



# NORTHEAST JOURNAL

SEP/OCT 2018  
St. Petersburg, FL  
EST. SEPTEMBER 2004

Good People ∞ Good Places ∞ Good Things Happening

## More Power to the Pedal!

Livia Zien

*Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds. – USPS Motto*

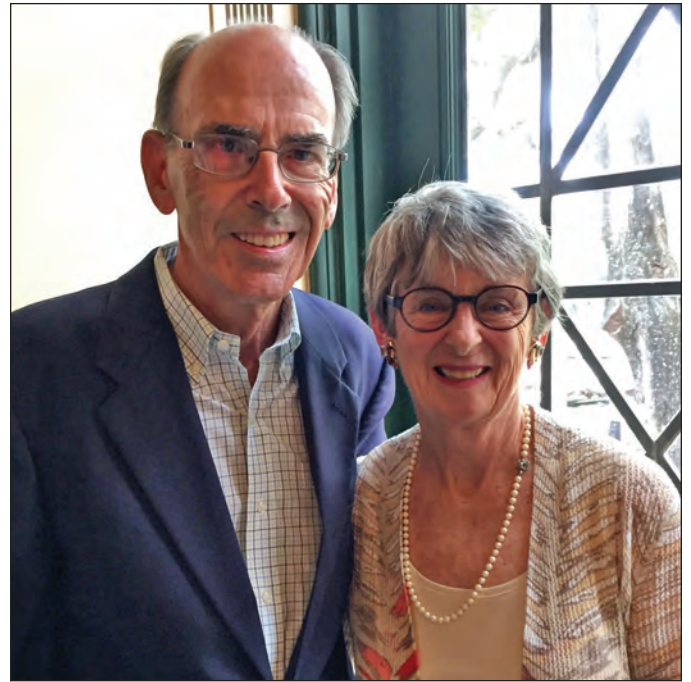
Among the many unique features of the Old Northeast, one of the longest continuous traditions is bicycle mail delivery. St. Petersburg is one of three remaining cities in the country where the United States Postal Service still delivers mail by bicycle.

Built in 1917, the Open Air Post Office at 76 4th St. N was the product of a joint effort among three prominent figures in St. Petersburg. Modeled after Edwin H. Tomlinson's earlier post office on Central Avenue, the open-air concept was designed to provide postal customers with 24-hour access to their mailboxes. While there was some scrutiny and skepticism about the novel design, supporters insisted that it was perfect for the St. Petersburg climate. Postmaster Roy Hanna lobbied for and secured \$107,500 from Congress for the new building. Architect George W. Stuart drew the plans and the new Mediterranean Revival structure was born. On April 4, 1975, it was added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places.

*Continued on page 24*



St. Pete's postal workers on the bicycle mail delivery fleet.



Elaine Normile and her husband Marty, who is a NEJ contributing writer.

## Elaine Normile Vinoy Historian Extraordinaire

Janan Talafer

When Robin Reed, a board member of the Historic Old Northeast Neighborhood Association, told me her friend Elaine Normile had recently retired as the historian for the Vinoy Renaissance Resort, my first thought was, "wait – the Vinoy has an historian on staff, how cool is that?"

A petite, bright, articulate 70-something, Elaine retired from the Vinoy at the end of May after an exciting 26-year career; 20 years as the iconic hotel's in-house historian. This summer, just a week after her retirement, I visited with Elaine at her home in the Old Northeast to learn more about what it was like to be on the Vinoy staff during such a pivotal time in the hotel's history.

Elaine and her husband Marty moved from Binghamton, in upstate New York, and came here in 1984 for Marty's job. He was recruited as the first executive director of the St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership, an economic development group charged with giving downtown a kick-start. It's hard to imagine now, but at the time, there were few downtown restaurants and even fewer retail shops. In fact, Elaine says that one of Marty's tasks was to find a developer to restore the Vinoy.

Now an impressive landmark on the downtown waterfront, the Vinoy was a mess at the time, a boarded-up eyesore. It had been closed since 1974 and some of the ceilings had caved in, trash was strewn about, all the rich furnishings had been sold, and homeless were living there. Saving the hotel from the wrecking ball was nothing short of a miracle.

In 1992, Elaine joined the Vinoy staff as a secretary in the sales office, just as the hotel was in the process of a massive two-year \$93 million restoration and re-opening as the Stouffer Vinoy Renaissance Resort. Bringing the hotel back to its former glory was a turning point in St. Pete's history, she says. Elaine is not alone in giving credit to the Vinoy for helping launch downtown's transformation and present-day renaissance.

"It was really a catalyst for all the wonderful things we are enjoying now," says Elaine. "Marty and I knew how important and essential the hotel was to the survival of St. Pete. When all of the pieces came together it was very exciting. To see the hotel rise up out of the ashes and go from a derelict building into a glorious destination on the waterfront was just thrilling."

*Continued on page 30*

## What a Bridge!

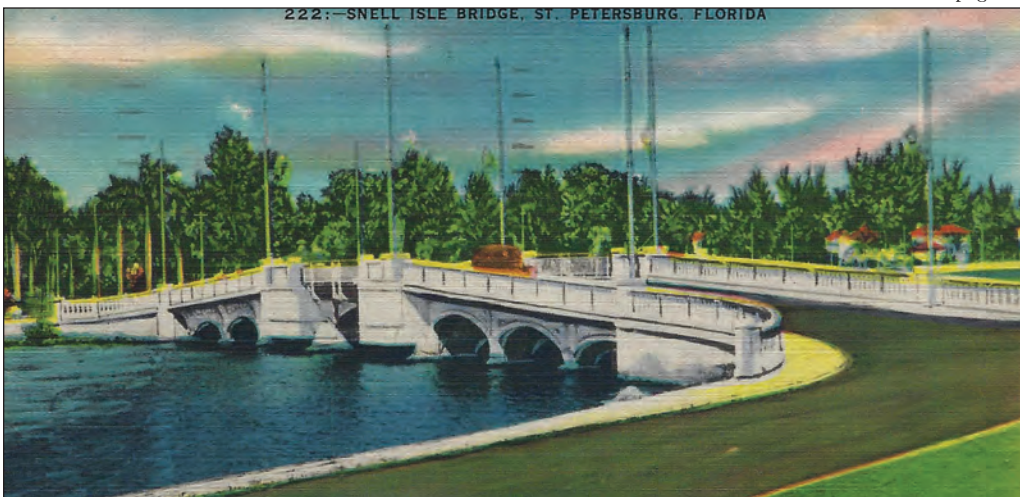
Will Michaels

The Gandy Bridge is functional. The Skyway Bridge is majestic. The Salt Creek 'Thrill Hill' bridge is quaint. But the Snell Isle Bridge is splendid.

Old Northeast and what was to become Snell Isle were originally connected by a rickety one-lane wooden bridge as early as 1917. Early master developer C. Perry Snell opened his

upscale Snell Isle development in 1925. In 1928, Snell donated three lots just north of the bridge to the women's organizations of St. Petersburg for the purpose of their building a club house which would serve all of the 15 women's organizations then in the city. Snell stipulated that the building was to have an auditorium with a stage and that the architectural firm of Kiehnel and Elliot be used to design the building.

*Continued on page 34*



Postcard view of the first Snell Isle Bridge, ca 1940.

Photos by Livia Zien unless otherwise credited

Courtesy of the Michaels Family Collection



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## EDITOR'S NOTE

We hope you enjoy reading our good news about people, organizations, and events in our Northeast St. Petersburg communities. We love writing about what makes our city unique, quirky and creative. For example, until reading Livia Zien's story, I had no idea that St. Pete was one of three cities where mail is still delivered by bicycle – how fun is that! I also enjoyed Sara Hopkins' story on Florida's emerging Glass Coast – yet another reason to be proud of our "artsy city."

Just as the *Northeast Journal* was going to press, we learned that the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance had announced the 4th annual SHINE Mural Festival for October 6-14. Artists from England, Germany, Japan, Pakistan, and Spain, as well as Oregon, Kentucky, Illinois, Georgia, and of course, St. Petersburg, will be coming here to create colorful street art during the festival.



St. Pete acro yogis Juliette Lauer, Julie Anne Cormier, and Laura Talafer strike a pose in front one of the many downtown murals.

The *Northeast Journal* will also be doing its part to showcase the arts by kicking off a photography contest for readers. We invite readers to capture an image that best represents our beautiful city and submit it to us for each issue. The winning photograph will be printed both on our masthead and inside the publication. The winner will receive a gift certificate to a local retailer or restaurant. Send horizontal photos and any questions to [editor@northeastjournal.org](mailto:editor@northeastjournal.org).

Good luck!  
*Janan Talafer*  
Editor, *Northeast Journal*



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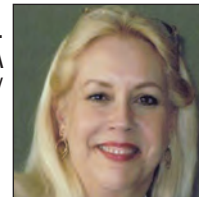
**MEET THE WRITERS**

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

**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.



**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]



**Colleen Casey** is a freelance writer living in St. Petersburg. Originally from Ohio, she moved here from Savannah, GA in the fall of 2017. When she isn't writing, Colleen enjoys reading, visiting local coffee shops, and meeting new people.



**Sara W. Hopkins** has lived in Chicago, New York, London, and Los Angeles prior to St. Petersburg. She is a former literary agent and now is vice president of a local corporate training company. In her spare time, she writes novels and screenplays.



**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.



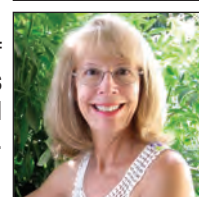
**Will Michaels** is retired as executive director of the History Museum and has served as president of St. Petersburg Preservation and vice president of the Dr. Carter G. Woodson Museum of African American History. He is the author of *The Making of St. Petersburg*. [wmichaels2@tampabay.rr.com]



**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.



**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]



**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. [gwzege@gmail.com]



**Livia Zien** moved to the area from Washington, DC in 2000. She married, traveled, and changed careers from electrical engineering to culinary arts to teaching math. Livia (who also enjoys running and swimming) and her husband Greg love life in the ONE with their two kitties.





# Remember 9/11

## Paying Tribute to Our Military & First Responders

Janan Talafer

There are certain tragic occasions in our country's history that will forever linger in our collective memory. The bombing of Pearl Harbor. John F. Kennedy's assassination. Hurricane Katrina's destruction in New Orleans. And 9/11.

Placido Bayou resident Jo Brower is making it her life's mission to keep the memory of 9/11 alive by honoring and supporting our military, veterans, first responders, and their families. Over the past six years, her nonprofit organization RHS (Remember, Honor, Support, Inc.) has raised more than \$500,000 for this worthy cause.

The funds raised directly benefit local nonprofit organizations that provide valuable services to injured or fallen veterans, police, and first-responders, including the Gold Shield Foundation, Special Operations Warrior Foundation, Stay in Step Spinal Cord Injury Recovery Center, Warrior2Warrior R.A.C.E. to Resiliency, Paws for Patriots at Southeastern Guide Dogs, Warrior Sailing Program, and C.O.P.S. (Concerns of Police Survivors West Central Florida Chapter).

"It's about remembering the price of freedom, honoring the sacrifices made by our men and women, and taking care of our own local heroes," says Jo. "We're also keeping the memory of 9/11 alive and educating our youth, many of whom were very young when it happened and aren't aware of its significance to our country."

The idea for RHS came after Jo and her late fiancée, John Stross, co-owner of Leverock's Seafood, helped a friend and group of women organize a 10th anniversary 9/11 prayer breakfast. That was in 2011. "John and I were so touched with the event that afterward, we looked at each and said, 'let's do this and kick it up a notch,'" Jo recalls.

The two formed a nonprofit organization, added a board of directors, and an advisory board of first responders, military, and community leaders. They also began planning fundraising events. The inaugural RHS-sponsored Patriot Day Memorial Breakfast was held in 2012 at the Vinoy and raised \$70,000, a significant start for a fledgling organization. Each year since has brought a bigger crowd of attendees and



Gen. Joseph Votel, CENTCOM, presents Jo Brower the Distinguished Public Service Award.



St. Pete Police Chief Anthony Holloway, Jo Brower, Mayor Rick Kriseman and Captain Franz Glenn Warner, Jr. of the Tampa Fire Department.



ROTC Marine Cadets from Tampa's Chamberlain High School with donated teddy bears.

notable guest speakers. This year's event – held on Tuesday, September 11 at the Coliseum – was one of the largest so far. The guest speaker was retired Master Sergeant Scott Neil, a Special Forces veteran whose story of going into Afghanistan after 9/11 was retold in the movie *12 Strong* and the documentary *Legion of Brothers*. Neil is also a local St. Pete resident and co-founder of St. Pete's new American Freedom Distillery with three fellow Green Berets.

"Six years ago, when we started RHS, we were pioneers in bringing the community together to honor our first responders and our military. John and I did not know where we would go with it and here we are today," says Jo. "What we do is more than a fundraising event, it's also a memorial and a way to highlight different military and first-responder organizations in our community. We do it for all the right reasons. After losing my only son, Barry, I have found our mission rewarding and purposeful. I love my country; I am a true patriot with purpose and passion."

John passed away in 2014 following a battle with leukemia, but Jo says she is more committed than ever to continue his legacy and support for philanthropy. Last year, RHS launched the Ride 4 RHS Heroes, a new bi-annual fundraising event held on Memorial Day and Veterans Day in which participants ride the Pinellas Trail to raise funds. Jo is also working on getting a nationally recognized First Responder Appreciation Week from September 11-17.

"It's been hard work but very meaningful," says Jo. "Our amazing warriors and their families were there for us and we must be there for them." ♦

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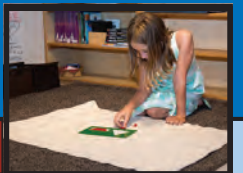


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# WHY WE LOVE THE 'BURG

## It's a Family Affair

What is it about St. Pete that attracts residents of all ages and from all corners of the country? We continue our new series that takes a look at what brings people to the Sunshine City.

Marty Normile

What is it about St. Pete that attracts new residents of all ages and from all corners of the country? When a friend told me that Howard Pollack had an interesting story about how he and his wife – semi-retired law partner Cindy Cooperman – ended up moving to St. Petersburg, I wanted to hear about it. Howard is a lawyer and entrepreneur, having relocated from Long Island, New York. But what really caught my attention is that he has written a novel, a murder-mystery titled *Everywhere That Tommy Goes*.

Before meeting Howard and Cindy, I was curious about his book. I went online to Amazon and the Barnes & Noble website. The *Long Island Press* review of the book read: "Pollack maintains a consistently interesting and edgy narrative, and winds up pulling together a terrific modern thriller." Another review read: "The plot is developed with intrigue and precision, and Pollack comes off like a skilled story surgeon in command of the scalpel." I was able to read several pages online. It grabbed me, so I ordered it.

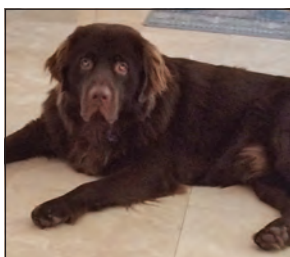
Howard invited me to meet at his and Cindy's Snell Isle home and spend a few hours relaxing by the pool they added to their property. We talked at length about his writing and what brought them to St. Petersburg three years ago. It turns out that nearly Howard's entire family – his parents, three brothers and many of their



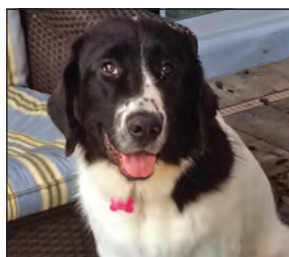
Howard Pollack and wife Cindy Cooperman.



Howard has a passion for classic sports cars.



Boulder.



Dakota.

children – have made the exodus from Long Island to the Sunshine State.

Howard's brother Bradley and his family live in Palm Harbor, his brother Stuart discovered St. Petersburg's Kenwood neighborhood, and when Howard and Cindy's children (son Cody and daughter Morgan) left home to start careers in New York City, the couple decided to come south, too, and bought a home in Snell Isle. Now, this summer, Howard's youngest brother Edward and his children, along with Howard's parents (Norman and Joyce) will be moving to Gulfport. For his parents, it will be their second time living in Florida, as they initially moved to the Orlando area in the early 1980s for Norman's job, but moved back home to Long Island in 2001 to be closer to the kids and grandkids.

Howard tells me another 'full circle' story, this one about his law career. After graduating from Hofstra University and Brooklyn Law School, he began working in Manhattan, but quickly tired of the commute. After six months, he bought a small house in Long Island and set up a home office with a word processor and dial-up modem in one of the bedrooms. Jump forward a few decades, Howard still runs the same Long Island law practice from home, but now it's a much more comfortable bedroom-office in the couple's Snell Isle home. The computer setup is definitely much more high tech, too. They still maintain the Long Island office, but their son Cody, who is also a lawyer, holds down the fort there. Howard and Cindy return to New York regularly to check in at the office and to visit their daughter, Morgan, who lives and works in Manhattan.



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Howard tells me that he and Cindy have discovered Snell Isle to be a beautiful and historic neighborhood, convenient to our vibrant and attractive downtown. The couple have comfortably settled in with their two large Newfoundland dogs, Boulder and Dakota. "I really enjoy the relaxed lifestyle in St. Pete and the sense of community we've found here," says Howard. "We never had any real sense of neighborhood in Long Island." Howard recently joined the Snell Isle Homeowners Association as a board member and also serves as the communications chair.

In addition to his legal work, Howard has become involved in small local real estate ventures here in St. Pete and is considering starting up a mortgage company. He also has a passion for classic sports cars – a 1974 MG-B and 2011 Aston Martin.

Now, about Howard's writing and his new novel. Howard has been interested in writing since childhood. He loved reading, and learned the joys of expressing himself through written words. It became his art form, and he does it purely for his own amusement. It is his way of relaxing. While reading bedtime stories to his son and daughter when they were children, he thought, "I could do that." So, he did.

At first, Howard wrote children's stories. "Often the words would just fly off the keyboard late into the nights, and when I would re-read them the next morning, I couldn't even remember writing them," he told me. "It's a magical feeling." On an Amazon From-the-Author blurb, Howard wrote: "Writing is a singular effort that starts out as an internal journey... and it can be the most rewarding of life's experiences."

He writes all kinds of things: poetry for friends, children's stories, unpublished novels, songs, commentary pieces for neighborhood publications, and much, much more. He does it for the pleasure he derives from transforming his imagination into words, forming and shaping ideas. It was only through the encouragement of Howard's family and friends that he moved toward the 2015 publication of his murder-mystery. So far, it has paid off with high praise and numerous awards, including a 2015 Gold Medal Prize – Readers' Favorite Murder-Mystery, and a Finalist for Indie-Fab Mystery Book of the Year.

In the weeks following my first visit with Howard and Cindy, I read the book. I'm not going to give away the story, but it clearly shows the author's creativity, sense of adventure, and literary craftsmanship as it leads the reader to more twists and turns than the streets winding through Howard and Cindy Pollack's Snell Isle neighborhood. ●

*Note to readers: Do you or someone you know have an interesting story about discovering and moving to St. Petersburg in the last few years? The Northeast Journal would like to tell it. Please contact Marty Normile at [marty.normile@gmail.com](mailto:marty.normile@gmail.com).*



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## 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](http://www.heartgallerykids.org).

### MALIK, AGE 8

Confident and intelligent, you can ask Malik for yourself and he'll tell you, "I'm special." Described as a good kid, Malik loves all things football. Not only is playing football what he does well, it is what he wants to do when he grows up. He has his eyes set on being the quarterback. But for now, Malik enjoys going to the playground, and he's happiest when he gets to spend time with his friends. In school, Malik loves doing Math – something else he does well.



Malik's favorite foods are chicken and pancakes, but please hold the gravy on mashed potatoes. His favorite colors are silver and gold. If Malik could change the world, he would add more love. Malik's ideal family are nice people and include a mom, dad, and siblings.

Photo courtesy of Brandi Image Photography • LSF-101552311

### TU-JA, AGE 14

Tu-ja (pronounced Tay-jah) is a budding foodie with a soft spot for animals.

Tu-ja is happiest when she's eating and scrolling through food photos on social media. She also likes to dabble in cooking and baking. If Tu-ja could change the world, she would put an end to animal cruelty. Her favorite animals are wolves, but she'll settle for having a Husky for a pet. Tu-ja likes writing poetry and songs. It's her dream to one day be a rapper/singer like the characters on her favorite TV show, *Star*. Tu-ja's favorite subject is History. Self-described as loyal, kind, and expressive, Tu-ja likes most that she's usually happy and funny. Tu-ja's favorite food is chicken tamales, but she'll pass on Brussels sprouts and sardines. Tu-ja would like a family where she can be the only child. Having lots of pets is a bonus.



Photo courtesy of Remember This • LSF-100563583

## NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH CELEBRATION

### HEART GALLERY OF PINELLAS & PASCO Focus! Heartfelt Harvest Fundraising Party

**Date:** Friday, November 9, 2018

**Time:** 6pm

**Venue:** Wyndham Grand Resort, Clearwater Beach

**RSVP info:** [www.heartgallerykids.org/focus2018](http://www.heartgallerykids.org/focus2018)

**Q: How many children are available for adoption?** A: There are now 3281 children of all ages involved in the foster system. Our goal is to find adoptive homes for 389 children this year, more than one a day.

**Q: How do I get started?** A: To learn more, attend an adoption orientation. Call Diane Johnson at 727-456-0600 Ext. 2085 or email [djohnson@eckerd.org](mailto:djohnson@eckerd.org) for information.

**Q: I can't adopt, but want to help. What are your needs?** A: Host a gallery at work. Get your civic club involved with our mission. Create a fundraiser on social media. Support our annual fundraiser. Get involved with toy drives and birthday celebrations. Work directly with our foster care workers and foster children. Contact [patsy@heartgallerykids.org](mailto:patsy@heartgallerykids.org) or call 727-258-4806 to get more involved.

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# Our Field of Dreams

## Help Us Save Our Legendary Ball Field



Lisset Hanewicz, president, Crescent Lake Neighborhood Association

In 1920, the city identified Crescent Lake Park as a location for a new athletic field for big-league baseball training. In 1924, Al Lang made a deal with the New York Yankees to hold spring training in St. Pete, and a year later Crescent Lake Field – the forerunner to Huggins-Stengel Field – was built as the Yankees’ training field. Phil Schenck, the groundskeeper of Yankee Stadium, supervised the field’s construction and wanted a deep right field. A deep right field would ensure that less baseballs would end up in the lake. The field was “made to measure” for Babe Ruth who was the home-run king at the time. As a result, they filled in and sodded the field for a distance of 390 feet from home plate to the outer rim of right field.

On February 23, 1925, 5,000 fans witnessed Al Lang officially turn over Crescent Lake baseball field to the New York Yankees. Al Lang pitched the ball to Yankees Manager Miller Huggins, symbolizing the official transfer of the park. The day before, reporter Stoney McLinn wrote that it “will do well to go back a matter of 10 years and recall that it was baseball, the nation’s pastime, that started to put the Sunshine City on the map.” The Yankees won the World Series in 1927 and 1928 and within a decade, St. Petersburg became the epicenter for major league training and a major tourist location. Every February and March, fans would fill the stands to watch the Yankees play. Marilyn Monroe visited with Joe DiMaggio in March of 1961 to watch the Yankees train. Over the years, the Yankees would win an impressive 17 World Championship Titles.

Unfortunately, after three decades of nearly continuous play (with the exception of WWII), the end of an era came when the Yankees left St. Petersburg for new facilities in Ft. Lauderdale. A year later, the New York Mets came to train and stayed until 1987, followed by the Baltimore Orioles, who played there from 1992 to 1995. Spring training at Huggins-Stengel Field lasted seven decades, with many baseball greats, including Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Bill Dickey, Joe DiMaggio, Yogi Berra, Whitey Ford, Mickey Mantle, Cal Ripken Jr., Roger Maris, Tom Seaver, Daryl Strawberry, Dwight Gooden, Nolan Ryan, and Willie Mays playing there.

Eventually, spring training in St. Petersburg officially came to an end. The final spring game was held on March 28, 2008 at Al Lang Field with the Rays vs. Reds. Over a 94-year span, nine major league baseball teams called St. Petersburg home for spring training.



- St. Louis Browns 1914
- Philadelphia Phillies 1915-1918
- Boston Braves 1922-1937
- New York Yankees 1925-1942, 1946-1950, 1952-1961
- St. Louis Cardinals 1938-1942, 1946-1997
- New York Giants 1951
- New York Mets 1962-1987
- Baltimore Orioles 1993-1995
- Tampa Bay Rays 1998-2008

The historic ball fields in St. Petersburg are mostly gone. Sunshine Field/Coffee Pot Bayou Park was cut into building lots prior to Waterfront Park being built. Al Lang Field, now home to the Rowdies of the United Soccer League, replaced Waterfront Park.

However, there is still one ball field in St. Petersburg that remains. Huggins-Stengel Field is virtually the same field baseball legends played on in 1925. It continues to be open to local schools such as St. Petersburg High School and other groups. The only visible and tangible reminders of its rich history are monuments to Miller Huggins and Casey Stengel, some memorabilia contained in the old renovated clubhouse, and the unassuming historic baseball field sitting quietly in the Crescent Lake neighborhood. ●

It’s a new day in St. Petersburg with tremendous development underway throughout the city. But there are some important places worth preserving. **The Crescent Lake Neighborhood Association has filed an application for Huggins-Stengel Field to receive local historic landmark designation.** A hearing before the Community Planning & Preservation Commission is scheduled in September and it will go before City Council on Thursday, October 18, 2018. We welcome the community’s support for this important landmark, a testament to our city’s long-time passion for baseball and a reminder of St. Pete’s fascinating early history.

To review the application, visit <http://cfnastpete.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Huggins-Stengel-Field-LLDA-final.pdf>. Also, videos of the Yankees’ spring training practice at Huggins-Stengel Field and photos of Marilyn Monroe and Joe DiMaggio, can be found at [www.cfnastpete.org](http://www.cfnastpete.org) under Neighborhood > Landmarks > Huggins-Stengel Field.



NY Yankees team photo at Crescent Lake 1942.

St. Petersburg Museum of History, Photo P08324



Monuments to Casey Stengel and Miller Huggins in front of clubhouse.



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## MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

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**Tom  
O'Neill**

25th Avenue  
Crescent Heights

**How long have you lived in St. Pete?**

I've lived in St Pete 28 years, originally from Ireland.

**Best hidden gem(s) in St. Pete?**

Fort DeSoto.

**Top two places on your bucket list?**

Iceland and Tahiti.

**A gadget you can't live without?**

A table saw.

**Favorite restaurant in St. Pete?**

Parkshore Grill.

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

Theodore Roosevelt, to thank him for establishing the national parks.

**Favorite recreational activity or hobby?**

Reading.

**Quote that inspires you or makes you laugh.**

"I don't want to belong to any club that won't accept me as a member."

**Favorite movie?**

*The Green Mile.*

**If a teleporter existed, when & where would you go?**

Yukon/Klondike Gold Rush on 1980s.

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

Thank you for a job done well.

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

Golden Doodle.

**Tell us about a significant mentor in your life or someone who has inspired you.**

My mother.

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

*Facts and Fears* by James Clapper. It's about how our national intelligence systems operate.

**What St. Pete venue is on the must-see list for out-of-town guests?**

The Dali Museum

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

Establishing a new life for myself in a new country, the United States.

**What do you do for a living?**

Best realtor in St. Pete.



**Sylvia  
Raymond**

27th Avenue  
Crescent Heights

**How long have you lived in St. Pete?**

I moved to St. Pete from Illinois when I was 7, then to Philadelphia in my early 20s. I came back about 22 years ago, when my daughter was 3. I wanted her to be near my sister and mother. Needless-to-say, I've been living here many years.

**Best hidden gem(s) in St. Pete?**

There are so many. Boyd Hill Nature Preserve, Sawgrass Lake Park, Driftwood neighborhood, Banyan Café, Roser Park, Lassing Park, Rio Vista Park, 11 Chicks restaurant, and Pom Poms Teahouse.

**Top two places on your bucket list?**

Amsterdam, and Yellowstone National Park.

**A gadget you can't live without.**

My Paperwhite Kindle, so I can read anywhere. My other must-have is my mobile phone plus audible.com. I listen all the time... when I exercise, when I do housework, or just when I want to chill.

**Favorite restaurant in St. Pete.**

That's a moving target, since there are so many. But, for now, my favorite is 2nd and 2nd. It's open 24 hours, has breakfast all day, plus lots of other good eats at a reasonable price.

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

I would like to meet Michelle Obama. She is an amazing, incredibly smart, successful, inspiring person, but she's also cool and stylish.

**Favorite recreational activity or hobby?**

I love cycling. It gives me a sense of freedom. It's satisfying because without the car, I feel I'm doing something good for the environment. My favorite hobby is painting rocks, and hiding them around town. Take a picture when you find a painted rock, post it to stpeterocks on Facebook, and then hide it so someone else can find it. It's a great way to be creative, get outside, and be part of a community.

**A quote that inspires you or makes you laugh.**

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference." ~Robert Frost

**A great movie you'd recommend?**

*Dr. Zhivago* with Julie Christie, Omar Sharif and Geraldine Chaplin. It's beautiful, tragic, historical, and it makes me cry. What more could I ask for?

**If a teleporter existed, when & where would you go?**

I'd travel back to prehistory to see the trees, plants, and animals that existed before humans did so much damage. That would be amazing.

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

You are so kind!

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

A Golden Retriever because everyone loves a Golden. Or an Australian Shepherd, because they're smart and agile. Both love to play and have fun.

**Tell us about a significant mentor in your life.**

I had a professor in college, Dr. Funk, whose doctorate was in music. He opened my eyes to classical music and made me love it.



**Steve  
Westphal**

Beach Drive

**How long have you lived in St. Pete?**

My family moved to Indian Shores from Morocco in 1968 so dad could fly F-4s at MacDill Air Force Base before going to Vietnam. Then, 12 years ago, I moved to St. Pete.

**Best hidden gem in St. Pete?**

Finding my wife Nancy here in 2010.

**Top two places on your bucket list?**

Mainland China and Australia/New Zealand.

**A gadget you can't live without?**

The dishwashing machine at any of our restaurants.

**Favorite restaurant in St. Pete?**

Anything that's GOTOSTEVES: Parkshore Grill, 400 Beach Seafood & Tap House, The Hangar Restaurant and Flight Lounge, or The Annex.

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

Any person who fought for civil rights in this country or the world. Equality is the only fair, true way to exist. We are all one. I would like to thank them for their struggles. We have a long way to go.

**Favorite recreational activity or hobby?**

Tennis and boating.

**Quote that inspires you?**

If God brings you to it, he will get you through it.

**Favorite movie?**

It was *Pulp Fiction*; now in it's anything without computer-generated imagery.

**If a teleporter existed, when & where would you go?**

I would like to go into the future to see if we ever saved our planet from the environmental damage it has suffered. Did we learn to manage our resources and work with Mother Nature?

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

When I overhear someone on the way out the door say they enjoyed our restaurant. After a long day and lots of work, that's all I need. That's what keeps me going.

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

A St. Bernard – living large, but only if I can be as smart as our poodle, Chanel.

**Tell us about a significant mentor in your life.**

There are so many I respect. Anthony Robbins for his can-do, always-willing attitude. The three German men I worked for at the Wine Cellar before I went on my own who taught me the value of an honest day's work with passion for what they do. Chef/partner Tyson Grant for his passion in the culinary arts. My dad for just telling me to leave things better than I found them.

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

*Finding My Virginity* by Richard Branson. Basically, it's about finding things that need improvement and making them better. Just like my dad said.

**What St. Pete venue is on the must-see list for out-of-town guests?**

The James Museum of Western & Wildlife Art. Tom and Mary James hit it out of the park with this one. And, the Dali Museum, of course.

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# AROUND THE BLOCK

## DANCE, MUSIC, THEATER

St. Pete's ever-expanding arts scene explodes October 18-31 with the 4th annual SPF18, an innovative showcase of the arts sponsored by the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance. Just a few of the scheduled events: The Florida Orchestra's free Pops in the Park; a showcase of culinary arts at the Birchwood Inn; a classic American Songbook Cabaret at the Palladium; and even a Shakespeare Festival at Williams Park. But this year, it's dance that really takes the stage.



St. Pete dancers Helen Hansen and Alex Jones.

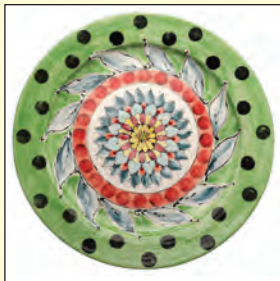
SPF18 offers several opportunities to experience local talented dance professionals, including *Work: Site, Dance at Work*, a series of six modern interpretative dances performed in select downtown workplaces. *Air-Earth-Fire-Water* is a collaboration of acting, dance and live music that will take place on the steps of the Museum of Fine Arts. Dancers Helen Hansen French and Alex Jones take the stage at the Palladium

Theater for Dance St. Pete. And the SPF18 finale will be an afternoon of Salsa, Merengue and Cha Cha with the Grammy nominated Orchestra Fuego at the historic Manhattan Casino. The event is a benefit for the Puerto Rico Relief Fund. For more information and the line-up of SPF18 events, go to [www.stpeteartsalliance.org](http://www.stpeteartsalliance.org)

\*\*\*\*\*

## FINE CRAFT ART FOR THE HOME: A UNIQUE FLORIDA CRAFTART EXPERIENCE

Nearly a dozen St. Pete area artists have transformed the Florida CraftArt exhibition gallery into a unique, artistic custom home, complete with living room, bedroom, dining room, patio and foyer. The event – *At Home With Craft* – runs September 7 through October 27. Look for David Calvin's custom coffee tables and dog house; a hand-made ceramic sink by Charlie Parker; a bar, wine rack and kitchen counter made by father-and-son team Nick and Austin Reale using with reclaimed wood from a live oak tree; and animal sculptures by Don Gialanella. According to Katie Deits, executive director of Florida CraftArt, "every item in every room, from the kitchen sink, hand towels and pottery to the furniture and the fountain are original works of art." What's a home without flowers? The art of Japanese flowering arrangement will also be showcased with displays created by the Ikebana International St. Petersburg Chapter. Other events during September and October include an opportunity to ask interior design questions by a member of the American Society of Interior Designers and a tour of four homes in the Old Northeast to see select private art collections as part of a *Home Is Where the Art Is* fundraiser. For more information, go to [www.Florida-CraftArt.org](http://www.Florida-CraftArt.org). ●



*Trip To Deruta*, pottery by Kimberli Cummings; *Ocamposilva Light* by Gus and Lina Ocamposilva; *Mod Deco Hall Table* by David Calvin.

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## SPOTLIGHT ON THE ARTS

## Forging Florida's Glass Coast

Sara W. Hopkins

For most St. Pete residents, it's no secret that our town has become a destination for the arts. What they might not realize, however, is how much of a presence we have in the world of glass art. Sure, everyone knows about the Chihuly Collection, most know about the Hot Shop at the Morean, and some know about Duncan McClellan's gallery, as well as the new Imagine Museum that's now open on Central Avenue.

But there's actually much more than that – St. Pete is the official 'headquarters' of the newly designated Florida Glass Coast. According to well-known glass artist Duncan McClellan, there are not only local museums showcasing glass art, but also large and small working glass studios, multiple hot shops, and galleries specializing in glass art. McClellan has created a new website aptly named [glasscoast.com](http://glasscoast.com) that houses information and resources for all the glass-art facilities in the area, from Tarpon Springs to Sarasota.

How did St. Pete evolve to become a hub for glass art? Andy Schlauch, executive director of the Chihuly Collection, moved here almost five years ago from Seattle. He's quick to say how vibrant the St. Pete glass arts scene was then, and of course, even more so now. "It's interesting how this coast has become a magnet for more and more glass artists and collectors," says Schlauch.

**ST. PETE'S GLASS ART MUSEUMS**

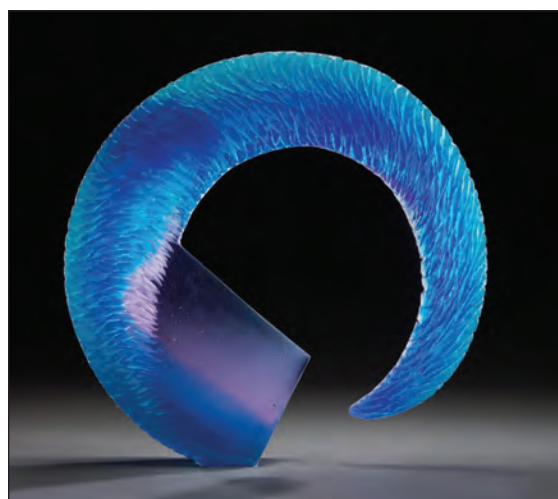
The Chihuly Collection, now in its new home across the street from the Morean Art Center, not only features the iconic work of Dale Chihuly and his students, but rotating special exhibits by other



Duncan McClellan Gallery.



Zen Glass hosts fun make-your-own glass workshops for beginners.



One of the many beautiful sculptures at Imagine Museum.

artists. The current exhibition, *Storytellers in Glass* encourages visitors to expand their understanding of glass art.

As Schlauch explains, "I think there's still some part of [glass art] that [makes] people automatically [think of it as] a functional object – a vase, a bowl, something like that. Seeing [glass] as a medium to create a sculpture – that's the difference."

The Imagine Museum opened earlier this year in a former charter school on Central Avenue near Haslam's Bookstore. Founded by artist, activist, and philanthropist Trish Duggan, the two-story museum chronicles the history of the American studio glass movement from the early 1960s to the present. More than 500 pieces of American Studio Glass are on display, from classic traditional sculptures to very contemporary works. A current special exhibit features 100 extraordinarily intricate botanical glass miniatures created by artist Paul Stankard.

Duggan has plans to expand the Imagine Museum even further by adding more international glass art and creating a separate space for it on the property. Plans are also underway to roll out educational programs for children and families, professional development, and lifelong learning.

**WORKING STUDIOS & GALLERIES**

Duncan McClellan has been a leader in the glass arts community for years, and his gallery in the Warehouse Art District, Duncan McClellan Gallery (DMG), is a popular destination during the Second Saturday Art Walk. In the last few years, he's expanded his reach to include residency training programs for



Glass art created by Duncan McClellan.

According to Jane Buckman, deputy director of Imagine Museum, a big part of the museum's mission is to show the range of contemporary studio glass, from the movement's launch in the early 1960s to today. In the beginning, "there was a lot of trial and error," says Buckman. "Harvey Littleton, whose father worked at Corning and developed Pyrex, was a pioneer of studio glass. Harvey built his own furnace and demonstrated it to other ceramicists. Prior to then, glass had to be manufactured in a factory. The invention of a furnace small enough to fit in a studio setting paved the way for glass art as we know it today."

Littleton's contemporaries went off to found glass art programs at Kent State, RISD, University of Wisconsin, and UC Berkeley, among others. Dale Chihuly was an early student of one such program. The Imagine Museum contains some of Chihuly's earlier pieces, along with several works by his students, assistants, and colleagues.

"Not only is it great that most of these glass artists are still alive today and can come to do artist talks, presentations, and other events, but it's a very collaborative art form. Usually it's a team working on a piece together. So, you have students of these great masters learning from them and even collaborating with them," says Buckman.



glass artists, as well as after-school and summer programs for underserved students in Pinellas, Hillsborough, and Manatee Counties.

To say McClellan and his team are busy is an understatement. "In September, we tripled the services we offer, doubled our glass artist residencies, and started summer programs," says McClellan, who credits his team for "pushing us to do more and more."

One such team member is Lauren Hill, who is in charge of education at DMG. "Duncan's real vision was to prove that he could change a community with art," says Hill. "He brought me on board to help him back up that vision with specific programming."

Student programs bridge between what they're learning in school with the art of glass. For example, students take what they've learned in geometry and apply it to a glass etching project. "This teaches them about positive and negative space and how to lay out a piece of art," says Hill. "Most artists use geometry to lay out a canvas. The idea is to get the students excited about learning without realizing they're using geometry." The students also get to see glass-blowing demonstrations and watch the collaborative, team-based process up-close.

**ZEN GLASS STUDIO & GALLERY**

Zen Glass Studio & Gallery, founded by David Walker and Josh Poll in 2002, is another popular stop on the Second Saturday Art Walk in St. Pete. In addition to classes and custom glass pieces and installation, the studio offers a very unique "Operation Zen" program for veterans. Founded by Chris Stowe, a retired Marine with multiple combat-related injuries, the program provides vets with an opportunity "to express themselves artistically and find their own personal Zen space."

**SARASOTA'S RINGING COLLEGE**

Just south of St. Pete in Sarasota, Ringling College of Art & Design completed construction this year on the new Richard and Barbara Basch Visual Arts Center, which includes a glassblowing studio. The Basch's are prominent Sarasota patrons of glass art and according to inside sources, it was a visit to the Chihuly Collection in St. Pete many years ago that propelled them to become more avid collectors. For the past nine years, they've worked with Mark Ormond, director of exhibitions at the Ringling College of Art and Design, to put together an annual display of select pieces from their extensive collection.

"Sarasota is a hotbed of private glass collectors," says Ormond. "There's been a huge boom in glass arts over the last few years." He points out that as of about five years ago, there were over 200 glass collectors located in two zip codes. "Like a lot of art collectors, it's a very social group," Ormond says. "When collectors get together and see what others have, they want to acquire more pieces and to discover new artists. That's great for the artist community."

With Ringling College's new glassblowing studio, Duncan McClellan's programs, museums like the Chihuly Collection and the Imagine Museum, and the many local working artists, it's no surprise that St. Petersburg's – and Tampa Bay's – reputation as the Glass Coast grows stronger every day. Our region has even caught the attention of the International Glass Art Society. The society's international conference will be held in St. Petersburg in March 2019. According to the website, the conference will explore "the new energy of St. Petersburg and the Florida Gulf Coast, from Sarasota to Tampa, offering a new perspective on future directions in glass."

As Jane Buckman puts it, "It's an exciting time for our Glass Coast." ◆



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# By Land and By Sea

## Sailors Come to St. Pete's Sailing Center

Gay Wasik-Zegel

Florida is all about water, and St. Petersburg has plenty to boast about. Touching on Tampa Bay, Boca Ciega Bay, the Gulf of Mexico, and the intracoastal waterways, St. Pete hugs some 240 miles of shoreline. Factor in the temperate climate and it's easy to see why so many sailors are drawn here. In fact, many sailors consider this area to be a premier spot for regional and national sailing regattas.

Here's an up-close look at three Northeast St. Pete couples who traveled here by land or sea, took a look around, and decided to stay.

### PLANTED ON HIGHER GROUND

Nathaniel Plant has salt on his skin and wind in his sails. He grew up on the California coast, where he always had a boat. In college at UCSC, he joined the sailing team and met his future wife, Sheila. As part of the Pacific Coast Collegiate Sailing Association, the two had ample opportunities to practice teamwork, patience, communication, and respect. It seemed natural to continue sailing together for fun after graduation and then to 'tie the knot' permanently in marriage.

Life carried the couple forward to Oregon, where Nathaniel completed his Ph.D. in oceanography. They raised two children and continued sailing on lakes, finding the ocean too rough in that part of the country. Later, Nathaniel's work researching coastal erosion and flooding took the family to Holland, where they lived for two-and-a-half years. Then a pivotal move took them to Mississippi.

In Mississippi, Sheila taught biology at a local



Bob and CeCe Clarke at their Old NE bungalow.



Sheila and Nathaniel Plant.



Meg Gimmi and Lon Ethington enjoying a day on the water.

middle school and Nathaniel worked for the U.S. Navy at the John C. Stennis Space Center. The family lived about an hour from New Orleans, and in 2005, as Hurricane Katrina was headed their way, they quickly packed and left their home – located only three houses inland from the coast. They stayed in the Navy shelter, listening to frightening news reports coming in. Five days later, the couple ventured out for a look at the destruction. Their house had been completely swept away. All that remained, for blocks, was piles of housing materials and debris. They picked up a few belongings sticking out of the rubble and left Mississippi for Washington, D.C.

The family lived in D.C. for two years until Nathaniel interviewed for an opening as a Research Oceanographer with the Department of the Interior's St. Petersburg Coastal and Marine Science Center. He was invited to a picnic on Demen's Landing, and as if on cue, a team of Lasers (the same boats his children sailed as



Second Wind headed up the Bay.

teenagers) came into view. Immediately he was sold on St. Pete!

After moving to town, the couple joined the St. Petersburg Sailing Center, which they describe as one of the gems of the city. Operated by the St. Petersburg Yacht Club, the center has been a major hub for sailing since the 1940s. "St. Pete is unique in that it makes a sailing center available to the public," says Sheila. "On an ideal weekend we can ride our bikes there to go

sailing, then ride our bikes to get a beer, and sail again on Sunday." The Sailing Center offers storage for their boats, camaraderie with other sailors, and "a wonderful racing experience," says Sheila. Nathaniel has even written a computer program to help determine if the weather will cooperate for a little sailing during the week, allowing the couple the chance to take advantage of a late afternoon sail after work in their 505-high performance sailboat.

### THE CRUISING CLARKES

Bob and CeCe Clarke grew up sailing in the Chesapeake Bay area of Maryland. Bob raced Star Class sailboats in his teenage and early adult years, while CeCe learned about sailing from the ground up, working with her dad and five siblings to build a sailboat in their basement. After the two married, sailing remained an important part of their life together. They lived on the water near Annapolis, Maryland, and bought their first 'family' sailboat in 1994 when their youngest child was five.

After long careers for both – Bob was an architect, and CeCe, a nurse – the two retired in 2015 and decided to sail their boat *Second Wind* down the Intercoastal Waterway to the Bahamas. In March of 2016, they arrived in the Keys,



having sailed to numerous sight-seeing stops along the way. Bob observed, "There has always been something magical about the water... We live aboard totally connected to the water and its moods."

"At any given moment, there is only one boss," says CeCe, when asked what lesson she has learned from sailing. In the Keys, the weather was definitely the boss, preventing them from sailing to the Bahamas. Finally, they decided that instead of heading east, they would cast off for the west coast of Florida, where they could visit family on St. Petersburg Beach and have some work done on their boat.

The Clarkes were quite familiar with St. Petersburg Beach. CeCe's grandparents had moved just blocks from the water in 1959. Her mother still lives there. CeCe remembers visiting as a young girl and wanting to explore downtown. Her parents told her that it could be "dangerous" and that there was really nothing to see anyway! "We spent our whole time at the beach and never saw other parts of the city," says CeCe.

CeCe and Bob finally made it to downtown St. Pete in 2017. With work finished on their boat, they decided to sail her to the Vinoy Basin for a 'test drive.' They put down anchor and decided to get out and explore the city's gorgeous waterfront, ending up in the heart of Old Northeast. It was there that a house spoke to them. In front of a shabby bungalow stood a sign: "I've been neglected. Don't you want to love me?"



The St. Petersburg Sailing Center.

"I've always loved bungalows," CeCe confesses. "It was love at first sight." Bob was captivated as well. "I made the mistake of saying, 'I think I have one more house in me,'" he chuckles. Within a week, the couple bought the house and have been lovingly restoring it ever since. "We have become porch sitters," smiles CeCe. "The best way in the world to meet people is to sit on your front porch." They no longer own a boat. As CeCe says, "It takes a lot to love an old house and we didn't have enough time for a boat, too." But the couple definitely see another boat and lots of sailing in their future.

**SAILING PARTNERS**

Lon Ethington and Meg Gimmi are partners in life as well as in sailing. Almost every weekend, they can be found racing through the swells of Tampa Bay in their Martin 243 or slicing the waves in their smaller Windmill. Meg tells me that their Martin 243 is unique in that only 14 were ever made.

Lon started off with powerboats when he lived in Ohio on Lake Erie, but once he decided to try his hand at sailing, he became hooked. He experimented on smaller vessels and eventually became comfortable on the J-24, a big keel boat. Meg, on the other hand, started off on a big 37-foot sailboat right from the start. No surprise, the two first met at a sailing competition, and soon after Lon invited Meg to crew on a two-person Windmill racing craft with him at a regatta in Rock Hall, Maryland. They soon became Windmill sailing partners, with a mutual love of competitive racing. It wasn't long before Lon moved to New Jersey, where Meg was a public-school art teacher. When they weren't working, they sailed whenever possible, even making it to the J80 2010 World Championships in Newport, Rhode Island.

The northern winters were cold, and when it was time for retirement, Meg wanted to sail more. Lon had lived in St. Petersburg previously and worked for North Sails. He still had family here. Though reluctant to leave her 'roots,' Meg agreed to move. They came to St. Pete in 2010 and bought a house on the water in Shore Acres. Lon even went back to work for North Sails part-time sewing sails.

Like Nathaniel and Sheila, Lon and Meg are members of the St. Petersburg Sailing Center. It's a hidden treasure," says Lon. "You can sail out of there six days a week. I don't know why there aren't more people beating down the door." In addition to a love of competition, the two enjoy just being outside on the water, which they say provides so many health benefits. "Turn off your phones and go out and be in nature," Meg advises. "There is nothing more pleasant than spending the night sleeping on a boat." ♦



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# NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF COMMUNITY... 1911-2011

## 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 (100 words or less) to NSNAeditor@aol.com.

### RETIRED GOLDFISH 'RETIRES' TO OLD NORTHEAST POND

My name is Cade and I am four years old. I won my first pet – a fish named Goldie – at the St. Raphael's fair. For two years, I faithfully fed Goldie her fish flakes and she grew and grew and grew! She started looking a little big for such a tiny fishbowl, and I was sad because she looked lonely. I wanted Goldie to have friends and a bigger home.

Then, I met our neighbor, Mrs. Tonya Strubbe. She and her husband,



Dr. Jim Strubbe, have a pond in their backyard with a waterfall, koi, and other goldfish. She invited Goldie to live in their pond.

On a sunny afternoon, my parents, sister and I brought Goldie to her new home where she immediately took off swimming. Goldie has been a wonderful first pet. I am happy that she has a new beautiful home surrounded by good friends.

~ Cade DeLozier



HONNA 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](http://www.facebook.com/honnaorg).

### WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED:

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

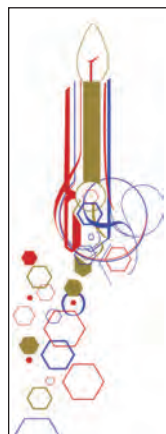
Parties, Crime Watch). Contact Nikki Taylor at [volunteers@honna.org](mailto:volunteers@honna.org).

- Follow Historic Old Northeast Forever at [www.historicoldnortheast-forever.org](http://www.historicoldnortheast-forever.org). HONF works "to preserve and protect our special neighborhood" (HONF is not affiliated with HONNA).



### MESSAGE FROM HONNA PRESIDENT NATALIE DEVICENTE

**Candlelight Tour of Homes – Save the Date!** Make the holiday season a little merrier by joining us on Sunday, December 9, from 3-8 pm to tour eight beautiful and distinctive homes in our great neighborhood! Stroll the brick streets by candlelight or hop on the free trolley with your friends, family, or neighbors and take in the festive decorations, home renovations, and perhaps even pick up some decorating ideas. This is a great way to kick off the holidays with this traditional Old Northeast event. Proceeds benefit



neighborhood improvements for projects like the acorn street lighting, tree canopy planting, and preservation of The Old Northeast monument signs. A percentage of the proceeds also go to a local charity. We still are in need of homes, so if you

would like to nominate a house, please email us at [president@honna.org](mailto:president@honna.org). Tour homeowners receive an original portrait of their homes as a gift for opening their houses for the Tour. To volunteer for the event, please contact us at [www.honna.org](http://www.honna.org) and we'll get you plugged in. Tickets will be available for purchase online at [www.honna.org](http://www.honna.org).



### 1ST ANNUAL HONNA FIELD DAY

On Sunday, October 7, from 1-4 pm at Elva Rouse Park (section of North Shore Park at 11th Avenue NE), bring a picnic and plan to wow your neighbors with feats of athleticism as you compete in the three-legged race, water balloon toss, eating contests, and more! Prizes will be awarded for placement, team-spirit relay winner, and sportsmanship. This event is appropriate for all ages. Register your team of four or more in advance at [www.honna.org](http://www.honna.org).

### VOLUNTEERS

We always need volunteers, and this fall we will be busy with events. We need volunteers for Field Day, Halloween Trunk or Treat and the

Candlelight Tour. Please visit [www.honna.org](http://www.honna.org), click on the contact tab and volunteer coordinator to send a message to John Johnson, volunteers chair. Thanks in advance for your help!



### HALLOWEEN IS COMING UP!

We are holding our Trunk or Treat on Sunday, October 28, in the parking lot of Westminster Church at 11th Ave. NE and 1st St. Decorate your car and come get a jump on the Halloween festivities. Also, Halloween in The Old NE is the best show in town! Check our website for information regarding parking, trick-or-treating, safety, etc. on our website at [www.honna.org](http://www.honna.org).

### MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

If you are not receiving our monthly newsletter at the beginning of every month, you are missing out learning about great HONNA events! Visit [www.honna.org](http://www.honna.org) to subscribe. Don't forget the Association's upcoming quarterly meeting. It's Monday, September 17, at Westminster Church with a social time at 6:45pm and the meeting beginning at 7pm. All neighborhood residents are welcomed!

### DEVELOPMENT & PRESERVATION

This has been a busy summer for development, preservation, and other causes which have come before City Council that will affect our neighborhood. We send out a monthly newsletter with the latest developments and preservation efforts in The ONE. Subscribe at [www.honna.org](http://www.honna.org).



### ROLLICKING PORCH PARTY

The annual summer Porch Party at Sunken Gardens – the tropical oasis in our own backyard – took place on Friday evening, August 17. Some 100 guests toured the garden before retreating to the air-conditioned space directly off the lobby. Residents enjoyed refreshments and tapped their toes to the music of two local bands – The Joe Milligan Project and Jeff Wolf's This Is Not a Band, which include several Old NE neighbors. Being able to check out the flamingoes added a special touch to the evening. Several years ago, Sunken Gardens needed to raise funds to purchase the not-inexpensive flamingos to 'restock' its very diminished flock. HONNA



made a contribution and subsequently asked to name one of the new flamingos. That's how 'Flamingo #2' gained the moniker 'HONNA.' So the next time you visit, look for tag #2 and say "Hi" to 'HONNA.'

**TRAFFIC & PARKING UPDATE**

**RPP Expansion Report to be Presented to City Council**

Following a vote by affected residents in favor of expanding the Residential Parking Permit (RPP) zone to 10th Ave N/NE, the City's Transportation Department has prepared a report that is to have its first reading before City Council on October 4. If the Council approves the RPP expansion, the City is on track to install signs, notify residents and begin the parking permit cycle around January 1, 2019.

-Kent Ulrich,  
Chair, Traffic & Parking Committee



- The HONNA Board has appointed Gina Ranieri to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of Peter Motzenbecker, former H O N N A President and key figure in the neighborhood's drive to secure curbside recycling. Thank you for your service to the Old NE, Peter! Gina is a Control Manager with JP Morgan Chase and is active with its community outreach, and is also involved with St. Mary Our Lady of Grace Church. She and her husband, Jim, recently relocated to their 1924 bungalow on 3rd St. N.



- In the July-August issue of the duPont Registry: *Luxury Living in Tampa Bay*, its *A to Z Lifestyle List* asked, "Walkable streets, distinctive architecture, verdant greenery, and nearby shops and restaurants? Who's got that?" In Pinellas County, it was our very own Old Northeast and Belleair Bluffs. And our 'neighbor' Downtown St. Pete was one of the 'most happening neighborhoods of all.' Thank you, duPont Registry, and thanks to all our Old NE neighbors who make such recognitions possible!



- There will be a clean up of Coffee Pot Bayou on September 22, from 9-11:30 am. Teams of four-to-six people will work on both sides (Old NE and Snell Isle) of three areas of the Bayou from the mouth of the Bay to the mangroves beyond Coffee Pot Park (at 31st Ave. NE). Trash and debris will be gathered and placed in bags, focusing on areas around storm sewers and gutters. Canterbury School and Keep Pinellas Beautiful will have canoes and kayaks for marine cleanup. Collected trash will be taken to North Shore School where it will be sorted, weighed, and recycled, or disposed of. Sorting will include: glass, metal, plastic, paper, wood, natural debris, and other. For more information and to volunteer, contact Walt Jaap at wjaap@tampabay.rr.com. This is not a HONNA event, but an activity the Board feels will be of interest to many residents.

- North Shore Elementary Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is hosting the North Shore Elementary Coffee Pot Turkey Trot on the morning of Thursday, November 22. This all-ages 5K timed run/walk is a family-friendly event that is open to the community in celebration of our neighborhood school and in support of our healthy school initiative. The selected route highlights some of the wonderful neighborhoods that make up part of the school zone, including Northeast Park, Snell Isle, and The Old Northeast. Register at [www.runsignup.com/coffeepotturkeytrot](http://www.runsignup.com/coffeepotturkeytrot).

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**On the Calendar**

- 9/17: Quarterly meeting/social
- 9/21: Porch Party
- 9/22: Clean-up of Coffee Pot Bayou
- 10/7: Old NE Field Day
- 10/26: Halloween Porch Party
- 10/28: Trunk or Treat
- 10/31: Halloween in the 'hood

**HONNA'S SHINING STARS – "BEFORE" AND "AFTER"**

HONNA recognizes 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 with the Neighborhood Star Award. Look for yard signs to indicate an award. Stars are also listed in the neighborhood monthly, online at [www.honna.org](http://www.honna.org) and on HONNA's Facebook page. Want to nominate a home? Email Charleen McGrath at [treasurer@honna.org](mailto:treasurer@honna.org).

Here are the Stars for July: 210 13th Avenue N (David Cramer & Bonnie MacDonald) and 636 16th Avenue NE



(William & Marcia Osier); and August: 132 14th Avenue N (Connie Lancaster & Anastasia Hiotis) and 924 2nd Street N (Robert & Susan Beroza).



**RESIDENTS PETITIONED FOR TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES ON 1ST STREET N/NE**

A majority (greater than the required 66 percent) of the residents along 1st St. N/NE between 22nd and 30th Ave. signed petitions to have traffic calming measures installed to reduce speeding. As a result of requests from the HONNA Board, the City has agreed to create two raised sidewalks [similar to the existing one at 25th Avenue N/NE in photo] and one speed hump on this section of the street. However, if problems are determined during the design phase, it may be necessary to change the way in which these traffic-calming methods are incorporated.



**CITY TO STUDY POSSIBLE CROSSWALK ON 4TH STREET N NEAR 11TH AND 12TH AVENUES**

As a result of a request on SeeClickFix, the city's Transportation Department has agreed to implement a study to see if the traffic conditions on 4th St. N justify the implementation of a crosswalk on 4th St. N between 11th and 12th Ave. The recent commercial transformation of the North Ward School property has increased vehicular and pedestrian traffic in this area.



JULY: 210 13th Avenue N "Before"



JULY: 210 13th Avenue N "After"



JULY: 636 16th Avenue NE "Before"



JULY: 636 16th Avenue NE "After"



AUGUST: 132 14th Avenue N "Before"



AUGUST: 132 14th Avenue N "After"



AUGUST: 924 2nd Street N "Before"



AUGUST: 924 2nd Street N "After"



ARTIST PROFILE

# Shop Dogs: Dogs With Jobs

Janan Talafer

It's not possible to browse through Laurie Ross's book *Shop Dogs, A Photo Essay of Dogs That Go to Work* without a big smile and sometimes a tear or two. There's the story of Mini Me, the Chihuahua, who works in the counseling department at Zephyrhills Elementary School. Kids get to hug her when they're sad or upset. Homer, a dachshund-Chihuahua, works there, too. He's a reading buddy.

Not all of the dogs work with kids, of course. Maddy and Diamond, two boxers, have dual jobs: at their dad's business, William Karns Enterprises, and as therapy dogs at a local senior living facility. Boopie, a big, white standard poodle, is in sales, as she entertains bored husbands at Goodnight Moon, a local store that sells linens and children's clothing. Vera, a Hungarian Vizsla, has a sales role, too, at Marion's, the well-known clothing and gift shop on 4th Street that – of course – specializes in Vera Bradley designer merchandise. Vera is the official greeter and children's entertainer.

"When I'm photographing animals, I don't feel hungry. I'm not tired. I'm not thinking about what I'm going to be doing later or something that I said that I shouldn't have," says Laurie, a Crescent Lake resident. "Time goes by without my realizing it. I'm in the moment – totally in the zone when I work."

There's no doubt that Laurie loves dogs. She has an uncanny ability to get them to sit still long enough to capture their personality, from cute, tiny, and playful to dignified, cool, and laid-back. I first heard about Laurie when she had a book signing for *Shop Dogs* at First Unity Spiritual Campus this past summer. I was intrigued by the name of her book and wanted to find out more. The idea of photographing dogs and telling their story of going to work in offices, schools, clothing stores, travel agencies, manufacturing plants, art galleries, and doctor's offices seemed like such a fun project.

Laurie has worked in the physical therapy field for the past 25 years, but photography is her passion. Her interest in photography started in



Laurie Ross and a Southeastern Guide Dog puppy.

high school at Dixie Hollins, during the era of 35 mm film and developing your own film in the darkroom. Then about a decade ago, she took a photography class at the Morean Art Center and learned the art of Photoshop. The class was an epiphany. "I literally ran home and started editing my photos. I could finally crop the way I wanted and change the color saturation. Everything caught fire and clicked for me," says Laurie.

Friends began asking her to take photos of them, their kids, their dogs and babies. Then she added small weddings to her portfolio. She also began experimenting with macrophotography, the art of taking extremely close-up photos, such as the veins in a leaf or the petals on a sunflower. "I had only been doing landscapes before and started moving in a new direction," says Laurie. "I wanted to take pictures that showed emotion – happiness, excitement, even sadness. As I'm working, I'm always thinking about what am I trying to convey here; what feeling can I show in my photos..."

She has two favorite quotes that sum up her passion for photography: one by Mark Twain – "Continuous improvement is better than delayed perfection," and one by an anonymous source – "You have an obligation to create that, which without, you would not exist."

The idea for a photo essay focused on dogs came during a spin class at Spinergy Fitness, when Jim Conahan, the owner, brought his English bulldog Tank to work. "Jim said, 'He's going to be my spin dog' and I responded, 'Wow, that's some shop dog.' When I got home, I couldn't stop thinking about that idea," says Laurie.

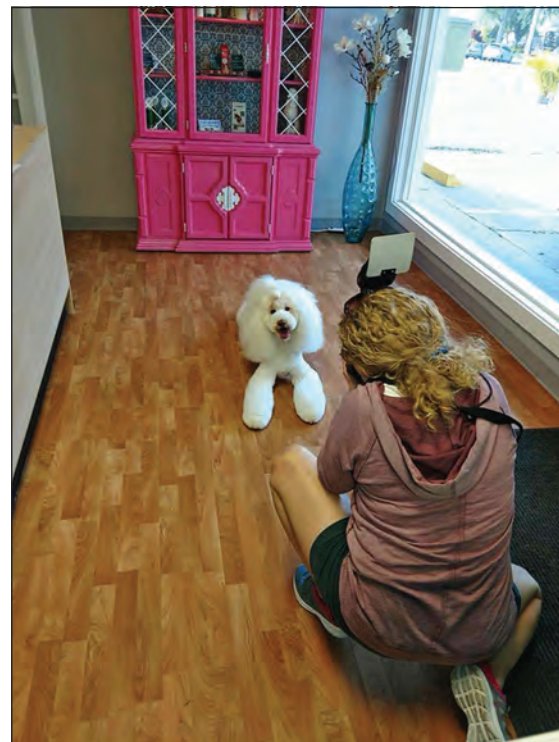
Not long after, she and her partner Adriana Bonilla were shopping for granite countertops for their kitchen and as they walked into the store, an enormous white Grey Dane got off the leather couch and came over to greet them. Lucy was her name. "Lucy was my inspiration," says Laurie. "I called the owner later and asked if I could come back and take her photo. After that, I took pictures of Tank. And I haven't rested since. It's become obsession."



Christie works at two jobs: St. Pete City Hall with Mayor Kriseman and at Creative Clay with Kerry Kriseman (his daughter).



Murphy works at St. Pete Chamber of Commerce.



A poodle poses like a model for Laurie.



After taking portraits of hundreds of dogs who go to work, Laurie says it's clear that animals in the workplace make the environment calmer, happier, and definitely less stressful. After all, when you're having a rough day, a little pet therapy makes such sense. "Seeing all of the pets in the workplace and all of the people who love them gives me hope in a world," says Laurie.



Laurie's second book will feature all kinds of pets. Sasha works at Chart 411/St. Pete Earth Day.

It's also clear from looking at the photos in her book that the dogs love going to work, too. In *Shop Dogs*, Laurie writes: "All of the dogs photographed in the book have three things in common: they have a purpose, they are happy, and they are completely devoted to their loved ones."

Now Laurie is hard at work on her second book, a slightly different version of the book since this one will feature all kinds of pets with jobs: cats and rabbits, a therapy pony, a llama... There's even a bearded dragon that hangs out in the Human Resources Department at the Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough County. Laurie's first book was self-published, but for the second, she's looking for a publisher. In the meantime, she's busy lining up pet portraits in the most

unexpected workplaces, like Bob, the 'shop dog' at Farmhouse Animal and Nature Sanctuary, who lives with a menagerie that includes baby kangaroos, goats, pigs, and horses. ♦

To see some of Laurie's photos, visit [www.shopdogsbook.com](http://www.shopdogsbook.com).



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**ST. PETE'S BICYCLE MAIL DELIVERY** *continued from page 1*

With the first automobile in St. Pete arriving in 1905, bicycle mail delivery remained the norm. The fleet of cyclists were not only deliverers, they also participated in local parades, had their own bowling and bicycle teams, and all on their own time. It was a very tight-knit community.

The Open Air Post Office celebrated their Centennial Anniversary in September 2017, and now supports a total of 18 postal routes in the 33701 Old Northeast zip code, including a newly created bicycle route. The region is bounded North-South between 14th Ave NE and 17th Ave S, East-West from the Bay to Martin Luther King Street. There are 13 bike routes with three to four relay boxes along the way, and five motorized routes primarily delivering parcels weighing over two pounds. In total, the carriers make over 13,000 deliveries each day.

Chris Hubble is a 23-year veteran of the fleet and executive vice president of the Branch 1477 of the National Association of Letter Carriers. He's always been an avid cyclist and rides with the St. Pete Bike Club. He began his Postal Service career in Hyde Park in Tampa, but one day as he was riding down 4th Street, he saw someone sitting by a relay box with her bike. He recalls asking her if she was a letter

carrier, and being surprised by her unenthusiastic, but affirmative response. He asked, "So you get mail and deliver it on a bike?!" Chris says he loved the idea. He explains, "I applied for a transfer and did a mutual swap to St. Pete. I just wanted to get my foot in the door, thinking, 'I gotta get this!'" And get it, he did. He started out with Route 12, and explains, "The rest is history."

The much sought-after bike routes are assigned based on seniority. Says Hubble, "We have a couple of carriers who had 26 years of seniority when they applied for the bike routes, and they said that they would have come here earlier had they known." He cautions that this profession is not for everyone, however. "Delivering mail is a career of hard work. As for the unique opportunity of delivering mail by bicycle, either you love it or you don't."

Hubble is one who loves his job. "There is never a dull moment. I get to ride



*Chris Hubble is a 23-year veteran of the bicycle fleet.*

a bike in beautiful downtown St. Petersburg, all while delivering the mail. It's a great stress reliever. With the environment that we work in – it's very physical and mental, but on the bike, you have a sense of freedom. You get paid to ride a bike for six hours." Operations at the office begin as early as 4:30 a.m. That's when— as Tracie Finley, USPS customer relations coordinator, describes it – "the magic happens." Each deliverer is responsible for sorting his or her own mail. When complete, they load up their bikes with about 1.5 hours' worth, and then the riding begins.

Green 'relay boxes' are spread out along the route and are used to store mail for pickup by the deliverers. Prior to their arrival, trucks are dispatched to load the boxes with mail for the next leg of their route. Carriers cycle from one relay box to the next where they collect the mail for the next section of their route and load it onto their bikes, making for a very efficient relay system.

The single-speed cruisers are personalized by their owners, but are still distinctive in their own right. Weighing in at nearly 50 pounds, the bike has a 20" front tire which is smaller than the rear. The unique center kickstand is located on the fork so that it can support a load up to 75 more pounds in the basket

above, i.e. the mail. And while the wheel turns, the basket does not. Hubble always advises his new trainees, "Do not look at the basket when you're turning."

Chris has claim to the oldest bike of the group. "I found it in the basement of the building. I apprehended it, rebuilt it to the way it was, and just changed the route number." A few years back, the team got together and designed a lighter aluminum cargo box, but he held onto the only canvas cage basket, a remnant of the 1960s.

There are many advantages to bicycle delivery. City and government employees are permitted to use the sidewalks, but parking can be difficult downtown. Studies have also shown that more mail is delivered by bicycle than with a motorized vehicle. In one year, they also save thousands of gallons of fuel and save money on the maintenance of 13 vehicles, leaving a smaller carbon footprint. "Back in the '70s with the gas shortage, there were also more bike routes," says Hubble. He points out that the Euclid Station still has one bike route in operation after losing a vehicle.



*The bicycle fleet ready for the day's action.*



*Historic photo of St. Pete mail carriers.*



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Tony Mellis enjoys delivering mail by bicycle.



Post office boxes at the Open Air Post Office.



Robert Holmes taking a picture of the fleet for his next painting.

Hubble explains, "You park at your first delivery, walk down the street. Then go to the next relay. It's amazing. They see this bike, and they know it's a U.S. postal bike." Tracie adds, "The kickstands are a dead giveaway." Flat tires have not been an issue either, nor have there been any accidents. The post office even has its own mechanic for regular maintenance on the bikes.

Even under the blazing sun and stifling humidity of summer, Chris says that "with a nice little breeze, parked under a shade tree, it can still be cooler than some of the long-life vehicles." The letter carriers still walk more than ride, pedaling approximately six miles and logging over 20,000 steps a day. The notorious thunderstorms provide an additional challenge in the summers, but Hubble has fun with them. "We get some side pours, and you have to dodge the rain drops. But what's really neat about the Old Northeast is that there are a lot of porches." He pauses, "When it rains, it's almost like a competition to keep the mail dry. I feel like a little kid again! It slows you down for sure, but you seek shelter, and you're going to get the job done."

This job, however, is not without other hazards. On foot, the satchel is used to carry the mail when going from house to house, but Hubble explains, "It is also the number one defense against dogs, if necessary. It is the first thing that can come between a dog and the carrier." Hubble has only been bitten twice. "But we actually train the dogs. We come into their yard. They bark, and we leave. So we really train them to dislike us." The carriers are aware of customers



The Open Air Post Office is an architectural gem.

who are dog owners. They multi-task walking along their route, flipping through the mail, getting ready to make the delivery, and working with a sense of urgency, so it is easy for a carrier to be surprised by a neighborhood canine.

Carriers take a lot of ownership of and pride in their routes. Finley notes that they always refer to, "My customers. My route." She adds, "If they notice that mail is piling up in the mail boxes, they will suspect that something might be up inside." She recounts stories where postal deliverers have helped their customers during medical emergencies or even fires.

The atmosphere behind the scenes in the Open Air Post Office is a cheerful one. The camaraderie is obvious. Chris says there is an esprit de corps among the carriers – that they feel part of a team. But they are also part of a larger team. Our letter carriers are a quiet but integral part of our communities. They visit us every day and know us by name more than they know us by address. They know our patterns as well as we know theirs. They do more than just deliver our mail. They are our neighbors and our friends.

Chris Hubble has worked his way to Route 14, what he refers to as his retirement route. "I will definitely be riding off into the sunset with my bike," he says. But for now, as he finishes sorting his mail and is asked if he wants to get out there and ride, he responds with a smile, "You bet. I can't wait!"

Note: A special thanks to artist Robert Holmes who suggested the topic for this article. He will be painting the bicycle fleet in the coming months.

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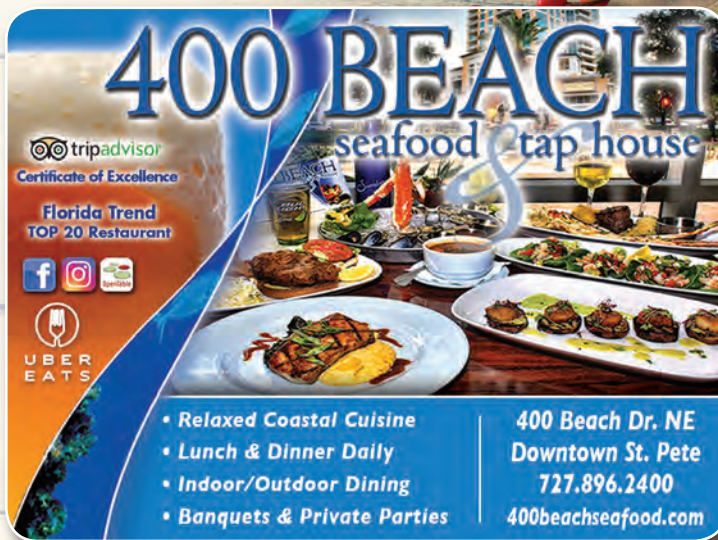
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(pictured here) who created and chaired the event.



Highlights of the evening included the awards presentation by Duncan McClellan, who personally made the awards for the winning artists and presented the coveted Enso Award – to Aaron Fodiman, the publisher of Tampa Bay Magazine – as well as the silent and live auction that featured the paintings entered to the Art Ties Us contest. Artists received 50% of the proceeds for their auctioned art and the balance went to The Public Art Project. Supporting restaurants, Birch & Vine, 400 Beach Seafood

& Tap House, Stillwaters Tavern, 1200 Chophouse, MacDinton's Irish Pub, and The Mill featured plated delicious tastings, and The Birchwood sponsored the open bar. Reginald Roundtree and Heather Van Nest emceed the event.

To end the evening, neckties that were made in the likeness of the winning art submissions were presented and will be worn by the staff at The Birchwood (pictured above) for one year to further promote the arts and The Birchwood's support of the arts in St. Petersburg. The actual art from the top-three winning artists can be seen at Birch & Vine Restaurant from now until December 31st. ●

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**ELAINE NORMILE** *continued from page 1*

The public, of course, was curious to see everything they had been reading and hearing about. "People were swarming to the hotel to see what had been done. They just kept coming and coming to see the renovations," says Elaine. "The general manager had been to San Diego to see the historic del Coronado Hotel and been given a tour of the property. The seed was planted. He came back and thought we should do something like that here, too."

In 1998, Elaine was named the hotel's first historian and given the task of developing a tour of the property. She says she was fortunate to be in the right place at the right time to get the job. In her favor, she already had experience giving tours as a docent for the Dali Museum. This was back in the day when the Dali was still in a small building south of downtown on USF-owned property, not in its current home in the dazzling Dalíesque-building next to the Mahaffey Theater.

But most importantly, Elaine had the inside knowledge about the hotel. "Management wanted someone who knew something about the Vinoy and I had the great opportunity to be part of the re-opening team during the renovation," says Elaine. "The position of historian was also part-time, which I wanted. So it was a perfect fit."

There was no shortage of research material for her to sort through: from old photographs, newspaper clippings, and memorabilia to artifacts like the 1,400 pieces of silver flatware discovered in a hidden vault during the renovation. There were also oral histories and anecdotes from the many people who had stayed there, celebrated a special event there, or worked there. "It was my job to separate fact from fiction. We wanted to give guests the most accurate information."

Elaine led the first official Vinoy tour in February 1998, showcasing not just the hotel's history, but also the extensive work completed during the renovation. A month later, she hired her first docent to help her. Now there are five to keep up with the demand. Over the years, thousands of people from all over the world have taken a tour.



"Originally the focus was on hotel guests, but now it's open it to the public," says Elaine. "We don't really advertise, it's usually word of mouth. Tour bus operators book with us. We have tour buses coming sometimes with 50 people. They stop at the museums and Sunken Gardens, and then come by for a tour of the Vinoy and to have lunch."

In addition to supervising the docents, Elaine served as a docent herself. "The highest compliments I ever received were when guests said, 'I see that you absolutely love and have a passion for your job.' It's always personal for me; part of my identity," says Elaine. What are some of the most

memorable tours she's given? Participants in the Eckerd College Road Scholars experience (an educational travel program for adults), and spouses of high-ranking military officers from all over the world who are part of the international coalition stationed at MacDill Air Force Base.

"It's such a gorgeous hotel and a great way to see and experience the Vinoy," says Elaine. "There is so much to talk about during the tours – the stenciled pecky cypress ceiling in the ballroom foyer and lobby for example. The renovation of the ballroom was a miracle."

Tours are an hour in length and take place Wednesday through Saturday, starting at 10:30 am. The price is \$10, or for \$27, combine it with lunch at the Vinoy's main dining rom, Marchand's Bar & Grill. I decided to take the tour myself to learn

more about the hotel's history, its beautiful architectural details and the long list of famous guests who have stayed there. For example, Babe Ruth attended the grand opening New Year's Eve party in 1925. Later guests included actor Jimmy Stewart, Presidents Herbert Hoover and Calvin Coolidge, and even Marilyn Monroe and Joe DiMaggio.

My tour docent, Carolyn Zella, pointed out some of the amazing details that I might have overlooked, including the dozens of griffin statues throughout the hotel. From the second floor balcony, we looked down into the opulent lobby and she told me that back in the early days, the lobby was filled with little shops, including a florist, linen shop, and shoe-shine stand. Outside in the side garden,



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she showed me the quirkiest artifact of all – a replica of a small private solarium. It looks like a small wooden shed on wheels with a door. Carolyn told me the Vinoy had five or six of them. Guests would sit inside to sunbathe au natural and take advantage of the “healing, restorative powers of the sun.”

Carolyn also described the hotel’s onsite dormitory for seasonal workers—a part of the hotel that no longer exists. The workers would stay at the Vinoy from October to May and travel to Maine or other resort locations in the summer, often serving the same wealthy families at each venue. A black-and-

white photo of workers all lined up in uniform hangs in the Vinoy hallway.

One last amusing, true story: In 1923, Aymer Vinoy Laughner was hosting a party at his home, now the Vinoy House Bed and Breakfast at Beach Drive and 5th Ave. NE. It must have been a wild party, for in the early morning hours, Walter Hagen, a famous golfer at the time, drove several golf balls off the face of Laughner’s pocket watch, hitting Laughner’s residential property across the street. Some of the guests suggested that Laughner purchase the property and develop a grand new waterfront resort there. He agreed, acquired the land

for \$170,000 and got to work building the Vinoy Park Hotel, named after his family. Elaine has had the privilege of getting to know the Laughner family over the years. One of the grandsons recently moved back to St. Petersburg.

While Elaine may miss being immersed in the history of the grand hotel, she says that in retirement she is looking forward to visiting children and grandchildren, spending time with friends, volunteering, and golfing. She also enjoys frequent long walks, including a route that takes her by the Vinoy. On a Sunday morning in July, she stopped by for the first time since she retired. “I felt like I had

just been off for a few days, not different at all,” says Elaine.

She says there were so many memorable moments on the job, not just developing the tours, but also collaborating with an exhibit designer to create the interesting history gallery at the far end of the hotel lobby, and later helping organize festivities to celebrate the hotel’s 75th anniversary in 2000. “The anniversary celebration was a really lovely event and I was given a lot of authority to generate ideas to make it special,” says Elaine. “The public was invited and we had a juried art show.”

Elaine hints that the last day on the job might have been one of the best. “It was very joyous,” says Elaine. “I don’t seek a lot of attention, but it was nice to be celebrated.” A prized going-away gift now hangs in her home – a collection of historic photos of the hotel during its early history as St. Petersburg’s grand winter resort. ●

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# Our Newest Neighborhood Transplants

Samantha Bond Richman

My story begins in my grandmother's backyard. She had beautiful gardens that produced spring flowers, like daffodils, tulips, hyacinths and crocus. Today, I buy hyacinths at the grocery store in springtime, just for the fragrance and to reminisce. She also had flowering bushes. I can remember wisteria, lilac, forsythia and many others that I can't remember the names of anymore. There was an enormous apple tree, too. Her vegetable garden was huge and produced corn, beans, potatoes, tomatoes, squash, kale and other vegetables. As a kid, I used to hate kale. Now I love it. She would be proud, like she always was of her grandchildren's accomplishments. I learned to love gardening from her, my mother's mother.

Today, more than ever, I find myself unconsciously doing things that suddenly remind me of my grandmother. Gardening is one of them. June 18th marked 17 years since she left us and I believe went to heaven. I always remember the month and year because she passed a few weeks before 9/11. I told myself be grateful she didn't see it and took solace in that fact when trying to accept the enormous tragedy of the terrorist attack. Now it's my turn to help care for my mother and father who are both in their 80s. They planned well and are receiving a long term care insurance benefit due to my father's diagnosis with Alzheimer's disease.

Recently my four siblings and I relocated my parents to St. Petersburg and put the beautiful retirement home my parents built together in Tallahassee up for sale. The assisted living facility they are moving to is a nice one. That helps with the adjustment. As many, many of my friends can attest, caring for an aging parent or parents is hard work regardless of the circumstances. When it's time to move, especially to a smaller space, everyone wonders the same thing...What are we going to do with all this stuff? That's quite another story, one that will not be rehashed here.

As the date to close on the real estate transaction approached, my mother was less concerned about her cherished dining room furniture and more concerned about her flower bulbs. My grandmother gave her several amaryllis bulbs when they moved into the house in 1994. I can remember the flowers blooming large, pink blossoms in spring and being very robust plants. "Sam, get my bulbs," chimed my mom. Over and over, "Get the bulbs. Don't forget." Why would I forget? As a business owner, wife, mother, grandmother and principal legal representative for my parent's financial affairs, I've got nothing else on my mind.

I wondered where she would put the bulbs, as the assisted living facility may not appreciate a giant box of dirt being hauled up to their room to facilitate a makeshift garden. I pondered about what to do, and realized my last chance to retrieve them before the house sold would be the trip I made to Tallahassee to see my daughter Natalie graduate from Florida State in early May. I thought of everything, or so I thought, as I arrived in Tallahassee the day before graduation. My mother texted me, "Don't forget my bulbs."

My brother was my host in Tallahassee. As I left his house early in the morning to make the last visit to my parent's house, I felt very melancholy. Even though it was not where I grew up, the house had been a gathering place for the five of us, our spouses, children, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, cousins and dogs for 24 years. There were many good memories, including two weddings on the front porch.

I went through the house, largely empty now, selecting a few more odds and ends to keep before the remainder was to be picked up for donation. This is probably something many of us have had to do. As the time to wrap up and get to the graduation ceremony approached, I looked for a shovel. Can't forget the bulbs. I found a plastic bathroom trashcan and decided that would perfect for transporting the bulbs in the trunk of my car back to St. Petersburg. I walked out into the front yard, stood looking around for a moment, and wondered, where

the heck are they? Then I remembered that there was a picture taken by the realtor just a month before and the big pink blooms appeared in the foreground of one of the real estate listing photos. So, I laid down my shovel and looked for the link from the realtor on my phone. Then, I went to my car and got my glasses, to study the picture trying to see where the photographer had been standing in my parent's substantial yard when the photo was taken.

I was in the wrong place. Putting the phone back in my pocket, I picked up the shovel and trashcan, and walked around the house through the long grass to the backyard in my new sandals, not ideal for working with a shovel. No matter, I thought, it's just a few flower bulbs. There they were, blooms spent,

though still recognizable stalks protruded from the ground. Holy cow, the garden was overgrown! Vines with thorns, vines with poison ivy (and surely a snake or two) were all around the flower stalks in the raised bed my father built beneath an oak tree. I dug in, careful to not damage the precious bulbs.

I began to worry about the time...can't be late to graduation. I dug deeper in a big circle getting dirt in my new sandals, and finally pried the first one out. "Look at the size of that!" I said to myself. I kept digging, grateful for a full-size shovel instead of the hand trowel I believed I would need for the job. I could feel sweat beginning to run down my back and continued one by one until I had five of the six bulbs in the trashcan that was clearly too small for these giants. I stopped and took a picture. No one would believe the story without a picture, I thought.

Finally, with the last bulb loaded in the trashcan, I put them in my trunk and drove away from the house that would no longer be our family gathering place. I made it to graduation on time, and in a dress, with some dirt on my feet no one noticed. The next day I drove back to St. Petersburg, traveling the less stressful route through a myriad of small towns. I dialed my mom's number, and conveyed the news. "The bulbs are in my trunk. They're HUGE. What are you going to do with them?"

She asked me in return, "What are you going to do with them?" My chest swelled with pride when I realized she was entrusting me with her precious gift from my grandmother. I cried a little, and when I got home, showed my husband just where I wanted my flower garden to be in our yard in Old Northeast.

The stalks are healthy and seem to be enjoying their new home in our side yard. My husband Tim built an above-ground bed so I can provide them with nutrient-rich potting soil instead of the sandy soil we have here. I even did Internet research to see what I should do to ensure their survival. My mom assured me they are hardy. The good news is we are so far south there is no need to dig them up in winter. Gratefully, we don't suffer frozen winter soil. I pledge to hold onto them and keep them healthy as best I can with my nominal gardening skills. When spring comes we will know my success or failure by their blooms. ●





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**HISTORY** continued from page 1

Richard Kiehnel and Leo Elliot were the nation's leading architects in developing the Mediterranean Revival style architecture for which St. Petersburg is so well known. They were based in Miami where among their many buildings was the famous El Jardin. In St. Petersburg, they also designed the Snell Arcade and the Rolyat Hotel, now Stetson Law School. The Club House was completed in 1929.

The impressive St. Petersburg Woman's Club building still thrives on its original site. However, the



The City of St. Petersburg



The City of St. Petersburg



Women's Club House built on lots donated by C. Perry Snell. The Woman's Club was instrumental in building the 1928/31 Snell Isle Bridge.

women were not happy with the old 1917 bridge and waged a campaign for a new one. The current bridge – built in the style of Renaissance Venetian bridges – was begun by Snell in 1928, but not finished until 1931. Snell intended to pay for the bridge in its entirety, but he ran out of money and the City had to step in and help out. Still, Snell paid for the lion's share, some \$43,000. The City's tab was \$29,000 for a total of \$73,000. The bridge finally opened on Christmas Day, 1931. The bridge's architects were Hadley, Nordstrom, and Atkinson who also designed the Union Trust Bank, the Snell Isle Country Club, and the 'Thrill Hill' bridge over Salt Creek on 3rd Street South.

This first Snell Isle bridge was designed to carry 20-ton trucks and a 50-ton electric trolley, although the trolley system was never extended across the bridge. It included a double-leafed bascule lift (drawbridge) to allow tall pleasure boats to pass through, often to the annoyance of waiting cars. When the lifts were closed, there was eight feet of clearance for small crafts. The bridge was 214 feet,



The City of St. Petersburg

nine inches long, had a 30-foot roadway, plus six-foot sidewalks on either side. It rested on 72 piles driven approximately 30 to 35 feet into the bayou. Attractive balusters lined each side. Detracting from its appearance was the running of utilities on poles across the bridge. Nevertheless the *St. Petersburg Times* declared it a "graceful and attractive design." At a later date, attractive tall light fixtures were added.

The bridge was reconstructed in 1996. At that time the bascule leafs and operating systems were removed and the bridge span became permanent. The bascule had not operated since about 1970. Channel clearance was increased slightly by eight inches. Also, the roadway was widened by five feet

and utilities were encapsulated in piping run through the bridge. Traditional hexagonal brick pavers were added for six-foot-wide crosswalks, and the double-fixture light poles that had been removed were restored. The cost of the reconstruction was approximately \$1 million. An article in the *Times* reported that "city engineers have bent over backwards to accommodate residents by keeping what amounts to a completely new structure looking just as the old one looks." In 2015, it was estimated that the bridge accommodated about 11,000 vehicles a day, three percent of which were trucks.

A 2012 Florida Department of Transportation Report described the Snell Isle Bridge as exhibiting

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“a number of elegant architectural features including the curved brackets that support the railings of sculpted balusters, arched girders, textured fascia, and gracefully curved entrances.” The report goes on to state, “It is historically important because of its age, its original bascule technology, and for the effective way it expresses the classical architectural treatment favored by many Florida developers during the 1920s.” Finally, the report noted that the bridge was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for its architecture and engineering during a 2000 survey.

The City is once again contemplating a reconstruction of this venerable and much-loved bridge. A 2015 bridge inspection rated the overall condition of the bridge as fair (a 2 on a 1-4 scale). The city’s Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) application is requesting \$860,400 from the federal Department of Transportation. The city will provide a 40 percent match from city budget funds. The grant proposes to advance necessary bridge replacement studies and complete the engineering design with the goal of replacing the aging Snell Isle Bridge, which is the main point of access and egress for many residents. Moreover, the Bridge is the only multi-modal exit during hurricane evacuations, as it must be taken in order to access official evacuation routes.”

The Historic Old Northeast Neighborhood Association (HONNA) supports the City’s application provided the state review the bridge for preservation and mitigation. The Association is not opposed to structural improvements, but believes it is most important to preserve the historical integrity and appearance of the bridge for future generations. HONNA emphasizes that the “Snell Bridge connects the Historic Old Northeast to Snell Isle, and has been a landmark for almost a century. It is also National Register-eligible, so the integrity of the bridge and the surrounding context is most important to us.”

In 2001, a 40-member production crew filmed a 30-second spot commercial featuring GMC trucks and SUVs crossing the Snell Isle Bridge. When asked why the bridge site was selected for the filming, a spokesperson for the company stated, “We felt the scene with the [Snell Isle] bridge really screamed Florida with the palm trees and Mediterranean homes.” Those of us who live here think no less. ●

Sources: Nevin D. Sitrer & Richard N. Sitrer, *The Sunshine Skyway Bridge: Spanning Tampa Bay* (2013); Florida Department of Transportation, Environmental Management Office, “*The Historic Highway Bridges of Florida*” (2012); St. Petersburg Times (Various but especially 10/14/28, 10/22/31, 5/30/95, 8/4,96, and 10/20/2001); Judy Lowe Wells, C. Perry Snell: His Place in St. Petersburg History (2006).



The Ponte delle Guglie bridge in Venice, Italy. The Snell Isle Bridge is designed in the Venetian tradition.

## WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

History writer Will Michaels is now researching an article for an upcoming edition of the *Northeast Journal* about

### Mickey Mantle in St. Petersburg

Mantle played spring training in St. Petersburg for the New York Yankees from about 1952 to 1961

**If you have...** stories, recollections, photos, or other information to share, please contact Will at [wmichaels2222@gmail.com](mailto:wmichaels2222@gmail.com) or 727-420-9195



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Eric Wallens with Oubie  
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Charles and Jennifer Brackney  
with Noah, Vought, Hazelle and Lilly – 16th Avenue NE



Brice Pinson with Luna  
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## AROUND THE BLOCK

### GET INVOLVED, BE A VOLUNTEER

Volunteering is a great way to get more involved in the community and to expand your social circle. The Sunshine Street Team, a volunteer effort that is part of the Downtown Business Association of St. Petersburg, will host a citywide volunteer recruitment effort on October 14 from 12noon to 4 pm. The event, titled: *It Takes A... Volunteer Village* will be held at the historic St. Pete Shuffleboard Club, 559 Mirror Lake Drive N. Interested in volunteering but not sure where to start? Stop by and learn about one-time, short-term or ongoing opportunities at dozens of nonprofit groups, museums, hospitals and local governments. The event is free for the public and there will be a food truck, music, open shuffleboard courts and a cash bar. Nonprofit groups interested in participating in the event can contact Les Lloyd, TBVolunteers@Outlook.com no later than Sept. 20 to see if there is still available space.



\*\*\*\*\*

### 44TH ANNUAL SPIFFS INTERNATIONAL FOLK FAIR RETURNS TO VINOY PARK OCTOBER 25-28

Vinoy Park will be transformed into a multicultural experience with food, music, ethnic art, cooking demonstrations and performances from around the world at the SPIFFS 44th annual International Folk Fair to be held October 25-28. In announcing the event, SPIFFS President Lotta Baum writes: "A 44-year tradition has been revitalized. In an immigrant nation facing an identity crisis, we have a new purpose. This year, SPIFFS's annual folk fair reminds us who we are – a fabric of cultures woven into a United States."

The four-day event includes entertainment from local Polynesian dancers, Giving Tree Music drum circles and music by the Urban Gypsies, Brazilian Samba by O Som Do Jazz, New Horizon Band of Gulfport, Irish Lift Band and The Islanders Greek Band. The culmination of the festival is the Grand Parade of Nations with a swearing-in ceremony of new American citizens. For more information go to [www.spiffsFolkFair.org](http://www.spiffsFolkFair.org). ●

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GOODNESS INDEED

# Puppet Shows with a Purpose: Increasing Youth Literacy, One Show at a Time

Colleen Casey

Books have the power to change a person's life, exposing readers to new worlds, ideas, and possibilities in the pages. Thanks to a scholarship secured by Northeast resident Rachael Russell, more public school students will start this journey while watching a puppet show performance of Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* at the main branch of the St. Petersburg Library.

Every other Monday from October to May, students and visitors to the library can see the show for free, which is put on by members of the Junior League of St. Petersburg. After the performance, the puppets are brought out to the audience, and Russell says the children greet the puppets like they are "rock stars." Kids then tour the library and are provided material by the library's children's department.

**LITERARY LEGACY**

Watching a book come to life would be a memorable field trip for any child in kindergarten or first grade. But according to Russell, for many of the students, it's the first time they have ever been to a library. School success is the main focus of the Junior League of St. Petersburg. To achieve this goal, it works on initiatives improving childhood literacy and nutrition. For 75 years, the League has used the puppet program to engage children and foster an appreciation for reading.

The Junior League is an organization for women who positively impact their communities through volunteer work and advocacy. The Junior League of St. Petersburg was founded in 1938, and puppet shows began in 1942. In the beginning, the Puppet Troupe performed at schools, but now shows take place solely at the St. Petersburg Main Library.

"Although the show has evolved and changed over its 75 years, the focus has always been to teach, promote, and enrich children's learning environment," Junior League of St. Petersburg President Summer Jensen explained.

Russell's connection to the Junior League and puppets dates back decades. Her grandmother, Sarah Lonquist, was a first-grade teacher and member of the St. Petersburg Junior League who took her class to see the puppet program. Russell remembers watching the shows when she was in school herself, and once she was able to join the Junior League like her mother and grandmother before her, she wanted to be on the Puppets Committee.

**WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY**

Although it was difficult to carve out time from her work schedule to commit to spending Monday mornings at the library, Russell found a way. She describes this volunteer opportunity as awe-inspiring. However, that did not stop her from being mildly frustrated when a school canceled several times in a row.

Instead of becoming discouraged by the cancellations, Russell set out to find out why this was happening. Over dinner with a friend, she discovered the reason was financial. Parents from the school in question were unable to provide their children the \$1-2 fee that would cover transportation to the library for the field trip.



Above: (L-R) Danielle Flynn, Sasha Segundo, Rachael Russell, Melanie Collinson, Carol Russell (sustainer) and Danielle Sanchez pose with puppets used during the performance.  
Below: Junior League puppet show photo from the archives.



Armed with this information, Russell went back to the Puppets Committee where the group decided that if the only deterrent was cost, they would sponsor the children. Starting with five schools, the committee set about funding the field trips.

Through the Little Black Dress Initiative – a fundraising campaign by the Junior League – the Puppets Committee was able to raise money for transportation. The funds are then given to the Pinellas Education Foundation, who coordinates the buses for the schools.

As a result, Russell described last year's attendance as "an absolute flood," adding that there were approximately 2,500 attendees. It was the first year in recent history Russell recalls having to hold a double-feature in order to accommodate all of the students.

**HUNGRY FOR MORE**

The League and the Library are not ready to stop. "This show remains relevant to our current focus area of school success to this day," Jensen stated, "and with our new grant program, we hope many more generations of St. Petersburg children will continue to benefit from this great program."

Jensen and the Junior League are not alone in this sentiment. Russell explained that while checking in with the library to see if they needed anything, one of the members of the children's department said it is great that we sold out, but a waiting list exists. If the goal is to reach all public-school kindergarteners in St. Petersburg (around 3,100), what else do we need to do?

The drive to continue expanding the program is because of the fundamental roles it plays, Russell explained. These include showing kids what a library is, and offering information about summer programs and the safe environment the library provides. She added that teachers also have a chance to give their

opinion, and keep the program on solid educational ground. When their class attends, teachers are handed a survey to fill out, providing educators an opportunity to say what, if any, improvements should be made.

**MOTIVATION MONDAY**

Characterizing the show as 'old-school fun' in an age of screentime, Russell says it is the best way to start her week. Select performances are private, but others are open to the public. All shows are free. For a local dose of motivation on your Monday morning, you too can see the awe and wonder on the children's faces, while catching an entertaining rendition of a childhood classic.

**THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR PERFORMANCE INFORMATION:**

- Who can attend?** Public and private schools, community walk-ins.
- When are the shows?** Every other Monday, October through May, 10:30AM
- Where is it?** St. Petersburg Main Library

Please note that groups of 10 or more, and/or those with transportation scholarships, must pre-register by calling 727-892-5269. ●

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**2101 Cherry St NE, Historic Old Northeast**  
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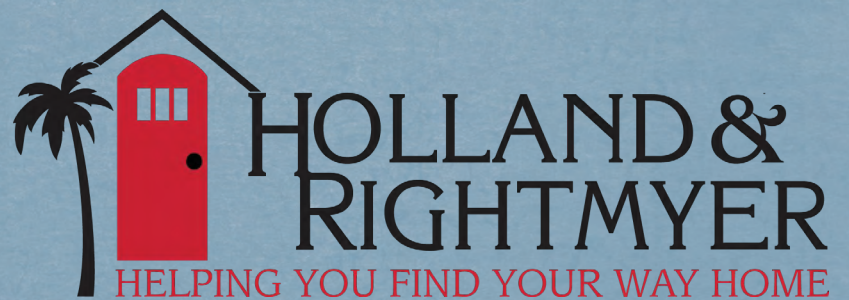
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