

Northeast Journal

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Good People ∞ Good Places ∞ Good Things Happening

Southeastern Guide Dogs Spread the Love

Ianan Talafer

t. Petersburg's Dali Museum might be the only museum in the country where a Southeastern Guide Dog helps out during docent tours. Patricia Allen is a docent at the Dali, and since Dave, her guide dog, goes everywhere Patricia goes, he's part of the tour every Tuesday afternoon at 12:30pm. "When

I ask if there are any questions, Dave knows to stand up and get ready to move on to the next painting," says Patricia. "He knows the routine. If I make a mistake and go the wrong way, he'll bark."

A retired risk manager for a national insurance company, Patricia had already been a docent at the Dali for many years when her eyesight began to fail, a result of diabetic

retinopathy. At first she resisted the idea that she might benefit from a guide dog, but after a series of small mishaps — including running into a bench that was part of a new exhibit at the Dali Museum — she decided it was time.

"Getting Dave was transformative for Patricia," says her partner Tom O'Shea. "Losing her sight was very isolating and Dave helped restore Patricia's confidence in her ability to get around." Dave's now been with Patricia for over eight years and the two have become inseparable. "Dave never leaves her side, sleeping by the bed and following her from room to room in the house," says Tom.

Continued on page 12



The Rogers family: Kristen, Zoe, Cole and Mitchell, with guide dog Harris

Mickey in St. Pete: Part 2

Will Michaels

n 1956, Mickey Mantle reported to spring training just after having his tonsils removed. In late February he played in the Tampa Palma Ceia Golf Club annual baseball-players-and-sports-writers golf tournament. Mickey was a late comer to the game of golf, and the Yanks

were only allowed to play golf during spring training. Mantle was paired with pitcher Whitey Ford.

Perhaps Mickey's most notable exhibition game that season occurred in mid-March against the Cardinals at Al Lang Stadium. Times sports writer Red Marston reported "The village blacksmith from Commerce, Okla., Mickey Mantle, muscled a hanging curve over the left field fence and on into Tampa Bay to give the New York Yankees three runs in the eighth inning." The pitcher was rookie right-hander Bob Mabe. "He put the pitch up there. And Mantle put it out there... Mantle gave the game-winning poke a Cadillac touch by hitting the ball left while batting left handed." Mickey's "bicepolar blast" actually hit the ground once before hopping into the bay.

Overall that spring Mickey's batting was exceptional. He struck out only once, and not until the twelfth game. He hit six home runs, two into the bay. Stan Musial commented Continued on page 22



Mickey with his son Mickey, Jr. at John's Pass, circa 1969



Kyle Taylor at work at The Penny Hoarder

Kyle Taylor: Millennial Entrepreneur

Marty Normile

hen Kyle Taylor moved into a house on our block in the Old Northeast neighborhood, I figured he must be the college-age son of the new owners. He was that youthful looking, full of energy, friendly, and engaging. I soon learned it was not his parents who were the new homeowners, but it was Kyle himself, and he was building his business in St. Petersburg.

The Penny Hoarder began as Kyle's hobby of finding different ways to earn money, and it has since grown to employ more than 100 people (and still growing) in a lively, fun-filled, sophisticated workspace in downtown St. Petersburg. The company also earned more than \$35 million in revenues in 2017. For three consecutive years, Inc. 500/5000 has ranked The Penny Hoarder one of the fastest-growing private-media companies in the US, and #25 on the overall list of the fastest-growing companies in America.

In short, The Penny Hoarder (www.thepennyhoarder.com) is now one of the largest personal finance websites, helping millions of readers worldwide earn and save money. It's become a phenomenal success and featured widely in several business and media publications and broadcasts. Kyle has spoken on the global stage about entrepreneurship, alternative career paths, and mission-based business. Pretty good for a guy who just turned 32. Best of all, it sprung from Kyle's curiosity and his personal experience of climbing out of \$50,000 in college loans and credit-card debt.

The Penny Hoarder is a truly fascinating business story, but this story is about Kyle, my neighbor, and how he happened to land in St. Petersburg and settle in the Old Northeast. Kyle grew up in nearby Manatee County's Lakewood Ranch, graduating from Lakewood Ranch High School in 2004. Last September, he was invited to speak to a student audience at the school, where he told his story. He was bitten by the entrepreneurial bug even during his younger days at middle school. He would search for grocery coupons for candy, bicycle to Winn Dixie, stuff his backpack with candy, and resell it to classmates, doubling his money.

"It was a thriving little enterprise," he told the high schoolers as he went on to tell them about building his current thriving larger business. He also got good at Monopoly by playing the game first against his sisters, and later playing in competitive tournaments, an addiction he still is unable to shake. "That's how nerdy I am," he admits.

His was a frugal family growing up, where earning and saving money was their way of life. His mother once worked as a part-time 'mystery shopper' where she would scope out selected stores and restaurants and write up reports about the 'customer' experience. Kyle saw this not only as a way to make extra money, but also to get an occasional free meal at Waffle House or Chili's. He was on to something.



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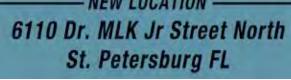


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EDITOR'S NOTE

After my Editor's Note in the last issue of the Northeast Journal, asking readers to tell us how they are making a difference through volunteer activities that connect, service, and uplift, I was so appreciative to hear from Venetian Isle resident Laura Reitan. Laura is a retired nurse case manager who still does a little consulting work. She also has experience as a guidance counselor in elementary schools. Now she is giving back by volunteering with the Lunch Pals program, a Pinellas County Schools' initiative. Lunch Pals is a one-on-one mentoring program which offers students the opportunity to connect with a caring adult.

Laura started by mentoring a third-grade student at Shore Acres Elementary School who lives in a single-parent household and has a physically challenged sibling. The experience was so positive that she asked if there were other students who might need support, and now she mentors two students at the school, both third graders. She visits the school one day a week and has lunch with each child individually. The students get their lunch in the cafeteria and then Laura sits outside with them at a picnic table in the school courtyard.

"One of the students was very quiet at first, but we connected over a book he was struggling to read," Laura said. "We read a book of his choice from the school library, or just talk about how his week is going, and about school, home, sports, or other interests. It's amazing what you can cover in a half-hour. I didn't think it would be that effective at first, but now I see that it's really making a difference."

Laura points out that there are many children living in non-traditional family structures who could benefit from a little extra attention. They might live with grandparents, or have parents with busy careers who don't have time to help with homework. Sometimes the children may be in foster care. Laura says the satisfaction of helping them is extremely rewarding. "It's left me feeling so fulfilled to do something so worthwhile," says Laura. "Now I'm motivated to look into more ways to get involved with the program, maybe expanding to work with middle school and high school students, too."

Learn more about Lunch Pals at pcsb. org/mentor. Do you have a story to share with readers? Email me at editor@ northeastjournal.org or janantalafer@ gmail.com.

Janan Talater Editor, *Northeast Journal*



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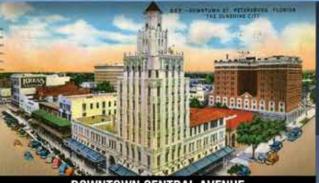




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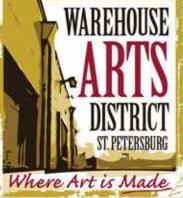
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MEET THE WRITERS

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. and an adjunct professor of English at local colleges in the area. A resident of the Old Northeast since 2000, she is the publicity/entertainment chair for the Suncoast Scandinavian Club. [carlburn@tampabay.rr.com]



Rick Carson has lived in St. Pete since 2001, after a career journey that took him from national Republican 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]



Diana Krause Geegan, a UCF grad, taught school and later excelled in the financial services field. She found her passion in real estate and utilizes her skills and training as a successful realtor. She loves spending time with friends and family, studying God's Word and giving back to the St. Pete community.



Lynn Lotkowictz 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]



Marty Normile and his family moved to St. Petersburg and the Old Northeast in 1984 when he was hired to head St. Petersburg Progress (now the Downtown Partnership). At the time, the Vinoy Hotel was boarded up, and there was only one restaurant on Beach Drive. Retired since 2001, he is continually amazed by St. Petersburg's transformation.



Sylvia Raymond, a longtime St. Pete resident (now in Crescent Heights), has been a teacher, college administrator, editor, and an administrator at an international organization accrediting business schools. She enjoys biking, volunteering for Crescent Heights Neighborhood Assoc. & others, painting/hiding rocks, and hanging out with family, friends & her two cats.



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



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



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]



Holly K. Walker has over 20 years of experience in speaking and writing both professionally and socially. She has been a resident of NE St. Petersburg since 1995. She is married and has two children. She also enjoys philanthropy and serves on several boards. [walker93@gte.net]



Gay Wasik-Zegel moved to St. Petersburg five years ago after retiring as a school media specialist. She is the author of a children's book *Stop Means Stop!* She enjoys gardening, yoga, biking, volunteering, and living in the best city in Florida. [gwzegel@gmail.com]





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SPOTLIGHT ON THE ARTS

The Sunscreen Film Festival Comes to St. Pete

Alan Armstrong

ix years ago, I heard about the Sunscreen Film Festival, and as an aspiring animated children's filmmaker who lives in the Old Northeast, I decided to find out more. I purchased the VIP pass so that I could attend as many workshops and discussions as possible. I wanted to learn more about how to write a proper screenplay and the process filmmakers had to go through to get their dreams on the big screen.

At one of the Sunscreen Film Festival cocktail parties, I happened to meet an Oscar-nominated successful screen writer and subsequently went home with great tips and a determination to

write the next big animated

children's film. The following year, I found out I could be volunteer and earn my VIP pass. After a couple more years of volunteering, I was invited to join the board of directors to oversee the volunteer program.

I'm still writing that screenplay, but getting involved with the Suncreen Film Festival has made a significant difference in my understanding of what's required to be successful. It amazes me that so many people don't know about this amazing weekend event that showcases the best indie (independent) films from around the US and the world.

This year's festival is the 14th in its history. It takes place April 25-28 at the Sundial Plaza AMC theaters in downtown St. Petersburg. My goal is to work with our sponsors to make the festival more



Castille Landon and mini-horse Apple featured in Apple of My Eye



Dylan McDermott and Bay news 9 reporter



Kirstie Alley and Robert Davi

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visible and more of a presence in St. Petersburg. In a city known for the arts, we are fortunate to have this type of festival just steps from our front

From its simple beginnings in 2005 at a local art gallery, the festival has grown to become a four-day international festival. Each year 60-70 filmmakers visit St. Petersburg in order to engage with audiences. This is a unique opportunity for St. Petersburg residents to watch new independent films that they may never have a chance to see anywhere else. Attendees also have the unique opportunity to engage with filmmakers and to hear some of the behind-the-scenes information

> about what went into the making of the film.

> In addition to many outstanding films, the Sunscreen Film Festival is noted for its workshops and panel discussions led primarily by Los Angeles and New York City industry professionals who lecture production issues,

acting tips, financing and a wide variety of insider techniques on how to get a film produced.

And let's not forget the parties. The highlight of any film festival are the parties where you get to meet and greet the filmmakers, producers, writers, film distributors, and attorneys. Many first-time filmmakers have scored great deals over a cocktail. You can even expect the occasional celebrity sighting. Last year, Hollywood actors Jane Seymour, Kirstie Alley, Dylan McDermott, and Joe Pantoliano were







 $Actors\ John\ Travolta\ with\ Patrick\ Wilson\ (who\ attended\ Shorecrest\ Preparatory\ School\ in\ St.\ Pete).$

among those attending the festival. For film lovers in town, this is a weekend to put on the calendar!

This year is expected to be better than ever. Chris Eaton, director of the Sunscreen Film Festival, has worked with the screening team to select 130 films from the 600 submitted. The carefully curated list this year includes both feature-length films and approximately 100 short films (animation, comedy, thrillers, etc). Some of this year's highlights will be the new documentary about Colombian artist Fernando Botero, as well as the locally produced film *Fly Like A Girl* about the history of female pilots. Additionally, there are short and feature films with stars, including Anna Paquin, Cynthia Nixon, Carol Kane, and Ed Asner, among others.

Attendees can purchase a four-day VIP pass, which entitles them to go to all the films, workshops, and parties. A one-day pass give you access to all the films, workshops, and parties for that day only. Or, you can purchase a single admission ticket per film or short block segment. For more information, visit www. sunscreenfilmfestival.com, or email info@sunscreenfilmfestival.com.

Looking forward to seeing you in April at the Sunscreen Film Festival!





ARTIST PROFILE

Michael McCarthy's Magical Music

Gay Wasik-Zegel

e comes from Ireland, a land of deep-rooted connections. Have you heard him sing or watched him perform? No doubt you have if you enjoy musical theater and have traveled to Broadway or San Francisco, visited London's West End, Sydney, Melbourne, Shanghai, Dublin, Norway, Sweden, and other places too numerous to name. He's also performed with the London Philharmonic and in the presence of Queen Elizabeth, as well as Tony Blair, Britain's former prime minister, and Jacques Chirac, former president of France. It may come as a surprise to

learn I'm talking about Michael McCarthy, the guest musical director at Shorecrest Preparatory School, and choir director at Northeast Presbyterian Church in Shore Acres. Michael has impressive credentials and an international reputation in the music world.

FROM SHAMROCKS TO THE SHORES OF ST. PETERSBURG

A native of Cork, Ireland, Michael studied piano as a young boy. He also took voice lessons from his mother's voice teacher, Etna McBurney. By the age of 15, he was singing in the ensemble of *Rigoletto* at the Cork Opera House. He continued his studies at the London Academy of Music, arriving in the US after being awarded a full scholarship to Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri. Though tradi-

tionally a women's college, Stephens offers male scholarships. That year there were 15 male scholarships: five in musical theater, five in dance, and five in tech theater. This opportunity led to his Bachelors' degree in musical theater.

I met with Michael for coffee on a sunny, crisp afternoon. His resonant voice and slight Irish accent made listening to him a pleasure. He chatted about how he and his wife, Stephanie, met in college – Stephanie was also a musical theater major there. How the two ended up in St. Petersburg years later is quite a story.

Following graduation, the couple briefly went their separate ways. Stephanie moved to Los Angeles to work for Donald O'Connor of Singing in the Rain and Francis the Talking Mule fame. Michael took off in another direction, moving to





Inspector Javert; Michael McCarthy; Andrew Lloyd Webber concert; season of shows at the Cork School of Music.

London where he competed with British actors for parts in musical theater. With his 'luck o' the Irish' (and boatloads of talent) he was soon chosen to play the leading role of Inspector Javert in *Les Misérables*. "Being an Irish actor and getting one of the most sought-after parts in the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of *Les Mis* was a big deal, especially after being in London such a short time," recalls Michael.

After a year apart, Stephanie decided to join Michael in London and the two married in 1990. Over the next 17 years, Michael successfully performed more than 5,000 perfor-

mances of Les Mis on London's West End, Broadway, and around the world. His repertoire continued to grow with starring roles as the Phantom in Ken Hill's Phantom of the Opera, as Ivan Molokov in Chess, and Sweeney Todd in Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street, to name but a few.

It was an exciting time, but when the couple were expecting their first child, they decided that a smaller community, and a career path where Michael could be home more, would be a better fit. Rather than stay in London, they considered making their home permanently in the US. They thought about San Diego and the Carolinas, but after a friend's recommendation, they chose to visit St. Petersburg. It was 2006, and the new Dali

Museum was just being finished in its current location on the downtown waterfront. Michael recalls sensing a 'buzz' of activity in the city. There was a sense of renewal in the air that gave him a "good feeling" about moving here. "When I got off the plane, it felt like the right thing to do. I saw 60 houses in one week," says Michael. "We made an offer about two days before flying back to London to pack up everything and come here." St. Petersburg has been home to Michael, Stephanie and their son Cían (KEE-an) ever since.

Life in the 'Burg

Today, Michael's engagements revolve around family life as he limits extended periods of travel. Recently, he performed as a soloist with the RTE National





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Symphony Orchestra in Dublin on New Year's Eve. The occasion: A Gala 70th birthday tribute to Andrew Lloyd Webber, composer of Cats, Phantom of the Opera and more. The event was sold-out. Always modest, Michael still has trouble believing that Andrew Lloyd Webber would choose him to perform considering the plethora of emerging younger artists now on the scene.

Back home in St. Pete, Michael has developed a strong relationship with Shorecrest Preparatory School. His talent, knowledge, and ability to connect with people of all ages is one of the guiding forces behind the growth of their musical theater program. Shorecrest headmaster Mike Murphy is quick to note that "academics and musical theater are hallmarks of our school."

Stephanie also brings her talent to Shorecrest. She is the middle school music teacher and instills a passion for musical theater in her students. Headmaster Mike Murphy elaborates: "when Stephanie became the middle school music teacher, musical theater in the music class became the mainstay. Allofher end-of-quarter productions are show-tune productions."

When the students reach high school, Michael takes over. He gives Stephanie credit for preparing the students so well. Staging a top-quality

Broadway production is a monumental task, especially for high school students. Michael says the preparation involved is "like having 10 years of voice lessons." Headmaster Murphy is appreciative of Michael's leadership in helping stage such



amazing productions. "He is able to work with the students and really bring out their power."

The school's next production will be Rogers and Hammerstein's 2013 Broadway version of *Cinderella*. The show will take place April 11-13 in the school's Janet Root Theater. Michael's expertise, alongside that of Shorecrest theater instructor William Leavengood and dance instructor Cheryl Lee, is sure to create another unforgettable show.

SHARING HIS GIFTS

Shorecrest is not the only venue in town that benefits from Michael's talents. He is also the choir director at Northeast Presbyterian Church. And in the summer, the family goes back to Ireland, where Michael and Stephanie work with students at the Performing Arts Summer School at the prestigious Cork School of Music. Michael founded the program which "employs lead actors and coaches from productions such as *Phantom of the Opera* and *Matilda* to give serious theater students the opportunity of working with industry professionals." Stephanie acts as the administrator, directing and co-producing a final 'showcase performance' with Michael.

A glance at his website, www.michael mccarthy.website, is proof of the impact that

Michael's work in music, theater, and film has had around the world. Our city is a bit richer for the fact that he and his family call St. Petersburg home. Perhaps there is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow!











GUIDE DOGS continued from page 1

I met Patricia, Tom, and Dave at the Dali café shortly before one of Patricia's tours. Dave isn't small, but he had managed to curl up on the floor in front of Patricia's chair. When I sat down at the table, he slowly adjusted his body so his head rested on one of my feet. I was immediately smitten. As Dave was working and in his

official guide dog harness, I wasn't supposed to give him too much attention, but I definitely wanted to.

As the time got close for Patricia's tour to begin, she stood up. Dave came to attention, alert and ready to go. Tom jokes about the time Patricia came home and told him about a couple who had seen her come into the museum. "They confessed to her later that they couldn't understand why someone who was visually impaired would come to a museum," says Tom. "Then when they found out she was their docent for the tour, they were more than surprised. Can you imagine? You either think 'you have to be kidding' or 'this is going to be a wonderful experience."

Since Patricia is one of the Dali's top docents and has been named docent of the year, it's obvious that her tours are an outstanding experience. "I've had parents come up after the tour and say this was one of the best museum tours they've ever had. Their children were paying attention because of Dave," says Patricia.

Dave is getting up there in dog years as he's 10 ½ and will retire next year. In retirement, he'll get to stop working and just be a dog, maybe even

take a nap on the couch or play tug of war – both of which are totally off limits for guide dogs. Patricia will get a new, younger guide dog, but Dave will stay on to live with the family. "The two dogs will meet for the first time in a neutral area, and then I'll bring them both home," says Patricia.

THE BREEDING, TRAINING, AND RAISING OF GUIDE DOGS

Southeastern Guide Dogs is an impressive organization with an impressive campus. The nonprofit organization is located just south of the Sunshine Skyway Bridge, off US 41 in Palmetto. As I turned into the sprawling 33-acre campus and drove through the main gates, I felt as if I were visiting a small junior college, which in some respects I guess I was. There were about a half-dozen modern one-story buildings with names like Puppy Academy, Canine University Training

Center, and the Canine University Residence Halls.

Training dogs for a career helping people is serious business. It requires two years of education and training with highly skilled staff and hundreds of volunteers. Since 1982, Southeastern Guide Dogs has trained more than 3,000 dogs and given them at no charge to recipients throughout the US. At first, the focus was

on training guide dogs for people with visual impairment, but in 2006, that mission was expanded to include military veterans with a variety of disabilities, from vision and hearing loss to seizures and PTSD. Military Gold Star families can also receive a dog for emotional support.

According to Ruth Lando, manager, media relations, Southeastern Guide Dogs receives no government funding and instead relies on donations, sponsorships, and other ways to give, including localwalkathons. The St. Petersburg Walkathon February 23 at Vinoy Park was part of a regional effort to surpass the world record for greatest number of dogs wearing a bandana

at a single event.

The SEGD website www.guidedogs.org reports that the guide dog program started as a small training kennel in the 1980s in Apollo Beach, the brainchild of Lions Club member Robert Miller and his wife. A few years later, Dr. Harris Silverman took over and moved the program to Palmetto, where it is located today. But the campus I saw was vastly different from the early days. In the last few years, a \$30 million

Recipients spend several weeks training at SEGD with their guide dogs

Puppies in training at Southeastern Guide Dogs

Dr. Harris Silverman took over and moved the program to Palmetto, where it is located today. But the campus I saw was vastly different from the early days. In the last few years, a \$30 million facilities, 'residence halls' for the dogs, an outdoor gym, and water splash park so the dogs learn to be comfortable around water. There's even a 'student center'

the dogs learn to be comfortable around water. There's even a 'student center' for recipients, who live on campus for several weeks as they learn how to work with their dog.

Everything that could be possibly needed is here. A canine rehabilitation program makes sure the dogs are in top physical condition. Behavior assessment

Everything that could be possibly needed is here. A canine rehabilitation program makes sure the dogs are in top physical condition. Behavior assessment specialists evaluate the dogs to determine which future career path would best match their personality and skills. Veterinarians manage their health. There are even genetic specialists to make sure that the female dogs chosen for the SEGD breeding program are the best qualified to birth the next generation. All of the dogs bred in the program are either Labradors, Golden Retrievers, or Goldadors



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(a combination Lab and Golden). The whelping and neonatal area rivals some hospitals for the care of pregnant dogs and newborn puppies.

I had the opportunity to peek inside some of the buildings. My first stop was at Puppy Academy, where I fell in love with the adorable six-to-seven-week-old furry puppies. I had to put on booties before I entered the area to avoid spreading germs to these little future 'superheroes.' As I sat on the floor, a little chocolate Lab came wiggling over, ready to play.

The puppies didn't have names yet, but instead wore a color-coded collar based on their birth order. I loved hearing that the staff doesn't choose the dogs' names. Instead, that honor goes to donors who contribute \$5,000 to sponsor a dog. As you can imagine, the names chosen for the dogs run the gamut from traditional to unique. The naming ceremony takes place when the dog is several months old and ready to live with a puppyraiser family.

MEET A PUPPY-RAISER FAMILY

Kristen and Mitchell Rogers, whose family owns Rogers Dry Cleaners on 4th Street North, have been volunteer SEGD puppy raisers for several years. The Rogers and their children Ali (19), Zoe (15), and Cole (10) have raised four guide dogs: Flo, Hawkeye, Wrigley, and their current dog, Harris, a lovable one-year-old black Lab. Harris goes to work with Kristen at her office at FRSTeam by Rogers (Fabric Restoration Service Team).

How did they get started raising guide dogs? "We had good friends who were puppy raisers and the girls thought it would be so cool to do that," says Kristen. "After we got approved, we went on a waiting list for a puppy that would be a good match for our household – active!"

Kristen is now a volunteer area coordinator for SEGD, which means she helps organize twice-monthly meetings for puppy-raiser families. She also oversees a



Patricia Allen, Tom O'Shea and Dave



Harris in uniform

six-week behavior-and-obedience training class. "There are a lot of expectations for the dogs. There are rules about toys, collars, food, housebreaking, and grooming. The dogs have to learn 20 commands. It takes a lot of time and patience and repetition," says Kristen. As Mitchell points out, "Your job is to deliver a well-adjusted, well-mannered dog that can walk nicely on a leash." No easy task!

With their official vest on, the dogs can go just about anywhere the family goes. "We've taken the dogs on our boat, to dance and band competitions with the kids, and to the movies, doctors' offices, Target and even Publix," says Kristen. "Publix is very accommodating. They allow us to have group training sessions to teach the dogs how to walk down aisles."

Participating as a puppy raiser helped their oldest daughter Ali accumulate community service hours toward her Bright Futures Scholarship. But more than anything, says Kristen, "it's a nice activity that the whole family does together. Everyone plays a part. It definitely takes a village."

Harris will return to the SEGD campus for 'college' when he's about a year-and-a-half old. That's when he'll begin the formal training program for either a guide dog or therapy dog. I told Kristen that I could not imagine the heartbreak of having to give up a puppy that had been part of your day-to-day life for more than a year.

"You definitely get attached and love them like they're your own, but you have to remember that it's not your dog from the start," says Kristen. "They're really not pets, but destined for something more." Mitchell puts it into perspective. "When you meet the recipient and realize how having a guide dog will transform that person's life forever, it makes everything we do worthwhile. The recipient's story is the one that takes on real emotion and meaning."



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NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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ST. PETE'S JEWEL ON TAMPA BAY

Rick Carson, editor • nsnaeditor@aol.com



We want to share our neighbors' thoughts about what it means to be neighborly in The Historic Old Northeast. Send your thoughts about The Historic Old Northeast (200 words or so) to NSNAeditor@aol.com.

I CARE! WE CARE!

It's great to see the vibrancy of our neighborhood and our city growing, but with that comes changes that are not all for the better. For Jill Hollenberg and her family living on Coffee Pot Boulevard, they have seen the level of traffic increase dramatically over the years. As she and her family spend time outside, they get a front-row view of the traffic and the dangers along this scenic, waterfront drive. Jill sees far too many reckless drivers, speeding along,

just a few feet from the sidewalk where so many folks walk, jog and bike. She says, "Crossing Coffee Pot Boulevard reminds me of the ATARI game, Frogger!" Drive too fast in front of her house and you may just hear someone yell, "Slow down!"

So maybe it was inevitable when Jill's son, Bryan, was brainstorming for an idea for his school project for the "I Care Community Annual Project" at Lakeview Fundamental, he decided to make "SLOW DOWN" signs to place in his yard along the street. Bryan, age 9, has grown up in the house on Coffee Pot, along with his two older siblings, Jason (15) and Lindsey (13). They love their spacious front yard to play in and the convenience of using their dock just across the street, but don't love the traffic, of course. Bryan's goal for the project: remind drivers to slow down and potentially save lives. He gathered some classmates and got to work! Although the city forced them to remove some of the signs on the public right-of-way, Bryan plans on leaving the ones on their property for a bit



longer to create awareness and hopefully prevent more incidents.

Not everyone heeds the warning, and Jill can't be there to warn drivers 24/7 either. Unfortunately, over the years her family has witnessed a college-age girl drive up on the sidewalk, narrowly missing a family of five and a young boy on a bike get hit by a car (thankfully he survived). In 2013 they were horrified when an elderly German couple was not so fortunate as they were strolling along and were struck and killed by a drunk driver, just a few hundred feet from their house.



The Hollenbergs have resided in their home since 2000 and have raised their family here. They love the neighborhood and its proximity to downtown but only wish people driving on Coffee Pot Boulevard would be more mindful that this is a residential area, with children and adults alike using the sidewalk – and that they would just SLOW DOWN!

If you would like to express your concerns, please contact Michael Frederick, the Neighborhood Transportation Manager with the City of St. Petersburg at Michael.Frederick@stpete.org. ~ Sharon Kantner



QUARTERLY NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

The March quarterly meeting of the neighborhood association will take place on Monday, March 18, at Westminster Church (11th and 1st Street NE). Plan to arrive around 6:45pm for some social time with the meeting getting underway at 7. Laura Duvekot (an historic preservationist in the City's Urban Planning & Historic Preservation Division) will enlighten us on the history of our Augusta Block streets and Lendel Bright (from the Community Affairs office) will take your questions about our sidewalks.





NEIGHBORHOOD-WIDE YARD SALE

HONNA's annual neighborhoodwide yard sale will take place on Saturday, March 23, from 8am until noon. This event is open to HONNA members, which means their sale locations will be publicized on a map that will describe major items for sale. This map will be available at Westminster Church at 126 11th Ave NE beginning at 8am and will also be found online at www.honna.org. The yard sale will be promoted through social media as well as the Tampa Bay Times to attract treasure hunters from outside the area.

The Louise Graham Regeneration Center will be stationed in the church parking lot again this year. HONNA members can drop off documents for secure shredding from 10am-1pm; there is no charge for HONNA members. The not-for-profit Center provides



Easter Egg Hunt

Join you neighbors in Coffee Pot Park (1st Street and 30th Avenue NE) HONNA's annual Easter Egg Hunt. This cuteness-personified event will begin at 10am on Saturday, April 20 and run until all the plastic eggs are found. As in the past, there will be an egg hunt for children three and under and a separate hunt for kids four and older. Wear your Easter best and bring your basket because the Easter Bunny will be there for photo opportunities.



PLAY BALL!!

The Tampa Bay Rays have extended an invitation to Old Northeast residents to attend the first Saturday game of the Rays' pennant-chasing new season on March 30. The game against the Houston Astros starts at 6:10pm. The lower level seats are \$35 per person (includes a FREE Rays hat!) and all ONE residents will be seated together. To purchase your tickets, go to www. groupmatics.events/event/HONNA.







SIDEWALK ISSUES

Doug O'Dowd, a new member of the HONNA Board, took it upon himself in 2018 to walk the entire Old NE neighborhood – from 22nd Avenue to 5th Avenue, from 4th Street to the water – to document every corner where it was not handicap/stroller accessible. He shared what he found to the City via the SeeClickFix app. He also reported other sidewalk issues – like broken hex block sidewalks – that he came across. Thanks, Doug!



SUNKEN GARDENS

A Children's Educational Garden is being created at Sunken Gardens to help teach kids about how and from where their food comes. It is expected to cost about \$100,000, which is being raised by the Sunken Gardens Forever Foundation. Its recent holiday Jingle Mingle fundraiser even featured a miniature train set donated to SG by Old NE residents Lou and Linda Santoro. The Foundation resulted from the successful effort that raised more



than \$40,000 to re-stock the flock of flamingos that visitors so enjoy. The Educational Garden will be a wonderful complement to the Great Explorations Children's Museum next door. [To learn more, visit the Foundation's Facebook page, Sunken Gardens Forever.]

AQUAPONICS

Old NE Neighbor Rich Cross has created an online family-owned business called Cross Aquaponics with a mission to help others grow clean, sustainable, nutritious food in handcrafted, self-contained ecosystems. Several years ago this public school teacher researched aquaponics and the exciting concept of plants filtering fish



waste and never having to fertilize, water or weed all while growing fish as a clean protein source. Instead of an industrial look, the new systems he designed applying his carpentry skills are esthetically pleasing and functional (his yard is used for photos and not as a showroom open to the public). Check it out on Facebook at Cross Aquaponics.

Preservation Awards

Preserve the 'Burg (previously known as St. Petersburg Preservation) is reviewing nominations for this year's Preservation awards. Recognized are groups, people and businesses which are preserving and restoring historic buildings and places throughout the City. These honors are categorized as follows: Residential and Commercial Restoration; Residential and Commercial Rehabilitation; Compatible Use; Adaptive Reuse; and Residential and Commercial Stewardship along with an award for Preservationist of the Year.

Five homes in The Historic Old Northeast and one commercial building on 4th Street have been nominated for this year's awards. These include: the Broshears residence at 226 17th Avenue NE for Restoration; the Rudolph Residence at 300 15th Avenue N for



Restoration; the Simon residence at 235 12th Avenue N for Rehabilitation; the Browning residence at 105 14th Avenue NE for Compatible Use; the Doyle residence at 625 20th Avenue NE for Stewardship; the North Ward School, now known as Public School Old North East, for Adaptive Use.

Congratulations to the owners and their successful preservation projects, which add to the character and charm of our neighborhood! The awards celebration will take place on Tuesday, March 19, at the Cathedral Church of St. Peter.

On the Calendar

Check www.honna.org and watch social media for details on these and other upcoming events

Friday, March 15 Porch Party; 7:30pm

Monday, March 18

Quarterly Neighborhood Association meeting, Westminster Church; 6:45pm social. 7pm meeting

Saturday, March 2

Neighborhood-wide Yard Sale and Shred Day*; 8am-1pm (*at Westminster Church)

Saturday, March 30

Tampa Bay Rays Baseball Outing, The Trop; 6:10pm

Saturday, April 20

Easter Egg Hunt, Coffee Pot Park; 10am

Friday, April 19 Porch Party; 7:30pm

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

In an effort to honor Old NE homeowners for preserving or updating their home or property and investing the extra dollar to keep the character and history of their homes intact, HONNA has been recognizing them with the Neighborhood Star Award. Going forward, every month yard signs will be placed on properties to indicate an award. Here are the Stars for February: 132 24th Avenue N (Jane Grossman) and 345 9th Avenue NE (Michelle Passoff and Andre Kupfermunz)

Watch for new Stars in the neighborhood monthly, and you'll be able to find them posted on www.honna.org in



FEBRUARY: 132 24th Avenue N "Before"



FEBRUARY: 345 9th Avenue NE "Before"



addition to HONNA's Facebook page. We invite you to be a part of this effort so please feel free to nominate a neighbor or a refurbished property in The ONE you admire. Have a home to honor? Send the information to Charleen McGrath at treasurer@honna.org.



FEBRUARY: 132 24th Avenue N "After'



FEBRUARY: 345 9th Avenue NE "After"



ONNA invites and encourages you to stay connected and on top of programs, events, and other happenings in our neighborhood. Want to learn more about the neighborhood, become involved, share ideas, learn about events and dates of Porch Parties, and provide feedback? Share/Like us at www.facebook.com/honnaorg.

Ways To Stay Connected:

- Visit www.honna.org
- Become a HONNA member. You'll receive periodic informative email announcements.
- honna.org/get-involved
- Volunteer for a project, program, or event (the Candlelight Tour of Homes, Trunk or Treat, Porch

Parties, Crime Watch). Contact John Johnson at jtj1sp@gmail.com.

 Follow Historic Old Northeast Forever at www.historicoldnortheastforever.org. HONF works "to preserve and protect our special neighborhood" (HONF is not affiliated with HONNA).

IN THE 'BURG

St. Petersburg's Grand Dame Saint Mary, Our Lady of Grace Church

Sylvia Raymond

When I was presented with the opportunity to attend a choral concert at the Saint Mary, Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church, my response was an enthusiastic yes! This historic church – located at 515 4th Street South – is one of the loveliest in the area.

The concert that day, titled *Winter Dreams*, was the first in their annual Winter Concert Series. I was privileged to experience this combination of post-Christmas and winter season music in this lovely, acoustically perfect space. The concert was performed by the Lumina Youth Choirs, a Tampa-based ensemble of young voices which includes the Serata (boys, grades 8–12), Stele (girls, grades 9–12), and Voci de Lumina (mixed, grades 9–12).

My favorite piece of the concert was titled *Bring Me Shadows* sung by Shaylah Stevens. There was a line in the song that meant much to me: "Yes, there are shadows, but shadows means there is sun." To hear the music in this setting, sung by these talented young musicians, took my breath away.

After the concert, I was excited to learn about and explore this beautiful church by joining a tour

of the church, led by Elaine Normille, an Old Northeast resident who retired last year as the historian for the Vinoy Renaissance Resort. Elaine was the hotel's first historian and held that position from 1998 until May of 2018. The *Northeast Journal* featured Elaine in a story published in the September-October 2018 issue. I guess Elaine's days as a tour guide and docent aren't over yet, since she led us on a wonderful tour of this historic old church, of which she is a member.

While we waited for the tour to begin, I met two of the participants, Suzanne Rupert and Yvonne Welstead. I got the feeling that these women, just like myself, took this opportunity to learn more about one of the



Entry to church



Little St. Mary's Public Restroom at the approach to the pier downtown

rapidly disappearing historically significant structures in St. Petersburg.

Before the tour began, Elaine told us about the history of the church. The property was purchased by Father O'Riordan, the first pastor of the church, from the estate of General John C. Williams, a founding father of Saint Petersburg. Fr. O'Riordan had the idea of creating a church styled after San Stefano's Church in Rome, where he studied for the priesthood. Father O'Riordan collaborated with Architect Henry Taylor – who designed the Vinoy – on the design of the new church.

Construction began on the present Saint Mary's in 1929. Byzantine in style with some Romanesque features, it is octagonal in shape with brick exterior and a clay tile roof, a style of architecture that began in Constantinople. Initial building costs were \$129,000. I was astounded to learn that 25 tons of marble was imported from Italy for the floors, imagining what this would cost today. On January 26, 1930, the cornerstone was laid by Bishop Patrick Barry, who was the bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine. Major renovations of the church structure took place in 1955, 1968, 1995, and 2005.

As our walk through the church commenced, my eyes were drawn to the sanctuary, with its beautiful

canopy structure, which I learned is called the baldachin, and made of American black walnut. The four angels and the dome of the baldachin are coated with 24-carat gold, which throws out an incredible glow, even in daytime. I can only imagine what it looks like at night, or during a service with the lights dimmed. Elaine told us that when it is dark inside the church, the golden angels are all you can see. A work of art, the sanctuary lamp was made in Italy and burns 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Under the baldachin is the altar, where the relics of Saints Peregrinus and Clarus are contained in the sepulcher.

The next feature I noticed on our tour were the 61 stained-glass windows, all the







Suzanne Rupert and Yvonne Welstead



Rose Window



Choir members

more magnificent as the sunshine streamed through. Over the entrance to the church, there is a large beautiful Rose Window, which looks like a flower, with its pistil and petals. Elaine explained that the other windows are grouped by tier: with the top-tier windows depicting the 12 apostles; the middle tier showing the 15 mysteries of the rosary; while the lower-tier windows portray the saints.

Of course, as with many churches, statuary abounds in this lovely space. I wish I could adequately describe some of these statues. You will just have to pay a visit to the church to experience their variety, artistry and ethereal beauty. The statue of Saint Mary, Our Lady of Grace, with her open arms, and flowers at her feet, made me feel so welcome.

Outside the church on 4th Street, above the main entrance, is an impressive 8-foot-wide stone carving depicting the nativity and the visit of the Magi. The doors that open into the church are wood, covered in copper. The decision to cover the doors with copper was because



to repair the wood doors was cost prohibitive. I think it was a great decision, because the doors absolutely glow.

On a side note, something I always wondered about growing up in St. Pete, what's the story with the Little St. Mary's Public Restroom at the approach to the pier in downtown St. Pete? If you have ever seen it, you will notice that it resembles Saint Mary, Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church. It is octagonal in shape, made of brick with a tile roof, has a dome, among other features. On the tour, I learned that they were both designed by Henry Taylor during the same time period. The legend, not true, is that Taylor built the bathroom to look like the church as revenge, because the church owed him money. In reality, the Comfort Station was built a few years prior to the church.

If you wish to experience this wonderful, historically significant church, you can read more at www.stmaryolg. org, or can attend the next free concert in the Winter Concert Series on Sunday, March 10 at 3 p.m. ●

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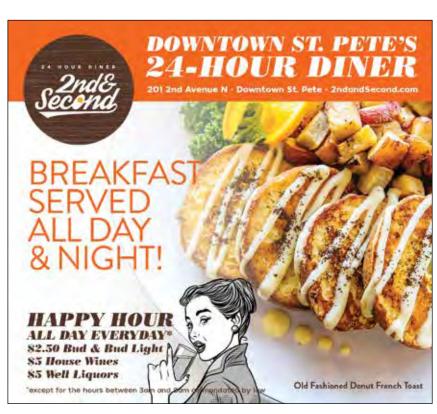




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DINING GUIDE

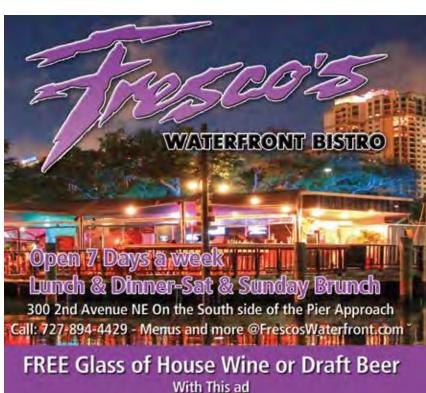






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OUT AND ABOUT





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AROUND THE BLOCK

KIDS AND KUBS DEFEAT MAYOR'S CITY HALL STARS

Jon Reynolds

If you're not familiar with The Kids and Kubs Three Quarter Century Club, you don't know what you're missing. The team will be celebrating their 90th season in 2020. The league is open to both men and women age 74 and over, although younger persons are accepted for off-season games. If you think because the team members are "seniors" that the games aren't full of action, you should have been there on Saturday, Feb. 2.

It is difficult to describe the events leading up to the Kids and Kubs 14-13 seven-inning victory over St Petersburg Mayor's City Hall Stars in their annual game at North Shore Park. Trailing 13-10 and facing the last at-bat in the bottom of the seventh inning, the team, more officially known as St. Petersburg's Three-Quarter Century Softball Club scored four runs to "snatch victory from the jaws of defeat." Jim Scala applied the final "crunch" by lifting a towering fly ball to left-center field, clearing the 250-foot fence to score three runners ahead of him. Scala also pitched his team to victory.

Gaining a 4-2 lead after two innings, the Kids and Kubs fell behind 6-4 at the end of three innings. Four runs in the fourth moved the Hall-Stars to a 10-4 lead. Answering with two runs in the bottom of that inning, the Kubs trailed 10-6 at the end of four complete innings.

Three runs by the Hall-Stars in the top of the fifth inning ballooned their lead to 13-6. Not to be intimidated, the Kids and Kubs answered



Third baseman Jim Scala, 81, hits walk-off game winner home run in Kids and Kubs annual game with the Mayor and City staff.

the three runs with four of their own to close the score to a 13-10 Hall-Star lead.

Jim Scala, working with battery mate Gus Tijerino, seemed to grow stronger as the contest continued. Playing stellar defense behind Scala, the Kids and Kubs blanked the Hall-Stars on only two hits in the top of the sixth and seven innings. Scala retired six of the last eight Hall-Star batters.

Coming to bat in the bottom of the seventh, trailing 13-10, Captain JD Horn noted: "the top of the Kids and Kubs batting order was on deck and the team was well positioned to overcome the three-run deficit." The first batter grounded out. The next three batters, Jerry Mayea, Ed Broomes, and Jim Crook loaded the bases with three straight singles, setting the table for Scala's walk-off homer.

Score by innings:

City Hall Stars 0 2 4 4 3 0 0 – 13

Kids and Kubs 3 1 0 2 4 0 4 – 14

The Kids and Kubs regular season runs through March on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at North Shore Park (field near the pool). Off-season pick-up games are played on the same days. Persons interested in playing should call 727-893-7108. ●

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

To be considered for the Meet Your Neighbor page, contact editor@northeastjournal.org.



Dr. Anna Loyd Downtown St. Pete



Scott Warren Downtown St. Pete



David Calvin 10th Avenue & 2nd Street North

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

I've been in St. Pete five years, but lived here before that during my three-year medical residency. I was born in Oklahoma and raised in Belgium and Zaire.

Best hidden gem in St. Pete?

The Edge District. So many shops, restaurants, and things to do.

Top two places in the world on your bucket list?

Anywhere in the world I have never been. Every year, I travel to a country I have never been and stay for a month.

Favorite restaurant in St. Pete

Il Ritorno

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

Benjamin Franklin. Such an interesting and diverse human. Would love to pick his brain.

Favorite sport, recreational activity or hobby?

I love extreme sports and off-the-map travel.

A great movie you'd recommend?

Never owned a TV and cannot sit still to watch movies.

If a teleporter existed, what time period and place would you go to first?

I would love to see the Roman Empire at its peak, the Incas in Peru at their peak, and the Egyptians at their peak. So many more things from our past I would be fascinated to learn about.

What is the most encouraging word/statement you can receive?

When someone says 'thank you' and I know I have helped someone.

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

I would be either one of my dogs... their life is pretty sweet.

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

My parents giving up everything to move overseas and help others.

Current book you've read and would recommend?

Unfortunately, I only read medical journals. I love them, but they aren't for everyone!

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

Opening my anti-aging and skin care business. It was the longest and hardest and most exhausting thing I have ever done.

Something people might not know about you? I speak four languages.

What do you do for a living?

I own Moxy Medical Spa and love helping people look and feel their best. I also am a pediatric emergency room doctor and love helping children.



I have lived in St. Pete for one year. Prior to that we lived in Atlanta for the previous 20 years. I am from Utah originally.

Best hidden gem in St. Pete?

Old Southeast Market

Top two places in the world on your bucket list? Buenos Aires, Argentina, and the island of Capri

Buenos Aires, Argentina, and the island of Capri in Italy

A gadget you can't live without

My mobile phone!

Favorite restaurant in St. Pete

Il Ritorno

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

Will Ferrell, because he always makes me laugh and seems like a genuine guy.

Favorite sport, recreational activity or hobby?

I am an avid cyclist and swimmer.

A great movie you'd recommend?

The Big Short

If a teleporter existed, what time period and place

would you go to first? Southern California in the 1980s

What is the most encouraging word/statement you can receive?

"You are a positive influence in my life"

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

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

My dad served proudly for 35 years in the US Navy and always made time for my siblings and me. He is a great role model and a super positive person.

Current book you've read and would recommend?

The Secret Race. As an avid cyclist, I thoroughly enjoy the Tour de France each year. However, this book delves into the hidden dark side of the Tour and it's some pretty wild stuff!

What St. Pete venues are on the must-see list for out-of-town guests?

The Dali Museum and the Canopy restaurant for the best view of Tampa Bay.

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

I was the Georgia State short-course triathlon series champion in my age group for two consecutive years.

Something people might not know about you? I am an Eagle Scout.

What do you do for a living?

I own Rush Cycle (indoor cycling), which is opening downtown in March. I love it because I get to do something I am extremely passionate about while helping people achieve their fitness goals.

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

My wife and our two cats moved here 4 ½ years ago from our hometown of St. Louis, MO.

Best hidden gem in St. Pete?

There are so many! Two of my favorites are the murals all over town and the Gizella Kopsick Palm Arboretum.

Top two places in the world on your bucket list? Fiji and New Zealand $\ \ \,$

A gadget you can't live without?

My record player. It's playing rock 'n' roll all day long in my woodworking shop.

Favorite restaurant in St. Pete?

This is a tough one. There are so many great places, but I love going to 400 Beach. It was the first restaurant my wife and I visited when deciding to move to St. Pete, so it brings back good memories.

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

Eric Clapton. I have been a huge fan of his music for the majority of my life. To sit down and talk music with him would be a dream come true.

Favorite sport, recreational activity, or hobby?

Riding my bike around this wonderful city (favorite activity) while stopping to take photos of reflections from puddles (favorite hobby).

A great movie you'd recommend?

I'm a little old-school with favorite movies. One of my favorites is *Crossroads* with Ralph Macchio. Great music and story.

If a teleporter existed, what time period and place would you go to first?

After seeing the Bill Graham exhibit at the Holocaust Museum – and being a big fan of rock 'n' roll – I would go back to San Francisco in the late '60s and listen to really great live music.

What is the most encouraging word/statement you can receive?

When I deliver a piece of custom-made furniture to my clients and they say, "This is even better than we expected."

If you were a dog, what breed would you be? A cat!

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

The teachers and mentors I studied with at the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship in Rockport, Maine... their inspiration and motivation have helped me greatly in my furniture-making career.

What St. Pete venues are on the must-see list for out-of-town guests?

We always take guests to Florida Craft Art where I have several furniture pieces displayed. Plus, just walking around the Old Northeast neighborhood with them is a treat!

Tell us about an accomplishment, current or past? Starting my custom furniture-making business (after spending two decades in aquatics!)

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HISTORY continued from page 1

regarding one, "No home run has ever cleared my head by so much as long as I can remember." After spring training, Mickey went on to win the American League Triple Crown during the regular season.

John Messmore is the owner of the Sweet Sage Café at North Redington Beach and a nearly life-long resident of greater St. Petersburg. At the age of 12, he went to work for famed photographer Ozzie Sweet, known to some as "the Babe Ruth of Sports Photography." Ozzie has over 1,800 magazine cover photos to his credit. When Mickey began his majors career in 1951, Ozzie was doing photography for Sports Magazine and John was hired on to assist. One of John's jobs was to help with the light reflector.

Mickey was one of John's and Ozzie's principal sports subjects. John remembers him as "just great, mild mannered, and a gentleman... down-

to-earth... comfortable to be around." While many shots of Mickey were taken at Al Lang Field, one in particular stands out. At the end of the '56 spring season, Ozzie came up with the idea of taking Mickey and some of his team mates on a fishing trip out of Madeira Beach. Mickey enthusiastically agreed along with Billy Martin, Whitey Ford, and Bob Grim. When they got to the boat, none of them had hats and Whitey in particular wanted one as he was very light-complected. The only store selling hats nearby was a ladies' dress shop. So they bought a ladies sun bonnet for Whitey which he wore. Many candid shots were taken including one famous photograph of all four players conversing, two with Coke bottles in their hands. Ozzie also brought beer (and chicken) but asked the guys to hide the beers and pick up the Cokes when he was photographing.

1957

The '57 season began with another baseball players golf tournament, and another scare about Mickey's knee. The tournament this time was in Miami Springs. As the

tournament got underway, Mickey complained about some pain in his knee and was allowed to use a cart rather than walk. much to the consternation of Yankees manager Casey Stengel back in St. Pete. "You'd think he'd know enough not to play if his knee hurt him, wouldn't you? The knee mustn't be too bad or else he'd not continue to play. But then again, you can't tell. The boy just don't know how to say no. He knows he's the big drawing card there and maybe he doesn't want to disappoint the tournament officials."





John Messmore began work as a 12 year old assistant to famed photographer Ozzie Sweet. He assisted with many photo shoots of Mickey Mantle and the Yankees in St. Petersburg and nearby Gulf communities in the 1950s and '60s. He is currently owner of Sweet Sage Café at North Redington Beach.





Bill Bond, Jr. was batboy for the Yankees during spring training in St. Petersburg in 1960 and saw Mickey play frequently. Circa 1960. Bill Bond and his wife Mary Lee in 2018.

1957 proved to be a record-breaking year for spring-training attendance with 96,864 fans. During the regular season, Mickey again out-performed becoming the American League's Most Valuable Player, hit .365, had 34 homers and 94 RBIs.

1958

As the '58 season got underway, Mickey participated in another golf tournament, the Bill Cody Memorial Baseball Players Golf Tourney at Sunset Golf and Country Club on Snell Isle, now the Vinoy Golf Club. His grouping included Detroit Tigers Billy Martin. Mickey entertained the crowd at one point when he missed a putt and then tossed his club into a pond mimicking flamboyant golfer Tommy Bolt.

"Florida's greatest attraction, equaled only by sunshine and grapefruit, goes on display today as the New York Yankees and St. Louis Cardinals slice open the Grapefruit League season at St. Petersburg's Al Lang Field," wrote Lonnie Burt of the *Times*. (The Florida major league spring-training teams were informally referred to as the Grapefruit League.) The Yanks did not fare well in their first game, losing

to the Cards 4-0 before a record crowd of 7,072. The Yanks, including Mickey, struck out 10 times.

Mickey did not play baseball well that spring due to an aggravated shoulder. The team ended up the spring season with an 11-12 exhibition record. Nevertheless, Mickey went on to finish the regular season with a league-leading 42 home runs and a batting average of .304. The Yankees won both the pennant and the Series.

1959

The '59 spring season began with a case of mistaken identity. Mickey was still negotiating his contract and refused to show at Crescent Lake until he had a signed agreement. Meanwhile, the players who did sign were again enjoying their usual golf games, as well as baseball. Three of the Yankees including Yogi Berra joined Mickey Vasiler – owner of Mickey's (Chicken in the Basket) Restaurant in South Pasadena – for a round of golf at

Lakewood Country Club (now St. Petersburg Country Club). Vasiler showed up at Crescent Lake to join the trio, when someone yelled, "Hi yah Mickey." Of course some of those who heard it thought the reference was to Mantle, even though they did not see him. Later the Yankees publicity manager Bob Fishel, eating at Moock's Restaurant, was told Mantle had just eaten there. Fishel mentioned this to some New York sports writers, and from there the story went viral across the country. Manager Casey Stengel summed up the comedy, "After all the free coast-to-coast advertising, Mickey [Vasiler] should invite us all out for a free chicken dinner."

Mickey finally did land his contract which was signed in St. Pete. It was for \$80,000. This tied Babe Ruth for having the second-highest baseball contract (not allowing for inflation). Ruth also signed his \$80,000 contract in St. Pete, in 1930. The highest-paid baseball player as of 1959 was Joe DiMaggio at \$100,000.

The Yanks finished the spring season with a 14-11 record, and finished the regular season in third place,

their worst record since 1925. Mickey did not perform well in the regular season. There was considerable criticism of Stengel, who was viewed by some as too old and out of touch with the players.

1960

In 1960, Mickey again signed his contract in St. Pete, somewhat reduced from the prior year. Then his knee flared up. He did not play an exhibition game until March 24th, against the Cardinals, playing all nine innings, but hitless. The Yankees ended the 1960 spring season by defeating

the Chicago White Sox 9-3. Mickey figured prominently with a triple and a single resulting in three RBIs. But overall, the Yankees spring record was dismal with an 11-19 record, worst in the American League. Yet *Times* sports writer Jack Ellison in an article titled "Can Yanks Regain Series Crown?" wrote at the end of the season that if the Yankees did regain the crown, "you can mark it as a 'Made in St. Petersburg' victory." He noted outstanding play by several veterans, the acquisition of Roger Maris, good pitching, and promising rookies. And the Yanks poor winning record did not hurt attendance in St. Petersburg. A post-spring-season survey showed the Yankees playing as the home team at Al Lang Stadium led all major league teams in the country in home-drawing power with 69,027 fans attending.

One of the Yankees batboys that year was Bill Bond, Jr. Bill who grew up in St. Pete, and came from a family of hoteliers. Hotels they owned and operated at one time or another included the Bond, the Ponce de Leon, the Pennsylvania (now Courtyard by Marriott), the Avalon, the Colonial, and the Park Lane. In

1960, his mother, while attending an event at the Vinoy, met a Yankees official who was looking for a batboy for the spring season. Bill's mother signed him up. He would only be batboy for the home games played at Al Lang Stadium. Bill was in the 8th grade at Meadowlawn Junior High at the time. His mother picked him up from school on game days at 11:30 and drove him to Miller Huggins Field where he had lunch with the team. Then he and the players were driven by yellow cab to Al Lang. His pay was "a new baseball every game, all the cracked bats, and all the old gloves."

Bill remembers Mickey as a great athlete. He was particularly impressed by his speed. "He was so fast. He was probably the fastest baseball player of his time. He could run down a fly ball in the outfield like nothing I had ever seen before. He was a great outfielder. He also had a great arm and could throw anybody out at 3rd or home with no problem." He recalls that Mickey and Whitely Ford were "great buddies, always laughing and joking with each other. But Mickey himself was rather shy... friendly, but not very outgoing. He and Roger Maris were very nice to me. The whole team was very nice to me. Elston Howard also kind of took me under his wing." Others he particularly remembers are Bobby Richardson and Bill Dickey, one of the coaches and now in the Cooperstown Hall of Fame.

Off the field, Bill remembers that Mickey and the whole team loved to go to Derby Lane, the dog race track. They patronized local restaurants such as the Chatterbox on 1st Street South, the Wedgewood on 18th Avenue South, and Moock's Tavern on 16th Street North. He remembers that later in '63 or '64, Whitey Ford and Mickey rented his parent's beach house during spring training. The last game of the '60 spring training season was an away game in Sarasota and Casey Stengel invited Bill to go. After the game, Casey presented Bill with a baseball signed by the entire team. "The boys wanted you to have this," Casey said. Bill continued in the family hotel business, also participating in civic activities. He served on the city council from 1980 to 1988.

Another St. Pete kid at the time was Tom James, now chairman emeritus of Raymond James. Tom recalls Mickey as "an incredible baseball player. He was born with great athletic ability including speed, wonderful eye/hand coordination, and great strength... He signed a couple of baseballs for me at Al Lang Field after home runs, and was friendly to us kids."

1961

The Yankees last spring in St. Petersburg was in 1961. Stengel had been replaced by Ralph Houk as manager. On the first day of training, Houk called Mickey into his office. Houk did not believe in team captains, but he made an exception for Mickey. He asked Mickey to step up and become captain of the

team. Characteristically, Mickey was reluctant, but finally said, "Ralph, if that's what you want me to be, I guess I gotta be it." Aside from Mickey's obvious outstanding baseball skills, Houk also may have been influenced by Mickey's ability to play with painful injuries. It was an example the rest of the team respected. Mickey was later to say, "Ralph is the best thing that ever happened to me in my life." Mickey went on that spring to demonstrate exceptional batting, at one stage batting well over .500.

Mickey died in 1995 at the age of 64, but his legacy lives on. In an article written for *Bleacher Report* by Timothy Rapp on the "100 Most Beloved Athletes in Sports History," Mickey ranked 6th, after Willie Mays (5th), Babe Ruth (3rd), and Jackie Robinson (1st). A 1952 mint Mickey Mantle sports card recently sold for \$2.88 million.

So what was it about Mickey Mantle that caught the imagination of a nation and made him a sports hero? Obviously his natural athletic ability was more than exceptional. His accession to the top major-league team at the remarkable young age of 19 also had its appeal. His was a classic rags-to-riches story, only in his case "Poor Boy from Small Town Makes Top Major League Team." He has also been described as a "tragic hero," because of his personal drive to excel, in addition to the usual challenges, while overcoming the challenge of a serious chronic injury. Mickey also suffered from alcoholism, which did not begin to surface publicly until the 1960s. Causes of his alcoholism were several, but perhaps his rapid rise to baseball stardom and all its pressures was a factor, along with a way to cope with the pain of his injuries.

What did Mickey mean to St. Pete? St. Pete's sense of place, including its economy, has long been associated with our paradise-like weather and all the outdoor games and sports that go with that. Engaging major-league baseball and their player icons for spring training was a stroke of genius in gaining national appreciation of this sense of place. Mantle continued in the tradition of Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Joe DiMaggio, Yogi Berra, and many others in helping to perpetuate that sense of place. But Mickey also added to the quality of life in our city on a personal level – a shy guy autographing a baseball for a kid, reluctantly giving an interview to a local reporter, clowning at a charity golf event, and serving as a tangible sports role model for our city's youth.

Sources: St. Petersburg Times (various); Larry Canale, Mickey Mantle: The Yankee Years: The Classic Photography of Ozzie Sweet (1998); Jane Leavy, The Last Boy: Mickey Mantle and the End of America's Childhood (2010); and conversations with Bill Bond, Tom James, and John Messmoore.





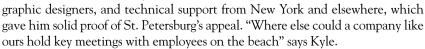
KYLE TAYLOR continued from page 1

He entered the University of South Florida Tampa to study political science, but dropped out after a semester to try real world politics. He campaigned for John Kerry's presidential bid, and bounced around working other political causes in places like Denver, Austin, Charlotte, and even St. Petersburg. He tried college again, this time at the University of Colorado, trying out new ways to earn money and running up that \$50,000 debt. He scrimped along, clipping coupons, working odd jobs, and blogging about it until his passion became his business. The blog was about how he was able to earn and save money, and it eventually attracted advertisers offering \$75 or \$100 to promote their products. He relocated to Maine and continued the blog website, but ultimately found that Maine was not the right place to start a business.

Returning home to St. Petersburg in 2015 was Kyle's first choice in deciding where to launch the current iteration of his business. As he explained on a recent

St. Pete X blog-cast, he had always kept abreast of everything that was happening here. He was familiar with several other 'up and coming' cities where he had worked, but they lacked the "charm, sense of community and quirkiness" of St. Petersburg. He also knew that St. Petersburg's growing entertainment, food, and breweries culture was very attractive to millennials like himself. There was also a solid base of "great companies and amazing places to live."

After successfully launching The Penny Hoarder in St. Pete, Kyle had planned to open a second office in New York City, but he quickly found St. Petersburg to be very rich in creative talent and technology services. He could also easily recruit writers,



Kyle chose our Old Northeast Neighborhood as his "amazing place to live." He was immediately drawn to the old houses, variety of architecture, the abundance of street trees, and the accessible waterfront. Perhaps most important to him is the sense of community he finds here, and the close proximity to downtown and his office. As evidence of his commitment to the 'gig' economy and to the message of The Penny Hoarder, he has given up his car and saves money by using ride services like Lyft and Uber. He relaxes when he can by reading (a book a week) and by being challenged by escape rooms, of which – surprising to me – there are many in and near downtown. By the way, an escape room is an interactive adventure game where players solve puzzles and use clues, hints and strategy to find a way out of a room.

There is something else special about St. Petersburg which Kyle appreciates as he continues to build The Penny Hoarder from the initial gathering of five employees

There is something else special about St. Petersburg which Kyle appreciates as he continues to build The Penny Hoarder from the initial gathering of five employees around his kitchen table. The broader community is willing to help. The Poynter Institute for Media Studies identifies St. Petersburg as an important media hub, and



an important resource for his company. He also noted that the mayor, city, and county officials, chamber of commerce, economic development groups, and arts organizations, as well as other technology businesses are all on the same page about where St. Petersburg is headed. He finds this type of consensus unique.

"They're all invested in the community's business success," says Kyle. That creates an atmosphere where emerging companies can freely share ideas, collaborate on projects, and even help in recruiting employees. For example, Kyle noted, if a candidate for a job isn't quite a fit for one company, he or she is often referred to, and picked up by another company down the street.

When Kyle settled in St. Petersburg, he probably had no idea of the impact he and his business could have on the city. Alison Barlow, the executive director of the St. Petersburg Innovation District – a non-profit that promotes downtown's university, research, medical, and technology institutions – put it this way: "Kyle is proving that creative companies such as his can attract and build talented teams here and thrive. These companies are the future of St. Petersburg."

Jason Mathis – himself a recent addition to St. Petersburg as president of the St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership – added that "Kyle exemplifies the new face of St. Petersburg." It is the same youthful look, energy, and engagement that I saw in Kyle as my new neighbor a few years ago. ●

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Of anticipating a team

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To the paddling To the flocking

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Rocks rolled away from the tomb

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Pedestrian pathways Construct tomorrow

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Build now

Sink and sway

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By water and weight

Unmerciful wheels of thawing time Alluring alleys with secrets to survey

In the cornered crunchy consistent clay

That retains rectangles in a circular slippery sense of

momentum Crossroads mimic a consternation of decisions

Lots of legs two four and many more

Walk trot crawl run gallop drive and sometimes fall

Pieces of every neighbor soak in

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PEOPLE AND PETS

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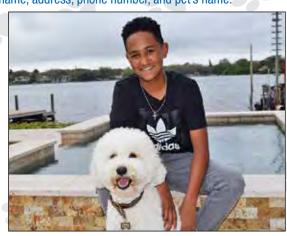
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Denise Deja with Coco Dartmoor Street North



Kiki Perez Avila with Pierre Beach Drive NE



Jadon Fusek with Teddy Monterey Blvd NE



Ashley Hernandez with Bonnie 29th Avenue North



Ilene Shandell with Jake 3rd Avenue North



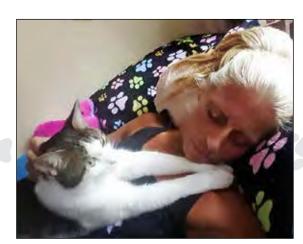
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Enchanted Jewels



Samantha Bond Richman

The artistic design works of Jean Schlumberger (pronounced "Slum-berjhay") are breathtakingly beautiful and now on display in the Hazel Hough Galleries at the Museum of Fine Arts. This exhibition is different; the artist's medium is an array of fabulous jewels and precious stones set in gold and platinum. From the private collection of Rachel "Bunny" Mellon, American aristocrat, the exhibit invites the visitor to

imagine what it was like being a member of mid-century high society, and perhaps to become the muse of a famous artist.

I was fortunate to visit the collection on behalf of the Northeast Journal and offer readers an insight into the amazing artist's work. There are two complementary exhibits, Jewels of the Imagination: Radiant Masterworks by Jean Schlumberger from the Mellon Collection, and Drawn to Beauty: The Art and Atalier of Jean Schlumberger.

Atelier refers to Schlumberger's workshop, in this case a studio housed in the famous design house of Tiffany & Co., in New York City. The artist's clients were also frequently his friends, and he was known to travel with his gal pals, probably increasing the allure of owning a Schlumberger design. In addition to Bunny Mellon, his clients included many of the rich and famous of the era, such as socialite Gloria Vanderbilt; first lady Jacqueline Kennedy; and actresses Greta Garbo, Audrey Hepburn, and Elizabeth Taylor. There were male clients as well, and some very fancy cufflinks are among the items displayed.

According to Schlumberger, "To create these splendid baubles, I become almost a psychoanalyst." In this exhibit, visitors are given a glimpse into the life of the artist with the rare opportunity to view candid photographs and personal letters in this collection. One in particular, a casual photo of Schlumberger leaning over the rail of a boat, is labeled "Private Collection, St. Petersburg, FL." The item's owner is

kept a mystery. Perhaps the owner was also a friend of the artist?

The relationship between Bunny Mellon and Schlumberger — whom she called "Johnny" — was not only artist and muse, they also shared secrets. The letters on display have a warm, co-conspiratorial tone and reflect an almost childlike delight, sometimes including sketches by the artist. Bunny Mellon was an avid gardener and Schlumberger's designs are uniquely capable of conveying movement, often



incorporated the random ordering of objects, further tricking the eye into believing they are living things. He said, "I try to make everything look as if it were growing, uneven at random, organic in motion..." In this, he succeeds.

Some of Schlumberger's sketches are included in the Atalier section of the exhibit and give insight to his inspiration. In one pencil sketch, an almond-eyed cat is drawn with a jeweled collar and tiara, as though the artist was simply having fun with his creativity. Perhaps it reflects the personality of one of his clients. His early work included fashions, and in addition to beautiful jewelry, he created one-of-a-kind objects of art, reflecting both his travels and his appreciation for the surrealist movement.

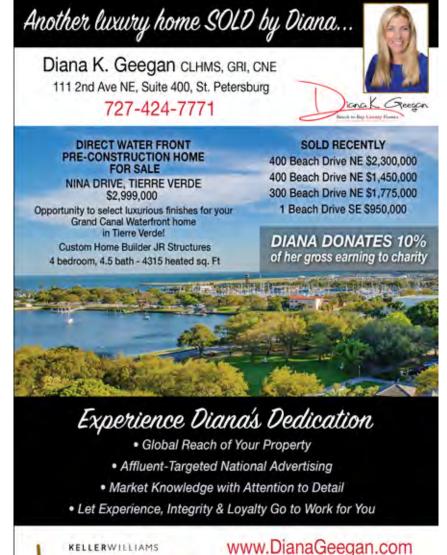
Without giving away the end of the story, the exhibit hall itself is true artwork. Produced by WRJ Design – which has created more than 40 exhibition spaces for Sotheby's New York – visitors are virtually transported to the gardens of Bunny Mellon. Most magical of all are the snow-dusted oaks replicated in trompe l'oeil, where some of the most stunning jewels are on display, including the amazing Jellyfish.

One thing Dr. Stanton Thomas, curator of collections, could not answer... Which came first? The desire to create something from materials at hand, or the muse for which he would create?

For more information, visit www.mfastpete.org.







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SNELL ISLE • THE BEACHES

Reinvention in St. Pete

Stacie Steinke

louchdown Tampa International Airport. The Southwest airplane door opens to the jetway and balmy moist air fills my lungs and face with warmth and freshness. Instantly, I feel at home. In one hour and 15 minutes I'll be looking onto Sarasota Bay from the lanai of a 2/2 condo, feeling still, calm, and turquoise; windows open with the breeze awakening senses and soul.

We left behind the cold weather of Virginia and chillier temperaments of lawyers, lobbyists, and political correctness to embrace the shimmering water of Tampa Bay and the Gulf of Mexico, accompanied by the sunnier dispositions of Floridians. We used to say to ourselves that we reside in McLean, VA, but lived in Florida. Six times a year over four years, we made the trip to paradise. Our getaways were a beautiful and magical oasis filled with fun and freedom from the conventions of work life.

Then, as if God was dropping a giant breadcrumb on our path, we had the opportunity to escape permanently with a new position for my husband. This was the perfect opportunity for me to explore how I wanted to live, free of the previous set of expectations and obligations of my life in Virginia.

This wasn't my first relocation. We had moved several times for work opportunities over 30 years of marriage. Yet, this was different. It was the first time I went without children, and without an identity as a mother defining front-and-center how I ordered my life. My husband and I were empty nesters making a new nest. It was not just a relocation. It was an opportunity for reinvention, and I was excited to toss out the old life and build a new one.

We sold our home in Virginia, and in just two days, the movers had all of our belongings packed up and ready to go. At our new home in St. Petersburg, it would take me months to unpack, sort, and place stuff. But it would take me even longer to make a new 'life' in my new home. For that to occur, I had to find my own sense of place in this new community.

What made the most sense to me was to integrate my Florida vibe of living as a vacationer into the daily reality of a full-time resident. I wanted to find a way to hold onto the life-giving spirit I always felt when we came to Longboat Key, where I could expose myself to the elements and be warmed, and have encounters with people that felt 'human' and not based solely on social opportunities and networking





for mutual benefit. There were so many practices to 'unlearn' in order to allow new ones to inhabit my space. I had to learn how to trust a new inner order.

> I met my first friend while walking along Coffee Pot Blvd, not far from our house. Having a cute dog helps to start conversation. Fortunately, so many people here are open to saying more than "hello" if you take the time to allow a conversation to develop. That is one of the things I loved about St. Pete from the beginning - the respect for humanity and each other's human-ness. First step in my reinvention: I had to unlearn 'rushing' and busyness as the measure of success.

> The second step to help the reinvention take shape and make it stick required building community through social connections and making friends. Fortunately, St. Pete is a reinvention hotbed. There are dozens of meet-up groups and community resources for just about any type of artistic, recreational, personal growth,

or health-and-wellness endeavor you might want to pursue. I found my community at YogaBlu Studio on 4th Street. While I had some experience with yoga, the instruction there was more in-depth and personal. Attending classes on a regular basis transformed my life, introducing me to new people and new ideas. It changed my perspective on exercise and body/mind/ spirit alignment. I was surprised to learn it also helped change how I functioned as a singer and voice teacher.

I have a master's degree in music in vocal pedagogy from Catholic University of America, in Washington, DC, and for the past 25 years I have performed as a singer and taught music. There was no doubt in my mind that music would continue to be the center of focus for both my life and my career path. But, I was open to new ideas about what approach to take. I was ready to reinvent and redefine who I was and how I felt about myself. Yoga helped me find the path. I began listening to what my yoga teachers were calling my 'inner voice' - that gentle guide that encourages you in decisions that bring about the most joy and fulfillment. And that voice was giving me a new mantra to "live from love," and follow the powerful spiritual force that

was guiding me to share each encounter from a place of love and compassion for myself and others. It found its fulfillment for me in helping myself and others to discover and share their authentic voice as singers.

In my last position in Virginia, I had been the department chair of a vibrant Visual and Performing Arts Department at a private high school. When I moved





here, I decided to reach out to all of the high schools in the St. Petersburg area to see if I could share my skills and expertise. Within a short time, I found an opportunity at Shorecrest Preparatory School teaching in the school's musical theater program. With talented students who were eager to develop their vocal musicianship, and a flexible teaching schedule for me, it was a perfect match. It also represented a big shift in my thinking. Instead of managing a big department, I was now focusing my attention on voice training, and vocal musicianship. To do that, I had to 'up' my game as both performer and teacher. Because I had been in a top-level management role for many years, over time, my singing skills had become a little rusty and uncertain. I found a supportive voice teacher in Sarasota and began yet another reinvention process — this time learning how to reinvigorate my vocal technique. It was challenging and rewarding to be a student again.

After training with my coach over a few months, I was able to take my new skills and combine it with what I had learned about breathing through my yoga practice. The results were amazing. My performances soared in a way that I had never experienced before. This discovery was transformational, truly helping me reinvent myself in the second half of my life.

Now I am on a mission to bring the yoga practices of deep breathing, body awareness, and mind/body connection to my vocal music teaching. This is a wholistic and unified approach to singing which asks students to use their breath by engaging their body with enough fluid motion to activate the voice without unnecessary tension. Sounds simple, but like a yoga half-moon pose (my personal challenge of the moment), it requires concentration, awareness, and letting go.

Earlier this year, I launched a new business, Body, Breath & Soul Vocal Studio. The studio is open to singers of all ages who want to explore and develop the full expressions of their voice. I am overjoyed. When I first moved here eighteen months ago, I knew I was ready for something new, but I had no idea what that would be. Now I feel that I have found it. First, I had to find my own balance of body, breath, and soul, and now I want to share this gift with my students, helping them learn a new way of working with their voice and furthering their talent. This is the fulfillment of my re-invention. It seems like a lifetime away from the fast-paced busyness of my former lifestyle.

Do you have your own story about moving to the Sunshine City from somewhere else and learning how to reinvent yourself by trying something new? I would love to hear from you about your challenges, discoveries and successes. Perhaps we can share your story in the next issue. Email me at staciesteinke@gmail.com. •



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Igniting Innovation, Building Community

Stacy Alexander, Shorecrest Director of Community Outreach.

SHORECREST PREPARATORY SCHOOL

or nearly a century, Shorecrest Preparatory School, located on 1st Avenue North in the Northeast part of town, has been an integral thread in the fabric of the Tampa Bay community. Founded in 1923 as Shorecrest Outdoor School, Shorecrest has grown to educate children from preschool through high school with one of the most successful college preparatory programs in the region. As the school has evolved, so has the City of St. Petersburg. Major developments in cultural organizations, medical facilities, universities, athletic teams, and

financial institutions continue to attract people from all over the world to live, work, and play here.

Great cities have great schools. As an educational leader, Shorecrest has played a key role in that revitalization, providing business leaders, and families relocating to the area with yet another reason to choose St. Petersburg.

In March 2018, Shorecrest launched the Transform Campaign, the school's most ambitious capital campaign to date. With a goal of \$16 million, Transform will fully foster community at Shorecrest with its first-ever Dining Hall, a new Experiential School, Library, Media, and Innovation Centers all housed in a new 60,000-square-foot facility.

"Shorecrest has four wonderful schools (Experiential, Lower, Middle, and Upper School) on its campus," says Shorecrest trustee and parent Will Conroy, who is a member of the Transform Leadership Council. "But what it's missing is that centerpiece that ties all four of those schools together. There's not a place for them [all of the students] to interact. And that's why Transform has become so important to us — to create that central place on campus where our children



will see their siblings and other children every single day."

As the heart and hearth of Shorecrest, this facility provides a place to meet and eat together, fostering multi-generational relationships among Shorecrest students. The new, first-ever Dining Hall – which opens March 18, 2019 – features indoor and outdoor seating with a full menu of healthy food choices for children of all ages.

Outside, the Commons is designed with areas for gardens and a gathering space where the 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children of The Experiential School and those in the K-4th grade Lower School, can see the Middle and Upper School students, allowing the older students to become their mentors, role models, and playmates.

Shorecrest Trustee and parent Beth Vivio acknowledges the value a central, shared facility can add to the whole PK3-12 experience. "There will be a place for children of all ages to interact with each other, faculty from different schools to interact, parents, grandparents. It's really going to be a wonderful hub for our community and provide an opportunity for everyone to meet new people and to learn about other parts of the school that they may not normally see."

Reimagining the facilities for teaching, learning and playing for the school's youngest students, the new Experiential School of Tampa Bay allows learning and play spaces to match the caliber of program for which Shorecrest is known.

Providing a state-of-the art space for the youngest of the Shorecrest community is long overdue, says headmaster Mike Murphy. Conroy adds, "We must take care of those Experiential School students and that Experiential School campus and give them the best that Shorecrest has to offer, because that sets the tone for the rest of their educational experience as they stay on campus to grade 12."

The emerald gem of Transform, a nod to the school's roots as an outdoor school,





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ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

INDIE GUITARIST WILLY PORTER AT HIDEAWAY CAFE Venue: Hideaway Cafe, 1756 Central Avenue, St. Petersburg Date/Time: March 16. Doors open at 6pm. Show begins at 8pm. Tickets: \$30

Ticketing: www.hideawaycafe.biz/portfolio/march-16-2019-willy-porter



Willy Porter, a Milwaukee-based guitarist and singer/songwriter. He is a stand-out musician who blurs the indie-folk/rock lines with his high-energy fingerpicking style, rich lyricism, and galvanizing live performances. He has shared world stages with rock icons Tori Amos, Paul Simon, Sting, and Jethro Tull before embarking on his own successful solo career.

Willy is currently test driving new music and revisiting classic favorites from his extensive song catalogue that spans more than 20 years and 11 studio albums. A recent reviewer for *The Riverfront Times* writes: "If you need another flat-top guitar hero, look no further than Willy Porter, a blindingly fleet and maddeningly nimble player. If you're trying to get the hang of the fingerstyle picking, you'll either curse the dude or forsake all and follow him."



Left: Faculty of The Experiential School of Tampa Bay, Shorecrest's 3, 4, and 5-year-old program, explore the future site of their new classrooms. Above: Junior Kindergarten students pose with the Transform LEGO sculpture after the campaign launch in March, 2018. Students from across the PK3-12 school worked together to build the structure throughout the school day.

is the creation of more than an acre-and-a-half of greenspace at the center of campus. This central quad will bring students together on a daily basis as they traverse a more unified Shorecrest.

"As I reflect on my time at Shorecrest, I am overwhelmed with gratitude," Murphy said. "For Transform, the community has united to raise \$9.95 million to help Shorecrest achieve world-class educational opportunities. Although we have received incredible support thus far, we are looking forward to reaching our \$16 million goal, which will allow us to realistically reach our future goals outlined in our 2020 Vision & Strategic Plan."

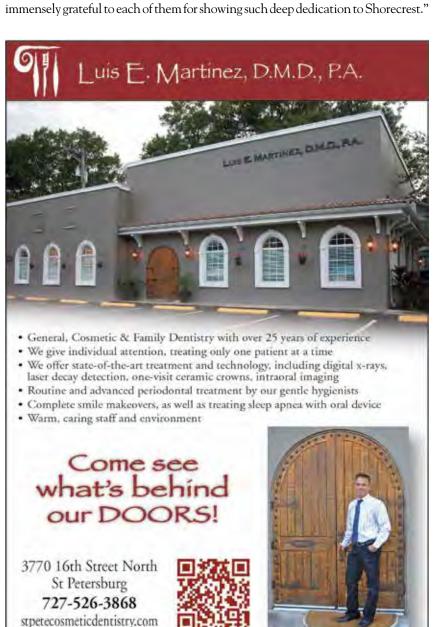
The Transform Campaign's first leadership philanthropic gift came from Tom Andrews and Jennifer Vesper; Andrews is a former chair of the Shorecrest board of trustees. Their early contribution of \$1 million helped create momentum.

"We already made meaningful progress – more than 150 families have contributed to our campaign efforts," said Conroy. "Several generous donors have stepped forward, and 100 percent of Shorecrest's board of trustees – as well as numerous staff and volunteers – donated prior to the campaign's public debut. We are immensely grateful to each of them for showing such deep dedication to Shorecrest."

Shorecrest has received several monumental Transform gifts in recent months. In December, the school received an anonymous \$2 million gift which is the single largest in the school's 95-year history. This record-breaking gift was followed by a historic philanthropic evening which took place at Sea Salt on January 11. In one night, an event hosted by several Shorecrest families called "30 for 30" raised \$1.2 million.

Five host families challenged other families within the school community to match and exceed \$30,000 in personal gifts and pledges. The challenge was accepted by 30 families. The evening was also an opportunity to pay tribute to the campaign's early leadership donors who provided financial support of leadership level donations to the Transform Campaign.

On February 28, 2019, Shorecrest held an all-school milestone event to celebrate the completion of the first floor. When students return from Spring Break on March 18, just one year after the campaign's public debut, they will move into their new home. Construction and fundraising for the final phase of the campaign continues.





GOODNESS InDEED

Pro-Am Raises Funds for First Tee of St. Petersburg

Holly Walker

USING GOLF TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE SUCCEED

olf is sometimes thought of as elite sport, or a sport for business executives. But for many years now, The First Tee of St. Petersburg has been reaching out to a diverse group of young people and helping them not only learn golf, but also succeed academically, and in life. The mission of The First Tee is to "positively impact youth by providing a learning environment and educational programs that promote character development and life-enhancing values through the game of golf while ensuring fair access for all children." I am proud to serve on the board of directors for this worthwhile community organization that has helped so many of our St. Petersburg youth.

Our signature event is the Brittany & Friends Celebrity Pro-Am, held every year in January at the Vinoy Renaissance St. Petersburg Resort & Golf Club. LPGA star Brittany Lincicome has been sponsoring the golf tournament for many years now, and it's become The First Tee's biggest fundraiser. This year's event was by far the best yet, with 150 golfers participating and more than \$205,000 raised to support the organization.

"The Brittany Event has slowly become one of the premier golf tournaments in the Tampa Bay area, as evidenced by the tremendous repeat participants and how quickly we sell out the tournament," said Gary Renfrow, a member of The First Tee of St. Petersburg Board of Trustees and vice president of events." For Brittany it's also very rewarding. "To see where the golf tournament has come is truly a dream come true," she said.

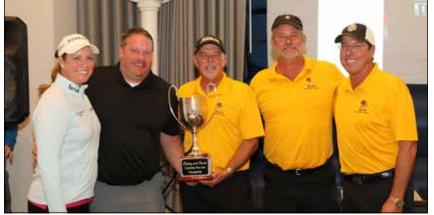


Team LS and Company: (from left) Eric Spaulding; Lourdes Darst; Brittany Lincicome; Troy Payne; and Lisa Smithson being held in the air.

Brittany grew up in Largo and started playing golf at age nine. After high school graduation, she turned pro and joined the LPGA (Ladies Professional Golf Association). She says she feels so blessed to have had a successful golf career playing with the LPGA for the past 14 years. She and her husband Dewald, and their new puppy Dexter, live in the Pasadena Country Club.

Brittany points out how expensive it can be to play golf and how lucky she feels that her parents supported her on her journey to success in the golf world. Over a decade ago, she met with First Tee of St. Petersburg's executive director, Rick Waltman, and board member Michael Puffer to talk about how she could help the organization. Because of the many benefits she's received, she wanted to make sure that all young people, regardless of financial status, could benefit from learning how to play the game. From that meeting, the Brittany & Friends, Celebrity Pro-Am was born.

Brittany recalls that the first year of the Celebrity Pro-Am there were only



Alden Suites was the winning team: (from left) Brittany Lincicome, LPGA player and event host; Brandon Day, title sponsor from MicroLumen; Gary Renfrow, First Tee board member and president of Alden Suites; Mike Finster; and Dave Feinberg. Missing from the team photo are Randy Mosley and Gary Koch.

15 groups that played and just a minimal amount of money was raised. The event has certainly come a long way! "Without the support of Brittany and all the sponsors of the event, we would not be able to reach as deep into the community and have the greatest impact possible," said Thomas Charlton, The First Tee of St. Petersburg program director.

Proceeds from the Brittany Pro-Am provide golfing scholarships for underprivileged youth, giving them access to the golf courses, driving ranges, and use of equipment, as well as tutoring to keep their grades up. It also covers the expenses of coaches and staff at The First Tee's Mentoring Center, which just opened this spring at the Twin Brooks Golf Course in South St. Petersburg. The Mentoring



Center offers youth development programs, including art, mentoring, homework assistance, and lessons in life skills. "It is important that everyone has a fair chance to succeed in life, and that is what The First Tee is all about," said Adam Stuck, The First Tee of St. Petersburg business development director. "It is important for our youth to have positive mentors in their life, and more so when they are faced with so many difficult challenges day after day."

The First Tee of St. Petersburg was established in 2005 when Rick Waltman was working for the City of St Petersburg as a PGA Professional and attended The First Tee National Meeting. "After spending a few days learning about the First Tee and their mission, I was hooked and committed to bringing a chapter to St. Petersburg," said Rick. "You may often hear people say that golf is more than a game and wonder why. Golf is a game used as vehicle to assist kids to learn how to be successful in life."

Today, the program reaches over 5,000 young people, ages 6-18, 75 percent of whom receive scholarship assistance. The youth play at three St. Petersburg golf courses: Mangrove Bay, Cypress Links, and Twin Brook. The program offers a variety



Team Dr. Alan Weiss: (from left) Dr. Steve Schirm; Dr. Allan Weiss, First Tee board member; LPGA Player Chella Choi; Daniel Weiss, First Tee alumni; and David Schirm.

of learning opportunities: one-hour clinics, two-hour practice-and-play after school programs, and weekend practice and play programs. There are also excellent summer camps, which include both half-day and full-day programs.

With a staff of only three full-time employees, volunteers continue to be the heart and soul of the organization. "I get more joy and satisfaction of seeing the benefits of programs like The First Tee than I can describe. If my actions help change the path of even one child, it makes it all so worthwhile," says Gary Renfrow, one of the many volunteers who keep the organization running smoothly. The First Tee of St. Petersburg is also proud of one of the many dedicated board members, Bill Darling, who was awarded the 2019 Tampa Bay Lightning Community Hero Award. At a Lightning game in February, Bill received a \$50,000 grant to benefit The First Tee of St. Petersburg.

Whether you would enjoy mentoring youth with life skills or helping them perfect their golf skills, The First Tee of St. Petersburg always has opportunities for volunteers willing to give their time, talent, and treasures to serve the youth of our community. Visit www.thefirstteestpetersburg.org. lacktriangle

THE HEART GALLERY

The Heart Gallery provides an emotionally safe way to connect children with families through a traveling exhibit featuring the faces and stories of local foster children ready for adoption. www.heartgallerykids.org.

MADISON, AGE 17

If Madison could do anything in her free time, it would be baking or anything she can do with her hands creatively! Madison loves art and books as well! Especially mystery books. Madison says one thing that everyone should do at least once in their lifetime would be, to write a book! She wants to be a writer when she grows up. If Madison had a superpower, it would be to time travel. How cool would that be? Madison's ideal family would have siblings and a dog, preferably a Dalmatian or a Pitbull. She would also like them to have a taste for Indian food too. Madison needs a family who is creative and fun! Could that be you?

He would describe himself as funny, caring and excited about life! In his free time, Jacob likes to go to the beach, watch Power Rangers and read books, especially, anything Dr. Seuss related. Jacob is known for his sweet tooth. His favorite foods are cake and brownies. Jacob's favorite super hero is Superman because he thinks everyone should do the right thing! His favorite animals are zebras, sharks and

giraffes. In a perfect world, Jacob

would like everyone to be nice and

pick up their trash and no bullies

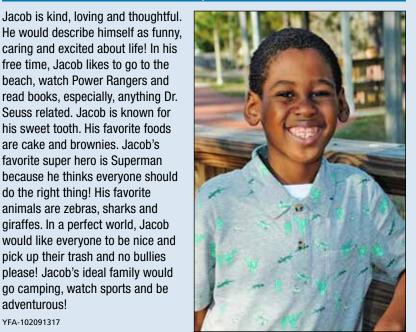
please! Jacob's ideal family would

go camping, watch sports and be

JACOB, AGE

adventurous! YFA-102091317

Photos courtesy of Julie Semancik



YFA-100613360

Photos courtesy of Michael Murphy Photography

To learn more, attend an adoption orientation. Call Diane Johnson at 727-456-0600 ext. 2085 or email djohnson@eckerd.org for information. Can't adopt, but want to help? Contact Patsy Stills, executive director at patsy@heartgallerykids.org or call 727-258-4806. Donate at www.heartgallerykids.org, or Heart Gallery of Pinellas & Pasco; 500 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St. N, Suite 300; St. Pete FL 33705.





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St. Petersburg's Beautiful Historic Brick Streets

Laura Duvekot, Historic Preservationist II, City of St. Petersburg

Ve value historic areas of St. Petersburg for their iconic, architecturally rich buildings, but sometimes it's the path between those buildings which help set the stage for the neighborhood's charm and sense of place. The Sunshine City's historic brick pavers in the Old Northeast, in front of the Vinoy Hotel, along

Coffee Pot Bayou, and in Historic Uptown are great examples. Whether they immediately catch the eye, or fade into the background amid rows of landmark showpiece homes, brick streets add texture to our urban landscape, force us to slow down, look more closely, and absorb a bit more of our surroundings.

St. Petersburg's first streets weren't brick, but paved with dirt or shell. Sadly, many early road building projects used Native American shell mounds that at one time were abundant in the area, remnants of the St. Petersburg's earliest inhabitants. But on a positive note, unlike many older communities, in which roads were often incorporated into a

pre-existing network of streets, from the start St. Petersburg's streets were laid out in an orderly pattern. The city's earliest streets were platted to be as wide as 100 feet, and a regular grid is visible in the earliest plat maps.

It's hard to imagine today when we are surrounded by asphalt, that at the turn of the 20th century, much of the country was unpaved. But, there was growing support for a nationwide network of paved roads, dubbed the Good Roads Movement. This movement spurred a boom of both road building and experimentation with paving materials. Because of its durability and longevity, brick was heralded as the top choice, especially compared to alternatives like wooden planks, hand-mixed asphalt, or gravel.

St. Petersburg's first brick street appeared on the scene in 1903. However, the fledgling municipality had only been incorporated for one year, and the city could only afford three blocks of pavement. City leaders chose a stretch of Central Avenue, as the dirt streets in that area often effectively became a swamp during the rainy season. Brick would be a vast improvement.

A brick road is only as sound as the bricks used to build it, and bricks used for paving required sufficient give to avoid shattering under horseshoes, but firm enough to avoid cracking or wearing. Unlike bricks used in building construction, which are generally made of surface clay, vitrified paving bricks often include more densely-packed shale. Once molded, paving bricks were then fired at a heat so high that the clay mixture would begin to fuse in a reaction similar to that used in glassmaking, resulting in bricks with an impervious skin.

The inclusion of a brand name on a brick face was an attempt at self-promotion on the part of brick-makers. It also gave better gripping power to both the dirt surface below and traffic above. Brick streets became known for their clean aesthetic and ability to support numerous modes of traffic in the changing landscapes of the early twentieth century.

By 1910, faced with a growing population and a desire to present an image of health, cleanliness, and civility, St. Petersburg allocated funds to pave an additional 75 miles of streets with bricks. The city contracted with several companies – a handful of brick stamps bearing their names can still be found on local streets today. But it was the Georgia Engineering Company, manufacturer of Augusta

Block bricks, which quickly became the number-one supplier because of the company's ability to transport its bricks to St. Pete for the lowest price. Within a few years, the Augusta Block logo was so prevalent on city streets that the Georgia Engineering Company operated an office in town, where winter visitors could acquire promotional material to bring back to their northern hometowns.

By 1941, 339 miles of brick streets had been laid throughout the city. Some of the neighborhoods had been platted with brick streets during the real estate boom of the 1920s but never developed after the bust. After WWII, St. Pete experienced another population boom and period of rapid construction. Asphalt rather

than brick became the preferred surface for new streets. It was a matter of cost. Trucks were introduced that could spread the asphalt mechanically, drastically reducing the price to spread this new, more modern paving material. Even existing brick streets were often resurfaced with asphalt when the expense to repair the brick became too much for the city to absorb. By 1960, only 113 miles of brick streets remained within city limits.

In 1992, St. Petersburg decided to take action to preserve its few remaining brick streets.

City Council passed a Brick Street and Granite Curb Preservation Policy in an effort to protect the approximately 90 miles of brick pavers that remained at that time. This policy was upheld and strengthened by additional resolutions passed in 2004, 2008, and 2010. Today, an estimated 82 linear miles of brick streets remain, an amount that is said to be among the highest in the country.

St. Petersburg's Traditional Streetscape Ordinance goes beyond just preserving our few remaining brick streets. The ordinance also offers owners of property that abuts asphalt-

covered brick streets the opportunity to share the cost of uncovering and restoring the long-hidden brick surface. Although this restoration is not commonly undertaken, there is the prospect for its future use. As an added benefit, the ordinance also protects the iconic hexagonal concrete block sidewalks and granite curbs in the city's historic districts.

The preservation of our brick streets and decorative hexagonal concrete sidewalks add significantly to the Sunshine City's retro charm. They not only serve as a reminder of the careful, tedious labor that was required to construct them, but they're also a testament to the enormous effort that it took to transform our city from a tiny hamlet at the turn of the twentieth century into a "Floridian Riviera" by the peak of the 1920s building boom. This metamorphosis was anything but an accident. Brick by brick, St. Petersburg built itself into the modern city it is today. \blacksquare







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343 49th Ave N, St. Petersburg Last offered at \$246,000 CNE, CLHMS, REALTOR®,

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3 Bed | 3 Bath | 650,000 | 2,400 sq ft Cozy home recently remodeled, Not in Flood Zone!

Estelia Mesimer | 727-686-2859



 $3~\mbox{Bed} \mid 3~\mbox{Bath} \mid 1,510~\mbox{sq ft} \mid \$369,000$ Great investment or redevelopment, Large Lot

 $\textbf{Kathryn Krayer Zimring} \hspace{0.1cm} | \hspace{0.1cm} 727\text{-}430\text{-}5010$



2 Bed | 2 Bath | 1 Car Garage | 1,104 sq ft | \$309,000 Updated cute bungalow with screen front porch

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2 Bed | 2 Bath | 1,207 sq ft | \$214,900 Well maintained home, no flood insurance required

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4 Bed | 3 Bath | 2 Car Garage | \$1,425,000 Water front home, Views of downtown and Skyway Bridge

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 $2\;\mbox{Bed}\;|\;2\;\mbox{Bath}\;|\;275,000.$ First level corner unit with classic updated interior. Gated entry & assigned parking

Julie Jones | 727-452-8663



2 BR | 2BA | Den | 1,759 Sq Ft | \$1,180,000 Faces Beach Drive & Straub Park. Huge Covered Patio

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3 BR | 2.5 BA | 1CG | 1,948 Sq Ft | \$899,000 | 1 Level Ranch Home, Complete Renovation. New Master Suite.

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