attended each year since they moved to downtown St. Pete. “The live entertainment – may it be singers, artist, or aerialist – are always elevated, creative, and unique ...The level of creativity, artistry, and production is always Hollywood-set caliber yet, not surprising as it leverages the vast network of talent we have locally within the St. Pete Arts community. If you have not attended one, it is always one of the premier events on the calendar.”

Chaired by Ryan and Marianne Griffin and supported by the Guild at The Dalí, this year’s theme, “Dalí’s Mortal Delusions,” is about embracing the artist’s fascination with mortality, symbolism, and existential themes related to the subconscious mind. Guests are encouraged to dress in their best black-and-white cocktail attire accented with surreal Dalinian symbols of mortality, such as ghosts, skulls, ants, and more. While themed attire is recommended, all are welcome.

Admission includes complimentary valet, gallery access, exclusive viewings of Dalí Alive 360° at The Dalí Dome, curated bites, open bar, and live entertainment. VIP guests also enjoy a pre-event reception at The Mandarin Hide, plus day-of early event access and entertainment, a custom welcome cocktail, private gallery viewing, and two general admission tickets to the museum.

“I have been attending Sueños since its inception in 2011,” said Kathy Biscoglia, president of the Dalí Guild. “Since then, the museum has been offering this event in late October with a different Dalí-inspired theme every year. And that is what makes this evening so special to me – the creative spectacle! The costumes, the decor, the special twist

on the theme make it an evening to remember and delight in.”

Since the beginning of August, Beach Drive resident Susan Robertson says she’s been planning and shopping for – and then finding – the perfect dress to wear for 2023. She calls Sueños “a highly anticipated affair filled with excitement and intrigue” that captivates from the first moment. “Having attended this event for years, I can confidently say that it never fails to deliver a one-of-a-kind experience. I am eagerly anticipating what surprises and delights await us all.” ●

Sueños de Dalí is Saturday, October 28 from 8 to 11 pm. Museum member tickets are \$130; general admission tickets are \$140 each; VIP Tickets are \$600. More at thedali.org/event/suenos-de-dali-2023.



A Dalí look-alike



Costumed guests revel in last year’s Sueños.



Sueños guests Jose, Natalie, and Yvonne enjoy last year’s event.



This year’s event is October 28.

Photo courtesy of the Dalí Museum

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A Full Set of Memories as China Finders Closes

Janan Talafer

My husband and I always meant to visit China Finders, the iconic store on Central Avenue that specializes in previously loved fine china and crystal. Tucked away between an ever-expanding diversity of trendy cafes, boutiques, and pubs in the Grand Central District, China Finders seemed like a throw-back to St. Petersburg in the 1950s and '60s, when it was still a sleepy little town.

When we heard that the iconic store was closing, we were dismayed that once again a landmark venue in St. Pete was disappearing. And when we drove by and saw the “up-to-75-percent off” sale sign in the window, we knew we had to stop and check it out. It didn't disappoint.

Row after row of beautiful sets of china dinnerware lined the shelves, so much that the size of the shop, about 4,000-square feet – estimated to be about four storefronts – seemed small. It was mind-boggling. There were dinner plates, salad bowls, gravy boats, butter dishes, delicate cups and saucers, cream and sugar sets, crystal wine glasses and so much more. It was hard to know where to look first.

Noah Weitkemper, who manages the family business with his father Larry, estimates that the inventory before the sale was about 300,000 items. “We have thousands of patterns here; it can be overwhelming. You almost have to take a few trips to the store to get the lay of the land,” said Bruce Schrier, Larry's husband, who also works part-time at the store.

It was a bittersweet moment as I looked around and thought of the stories those beautiful pieces of pottery could tell. The countless Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, Sunday family dinners, anniversaries and graduations, children's birthdays. Special occasions that required a tablecloth and cloth napkins, sterling silver flatware, and a complete place setting of fine china for each person. “The dining room all decked out like that is a visual trigger,” said Schrier. “Food served on a beautiful plate says this is more than a meal. It sets the mood. It says, this is an experience.”

Although some of the china stacked on the shelves may have been owned by collectors, more likely they were family treasures passed down from one generation to the next. My husband inherited an antique dark blue Wedgwood collection from his mother. I received a dozen china teacups and teapots from my mother, some of which were from her mother, as well as a



Larry Weitkemper, left, and Bruce Schrier

complete set of dishes from the World War II era marked “made in occupied Japan.”

That's how Larry got started in the business. In the early 1980s, he inherited a full set of china from his grandmother and didn't quite know what to do with it. “He didn't need it and thought maybe he'd sell it, then started thinking about it as a business,” said Schrier.

At the time, he worked full-time as a healthcare educator for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, but in his spare time he focused on china. “It became my passion,” he said. Larry's twin brother, Harry,

him to a warehouse in Pinellas Park, and then to the store's current location in the Grand Central District. Larry continued to help from St. Louis, until he retired from the VA, and moved here with Schrier.

Eventually, Harry sold his share in the business. Noah joined the team. The store thrived and their online presence grew. “It was a group effort – buying, processing, selling, and shipping,” said Schrier. They were sending china to customers all over the world.

I was curious. Most millennials aren't interested in inheriting or acquiring the “good” china. And as

narrow it down to my favorite. I like bright colors and floral patterns. Schrier doesn't. “China is like artwork; it has to speak to you,” he said. “There's also something about picking it up and feeling it in your hand.” It's not surprising to learn that at home, he and Larry have several sets: Fiesta ware in almost every color, a sleek, all-white Gibson set, and a Rosenthal set from Germany. “It's beautiful, very tasteful, with a geometric pattern and gold trim,” he said.

About twenty years ago, the business shifted from Missouri to Florida when Harry relocated to this area. He brought the china with



Bruce Schrier holds a delicate china cup.



Shelves are filled top to bottom with china.

joined him in the search for good deals at estate sales. Then they'd turn around and sell it to interested buyers. At first, they worked out of the basement in Larry's home in St. Louis, MO. But eventually their inventory grew large enough that they needed a storefront. “It just exploded,” said Larry.

Over the years he became an expert. “Larry knows what to look for, the various marks on the back and what they mean. We have spent a fortune on reference books. We have dozens and dozens of them,” said Schrier.

The top brand names in fine china were all here in the shop: Lenox, Royal Doulton, Mikasa, Noritake, Royal Copenhagen, Wedgwood, and other, unusual, rare and vintage pieces from all over the world. There were also Christmas plates and mugs, colorful Fiesta ware, and china made at one time exclusively for high-end department stores like Macy's, Nieman Marcus, and Hudson's. “The buyer would sit with the manufacturer to collaborate on something special just for the store,” said Schrier.

With so many choices I couldn't imagine having to

boomers retire and downsize, they often don't have room for china cabinets full of family treasures. So who is buying the china? Schrier points out that over the years the phone has rung constantly with people either interested in selling their collection or hoping China Finders can help them replace a chipped, broken, or misplaced piece from their set. Given how packed the shop was the day I visited, and how many times Schrier had to interrupt our interview to answer the phone, I could see how that was true.

Now it's the end of an era. Earlier this year, an investor approached them with an offer they couldn't refuse for the property. “We had been thinking about retiring anyway,” said Schrier. “We're both going to be 72 and it's time.” Their last official day was September 9, and they will vacate the store by mid-October.

What will happen with the remaining inventory? They'll continue to have a busy online presence. And Schrier jokes that any time they want to go on another Holland America cruise, they'll box up a few sets to auction off at Burchard Galleries. They've already been on 45 cruises so far. Many more to go. ●



Sofia Weitkemper points to a valuable tiny china teapot.

Spooky Season

Brandy Stark

It is the season for all things spirited! From creepy and kooky, to weird and wild, there's a little art for everyone this time of year. Here's a sampling of some of St. Pete's upcoming art exhibits and events.

Art Centers

Florida Craftart: *Ghost Stories*. 510 Central Avenue. September 1 to October 21. Monday – Saturday, 10 am to 5:30 pm; Sunday, Noon to 5 pm. floridacraftart.org

Artists invoke spirits, spooks, and otherworldly beings for a fine craft foray into the nether realm of Ghost Stories. Multi-media artworks of ceramics, fiber, glass jewelry, mixed media, printmaking, sculpture, and wood will tell a tale of spirits... real or imagined. For those who want more answers than mysteries, the *Ekphrastic*, a session in which artists explain their works, will be on September 28.

Morean Arts Center: 719 Central Avenue. September 1 to October 26. Daily, 10 am-5 pm. moreanartscenter.org

As always, the Morean offers a plethora of shows and events during these two months. As explained by Morean Art Curator, Amanda Cooper, "All three exhibitions have the (loose) connection to the SHINE mural festival/street artists."

ARTofficial Intelligence returns for its 10th year. The popular robot-themed show was founded by artist Mark Stevens (creator of Bob the Robot Prince of Denmark) and continues to depict robotic friends in all their glory.

Ermin Tabakovic: *Transcending Space* features the work of Yugoslavia/Bosnia born artist Ermine Tabakovic. Long involved in the European art scene, his family eventually immigrated to the United States, settling in the Tampa Bay area. "Modern geometric painting has had a very big influence on my work, especially the Constructivist artists and the art movements of the 20th century," the artist explains. "In my current work, I tend to fuse all these different influences and combine them with my own personal aesthetic to create a new visual language that transcends the past and points to something new and different."

SHINE 9 features an exhibition of the artist participating in this year's SHINE mural festival. (See story on page 10.)

Museums

Dalí Museum: *Sueños de Dalí*. 1 Dalí Blvd, St. Petersburg. October 28, 8 to 11 pm. \$140 non-members/\$130 members. thedali.org

The building and gardens of the Dalí morph into a world of whimsical delight. This year's theme, "Dalí's Mortal Delusions," embraces Salvador Dalí's fascination with mortality, NORTHEAST JOURNAL



"Breathe Out" by Wendy Bruce is machine-stitched with thread at Florida CraftArt

symbolism, and existential themes related to the subconscious mind. Guests are encouraged to dress for the theme. (See story on page 25.)

Spots About Town

Artlofts: *The Heat Is On*. 10 5th Street North, second floor above Florida Craftart. September 1 to 30. Monday to Friday, 10 am – 5 pm; Saturday, 12 – 4 pm, Second Saturday, 5 – 9 pm. Contact Susan Hess at 727-504-8788.

The Heat Is On is a new exhibit by members of Florida Wax, founded by encaustic wax artist, Shelley Jean, and is an affiliate of the International Encaustic Association. This group has exhibited across the state, including Bok Towers, Lake Wales, the University Club, Winter Park, the Bonvoy Marriott Hotel, Sarasota and Gallery Elan, Daytona Beach. Lucky for us, this show is in the heart of downtown!

Dissent Craft Brewing: *Extemporanea*. 5518 Haines Road N. Through September 16. Monday to Thursday, 3 – 9 pm, Friday and Saturday, 12 – 10 pm, Sunday 12 – 6 pm. Contact the brewery at 727-827-7129.

Extemporanea is a display of both new and older works from Kristi Capone's vast and varied catalog. Her style ranges broadly from industrial-influenced abstract expressionism to pop culture homage and rustic nature art.

Smokin' 19: *Favorite Places*. 3090 34th Street N. Through Sept. 17. 11 am – 10 pm daily. smokin19.com

As summer ends, take one more road



Kristi Capone exhibits her work at Dissent Craft Brewing

trip. This show features artists' favorite places to go – either real or imagined.

September 18 – October 19: *Nightmares on 34th Street*.

This show features the Halloweenesque dream scenes from the artistic nightmare! Come and get your spooky groove on with this local show. Remember that 100% of sales go to one of the scariest populations out there: the artists themselves.

Halloween Special Events

St. Petersburg Museum of History: *World's Largest Ghost Hunt*. 335 2nd Avenue NE. September 30. For updated details, check the SPIRITS of St. Petersburg website at spiritsofstpetersburg.com or spmoh.com.

For those who want a more hands-on approach to the paranormal, the St. Petersburg Museum of History and the SPIRITS of St. Petersburg are teaming up to present the sixth installment of the World's Largest Ghost Hunt. This event focuses on the legends of haunting at the museum: at over 100 years of age and filled with local antiquities, the place does have a few spooks. Come find out who haunts the halls and learn more about paranormal investigation!

Studio@620: *Hauntizaar*. 620 1st Avenue S. October 14, 10 am – 3 pm. thestudioat620.org

If spooky stuff makes your skin crawl in a good way, this event is for you. From the organizers, "We're the original Halloween and Day of the Dead Indie Art Market in the Tampa Bay Area,



"Lunetta" is a ceramic artwork by Jennifer Rosseter at Florida CraftArt



"Urban Nest" by Susan Hess, part of Florida Wax

founded in 2016 by the St. Pete Craft Heroes. The most creatively creepy vendors will be sharing their weird wares with you!" Includes tarot readings.

Halloween on Central: *Voodoo Vendor Village*. October 29. Noon – 5 pm. Central Avenue from MLK to 31st Street/Grand Central District. Free and open to the public.

The Voodoo Vendor Village hosts over promises entertainment, candy stations, and more than 100 local makers, artists, and small businesses. While the event spreads throughout the Grand Central District, the village will be between 16th and 20th streets along Central Avenue. Family friendly and costumes encouraged! ●



Melissa Black, vases, mixed media for Hauntizaar



ARTofficial Intelligence art by Mike Knapp at the Morean

Haunted St. Pete: The Ghosts of Roser Park

Brandy Stark

Nestled near the heart of St. Petersburg is a quirky, historic, and, some say, haunted neighborhood known as Roser Park. Filled with eclectic houses, this 270-acre district is located between 4th and 9th Streets South and bordered by Brooker Creek (home of the “Mini Lights Legend”) and Ingleside Avenue to the north and south. The haunted vibe may be inferred as the neighborhood includes the 19th century Greenwood Cemetery, one of the oldest burial spots in St. Petersburg, resting place of both Confederate and Union soldiers.

The founder of the development, Charles Roser, a transplant from Ohio, was a visionary in his time. According to legend, Roser had amassed his own fortune by selling the recipe for Fig Newtons to Nabisco for a million dollars. While the company has no record of this purchase, it concedes that there was a period of rapid company mergers in the late 1890s in which Roser may have been a part.

He developed the Roser Park neighborhood in 1911 as one of the first residential subdivisions to be established outside of the downtown business district. Located near the downtown trolley, it was one of the early “streetcar suburbs.” The citizens of the city were dubious about this venture; Roser was initially told that his plan would fail because no one would want to move into a “mud hole.”

Roser was undaunted. He saw the potential in the area: native Tocobagan shell mounds became the backdrop for his houses, and the creek was a selling point. He marketed the area through scenic postcards featuring Old Charlie, an immense oak tree bordering the creek that still stands today. He added brick streets, which were considered an elaborate expense for the time, and streetlights.

Though he died at Mound Hospital at the age of 73, it is not Roser who is said to haunt his old neighborhood. Instead, it is a myriad of legends, historic figures, and eclectic behaviors that mark this space.

Roser Park resident Domenico Pontoriero was so excited about the area’s uniqueness that he co-developed a historic ghost tour for the neighborhood. “I love the local expression that ‘every home in Roser Park comes with a ghost,’” he says. “I don’t know who came up with that, but I think that people who move to Roser Park are a special group – they are not the typical homeowner. They are okay and even enthusiastic about the stories here.”

Pontoriero says the real purpose of the ghost tour is to educate people about “the history of Roser Park, but also to inspire people by talking about some of the paranormal activity that goes on here.”

The tour weaves through the neighborhood while pointing out “local stories along the way. Some involve ghosts, some highlight quirky events, some are really insightful history. I think it is particularly exciting for anyone who likes strange facts or mysterious stories.”



A vintage card shows Roser Park as it was developing.



Tourists on the footbridge in Roser park in the early 1900s



“Old Charlie” oak tree in Roser Park. Courtesy of Historic Roser Park Neighborhood Association



Charles Roser's house in Roser Park

One such legend Dominico highlights is a popular local story about an old bridge crossing at Brooker Creek: the mini lights. It is a spot of conjuring ghostly orbs, often perturbing the spectators who are said to chase away anyone found on the spot.

The tour is augmented by input from the SPIRITS of St. Petersburg, a local paranormal investigation group. There is a spot where two grand houses stand upon the ridge of a hill. Decades ago, the homeowners of each property grew acrimonious with one another and held a duel in the front yard. The legend says that each met his mark, and both died. While demonstrating equipment during a tour in 2022, SPIRITS got a response through a device called a spirit box, a small radio that scans the airwaves. This is believed to allow the ghosts to speak through the static.

One homeowner reported that his house lights mysteriously turned themselves off in the living room at least once a night. This was paired with occasional sounds of footsteps walking along the other side of the house, even though the homeowner lives alone. The phenomena happened during a SPIRITS investigation and was witnessed by the team. A deep dive into the local archives revealed that a man who lived there in the late 1970s was attacked by a neighbor, left unconscious in the back

yard, and later taken to a hospital where he died. Murder charges were filed against the neighbor, who was convicted. Perhaps this man continues to roam through his former dwelling.

Another home sits right next to the Greenwood Cemetery and is said to be haunted by the ghost of a former city mayor. During the SPIRITS investigation, a sound sensor set itself off four times in an empty room. No one was near it;

the device was deemed sound and worked correctly for the rest of the investigation. The team concluded that a ghostly visitor had likely stopped in for a bit, later leaving to return to the graveyard.

Anyone who wants to learn the non-haunted history of the neighborhood is welcome to visit and do a self-guided tour through their famous outdoor museum. The project was spearheaded by Ron Motyka, a resident of the neighborhood, to further educate folks at their leisure about this remarkable place. Now in its 25th year, the walking tour includes plaques posted outside of various homes that describe the architecture and significance of the structure. The neighborhood association

is working in conjunction with the St. Petersburg Museum of History to install new information stations in the area.

Interested in learning more about the ghosts of Roser Park? The neighborhood is hosting an event on the evening of October 21, at 5 pm with multiple ghost tours and Halloween vendors. ●

For more on the event and the neighborhood’s legends, visit roserparkishaunted.com; find more on the past, present, and future of Roser Park at historicroserpark.org.

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~ Jeannie Carlson

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Halloween Comes in Peace



Photo courtesy of the city of St. Petersburg

Each Halloween, thousands of people head to the Old Northeast to celebrate the holiday amongst the elaborate decorations and fanfare.

Abby Baker

“Do you know the alien house in the Old Northeast?” Rob Arrington might ask when he’s out in St. Pete. “That’s me.”

If you’ve strolled the orange, black, and Spanish-moss-dappled streets of the Old Northeast from a week before Halloween to the holiday itself, chances are you’re familiar with the alien house on 18th Avenue. Rob works as an engineer and evidence of his career is threaded through his Halloween decor – he’s been showcasing the alien-invasion-crop-circle theme for eight years. And wife Liz was the creative mind behind the idea.

When the Arringtons first moved to the Old Northeast, they decided to observe the whole “Halloween thing” that their neighbors warned them about.

“There are lots of graveyards and ghosts, and my wife wanted to do something different,” Rob said. “We loved the movie *Signs*; it was a cool movie, actually. She was like, ‘What if we did something with aliens?’” Nearly a decade later, their home has become a legendary extraterrestrial landmark that attracts 4,000 to 5,000 Earthly visitors a season.

While Liz conceived the otherworldly concept, Rob is the executor. Each year, he rigs their garage door to hoist a homemade and ever-glowing spaceship into the air. If they left it up year-round, their yard would feature a UFO-shaped dead grass stencil with a wingspan of over five feet. A green glow accompanies a timed smoke machine that obscures any wires visible from the street. The Arrington’s bug-eyed aliens inhabit a field of cornstalks and haybales.

Rob says he starts working two weeks out, meticulously setting up the proper machines and arranging the stored decorations. “A lot of people drive by my

house the week before Halloween, and they expect it,” he laughs. “It’s not the same people every year, but those who know about it, know it. And it’s too much to scrap every year, so when people ask me what’s next, I say, ‘You’re looking at it, buddy!’”

It’s not lost on the Arrington’s 13-year-old son that the U.S. government may or may not have confirmed the existence of aliens this year. If extra-terrestrial life forms decide to invade St. Pete on Halloween night, we know who they’ll beam up first.

The Spirit of the Neighborhood

“As an association, we don’t actually do a lot for Halloween night,” says HONNA President Nick Bell. “Halloween does its own thing.” But before the holiday, HONNA hosts a house-decorating event and a trunk-or-treat at Westminister Palms on the Sunday preceding Halloween.

On Halloween night, Bell says the neighborhood comes alive with anywhere from 5,000 to 7,000 people – kids, adults, and teens. While many stick to the busiest avenues, it’s hard to find a quiet street in the neighborhood on October 31st. Homeowners on 17th Avenue pool their money to pay \$1,500 to close the street to traffic, according to Bell. They’re happy to contribute to maintain the tradition.

This year, though, some homeowners have voiced concerns. “I’ve received word from homeowners on the main street [17th Avenue] that the crowd in recent years has consisted mainly of older kids and teenagers who are partying,” Bell said. “They’re not there in the spirit of Halloween and not in a family friendly way.” Some homeowners have considered not closing the street to discourage loitering and public drinking, but Bell is hopeful that Halloween 2023 will proceed as planned – and that visitors will be courteous.

Bell says he’s planning to decorate his own home with a zombie playground and enjoy the night as he does every year. He moved to the neighborhood four years ago on October 30 and quickly realized how seriously the neighborhood takes the holiday. “It should be a great night, as it always is. The entire neighborhood gets involved, and there are many moving parts.” ●

For more on all things Halloween in the Old Northeast, visit honna.org or facebook.com/honnaorg.

HONNA’s Tips and Tricks for Halloween in the Old Northeast

Want to see the fun but beat the crowds? Most of the Halloween decorations in the ONE will be in full glory the week before Halloween.

For trick or treaters with small kids and others who’d prefer not to walk too far, a golf cart chariot is a solid choice. (Pre-book) and rent a four-wheeled cart from downtown’s St. Pete Golf Carts at 111 2nd Avenue NE. The streets will be closed for traffic, but not golf carts.

The biggest area to hit is 17th and 18th Avenues NE. That’s where many of the majorly decked out houses are, and great candy. Don’t miss hidden gems on the side streets, though – great houses, less foot traffic.

For residents, trick-or-treaters are mainly out from 5 to 9 p.m. Make sure you’re equipped with enough candy to handle four hours of fun!

From HONNA President Nick Bell: “Eat before candy time, because you won’t have time. Make chili and buy wine, then get ready to descend into bedlam for several hours.”



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Featured Listings



1126 16th Avenue
Euclid St. Paul | Listed at \$1,050,000
4 Bed | 2 Bath | 1,630 SF



224 13th Avenue N
Old Northeast | Listed at \$1,925,000
5 Bed | 4 Bath | 2,846 SF | Detached 2 Car Garage

199 Dali Boulevard #805
The Salvador | Listed at \$1,025,000
2 Bed | 2 Bath | Den | 1,483 SF

Recent Successes



105 10th Avenue
Passe-A-Grille | Sold at \$1,200,000



226 13th Avenue N
Old Northeast | Sold at \$1,950,000



636 Monte Cristo Boulevard
Island of Tierra Verde | Sold at \$1,250,000



"Ali is awesome! She has been a tremendous help to me in this process. She is very knowledgeable and so easy to work with! She found many homes that fit within the price range and home characteristics that I had provided. She took a lot of her time to show us many homes and helped me with the closing as I was doing it remotely. She met with the inspectors and contractors for me as I was in another state. Ali has truly been a pleasure to work with and I would highly recommend her!!!"

April C.

*Represented Buyer



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