

NORTHEAST JOURNAL

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St. Petersburg, FL

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Sprinting to Gold: Bobby Finke, Hometown Hero



Bobby Finke poses with a young swimmer from Connecticut and his family

— SARA WOLSKI —

Bobby Finke stunned swimming fans around the world when he came from the middle of the pack of swimmers in the men's 800-meter freestyle race to capture an Olympic gold medal in a final, thrilling sprint at the end. He went on to repeat the breathtaking, gold-medal-winning finish for the men's 1,500-meter freestyle race a few days later. The 21-year-old Clearwater native who grew up swimming at North Shore Aquatic Complex has since been called the greatest long-distance swimmer in the world.

Even his journey home was memorable. While connecting through Newark airport, Bobby's carry-on luggage triggered a security alert with the TSA. Bobby stepped aside diligently, waiting for personnel to check his bag. After answering the standard questions, Bobby watched as the TSA agent performed her search, exclaiming and apologizing as she procured his gold medals from his bag.

Continued on page 14

Diamond Jubilee with Sister City Takamatsu

— WILL MICHAELS —

This year is the Diamond Jubilee of the St. Petersburg-Takamatsu, Japan, Sister City Partnership. Sixty years ago, some in St. Petersburg were not all that enthused about becoming a Sister City with any Japanese city. 1961 was only sixteen years after the end of World War II. Many still had bitter memories of Japan from the war. On the other hand, Takamatsu had bitter memories as well, especially dating from July 4, 1945, when about 80% of Takamatsu was destroyed by US bombing.

Continued on page 26



Takamatsu Mayor Hideto Onishi and Mayor Bill Foster with Mrs. Noriko Noda, member of the Takamatsu 50th Anniversary executive committee, at the 50th Sister City Celebration in Takamatsu, 2011.

Martha Reed: Crime Writer Extraordinaire

— JANAN TALAFER —

Disgraced ex-police detective Jane Byrne is on the run. After surviving a brutal excessive-force civil lawsuit that scarred her with PTSD, she blows into New Orleans on her Ducati motorcycle looking for a fresh start, never expecting to uncover a hate-crime serial killer targeting NOLA's inclusive LGBTQ community.

After reading this description of the fictional crime thriller, *Love Power*, I'm intrigued to meet the author, Martha Reed, who lives in Crescent Heights and retired last year as a senior project consultant for a local financial services firm.

It's hard to imagine working in the financial world by day and writing mystery and crime fiction by night. Sort of a left-brain/right-brain dichotomy. But, Martha says it's been the perfect balance between the analytical thinking required for the job and the creativity required to weave together a good story.



Martha Reed's latest book, *Love Power*

Her fascination for crime fiction was piqued early in life when her grandfather introduced her to murder mysteries. "There's a puzzle aspect to crime fiction," she says. "There's always a trigger event (a villain commits a crime), and then a solution (the villain gets caught). The writer needs to figure out the middle and connect the dots."

According to NPD BookScan, crime fiction is one of the most popular genres today – about 36 percent of all book sales fit into this category. Martha points to the wide diversity of the genre. There's everything from cozy mysteries, like those that Agatha Christie wrote, to classic detective novels, thrillers, and realistic true-crime fiction. "Readers can find whatever flavor they're interested in somewhere along the spectrum," she says.

There's also the satisfaction that comes from a story where, in the end, justice triumphs and the natural order is restored. "There is so much uncertainty in our day-to-day living and these types

Continued on page 22

Lynn Laskowitz

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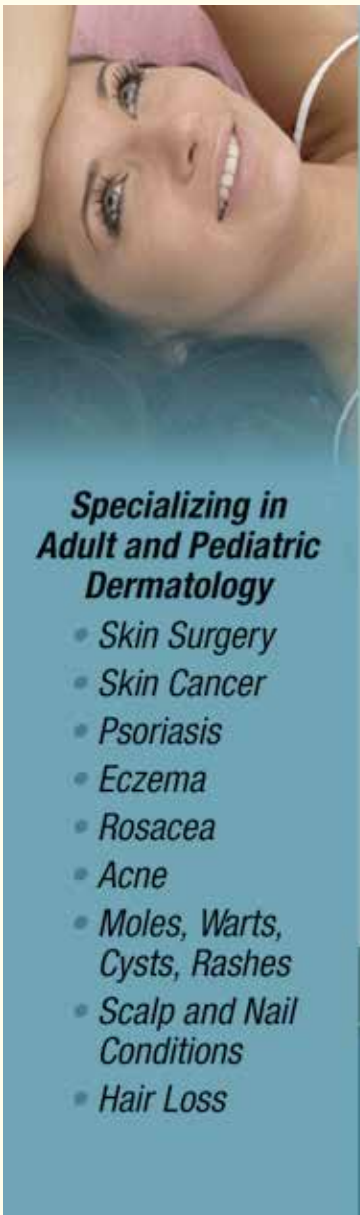
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EDITOR'S NOTE



Thoughts of Fall

This is the time of year I am most nostalgic for New England. No matter how long I live in Florida, I still crave autumn, when leaves turn glorious hues, the light subtly changes, and temperatures drop enough to start wearing comfy sweaters. I don't ever intend to go back up north to live, yet in September and October, I have to remind myself how great it is to live here in St. Petersburg with our amazing waterfront and downtown, beautiful tropical landscapes, and incredible sunsets.

I'm also appreciative of St. Pete's artsy, eclectic vibe – a cultural mindset that isn't necessarily found in other cities around the US. We celebrate the artistic and make room for a great diversity of creativity. Usually the focus is on the city's crazy quilt of murals, but in this issue, we wanted to draw attention to a different kind of public art, the many statues, both historic and modern. I love the photo essay by Lynn Lotkowitz on page 28-29. So, when I saw the Snell Isle statue of a panther wearing a shark outfit, I had to stop and take a photo to include in my Editor's Note. A few weeks later, there he was again, this time in a different and equally entertaining costume with a trio of flamingos on his back. Every time I drive by, I laugh. It's such a fun, comical sight, and a wonderful example of what makes St. Pete special. I am grateful to the homeowner who has a great sense of humor, something we all need during these challenging times. Just in case you'd like to see the panther in person, he's at the corner of Monterey Blvd. and Locust Street NE.

Janan Talafer
Editor, Northeast Journal




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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.

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



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



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



Lynn Lotkowitz spent years in radio in NY, and in business dev/mgmt at *Florida Trend Magazine*. She volunteers at Tomlinson Adult Learning Center ESOL Program, and travels internationally. Lynn is the new *NEJ* Facebook roving reporter sharing photos and video about exciting events, people and places around town. [facebook.com/NortheastJournalFL]



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]



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



Mila Salamone has lived in Taos, NM and Santa Cruz, CA. She has been lucky enough to travel all over the world when she was young. She loves the fulfilling joy of brave kindness between human beings. She's currently enrolled at Shorecrest.



Aaron Sherman a.k.a. Echo is an abstract painter and writer who recently relocated from the Bay area in California. He has a studio at the Five Deuces Gallery in the Warehouse Arts District and welcomes the public on the Second Saturday Art Walk of each month.



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 is the editor of the *Northeast Journal* and 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]




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Exciting Times Ahead for the Museum of History

— BRANDY STARK —

As the St Petersburg Museum of History gets ready to celebrate its 100th year anniversary next year, it is—in a move most apropos—about to make history. Earlier this summer, the museum announced a major construction project that will take the venue to the next level. A 10,000-square-foot expansion, plus an amazing art installation by Ya La'ford that wraps around the new building's exterior, will transform the museum into showpiece on the St. Pete downtown waterfront and an anchor in the new Pier district.

At a press conference and unveiling of the museum's exciting plans, executive director Rui Farias noted that “the new Museum of History will become a cultural tourism destination for thousands of visitors, as well as the foundation of a Florida historical educational opportunity for all Tampa Bay area schools.”

The estimated \$8-million construction project incorporates a 4,000-square-foot wing that will house a permanent interactive exhibit called *Explore Florida*. There will also be a Visit St. Pete/Clearwater Welcome Center and Gift Shop featuring local artists' work, as well as a rooftop terrace called The Flight Deck.

Reflecting St. Petersburg's role as an arts destination, one of the highlights of the project will certainly be Ya La'ford's monumental wrap-around installation. The sculpture will be placed on the exterior of the new construction and back-lit with LED lights that change color to reflect holidays and other events. It will also incorporate technology that can be activated with an app on a smartphone to give viewers an overview of some 500 years of Florida history.

“We're incredibly excited for the expansion, and to be able to house Ya La'ford's art is mind boggling,” said Rui. “We'll have a 100-year-old museum with a modern art piece inspired by, and teaching about 100 years of Florida history. It's incredible!”

An internationally recognized artist, La'ford is known for her bold, geometric statements, which will be incorporated into the history museum installation. Titled *Intersections*, the sculpture features geometric lines of abstract patterns, forms, and trajectories. It represents a “bridge between the past, present and future,” explains La'ford, adding that “using the power of the mind, the geometric design of the building is also a physical record and representation of intersecting lines run through the Florida transportation system.”

La'ford said she was inspired by her research on Florida's instrumental role in the birth and growth of America as represented by a historic 1891 railroad map. She hopes to embody the “trials, tribulations, and victories that honor the rich heritage of the early foundation of the city of St. Petersburg.” She adds that “just like each of us, these roads will change and evolve. Every time we travel, we have the opportunity to learn and grow with each other, as Floridians, as a connected community.”

Founded in 1922 by Mary Wheeler Eaton as the St. Petersburg Memorial Historical Society, the Museum of History is the oldest in Pinellas County. The original facility was housed within a former aquarium building that had stood at the foot of what was then called the St. Petersburg Municipal Pier. The city gave the building—battered by the 1921 hurricane—to Eaton for the historical society. Although small and worn, it stood until it was rebuilt in the 1950s.

While the museum's vision for the future is very innovative, some of the current displays showcasing the city's early history are pretty unique and quirky, part of what makes St. Pete special. A trip to the museum can be quite eye-opening.

Over the years, the venue served as a repository for a growing assortment of artifacts, antiques, and



Rendering of the new St. Petersburg Museum of History



Dennis Schrader's Little Cooperstown exhibit, a collection of 5,000 signed baseballs



Ya La'ford addresses the crowd at the press conference



Two-headed chicken in the collection of 'oddities.'

oddities, much of it donated by early St. Pete families. There's a pair of President Howard Taft's enormous pajamas, a Native American Indian dug-out canoe unearthed from Crescent Lake, and a 3,000-year-old Egyptian mummy and her coffin, said to have been abandoned in St. Pete by a ship's captain who could not pay his docking fees. The mummy is currently housed in a room renovated to look like a replica of King Tutankhamen's tomb.

But most peculiar of all is the two-headed, six-legged calf named 'Half-and-Half,' born in Safety Harbor in 1926. The calf lived six weeks and, upon its death, was preserved and donated to the museum. The calf is so popular that when the museum was renovated and the calf was stored in the director's office, visitors asked to see it.

“They remembered seeing the calf when they were kids – heck, when I was 8 or 9 and first visited the museum, I remember seeing the mummy and the calf, too,” said Rui. “Visitors bringing grandchildren wanted to share the experience, so I let folks come into my office to see Half-and-Half until it could be displayed in our collection again.”

The calf was partially responsible for a second recent addition to the oddities: a two-headed chicken. Rui said he learned about a small museum in Colorado that hosted 'Frozen Dead Guy Day' in honor of an eccentric man who died and was buried in the side of a local mountain – preserved by ice. “I wanted to do something similar for Half-and-Half,” said Rui. “We hosted the first annual 'Two-Headed Calf Day' in 2018 and the story went viral. A short time later, we got a call from a man in South Carolina. He had bought a two-headed chicken at an auction in the northeast. The chicken had been born in Tampa, and he asked if we would like it. Of course I accepted. A bit of time passed, and one day a box showed up. Inside was the chicken!”

In addition to unusual items, the museum acquired entire households, such as the Haas House and its collection of shells and minerals. The Lowe House was added in 1970, followed by other local properties such as a blacksmith shop, a dentist office, and a railroad caboose. These historic structures are no longer at the museum. Some went to the Pinellas Pioneer Settlement at Boyd Hill Nature Park, others to Heritage Village in Largo. The shell and mineral collections are currently in storage.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, as downtown began undergoing an early revitalization, the museum underwent another upgrade. New exhibits arrived, such as the life-size replica of the *Benoist XIV* airboat that hangs from the ceiling in the First Airline Gallery. Tony Jannus flew the *Benoist* from St. Pete to Tampa in a 1914 historic flight, making St. Pete the birthplace of the first scheduled commercial airline. The museum also acquired Dennis Schrader's Little Cooperstown exhibit, a collection of 5,000 signed baseballs. The collection is currently certified by *Guinness World Records* as the largest collection of its kind in the world.

Groundbreaking for the next phase of museum development is scheduled for February 2022 with construction expected to take 10 months. In the meantime, the museum is still open for visitors to enjoy. The museum also offers the popular Happy Hour with the Historian the first Thursday evening of the month. I [Brandy Stark] will be presenting Bay Area Ghost Stories on October 14, and local mural artist Derek Donnelly will discuss Florida murals on November 11. For more information go to www.spmoh.com. ●



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GOODNESS INDEED

St. Pete Civitan Celebrates 100th Anniversary

— JEANNIE CARLSON —

On September 11th, the St. Petersburg Civitan Club celebrated its 100th year of services to the community. Although the club was officially chartered on April 12, 1921, like many other clubs and volunteer organizations, the recent pandemic delayed their centennial festivities from last spring until now. St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Kriseman issued a proclamation recognizing the Club's centennial on its actual anniversary last April.

The first Civitan Club was formed in Birmingham, AL, in 1917, with St. Pete starting its own club four years later. The organization's guiding principle is to build good citizenship through volunteering with an emphasis on helping people with developmental disabilities.

The St. Pete Club's first project back in the 1920s involved city beautification. The club bought and placed a pair of swans in Mirror Lake.

there, a reminder of St. Pete's pioneer days. Behind that are historic 1925 Mediterranean style apartments that were once storefronts.

During the Depression, the club collected clothing and food for the needy, and in 1935, members purchased land in Indian Rocks Beach to build the Civitan Beach House. This past April, the facility was listed on the National Registry of Historic Places by the US National Park Service. A plaque unveiled during the 100th anniversary celebration in September will be placed permanently on the Beach House.

The St. Pete Civitan Club is now the largest in the state and is dedicated to raising funds to support Special Olympics Florida, the Civitan International Research Center (which focuses on interdisciplinary neurodevelopmental research), and PARC. PARC is a Pinellas County program that has been providing services, programs, and support to individuals with intellectual and developmental



Mayor Rick Kriseman with Civitan President Jan Ward and board members Bonnie Ruth, MaryAnn Fisher, and Norm Bungard

and MaryAnn Fisher of Shore Acres are both members of the St. Petersburg Civitan Club board of directors and have been fast friends for nearly two of the Civitan Club's ten decades.

MaryAnn is retired from a 23-year career with PARC. She first learned about Civitan from her boss, the late Curt Thomas, former CEO of PARC. Thomas was the second president of the St. Pete Civitan Club and was later named president of Civitan International. "The missions of PARC and Civitan are closely related," said MaryAnn. Both offer support to people who are developmentally disabled. She initially joined the 'ladies' group' of the St. Petersburg Civitan Club in 1993. Then in 1995, the two clubs merged into one.

Bonnie's introduction to Civitan came from a friend at church who was a retired army colonel. She officially joined the club in 2007. Bonnie is a third-generation Old Northeast resident whose grandparents moved to the neighborhood in 1929. Bonnie graduated from St. Petersburg High School, as did her mother. She and her husband Dave were missionaries in South America, where they founded several schools – ranging from preschool to high school – in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Lima, Peru. In 1992, Bonnie came back to St. Pete, moving

into the home that had been her grandparents. She's since moved into another house, but is still a proud resident of the Old Northeast.

Both MaryAnn and Bonnie are active volunteers in their work with St. Petersburg Civitan Club. MaryAnn is currently the secretary of the Civitan Foundation and Bonnie is a member on the club's board. In addition, they have each served a one-year term as president, and Bonnie was treasurer for six years.

They are proud of Civitan's support of PARC and Special Olympics, as well as many bowling tournaments, swimming, track-and-field, and golfing events for people with disabilities. The athletes who participate in these events "instill me with inspiration," said MaryAnn. "They are big-hearted athletes and they love competition."

It's interesting to note that in the early days of the club, the regular twice-a-month club meetings took place at Orange Blossom on Fourth Street North. The old Orange Blossom Restaurant is no more, but Orange Blossom Catering is still going strong, so it was fitting that they were the vendor of choice at the 100th anniversary celebration.

For more information about the St. Petersburg Civitan Club, visit www.stpetecivitan.org. To learn about PARC, go to www.parc-fl.org. ●



Civitan's Lori Clapp, MaryAnn Fisher, and Jeanne Davison at the Special Olympics held at North Shore Aquatics Complex

Also in the early days, the club raised funds and built an artesian well at 1st Street and 28th Avenue North. The well included a fountain and eight faucets for filling water jugs. Poor quality drinking water was a major concern back then, so having an artesian well was a great help to many citizens at the time. The fountain is still

disabilities for over 65 years. In addition, the Club supports other local charitable organizations such as the Pinellas Education Foundation and the St. Petersburg College Foundation, and has sponsored the annual Fish-a-Thon with the St. Petersburg Parks & Rec Department since 1954.

Bonnie Ruth of the Old Northeast

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Red Tide and Tampa Bay

8 Questions For Kristen Kusek, USF College of Marine Science

The Director of Strategic Communications at the USF College of Marine Science, Kristen sat down with red tide experts at the college to offer Northeast Journal readers some insight on this year's severe red tide bloom event.

What is red tide? How and why does it occur?

In the Gulf of Mexico, red tide is a collection of a naturally occurring marine algae called *Karenia brevis*, or *K. brevis* for short. This microscopic, single-celled plant-like organism is always present in the Gulf of Mexico and can be present also in Tampa Bay waters. In small numbers, we don't notice it. However, when the algae 'blooms,' it creates large concentrations of cells and causes the water to become discolored (though it often looks more brownish than red).

Why was red tide so severe this summer?

Red tides in Florida generally occur in late summer and early fall. They usually start offshore in the Gulf of Mexico and arrive on our Gulf Coast beaches. This particular red tide bloom was unique. It occurred earlier than usual, and the algae made its way deep into the heart of Tampa Bay in high concentrations. The last time Tampa Bay had a red tide this severe was in 1971.



USF College of Marine Science



USF College of Marine Science glider used to study red tide

Do we understand what caused it?

Many factors likely contributed to this year's bloom. The bloom began in Southwest Florida in early spring. Persistent winds ultimately pushed it north into Tampa Bay, where normal circulation patterns do not 'flush' the water quickly. The salinity in Tampa Bay was also extremely high in the spring compared to normal; high salinity is conducive to red tide blooms. Last but not least, the controlled discharges of wastewater from the Piney Point fertilizer plant between late March and early April added nutrients to Tampa Bay. Nutrients fuel the growth of algae, although scientists observed a

different kind of algae bloom than red tide in the Bay immediately after the nutrient discharges. However, it's certainly possible the nutrients from Piney Point played a role in the severity of the red tide bloom once it arrived in Tampa Bay.

It's seems as if red tide is getting worse. Is this accurate?

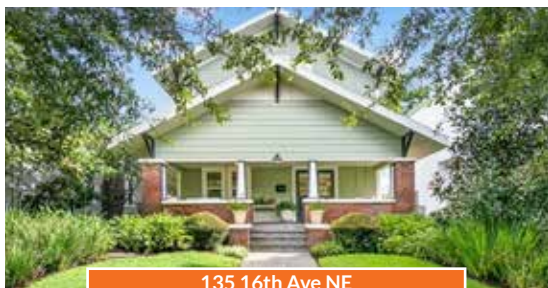
Red tides are tricky to study, and this question is tricky to answer. A suite of factors influences the origin, duration, and demise of red tide events. Red tides are certainly 'natural' when they occur, and they are not always disasters. Some last a couple months and we don't even notice them.

Blooms have been observed in our waters since the 1500s. Historical records show that some were of long-duration – particularly severe blooms back in the 1950s, for example. With the current trend of strong population growth, Tampa Bay is subject to nutrient input due to sources ranging from agricultural operations to lawn fertilizers, aging septic systems, atmospheric deposition, groundwater, and more. These nutrient sources will continue to exacerbate red tide blooms and other kinds of algae blooms unless and until we address them.

Another significant and ongoing conversation within the science community is how our warming climate may impact red tide blooms. Drought conditions, for example, mean the water has higher salinity, which is conducive to blooms. Heavier rainfall and stronger storms often translate into greater runoff from land, which is also a significant problem.

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What research is the USF College of Marine Science undertaking regarding red tide?

The USF College of Marine Science has played a key role in Florida red tide monitoring and prediction since the 1950s. Our red tide work involves long-established collaborations between the USF College of Marine Science, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, Mote Marine Laboratory in Sarasota, and more. We are focused on the following key areas:

- Detecting and monitoring red tides from space using satellite imagery
- Developing sophisticated computer models that help predict and track where red tides will move depending on the currents, winds, and tides
- Studying ocean currents using robotic gliders and other tools to understand how red tide blooms form offshore in the Gulf of Mexico
- Evaluating the role of trace metals such as iron in red tide blooms

The College also played a key role in researching and responding to the effects of the Piney Point discharges. We were grateful to our partner, the Florida Institute of Oceanography, who made it possible for us to quickly respond and perform a series of day-long expeditions aboard our boat, R/V Weatherbird II.

Why is red time so deadly to marine life? Is it also harmful to people?

K. brevis produces a neurotoxin called brevetoxin. This toxin can kill fish, negatively affect other kinds of marine life, and cause respiratory distress in humans – particularly for those with asthma. Wave action along the shoreline can cause the toxin to become airborne, which is how it can become a wide-spread problem for people. Wearing a face covering can help because the toxin is a particle in the air. Masks block its transmission to our respiratory tract. In humans, the characteristic symptoms of brevetoxin poisoning include:

- Paresthesia (tingling)
- Reversal of hot-cold temperature sensation

- Myalgia (muscle pain)
- Vertigo
- Ataxia (loss of coordination)
- Abdominal pain, nausea, diarrhea
- Headache
- Bradycardia (slow heart rate)
- Dilated pupils
- Respiratory distress

What can we do to prevent it?

Red tides in Florida are natural occurrences. However, there are several actions we can take collectively to not exacerbate it. Follow guidelines for when and how to use fertilizers on lawns. Pinellas County bans fertilizers during the rainy season from June to the end of September. Support local and state politicians who value Florida’s environment as vital to our health, economy, and prosperity.

Are there any precautions we should take during a red tide event?

- If you see dead fish, report it to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission so they can track where the fish kills are occurring. Call 1-800-636-0511, or file a report online (Fish Kill Report Application: myfwc.com).
- If you have respiratory problems, do not go to the beach or waterways with red tide.
- If you go to the beach with red tide, wear a bandanna or mask. Go to an air-conditioned space if you experience respiratory distress. Do not swim near dead fish. Keep pets away from the water.
- Do not eat filter-feeding shellfish, such as oysters and clams, that are harvested during a red tide event. Eating shellfish that have accumulated the toxin can make people sick.
- However, the health department regulates seafood eaten in a restaurant so it is safe to eat. Additionally, fish caught recreationally from areas experiencing a red tide are safe to eat if the fish behaved normally when it was caught. ●

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SPRINTING TO GOLD *Continued from page 1*

It's perhaps unsurprising that the gold medals looked odd under a security scanner. This year, the Tokyo public donated recycled electronic components from phones and laptops to construct the medals in a sustainable, environmentally friendly initiative, before they were plated with gold, silver, or bronze.

Now that the Olympic games are complete, it's back to real life for Bobby: a week of relaxation at home with family and friends, then off to start his senior year at the University of Florida. Bobby's majoring in construction management. "I want to build people's dream homes," he explains with a wide grin.

Bobby is the third of the Finke siblings to compete impressively in swimming. His older sisters, Autumn and Summer, were both NCAA qualifiers, and SEC and ACC swimmers, and the family traveled to Olympic trials more than once for the girls. Summer swam for NC State and Autumn swam for the University of Florida. Today, Autumn is preparing to return to UF for law school. Summer recently completed her master's in



Bobby Finke with members of the North Shore swim team while Coach Fred Lewis looks on

sports management from UF, and is an intern for the Tampa Sports Authority which manages Raymond James Stadium.

Their father, Joe Finke, is also strongly connected to swimming; he's a coach for the St. Petersburg Aquatics (SPA), a year-round competitive swim team at North Shore Aquatics

Complex. This year, he was honored as one of the top-10 age-group coaches of the year by the American Swimming Coaches Association.

"It's still just unbelievable," Joe says of Bobby's victories. "I know it happened: he's here and I can see the medals sitting on the dining room table, but it's just unreal."

Bobby grew up watching other great swimmers, like his sisters, his peers, their peers, and Olympic-gold-medal winners Nicole Hayes and Melanie Margalis. Paralympic swimmer Brad Snyder, who also trained at North Shore Pool, won five gold medals and two silver medals after losing his sight in an explosion while serving as a Navy bomb technician. He worked extensively with Coach Fred Lewis to regain his sense of positioning in the water and when to flip-turn.

"The [St. Pete Aquatics] program has produced some amazing swimmers," Bobby says. "I hope to continue this legacy going forward. I'll try to make the [US Olympic swimming] team in 2024."

A few days after he returned from Tokyo, Bobby attended the ISCA

(International Swimming Coaches Association) swim meet hosted at North Shore Pool. He greeted young swimmers, offered words of encouragement, smiled for photographs with them, and signed autographs. Both his father and Coach Fred looked on proudly at Bobby and the Olympic gold medals around his neck.



Gold medal swimmer Bobby Finke



A young swim team member with Bobby

Mike Lewis/USA Swimming

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North Shore Aquatics Complex celebrates local hero Bobby Finke

“This is everything he’s been training for his whole life,” Coach Fred says. “He did it.”

Originally from New Jersey, Fred Lewis moved to St. Petersburg in September 1988 and started coaching the St. Petersburg Aquatics (SPA). The program has recently been ranked number 11 of the top 100 age-group swim teams the country by the American Swimming Coaches Association. Fred also coaches the St. Pete Masters swim program (SPM), an adult competitive swimming team that calls North Shore Pool its home.

When asked what Bobby was like growing up, Fred describes the time his older sisters snuck him into the pool to swim a 50-meter race when he was four or five years old.

“I had my back turned for a moment,” Fred says, “and when I looked over at the pool, there’s little Bobby in a lane trying to keep up. But, the best story,” Fred continues, “is when Bobby was counting for his sister, Summer, and he leaned too far over with the counter paddle and fell into the water on top of her.”

Despite that particular swim meet misadventure, the siblings are closely knit and enjoy their swimming camaraderie.

“Everyone in the family is incredibly proud of Bobby,” Joe says.

When reflecting back at his Olympic experience, a look of wonder fills Bobby’s face. “It was a blur, but it was amazing,” he says. “The whole swim team was super close. We played card games and a Nintendo Switch and just hung out and socialized. It was great. After the race, when they showed the screen of everyone here at North Shore celebrating, I got so choked up. I was like, ‘That’s my pool!’ It really means a lot.”

At the ISCA swim meet, Bobby surveyed the sea of young swimmers, pride lighting up his face. “I used to be these kids.”

Standing beside him, Joe went on to say, “What’s more important than results or medals is the person he is. I’m in awe of Bobby.”

Not only did Bobby spend four straight hours with young swimmers and their families at the swim meet, he also volunteered at the meet. He took up the counting paddle and counted for the 800-meter freestyle race – the same race that a few weeks ago won him his first Olympic gold medal.

Bobby seemed energized by the buzz of the swim meet – and very happy to be home with this family and friends.

When asked about his values and what’s most important to him in life, he didn’t hesitate before answering with a contented smile, “Family.” ♦

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Changes At North Shore School

— JON KILE —

A new school year has begun and a lot has changed since North Shore Elementary last opened its doors to the full student body. After a year in which teachers and families juggled in-person and online options, North Shore is taking steps toward getting back to normal. The leadership and scenery have changed, too.

The end of the 2020-21 school year saw the retirement of beloved Principal Cooper Dawson, who had led the school for nearly a decade. Filling her role is Heidi Bockover. Mrs. Bockover isn't entirely new to North Shore. After filling in for a principal on leave at Lakeview Fundamental, she spent much of the last year assisting at North Shore and got to know many of the teachers and students who attended in person.

Before coming to her first permanent post as a principal at North Shore, Bockover spent many years in administration as an assistant principal at Melrose Elementary and Oakhurst Elementary. She started her career as a first- and second-grade teacher at Fuguitt Elementary and at Gulf Beaches Elementary.

Bockover was excited about the new year, with the focus on in-person instruction again. "Our teachers are so excited to have the kids back on campus. They did an amazing job last year adapting to the technology."

On the First Street side of the school, construction has been underway over the last year, and a new 15,000-square-foot building has risen, changing the look of the campus. The new building features ten much-needed new classrooms as well as office space.

North Shore has also added a critically needed VPK (Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten) program with four classes. The Kindergarten class has grown too, with five classes. Overall enrollment is up by roughly 100 students and is now at 450 students.

Getting the new building open was a bit of an adventure. The original completion date was set for mid-July, with plenty of time before the first day of school on August 11. But delays in the supply of key materials had contractors warning that the classrooms might not be ready until September. With a lot of hard work and a little luck, teachers were able to begin setting up their classrooms on time with the



Above left: Lucy, Jack, and Mia Auld are all smiles on the first day of school. Top right: New classrooms and offices at North Shore School. Above right: New principal Heidi Bockover meets with North Shore students (left to right) Sawyer Crum, Goldie Crum, Lucy Auld, and Hanley Crum, during an event at Crisp Park.



aroma of fresh paint in the air.

"We're still waiting on student desks, which are back-ordered, but we have moved older desks and tables in to the new building so that everyone has a workspace to start the year," Bockover said.

All this growth means the popular neighborhood school has a lot of new faces on the faculty, with 14 instructors and eight support staff who are new to North Shore. What does school look like in 2021? Students and teachers are strongly encouraged, but not required, to wear masks as a precaution for Covid-19. Teachers will continue to follow protocols for social distancing to the greatest extent, increased handwashing, and notifying the school nurse when students are exhibiting symptoms.

The school's biggest fall neighborhood event also

plans to be back and in-person with the Coffee Pot Turkey Trot 5K race on Thanksgiving Day. Going into its fifth year, the Turkey Trot is the key fundraising activity, with proceeds supporting after-school enhancements such as yoga, soccer, Spanish, and theater, as well as field trips and important in-school literacy and anti-bullying programs. To register for the Coffee Pot Turkey Trot, visit runsignup.com/coffeepotturkeytrot.

While waiting on keys to the new facility and still finalizing her last teaching slot, Bockover was excited to finally start the year. "I feel so blessed to have been appointed North Shore Elementary's principal," she says. "North Shore captured my heart when I came to help out back in February and I am beyond thrilled to call North Shore my home." ●

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NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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We hope to see you on the Tour! Help spread the word!

Tour Time Is Coming!
It is hard to believe that December is now fast approaching! It won't be long before we'll decorate our homes inside and out in preparation for some festive holiday cheer, and festive cheer is what we all need during these abnormal times. The annual Candlelight Tour of Homes is one of the most neighborly

events in which we in the ONE engage. With fingers crossed, we hope to bring you the 23rd annual Tour on Sunday, December 12 from 3-8pm. We will bring you an assortment of beautiful homes with different architectural styles for you to explore with family, friends, and neighbors. If you would like your home to be considered for this year's Tour, or would like to volunteer, please email us at honnapresident@gmail.com and you'll be contacted. In

addition to viewing the homes on the Tour, we hope to bring you a splash of live music and trolley rides to enhance your overall experience. We are excited about this year's Tour, and the homes we have lined up so far are a great blend of new, old, and renovated, with a fun twist! Hope to see you on the Tour – and please help us spread the word. Watch for more details at www.honna.org and on social media postings. ~ Sharon Kantner



Quarterly Neighborhood Meeting

The next HONNA quarterly meeting will take place on Monday, September 20, at 7pm. Featured speakers will be James Corbett (director) and Joe Waugh (operations manager) for the City of St. Petersburg Codes Compliance Department. They will provide an informational presentation concerning codes compliance issues in our neighborhood and the City as a whole. There will be a Q&A session following their presentation. This meeting will be virtual, so watch your emails and social media for the details; and contact honnapresident@gmail.com with any questions concerning the program.

Coming up on the calendar:

- Friday, September 16: Porch Party
Check the HONNA website and watch social media for details
- Monday, September 20: Quarterly Neighborhood virtual meeting
- Saturday, October 16: Coastal Cleanup
- Friday, October 28: Annual Halloween Porch Party
- Sunday, December 12: Annual Candlelight Tour of Homes



Coastal Cleanup Opportunity

It's that time of year again when Keep Pinellas Beautiful (KPB) is partnering with the Ocean Conservancy to host the 2021 International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) on Saturday, October 16. HONNA will be sponsoring this event to cover the area from Coffee Pot Boulevard to North Shore Park. This annual project brings together volunteers in coastal regions to collect, count, and document the trash they find, acting as citizen scientists all over the world. The Ocean Conservancy then uses this data to study marine debris, and release a yearly report detailing the most common types of trash found in coastal areas, the total weight of trash collected, and much more. See the HONNA website (www.honna.org) for details.



July 4th Food Drive

More than 7,000 children in Pinellas County live with chronic hunger, and more than 36,000 live every day with food insecurities. The Kind Mouse feeds children who have nothing to eat outside of school. In lieu of the annual Children's 4th of July Parade, HONNA conducted a canned food drive that ran from July 3-11. The drive was a huge success with 16 Kind Mouse bins filled to the brim. [Pictured is Kind Mouse

volunteer Scott Leith collecting the food drive donations.] HONNA is grateful to Marion's on 4th and the Old Northeast Tavern for being designated drop-off sites for the drive. HONNA would also like to thank the Council of Neighborhood Associations and the Historic Old Northeast LGBT Group for doing frequent social media blasts and helping spread the word. Residents in the Old Northeast and neighborhoods across the City deserve a big thank you for their giving spirit. For more info, visit www.thekindmouse.org.



Pride Ride

The 2nd Annual Old Northeast Pride Ride took place on Sunday afternoon, June 27. Organized by neighbors Frank Hays and Steve Deal, about two dozen festively decorated vehicles – cars, golf carts, and bicycles – traveled a route from the North Shore pool along North Shore Drive to 18th Avenue, then onto to 1st Street to 14th, and then down Beach Drive with a quick loop around the Museum of Fine Arts and the Vinoy. The colorful caravan of adults and children received numerous rounds of applause and cheers along the way.

It's All the Buzz

With flowers everywhere this time of year here in Florida, it might be interesting to know a few facts about bees. So we went online and found a few facts about bees you might find of interest.

1. The reason bees are so noisy is because they beat their wings 11,400 times in one minute!
2. Only female bees can sting; male bees don't have stingers.



Maybe neighbor Jim Strubbe's honey bees have left this spiffy hive to visit your garden



3. Honey bees communicate through a series of dance moves; this includes giving directions to a flower bed so the others can get the nectar.
4. A hive of honey bees will fly over 55,000 miles to make one pound of honey and can create 100 pounds of honey in a year.
5. The honey bee is the only insect that makes food man can eat.
6. Each honey bee from the same hive has its own specific color identification.
7. The honey bee (also known as *Apis mellifera*) is most relied on for agricultural pollination.
8. Eating honey makes you smarter as it has an antioxidant that improves brain functions.
9. If stored properly, honey does not go bad.
10. According to *Bored Panda*, the bee has officially been labeled the most important creature on Earth by The Earthwatch Institute. They pollinate over 70% of the worlds agriculture.

If you want to attract bees, go to your nearest nursery and get some great ideas for plants that will attract bees. The Pinellas County Bee Keepers Association (www.pinellasbeekeepers.buzz) is the place to go for information if you want to get with the buzz.

~Doug O'Dowd





Remembering Mary Alice Lange

The Historic Old Northeast and St. Petersburg recently lost a true champion – Mary Alice Lange, who passed on June 18.

For many years, Mary Alice was the face of HONNA. She helped create the neighborhood association, took on the issues confronting our community, and continued throughout the years to support the organization through her participation and activism. She will be remembered for vitally important projects such as saving Sunken Gardens and listing the neighborhood on the National Register of Historic Places.

She and I worked together on many HONNA initiatives and activities and had some crazy times together! I well remember driving up and down Old Northeast alleys in the dark so that we could identify non-working streetlights to fulfill a City grant requirement. This was a prelude to the 1st Street Acorn Lighting Project, one of Mary Alice's many successes. HONNA – with grants from the City and the help of many volunteers – completed the distinctive lamp pole installations from 9th to 22nd Avenue. The project continues today south of 9th Avenue.

During her many years of service to the neighborhood, Mary Alice chaired or participated in numerous annual HONNA events including the charming July 4th Children's parade, spooky Halloween celebrations, Easter Egg Hunts, and the neighborhood's 100th Anniversary Picnic in the Park in 2011. Always looking for volunteers, Mary Alice's friendly manner and can-do attitude won HONNA many new helpers for these events.

In the late 1980s, Mary Alice lobbied for zoning changes, which led to single family zoning for the Old Northeast. She shared many stories with me about the decline and neglect that the neighborhood had experienced in the '70s and '80s, including rundown rooming houses and commercial

development encroaching into the neighborhood. Almost 20 years later, her tireless efforts helped to create an entire zoning overhaul which better reflects the existing character of neighborhoods across the City. A variety of historical architectural styles, alleys, a lush tree canopy, brick streets and hex block sidewalks – all typical of the Old Northeast – were identified as characteristics of 'Traditional Neighborhoods,' with new zoning regulations to help protect them. Continuing those preservation efforts in 2007, Mary Alice joined other residents in the neighborhood's campaign to become a local historic district.

Mary Alice also led the effort to create the Historic Old Northeast's Neighborhood Plan, the first such plan in St. Pete which outlined goals, policies, and priorities. Her committee discussed 'likes and dislikes,' took innumerable photos, sought resident input, and eventually produced the 1990 Neighborhood Plan. I was fortunate to work with Mary Alice on the 2009 update to the Plan, which remains HONNA's guiding document today. It was during this time that she also received a Florida All State Neighborhood Team award. After its acceptance by City Council, the Neighborhood Plan update was submitted to Neighborhoods USA, competing for a national award which, not surprisingly, HONNA won!

When Mary Alice retired from the Board in 2016, she was honored with a City proclamation for her 30 years of leadership in HONNA with November 16, 2016, being declared Mary Alice Lange Day. Having served as president three times, and as a board member and committee chair numerous times, she was elected HONNA's first Honorary Trustee and presented with an engraved hex block thanking her for her dedication and many years of service to the neighborhood. [Mary Alice is pictured above with Robin Reed].

Mary Alice was truly an inspiration; it was an honor and pleasure to work with her. She will be missed. ●

~Robin Reed

HONNA has made a contribution to the Downtown Waterfront Parks Foundation in memory of Mary Alice Lange and Joe O'Connor for their years of service and commitment to HONNA on behalf of The Historic Old Northeast and the City.



Sept: 535 13th Avenue NE "Before"



Sept: 535 13th Avenue NE "After"



The STAR for September goes to 535 13th Avenue NE; Art Fyvolent and Jaymie Beller.

Watch for new STARS in the neighborhood monthly, and you can find them posted on www.honna.org and Facebook. We invite you to nominate a neighbor or a refurbished property you admire in the ONE. Have a home to honor? Send the info to Charleen McGrath at treasurer@honna.org. ●



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SPOTLIGHT ON THE ARTS

Whimsical Art To Brighten Your Day

— JANAN TALAFAER —

Stepping into Alli Arnold's cozy bungalow in the Old Northeast feels like walking into a charming English cottage. It's filled with artwork, a mix-and-match of colors and textures, comfortable furniture, lots of books and a menagerie of animals. Sophia, the Boston Terrier; Honey the Morkie (Maltese & Yorkie); George, the little Green Cheek Conure parrot; and two gerbils – Gronk (for Rob Gronkowski of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers) and Tzatziki (for Alli's favorite Greek-style condiment) are all eager to greet me.

"I'm happy my husband Ken is on board with all of this animal madness," jokes Alli.

A native New Yorker and illustrator, Alli moved to St. Pete in 2011, and is passionate about animals, fashion, searching for cool vintage finds in local thrift shops, and drawing. She's been drawing for as long as she can remember. "Illustrations are my heart and soul," she says.

There's a playful energy about Alli and it's reflected in her artistic style – light and whimsical, friendly, and upbeat. When she was seven, she had her first published illustration in *Newsday*, her local hometown newspaper in Long Island. The elementary school principal tacked the published piece on a bulletin board, not only giving her budding talent recognition, but helping set her on a life-long career path.

"I wasn't interested in softball, cheerleading, or the beach," Alli says. "I was able to express myself much more fluently by drawing. I've stuttered since childhood and wasn't always comfortable speaking. Instead, I became a great observer of life and people. Art is a language in which I can be fluent."

She graduated from high school at age 17 and immediately moved to NYC to attend Parson's School of Design in Greenwich Village, where she earned a BFA, majoring in illustration. She launched her career in Manhattan, doing illustrations for all the well-known magazines like *Glamour*, *Elle*, *Seventeen*, *Real*



Alli's artwork for Bergdorf Goodman



Artwork for Tiffany & Co.



Pet portraits

Simple, *Parenting* and *Travel & Leisure*, as well as media outlets, including the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, even the *Anchorage Daily News*. Her creative spark was also unleashed when major NYC retailers, ranging from Bergdorf Goodman, Neiman Marcus, and Kate Spade to Tiffany & Co. hired her to illustrate ads and create colorful thank you cards given to customers on special occasions.

Her favorite all-time job was "The 12 Days of Christmas," a series of animated holiday scenes for Tiffany & Co. online customers. Against the iconic Tiffany turquoise blue background, Alli created scenes of little bears, bunnies, elephants, and other characters wearing scarves, skating, rowing boats, and just having a good time. Tiffany's Photoshopped their jewelry into the scenes to promote holiday gift-giving. "It was a lot of fun to combine whimsy with their luxury jewels. They gave me complete creative freedom," says Alli.

In March 2011, she came for a visit to St. Pete, staying for a short time with her uncle who lived in the Old Northeast. "It was snowing in New York City. It felt like heaven here, just an oasis," says Alli. She returned to New York, got rid of just about everything she owned, took a leap of faith, and moved south to

start a new life. Because she'd never needed a car in New York City, she also got her first driver's license at age 38.

One year later, while having lunch at the former Crowley's restaurant on Central Avenue, she met her future husband Ken Huelhorst, senior art director for the Tampa Bay Metropolitan YMCA Association. They not only shared a love for art, but also rock 'n' roll. "We love going to concerts. That's how we connected, talking about our favorite bands," says Alli. "I turns out we had been to the same show at the State Theater, but didn't know each other then. Ken showed me a photo he had taken from the event and we were both amazed to see that I was in the photo."

They had planned a big wedding with friends and relatives at the St. Pete Shuffleboard Club just as the pandemic shut everything down. Alli had been teaching once a week at Creative Clay, an arts center for people with disabilities, where Kerry Kriseman, serves as the organization's public relations manager. She's also the wife of St. Pete mayor Rick Kriseman. Alli took a chance and asked if the mayor would marry them on the steps of city hall. "Luckily for us, the mayor agreed," says Alli.

Recently Alli has been branching out from editorial and advertising illustrations to accepting commissions for pet, family, and house portraits. Local interior designer Lisa Gilmore commissions Alli to create family portraits of some of her clients, and has the portraits framed at ARTicles Art Gallery. That led to a meeting between Alli and Leslie Curran, owner of ARTicles, which now represents Alli's portraits.

In October 2020, *HGBT* magazine named her one of their favorite pet portrait artists after finding her work on the Etsy ([etsy.com/shop/alliarnoldportraits](https://www.etsy.com/shop/alliarnoldportraits)). She also recently completed a mural for the new restaurant Two Graces, opening soon at 6001 Central Avenue. To see some of Alli's work, visit www.alliarnold.com or @alliarndportraits on Instagram. ●



Alli Arnold in her home studio

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SPOTLIGHT ON THE ARTS

A Talent For Decorative Arts



Cool abstract



Jeff on the drums



Floral mural for a classic room

he received the 1994 Craftsmanship Award from the Baltimore Building Congress and Exchange. “We had huge scaffolding and a platform to work from, and seven guys on the team,” says Jeff. “We were working on one of the largest plaster relief ceilings at the time.” They also added faux marble, gold leafing, and mahogany paint finishes throughout the lodge.

For some time now, he’s been working solo from his garage studio at his home a few blocks from the Old Northeast. Despite the pandemic, he’s busy creating commissioned work for both residential and commercial clients. One of the most interesting is a community bank in the small north Florida town of Chiefland that Jeff painted in an art-deco/neoclassical style reminiscent of early 20th century New York City banks. “The CEO loves creating themes at the various bank branches. Each one is an expression of a different art form,” he says.

Like many creative people, it’s easy for Jeff to get into the ‘zone’ or the flow, where time slows and there is total focus. “When I’m painting, four hours can go by without my awareness. I’ve barely noticed that I was even breathing,” he says. “It’s a great feeling, so satisfying.”

When he needs to take a break or just chill out, he plays the drums. Over in the corner of the garage is a drum set. “I’m a pretend drummer, a garage guy,” Jeff jokes. Drumming is a hobby that started in high school, he says. “A friend was a drummer and I was his roadie. I’ve always been surrounded by friends who are drummers. They’re all creative people who paint and draw.”

Of all the various styles and genres in which he has worked, Jeff says landscape painting is his personal favorite, although lately he’s been creating abstract art pieces in collaboration with area interior designers. “I curate the art for the space,” says Jeff. “It’s very freeing with color, technique, and design. Each piece is different.” It sounds like a dream job for someone who enjoys continually stretching his artistic abilities. ●

— JANAN TALAFER —

Looking at Jeff Walling’s photo gallery on his website is to be dazzled by the sheer diversity of art he’s created. Murals with vivid scenes of tropical birds and foliage next to Old-World castles and tranquil seascides. Opulent ornamental faux finishes on doorways, walls, and furniture. Original paintings that range from the abstract to post-impressionist and the realistic. Even dog portraits. And sculpture.

While many artists have a style that is clearly recognizable – think Dali or Picasso – Jeff has done the opposite. His ability to be versatile is one of his strengths. He can replicate art in any genre and from any time period in history, mixing traditional techniques with new materials. A good example is work he did for the Sykes family, recreating the capital – or top of a decorative column – in the front of their Georgian Revival home in Tampa. Among the materials he used – high density foam.

There doesn’t seem to be any limit to what he’s willing to tackle, including Venetian plaster, gold leafing, glazing, faux finishes, hand-painted wallpaper, and trompe l’oeil murals that fool the eye and make you think the Roman columns and antique fountain in the dining room are real. One of the secrets to his successful 30-plus-year art career is never saying no to a job.

“I just say yes to any project that comes my way and then figure it out,” says Jeff. “I couldn’t be more grateful at how my career has turned out. It’s never been boring. I can’t imagine doing the same thing over and over again.” Where do the ideas come from? “I have a massive collection of art books and then there’s the Internet. I’m always doing research,” he says.

Jeff grew up in Michigan and came to Florida to attend the Ringling School of Art and Design. But he enjoyed hands-on learning more than the academic setting, so he said yes to a job with a

commercial sign painter. It was a career move that he calls a step in the right direction. “Frank was in his 70s and was a sign painter by day and an artist at night,” says Jeff.

His next job was with Paul Montgomery, a well-known decorative artist with a studio in Sarasota. “Paul brought me to the dance,” says Jeff. “I didn’t even know what faux finish was at the time. I was still pretty raw.” That was about to change dramatically.

Jeff spent much of the 1990s on the road, working for Paul on major projects in the US and internationally. His portfolio of jobs sounds like a travelogue: Caruso’s Palace in Orlando; Ginza Tokyo Hotel in Japan; resorts in Jamaica, Palm Springs, Hawaii and Jupiter; private homes in Mexico, Bermuda, New York, and England, among others. In Hawaii, he spent almost a year as the project manager for two different resorts, directing a team on multiple projects, including creating 10,000-line feet of faux railing. “We had a huge tent covering our work area outside. The view of the ocean and mountains behind us was incredible,” says Jeff.

His most challenging job was a year-long project at the Grand Masonic Lodge in Baltimore, for which



Jeff painting tropical landscape

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CRIME WRITER *Continued from page 1*
of stories can give us a framework for a comforting resolution,” says Martha.

Then there is the sense of a shared community, not only among the story’s

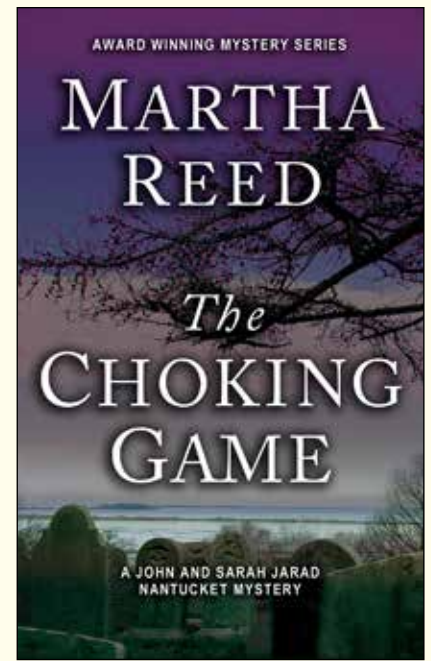
characters who come together to solve the crime, but also among readers. That’s especially true in a series, says Martha, where “you can come back and check on the characters you’ve come to

know, and find out what’s been going on with them. Readers like the continuity.”

Martha’s fans might find that sense of community in her John and Sarah Jarad Nantucket Mystery series. Set on the iconic island of Nantucket thirty miles off the coast of Massachusetts, the series has received multiple award recognitions. Her first book in the series, *The Choking Game*, was a nominee in the 2015 Killer Nashville Silver Falchion Awards. Her second, *The Nature of the Grave*, won a 2006 Independent Publisher Book Award Honorable Mention for Mid-Atlantic Best Regional Fiction, and book three, *No Rest for the Wicked*, was a 2017 Independent Publisher Book Award nominee.

More recently, this past August, her latest novel, *Love Power* was a 2021 Killer Nashville Silver Falchion Readers’ Choice Award winner. It’s a new series set in New Orleans and follows two heroines – ex-police detective Jane Byrne and a transgender sleuth, Gigi Pascoe. She’s currently working on a second book in the NOLA series, but won’t divulge any details. “No spoilers,” she teases.

She does admit, however, that the



new book is turning out to be not at all what she thought when she first started drafting it. “You know the Bruce Springsteen *Hungry Heart* where the lyrics are, ‘I took a wrong turn and I just kept going.’ Well, sometimes you just have to go where the story takes you,” says Martha. “As I’m writing, the characters come to life and the twists surprise me. I can’t explain how it happens. I think of myself as the first



Martha hanging out at her favorite coffee shop, Black Crow



Martha participated in the St. Petersburg Police Department Citizens Academy

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reader. I'm reading the story as I'm writing it. There's a wonderful moment about 30,000 words in where you know you've got it and you just need to write it out. It's the best feeling in the world."

In addition to several novels, Martha's also published several short stories and articles in mystery journals. Where do her ideas come from? "I keep a messy folder of clippings," says Martha. "When it's time to start a new book, I'll open the folder and see if anything looks interesting or starts to gel. It's a game that I play, like casting a fishing net over a pond. It's a magical process, so much fun."

Although she always knew she wanted to be a writer, the path was anything but direct getting there. She studied journalism for two years at the University of Missouri, but realized she didn't want to be a journalist. The next step was a BS degree in Secondary English Education from Boston University, but she didn't want to teach English either. Instead, she worked as a financial typesetter in Dallas for 10 years, and then after moving to Pittsburgh, began a career in financial services project management.

She'd credits the Mystery Lovers Bookshop, an indie bookstore north of Pittsburgh that specializes in the mystery genre, for pointing her in the right direction. "The bookshop had a 'Sisters in Crime' meeting," says Martha. "I walked in and found my

people, and I never looked back. It was a real entry point for me; a doorway."

In 2018, she attended Bouchercon, the annual crime fiction conference. That year it was held at the Vinoy on the downtown St. Pete waterfront. It was one of those perfect moments in September. "I stepped outside the hotel and looked at the marina, at the beautiful clear blue sky, and at all the people running around the park and being active. Everything clicked," says Martha. She moved to St. Pete in January 2019. "Every day I find something else to love about living in the area," she says. "The amazing arts community, the many coffee shops, great restaurants, and the best beaches. St. Pete has it all."

She's especially passionate about the St. Pete Shuffleboard Club, where she's currently a member-at-large on the board of directors. "I remember driving for the first time into downtown on I-375 on a Friday night and seeing this place that was all lit up with hundreds of people playing shuffleboard and dancing to Earth, Wind and Fire. I didn't know what that was, but I knew I wanted to be part of it," she says. ●

For a peek at some of Martha's crime novels and short stories, go to www.reedmenow.com. Martha is also vice president of the Florida Chapter of the Sisters in Crime, www.flgcsinc.com, a national organization that supports crime fiction writers, and she is an active member of the Florida Mystery Writers of America. www.mwaflorida.org.



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JAYCE is a loving 4th grader who likes to help out around the house. He enjoys getting his hair cut and dressing nice, and though he doesn't know exactly what he wants to be when he grows up, he does think being a firefighter would be pretty cool. He loves to watch the Bucs, and when he's at school, he loves PE class! Jayce wants a forever family to love him for who he is. He likes to crack jokes and would love to listen to every-one's stories, and he hopes that he can find a nice family to be a part of his story.



EDWIN, age 12, is a fun, active child who enjoys playing games in his spare time and watching volleyball. He prides himself on being loyal and truthful. If he had a pet in the future he would want a dog, and he really likes learning math at school. If Edwin had a superpower, he thinks that having super speed would be super cool! Edwin likes listening to music such as Bad Bunny, and when he grows up, he would love to be a singer. He likes to eat pizza and lasagna, but his favorite is a burger. Edwin hopes for a nice family who inspires him to be his best self.



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SISTER CITY *Continued from page 1*

The Sister Cities Program was founded by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956. Eisenhower envisioned a network of sister cities that would be a “champion for peace and prosperity by fostering bonds between people from different communities around the world.” He believed that “people from different cultures could understand, appreciate, and celebrate their differences while building partnerships that would lessen the chance of new conflicts.” St. Petersburg’s Sister City Partnership with Takamatsu is one of the first Sister City Programs in the United States.

The two cities were matched because they had a lot in common. Both were incorporated as municipalities less than 100 years before, although Takamatsu traces its history as a city back to the 12th Century. Both faced the water, had a similar climate, and were tourist cities. The populations and city square miles were about the same. Also coincidentally, Takamatsu means “tall pine” in Japanese, and the numerous pine trees in Pinellas County contributed to the name ‘Pinellas,’ and in St. Petersburg itself, the southernmost part of the city is called Pinellas Point. The name derives from the Spanish, ‘Punta de Pinal,’ or ‘Point of Pines.’

A Student Exchange Program has been part of the Sister City relationship since 1984. Each year, two or three high school juniors are selected as goodwill ambassadors to Takamatsu. Students spend up to three weeks in Takamatsu. In exchange, Takamatsu sends students to St. Petersburg. (The program has been suspended since 2020 due to the pandemic.) From the beginning, educational and cultural activities were emphasized. At various times, school children in St. Pete and Takamatsu exchanged artworks, handcrafts, and



Takamatsu City Assembly delegation presents Mayor Rick Kriseman with a Takamatsu traditional Iwabata craft flag in 2014.

poem books. During the 40th Anniversary, the St. Petersburg Museum of History displayed a special exhibit on the Sister Cities Program.

In 1962, a generous donor in St. Petersburg funded a four-year scholarship to be used by Takamatsu teachers at Eckerd College (then Florida Presbyterian College). Takamatsu City employee interns spent several months at Eckerd College, and then with the City, rotating through various departments learning about our City government.

Over the years, St. Petersburg has sent delegations to Takamatsu, including mayors and city council representatives, while Takamatsu has sent like delegations to St. Pete. The first St. Petersburg mayor to make the trip was Herman Goldner in 1967. Mayor Goldner visited again in 1972. Mayor Randy Wedding visited Takamatsu in 1974. Mayor Nobuo Waki made his first visit to St. Petersburg in 1978. He returned again 13 years later in 1991 to commemorate the 30th Anniversary.

Mayor Corrine Freeman visited Takamatsu in 1984.

Mayor Robert L. Ulrich visited Takamatsu in 1990 to celebrate their Centennial and Sister City Fair. He previously lived in Japan while serving in the US Air Force as a helicopter pilot and so knew the country well. Ulrich is a biking aficionado so he recruited 15 local cyclists to come with him (at their own expense). After participating in the ceremonies at Takamatsu, Ulrich and his bicycle friends took a bike trip through the picturesque Shikoku Region of Japan. He recalls, “The Fuji Bicycle Company agreed to sponsor our trip of 250 miles around Shikoku complete with brand-new bicycles, appropriate cycle-ware including helmets, a sag-wagon, and the US-educated son of the local Fuji bicycle dealer as our guide, route-setter, and reservation-maker. Each night, we found ourselves in a quaint Japanese inn, and we fellowshiped and dined on Japanese cuisine and warm hospitality

to the delight of our entire entourage. A sidelight of our venture was Takamatsu Mayor Waki’s fear that we should not undertake such a perilous journey on narrow Japanese roads. But we prevailed. The local media caught wind of our adventure and we departed Takamatsu in a blaze of paparazzi-loaded cars and helicopters photographing the crazy Americans off on a lark.”

Mayor Bill Foster participated in the 40th Anniversary as chair of the City Council. For that occasion, he arranged for 15 boys from the ‘St. Pete Rays of Fossil Park’ baseball team to go to Takamatsu. They were matched against the ‘Takamatsu Dragons.’ The ‘Friendship Games’ ended in a tie. He remembers the city rolling out the red carpet for the St. Petersburg delegation, noting that “there was no want or need that was unmet.” The city was decorated with banners commemorating the occasion. Art drawn by students at Anabuki College depicting St. Petersburg was displayed



Julann and Jacob Baker on visit to Japan at the Sadako Sasaki sculpture draped with origami cranes. Campbell Park Elementary School students made origami cranes to be draped on the sculpture.



Former Mayor Bob Ulrich in traditional Japanese-style clothing during visit to Japan.



The Red Pelican origami at the entrance of the St. Pete Pier is a “nod” to the 60-year Takamatsu-St. Petersburg Sister City Partnership. A new plaque will soon be added to the sculpture recounting the sixty years of friendship between the two cities.

City of St. Petersburg

throughout Takamatsu’s largest shopping mall. He again traveled to Takamatsu as mayor for the 50th Anniversary in 2011.

In 2008, Mayor Rick Baker traveled to Takamatsu. Baker notes, “During our delegation visit to Takamatsu, we first travelled to Hiroshima to meet with city leaders and visit Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. Within the park, among other memorials is a large statue of Sadako Sasaki holding a golden crane. Sadako was a young girl who died from radiation poison in the aftermath of the atom bomb. Before she died, she had folded over 1,000 origami paper cranes under a Japanese legend that says to do so enables the folder to be granted a wish. There are large Plexiglas displays at the memorial where people can place origami cranes made in memory and honor of Sadako. Before leaving for Japan, children from schools throughout St. Petersburg learned of Sadako’s story and made over two hundred origami cranes to present. At the memorial, our children Jacob (11) and Julann (12) – Sadako’s age when she died – presented the cranes on behalf of the children of St. Petersburg to the memorial after meeting with the vice mayor of Hiroshima. It was a moving moment for everyone who witnessed it.” Sadako’s simple wish was that she would live through her disease so she could fulfill her dream of being on a running team.

This year’s Diamond Anniversary is being organized by the St. Petersburg International Folk Festival (SPIFF) in cooperation with the City. One event has already taken place. Recently Mayor Rick Kriseman and Takamatsu Mayor Hideto Onishi exchanged greetings in a Webex meeting. Creative Clay in St. Petersburg and Heart Art Link of Takamatsu have begun an art exchange program. James B. Sanderlin IB Elementary World School will have virtual exchanges with Higashieta Elementary School. Thurgood Marshall Middle School will have virtual exchanges with Fuzoku Junior High School. Beginning in October, Sunken Gardens will feature the 60th Anniversary Sister City logo on their koi food packets. In addition, there will be a new exhibit at the History Museum and an observance will be held at the City Council on October 14th.

One of the artworks at the new St. Petersburg Pier is the Red Pelican, which incorporates the geometric footprint of the new Pier, as well as the logo of the City. The accompanying plaque notes that the artist Nathan Mabry “found inspiration in origami, the art of folding paper, a nod to Takamatsu, Japan, St. Pete’s long-time sister city.” This tribute calls to mind Mayor Baker’s visit to Hiroshima, and to Sadako Sasaki, and the 1,000 origami cranes she made to realize her simple wish. Most appropriately, in recognition of the Diamond Jubilee of our Sister City Program, a second plaque will be added to the Red Pelican recounting the 60-year history of the St. Petersburg-Takamatsu Sister City Partnership. ●

Speaking About Takamatsu

“One of the very prescient U.S. movements post-war was the establishment by many municipalities of ‘Sister City’ relationships where members of a U.S. City’s elected government adopted a Japanese City – it was people to people and resulted in a small but effective exercise of one City reaching out half way across the world to another in understanding and, when possible, in some commercial way. To date, many St. Pete students and residents have experience Japan’s culture finding that travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and ignorance.”

~Robert L. Ulrich (Mayor 1987-1991)

“A large delegation from Takamatsu visited St. Petersburg for the 30th Anniversary in 1991. I later led a delegation to visit Takamatsu, a beautiful city on a southern island of Japan. We were very warmly received. Our visit could not have been better.”

~David L. Fischer (Mayor 1991-1997)

“Over the years, with student exchanges, delegation visits and cultural exchange, the communities of Takamatsu and St. Petersburg have not only built bridges but have also become friends. Our Japanese sister city has a rich history and culture and people who are amazingly caring and gracious. When these interactions are combined with thousands of others in cities across the nation and world, it becomes a limited, but important, tool in the effort to encourage international commerce, exchange, and peace.”

~Rick Baker (Mayor 2001-2010)

“The people of Takamatsu truly understand the significance of art, education, literature, and culture, and because of this a Sister City relationship is very meaningful to them. The cultural exchanges of young people in particular, either as students or teachers, have been the most important aspect of the Sister Cities Program. And it’s our humble contribution towards world peace.”

~Bill Foster (Mayor 2010-2014)

“Sister City relationships transcend the divisions and politics of the day and allow cities and citizens to focus on what unites us, especially as it relates to arts and culture. It’s really incredibly valuable. Both St. Petersburg and Takamatsu are better places after sixty years of friendship and student exchanges. Regardless of what unfolds in either of our cities, that relationship will endure.”

~Rick Kriseman (Mayor 2014-2022)



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Sculptures Add to St. Pete's Artistic Vibe

— PHOTO ESSAY BY LYNN LOTKOWITZ —

When we think of St. Pete as an arts destination, the city's ever-growing collection of murals, the many outstanding museums, and dozens of art galleries come to mind. But the city has also its share of sculptures and monuments, both historic and new, that contribute to the creative vibe. Here are a few great examples. ●

- 1.) Mark Aeling's "Gladius Blossom" is an imposing sight at the new St. Petersburg Police Department.
- 2.) The Edge District's new "Sun On The Edge" sculpture in the middle of a roundabout on Central Avenue.
- 3.) One of many historic statues in the Snell Isle Park that were purchased in the 1920s by C. Perry Snell, a visionary who developed much of Northeast St. Pete, including Snell Isle.
- 4.) Also at the new St. Pete Police Department, the sculpture, "Community DNA," by Catherine Wood incorporates 31 collages rendered in glass and metal.
- 5.) The Snell Isle Park gazebo is another beautiful example of the historic artifacts acquired by developer C. Perry Snell. A few days before Christmas every year, Santa comes to visit – he sits in the gazebo where he greets children and waves to passing cars.
- 6.) Belgian artist Nick Ervinck's created, "Olnetopia", a water-like bronze sculpture that is one of several unique sculptures at the new Pier.
- 7.) Historic fountain at 1st Street & 28th Avenue North, part of an artesian well that the Civitan Club raised funds for and built so early St. Pete residents could have clean drinking water.
- 8.) The Blackthorn Memorial, located in the Sunshine Skyway Bridge rest area and fishing pier, recognizes the 23 members of the Coast Guard Cutter Blackthorn whose lives were lost during a collision with a tanker on Jan. 28, 1980.
- 9.) A sculpture at the Raymond James Financial campus, one of the many sculptures in Tom and Mary James' collection of western and wildlife art. (photo by City of St. Pete)
- 10.) The USFSP bull in front of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg Student Center. (photo by City of St. Pete)
- 11.) The statue in Pioneer Park, at Central Avenue and Beach Drive near the St. Pete Yacht Club, recognizes the individuals who helped found St. Petersburg.
- 12.) One of Mike Elwell's whimsical Beach Drive bench sculptures, an alligator, dressed for a night on the town.



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Alli Arnold

Bay Street NE

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

I was born in Manhattan and raised in Massapequa, Long Island. I moved to St. Pete in May of 2011.

Favorite place to visit in St. Pete?

I love to throw two chairs in the car on a weeknight and head to Treasure Island beach, where my husband and I visited when we were first dating, and where we fell in love. We sit and watch the sunset and talk about how lucky we are to live right here.

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

The summer I was 34, I quit an office job that no longer served me and embarked on a two-month journey: July was spent visiting friends on the west coast (Seattle, Portland, and San Francisco), and in August I flew to Dublin, Ireland for a month-long stay with my brother and sister-in-law who had recently moved there. Now they live in St. Pete, too!

Top two places in the world on your bucket list?

NYC is the greatest city in the world and I will never tire of going there. I would also like to spend a time in Galway, Ireland, learning about my ancestors.

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

I would have liked to meet the artist and writer Maurice Sendak (*Little Bear*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, etc). His illustrations were some of my favorites growing up, and he had such poignant stories and wonderful observations to share about them.

Favorite sport, recreational activity, or hobby?

My favorite sport, recreational activity, and hobby is shopping. Also people watching – which you can do while shopping.

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

In my head, I am still roaming the chilly streets of Easttown, wondering what Mare and her mother are quibbling about now, so I'd say *Mare of Easttown*. Also on HBO, *30 Coins* was a fun, fever-dream full of surprises both horrific and hilarious.

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

If I were a dog I would be a Morkie: Confident, sensitive, and usually in need of a bang trim.

Tell us about a person who has inspired you.

My father, James Arnold, continues to be my role model. Dad had multiple sclerosis and spent the last 25 years of his life in a nursing home. Despite his many challenges, my father had zero self-pity and an abundance of gratitude. He was meticulous about his appearance, retained his sense of humor, and sang at the top of his lungs (at appropriate times, and not). He reminds me to not complain and to remember to be thankful.

Current book you've read and would recommend?

I just started reading *IM: A Memoir* by Isaac Mizrahi. He is a fashion designer, cabaret performer, and zany New Yorker who I am looking forward to getting to know better.



Michael Cichon

Snell Isle Blvd NE

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

I've been in St. Pete four years, originally from Ohio.

Favorite place in St. Pete?

That's not fair! Only one place? I'd have to say Bodega restaurant on Central, the Museum of Fine Arts St. Petersburg, and Weedon Island Preserve.

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

There's only been armchair travel the past year-and-a-half, but my last trip to Chicago was excellent; a really motivating destination for the museum and architecture buff I am.

Top two places in the world on your bucket list?

Scandinavia and Japan for the architecture.

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

Any individual (famous or not) from an ancient American Indian culture, who could give me a firsthand account of what life was like centuries or even millennia ago. I've had that fly-on-the-wall daydream since I was a child.

Favorite sport, recreational activity, or hobby?

I love to drum until I'm beat! It's always great to take a brisk walk around Snell Isle, as well. I'm also still a baseball kinda guy.

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

Any Mexican film noir is well worth the time.

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

Xoloizcuintli (a type of hairless dog from Mexico that takes its name from the Aztec deity Xolotl).

Tell us about a person who inspired you.

Maynard James Keenan, vocalist for the musical groups Tool, Puscifer, and A Perfect Circle. He is also a winemaker – owner of Merkin Vineyards and Caduceus Cellars. His disciplined and resourceful approach to doing several disparate things at once is truly motivating to me.

Current book you've read and would recommend?

Although I am surrounded by books, I read primarily for knowledge of what I am currently interested in researching, for myself or when presenting to clients. My taste in books and subject matter is typically for art historical reference and cultural anthropology... and also archaeology.

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

I was almost a professional musician. My brother and I were creating original commercial rock music ('84-'94), and Gene Simmons of Kiss put us under contract on his record label Man of a Thousand Faces. We were well on our way to being promoted and financed by Simmons, but rap was just beginning to get the attention of record labels and our deal fizzled out. It would've been such a different life had that all worked out, but not necessarily a better one.



Sonya Sarkar

2nd Avenue NE

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

I have lived in St. Pete for almost a year now! I was born and raised in Jacksonville, FL, and moved to NYC in 2013 after I graduated from UF. I moved to St. Pete from NYC in September 2020.

Favorite place to visit in St. Pete?

North Shore Park is definitely my favorite place. My favorite restaurant is a toss-up between Lingr, Ceviche, and Wild Child.

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

My husband (then boyfriend) and I did a four-day cruise through Ha Long Bay in Vietnam, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site. We swam in the bay's turquoise water, saw fishing villages, rode bikes through farms, and soaked up the beauty that is Vietnam.

Top two places in the world on your bucket list?

Probably Africa, specifically Madagascar and Kenya, and also Greece!

Favorite sport, recreational activity, or hobby?

I love physical activity, whether it's in a gym, riding my bike, kayaking, etc. Anything that gets my body moving makes me feel better.

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

Master of None on Netflix is one of my favorite shows right now.

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

A Golden Retriever since they are just the best dogs! Always happy, loyal, and so smart. Might be a little biased since we just got an 8-week-old Golden named Ziggy.

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

My dad. He made his way here from India 35+ years ago with my mom, both of whom had nothing at the time. He has now owned his own accounting business for 15+ years. Just thinking about the obstacles he has faced is truly remarkable and inspiring!

Current book you've read and would recommend?

Surrounded by Idiots: The Four Types of Human Behavior. It teaches you how to identify and understand patterns of human behavior so you can better communicate with the 'four' main types of behavior.

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

Launching Paradeco Coffee Roasters with my husband is definitely my top accomplishment so far, especially since I was working full-time until two weeks before we opened our doors!

Something people might not know about you?

I hiked the unrestored Great Wall of China, also known as Wild Wall, by myself! Slightly scary but overall one of the most incredible experiences.



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Sunken Gardens to Create New History Center



Postcard of 1940 entrance



Yogi Berra with Miss Sunken Gardens



Historic billboard



Rendering of new landscape around Sunken Gardens History Center



Rendering of new Sunken Gardens History Center

— JANAN TALAHER —

It's hard to imagine that in the 1950s and '60s, billboards advertising Sunken Gardens lined highways in the Southeast, celebrities like baseball great Yogi Berra stopped by to visit, and beauty pageants were a frequent occurrence. There were even alligator wrestling shows and a gift shop billed as the "world's largest." At the time, Sunken Gardens was considered one of the top roadside attractions in Florida, helping put St. Pete on the map as a popular tourist destination. This unique part of St. Pete's history will now be showcased in a new Sunken Gardens History Center.

The new History Center will be located in a vintage 1940-era building with red tile roof that once served as the ticket and admission office when the Gardens' entrance was on 18th Avenue North in the Old Northeast neighborhood. That building is currently being used to house the tropical parrots and other birds when the gardens are closed for the night. As part of the project, the birds will receive new overnight accommodations in a different location of the gardens.

The Sunken Gardens Forever Foundation has pledged \$120,000 for the new History Center — \$100,000 to support the cost of renovating and restoring the 1940 entrance, and \$20,000 toward creating the historical exhibits. The Florida

Department of State, Division of Historical Resources is also providing a \$50,000 grant for interpretative panels, displays, and exhibits.

"We look forward to telling the history of Sunken Gardens and its role as a major Old Florida Roadside attraction," said Robin Reed, president of the Sunken Gardens Forever Foundation. "We are thrilled to support the gardens in its role as an historic gem for the City of St. Petersburg."

For months now, Jennifer Tyson (education and volunteer coordinator at Sunken Gardens) and Kathy Turner Lee (granddaughter of Sunken Gardens' original founder, George Turner Sr.) have been sorting through a vast collection of memorabilia, including old family photos, mid-century TV commercials, vintage documents, and much more that will be featured in the new History Center.

They are even assembling information about Sunken Gardens' earliest history, dating back to the 1900s, when George Turner Sr. bought the land, once the site of an ancient lake-bed and sinkhole. George was a plumber by trade, and in the early 1920s, he created a terracotta piping system to drain the swampy land, leaving behind a rich organic 'muck' that was perfect for growing tropical fruits and vegetables, which the Turner family sold at a farm stand.

Over time, George and his wife Eula expanded the gardens, added the iconic colored walkways, and started charging admission. By 1936, Turner's Sunken Gardens was a year-round destination. In the late 1940 and '50s, mom-and-pop motels started popping up along 4th Street North, further increasing Sunken Gardens' visibility and turning it into one of the city's main attractions.

Robin Reed noted that the new History Center is "well aligned with the Sunken Gardens Forever Foundation's mission, which is to support Sunken Gardens and preserve its legacy as a historic landmark through education and philanthropy." Sunken Gardens is owned and operated by the City of St. Petersburg. The Sunken Gardens Forever Foundation provides the 'extra' financial support for important Garden projects outside the scope of the city's operating budget. The Foundation will be launching a capital campaign for the new History Center in the near future.

Although the 1940s entrance is being restored, it will not be used as entrance, but will only be accessible from within the Gardens. In addition to restoring the building, plans call for creating a small outdoor courtyard with seating, and adding more landscaping, including an arbor for orchids. For more information, go to www.sunkengardensfoundation.org. ●



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Expression of Now

— ECHO SHAMAN —

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 And acceptance is what we need
 The reflection is all around
 And it's not hard to see
 when we simply be ●



A Beach Drive Murder Mystery, Part 2

— MILA SALAMONE —

(Part 1 of this story appeared in the May-June issue of the Northeast Journal)

Anna Jones, on vacation after the craziest year of her life, sits alone at a table for two and snatches at a napkin, struggling to free itself from the cup she placed over it. It's been five months since she saw that man get shot and die on the pavement, just a few moments before the ambulance came. She'd normally be bothered thinking so casually about it, except that so many news stories glamorized the event that it suddenly seemed dull to her.

Like a lake lies dormant while a river rushes by, the roar of city life contrasts the tranquil countryside. But in California, the ocean waves crash on sand only miles from a mountain only steps from a silent city bustle. Now that she's in Santa Cruz, she experiences the ranging concoction of tourists, lifers, and homeless people – of course, the most common spotting is the surfers, who birth themselves out of the Santa Cruz ocean like a million light bulbs flicker on when the sun goes down. School was over, and she'd had big plans to go in-state for college, but that seemed like the last thing her body needed now.

In a time of chaos, forced organization was not the answer – she had too many nightmares to spend the daytime planning. Her parents agreed to support her in a year off as she figured out what she wanted to do, but the shapelessness of everything overwhelmed her. Her parents sent her some money once she got here, guilty about their inability to travel with her due to their busy work schedule, and she was surviving off of that for now.

Anna loves Santa Cruz, and the sand that wiggles between her toes and invades her toenails doesn't concern her because she gets the creeping sense that she belongs here. Even the people in Santa Cruz, crazy and unpredictable as they are, comfort Anna.

Sometimes if you sit alone in a crowded room, the silence can be overwhelming. For Anna, after one crazy incident in a city of calm, it feels safer to live around the world of crazy.

Despite her prescribed control, a yelping lack of control kindles just below the surface of her mind like lava under rock. The napkin she stuffed under her cup catches her attention as she sees it wiggle again, so she pulls it out for closer examination. A few minutes earlier a boy had been by and written his number sloppily on the outer edge. An 813, so perfectly different than her usual 727. He had black hair cut just above his ears so that a little lagged down, and more jewelry than she'd ever seen on a man. Little studs lined his ears, and then dangly silver kites. His eyes were the kind of blue that almost turned purple against his ruby necklace.

His style overwhelmed her. She felt compelled to comply with his avant-garde flirtation tactics out of sheer curiosity. His first words to her were, "such an interesting little face." When she spun around in shock, he was already sitting in the chair behind her, and smiled like a nymph. "It's a compliment" he said, and she felt at odds with her habitual reaction as her immediate one was inclined to be quite flattered.

He asked for her number not by way of courtship, he insisted, but to paint her "delicate" eyes and sell his art to the highest bidder. The fact that he would call himself an artist didn't surprise her at all (you could see it in the way he dressed). When she asked for his name, he said: "Ren." She needed to know why he looked so peculiar in a land of peculiars, so she asked. He said that he sensed in her face the pain of something still lingering; he explained that her features reminded him of a snow princess in one of his favorite children's cartoons. She'd been complimented before; the usual "you're so pretty," "you're so beautiful," "you're..." But nothing like this.

She'd been thinking about him all this time, sitting at the cafe. Shifting between past and present, she smooths the napkin with her fingers, and then her palm, and now, types the number he gave her into a phone with a cracked screen. She had been thinking about him all this time, but now she remembers that she never called him when he left. She ponders what he meant when he said he was an artist. She calls.

"Hello? Who's this?"

"Anna. The girl from the cafe."

"Gentle! How lovely."

(Anna coughs out a laugh at his ridiculousness).

"Well I have to say that I wasn't expecting you so soon."

"No?"

"No. But since you made the effort, I feel I should fill you in."

"On what?"

"On the real reason I asked for your number."

Anna pauses and experiences a tingle of anxiety, like a slight buzz irritating her chin, or a fly throwing itself against the window in desperate escape.

"Yeah?"

"I recognized you. You're that girl from the news video of the man getting shot. You were in the background."

"Oh." I

A pause.

"I also know why they want you."

"What?"

"I know why they want you, and I'm the only person who can help."

The cars stop moving, the pedestrians slow mid step, the clouds freeze in the sky, and the sun goes cold in Anna's eyes.

"Let's get some coffee. Don't worry Anna, it'll all be okay." ●



Classic yet Modern Old Northeast Home in Eminently-Walkable Location - Just Listed

Ideally situated in the heart of the Old Northeast, this stunning 3/2 home combines the functionality of a modern home with classic style and architecture so revered in this neighborhood. Located on a quiet corner only 2 blocks from North Shore Park and 4 blocks from the excitement of downtown St. Petersburg.

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The Last Word: Around the Block

ARTicles Grand Opening on 9th



It's hard to miss the many changes underway on 9th Street/Dr. MLK Jr. Street North, from new restaurants and shops to bike lanes. Now Leslie Curran has moved her business there, too.

After 18 years as an anchor on Central Avenue, Leslie has relocated ARTicles Art Gallery & Custom Framing to 1234 9th Street North, in the up-and-coming Historic Uptown neighborhood just at the edge of the Old Northeast. D'Gallerie, previously located at the Sundial Plaza downtown, has moved in next door.

"We're creating a new arts district outside of downtown," says D'Gallerie owner Alejandro Quintero. The Mize Gallery, owned by the mural artist Chad Mize, is just a few blocks away, and popular restaurants Nitally's and The Left Bank Bistro are across the street.

At a June grand opening, guests got the chance to see the interior of the recently renovated two-story vintage 1920-era building that houses the two art galleries. "We loved this space with tall ceilings and lots of natural light," says Leslie, who pointed out that her move from downtown was prompted by the need for more room to showcase the artists she represents at the gallery.

A former City Council member, Leslie was instrumental in saving and renovating the 600 Block of Central Avenue, part of the renaissance of Central Avenue as a prime destination for restaurants, retail shops, and artist studios. She taught herself custom framing at age 23 and then studied with a local master framer whom she calls a true craftsman. "I've always been involved in art," she says. "I've been a woman-owned business for almost 20 years. We made it through the recession and now Covid. We always seem to be able to adapt." ●

For more information about the galleries, go to www.articlesstpete.com and www.d-gallerie.com.



Customer Karin Edminston and ARTicles owner Leslie Curran



Artist iBOMS and D'Gallerie owner Alejandro Quintero

Shop Local Save the Date: November 27-28

Celebrate St. Pete artisans by shopping local at this year's Shopapalooza Festival, back this year after being postponed in 2020 due to Covid. Admission is free and more than 300 local vendors have signed up to participate. The festival is scheduled for Saturday, November 27 and Sunday, November 28 from 10am-5pm at Vinoy Park. For more information go to www.shopapaloozafestival.com. ●

Congratulations, St. Pete Debs



Continuing a tradition that has been ongoing since the 1930s, the St. Petersburg Debutante Club honors 21 young women, all of whom are sophomores or juniors in college. The women participate in social events and charitable community projects, including collecting two dozen new children's tennis shoes for Clothes To Kids, providing dinner to St. Vincent DePaul Ministries, and 36 hours of labor to Habitat for Humanity. ●

Back row: Lexi Shouppe, Meredith Kiernan, Julia Gilby, Emery Camp, Lindsay Wilson, Krista Kennedy, and Emily Will. Front row: Remy Fleming, Natalie Stiles, Dory Donatelli, Georgia Barlow, Kate Nelson, Allison Rothman, Hannah Wetmore, and Sophia Vesley. Not pictured: Alondra Rios, Milan Posey, Mary Musselman, Jillian Kilgroe, Stuary Cohen, and Hannah Andrews.

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