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The Islander

The Best News on Anna Maria Island Since 1992

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Holiday cheer comes to Island



Riley Luckerman, left, really likes Santa and so, why the tears? Riley tripped on his way up the stairs to board the Anna Maria Island Privateers' ship, where Santa hosted visits and the Privateers provided gifts for all children, free food for kids and a fun time with the crew. The party took place at Coquina Beach, where the Saturday parade ended after a trip from Anna Maria with loads of followers. Shawn Darby went to see Santa aboard the Privateers' ship dressed as a pirate. Brothers Raymond, left, and Blaze Asmakis take teamwork to Santa, visiting the big elf together to share their Christmas lists. Sisters Shyanne, left, and Amanda Kamrath share a fashion look of beads, beads, beads, and a visit with Santa. For more holiday pictures, see page 25. Islander Photos: Lisa and Annie Williams



The Cortez Yacht Club's annual lighted boat parade begins at the Historic Bridge Street Pier Dec. 13. The parade drew a few boats and a few dozen observers, who cheered when the lights went on at 6:35 p.m. Islander Photo: Lisa Neff



Santa arrives at the rear of the Anna Maria Island Privateers Christmas Parade. And, as is tradition, kids follow him to the holiday party at Coquina Beach. More photos, pages 25-26. Islander Photo: Bonner Joy



Bradenton Beach Mayor Michael Pierce lights the Christmas tree on Bridge Street Dec. 13. Islander Photo: Lisa Neff

CVB director upbeat for winter season

By Rick Catlin
Islander Reporter

Don't knock on Larry White's door with bad news about the economy or tourism nationwide.

As executive director of the Bradenton Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, White keeps up to date with all the economic news as it relates to tourism. He's well aware that the country is in a recession, but Anna Maria Island and Longboat Key have weathered such storms in the past. White is positively upbeat about the coming season.

Following the events of Sept. 11, 2001, Florida tourism plummeted as a fear of flying gripped vacationers nationwide.

White said hoteliers in the Orlando area panicked as their hotel rooms stood vacant, but visitors and winter residents still came to Anna Maria Island that season.

"We're a different destination than Orlando. The vast majority of our visitors drive here. We're watching our market and we've been encouraged so far," White said.

While he has seen some reports that say online travel agencies such as Expedia and Orbitz are down 14 percent in bookings, that's not a serious problem for the CVB area.

Marketing director Jessica Grace indicated most Island visitors to the area who book travel here book directly with the accommodation or rental agent.

And occupancy numbers for Island accommodations for October this year were up from last year, despite the five-week closure of the Anna Maria Island Bridge.

Thanksgiving was a good week for Island accommodations, retail shops and restaurants and advance room reservations appear to be on par with last year.

"Winter residents are returning and traffic is building up again," White said.

But visitors don't book as far in advance as they used to, White observed. That makes it difficult to predict how February tourism will be when it's still two months away.

Grace said marketing efforts have gone well and she fully expects a solid winter season for the area.

The Island is no longer an unknown destination. In the past several years, publications such as *The New York Times*, *Washington Post* and most recently, *USA Today* featured Anna Maria Island as one of the best destinations for vacationers looking for the uniqueness and charm of old Florida.

Other travel writers also have echoed the beauty of the Island for a vacation or a wedding. Various bridal publications have touted the natural setting of the Island as the place for that special event for brides and grooms and Island businesses have seen steady growth in that arena for the past few years. The wedding industry is now an integral part of the Island economy.

It's that natural beauty and peace and quiet that brings people to the Island, said Grace.

"We are not an attraction-oriented destination like Orlando. We are a family destination and our attraction is our peace and quiet and our beautiful beaches," she said.

As long as beautiful beaches remain in style, the Island should enjoy a successful winter season.

Investigations continue in disappearance, fire

By Lisa Neff
Islander Reporter

Investigators seeking to solve the disappearance of a Holmes Beach resident and a fire at her motel say they are making progress.

"We still feel confident we can get to the bottom of this," Manatee County Sheriff's Office spokesman Dave Bristow said Dec. 11. "We're working some angles.... We're working on some different things and we will end up solving this."

The MCSO is the lead investigating agency looking into the disappearance of Sabine Musil-Buehler, 49, who, along with husband Tom, owns Haley's Motel, 8102 Gulf Drive, Holmes Beach.

PLEASE SEE HALEY'S, NEXT PAGE

Haley's owner, fire cause sought

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Musil-Buehler was reported missing on Nov. 6, after her car was found in Bradenton, allegedly stolen from behind a 14th Street bar by Robert Corona.

The last known person to see Musil-Buehler is her boyfriend, William Cumber III, who said the couple had an argument while watching election news on Nov. 4. At about 10 p.m., Musil-Buehler left the residence in Anna Maria.

Meanwhile, the Holmes Beach Police Department has taken the lead in investigating a fire that destroyed the elevated garden house at the motel. The fire took place on Nov. 16, a cold Sunday night two weeks after Musil-Buehler's disappearance.

Sources have described the cause of the fire as "suspicious," "undetermined" and "intentionally set" and the case remains open pending the results of forensic testing.

Fire officials said the blaze destroyed the building, while the main motel complex did not suffer damage.

Two exotic birds were lost in the fire. "They're just gone," Tom Buehler said last week.

Friends and family have said that they knew as early as Nov. 6 that something was wrong in Musil-Buehler's life because she would never leave her animals uncared for.

One of the Buehlers' birds, Giacomo, a Hahn's macaw, continues to greet guests to Haley's Motel.

But two others perished in the fire — Sunshine, an African ringneck, and Ferris, a monk parrot.

"They were right at the main part of the fire," Buehler said.

If the fire investigation leads to a prosecution, legal expert Jennifer Dietz, a Tampa attorney and professor of animal law at Stetson Law School, said authorities possibly could pursue two felony cruelty to animal charges under Florida Statute 828.12.

A conviction on such a charge could result in a \$10,000 fine and up to five years in jail.

Dietz said if someone set the fire, they likely



Sabine Musil-Buehler has been missing since Nov. 4. The missing person report describes her as about 5'6", 136 pounds, with silver hair, green eyes and a German accent.

knew the birds were on the premises. "Birds are pretty vocal," she said.

Buehler said a lot was lost in the fire, but "Sabine being missing is the most important thing right now."

Fire investigations can be quick or they can be lengthy, depending on the circumstances and the type of evidence under review, said Sam Venzeio of the Florida Fire Marshal's Office. Some investigations get closed within a week and others, he said, can take a year or more.

Speaking in general terms and not specifically to the Haley's investigation, Venzeio said forensic analysis involves "precise technical testing."

Early in the investigation, HBPD Chief Jay Romine said the fire was "suspicious" given the circumstances involved.

Days after the fire, Cumber, who recently served prison time for arson, told the press he felt he was being framed. He has been identified by authorities as a "person of interest."

Musil-Buehler reward funds sought

Friends and family of Sabine Musil-Buehler have established a fund for a reward for information in the case.

Donations can be made at Whitney Bank, 5324 Gulf Drive, Holmes Beach, in the name of the Sabine Buehler Benefit Fund.

Earlier this month, several people reported seeing investigators searching Cumber's residence after he moved out.

Last week, a source told *The Islander* that the MCSO collected mail that Cumber left behind when he moved to Bradenton, including letters between Cumber and Musil-Buehler.

Bristow declined to comment on that report. "We're not going to talk about any of the evidence," he said.

The Manatee County Crime Stoppers is asking for tips in the case and has posted details of Musil-Buehler's disappearance on its Web site at www.manateecrimestoppers.com.

Friends and family of the missing woman also have opened an account at Whitney Bank, 5324 Gulf Drive, Holmes Beach, to collect reward money for information that helps locate Musil-Buehler.

For weeks, few donated to the reward fund, which a month after Musil-Buehler's disappearance contained less than \$500, according to Silvia Zadarosni, who opened the account. Last week, a single anonymous donation more than doubled the reward fund, Zadarosni said.

"I really think the reward is going to make a difference to people," Zadarosni said.

Six weeks after Musil-Buehler's disappearance, Bristow said, "You would think [witnesses] would have come forward if they had seen something or they had any information."

However, he said, there now may be new witnesses, people who recently may have heard something relevant to the investigations.

"If somebody knows something, it would certainly be appreciated if they'd give it up at this point," Bristow said. "If you are hearing anything about this case, let us know."

People with information related to Musil-Buehler's disappearance can call the MCSO at 941-747-3011, or Crime Stopper's at 866-634-8477. People with information related to the fire can call HBPD at 941-778-5807.

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Sue Normand is in her seventh year with *Island Mail & More*, 3230 E. Bay Drive, Holmes Beach. She marked a business anniversary recently, as well as the one-year anniversary of a shooting at her store. *Islander* Photo: Lisa Neff

Normand marks anniversaries

By Lisa Neff
Islander Reporter

A year ago Sue Normand found herself a victim — and a survivor — of a man who walked into her Holmes Beach store and fired a bullet into her hip.

Normand, after a year of working on her physical, emotional and financial recovery, recently returned to the volunteer program she had worked on with a passion before the Dec. 5, 2007, shooting at her *Island Mail & More*, 3230 E. Bay Drive, Holmes Beach. Normand is back on the volunteer roster with the Manatee County Victim Advocate Program.

“I started back on call,” she said. “I wanted to wait to make sure I was going to be effective in that role.” Victim advocates assist people through the legal process, as well as provide emotional support in recovering from a crime.

Earlier this month, Normand quietly observed the one-year anniversary of the shooting that sent her to the hospital, via helicopter, with a shattered hip.

In August, a jury found Mark Koenigs of Bradenton Beach guilty of shooting Normand and threatening to shoot two law enforcement officers trying to arrest him on the Gulf shore. Koenigs was convicted of one count of aggravated battery with a firearm and two counts of aggravated assault on law enforcement.

In November, Manatee County Circuit Court Judge Diana Moreland sentenced Koenigs to 40 years in prison.

Normand, in an interview Dec. 10, said the case is not closed.

During the trial, Koenig’s defense attorney made a motion for a mistrial, which the court denied. A statement of “judicial acts to be reviewed” filed Nov. 26 on Koenigs’ behalf by assistant public defender Peter Belmont stated that the court erred in denying the motion.

Belmont also filed a notice to appeal the convictions to Florida’s Second District Court of Appeal and possibly win a new trial.

“I’m hoping not,” Normand said of a new trial. “The trial was much harder than you think it would be.... It’s just hard, recalling everything and facing the person.”

During Koenigs’ sentencing, Normand told the court how Koenigs’ action impacted her life, her family and her business.

A year later, she continues to suffer physical pain and the financial burden continues.

“The bills are frightening,” she said.

While the judge ordered Koenigs to make restitution to Normand for her medical costs, Koenigs is not believed to have any assets.

Property that Koenigs owned went into foreclosure prior to the shooting.

More recently, a judge found Koenigs insolvent and appointed a public defender to handle his appeal. His application for criminal indigent status indicates that he has no income from Social Security, unemployment compensation, pension, veteran’s benefits or wages and that he has no assets such as cash, cer-

tificates of deposits, stocks or bonds or equity in real estate.

“I don’t know if I am going to be able to expect anything substantial,” Normand said, adding that she has dropped a civil suit against Koenigs. “I don’t think he has any assets to pay for anything.”

Normand has returned to *Island Mail & More*, but, unable to work full-time, she continues to rely on her son for assistance and recently advertised for an employee for her seventh Christmas season.

She has high hopes for the season, but concern for the ailing economy. “It’s so hard on so many people right now,” Normand said. “But this is the time of year when we really depend on business.”

Shipping remains the most substantial part of Normand’s operation, but *Island Mail & More* also offers office services, graphic and Web design, computer use and wireless Internet and mail box rentals, as well as sells greeting cards, decorated boxes and envelopes and a variety of supplies.

One of the newest offerings is an expedited passport service, Normand said, adding that customers are guaranteed passport photos they like.

On a recent Wednesday morning — the same day of the week and time that Koenigs entered the store — early customers arrived. One woman wanted to make a copy of a document. Another woman wanted to use the conference room. The telephone began to ring.

Normand said for all the change in her life since Dec. 5, 2007, she still loves the work — the pace, the business and the people.

“I’m not afraid every time somebody walks in the door,” she said. “There are reminders of the incident — constant reminders. But I don’t often picture the whole thing. And I am not afraid.”

Man injured in Sunday night crash

An 18-year-old man was taken to the hospital by medical helicopter after an accident on Manatee Avenue on Perico Island near the Anna Maria Island Bridge Dec. 14.

The accident occurred at about 9:30 p.m. near Seven Shores Boulevard east of the bridge, according to Manatee County Emergency Medical Services.

Details of the accident, including the driver’s name, were not available as of *The Islander* press time Monday morning.

The accident, which involved a single SUV, was being investigated by the Bradenton Police Department.

The BPD said the SUV was traveling east on Manatee Avenue, away from Anna Maria Island, when the vehicle hit an embankment, a stop sign and then a tree.

The driver, the only occupant of the vehicle, was taken to Bayfront Medical Center in St. Petersburg.

Gulf Drive lane closures this week

The Florida Department of Transportation is advising motorists on Gulf Drive to expect intermittent north and southbound lane closures between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. through Friday, Dec. 19.

The DOT said it had no plans for any lane closures on the Anna Maria Island Bridge through Sunday, Dec. 21. However, the south sidewalk is closed to pedestrians and bicyclists.

DOT plans Gulf Drive resurfacing next year

Island motorists already used to traffic delays for bridge renovations, installation of water and gas lines and other work can expect more of the same if the Florida Department of Transportation starts a \$5.6 million resurfacing of State Road 789 beginning in 2009.

DOT District One Secretary Stan Cann included the resurfacing project when he presented the DOT’s tentative five-year work plan for Manatee County to the Sarasota-Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization at its Dec. 15 meeting.

The DOT plans to spend \$3.2 million resurfacing State Road 789 (Gulf Drive) for 2,117 feet from south of Cortez Road to State Road 64 (Manatee Avenue). A separate tentative work program for 2009 will resurface 1,650 feet of State Road 789 from the Longboat Key Bridge to the point of the other project south of Cortez Road. Funding for both projects is already in place, according to Cann.

The DOT also plans to spend \$45,000 for landscaping at various Island locations in 2009 and \$326,000 in 2010.

Perhaps the most anticipated project in the tentative program is a \$5.6 million rehabilitation of the Cortez Bridge, to begin in 2013-14. The environmental study and design would begin in 2012-13.

MPO executive director Mike Howe said that, while the project is in the plan, it’s a long way down the road.

“Generally, the earlier year the project is in, the more likely it is to happen,” he said.

The DOT’s five-year plan is updated every year and presented annually to the MPO.

Meetings

Anna Maria City

- Dec. 17, 6 p.m., volunteer and staff appreciation night.
- Dec. 18, 7 p.m., city commission meeting.
Anna Maria City Hall, 10005 Gulf Drive, 941-708-6130, www.cityofannamaria.com.

Bradenton Beach

- Dec. 19, 7 p.m., city review of holiday lights in residential/business contest.
- Jan. 12, 3 p.m., ScenicWAVES meeting.
Bradenton Beach City Hall, 107 Gulf Drive N., 941-778-1005, www.cityofbradentonbeach.org.

Holmes Beach

- Nothing scheduled.
Holmes Beach City Hall, 5801 Marina Drive, 941-708-5800, www.holmesbeachfl.org.

Of Interest

- Dec. 19, 9 a.m., Manatee County Legislative Delegation annual meeting at Meals on Wheels PLUS Enrichment Center, 1816 Ninth St. W., Bradenton, 941-727-6349.
- Dec. 25, government offices will be closed for the Christmas holiday. Holmes Beach City Hall also will be closed Dec. 26. *The Islander* office will close for the holiday.
- Jan. 1, government offices will be closed for the new year’s holiday. *The Islander* office will also close.

Send public meeting notices to lisaneff@islander.org.

Renourishment will not include Anna Maria bayside

By Rick Catlin
Islander Reporter

Some Anna Maria residents have questioned why the beach area in front of several homes on North Shore Drive will not be included in Manatee County's next beach renourishment project.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's marker that separates Anna Maria's bayside from the seaside is about 200 yards north of the Rod

& Reel Pier. Properties north and west of the marker are "seaside," according to the DEP, and eligible for inclusion in state and federally funded beach renourishment projects.

Properties south of the marker, including homes on North Shore Drive such as Joan Dickinson's at 865 N. Shore Drive, are considered "bayside" by the DEP and are not eligible for beach funding. The marker is near a groin in the water, just a few yards north of

Dickinson's house.

Anna Maria Mayor Fran Barford held a meeting in November with property owners who are ineligible for inclusion in the next renourishment cycle and offered them alternatives, including a petition to the DEP to consider moving the marker further south.

The bayside of Anna Maria is the only inlet in Florida that the DEP considers "critically eroded" that is not seaside of a DEP marker.

Bradenton Beach post office drops Saturday hours

By Lisa Neff
Islander Reporter

Bradenton Beach's post office plans to cease its Saturday window service Jan. 24.

The post office's weekday business hours will remain unchanged — from 8:30 a.m. to noon and from 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Also, the post office will remain open 24 hours for customer access to P.O. boxes and customers who want to collect held mail and packages can pick up items at the dutch door at the office, 116 Bridge St.

Retail service on Saturday mornings will still be available at post offices in Holmes Beach, Anna Maria and Longboat Key, as well as the Island Mail & More store in Holmes Beach.

The announcement comes as the Manasota Local 7136 of the American Postal Workers Union fights possible job cuts or the closing of the U.S. Postal Service Manasota Processing and Distribution Center in Bradenton near the airport.

However, Bradenton Beach Post Master Charlie Shannon III said the window service hours are in no way related to the possible plant closing, which is being analyzed in an efficiency study by the Postal Service.

Shannon said a review of the records found too few customers on Saturday morning to keep the window open

"It just didn't make business sense to stay open for that period of time," said Shannon, who has been working the window on Saturdays lately.

While the closing of the window for three hours on Saturday will save money, Shannon said, "This really has nothing to do with budget cuts or the plant cuts. It's just a business decision."

Changes at the processing and distribution center would impact Island mail, according to a union letter to local elected officials.

A union statement on its Web site www.keepthemailhere.com said, "We believe the changes proposed will have a major impact on mail delivery in our area. First, all local mail would have to travel farther. Under the plan, all the mail sent from Sarasota, Manatee and parts of Desoto county would be sent to Tampa for processing, instead of being processed locally. For example, a letter mailed from Sarasota to Bradenton would be first trucked to Tampa, postmarked, processed, then sent back to Bradenton for delivery, instead of being processed locally. Second, we could see earlier collection times and later deliveries, even

into the night, to make up for the increased travel time. Third, the postmark for all the mail sent from our area would change to Tampa, unless you actually go to the post office and request your town's postmark."

Postal officials declined to comment.

The union is seeking support from municipal governments in protecting the distribution center and jobs at the site.

On Dec. 10, the Bradenton City Council instructed Mayor Wayne Poston to send a letter to the Postal Service detailing the city's concern with possible job losses in the event the local center closes.



Sweet Adelines Christmas

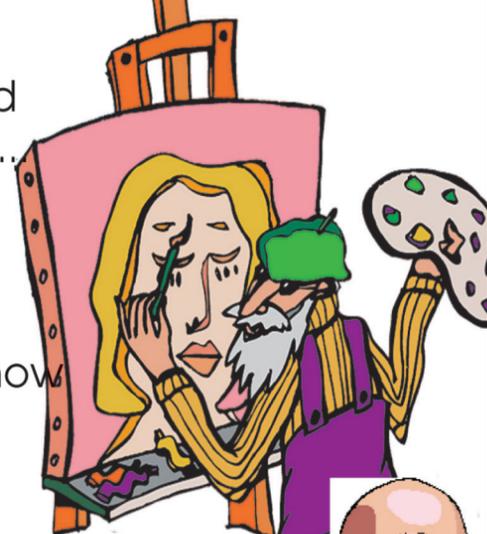
Women from Anna Maria Island and Longboat Key sing in the Sweet Adelines holiday show "Christmas in Toyland" Dec 6 at Bradenton Christian High School. They are, left to right, Pam McMillen, Ginny Nunn, Jeanette Rothberg, Sharon Rogers-Barron, Marge Malin, Judy McClarren, Bunny Klein and Ellen Linsley. For information on the choral group, call Nunn at 941-778-9450, or e-mail enunnjr@tampabay.rr.com.

Where's Woody? Art & Yard Sale

Join us at *The Islander* newspaper office and on the sidewalks of the Island Shopping Center ...

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Commission seeks consensus on Agnelli office

By Lisa Neff
Islander Reporter

Holmes Beach commissioners seek to build a compromise to allow for a contractor's office to exist at a former funeral home.

The matter, the subject of a third continuation of a public hearing Dec. 9, took up more than an hour of the commission's regular meeting.

The commission is facing a special exception request for a contractor's office at Agnelli Group Professional Park, 6000 Marina Drive, in a commercial zoning district.

There are multiple offices in the building, but the commission's concern is with John Agnelli's contractor office, and whether related equipment and materials can be parked and stored at the site.

A crowd gathered in the city hall chamber for the hearing, but only attorneys, city planning consultant Bill Brisson and city public works superintendent Joe Duennes addressed commissioners.

Brisson, in a memo and during the hearing, recommended denying the application.

"It is our recommendation that there comes a point where the limitations of a site must be recognized, particularly in light of the impacts of the use of the property on its neighbors, and that this special exception should be denied," he said.

Brisson said the property already is non-conforming as to impervious-surface coverage "so there is no opportunity to add additional paved parking" and "the ability to provide the appropriate number of parking spaces is questionable."

Also, outside storage would have to be screened and a buffer created to protect neighbors, but "it does not appear that this can be accommodated on site."

Agnelli's attorney, Ricinda Perry, said, "This is so simple and it's really not that big of a deal."

Agnelli doesn't want to use the location as a staging site for construction work, she said. "My client has pulled back the use of that property in comparison to the funeral home."

Agnelli simply wants a contractor's office and the ability to park a couple of trucks, Perry said.

She added that Agnelli would accept stipulations regarding the size and number of construction vehicles and the location of outdoor storage for materials.

Agnelli himself told commissioners, "My place is not a construction site.... That is an office building, and I have a few vehicles in back. I don't want



Bill Brisson, planning consultant for the city of Holmes Beach, discusses his concerns with a special exception request for Agnelli Group Professional Park on Marina Drive.



Attorney Ricinda Perry, representing John Agnelli, suggests some stipulations that might help negotiations for a construction office at Agnelli's building on Marina Drive.

a construction yard."

Attorney Bob Hendrickson, representing neighboring property owners, said that his clients' concern was with what would happen if Agnelli sold the building.

"My clients don't doubt that Mr. Agnelli is a great guy," he said. "What we have to look at here is this application is not filed on behalf of Mr. Agnelli. The special exception follows this property forever.... Whoever buys that property will have the right to take advantage of what this commission decides."

Duennes kept his comments short, telling the commission that what he had hoped to gain from the review was a definition of "construction equipment."

During discussion on the dais, Commissioner David Zaccagnino said he had hoped to hear the attorneys had reached a compromise by last week.

"I think a lot of these things can be addressed," he said.

"We really have to be careful of what we do with the business on the Island. It's a luxury to have mom-

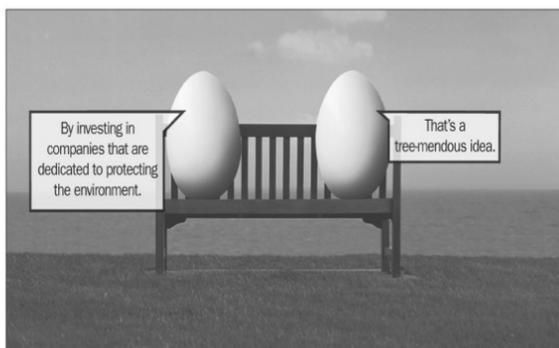
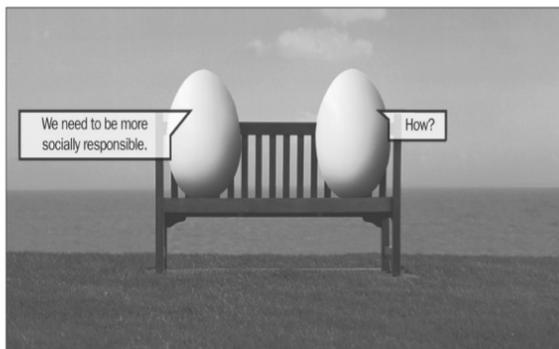
and-pop businesses out here that have an interest in the community.... And local businesses already are having a tough time."

"I would like to see us work out a compromise," Commission Chair Sandy Haas-Martens said, suggesting limiting the number of construction-related vehicles to four, setting hours of their operation from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., prohibiting outdoor storage and requiring Agnelli to erect an additional buffer between his property and neighboring residential properties.

Commissioners John Monetti and Pat Morton questioned whether common ground could be reached.

"I think," Monetti said, referring to Brisson's comments, "the limit of the site needs to be recognized."

At the conclusion of the discussion, the commission asked for attorneys, along with Duennes, to present a recommendation at a Jan. 13 meeting, which will take place at 7 p.m. at city hall, 5701 Marina Drive.



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Our Opinion

Darn, discovered again

The Anna Maria Island version of the coconut telegraph was buzzing last week about a *USA Today* feature on vacationing here. Right here. Yep. Little Anna Maria Island, in the “big boy” media again for being a great vacation spot.

And good food, places to go and things to do.

Writer Kitty Bean Yancey pumped in a mix of history, mentioning first homesteader George Bean, the spawning art scene, a manatee swimming, some nightspots, the natural beauty, free trolley, tempting foods, and a dearth of gated estates.

She seems to think it's cheap here. She names names and gives prices. Sunset at the Sandbar can get you free champagne and a grouper sandwich is under \$9 at the Rod & Reel Pier.

Apparently we've been discovered. We're cheap! Yancey found “digs near the beach for \$1,000 a week in high season.”

“Wallet friendly,” she says, while touting mom-and-pop lodgings and “some oceanfront ones . . . below \$100” a night. It seems the rest of the world is in the age of “\$400-a-night beachfront resorts.” She notes millionaires love our “laid-back friendly atmosphere. Some live at the ritzier north end of the Island. . . .”

It's common practice in travel articles to provide a list of links and contacts, but the *USA Today* sidebar of information on how to get here, where to stay and eat, and at what prices, well, it reads like an ad, and so does Yancey.

Just consider the headline, “The ‘old Florida’ feel of Anna Maria Island.”

The Pine Avenue Restoration developers have the same sort of slogan, but Yancey forgot to mention their efforts.

Maybe next time. And there will be a next time.

We're that good.

Say it ain't so

It seems that artist and man-about-town Mark Alonso, recently defeated in his bid for a commission seat in Anna Maria, has run afoul of the city for “signs” that tout his choice of local businesses on his three-wheel bike.

Oops. While he's hung banners and signs on his “rickshaw” for several years, it appears someone now has complained.

For shame. He does it for friends and for free. Is there no freedom of speech in Anna Maria?

We think it's his right and we plan to stand up for him.



SLICK

And, thankfully, sunsets are free!

By Egan

Your Opinion

Tax detracts

To our elected county commissioners:

Local papers have quoted tourism officials as saying, “a tax increase is not likely to detract visitors,” and “most people don't base their vacation destination on a tax rate.”

Hey, let's be realistic! Tourists look for the bottom-line cost and presently Anna Maria Island rentals must charge a 10.5 percent tax! By raising the resort tax by 25 percent, a 1-cent increase, the tax on our rental apartment will grow to \$333.50.

Our rental market is soft and travel money is tight. A 25 percent resort-tax increase will only make it more expensive for our tourist base. Reading that our restaurants are “cutting prices, hoping for a business boost,” this tax increase means my tenants will have less money to eat out or spend at our local businesses.

Our commissioners need to shop elsewhere to raise revenues or reduce their budget; like the owners and our tourists are now doing. A tourism tax increase will likely detract visitors.

Bill Hahn, Holmes Beach

Vanished...

On Nov. 4, my friend Sabine Musil-Buehler disappeared, vanished.

She was last seen by her boyfriend, Bill Cumber, who said she left after an argument.

I've never had a friend or a family member that this happened to. Emotions and course of action are unfamiliar.

I sit in disbelief that she could just vanish as I see her picture on the TV and in the newspapers.

After finding her car stolen, with her blood in it and parts of the seat cut out, my suspicions of what or who could have done this run over and over in my head like a bad rerun or a song you can't get out of

your head.

I think of all the wonderful things she did for people, of her love for life and for all the animals that found a home in her heart.

I feel totally helpless in trying to find her.

Whoever is responsible covered their tracks.

I would also like to thank *The Islander*, the *Sun*, and the *Bradenton Herald* for keeping the story alive and giving the people hope that we will find out what happened.

They have also given justice to Sabine's integrity and showed just how wonderful a person she was or is, which is hard to say.

I also realize that we can all say that we won't get ourselves in a risky relationship, or fall prey to someone that can con us, but I say never say never because sometimes our hearts and emotions lead to places we normally wouldn't let ourselves go.

Somewhere out there I believe someone has murdered my friend Sabine, and if they did it once, it can be done again.

Debby Hall, Bradenton

Invisible signs

We took a leisurely Saturday afternoon ride around Bean Point intending to note the 300 touted and advertised beach access parking spot signage.

But as Phyllis and I drove through, there is no way we could have located any of those 300 spots.

However, I could not believe the extent of the “no parking” sign pollution.

I would suggest that Anna Maria schedule a tour of beach parking spots.

I resent the use of my tax dollars to renourish Anna Maria beaches in an elitist environment of “stay away” or “come, but don't stop” attitude. I don't believe much in beach renourishment, but if it must be done in Anna Maria, do it with private money.

Emil Peters, Holmes Beach

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Chiles endowment raid proposed to balance state budget

By Paul Roat

Florida lawmakers have set their eyes on raiding a fund established by the late Gov. Lawton Chiles dedicated to assisting elderly people and children as a means to balance dwindling state revenues.

The Lawton Chiles Endowment Fund was created in 1999 from a portion of a massive settlement from tobacco companies, who were sued by the state for contributing to the death of smokers. At one point, the fund totaled \$2.1 billion; economic woes have caused the principal to dwindle to about \$1.2 billion

today.

In 2007, Gov. Charlie Crist received permission from the widow of Chiles, Holmes Beach resident Rhea Chiles, to borrow from the fund to help meet the state budget. That loan was approved.

State lawmakers approved a bill in September that would allow Crist to divert \$364 million from the fund for other state uses. The Chiles family — sons Ed and Bud, and Rhea — sent a strong letter to Chiles and other leading members of the Florida Legislature strongly opposing the proposed raiding of the fund.

Bud Chiles told the St. Petersburg Times that talk in Tallahassee “has now shifted from repaying the endowment to raiding it more, and that the family could no longer stay quiet. ‘Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me,’” Chiles said.

The Chiles family has vowed to fight in court any depletion of the fund by state officials.

Florida Chief Financial Officer Alex Sink and the state’s chief investment analyst, Ash Williams, have both said cashing out investments that power the interest of the fund would be shortsighted while financial markets are down.

“This looks like a case of a quick fix,” Rhea Chiles said. “It seems they want to reach over and grab it without any real effort. It’s not the right thing to do.”

She said that funding to aid elders and children “doesn’t come easily. I don’t think anyone knows how much those people in the trenches rely on that money.

“Here we are in dire straits, almost going over the waterfall, and we don’t want to take care of those who are most vulnerable in our society?”

She said that meetings with lawmakers have been ongoing and “they may be reconsidering” tapping into the endowment principal.



In the Dec. 16, 1998, issue of *The Islander*, headlines announced:

- Florida Gov. Lawton Chiles, father of Sandbar Restaurant owner Ed Chiles in Anna Maria, passed away suddenly Dec. 12 in Tallahassee, just three weeks before he was to step down as Florida’s governor following eight years in that office.

- Holmes Beach city commissioners agreed to study all options to solve traffic problems at Manatee Public Beach, including placement of a traffic signal at the Manatee Avenue-Gulf Drive intersection.

- The fate of the former Holmes Beach City Hall building was to be decided by the city commission after the city’s beautification committee presented a study on potential uses for the structure. The commission had originally intended to demolish the building after moving into a new city hall.

City pier restaurant wants lower rent

Anna Maria City Pier Restaurant owner Mario Schoenfelder, who leases the operation from the city for \$8,115.12 per month, told Mayor Fran Barford he wants the commission to discuss lower payments.

“In light of the current economic conditions that were impossible to foresee at the time of the existing lease agreement, I would respectfully request exploring the possibility of some adjustment to the current monthly rent,” now at \$8,115.12,” said Schoenfelder.

He suggested an adjustment to \$5,000 per month for a 12-month period “would be reasonable.”

Schoenfelder asked the city to “Please, bear in mind our substantial investment to preserve and update the Anna Maria City Pier at the time we took possession.”

The issue will be presented at a future city commission work session.

TEMPS AND DROPS ON AMI

Date	Low	High	Rainfall
Dec. 7	54	70	.20
Dec. 8	60	75	0
Dec. 9	62	84	0
Dec. 10	70	76	0
Dec. 11	64	72	.80
Dec. 12	58	62	Trace
Dec. 13	51	70	0

Average Gulf water temperature 62°

24-hour rainfall accumulation with reading at approximately 5 p.m. daily.

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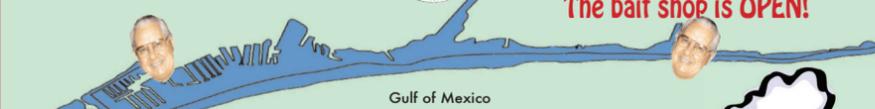
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Anna Maria artist, cyclist faces code violation

By Rick Catlin
Islander Reporter

Artist and former Anna Maria city commission candidate Mark Alonso has been issued a code violation notice by code enforcement officer Gerry Rathvon.

The notice said the city has received a complaint that Alonso is displaying advertising on his three-wheel bicycle. Rathvon said in the letter that such a display violates Sec. 98-5 of the city code and asked Alonso to remove the signage.

Rathvon said the complaint was made anonymously and she is required by the city commission to follow up on all complaints, including those made without a signature.

Alonso, who ran unsuccessfully for a seat on the city commission in the November election, said he doesn't understand why the city is picking on him.

"I was surprised. I thought it was a joke. I put the sign on the bike on my own. It's a matter of free speech. I'm not getting paid for this. I'm just trying to help out a new business."

Alonso said he had no plans to remove the sign.

"I'm going to keep it on until the owner asks me to take it off. I told Gerry to do what she had to do, but this is my freedom of expression, which is the American way."

Alonso, 82, is known in Anna Maria as a eclectic artist who creates collectibles and gifts from discarded items, coconuts and driftwood.

In her letter to Alonso, Rathvon said correcting the problem would be "greatly appreciated."

Anna Maria City, owners settle marina dispute

By Rick Catlin
Islander Reporter

The city of Anna Maria and Jack and Evelyn Fiske reached a settlement moments before the long-standing case was to be heard by the code enforcement board Dec. 11.

The two sides requested that board chairman Bill Iseman recess the code board hearing shortly after it began at 6 p.m. to allow them to settle their differences in conference. Board members agreed to the recess.

Shortly before 7 p.m., city attorney Jim Dye said the parties had reached a settlement. The agreement still has to be approved by the code board, which will receive full details and the facts of the case at a Jan. 12 continuation of the hearing.

The city had contended that the Fiskes had expanded the marina use of the property beyond what was grandfathered by prior administrations. The Fiskes contended they had not expanded the use.

Dye presented a short summary of the settlement to the board, noting that both parties started negotia-

tions "far apart," but were eventually able to compromise on issues.

The agreement will limit the number of onshore storage boats and trailers to five, Dye said. A boat on a trailer counts as one storage unit. No more than five vehicles, other than those belonging to the Fiskes, will be allowed on the property at any time.

Dye said also that increased use of the property by commercial enterprises, such as boat charters and kayak rentals, would be limited by the agreement. Two enterprises, a charter boat and a kayak rental, that launch from the property, will not be permitted to return if either leaves for a year. No new commercial enterprises are allowed under the agreement.

The Fiskes are to retain their 12 wet slips to rent dock space to watercraft owners, but major maintenance of a boat, such as fiberglass repairs or repainting, will not be permitted under the agreement.

Dye agreed that the property has had "historic use as a marina" and that will be permitted to continue, but with no expansion.

"As long as the property stays within the bound-

ary of the agreement, it will be deemed to be in compliance by the city," he said.

Adjacent neighbors had complained that the marina use at the Fiske residence had increased during the closure of Galati Marine for a two-year renovation program.

Toby Kinerk, a neighbor who had brought the original complaint to the city, said he accepts the agreement.

He said the problems began after Galati closed its marina operation for remodeling. A number of operators at Galati then sought to use the Fiske property, resulting in an increase in activity there that was a detriment to the neighbors, according to the complaint.

Kinerk said he and Jack Fiske had been friends before the code complaint began in April and he hopes that can continue with the issues now resolved.

Board members agreed to continue the hearing to 6 p.m. Jan. 12, at which time a written agreement will be presented, including details of all current marina uses at the Fiske property.

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Park site of launch party

By Lisa Neff
Islander Reporter

Bradenton Beach residents endorsed, with some caveats, the concept of creating a kayak launch at Herb Dolan Park.

The endorsement took place during a Dec. 9 city-sponsored meeting in the park at 25th Street by the bay.

The city is working with Scheda Ecological Associates Inc., a consulting firm, on development of a recreational boating master plan that likely will lead to the creation of a mooring field, the hiring of a harbor master and the construction of at least one kayak/canoe launch.

"Public access is what we're about," said city project and program department manager Lisa Marie Phillips, who led the meeting, along with Scheda scientist Dianne Rosensweig. Mayor Michael Pierce also attended.

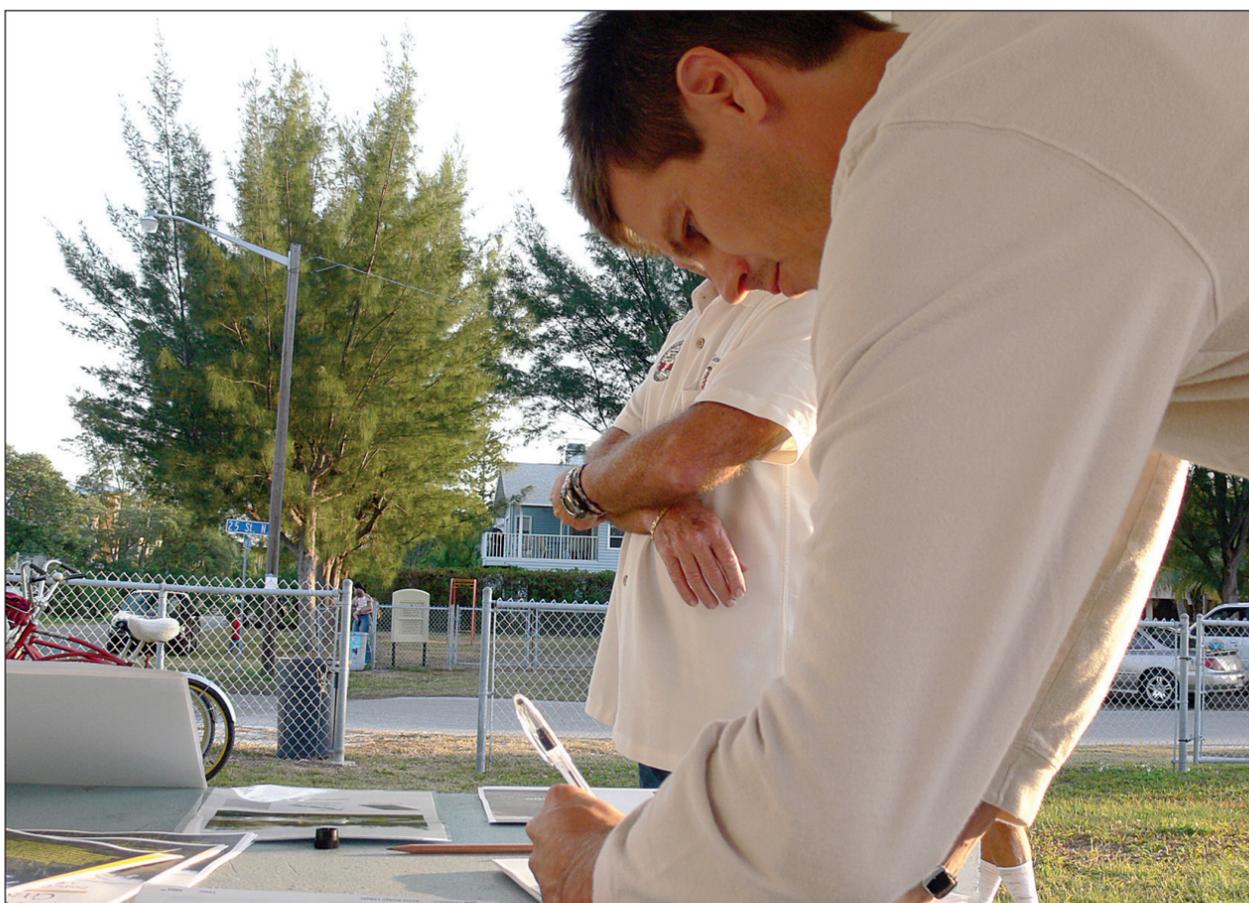
Phillips, gesturing toward the shoreline, said, "People already use this spot for launching. But it needs some improvement to make it safe.... Maybe we can improve it, enhance it for non-motorized boating options in this city."

Rosensweig told the dozen people assembled for the meeting that Scheda associates boated the waters around Bradenton Beach scouting locations for a kayak launch.

"This is the best spot by far," she said, adding that Scheda also invited representatives from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to look at the site.

"You already have existing parking," Rosensweig said. "This is already a good location."

She suggested improvements such as clearing out



Bradenton Beach resident Rick Bisio signs his name as an attendee of a city meeting Dec. 9 at Herb Dolan Park in Bradenton Beach. Paddling enthusiasts and residents gathered to discuss creating a kayak launch at the park as part of a master boating plan. *Islander Photo: Lisa Neff*

rocks along the shore and using a metal mesh and spartina grass to provide stability.

"It holds the sediment back and you don't see the mesh after a while," Rosensweig said. Kayakers could bring their boats through the grass into the water.

"It's a very simple ramp," she added.

Phillips noted the number of kayakers who live in the area, including about 40 kayak owners at the nearby Sandpiper Co-op.

Most of the people at the meeting came from the neighborhood surrounding the park, and no one spoke against the project. A few, however, expressed concerns about the location becoming a daylong destination and also uncontrolled parking.

"I think it's important to improve the park," said resident Rick Bisio, who chairs the city's planning board.

Bisio suggested that part of the improvements involve regulating public parking.

"People are bringing their kayak down," he said. "They park next to the water ... and then you have a

wall of cars between you and the water.

"I would really like to see no parking on the bay-side of this street and we've got plenty of other space to do that."

Phillips emphasized that the city and Scheda are in the preliminary stages of drafting the plan and that a more detailed proposal would be circulated at a later date.

Kayaking has become increasingly popular nationwide in the past decade, nearly replacing the sport of canoeing.

The federally funded National Survey on Recreation and the Environment estimated that there are about 6.7 million kayakers in the country. The top five states in terms of kayakers are California, Hawaii, Florida, Massachusetts and New York, according to the NSRE.

With the rising interest in eco-tourism, the sport is expected to become even more popular, especially in coastal communities such as Anna Maria Island, according to Jill Redress of the National Sporting Goods Association, which first included kayaking in its annual survey of activities in 2007.

Top five states for kayaking

1. California: 495,000
2. Hawaii: 268,000
3. Florida: 186,000
4. Massachusetts: 144,000
5. New York: 124,000

Source: National Survey on Recreation and the Environment/NOAA

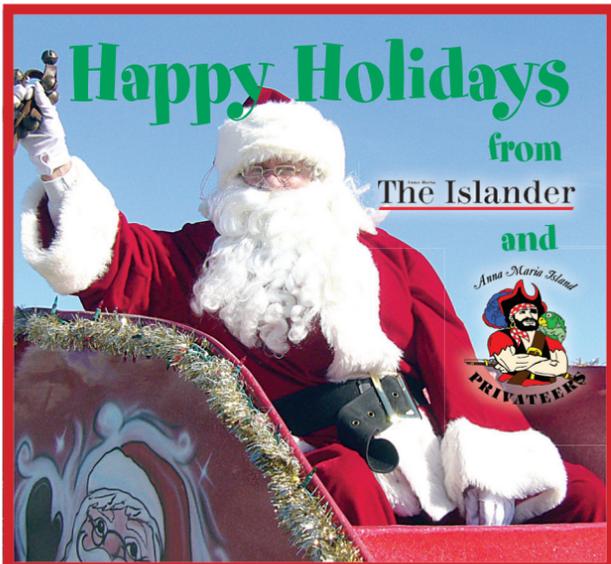
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Fat Cat hosts book signing

Local author Mike Zee will sign copies of his two new paperbacks 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dec. 20 at Fat Cat's, 5400 Holmes Blvd., Holmes Beach.

Zee's two titles are "You Might be Homeless If..." and "The Homeless Man's HOBOLY Joke Book."

"You Might Be Homeless" is a collection of jokes, irony and "words of truth," according to the author.

"The Homeless Man's HOBOLY Joke Book" also contains jokes, words of wisdom and "The Story of Hobo Jonah and the Gourd."

For more information, call Zee at 941-567-4456.

Christmas concert set for Dec. 21

The Anna Maria Island Community Chorus and Orchestra will present its "Season of Joy" concert at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 21, at CrossPointe Fellowship, 8605 Gulf Drive, Holmes Beach.

The concert, with artistic director and principal conductor Alfred Gershfeld, will feature the music of Tchaikovsky, Vivaldi, Rimsky-Korsakov and Handel.

The Tchaikovsky portion of the program will feature selections from "The Nutcracker Ballet."

From Vivaldi, the program includes "Winter" from "The Four Seasons."

The concert also will feature Christmas Carols from around the world and selections from Handel's "Messiah."

Tickets can be purchased at the Anna Maria Island Chamber of Commerce office, 5313 Gulf Drive, Holmes Beach, or by phone by calling Donna Misner at 941-778-8585.

For more information, call Dantia Gould at 941-778-1880.



Maestro appreciation

The Studio at Gulf and Pine on Nov. 15 hosted conductor Alfred Gershfeld of the Anna Maria Island Community Chorus and Orchestra, pictured with his wife, Yelena, for "Meet the Maestro," part of artsHOP weekend. The next day, AMICCO performed its first concert of 2008-09, which will be followed by the "Season of Joy" concert at 2 p.m. Dec. 21 at Crosspointe Fellowship. Islander Photo: Lisa Neff

Birding course offered

Registration has begun for the Manatee County Audubon Society's Jan. 19-31 bird-watching course organized in part by Nancy Dean.

The program consists of four class sessions at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 19, Jan. 22, Jan. 26 and Jan. 29 at Synovus Bank, 2520 Manatee Ave. W., Bradenton.

The fee is \$50 for non-members and \$35 for members.

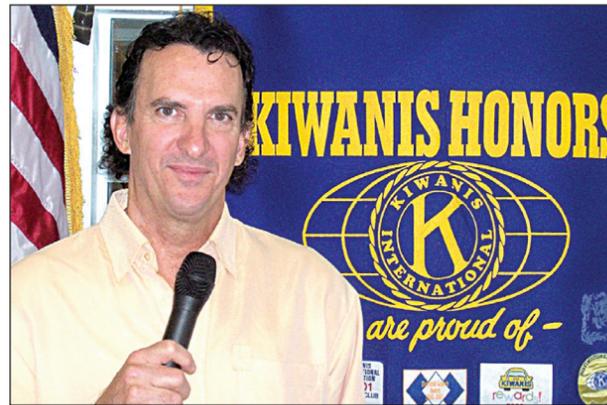
For more information, call Dean at 941-792-9235.

Kiwanis to meet Saturday

The Anna Maria Island Kiwanis Club will meet at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 20, at Cafe on the Beach at the Manatee Public Beach, 4000 Gulf Drive, Holmes Beach.

The guest speaker will be Sissy Quinn, executive administrator of the Anna Maria Island Historical Society.

For more information, contact member Ralph Bassett at 941-795-8697.



Kiwanis gets 'Taste'

Neal Finelli, owner and publisher of Taste Dining and Travel magazine and a resident of Perico Island, speaks to Anna Maria Island Kiwanis Club members about his experience in publishing his magazine. Islander Photo: Ralph Bassett

Butterfly park gets bench from SAM

Save Anna Maria Inc. will donate a bench to the Anna Maria Island Butterfly Park Dec. 17.

The bench will honor Melody Kramer, SAM's first president and a founding member.

Kramer is expected to attend the public ceremony at 3:30 p.m. at the park, located south of Holmes Beach City Hall, 5701 Marina Drive.

The bench will be dedicated as the volunteer caretakers of the park sponsored by North American Butterfly Association's Manasota Chapter work on improvements.

For part of 2008, the park's future was in question as Holmes Beach Mayor Rich Bohnenberger and the butterfly association tried to work out an agreement for responsibility in the garden, which had been damaged by a contractor hired to trim ficus trees.

An agreement was signed this fall, clearing the way for volunteers to begin to replace personalized bricks, as well as work on plantings in the garden, which was designated in 1999.

In November, butterfly association representative Nancy Ambrose ordered a new supply of personalized bricks.

Ambrose said there has been additional activity at the park, including the relocation of the veterans' memorial sign so that it is visible to city hall arrivals, the removal of weeds in anticipation of a major planting in the spring. Also, new sidewalks may be completed by the new year.

Next the butterfly group and SAM announced the dedication of the bench, with current SAM president Billie Martini promising a taste of her rum cake for those who attend the program honoring the past SAM president.

Kramer, before moving away from the Island, served on Anna Maria's planning and zoning board, on the Island Citizens Action Committee and was instrumental in forming SAM.

The Islandwide group, with Kramer at the helm, successfully challenged the replacement plans in 1992-93 for the Anna Maria Island Bridge on Manatee Avenue.

Crosspointe hosts holiday concert

Crosspointe Fellowship will host a Christmas Eve concert featuring harpist Greg Buchanan.

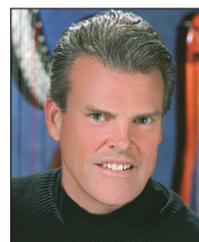
The concert will begin at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 24 at the church, 8605 Gulf Drive, Holmes Beach.

Buchanan, according to a church announcement "has been one of the most sought after

Christian performers in America. His superb musicianship and enthusiastic attitude toward the Christian life are evidenced as he shares his unbelievable musical gift and personal walk of faith."

The concert is free and open to the public on a "first come, first served" basis.

For more information, call the church at 941-778-0719.



Oops, artist 'yard sale' Dec. 20

Inadvertently, *The Islander* published last year's information for this year's art sale at the newspaper, "Where's Woody?"

The sale will be held this year on Dec. 20.

The sale originated as a yard sale at the home of artist Woody Candish, but ran afoul of city "event" permits, and it moved some years ago to the newspaper with Candish as the host.

Candish will again host the annual pre-holiday "yard sale" on the sidewalks of the Island Shopping Center in Holmes Beach.

The annual sale will take place from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 20. Participating artists, whether independent or artists associated with Rest-

less Natives, the Anna Maria Island Artists Guild, Art League, Island Gallery West or any other art organization are invited to have a booth at the sale — they need only to register with *The Islander*.

There is no fee to enter and all area artists are welcome to register and participate in the sale. The deadline to register and take part in the sale is Dec. 18.

For holiday shoppers, it's a last-minute chance to purchase quality original art, much of it at bargain prices, directly from local artists.

To participate in the sidewalk sale, contact Lisa Williams at *The Islander* at 941-778-7978, or e-mail lisaw@islander.org.

Cramer to challenge Anna Maria comp plan

By Rick Catlin
Islander Reporter

Former Anna Maria City Commissioner Linda Cramer has informed Mayor Fran Barford she intends to challenge the adoption of the city's comprehensive plan and future land-use map. Cramer also asked for an extension of time to file the challenge.



Cramer

In a Dec. 11 letter to the mayor, Cramer said she is representing herself because her attorney is dealing with a family illness. She said she needs the 180-extension to formally file her petition as an affected party.

Cramer at one time owned property at the north-

west corner of Gulf Drive and Palm Avenue that became a controversy as to its zoning.

During city commission hearings on the comp-plan, Cramer, then a city commissioner, had remained largely silent on the issue of her property's land-use designation.

Eventually, she indicated that her property should be designated as retail-office-residential in the comp plan as, she claimed, was indicated by the city commission when the comp plan was originated in the late 1980s. But a number of Palmetto Avenue residents successfully argued to the city commission against including that portion of the intersection in ROR. The commission agreed and continued the property's residential zoning in the future land-use map adopted with the comp plan.

Cramer was defeated in her bid for re-election in November 2006.

HB commission steps back from Sandpiper

By Lisa Neff
Islander Reporter

The Holmes Beach City Commission agreed not to pursue concerns with the Bradenton Beach City Commission's decision to issue a quitclaim deed for unimproved 27th Street to the Sandpiper Resort Co-op.

The Holmes Beach commissioners reached the consensus during a Dec. 9 meeting attended by nearly as many Bradenton Beach citizens as Holmes Beach citizens.

On Dec. 4, the Bradenton Beach City Commission approved a final reading of an ordinance executing a quitclaim deed to the mobile home resort for 27th Street from Gulf Drive to Anna Maria Sound, Avenue B and Avenue C from 26th Street to 27th Street, and the northerly unpaved portion of 26th Street from Gulf Drive to Anna Maria Sound.

Sandpiper Co-op members had sought the quitclaim deed because some homes exist on part of the city rights of way and the deed was needed to clarify ownership of land that contains some dwellings, according to Sandpiper attorney Chuck Webb said.

Before the Bradenton Beach vote, Holmes Beach city attorneys Patricia Petruff and Warren Pies had raised concerns about deeding 27th Street to the mobile home park.

Pies and Petruff said a more appropriate action would be to vacate the right of way.

Their primary concern was the access Holmes Beach residents have had to the unimproved street, which is a path to the beach for some.

Sandpiper residents attended the Dec. 9 Holmes Beach City Commission meeting to see whether the city would take any action relative to the issue.

They heard commissioners agree to take no action.

"I don't know where the city of Holmes Beach really needs to get involved with this," said Holmes Beach Commissioner Pat Morton. "I feel we are not really involved with this as a city.... If the property owners there in that area are concerned, then they should step up.... But Holmes Beach does not need to be telling Bradenton Beach what they should be doing with their city."

Commissioner David Zaccagnino added, "It's a Bradenton Beach issue."

Holmes Beach commissioner hospitalized

Holmes Beach City Commissioner Pat Geyer has been hospitalized for an infection.

Earlier this year, Geyer underwent replacement knee surgery.

There were complications that led to an infection, according to City Commission Chair Sandy Haas-Martens, who at a Dec. 9 meeting said the city's thoughts are with Geyer.

Commissioner John Monetti, who owns property near 27th Street, said there are concerns for Holmes Beach.

"The street lies in Bradenton Beach, but there are a lot of citizens that use that street and it's a dedicated public street," he said.

Monetti said he had wanted to see Bradenton Beach commissioners take a different course of action, but that he also understood Sandpiper property owners "truly have had hardship."

Commission chair Sandy Haas-Martens brought the discussion to a close: "So basically what we're saying is we're not going to do anything.... We're not going to spend city dollars at this point. Is everybody in agreement?"

The other commissioners, with Pat Geyer absent for health reasons, said, "Yes."

And Webb, who was on his way to the podium to defend Sandpiper's case, took a seat.

In other business, the city commission:

- Adopted an ordinance amending the city code in regards to candidate qualification to bring Holmes Beach qualifying dates in line with a revised state schedule.

- Authorized the mayor to accept a federal grant for the demolition of a home deemed a "severe repetitive loss" due to flooding. (See story, page 23.)

- Agreed to cancel the scheduled Dec. 23 meeting due to its proximity to the Christmas holiday. City hall will be closed Dec. 25-26.

- Heard from the mayor that a plan to install a sidewalk along Manatee Avenue at the Kingfish Boat Ramp "is still on the radar."

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Committee learns AM pier boardwalk too costly

By Rick Catlin
Islander Reporter

Members of Anna Maria's transportation enhancement grant committee experienced a bit of "sticker shock" at their Dec. 8 meeting when they learned the estimated cost to build a boardwalk and associated amenities at the city pier would be \$879,355, about \$700,000 more than anticipated.

They also learned why the estimate was higher than expected.

Florida Department of Transportation official Chris Piazza prepared and presented the estimate and cautioned that it includes about 45 percent in extra charges. Because the \$358,000 grant the city will receive through the DOT in 2011 is federally funded, Piazza said he had to follow federal guidelines for cost estimates and use "premium pricing."

"These are federal guidelines. It's not how we would do it if it were a state project," Piazza told the committee. Piazza had DOT engineers run a separate estimate and their projection was \$553,000, including everything.

Piazza's estimate is also not the estimate that contractor Steve Kring or developer Mike Coleman, both committee members, would have come up with if they were estimating the project.

"I can do this for about \$11 a linear foot. You've got \$71 a linear foot," Kring said. "I now know why every government project costs so much. I think we can do this 'green' for a lot less green," he said.

Piazza agreed, but said he was bound to follow the federal rules because the money is federal. In addition, he put in "everything the committee had suggested."

His estimate included drainage, landscaping, picnic pavilions, handicap-accessible parking spaces, parking lot improvements, a central pavilion at the pier entrance and other amenities the committee suggested.

"You can reduce the cost considerably if you reduce the scope of work," he said.

Coleman noted that a similar boardwalk at the Robinson Preserve cost about \$17 a linear foot.

Piazza said he had to estimate the costs based upon a "no bid" procedure and using the best possible materials. He had to add an additional 25 percent for project cost, 10 percent for mobilization and 10 percent for "traffic maintenance."

Coleman said those costs are never considered in a private project. If Island contractors are used, there is no mobilization cost.

Piazza told the committee that it does not have to engage the DOT as the engineer and planner on the project. The DOT by law has to use the federal standards, and that includes \$45,000 for design fees. If the city has some agency or person that is certified to perform local projects by the DOT, it can then ignore federal estimate requirements.

City Commissioner Jo Ann Mattick, who chairs the committee, suggested the city partner with the Manatee County engineering department, which is DOT certified.

"That would save a lot of money, and we don't have to put in everything we considered," she said.

Committee members thanked Piazza for his efforts.

"We're not knocking you," Coleman said. "You did what we asked and we thank you."

Kring suggested asking Manatee County engineers and planners to design the project.

Mattick agreed, saying "It's time for the county to support us, considering all the tax money we send them."

Kring said that, if the county balks at providing assistance, he could get a certified engineer to design the plans for about \$10,000.

That money would have to be paid up front, but could be recovered when the grant is delivered, said

Piazza.

Mattick said that before that's considered she would ask Anna Maria Mayor Fran Barford to approach Manatee County officials for assistance and seek support from county commissioners.

Committee members agreed to have Mattick present the boardwalk proposal to the city commission at its Jan. 8 work session.

"We need direction," said Mattick. "We need to get a feel of support, then we can go about getting the cost down."

Mattick had originally estimated a boardwalk could be built for less than \$200,000, based upon her conversations with Bridge Builders of North Carolina, the company that installed the boardwalk at the Robinson Preserve.

She said she hopes to have a better preliminary estimate to give to the commission other than the \$879,000 presented by Piazza.

Committee members agreed the project was not worth pursuing at that price.

"I could not in good conscience spend \$870,000 of the public's money knowing it could be done for a lot less," said Coleman. "The whole idea that because it's a grant, we might as well spend it, is ridiculous," he said.

While she could not speak for other commissioners, Mattick said she "would not consider an \$880,000 boardwalk. It's just a ridiculous amount of money for a simple project."

The \$358,000 federal grant that the city will receive from the DOT in fiscal year 2010-11 has to be used for new projects in the city's business district on Gulf Drive and Pine Avenue. It cannot be used to enhance existing structures such as the city pier, as some people have suggested.

Mattick invited the public to attend the Jan. 8 city commission worksession and provide input.

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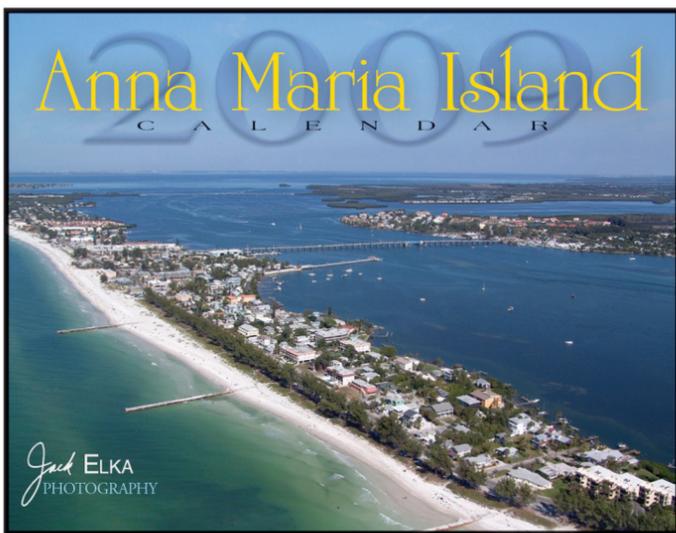
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'Severe loss' to lead to Holmes Beach park

By Lisa Neff
Islander Reporter

Holmes Beach officials continue to negotiate an agreement with a homeowner that could lead to a small lakefront park.

City commissioners on Dec. 9 authorized the mayor to accept a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to cover the demolition of a home and acquisition of the property in the 6800 block of Holmes Boulevard. A FEMA project description states, "The structure suffers repeated damage from floods. The land will be converted to open space and the deed restricted."

FEMA has deemed the home a "severe repetitive loss" due to flooding and ordered the property owners to make a choice — demolish and sell the land, demolish and rebuild, or pay top-price for insurance.

The property owners, Kenneth and Cynthia Rushforth, decided the best option, with FEMA financial support, was to have the home demolished and turn the property over to the city for a park.

"We didn't plan on selling this house" until receiving notice from FEMA earlier this year, Kenneth Rushforth said.

Commissioner David Zaccagnino said that he considered the property a "gift to the city" and thought the city should "do everything possible so we can accept this grant."

Addressing the Rushforths, he said, "You are profiting from this, but you are giving this to the city as a park."

However, the details of the transfer of property still need to be finalized, according to city attorney Patricia Petruff during a sometimes tense discussion of the issue Dec. 9.

The FEMA grant was noticed to the city Nov. 5, with a long list of requirements, the first being that it be accepted within 60 days.

With the deadline for accepting the grant expected to arrive before the commission's next meeting on Jan. 13, the elected officials had to act without a contract or even a signed list of the terms.

The grant is for \$826,000 — about \$800,000 of which most of which would go to the Rushforths for the sale of their property to the city. The rest of the grant money will be used to pay for the costs of demolishing the property, transferring the deed and other associated expenses. It's the cost details that the city attorney is working out with the Rushforths.

Petruff stressed that the commissioners instructed her office to negotiate terms so that "the city have no outlay with respect to this acquisition of property."

Some of the terms proposed by the city include holding up to 5 percent of the grant in a reserve in the event the city encounters unseen costs with the

property, or expenses run higher than anticipated.

Petruff said the city has had some trouble working with the Rushforths.

"I understand how bad the situation is," Petruff said, referring to the Rushforths' predicament. But she stressed that the city's best interests must be served.

"It is not a piece of property that the city needs ... for any purpose," Petruff said, adding that she would like "Mr. Rushforth to sign the term sheet ... and not to renegotiate it here at this meeting."

Commissioners eventually decided to authorize the mayor to accept the FEMA grant, but asked that a list of terms or a contract be presented at their next meeting, which is scheduled for 7 p.m. Jan. 13.

Petruff said that if a contract is not negotiated, the city would return the grant to FEMA.



For the birds

More than 150 people attended the opening reception of "Birds of the FISH Preserve" Friday at the Florida Maritime Museum in Cortez. The art exhibit features photographs of birds either taken at or visiting the 95-acre Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage Preserve. Pictured, from left, is the museum's Roger Allen, photographer Rick Greenspun and Manatee County Commissioner John Chappie. The exhibit is open at the museum at Cortez Road on 119th Street West in Cortez through Jan. 12. *Islander Photo: Paul Roat*

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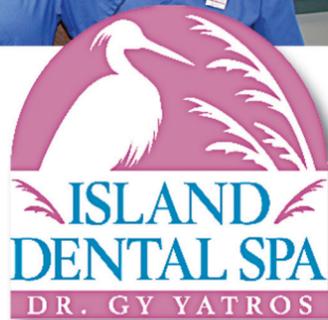
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Streetlife

Island police reports

Anna Maria City

Dec. 8, 100 S. Bay Blvd., city pier, criminal mischief. The pier manager said someone broke into a storage area and took paper products. Damage was \$10. The manager said he suspected fishers in the area as the culprits.

Dec. 9, 100 Spring Ave., Sandbar Restaurant, theft. Someone driving a maroon-colored pickup truck took a moped from the restaurant parking lot.

Bradenton Beach

Nov. 30, 2513 Gulf Drive, Circle K, theft. The manager and district manager noted a clerk had taken approximately \$28 from the cash register. The clerk admitted to the theft. She was issued a trespass warning and charged with theft.

Dec. 3, 2300 block Gulf Drive, license. Officers responded to a vehicle crash where one vehicle left the scene. While running a record check on the errant vehicle, the vehicle was spotted passing them. Officers stopped the truck and determined the man driving did not have a driver's license. He denied striking any vehicle. He was arrested.

Holmes Beach

Dec. 5, 100 block 64th Street, drugs. Bradenton police notified Holmes Beach officers that the driver of a vehicle heading toward the Island appeared to be smoking marijuana. Officers stopped the car and noticed a strong smell of marijuana. Edward B. Wiley-Jones, 26, of Bradenton, produced a glass jar and plastic bag, both filled with marijuana, and he was charged and issued a notice to appear in court.

Dec. 5, 100 block 67th Street, burglary. The complainant said someone entered her home while she was out of town and took a television set and DVD player. Entry was apparently through a sliding-glass door.

Dec. 6, 400 block 28th Street, theft. The com-



Cortez horse corralled

A stainless-steel horse commissioned by the late Robert Sailors home at the Florida Maritime Museum in Cortez — the center of a fountain in back of the former schoolhouse on 119th Street West. Florida Institute of Saltwater Heritage president Allan Garner ran the plumbing pipes, built the pool and installed lighting for the sculpture. The horse was dedicated by Sailors to Cortezians Doris Green, Mary Fulford Green and Sue Maddox. *Islander Photo: Paul Roat*

plaintant said she was cleaning a residence belonging to her husband, and noticed a coin collection was missing. She said many people had been in and out of the residence since she lived there. The collection was valued at \$25,000.

Dec. 6, 4300 Gulf Drive, resisting arrest, impersonation. Officers stopped a man in July for a traffic violation and driving with an expired license. He was charged for both infractions. In September, he failed to appear in court and a bench warrant was issued. In December, the state attorney's office declined to prosecute because the man charged with the traffic infractions died 11 days before he was stopped by police. An investigation revealed the man who was stopped was a relative of the deceased and was falsely using his identification, as his license was suspended at the time of the traffic stop. He was charged with false display of another's driver's license and the traffic infractions.

Dec. 6, 700 block Manatee Avenue, drugs. Officers noticed a vehicle driving at a high rate of

speed on Manatee Avenue. When getting his driver's license, officers noticed a plastic bag in the driver's lap that turned out to contain marijuana and oxycodone and morphine pills. David M. Layne, 47, of Bradenton, admitted to having the marijuana and pills and was arrested.

Dec. 10, 3008 Ave. C, Air America, battery. An employee of the company said his employer yelled at him regarding a job he had done, pushed him into a wooden fence and then fired him. Witnesses backed up the events as described by the employee. A trespass warning was issued to the employee, and battery charges were filed against the employer.

Dec. 11, 2900 block Avenue E, burglary. The complainant said she put her purse on her kitchen counter the night before and it was missing the next day. Missing were credit cards, eyeglasses and a sweater. She contacted her bank, and several charges had been made on her credit cards. A sliding-glass door was open and was the apparent means of entry to the house.


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Obituaries

J. Roger Blake

J. Roger Blake, 81, a resident of Holmes Beach for 35 years, died Dec. 8.

No services were held. Griffith-Cline Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

He is survived by sons Kenneth of Moundville, W. Va., and Randall of Atlanta, Ga.; daughters Barbara Eyster of Crystal River, and Lori Shakespeare of Myrtle Beach, S.C.; and eight grandchildren.

Richard Allen 'Rick' Boyd Jr.

Richard Allen "Rick" Boyd Jr., 53, of Anna Maria and formerly of Prince George's, Md., died Dec. 8.

Born in St. Georges, Mr. Boyd moved to Manatee County at an early age. He was an entertainer, singing at many venues locally, including Café on the Beach in Holmes Beach for seven years. He played John the Baptist in the Promise production in Branson, Mo., for three years. He was a graduate of the Rhema Bible School in Oklahoma, and served with the U.S. Army as an entertainer during the Vietnam era.

A celebration of life was held Dec. 13. Private services will be held at a later date at Sarasota National Cemetery, Sarasota, with military honors. Memorial contributions may be made to the Bay Pines VAMC Hospice Unit, 10000 Bay Pines Blvd., Bay Pines FL 33504. Condolences may be made online at www.shannonfuneralhomes.com. Shannon Funeral Home, Town Chapel, Bradenton, was in charge of arrangements.

He is survived by parents Richard A. Sr. and Barbara of Palmetto; sisters Wanda Rettedal and husband Mike, and Kelley Woods and husband Joshua, all of Sapulpa, Okla.; and nieces Ashley and Briana Boyd and Haley Woods.

Allen N. Clow

Allen N. Clow, 85, of Bradenton, died Dec. 7.

Born in Ypsilanti, Mich., Mr. Clow moved to Bradenton in 1979. He was former owner and operator of Ypsilanti Machine and Welding Shop, worked at

Michigan Consolidated Gas Co., and was supervisor and superintendent of Tidy Island, Bridgeport and Summer Sands condominiums. He was a city councilman in Michigan and implemented a nationwide practice to reduce phosphate in waterways, as well as being in the forefront of recycling. He was a member of Faith United Methodist Church, Bradenton.

No services were held. Memorial contributions may be made to American Heart Association, P.O. Box 840692, Dallas TX 75284-0692. Griffith-Cline Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

He is survived by wife Alexine; sons Scott of Wyoming and Dan of Spring Hill, Fla.; two grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

Kenneth William Holmes

Kenneth William Holmes, 91, of Bradenton and formerly of Holmes Beach, died Dec. 6.

Mr. Holmes was born in Dracut, Mass., and moved to Holmes Beach in 1977. He grew up in Billerica, Mass., where he worked in the family business, the Billerica Diner. He graduated from Howe High School in 1935 and worked for the Boston & Maine railroad. He was a member of the U.S. Naval Air Force as a nose gunner on a PB4Y Privateer and received a Purple Heart among other citations and medals. After the war he returned to the railroad and later retired from John Hancock Life Insurance Co. as an agent. He attended St. Bernard Catholic Church, Holmes Beach, where he was a pancake cook. He was a volunteer at Meals on Wheels. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus and the Holy Name Society.

Memorial Mass was Dec. 13 at the church. Griffith-Cline Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Dorothea "Dolly"; son Kevin and his wife Fane; brother Paul of Billerica, Mass.; sister Catherine Houlne of Nashua, N.H.; grandchildren Kenneth and his wife Kristen, Neil, Timothy and Kristina; and great-grandchildren Corbin, Jenna, Connor and Makayla.

Drusilla 'Sue' Norton Parks

Drusilla "Sue" Norton Parks, 77, of Bradenton, died Dec. 6.

Mrs. Parks was born on Martha's Vineyard Island, Mass., and moved to Manatee County

from Edgartown, Mass., in the 1990s. She was an artist and owned an antique shop as well as holding a real estate license. She was a graduate of the Massachusetts School of Art with a degree in fashion design and illustration. She was Methodist.

A gathering of family and friends will take place at a later date. Griffith-Cline Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

She is survived by brothers S. Bailey Norton Jr. and wife Joan, and Floyd C. Norton and wife Janet, all of Edgartown; nieces Nancy N. Monahan and husband Kenneth R. of Hingham, Mass., and Deborah B. Norton and husband Bill Snyder of Essex Junction, Vt.; nephew Stuart L. Norton and wife Cathi of Bloomington, Ind.; five grandnieces; one grand-nephew; one great-grandniece; and three great-grand-nephews.

Ina J. Raburn

Ina J. Raburn, 92, of Bradenton, died Dec. 7.

A memorial service and celebration of Mrs. Raburn's life will be held for family and friends at 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 20, at the Anna Maria Island Community Center, 407 Magnolia Ave., Anna Maria.

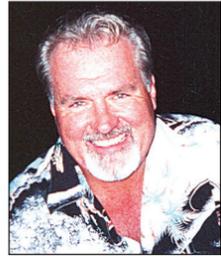
The family suggested memorial donations may be to a favorite charity or the Anna Maria Island Community Center, P.O. Box 253, Anna Maria FL 34216.

Mrs. Raburn is survived by two sons, Doyal and wife Becky and James and wife Janet; daughter Deborah and husband Joe DeVary; grandchildren Kim and husband Mark Ibasfalean of Cortez, Doyal and wife Sandy Raburn, Jason and wife Connie Ison, Autumn and husband Al Rudolph, Justin and wife Melissa Raburn and Amanda Brown; and seven great-grandchildren.

Click!

The Islander welcomes photographs and notices of the milestones in readers' lives — weddings, anniversaries, travels and other events.

Please send notices and photographs with detailed captions — along with complete contact information — to news@islander.org or 5404 Marina Drive, Holmes Beach FL 34217.



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Manatee Shoppers Guide



Tiki and Kitty's Decemberfest



Shopping Daze for the Holidays!

Tiki and Kitty celebrate December's holiday shopping daze!

It's our favorite time of the year to shop for someone other than ourselves!

Our first stop for the holiday shopping spree is **Steff's Stuff** on Longboat Key, where we find lots of vintage dinnerware for serving up dee-lish holiday meals. We're focused on a pretty bowl for our holiday dinner hostess.

In Bradenton, **Community Thrift Shop** is holding its annual pre-Christmas sale Thursday, Dec. 18, then they close for the remainder of the year, reopening Jan. 5, 2009. **Rusty Crickett's** hopes you'll join them Thursday, Dec 18, for a wine and cheese party from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. when everything in the store will be discounted. And for last-minute shoppers, Crickett's will be open Sunday, Dec. 21, for holiday shopping.

The Historic East Bradenton Antiques District features **Braden River Antiques**, a huge store packed with awesome vintage furniture and accessories, **Cobwebs**, a quaint antique shop featuring quality collectables, and **Retro Rosie**, the place for top-notch vintage clothing, including a beautiful selection of bridal gowns. We love **Vintage Vagabond Antiques** and look forward to the twice-a-month Flea Market under the Oaks — and the next event is Sunday, Dec. 21. Say "hi" to Don and Bev when you arrive.

Plus Sizes & More consignment store has a great selection of quality holiday wear for plus-size ladies and we can't rave enough about the friendly service. Check it out if you're looking for a special New Year's Eve outfit!

The Sea Hagg is featuring the "Before-Christmas, After Christmas Sale" Dec 17 thru Dec. 24. Yes, it sounds wacky, but that's what we like!

In Ellenton, browsing thru the **Feed Store Antique Mall** reminds us of holidays spent with Granny and PawPaw — and you, too, should feel the warmth. And at **Charms of Leffingwell**, we find owner Bobbie just as charming and helpful as ever in helping us find the perfect gift items for our loved ones.

Happy shopping and happy holidays to all! See you next year with a brand new scheme for shopping fun.



Kitty can't help but purr when she finds this vintage cat at Cobwebs.



Tiki and Kitty arrive at The Sea Hagg for its Before Christmas After Christmas Sale.

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Winterfest art fair draws from near, far

By Lisa Neff
Islander Reporter

There is an art to traveling.
And travelers seek art.

Many people walked the grassy aisles of the 21st annual Winterfest Dec. 13-14 on the field near Holmes Beach City Hall looking, studying and buying the work of artists and craftspeople.

Some were residents of Anna Maria Island who said they counted on finding unique holiday gifts at the Winterfest Festival of Fine Arts and Crafts.

Also, a noticeable number of Winterfest patrons said they were on vacation in the area or had traveled to Anna Maria Island for the event, which featured about 100 artists, a young artists celebration, local non-profit organizations, concession sales and music.

"I think next to going to the beach, looking for local art is about my favorite thing to do down here," said Carol Cunningham of Ames, Iowa. "Artists often have something very special and unique to say about their homes."

While Cunningham looked for art that captured Anna Maria Island's character, vacationer Howard Joyner looked for value.

"I collect," said the traveler from South Bend,



Peggy Furlin of Lake Mills, Wis., works on a watercolor painting at her tent during the 21st annual Winterfest Dec. 13 in Holmes Beach. *Islander Photos: Lisa Neff*



Shoppers give some consideration to a clothing booth at Winterfest.

Ind. "I don't collect big names, but sometimes I collect people who get big names. So I'm here looking for value. These events are great for finding fine art for affordable prices."

Industry experts call Cunningham and Joyner cultural tourists, and statistics show that they have a larger economic impact on a tourist economy on average than vacationers in general.

Local artist Amelia Gasden called these tourists her lifeblood.

Gasden paints shells, coconuts and other local finds.

"Vacationers are definitely my big customers," said Gasden, who came as a Winterfest shopper, not exhibitor.

She and many patrons left the festival with col-

lectibles for their homes or gifts for others.

And raffle-players left with tickets that could potentially be redeemed for prizes donated by Winterfest artists.

Like the patrons, the 113 Winterfest vendors came from near and far to showcase their watercolor and oil paintings, photographs and textiles, metal-works and jewelry, pottery and sculptures, glasses and woodcarvings, papers and pastels.

The Anna Maria Island Art League hosted the festival to celebrate artists' work and raise money for the not-for-profit organization, which offers a broad range of courses at its studio, 5312 Holmes Blvd., as well as conducts a scholarship program for arts classes.

PLEASE SEE WINTERFEST, NEXT PAGE

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AMICC announces new year classes

The Anna Maria Island Community Center recently announced its lineup of classes for the new year and is encouraging early registration.

Classes include:

- The Cancer Project Food for Life Ellen Jones at 10:30 a.m. Thursdays starting Jan. 15.
- Bridge Lessons with Larry Auerbach at 10:30 a.m. Fridays starting Jan. 2.
- Creative Floral Arranging with Silvia Zadarosni at 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays starting Jan. 21.
- One Stroke Painting with Carol Plymire at 9 a.m. Mondays starting Jan. 19.
- Digital Photography with Clarence Jones at 7 p.m. Tuesdays starting Jan. 13.
- Basic Photography with Jack Elka at 3 p.m. Tuesdays starting Jan. 6.
- Irish Dance at 12:30 p.m. Mondays starting Jan. 5.
- Line Dancing with Bunny Burton at 10:30 a.m. Fridays starting Jan. 2.
- Tai Chi for Beginners with Sherry Fideler at 10:15 a.m. Tuesdays starting Jan. 13.
- Yoga with Linda Morassi at 6:30 p.m. Tuesdays starting Jan. 6.
- Italian for Beginners with Patrizia Storelli at 10:30 a.m. Wednesdays starting Jan. 7.
- French for Beginners with Patrizia Storelli at 1 p.m. Wednesdays starting Jan. 7.
- Spanish for Beginners with Alex Mardones at 6 p.m. Tuesdays starting Jan. 6.
- Spanish for Intermediate with Alex Mardones at 6 p.m. Thursdays starting Jan. 8.

The Center is at 407 Magnolia Ave., Anna Maria.

For more information about classes, including fees, or to register, call the Center at 941-778-1908.



Mackenzie Webber, 5, of Long Island, N.Y., prepares to paint at the children's art booth at Winterfest in Holmes Beach. Young attendees created art on Dec. 13, as well as viewed submissions by Manatee County students in the Young at Art exhibit.

Winterfest awards

In the 21st annual Winterfest Festival of Fine Arts and Crafts, judges on Dec. 13 presented the following awards:

Best of show for two dimensional: Alan Sundal, oils/acrylics.

Best of show for three dimensional: Marilyn Vaillancourt, jewelry.

First place for two dimensional: Cantave Casseus, mixed media.

First place for three dimensional: Warner Whitfield, glass.



Winterfest shoppers browse in the field by Holmes Beach City Hall Dec. 13 looking for fine arts and crafts by professional artists. The event included a display of student work, music and food.

Winterfest art show draws crowd

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

AMIAL also will host Springfest March 14-15, 2009.

For art-as-gifts shoppers, the Artists Guild of Anna Maria Island also hosted a sale Dec. 13 at its gallery in the Island Shopping Center.

And the selling will continue Dec. 20 with *The Islander* newspaper's annual Where's Woody Art Yard Sale from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. outside the newspaper office at the Island Shopping Center, 5404 Marina Drive, Holmes Beach.

Last-minute holiday shopping is the theme for the artists, who in past years gathered in artist Woody Candish's yard for the sale. Local artists will bring out their prints, pottery, paintings, photographs and jewelry at sometimes deeply discounted prices.



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ISLANDER CALENDAR

Wednesday, Dec. 17

3:30 p.m. — Save Anna Maria Island Inc. dedication ceremony honoring Melody Kramer, SAM founder, at the Anna Maria Island Butterfly Park, 5801 Marina Drive, Holmes Beach. Information: 941-518-4431 or 941-778-2549.

5:30 p.m. — Holiday movie and craft project for teens at the Island Branch Library, 5701 Marina Drive, Holmes Beach. Information: 941-778-6341.

6:15 p.m. — Soup Supper at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 6608 Marina Drive, Holmes Beach. Ticket information: 941-778-1813.

7 p.m. — Holden evening prayer at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 6608 Marina Drive, Holmes Beach. Information: 941-778-1813.

Thursday, Dec. 18

10:15 a.m. — Friends of the Island Branch Library book club discussion on "The Last Days of Dogtown" at the Island Branch Library, 5701 Marina Drive, Holmes Beach. Information: 941-778-4669.

Saturday, Dec. 20

8:30 a.m. — The Kiwanis Club of Anna Maria Island hosts a breakfast meeting with guest speaker Sissy Quinn, executive administrator of the Anna Maria Island Historical Society, at Cafe on the Beach, 4000 Gulf Drive, Holmes Beach. Information: 941-795-8697.

9 a.m. to 2 p.m. — The Islander, 5404 Marina Drive, Holmes Beach, hosts the Where's Woody Art Yard Sale.

9 a.m. to noon — Pier Regulars Christmas party at the Anna Maria City Pier, 100 S. Bay Blvd., Anna Maria.

9 a.m. to 2 p.m. — Bridge Street Market featuring music, food and shopping at 107 Bridge Street, Bradenton Beach. Information: 941-518-4431.

Sunday, Dec. 21

Winter begins today.

Hanukkah begins at sundown.

2 p.m. — Anna Maria Island Community Choir and Orchestra "Season of Joy" concert at Crosspointe Fellowship, 8605 Gulf Drive, Anna Maria. Information: 941-778-8585. Fee applies.

Monday, Dec. 22

Manatee public schools close for the winter break. Classes resume Jan. 6.



Ring in the season

Bellringer Major Leckie of the Kiwanis Club of Anna Maria Island beckons Publix Super Market associate Stephen Stern to contribute to the Salvation Army kettle outside the store on Dec. 4. The Kiwanis Club began stationing bellringers outside the store in early December. To volunteer, call Kiwanis member Ralph Bassett at 941-795-8697. Islander Photo: Edna Tiemann

Tuesday, Dec. 23

Noon: The Rotary Club of Anna Maria Island meets for lunch at the BeachHouse Restaurant, 200 Gulf Drive N., Bradenton Beach. Fee. Information: 941-778-1880.

Wednesday, Dec. 24

6 p.m. — Gospel concert featuring Greg Buchanan at Crosspointe Fellowship, 8605 Gulf Drive, Holmes Beach. Information: 941-778-7845.

Ongoing:

• "Birds of the FISH Preserve" photograph exhibit at the Florida Maritime Museum, 4415 119th St. W., Cortez, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday, through Jan. 12. Information: 941-708-6120.

• Wednesdays and Saturdays at 9 a.m., players pitch horseshoes in the pits at Anna Maria City Hall, 10005 Gulf Drive, Anna Maria. Information: 941-708-6130.

• The first and third Mondays of each month, the American Legion Post 24, 2005 75th St. W., Bradenton, hosts dinners for the public. Fee. Information: 941-794-3489.

Coming up:

- Dec. 27, Kiwanis meeting with guest Scott Pardue.
- Dec. 30, Rotary Club meeting at the BeachHouse Restaurant.
- Jan. 3, Bay Wise kayak tour of Otter Key.
- Jan. 3, New Year ritual yoga workshop at Island Yoga Space.

Save the date

- Jan. 6, Juried Open Aqueous and Signature show at The Studio at Gulf and Pine.
- Jan. 17, AME 5k Dolphin Dash.
- Feb. 1, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church 50th Anniversary celebration.

Send calendar announcements to diana@islander.org. Please include the time, date and location of the event, a brief description and a contact via e-mail and phone.

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Island Biz

By Rick Catlin



A special pizza place for locals and visitors

Capalbo's House of Pizza at 10519 Cortez Road, W. has reopened after owners **Craig and Radka Watson** closed the famous pizzeria in September for some major renovations. The Watsons purchased Capalbo's early this year from Mike Capalbo, who operated the restaurant for nearly 20 years.

But pizza lovers need not worry. Mike is still the head pizza chef, serving up his handmade pizzas as fast as customers can order and eat.

"We are the pizza specialty place," said Radka. "We're keeping all the old favorites and have added some new ones. Of course, with Mike around, everything will be fresh and the best."

The popular pizza buffet is open for lunch daily and guests will enjoy happy hour all day at Capalbo's.

Craig and Radka have a complete selection of Italian and American wines for every menu choice.

Capalbo's has a VegGie Speciali pizza for vegetarians, but most say the best pizza is still the Capalbo's (Michael) Speciali pizza.

The popular pizza is served with traditional pepperoni, shredded meatballs, crumbly sausage, homemade sauce, fresh mushrooms, green peppers, onion rings and lots of love.

Capalbo's also serves soups,



Capalbo still at Capalbo's

Radka Watson, right, of Capalbo's House of Pizza and husband Craig, not pictured, recently reopened after remodeling the landmark pizza restaurant at 10519 Cortez Road W. Pictured with Radka is former owner Mike Capalbo, who is still behind the scenes making his specialty pizzas. *Islander Photo: Rick Catlin*

salads and sandwiches in addition to its famous pizza.

"We really want to be the pizza place for locals and our winter visitors," said Radka. "Everything is the same, including the friendly atmosphere."

Capalbo's House of Pizza is open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from noon to 9 p.m. on Sunday.

For more information or to order a pizza, call 941-792-5300.

Seafood Shack reopens

The **Marina Grill** at the Seafood Shack, 4110 127th St. W., Cortez,

reopened for business Dec. 15 following eight months of closure.

Owner **Ham Jones** had closed the landmark seafood restaurant for several reasons, including the four-month closure during the summer of the humpback bridge on 127th Street leading from Cortez Road to the restaurant.

Only the downstairs Marina Grill is open, serving from 11:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. daily.

For more information, call 941-794-1235.

Really Rudy

Rudy's Subs at 9906 Gulf Drive in Anna Maria is now open for business.

Owners **Julie Quinlivan and Sally Woodward** came from Denver follow-

ing a visit and falling in love with Anna Maria Island.

The interior of the store was painted by award-winning muralist Kathy Dawson of Denver, who designed the walls with an Island theme.

Rudy's will feature a Philly cheese steak sandwich for \$5.95 on its menu, in addition to a variety of sub sandwiches, party subs and homemade treats.

For more information, call 941-896-7844.

Realty raves

Island Real Estate at 6101 Marina Drive, Holmes Beach, has named Tom Nelson as the company's top sales agent for November. The top sales award went to John van Zandt.

For more information on Island Real Estate, call 941-778-6066.

Got a new business going up in Anna Maria Island, Cortez, Palma Sola, west Bradenton or Longboat Key? How about a new product or service, an anniversary, a new hire, or an award-winning staff member? Call Island Biz at 941-778-7978, fax your news toll free to 866-362-9821, or e-mail us at news@islander.org.

Island real estate transactions

6300 Flotilla Drive, Unit 79, Shell Point condominium, Holmes Beach, a 1,151 sfla 2bed/2bath condo with shared pool built in 1973 was sold 11/25/08, Murphy to Bauer for \$195,000; list \$209,000.

Jesse Brisson, broker/associate at Gulf-Bay Realty of Anna Maria, can be reached at Gulf-Bay 941-778-7244. Current Island real estate transactions may also be viewed online at www.islander.org. Copyright 2008

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Stalking and finning to a close encounter

The Tampa Bay area appears on its way to becoming a mecca for odd critters of late — odd for our region, at least, both in water and on land.

American crocodiles have made an appearance in northeastern Manatee County. Coyotes are roaming the wilds and not-so-wilds of our eastern neighbors, too. And a whale shark, the largest of fish, has been nuzzling divers in the Gulf of Mexico off Pinellas County beaches.

Weird and wild wildlife for our part of the world.

Crocs

Manatee County had an American crocodile take to its shores earlier this year when a 9-footer was spotted in a pond near the upper reaches of the Manatee River. Crocs were once a common sight in much of peninsular Florida, but hunters pretty much wiped them out around the beginning of the 20th century. This local croc sighting was the first outside of South Florida in decades.

Crocs are slightly larger than alligators, lighter in color, have a more rounded snout and have some teeth that overlap the reptile's upper lip. Habitat is salt or brackish water, rather than the gator's preferred freshwater haunts.

The old salts have the distinction of being the largest of reptiles found in the United States.

Crocodile populations diminished to about 200 due to hunting and habitat depreciation. Thanks to federal protection from hunting and some massive habitat restoration projects in South Florida, the croc population has swelled to more than 2,000.

As the population grows, expansion of the croc's territory has followed.

Let's see: big reptile, carnivorous, lots of teeth, likes saltwater — could we be talking a new breed of dangerous beachgoer looking for a summertime buffet?

Perhaps, but probably not.

Crocodiles are a bit more timid around humans than their alligator cousins. Despite the killer crocodile legends of Australia or the South Pacific, the American croc pretty much leaves people alone. There have been no reported croc-human interactions in Florida; in comparison, alligators have killed 20 Floridians since 1973.

Remember that the population difference between the two critters is huge, with 1.25 million gators in the state versus 2,000 or so crocs.

Crocs do seem to have a fondness for dogs and



cats, though, as a change in their normal diet of snakes, raccoons, other reptiles and birds.

The Manatee County crocodile escaped capture attempts and was last seen heading toward the Manatee River.

Coyotes

Coyotes are also moving into our area. Actually, they're found in all 67 counties in Florida but Monroe, and predictions are that the Florida Keys could eventually support the critters.

It seems coyotes were first introduced to Florida in the 1920s as something for hunting dogs to chase. Some eluded the dogs, found a home in the scrub and started making little coyotes, as many as a half-dozen per litter per year, mostly in the center of the state.

Coyotes also migrated to Florida from the usual western U.S. states and took up residence in the vast forests of the Panhandle.

The canines aren't as large as you would imagine, with big males weighing in at about 40 pounds. They're grayish brown, have coarse fur and can run up to 40 mph.

They're also wily critters. Coyotes are problem solvers, not unlike the cartoon character, and the biggest problem they face is finding dinner. Their solution for what to eat lies in the garbage cans so handily found in subdivisions near their wilderness homes.

As with crocs, coyotes don't much care for humans, although there have been many reports of the dogs staring at humans at dawn and dusk, their prime time to roam and hunt, plus a few attacks over the years.

And they have a fondness for pets. One woman in Collier County lost 26 cats to coyotes. Small dogs are also something of a delicacy.

But coyote experts are quick to point out that the canines are the poster child for an opportunistic eater, and almost anything poses as an opportunity for a coyote. Sea turtle eggs, rabbits, squirrels, berries and

even watermelon on the vine are all coyote food.

If coyotes have migrated to the Sunshine State from places as far west as Wyoming and California, there seems little doubt that they could decide to go to the beach. After all, Anna Maria Island is home to some foxes. Could coyotes be far behind?

Whale shark

Whale sharks are the largest fish found on Earth at upwards of 46 feet. The big fish are in almost all the world's warm-water oceans. They take their name from the first people who spotted one and described it as being as big as a whale and shaped like a shark.

Unlike sharks, though, these critters are filter-feeders. Lunch is plankton, small fish and an occasional mackerel that gets scooped up in their big maw. The only harm they can cause humans is to roll on one, or gum a person to death — both unlikely occurrences. They do seem to be curious about swimmers, though, and don't mind being approached or approaching a diver to see what that other-world thing is doing in its environment.

Whale sharks are also sort of a psychedelic-colored fish. Their skin is marked with a yellow checkboard pattern in spots and stripes over a gray background. The marks are distinct on each shark, making identification easier.

They're mostly deepwater critters, and can dive to 2,300 feet or so. Most of the time, though, they're found near the surface, slurping up plankton. They're also solitary, although whale sharks have been seen clumped up where there is a good food supply.

And whale sharks have no problem coming close to shore. One has been spotted several times in the past few weeks in the near shore Gulf off Pinellas County, and there have been several reports of the big fish off the Island over the years, basking at the surface.

Females bear live young, up to 200 at a time, all about 2 feet long at birth. The fish reach sexual maturity at age 30 or so, and can live from 60 up to 100 years.

Sandscript factoid

The Florida Museum of Natural History has a grim forecast for the fate of whale sharks.

Whale sharks have fins. Fins are prized in east Asia for soup, at upwards of \$100 a bowl. The museum's assessment of whale sharks, both for its meat and its fins:

"At present, commercial fisheries for whale sharks are limited, but may expand from an increased demand for food products. In Taiwan, approximately 100 whale sharks are taken annually. The whale shark meat fetches a high price in this country, and this fact has stimulated larger harvests over the last years. Fishing for this shark also occurs in the Philippines ... providing food for the local fishing communities.

"Whale shark fins are sold in the Orient, especially in Hong Kong. Occasionally, whale sharks are captured accidentally along the coast of India. Sometimes the flesh is eaten and the liver oil is utilized for waterproofing wooden fishing boats and other appliances, for the manufacture of shoe polish and as a treatment for some skin diseases. The processing of whale shark fins has also been reported in India."

Here's a fish that grows to more than 40 feet in length and can live for upwards of 100 years, and we're killing it to make soup?

Mullet run is on in local bays

Florida fishers and fish retailers say the annual mullet run is on.

And the fish is in abundance.

"It's been pretty good so far," said Kim McVey in the fish house at Cortez Bait and Seafood in Cortez village.

Mullet are found worldwide in tropical and subtropical waters, including Florida's bays and estuaries and along the state's Atlantic and Gulf coasts. The primary fishery for Florida mullet is the Gulf and one of the best areas for the tastiest mullet is Cortez.

Mullet — dark bluish on the top and silver on the sides — feed on aquatic plant and algae, swim in large schools and run in the waters in the late fall, when the fish migrate from the back bays to the deeper waters to spawn. This migration is known as a mullet run.

The run traditionally lasts until late December or early January and is influenced by cold fronts over

the Gulf of Mexico.

Coinciding with the mullet run, the Florida Department of Agriculture issued a statement encouraging diners to consider mullet's "great value in the current economic climate."

Last year, Florida commercial fishers harvested more than 7 million pounds of mullet, according to the state.

That number may go up this year due to a change in fishing rules.

In June, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission approved a rule allowing weekend commercial harvest of striped or black mullet. Weekend harvests had been prohibited during certain months of the year to help protect mullet when they spawn. But an FWC stock assessment indicated that mullet populations are now healthy enough statewide to safely sustain commercial mullet harvesting on weekends.

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Gag grouper bite great offshore, in Tampa Bay

By Paul Roat

Fishers have always been keen weather watchers, and last week proved a good example of when to fish and when to wait it out at the dock.

Early in the week saw warm temperatures, moderate winds and great fishing. Later in the week, the cold fronts brought rain, high winds, slowing the action.

On good days in an early winter chill, though, offshore fishing is generally regarded as phenomenal for grouper. The big, tasty fish are moving closer to shore as water temps dip, and they seem hungry. Limit catches are reported by most of the offshore captains.

Redfish and flounder are a good bet in the bays, plus a few skittish catch-and-release snook and equally shy catch-and-release trout. Snook season closed on Dec. 15 until Jan. 31, and trout remain closed through December. But sheepshead are also getting big.

Capt. Mark Johnston out of **Annie's Bait & Tackle** on Cortez Road said he went offshore with **Capt. Sam Kimball** and found grouper fishing to be fantastic. "It's just ridiculous," he said. "We're getting limit catches on every trip." The pair are fishing in 50 to 80 feet of water in the Gulf, with the action coming wherever there is a hard bottom or ledge. Clear water is also important for a good catch, Capt. Mark added. Other catches include lots of mangrove snapper and gag grouper to 20 pounds, caught with live pinfish. In the backwater, they've been fishing in Palma Sola Bay, Anna Maria Sound and near Longboat Key for redfish and black drum. Best action is coming from near deepwater docks. They're also catching reeling up some nice-sized flounder.

Danny Stasny at **Island Discount Tackle** at **Catchers Marina** in Holmes Beach said water and weather has been rough for fishers, but there are still redfish and sheepshead to be caught, plus ladyfish on the seagrass flats in the bays. Snook are in a transitional period en route to their winter homes and don't seem to be biting, he added.



Good offshore catch

Rob Long, left, Joe Long and Amelia Stone are pictured with a portion of their catch of gag grouper, snapper and a big kingfish, all caught in 50 feet of water offshore of Anna Maria Island in the Gulf of Mexico. The group was here "on holiday" from Liverpool, England, and went fishing with Capt. Larry McGuire.

At the **Rod & Reel Pier**, reports include sheepshead and mackerel, but the cold weather has kept most people away from the dock.

Rocky at the **Anna Maria City Pier** said the cold has kept most fishers off the long dock, but the few who did dip a line last week caught flounder, sheepshead and some small bonnethead sharks.

Capt. Larry McGuire of **Show Me The Fish Charters** said that "this is probably the best time to catch gag grouper. As our water temperature drops, grouper move closer in for the winter and they bunch up on the rock piles, ledges and hard bottom areas and they have a ferocious appetite." He is also putting his charters onto limit catches of red grouper, mangrove snapper, amberjack, sharks, triggerfish, porgys and even a few kingfish and Spanish mackerel. He's finding the best action in less than 65 feet of water, with live and cut bait both working great.

Good luck and good fishing.

Power squadron plans classes

The Anna Maria Island Power Squadron will hold a number of courses in January at 1200 71st St. N.W., Bradenton.

The boating course is a two-part safety course scheduled to take place at 8:30 a.m. Jan. 3 and Jan. 10. The fee is \$35, and the course covers boating rules, weather, boat handling and distress signals.

Graduates qualify for a boating education certificate in the state and possible insurance discounts.

Other classes include the "Chart Smart Seminar" at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 13; the "GPS Seminar" at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 20 and the "Knots Seminar" at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 12.

For more information, call Gloria Potter 941-795-0482.

FISH TALES WELCOME

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Anna Maria Island Tides

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Dec 17	2:04 2.1	5:01 1.3	9:48 -0.2	9:20 0.9
Dec 18	3:20 1.7	5:26 1.5	10:28 0.1	11:07 0.7
Dec 19	4:58 1.4	5:55 1.7	11:05 0.4	—
Dec 20	6:54 1.1	6:26 1.8	12:39 0.4	11:40 0.6
Dec 21	8:48 1.1	6:59 2.0	1:52 0.1	12:14 0.9
Dec 22	10:25 1.1	7:33 2.1	2:50 -0.2	12:48 1.0
Dec 23	8:09 2.1	—	3:39 -0.4	—
Dec 24	8:46 2.2	—	4:22 -0.6	—

* Cortez High Tides 7 minutes later — lows 1:06 later

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Island's youth basketball season well under way

By Kevin Cassidy
Islander Reporter

Ross Built edged Coastal Orthopedic 12-10 in a back-and-forth Anna Maria Island Community Center Basketball League Division III basketball game on Dec. 13 at the Center. Coastal Orthopedic grabbed a 6-4 lead late in the second quarter when Emma Moneuse grabbed one of her six offensive rebounds and converted a baseline shot, but Ross Built fought back.

Andrew Ross drove the lane and was fouled at the 4:50 mark of the second quarter. He made one of two foul shots to pull to within one point. And Ross Built grabbed the lead when Andrew Ross passed to brother Jake, who stopped and popped a 10-footer from the wing to give Ross Built a 7-6 lead with 3:08 to play in the half.

Coastal Orthopedic retook the lead when Leo Rose found Luke Valadie along the baseline to give Coastal an 8-7 lead as the half buzzer rang.

Ross Built tied the score early in the third quarter when Jake Ross was fouled driving to the hoop and made one of two free throws. Jake then gave Ross the lead when he rebounded his own miss and converted to give Ross Built a 10-8 lead. With 55 seconds to play in the third, Josh Class drove the lane and was fouled, but was unable to convert either of his two free throws, leaving Ross Built with a two-point lead.

Early in the fourth quarter, Class drove the lane, before passing to an open Valadie, who banked his shot in to tie the score at 10-10. With just over one minute to play, Jake Ross found some space on the right wing and pulled up for a 10-footer. His shot missed, but brother Andrew was there with the offensive rebound putback that turned out to be the game winner.

Jake Ross finished the game with seven points while brother Andrew added five points. Moneuse lead Coastal Orthopedic with four points while Class, Rose and Valadie each added two points in the loss.

In other AMICC basketball league action last week:

Seth Walter scored six points to lead Jessie's Island Store past Air & Energy 12-6 in a Dec. 13 Division III basketball game. Mickey Koczetsut, Gavin Lutus and Brandon Mills completed the scoring for Jessie's in the victory. Air & Energy was led by Michael Latimer's four points and two points from Tyler Yavalar in the loss.

E-Training Solutions received four points apiece from Amanda Bosch-Nyberg, Blaine Jenefsky and Logan Reiber during its Dec. 13 Division II victory over Longboat Observer. Bryce Smith added three points to E-Training's 15-12 victory. Josh Zawistoski scored eight points and Madison Gsell scored four points to lead Longboat Observer in the loss.

Sand Dollar rode a balanced scoring attack that saw five different players score in their 24-13 Division II victory over Panoramic on Dec. 13. Burke McCampbell-Hill paced Sand Dollar with nine points, while Lauren Sapienza, Mikayla Kane and Cameron Brauner each scored four points. Joe Class completed the Sand Dollar scoring with two points. Jake Parsons led Panoramic with seven points, while Jacque Armer, Adam Clark and Emma Terry each scored two points in the loss.



Andrew Ross steals the ball from Leo Rose and is off to the races during Anna Maria Island Community Center Division III basketball action at the Center. Islander Photos: Kevin Cassidy

Daniel Pimental poured in 20 points to lead Island Family Physicians to a 36-27 Division I victory over Fronius on Dec. 13. Kayla Armer chipped in with six points for IFP, which also received four points apiece from Mallory Kosfeld and Lee Bergeron and two points from Zach Guerin in the win. Savannah Schield led Fronius with 14 points, while Taylor Wilson added 11 points in the loss.

Matt Bauer poured in 28 points to lead Rotten Ralph's past Bradenton Prep 50-10 in Premier Division action on Dec. 13. Chandler Hardy scored seven points and Christian Hightower added five points for Rotten Ralph's, which also received four points apiece from Wyatt Hoffman and Daniel Janisch in the victory. Bradenton Prep was led in the loss by Edward Brown's four points and three points apiece from Devin Coulter and Robert Gaugenti.

A Paradise Realty earned a Premier Division victory over Island Real Estate on Dec. 13 behind 14 points from Kyle Sewall and 12 points from Kyle Aritt. Troy Kosewski added four points for Paradise, which also received one point from Patrick Edwards in the victory. Island Real Estate was led by Joe Karasiewicz' 14 points and nine points from Forest Schield. Julian Botero completed the scoring for IRE with four points.

Dips Ice Cream received 13 points from Justin Gargett and 10 points from Max Miller during its 28-27 Division I victory over Island Family Physicians on Dec. 12. Johnny Mattay added three points for Dips, which also received two points from Brennan Gallagher in the victory. Daniel Pimental led all scorers with 17 points. IFP teammates Kayla Armer had four points, while two points apiece from Zach Guerin, Lee Bergeron and Isaiah Beaton completed the scoring for IFP.

Mikayla Kane scored 11 points and Burke McCampbell-Hill chipped in with eight points to lead Sand Dollar to a 25-13 Division II victory over E-Training Solutions on Dec. 12. Cameron Brauner added four points and Lauren Sapienza scored two points to complete the Sand Dollar scoring in the victory. Bryce Smith scored five points and Logan Reiber added four points to lead E-Training Solutions, which also received two points apiece from Mikey Ellsworth and Blaine Jenefsky in the loss.

Josh Zawistoski poured in 16 points to lead Longboat Observer past Panoramic by a 24-16 score during Division II basketball action on Dec. 11. Joey Salinas added four points, while Alexandria Salinas and Chase Lewis each finished with two points. Jake Parsons scored 11 points to lead Panoramic, which also received six points from Adam Clark and one point from Alexia Yavalar in the loss.

Air & Energy cooled off Coastal Orthopedics by a 13-11 score in Division III action on Dec. 11. Michael Latimer showed he's not just a soccer star, leading all scorers with 10 points. Tyler Yavalar added three points for A&E in the victory. Coastal Orthopedics

was led by Luke Valadie's six points, while Emma Moneuse added three points and Josh Class put up two in the loss.

Jessie's Island Store defeated Ross Built 12-8 in Division III action on Dec. 10 behind a balanced scoring attack that saw three players score four points apiece. Mickey Koczetsut, Jean Paul Russo and Seth Walter each had a pair of baskets to lead Jessie's to victory. Ross Built was led by Jake Ross with six points while brother Andrew added two points in the loss.

Island Real Estate edged Rotten Ralph's 33-30 in Premier Division action on Dec. 10 behind 15 points from Forest Schield and 10 points from Joe Karasiewicz. Julian Botero and Zach Evans each added four points for IRE in the victory. Daniel Janisch and Wyatt Hoffman led Rotten Ralph's with 12 and 10 points respectively. Chris Callahan added four points in the loss, while Blake Rivers and Christian Hightower completed the scoring with two points apiece.

Sign up now for indoor soccer

It's back! After a one-year hiatus, the Anna Maria Island Community Center announces the return of its AMICC Indoor Soccer Tournament. This year's tourney will take place Jan. 6-11 with games being played from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday and on Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

As in the past, it will be a double-elimination tourney with male and female divisions from U8 up to U16. Cost is \$100 per team with each team needing a roster of 6-12 players. The deadline for entry is Dec. 29.

Each registered player will receive a tournament T-shirt, and there will be an MVP award for each age division in addition to a first-place prize package and trophy for each division champion.

For more information, contact Center athletic director Andy Jonatzke at 941-778-1908, ext. 9205.

Key Royale golf news

The Key Royale Club men played an 18-hole, better-ball-of-partners game Dec. 10. The team of Danny Hayes and Bob Dickinson rolled to a three-stroke victory after combining to fire a 10-under-par 54. Second place went to the team of Bob Kelly and Chris Collins who finished at 7-under-par 57. Don Latorre and Jim Helgerson matched the 58 carded by John Sagert and Bob Landgren to finish in a tie for third place.

The Key Royale Club men played a nine-hole, two-best-balls-of-foursome match on Dec. 8. The team of Don Ledford, Bob Jorgensen, Earl Huntzinger and John Driscoll matched the 57 carded by Dick Mills, Vince Fanton, John Sagert and Paul Kammerlen to finish in a tie for first place. The team of Gordon McKinna, Fred Meyer, Jim Finn and Pete Weir were two shots back in second place.

Anna Maria Island Community Center basketball schedule

Premier Division (ages 14-17)

Dec. 17	8 p.m.	IRE vs. Academy
Dec. 19	6 p.m.	Paradise vs. Academy
Dec. 19	7 p.m.	Paradise vs. Ralph's

Division I (ages 12-13)

Dec. 18	8 p.m.	Fronius vs. Dips
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Division II (ages 10-11)

Dec. 18	7 p.m.	Sand Dollar vs. Observer
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Division III (ages 8-9)

Dec. 17	7 p.m.	Ross Built vs. Jessie's
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Instructional League (ages 5-7)

Dec. 17	6 p.m.	Bistro vs. Walter
Dec. 18	6 p.m.	Sandbar vs. Walter

Holiday celebrations run Islandwide

By Lisa Neff
Islander Reporter

Islanders celebrated the season of joy from morning to night Dec. 13.

The day began with the annual Anna Maria Island Privateers Christmas Parade, which started in Bayfront Park and traveled the length of the Island — through Anna Maria, Holmes Beach and Bradenton Beach to Coquina Beach.

“My kids look forward to it every year,” said Lydia Tomlinson of Bradenton, who watched the parade pass by on Gulf Drive in Anna Maria. “This is always a big weekend for us — the parade and the lunch and shopping.”

Dozens of Island businesses and organizations participated in the motorized caravan of merriment that ended with Santa Claus in his sleigh.

“Tell him to remember to come down our chimney,” Melanie Kramer of Indianapolis told her son, Jeremy, 8.

Santa and the Privateers remained at Coquina Beach after the parade for a party. Children feasted on free hot dogs and hamburgers, visited with Santa and left with a present from the jolly old elf.

Dec. 13 concluded with the annual Bethlehem Walk organized by Roser Memorial Community Church in Anna Maria and a holiday open house on Bridge Street in Bradenton Beach.

Each year, Roser welcomes a crowd for the Bethlehem Walk, a reenactment of the story of Mary and Joseph searching for shelter for the birth of Jesus.

Many members of the church arrived costumed as shepherds and, walking alongside a donkey and goats, going house to house in the Roser neighborhood with church members posing as Mary and Joseph.

The walk concluded at the church, where the Rev. Gary Batey retold the Christmas story and celebrants gathered for refreshments.

Meanwhile, the Bridge Street Merchants Association presented the open house in Bradenton Beach, an event that coincided with the Cortez Yacht Club’s fifth annual Holiday Lighted Boat Parade in the Intra-coastal Waterway between the Bridge Street Pier and the Cortez Bridge.

Proceeds from Christmas on Bridge Street, raised with an auction of holiday decorations, jewelry, vacation packages and restaurant certificates, benefited the Tingley Memorial Library.

As people strolled the street and browsed the shops, DJ Chuck Weirich played Christmas carols. Organist Carl Parks also performed during the celebration, which included a meet-and-greet with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

“Well, I’ve been real good,” said Bridge Street shopper Ricky Jones, 7. “You can even ask my mom. So I should be getting lots of presents.”

During the open house, Bradenton Beach Mayor Michael Pierce lighted the Christmas tree. Many other businesses, residences and boats in the area, including a number of homes in the nearby Pines Trailer Park, already were festively decorated.

On Dec. 19, the city will hold a contest, presenting four prizes for best decorating in the holiday spirit, according to City Commissioner Janie Robertson.

The city will award first and second prizes in both residential and commercial categories. The top prizes will be \$150 and the second-place prizes will be \$100.



Hernando De Soto Historical Society conquistadors of Bradenton ride on their ship in the Anna Maria Island Privateers Christmas Parade, throwing beads and playing holiday music to please the crowds.



Billy Graham takes a photograph of Mrs. Claus, Loraine Lawrence, Lynda Kubeck and Mr. Claus during the Historic Bridge Street Merchants Association’s holiday celebration Dec. 13. Islander Photo: Lisa Neff



The Anna Maria Island Privateers lead the parade they sponsor, followed by lots of riding supporters and holiday spirit, loads of bead and candy throwing, and, finally, Santa Claus in his sleigh. Islander Photo: Bonner Joy



Holmes Beach Mayor Rich Bohnenberger in the HB Police Department boat/float, throws beads to paradegoers.

Holiday giving

Many merchants in the “downtown” area of Holmes Beach participated in a holiday open house Dec. 5, and some merchants contributed to prize bundles. Folks attending the event were able to submit entry forms for the prizes at the participating locations.

The event was sponsored by *The Islander* and the prize bundles were displayed during the event at the newspaper office.

Three bundles of prizes included some or all of the following gifts from listed merchants:

Anna Maria Island Accommodations: “I Love Anna Maria Island” T-shirt.

Mixon Insurance: Box of candy.

Sun & Surf: “Life is Good” Christmas tree ornaments.

Mister Roberts Resortwear: Canvas cosmetic bag with inspirational message.

Minnie’s Beach Cafe: Minnie’s coffee mug and \$10 restaurant certificate.

Melinda’s Cafe & Catering: Melinda’s own hot sauce.

Color of Coconut: tropical animal magnet.

ReMax Alliance Group: Bottle of wine.

Everything Under the Sun Garden Center: Poinsettia.

Artists Guild: Joan Voyles watercolor print.

Island Gourmet Pizza: Certificate for a free pizza.

AMI Fitness: Free daily passes.

Sweet Peas Samplings: Box of Florida taffy, wine carrier bag, pink flamingo T-shirt.

The Beach Hut: birdhouse, lighthouse, bird-in-a-tree novelty.



And the winner is Kayla Jennis of Holmes Beach, at the Downtown Holmes Beach open house held Dec. 5, where merchants donated gifts, some to three gift baskets, for a drawing with entry forms at their stores during the area holiday event. Kayla receives help from dad to get the “loot” home.

J & J Graphics: Anna Maria Island canvas bag.

AMI Video: \$25 gift certificate.

Acqua Aveda: Aveda products.

Island Traders: Pirate coconut head.

Island Gallery West/Debra Ridgdill: Raku starfish pottery.

Native Rentals: Kayak rentals.

Artists Guild: Watercolor by Cheryl Jorgensen.

Creations by L: Swarovski Crystal bracelet.

Thanks go to Rebecca Barnett of *The Islander* and her crew of elves for helping gather and arrange the holiday gift giveaway program.

Roser's holiday tradition

More than 200 people celebrated the "reason for the season" at Roser Memorial Community Church Dec. 13 when churchgoers staged their annual "Bethlehem Walk" followed by cookies and refreshments at the church.

This year's event began under the portico, where churchgoers were joined by some animals, a donkey, llama and other small farm "pets," as well as Mary and Joseph, portrayed by Charlie Gianiotos and Caitlin Tribble. They were joined by churchgoers, some in period attire, in a walk around the block that is a neighborhood re-enactment, including prearranged visits by Joseph and Mary to homes that serve as inns, in search of shelter and a place to give birth to baby Jesus.

Along the walk, carols will be sung.

Back at the church, Baby Isabella Clements arrives, posing as the newborn baby Jesus with Gianiotos and Tribble as the Rev. Gary Batey reads the Christmas story.

And, at the end of the story, refreshments and cookies were served.



The Rev. Gary Batey introduces the newborn baby Jesus, Isabella Clements, with Charlie Gianiotos and Caitlin Tribble as Joseph and Mary, to the faithful awaiting at Roser Church. Islander Photos: Edna Tiemann



A crowd gathers as Mary and Joseph seek shelter at Roser Cottage/Sato Real Estate during the Bethlehem Walk re-enactment.



Aaliya Mappe carried goat Cocoa on the Bethlehem Walk.



Along for the walk, carols and traditions of the season are left to right, rear, Beryl Love and A.J. Vulgan, and, front, Harriet Keyser and young Emery Vulgan.



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AERIAL PHOTOS of Anna Maria Island. View and purchase online: www.jackelka.com.

GARAGE SALES

ROSER THRIFT SHOP: Open 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday; 9 a.m.- noon Saturday. Lots of Christmas decorations. 511 Pine Ave., Anna Maria. 941-779-2733.

MOVING SALE: 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Dec. 19-20. Dresser, queen bed, fishing prints, tools, much more. Coral Shores subdivision. 4703 Bimini Drive, Bradenton.

BIG SALE! 8 a.m.-1p.m. Saturday, Dec. 20. Tons of children's toys, clothes, furniture, dishes and more. 208 81st St., Holmes Beach.

YARD SALE: Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Dec. 18-20. Multi-family. Dishes, clothes, books, toys, many bargains! 432 44th St. Ct. W., Palmetto Point.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANIMAL NETWORK HAS cats and kittens for adoption at PetSmart on Cortez Road, Bradenton every Saturday and Sunday.

ISLAND ROCK SCHOOL at the Anna Maria Island Community Center. Guitar, bass, drums, flute, saxophone, clarinet, piano and vocals. Call Scott Achor, 941-778-1747, or Koko Ray Hansen, 941-758-0395. Rock on!

ANNOUNCEMENTS Continued

FREE GUN LOCK. Yes, free. Courtesy of the Project Childsafe, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Holmes Beach Police Department. Free at The Islander newspaper office, 5404 Marina Drive, Holmes Beach. Don't be sorry, be safe.

BUTTERFLY PARK BENEFIT: Purchase a personalized brick in the Anna Maria Island Butterfly Park. Two lines, \$40. Three lines, \$50. Forms at The Islander or call 941-518-4431 for more information.

PETS

PARENTS NEEDED for loving homes to foster puppies and kittens until they are old enough for adoption. All food and medical provided. Julie, 941-720-1411.

ADULT CATS in desperate need of loving homes. All are current on vaccines. All applicants screened. Please, call 941-922-0774.

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BIMINI BAY SAILING: Small sailboat rentals and instruction. Day. Week. Month. Sunfish, Laser, Zuma and Precision 15. Call Brian at 941-685-1400.

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FOR RENT: BOAT slip in Holmes Beach. Fits up to 23 feet. \$140/month. 941-778-2581.

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NURSES: PRIVATE DUTY. Long-term home care assisting lady with spinal injury. Six-hour morning shifts available. 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Travel opportunity. 941-383-6953.

HIRING SALES REP: Vast territory, excellent income potential. Ad experience helpful. Computer knowledge a must. E-mail info to bonner@islander.org

HELP WANTED Continued

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT Tingley Library in Bradenton Beach. Friendly atmosphere with great community spirit. It's fun, give it a try! For more information, 941-779-1208.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

GREAT SITE: FORMER service station on strategic Longboat corner. Many business uses possible: gas/convenience store, bank, restaurant, etc. Priced reduced to \$999,000. Longview Realty, 941-383-6112.

KIDS4HIRE

ISLAND TUTORING. Manatee High School sophomore Chris Perez tutors elementary or middle school children. Call 941-778-2979.

CALL ALEXANDRA, 15, for babysitting or odd-jobs. Red Cross certified in first aid and babysitting. 941-778-5352

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NEED A BABYSITTER or pet sitter? Call Kendall! First-aid certified, great with kids and animals! Best on the Island! 941-779-9783.

NEED A BABYSITTER, pet sitter, house sitter or dog walker? Experienced with both children and pets. Red Cross certified in CPR for all ages. Call the twins, Kayla and Ariel Jennis, 941-778-1746. The best team around!

TEEN WITH CHILD daycare experience and Red Cross certified in babysitting. Loves children. Call Katie, 941-778-1491 or 941-447-4057.

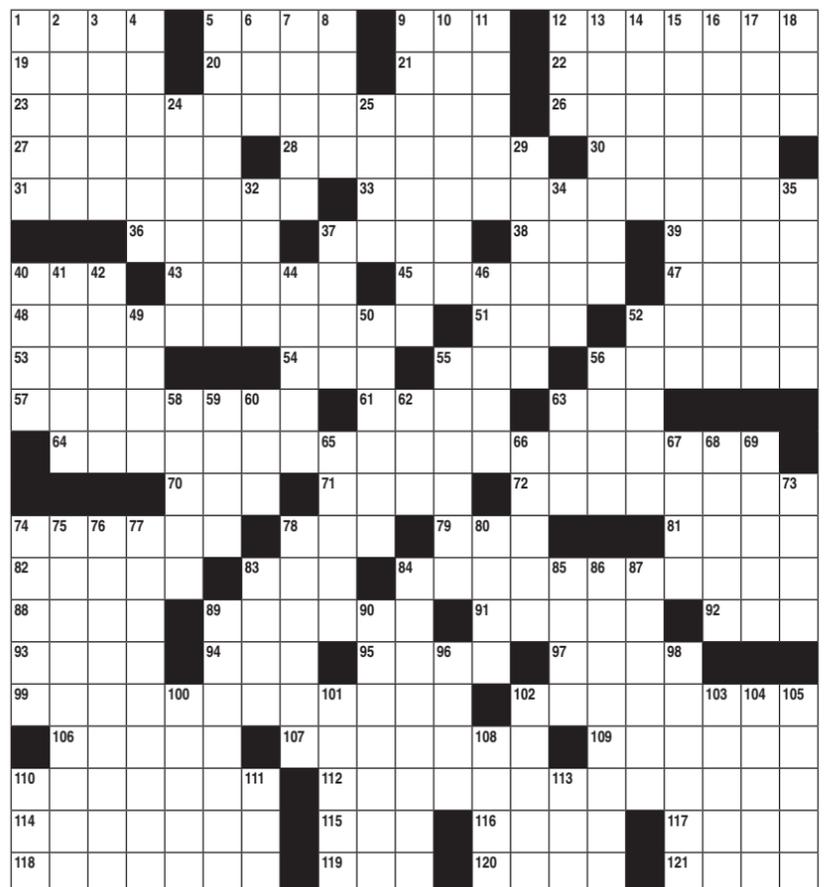
KIDS FOR HIRE ads are FREE for Island youths under 16 looking for work. Ads must be placed in person at The Islander newspaper office, 5404 Marina Drive, Holmes Beach.

New York Times Sunday Magazine Crossword

"HEY!" By Jim Page / Edited by Will Shortz

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Across | 48 *Participates in a bear market | 93 When said three times, a 1970 film | 6 911 respondent |
| 1 Nailed | 51 Word of dissent | 94 "___ Mutual Friend" | 7 Busters? |
| 5 ___ diagram | 52 English actor Sir ___ Jacobi | 95 Seasonal time, in store signs | 8 Sweet 16 org. |
| 9 Is in the Vatican | 53 Suffix with disk | 97 Provokes | 9 How to put a coin in a coin slot |
| 12 Stubborn response | 54 Burn cause | 99 *Engages in some mutual gossip | 10 Lugs |
| 19 Contact sport with a purification ritual | 55 Card's insignia | 102 Loser of a footrace with Hippomenes | 11 "A Visit From St. Nicholas," e.g. |
| 20 Jobs offering of 1998 | 56 Formal | 106 "Christopher Robin went down with ___": Milne | 12 "___ a living" |
| 21 Start of the seventh century | 57 Like many root vegetables for the winter | 107 Queens neighborhood near La Guardia | 13 Entertains, as a child at bedtime |
| 22 Paws | 61 Home of the Wright Brothers Natl. Memorial | 109 Subjects of many bets | 14 Accept a bad defeat, in slang |
| 23 *Distinguishes | 63 It may be illegal to hang one | 110 Clique | 15 Chicken dish |
| 26 Languished | 64 Start of an announcement ... or a hint to what's hidden in the answers to the six starred clues | 112 *Commits knitting boo-boos | 16 Medium of OPEC transactions |
| 27 Little fingers | 70 Empty (of) | 114 Actress Annabella of "The Sopranos" | 17 Some landlocked bodies of water |
| 28 Brightest star in Auriga, from the Latin for "little she-goat" | 71 Landscaper's locale | 115 Brit's oath | 18 Vacation time in Valois |
| 30 Plant with two seed leaves | 72 Free of mistakes | 116 Conceited | 24 Silvery salmon |
| 31 Literary wrap-up | 74 Dutch artist Theo | 117 Sticker? | 25 ___ facto |
| 33 *Does a hostler's work | 78 TV pooch with a temper | 118 Most grinchlike | 29 Lacking limbs |
| 36 ___ onto | 79 Alley-___ pass | 119 Merino mother | 32 Give off |
| 37 Bar product | 81 Ancestor of a banjo | 120 Worrisome engine sound | 34 Moving easily |
| 38 Make a choice | 82 President-___ | 121 "___, how love can trifle with itself!": Shak. | 35 Like Bart Simpson's hair |
| 39 Sharp rebuke | 83 Cross shape | | 37 Cabinet head: Abbr. |
| 40 "Taking Heat" memoirist Fleischer | 84 *Plays at a pond, in a way | | 40 Summer drinks |
| 43 Played out | 88 Speak carelessly | | 41 Like some dirt paths |
| 45 San ___, locale just north of Tijuana, Mexico | 89 Ellen of "Grey's Anatomy" | | 42 "___ old for this!" |
| 47 "The Story-Teller" storyteller | 91 "Dune" director David | | 44 Residential sign |
| | 92 Emerson's "jealous mistress" | | 46 "He-e-ere's Johnny!," e.g. |
| | | | 49 Equatorial land |
| | | | 50 Pulitzer winner for "Russia Leaves the War" |
| | | | 52 Load bearer? |
| | | | 55 Caved in |

Answers appear on page 28 of this edition.



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| 56 Proofreader's mark | 67 Guthrie with a guitar | 83 Ballyhoo | 101 Fingerprint feature |
| 58 Québec traffic sign | 68 Sweater's place | 84 Seconds, say | 102 Very, in music |
| 59 Barbara of "Mission: Impossible" | 69 Make a record of | 85 Temper tantrum | 103 Nothing |
| 60 Co. name ender | 73 Try | 86 Removing, as paint | 104 "Lady T" singer ___ Marie |
| 62 Midpoint: Abbr. | 74 Isn't serious | 87 Everything | 105 Lunkheads |
| 63 Bygone TV inits. | 75 Stipend | 89 Frauds | 108 Answer, shortly |
| 65 Examine covetously | 76 Pain along the course of a nerve | 90 Plane seating specification | 110 Doctrine |
| 66 Brisk | 77 Junkyard junk | 96 Right away | 111 Overly rehearsed |
| | 78 Strict disciplinarian | 98 Retreats | |
| | 80 Bribes | 100 Make it home safely | 113 ___ soldier |

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RENTALS Continued

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RENTALS Continued

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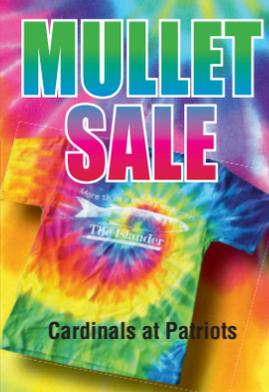
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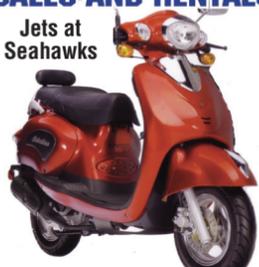
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