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WINTER 2022

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MAGAZINE



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STEPHANIE MOSS DANDRIDGE

I am honored to be featured in our first Agents of Influence editorial, published in the latest Art Basel Miami Beach Magazine. Our 24-page supplement illustrates our company's singular connection to art in a captivating editorial format.

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KING CENTER ENHANCES CULTURAL FLAVOR OF THE SPACE COAST

Back in my salad days, I worked as a reporter in Sarasota, covering the municipal beat for the local newspaper, the *Herald-Tribune*. For 38 years, from 1950 to 1988, the city had the same person at the helm, City Manager Ken Thompson.

Though his long tenure was controversial, Thompson is credited with bringing the sleepy circus city into the modern age. A book written a decade ago, *The Rise of Sarasota: Ken Thompson and the Rebirth of Paradise*, is a testament to his contributions to the city.

In my first year covering City Hall, much of the drama on the city commission centered on Thompson's future with the city. Thompson was 77, and several commissioners believed that his time to retire had come and gone at least several times. But Thompson held fast, and held his opposition at bay for several years, always with the attitude that he would outlast his opposition, which he always did.

When he finally decided to retire in 1988, I was tasked by my editors with getting a debriefing from him on the changes that occurred in the city over his nearly four decades as city manager. Over a one-week period, I visited him in the afternoons at his office and reconstructed his life as city manager.

I don't remember much about those interviews, but two things stand out. He credited his health and mental acuity to a daily regimen of jumping on his backyard trampoline. He credited the city's status as a cultural mecca on Florida's west coast with the decision to build the Van Wezel Center for the Performing Arts.

He told me during the interviews that building the Van Wezel in the 1960s was designed to bring well-heeled newcomers who would be attracted to the city's cultural offerings. In his view, the purple-hued hall on the bayfront would be a symbol of the city's cultural wealth.

I don't use a trampoline on a daily or even occasional basis, but Thompson's "build it and they will come" approach to enhancing the cultural life of a community has stuck with me in the various communities I've covered over the years. I was especially reminded of this philosophy as Maria Sonnenberg put together her story starting on Page 28 updating our readers on the recent improvements to Brevard's Maxwell C. King Center for the Performing Arts.

Like the Van Wezel in Sarasota, the King Center has made a similar impact on Brevard County since opening its doors 34 years ago.

The Florida Legislature approved the initial design work for Brevard's new 2,016-seat performing arts hall in 1983 and the \$12.3 million center opened as the Brevard Performing Arts Center in 1988. A year later, the center was named for Maxwell C. King, the longtime president of Brevard Community College, now Eastern Florida State College, which owns and supports the center.

Over the years, the center has brought countless Broadway shows, symphonies and major headliner acts such as Aretha Franklin and Billy Joel, exerting a profound impact on the cultural life of Brevard County and Central Florida. A recent \$4 million renovation has only enhanced the wow factor for the more than 100,000 people entering its doors for its scores of shows each year.

Undoubtedly, there are many old-time Brevard residents sitting in those seats. But others are occasional tourists thinking about making Brevard their future home. Or maybe even possible job recruits to L3Harris. Residents think with pride what their community has achieved culturally and the visitors think of the benefits that life in Brevard could bring: miles of beaches, a thriving economy, great weather and even outstanding cultural opportunities.

Performing arts venues such as the King Center have been especially affected by the restrictions caused by COVID-19. Even as we were putting the article together a new variant of the coronavirus arrived. It's times like these that we must rally to protect the institutions we value.



Gregory Enns
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Win A Masterpiece of Florida Art Annual Raffle Drawing Sunday, March 6, 2022



This extraordinary 30 x 46 silver gelatin photograph by the master artist Clyde Butcher, featuring a timeless image of Florida's wild and scenic Loxahatchee River, will be raffled off to one lucky art lover, with all proceeds helping to support the Museum and its work in the community.

Tickets are available for donations of \$25 each, or \$60 for three, or \$100 for six chances to win at www.BackusMuseum.org/raffle

Rules for drawing are on display at the Museum. All dates subject to change. Please visit the Museum's website for updates on schedule and events.

Harold Newton (1934-1994). *After the Storm, n.d.* Oil on Masonite, 24 x 30 in. Lightle Collection.
Clyde Butcher (b.1942). *Loxahatchee #30, 1998.* Archival Silver Gelatin Print, Ed.21/50. 30 x 46 in.

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Exposure to the sun — and the passing years — causes cataracts, which blur vision and makes even routine tasks more difficult. Failing eyesight not only significantly affects quality of life and mental health, but it also threatens independence. It need not

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The procedure provides a huge boost to quality of life. Cataracts can exacerbate eye inflammation and glaucoma and makes treatment for issues as diabetes-induced damaged retinas more difficult. Cataract surgery can minimize such complications.

It can also help to prevent falls and car accidents. Studies note that cataract surgery results in fewer falls that can lead to broken hips. Driving safety improves significantly, too.

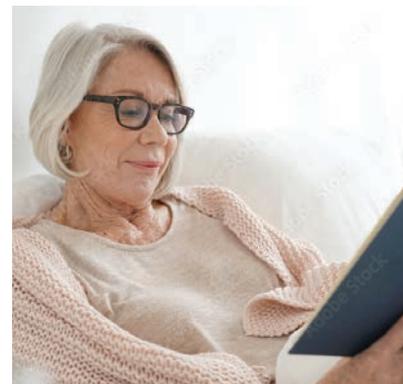
In addition to this, most recently cataract extraction was found to be significantly associated with a lower risk of developing dementia. This was found in a breaking new study published this year in the Journal of the American Medical Association that prospectively followed over 3000 patients that were dementia free at the time of the enrollment. **Patients with early cataract extraction after controlling for other risks had a significantly reduced risk of dementia compared to those who waited.** This is new information is in follow up to a 2020 study by the Gerontological Society of America. This research followed more than 15,000 older adults for six years, and notes that poorer visual acuity was associated with higher rates of dementia, concluding that moderate-to-severe visual impairment could be a risk factor for this deadly mental illness.

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WHAT READERS SAY:

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The lunch and dinner menus are sectioned into Land Fare and Sea Fare with some vegetarian thrown in. The dishes are so popular that Stuart Borton wrote *The Yellow Dog Café Cookbook*, which is for sale online or at the restaurant.

WHAT READERS SAY

"The location screams Florida, the food is to die for, always fresh & properly seasoned. The wait staff is exquisite, the owners are involved in the interaction at the restaurant and also with their community."



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Interactive experiences include giraffe and bird feedings, a children's water play area and kayaking around animal habitats, train rides, aerial adventures and more. Tree Top Trek with zip lines offers a variety of speedy aerial trips from beginner to advanced.

The zoo takes education seriously with learning through experiences as the foundation of its educational programs. It's a great day out for the entire family.

WHAT READERS SAY

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Its journey to the perfect brewhouse and brew-crew was a long road full of many decisions big and small, which all led to its custom-designed, one-of-a-kind, state-of-the-art brew system — an oversized, 10-barrel brewhouse. This is a great place with great flavors. Enjoy!

WHAT READERS SAY

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WHAT READERS SAY

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Golfers can enjoy seeing a host of wildlife, including American bald eagles, sandhill cranes, alligators, deer, foxes

and bobcats. And because of the proximity to the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian and Banana rivers, there is always a refreshing, tropical breeze.

Viera also offers a golf academy for adults and another for juniors. The Hook and Eagle Tavern is a favorite, with food, beverages and a chance to connect with fellow golfers.

WHAT READERS SAY "Beautiful course, reasonably priced, great restaurant on site."

BEST NEW RESTAURANT

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Qscrackincrab.com



Quinisha Bredwood opened Q's Crackin' Crab & Seafood Kitchen, with the Q for Quinisha, in July with high hopes that her favorite recipes would be a hit. And are they ever. Business is booming, she has a staff of 12, and customers are loving her crab dishes and everything else.

She grew up knowing these recipes from childhood, began to cook them for family and friends as an adult, and wanted to bring them to a wider audience. Check her Facebook page for events and photos of some of her exciting dishes. She even has a T-shirt you can buy. Food orders can be placed online for pickup or delivery. Q's also caters.

WHAT READERS SAY

"I have never been so blown away by food. Just what I've been looking for."



**Q'S CRACKIN' CRAB
& SEAFOOD KITCHEN**

STEVEN R. HICKS

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“We are not recommended for women who wish to go unnoticed,” owner Loretta Grella says. The shop offers the latest fashions and trends and to be sure they are always up-to-date she only brings in a limited number of each piece, keeping the store fresh with new items and fantastic new trends. Brands include Show Me Your MuMu, Lucky brand, Free People, For Love & Lemons, Mink Pink and many more.

WHAT READERS SAY
“Wonderful selection and excellent staff.”



DOWNTOWN DIVAS



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PUB AMERICANA



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pubamericana.com

Stacked juicy burgers dripping with cheese and toppings are standard at Pub Americana, beloved for its burgers at its Cocoa and Melbourne restaurants. As described on its website, “Our half-pound burgers start with a gourmet blend of Black Angus brisket, short rib and chuck, grilled to your liking and served on a brioche bun with our famous seasoned parmesan fries.” But it doesn’t stop there.

Diners can try the Angus gourmet blend, turkey, veggie patty, roasted portobello cap and natural organic chicken breast, or substitute lamb patty, half pound of salmon, tuna loin block sashimi style. It offers a great variety of innovative burgers made in a variety of ways. Check it out — there’s something to love for everyone.

WHAT READERS SAY
“Great menu, good service.”



BACKWATER

BEST PLACE FOR BREAKFAST BACKWATER

1904 Municipal Lane, Melbourne
321.837.3925
backwaterflorida.com

Here's something that has never been heard of by most people. Backwater, a breakfast and supper place in Melbourne, lets guests make their own pancakes at eight griddle tables. Buy the batter and cook away. Toppings and sides can be added. It also offers vegan- or gluten-free batter. It says its goal is to bring people together over southern food. And it offers things like fried green bacon lettuce and tomato sandwiches, shrimp and grits, deep fried French toast and more.

Backwater is a small mom-and-pop restaurant. It takes special diets and food allergies seriously and will work to accommodate those needs. This is definitely a place to visit!

WHAT READERS SAY

"Good food, service and atmosphere."

BEST NONPROFIT THE WOMEN'S CENTER

1425 Aurora Road
Melbourne
321.242.3110
400 Julia St.
Titusville
321.607.6811
womenscenter.net



The Women's Center in Melbourne and Titusville helps people who are victims of domestic abuse and rape to heal from their experiences.

Serving more than 6,500 women and men annually, the Women's Center, in its 45th year, can be the first and last step in helping people transition from victims to survivors. Wraparound programs with an understanding of trauma provide victims with the hope, tools and resources needed to build a healthy and successful future for themselves and their families.

Among its many programs: emergency shelter, advocacy, education, sexual assault services, counseling, support groups. The center hosts fund-raising events to help pay for their services.



THE WOMEN'S CENTER

WHAT READERS SAY

"They help victims of any crime while they are going through their personal process and provide support that many don't understand when going through a victimization like domestic violence."

BEST SALON/BARBERSHOP

SILHOUETTE HAIR DESIGN

1950 Highland Ave., Melbourne

321.242.2594

silhouettehair.com



Silhouette specializes in creating unique looks with color, cuts and styling. The staff wants to make clients look and feel beautiful. They have a wealth of professional hair salon and spa services from haircuts and styles to beautiful, custom hair color. The stylists are trained in the most advanced techniques and every appointment begins with a personal consultation. Their high quality salon products deliver great results.

Owner Darlyne McGee has been in the hair salon business for 49 years. She brings all that knowledge and a large staff to Silhouette, which opened in February 2021. Her knowledge and experience are at the heart of Silhouette's excellence.

WHAT READERS SAY

"I have recommended numerous people there over the years and every one of them have become loyal forever customers due to the extreme expertise."



SILHOUETTE HAIR DESIGN

BEST PIZZA

RYAN'S PIZZA | 4 Harrison St., Cocoa | 321.634.5555 | ryanspizzaandpub.com



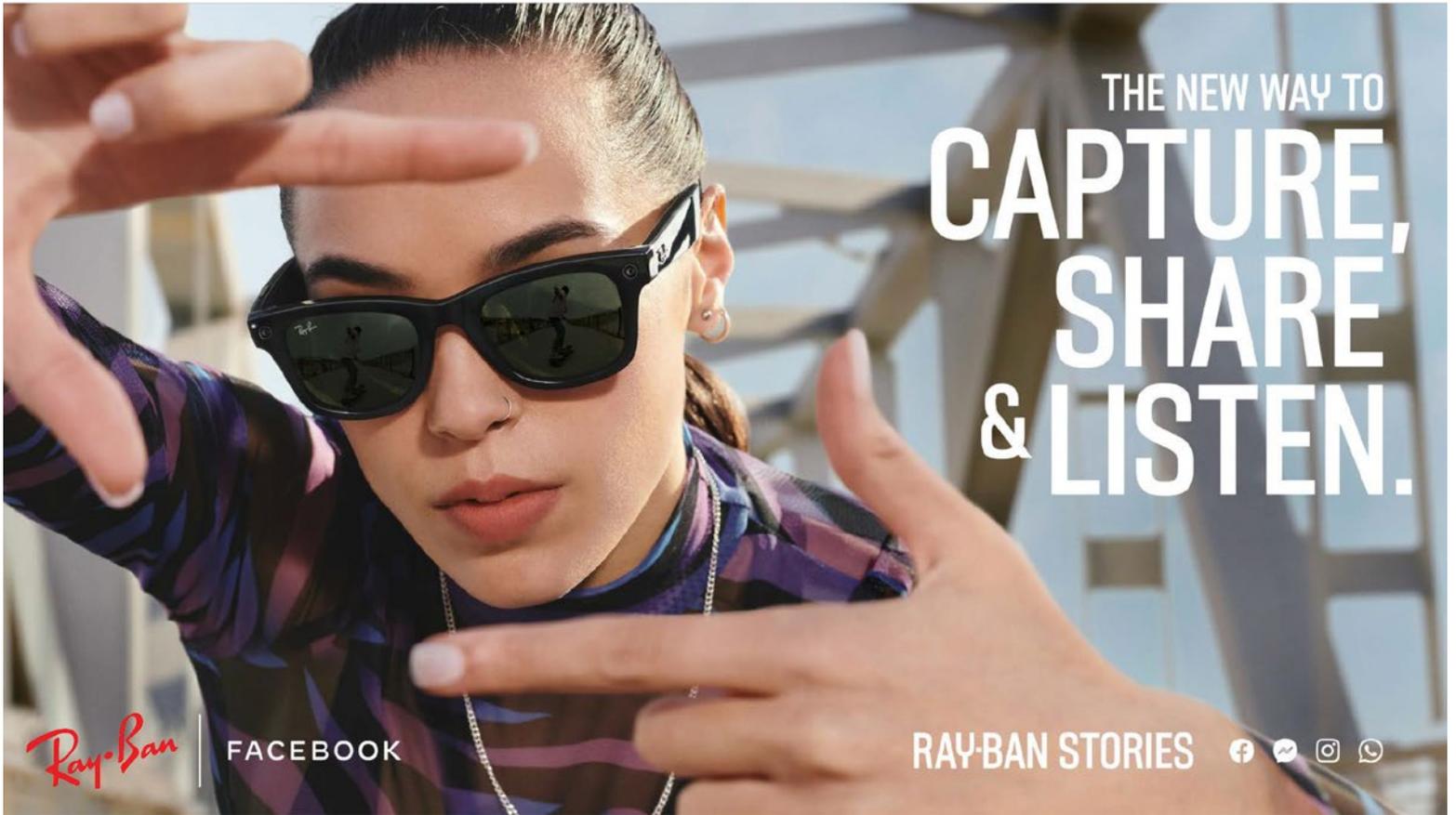
RYAN'S PIZZA



Colorful rooftop umbrellas signal right away that Ryan's Pizza and Pub is no ordinary pizza place. Inside, brick walls and an arch welcome you with warmth. It's a pizza place but it resembles an Irish pub. Diners love it. They can meet friends and talk, lay back and relax, and enjoy the outstanding waterfront view.

The pizzas include something for everyone, such as Philly cheese, BBQ chicken-bacon, New Jersey thin crust, a veggie pizza and more. It also sells pizza by the slice. The menu includes more than pizza — shepherd's pie, quite a few Italian dishes and beer-battered chips. Ryan's is a place you won't want to miss.

WHAT READERS SAY "Great place, great view of the water and the food is delicious."



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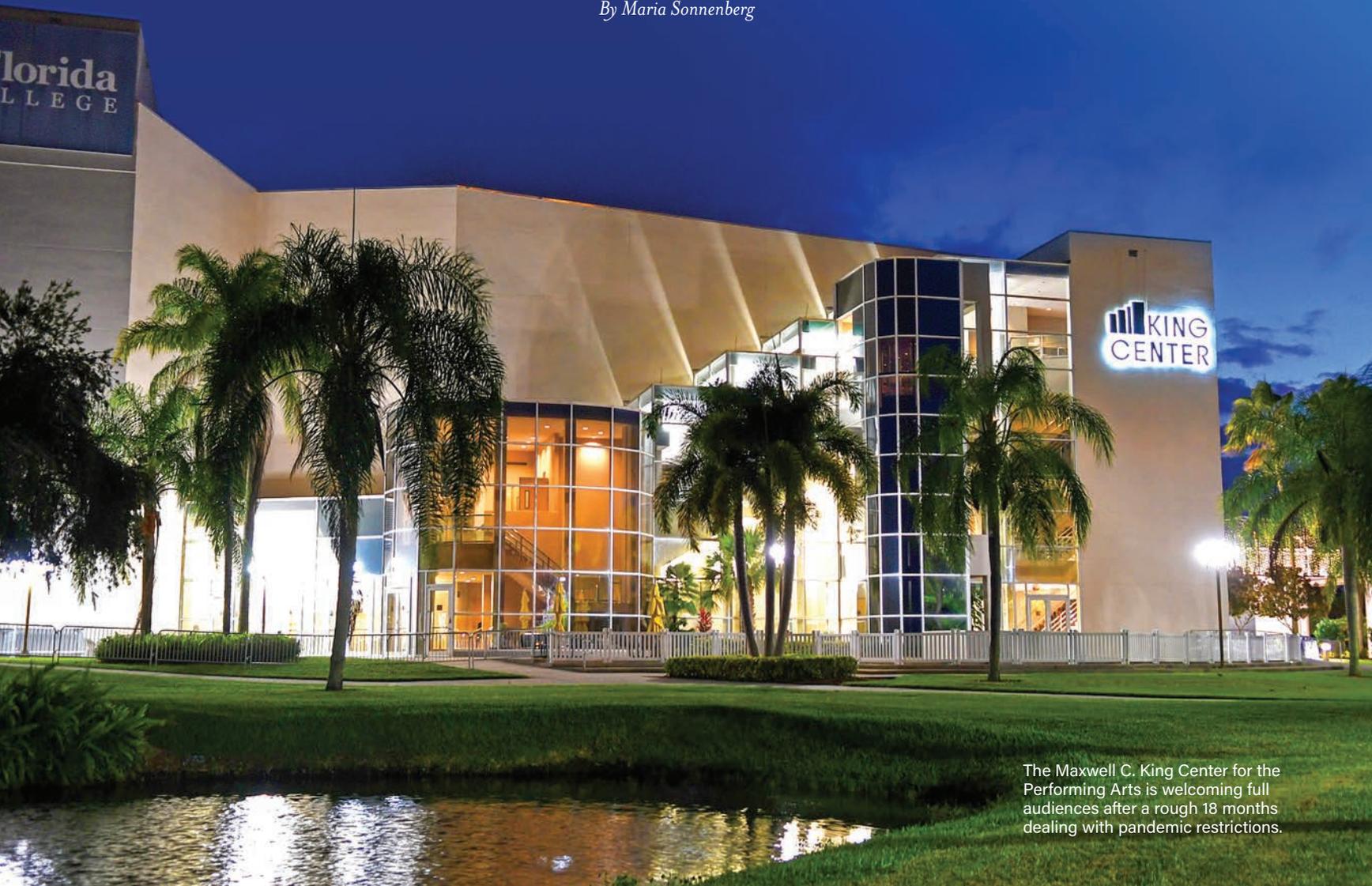
www.atlantisvisioncenter.com



On with the show

Renovated King Center welcomes back audiences with full schedule

By Maria Sonnenberg



The Maxwell C. King Center for the Performing Arts is welcoming full audiences after a rough 18 months dealing with pandemic restrictions.

MAXWELL C. KING CENTER PHOTOS

As the story of Buddy Holly unfolded on its main stage in early December, the Maxwell C. King Center for the Performing Arts was putting in the last piece of the normalcy puzzle.

It had been a rough 18 months for Brevard's premier performing arts venue, but the return of Broadway touring companies such as American Theatre Guild's *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* heralded a brighter tomorrow. Coincidentally, it was a Broadway show,

Singin' in the Rain, that opened the center in April 1988.

ASM Global, the Los Angeles-based venue and event management company that took over the center in early 2020, could not have had worse timing. Almost immediately, it faced pandemic-induced closings, limited capacity re-opening, high-octane cleaning protocols and concert cancellations or postponements because of COVID-19 spikes, all while the building was undergoing major renovations.

Until COVID-19 turned the world upside down, the King Center had hosted more than 100 annual events that attracted more than 100,000 visitors eager to see performers such as Aretha Franklin, Billy Joel, Dolly Parton, Jerry Seinfeld and John Legend.

STAGE WENT DARK

For long months, there were no audiences and no shows. The once robust youth program, which introduced thousands of students in Brevard to the magic of live theater, >>

shuttered. The program, renamed the Titan Youth Theatre, has returned with programs to connect and support co-curricular learning and serve under-resourced students in Title I schools, as well as assist groups that serve youth and young adults.

“As we reimagined our next steps, we worked behind the scenes with artists and their management teams and have selected programs that will educate, enrich and offer enjoyment,” said Karen Wilson, who has led the program for more than two decades.

On the schedule for next year are a range of programs that include The New Shanghai Circus, the U.S. Coast Guard Band, *Trashaganza* by Bash the Trash and *South Pacific*.

The long journey back to normalcy began when promoters such as Roland Guilarte of Brevard Music Group slowly brought concerts

back. Guilarte, a pivotal figure in Central Florida’s jazz scene, has forged a decades-long association with the King Center.

“Having a 28-year relationship with our local performing arts center is key to our success,” Guilarte said. “Although we present concerts at other area venues, the King Center is an A quality venue and has been so for 33 years. We are pleased with how ASM Global Management has started to move things forward.”

EXTENSIVE MAKEOVER

For the center, leaving pandemic woes behind included the November reveal of its newly redesigned and upgraded members-only Crown Club, a haven for patrons. The makeover included a new bar and furniture, impressive lighting fixtures, carpeting and unique memorabilia and art. All in all, the \$4 million >>



A robust schedule of Broadway touring shows is a sure sign things are back to normal at the King Center.



With 2,016 seats, the center is in the middle of the sweet spot for ASM Global, which manages an extensive collection of theaters around the world.



A major makeover for the Crown Club includes new lighting fixtures, furnishings, carpeting and bar.

project was the largest in the center's history.

The Crown Club came on the heels of additional upgrades that featured a complete lobby and bar renovation, an expanded main entrance, art installations and a cutting-edge HVAC system.

As performing venues go, the center is among the perfect ones for ASM Global, which manages theaters ranging in size from 500 to 5,000 seats.

"With 2,016 seats, it's in the middle of the sweet spot," said Bob Papke, general manager of the King Center and ASM's vice president of theaters.

Papke, who lives in Brevard, also oversees operations of theaters as far away as Sydney, Australia, and Manchester, England.

In addition to performing arts centers, ASM Global operates stadiums, arenas, convention centers, amphitheaters, sports stadiums, equestrian centers and even a NASCAR racetrack.

SLOW RECOVERY

As the pandemic waned, the center tentatively reopened with strict safety protocols that included a 25 percent capacity and shows with only one or a couple of performers onstage. It slowly upped capacity to 50 percent and then 100 percent, but audiences didn't initially rush to buy tickets.

"Ticket sales were all over the place, depending on the shows," Papke said.

>>



A complete lobby renovation expanded the main entrance and bar and added new art.

The November appearance of ZZ Top, which forged ahead despite the death of legendary bassist Dusty Hill earlier in the year, brought a full house. It was like old times.

Among the audience was Anthony Catanese, center board chairman and Florida Institute of Technology's president emeritus.

Catanese often attends performances of the venue's resident musical ensemble, the Brevard Symphony Orchestra, as well as the Classic Albums Live series and holiday shows such as *A Peter White Christmas*.

For 2022, Papke is confident that ASM Global's muscle can bring more than 150 acts to the main stage and the 288-seat Studio Theatre.

"We have access to programs we could not get before," he said.

Another sign of business as usual is the return of volunteers. Connie Parker, the center's Volunteer of the Year for 2021, is delighted to be back.

"It's so nice to be doing events each week," said Parker, who started working as a volunteer in 2007. "It's the people that keep me going, the friends I've made here and [all] of the patrons coming in to see these fabulous events."

When it comes to volunteers, management believes the more the merrier.

>>



Connie Parker, the 2021 King Center Volunteer of the Year, is delighted to be back.



Bob Papke, left, the center's general manager and ASM Global's vice president of theaters, enjoys a red carpet moment with Sara and Anthony Catanese, president emeritus of Florida Tech and chairman of the King Center board.



The \$4 million remodeling project at the King Center included improvements to the Crown Club, a place where Crown Club members can gather to socialize during intermissions and prior to shows. A new bar, updated furnishings and impressive light fixtures were part of the remodel.



Renovations to the lobby include major art installations.

“We have over 200 volunteers, but we’re always on the lookout for more,” said Papke.

The volunteers reflect the center’s lifelong grassroots connection with the community. Its exhibit hall has been a favorite for local artists to highlight their work. The Space Coast Ballet also calls the venue home.

EARLY BEGINNINGS

The story goes that, in the 1980s, a group of women approached former president of Brevard Community College [now Eastern Florida State College] Maxwell C. King to lead the drive for a major performing arts theater.

“Max indeed took the lead with the help of Lt. Gov. Tom Adams,” Catanese recalled. “The state eventually provided most of the funding.”

The venue, owned by EFSC, has enjoyed a strong partnership with one of the area’s largest employers, L3Harris, which donated \$1 million toward the recent renovations.

“L3Harris has always been the major supporter,” Catanese said. “They see it as a major recruiting advantage.”

For artists, the King Center is memorable. For example, Josh Groban performed there when he was still a virtual unknown. And Tony Bennett, a repeat performer, liked the acoustics so

much he belted out some songs without any microphone or amplification. Bill Cosby was doing his comedy routine the day that charges against him were announced. A sky full of media helicopters hovered over the King Center that day, but Cosby kept his cool and gave the audience good laughs.

There was talk a few years back of building a larger, newer venue, but the unanimous preference was to bring the existing building up to snuff. The consensus was why mess with success.

“Without the King Center, our community would be a less attractive place to live, work and play,” Catanese said. ⬆



Members of the Crown Club socialize before an evening’s performance.

UPCOMING SHOWS

Jan. 15

Marcus Anderson*

Jan. 22

Brevard Symphony Orchestra *Letters from Home*

Jan. 26

Gaelic Storm
Little Feat

Jan. 30

Dwight Yoakam

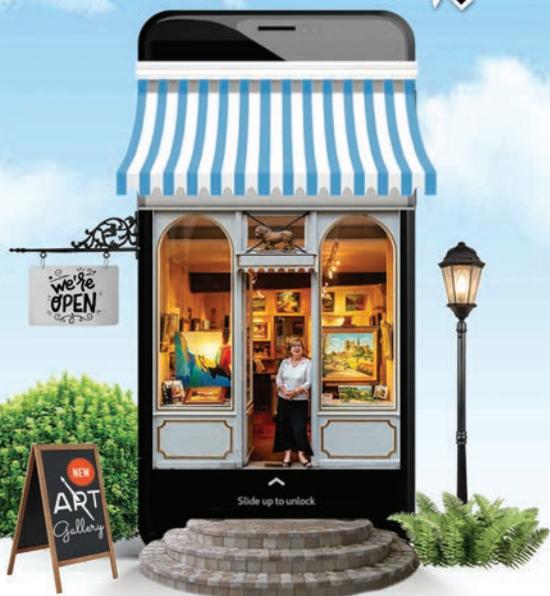
Jan. 31

Tab Benoit

Visit www.kingcenter.com
for more information.

*First of a six-pack Smooth Jazz Series in the Studio Theatre

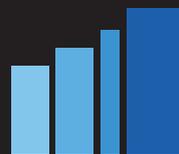
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2. THE WONDEROUS WORLD OF JOHN WILLIAMS

A 90th Birthday Tribute

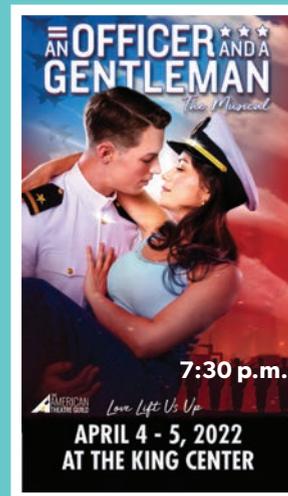
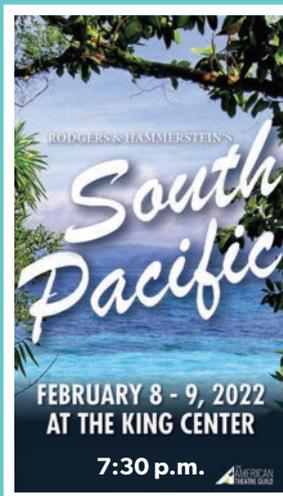
Feb. 5, 2022 – 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

3. PAUL HUANG CLASH OF THE TITANS

March 12, 2022 – 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

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MELISSA PEAT AND MARGARET K. WAGNER

Legal matters are serious issues that require attention to detail and a legal professional trained in the specific field needed. **Coastal Legal Team** can be that advocate and ensure you and your interests are represented properly in accordance with the law. Coastal Legal Team offers skilled advocacy and sound judgment when representing clients in criminal and family legal matters. The entire team is committed to advocating for the clients' best interests without intensifying stress levels.

Founder, Melissa Peat, is from Brevard County, Florida. She graduated from Melbourne High School and then attended Stetson University, where she was a scholar soccer athlete. While at Stetson, Peat majored in business administration with a minor in German and played varsity soccer. She maintained a scholar athlete GPA, studied abroad in Nottingham, England, and completed her studies with honors prior to graduation.

Peat then pursued her ambition to the Florida State University College of Law where she obtained her law degree in 2001 with two academic awards in International Law. She passed the Florida Bar exam in 2001 and then completed an internship with the Florida House of Representatives, while undertaking her master's degree in International Affairs at Florida State University.

Peat completed her master's degree in England in 2002, qualified as a solicitor in England and Wales in 2004 and began practicing in that capacity in England and Wales where she worked for prestigious British firms in London and she remains a consultant senior Solicitor. Peat has twice been invited to lecture on comparative law with the Florida State University campus in London.

In 2010, Peat returned to Florida to pursue her goal of assisting the local community in their legal needs. Peat has worked at the State Attorney's Office and with a local law firm to refine her skills, and then happily founded Coastal Legal Team to further assist those in her community.

Also a life long resident of Brevard County, Coastal Legal Team partner, Margaret McKinley Wagner's, family has been in Brevard County since 1955. Wagner graduated from Melbourne High School in 1997 and continued her education at Florida State University. While there she majored in Psychology with a focus in Forensic Psychology and minored in Criminology. Wagner graduated with an honors in Psychology from FSU in 2001 and immediately enrolled in Stetson University College of Law in St. Petersburg, FL.

After graduating from law school in 2004, Wagner returned to Brevard County and began her career as an Assistant Public Defender in Indian River County. Wagner began in the misdemeanor and juvenile division but quickly moved up to the felony division after only five months. There she began trying serious felony cases such as Capital Sexual Battery, Aggravated Battery on a Law Enforcement Officer, serious drug cases, and other assorted felonies. After about a year in Indian River County, Wagner joined the Public Defender's Office in



STEVEN R. HICKS

Brevard where she continued to focus on serious felony cases including murder cases, capital sexual battery, trafficking in illegal substances, gun crimes, and a whole range of other serious felony cases.

Wagner transitioned into private practice in 2012 where things haven't slowed down much. She continues to handle serious felony cases, misdemeanors, and injunctions and has tried dozens of criminal cases to a jury and has handled thousands upon thousands of cases during her career. Wagner recently joined the Coastal Legal Team family in September 2021 and says that even though she stays busy, she finds that in private practice she can have fewer clients and devote more of her time and attention to each of them. "I find that private practice allows me to create a more effective and meaningful relationship with those I represent, and Coastal Legal Team provides a very holistic approach to the legal issues that affect our clients. I'm very excited about what the future holds for me, Coastal Legal Team, and the clients we are able to help with all aspects of their lives."

People make the business, and it could not be more true at Coastal Legal Team. Peat has hand-picked the team she works with, and the success of the firm reflects her sound judgment. If you need legal help or are looking for a lawyer in Melbourne, Florida, welcome, you found your law firm. Coastal Legal is in downtown Melbourne but the firm represents individuals in multiple counties around the state, handling thousands of criminal cases and has represented many individuals in numerous jury trials. The team's goal is to be certain that their clients' rights are protected and that they receive the most zealous representation possible.



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**VASCULAR
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Squeezed out

Development, disease ravages regional citrus industry

out

By Maria Sonnenberg



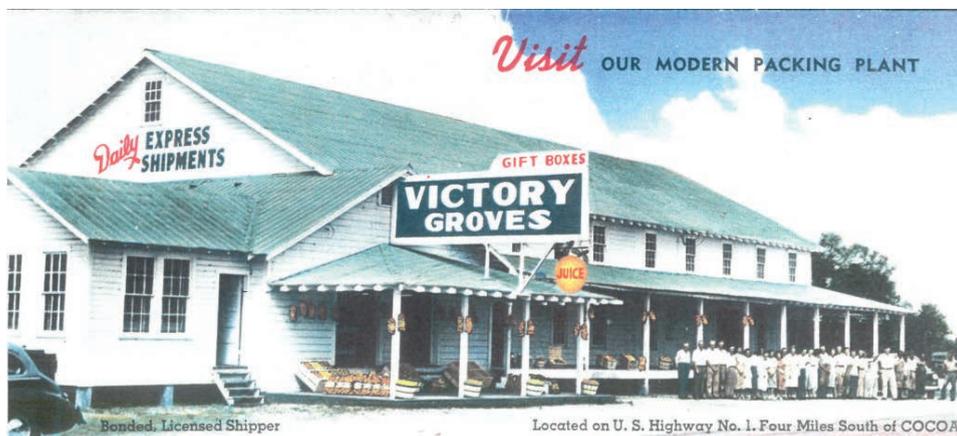
Hobby farmer Jerry Hunt cares for the hundreds of trees in his Merritt Island grove.

JASON HOOK

Among his birthday presents last year, Frank Sullivan III found a very special one: a wooden board. Mind you, this was no ordinary wood, for it was plucked from the demolition of the Sullivan Victory Groves packinghouse in Rockledge, an iconic building that for decades was representative of the once-robust citrus industry in Brevard.

Sullivan had been there as the wrecking ball eradicated history.

“It was very hard to watch, but the packinghouses are a thing of the past, as is the citrus industry in this area,” the 84-year-old said. >>



BREVARD COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The packinghouse of Sullivan Victory Groves was for decades a landmark along U.S. 1 in Rockledge. The building was demolished in 2020, marking the end of a three-generation business that provided thousands of pounds of citrus to buyers around the world.

Disease and development have forever changed the landscape of Brevard, once redolent with the fragrance of orange blossoms that promised the gustatory delights of Indian River fruit, prized above others as the king of oranges.

SELLING BETTER OPTION

Citrus diseases such as canker and greening walloped the Florida citrus industry, but in Brevard, growers also had to cope with the undeniable fact that land was worth more for development than for agriculture, that more — and easier — income could be realized from selling sickly groves than from trying to save them.

“When I first got started, Brevard had 29,000 residents,” Sullivan said. “Now we’re closing in on 700,000.”

Suntree resident Joyce Wilden grew up on her family’s 80-acre farm in Micco. While her parents did not grow citrus, the farm was bordered by citrus groves.

“We used to ride the horses through the groves all the time and one of the grove owners let us pick whatever we wanted for our own consumption,” Wilden said.

The groves were long ago replaced by a housing development.

GROWING NO MORE

Although the south end of the county boasted a fair amount of groves, it could never compare to Merritt Island and Cape Canaveral, once the heart of Brevard’s citrus production. Douglas Dummett’s Merritt Island grove, which survived the devastating freeze of 1835, saved the industry after Dummett distributed cuttings and seeds to growers around the state.



Sullivan, a third-generation citrus grower, witnessed the end of an era with the demolition of the Sullivan Victory Groves packinghouse last year.

Indian River fruit was once so prized and had so many copycats that the appellation is legally permitted to be used only for the fruit grown in a 200-mile strip of land between Daytona Beach and West Palm Beach.

“Back in the day, most of Merritt Island was citrus,” Sullivan said.

The fate of Sullivan Victory Groves reflects the industry’s health. Sullivan, a third-generation grower, once provided juice manufacturers — and orange-loving consumers worldwide — with thousands upon thousands of boxes of oranges, each weighing in close to 100 pounds.

Freezes in 1983, 1985 and 1989, when temperatures hovered at 17 degrees for hours, walloped



Frank Sullivan of Sullivan Victory Groves retains a small mail-order citrus shipping operation, but no longer owns any orange groves.

Victory Groves, as it did all the groves in Brevard. Then came the canker, a citrus disease that blemishes the fruit but does not affect the flavor of the juice. At least the oranges could be salvaged for juice, but then the groves took another hit with the appearance of greening, which keeps the fruit from ripening, from ever reaching maturity.

By 1991, Sullivan had closed the packinghouse.

“There was nothing to pack,” he said.

Indian River fruit was once so prized and had so many copycats that the appellation is legally permitted to be used only for the fruit grown in a 200-mile strip of land between Daytona Beach and West Palm Beach.

PRODUCTION DOWN

Statewide, the industry remains beleaguered. In 1997, the state produced more than 340 million 90-pound boxes of oranges. The number dropped to 67 million boxes last year, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture data. >>



BREVARD COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Douglas Dummett's orange grove on Merritt Island is considered the mother grove for all current citrus in Florida. Cuttings and seedlings from the grove saved the industry after it was decimated by a freeze in 1835.

Sullivan, the consummate grower, remains active in the industry through a small mail order operation, and he keeps abreast of research that might revive the groves. There have been some promising studies such as the experiment in Polk County to grow citrus under screens. The University of Florida has planted disease-hardy experimental trees on the grounds of Field Manor, the historical Merritt Island home once ringed with groves.

The Dundee Citrus Growers cooperative is encouraging growers to get back in action by loaning them \$10 per tree planted, a loan that will be forgiven when the tree bears fruit. In neighboring Indian River County, investors from the United States and abroad have joined forces with commercial growers to help develop 1,500 acres of grapefruit.

ROCKETS WIN OUT

In the Space Coast, however, hopes for an orange renaissance are dim, and the space industry had more than its share in halting the development. Nine thousand acres of prime groves, including Dummett's historical plantings, once grew in the area NASA deemed a buffer zone for the Kennedy Space Center. Sullivan's family owned 850 acres there.

The government bought out the owners but allowed them to lease the groves for a few years, until the Department of the Interior decided that the land should revert to native vegetation.

"They told us that citrus was introduced in Florida only in the 1400s and that it did not qualify as native," Sullivan said.

The groves languished and died.

>>



Harvey's Groves, once a major Space Coast citrus producer, shut its packinghouse doors in 2017.



Hunt sells oranges and other fruit from a cart in front of his Merritt Island grove. The future of Brevard's citrus rests on hobby farmers who, like Hunt, are willing to put in the time and effort to fight pervasive citrus diseases such as canker and greening.

“Now they are overrun with Brazilian peppers,” Sullivan said.

Although not native, citrus has been in America since Christopher Columbus introduced it to the New World in 1493. Ponce de Leon probably planted the first orange trees in Florida and the conquistadors soon noted how well these young transplants grew in Florida's sandy soil and subtropical climate.

The trees grew wild, but were tamed by post-Civil War growers, transplants who abandoned other southern states for the promise of land in Florida.

Sullivan's family had grown oranges since 1900, but these days, Sullivan doesn't own a citrus tree even in his backyard. He still loves orange juice, but he has to buy it at the grocery store, or for a treat, from the Cocoa Beach Winery & Gourmet Market, which carries cold fresh-squeezed orange juice Sullivan

calls the “closest to the real thing.”

GROWERS FIND NICHE

If oranges have a future in Brevard, it will be in the hands of hobby farmers such as Jerry Hunt, a retired general contractor turned grower. Of the 19 Merritt Island acres he farms, six are planted with oranges at 100 trees per acre. Six hundred trees represent a miniscule number for a commercial grower, but every fall, Hunt's trees produce enough navels to keep his little fruit-stand-on-wheels well stocked. A small sign announcing fruit for sale directs customers to the stand in front of his farm, a business he operates under the honor system.

The secret to growing citrus these days is simple but labor-intensive, Hunt said.

“You have to fertilize them a lot, and that might not be cost-effective for the large growers,” he said.

He leans on KPhite, a fungicide he mixes in with the fertilizer to stimulate root growth and combat the greening that chokes orange trees.

Among the oranges are 27 pomelo trees, a type of grapefruit perfect for eating, but not so great as juice. The trees are experimental varieties provided by the University of Florida. If oranges have had it bad in the last few decades, grapefruits experienced it worse and help is needed to bring the groves back to health.

Despite all the setbacks, farmers like Hunt remain optimistic. Each new year could bring welcome news for the groves.

“It'd still an uphill battle, but this year is looking good,” said the optimistic Hunt.

The end result is well worth the effort. As Sullivan notes on his mail order website, “there is no better way to start your morning routine than with a glass of cold, fresh squeezed orange juice.”▲

Reminders OF the past

Grower credited with saving industry

By Maria Sonnenberg

Big Orange on U.S. 1 north of Eau Gallie is hard to miss. The Chamber of Commerce used the 16-foot cement citrus to dispense orange juice to visitors.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
MELBOURNE, FLORIDA
ORANGE RESTORED BY
MELBOURNE ROTARY CLUB

JASON HOOK

Orange-shaped structures dot the Florida landscape and Brevard is no exception. On U.S. 1 in Eau Gallie, the huge cement Big Orange built during the 1960s once served as a fruit stand where the Chamber of Commerce would dispense orange juice to tourists.

Although visitors will no longer enjoy any OJ there, they do stop for a photo op with the round structure, 15 feet in diameter, carefully preserved in all its orange and green glory by the Melbourne Rotary Club.

In the 1800s, Douglas Dummett owned a citrus grove perfectly situated near the warm waters of the Indian River. A good caretaker to the grove, Dummett developed unique grafting techniques that, coupled with the location of his grove, saved his trees from a landmark freeze in 1835, a freeze that felled almost every orange tree in the state.

Dummett graciously provided not only seeds and cuttings from his healthy, hardy trees to his fellow growers, but he also showed them a technique to propagate by grafting buds of sweet

orange trees onto the stumps of the wild sour orange trees, a process that speeded growth and increased the tree's endurance.

For his efforts, Dummett has been called the father of Florida citrus. Unfortunately, his groves did not survive. The United States government decided to allow the 9,000 acres of orange groves that buffer Kennedy Space Center to revert to the wild, and the trees that once saved the Florida citrus industry soon were just a footnote in history. ▲



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A triple tray ceiling with faux beams spans the great room in the house Joyal Homes created for Michelle and Chuck Muller. A 10-blade ceiling fan adds a touch of industrial to the setting.

ROB DOWNEY PHOTOS

The perfect mix

New dream home incorporates couple's contrasting styles

By Maria Sonnenberg

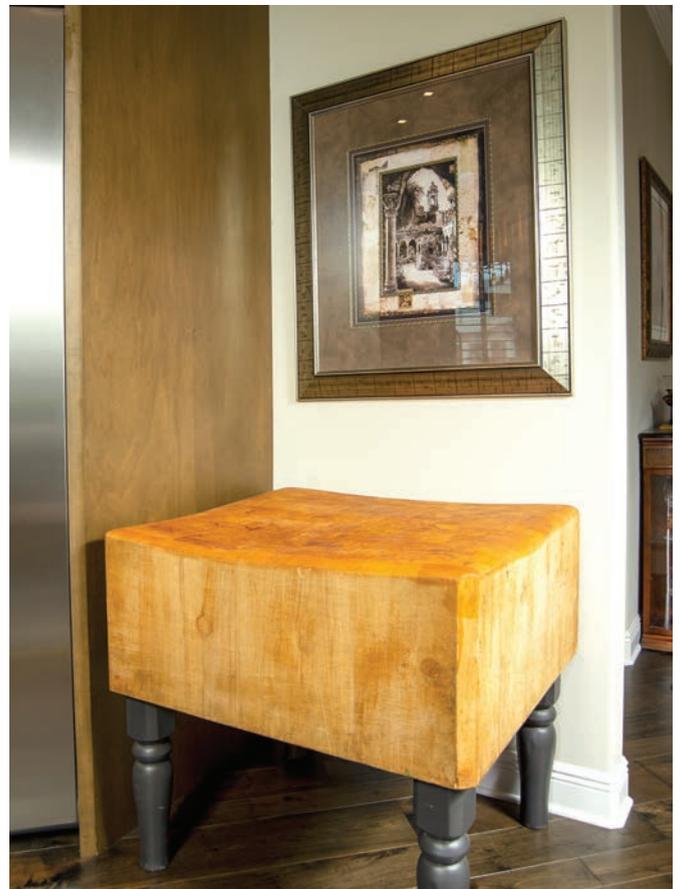
He favors the traditional look. She loves, loves modern glam.

When it was time for Michelle and Chuck Muller to furnish their dream home in Viera, the couple knew what they each liked, but were not sure how to blend both styles into a look that would make both happy.

Enter Wilver Palencia with Pullman West in Rockledge, an interior designer with plenty of ideas.

"They were very receptive to my opinions," Palencia said.

The Mullers' responsiveness was refreshing, as was their total-house approach. Their previous home was 3,500 square feet on two floors, but >>



A vintage butcher block takes pride of place in the Muller kitchen.



Michelle and Chuck Muller relax with best furry friends, Zoey and Bentley.

when they moved the short distance to the new house Joyal Homes created for them, they parted ways with most of the old furniture.

“Our nephew made out like a bandit,” Chuck Muller said.

MORE USABLE SPACE

Since the new three-bedroom, three-bath home is 500 square feet smaller, the couple was technically downsizing, but they had years ago realized that they were fully utilizing only about 1,600 square feet of the bigger house, so, in fact, the new digs, with its seamless flow perfect for entertaining, plus all the bells and whistles, offered more usable space.

“We downsized but upsized,” he added.

Jeff Joseph, Joyal Homes executive designer, channeled his 36 years in the industry to design a home that takes the utmost advantage of the available space, the view and the site.

“It’s all in the details with Jeff,” said Kerri Kunde, marketing director for Joyal Homes.

“There is not a step in the design and building process that Jeff has not carefully evaluated and improved upon.”

A FEW BIG ISSUES

Joseph did have a couple of not so very tiny problems to tackle in the form of huge Gothic doors from an 1800s-era cathedral and a glass-and-wood wall from >>

Joyal Homes created a one-of-a-kind residence for Michelle and Chuck Muller.



Orlando's late, great Church Street Station complex, which in the 1970s was considered among the top attractions in Florida.

The couple found both massive pieces while browsing at Florida Victorian Architectural Salvage in Deland and wanted them incorporated into their new home.

So, what do you do with mammoth church doors? Use them in your pantry, of course. The doors had no casing, but that only provided an opportunity to make an even greater statement.

"Our trim carpenter, Manny Rodrigues, did the casing with a live edge," Joseph said.

The pantry also serves as a coffee bar and to make access of the higher shelves both fun and a breeze, a library ladder, trimmed down to scale, was installed.

The ornate Victorian pub wall from Church Street Station, with its elaborate beveled glass, rich dark woods and brass inserts, seemed tailor-made to create a foyer space without altering the open plan feel of the house. Discussions on whether or not to restore the antique wall followed.

"We decided to keep it as original as possible and match the trim as much as possible," Palencia said.

FELL INTO PLACE

Both accent pieces were pivotal on the path the entire design would follow.

On the other side of the wall, a railway station clock replica from the Bombay Co. fit perfectly into the space created by the wall and the pantry. It is here, in the wine and cigar room, that >>



Joyal Homes executive designer Jeff Joseph skillfully repurposed Gothic doors from an 1800s-era church into pantry doors with the help of Joyal trim carpenter Manny Rodrigues, who crafted live-edge casing to further enhance the eye magnet.



An ornate pub wall from the legendary Church Street Station in Orlando was tailor-made to create a foyer space without altering the open plan feel of the house.



The Mullers' new kitchen features a stunning chandelier from House of Lights and a three-column push-open Thermador refrigerator with center wine cooler.

the Mullers expect plenty of casual entertaining to happen.

“Once the wall and the doors happened, things started to fall into place,” Muller said.

Four leather club chairs from Restoration Hardware offer a cozy retreat atop a cowskin rug from Napa. The wall’s deep, moss greens contrast with the rich chocolate of the chairs. In the space, the traditional and the contemporary blend well, as witnessed by a Lladro statue of Don Quixote, a find from Spain, just inches away from a bold abstract that Palencia recommended.

Since Zoey, the shih tzu, and Bentley, the English bulldog, are also part of the Muller clan, the design needed to include the two. For the great room, Palencia suggested a sloped arm leather sofa from Hooker Furniture, known for quality and durability.

“It is very pet-friendly,” he said.

The sofa faces an 85-inch flat screen television embedded within a bespoke niche atop a 100-inch gas linear fireplace. An 84-inch, 10-blade ceiling fan from the 13.5-foot coffered ceiling adds a touch of industrial to the setting.

MADE THE MOVE

From the vantage point of the entrance, a vista of the home’s common areas encircles the viewer. Even the media room, aka Chuck Muller’s man cave, can be seen. Its clean, neutral palette is highlighted by subtly abstract wallpaper with a hint of copper shimmer.

Some of their furniture made the move to the new house, including a leather ottoman Muller’s grandfather discovered in Egypt and a former curio cabinet that has been transformed into a handsome



>> A pantry can be found behind the Gothic doors in the Muller kitchen.

liquor cabinet. A sleek three-blade ceiling fan nods to Muller's work for an aerospace company.

The home gathers plenty of glam points with its lighting. The intricate and glittering fixture over the kitchen island is a prime example. A stunning chandelier from House of Lights provides Muller, the official chef in the household, plenty of light. He put himself through college working as a cook, so for his new home, he wanted superior appliances such as the three-column, push-open Thermador refrigerator that incorporates a center wine cooler.

Semicircular aquarium glass offers unrestricted views of the pool and lake from the dining area, where a glass-topped circular table from Century Furniture seems to rise from the earth, supported by a wooden base that has an abstract representation of roots.

LAKE VIEWS ABOUND

Joseph ascertained that the lake view be the focus of the Muller house, and indeed, fantastic views of Intercoastal Pools' infinity pool are everywhere, from the main living areas to the master suite.

The giant picture pool screen does not clutter the eye with additional lines, allowing for the visual delight of the stunning pool flanked by an infinity spa on one side and a beach entry on the other. In the evenings, brown copper water bowls showcase the stunning combination of fire and water. >>



Semicircular aquarium glass offers unrestricted views of the pool and lake beyond from the dining area, where a glass-topped circular table from Century Furniture offers an abstract representation of roots.



Intercoastal Pools' infinity pool and spa frames a conversation area in the Mullers' lanai.



Scalloped tile sparkles behind the retro clawfoot bathtub in the master bathroom. A state-of-the-art shower big enough for a party completes the retreat.

The Mullers were definitely hands-on when it came to building their new house.

“We were there every single day driving them crazy,” Muller said.

Building a house is sometimes compared to childbirth. For them, birthing their new residence must have been a more of a pleasure than a labor, since just weeks after moving in, they were already toying with the possibility of building another house in a new neighboring development.

“We like the process,” Muller said. ⚡



In the media room, aka Chuck Muller’s man cave, a clean, neutral palette is highlighted by subtly abstract wallpaper with a hint of copper shimmer.



Michelle Muller selected most of the lighting fixtures, including the handsome chandelier and pendants in the master bedroom.



Custom his-and-hers closets provide plenty of space for treasures, including Michelle’s extensive collection of shoes.



While not huge, the summer kitchen offers everything Chuck Muller needs for entertaining in style.



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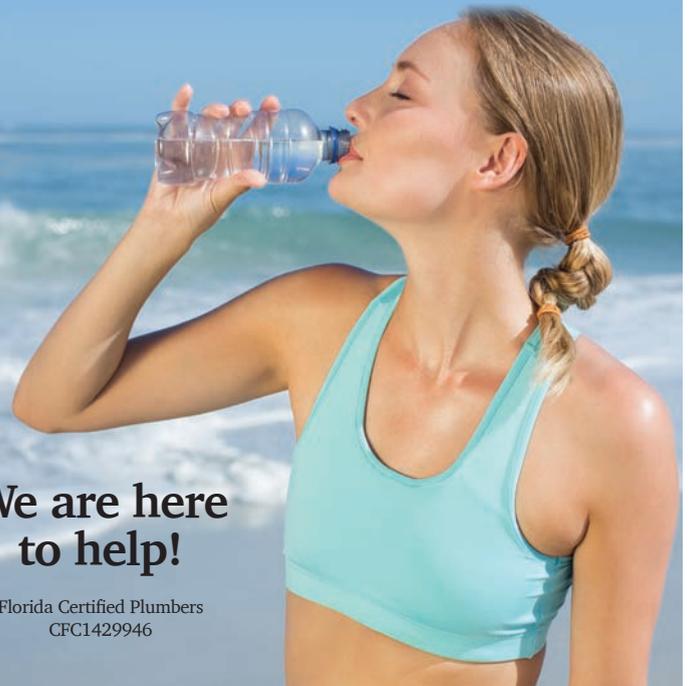
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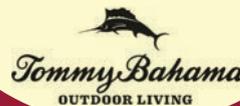
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Bridging past and future

By Maria Sonnenberg



NORTHBORO BUILDERS RENDERING

With rooftop dining, the proposed 160-room Unscripted Hotel by Dream Hotel Group of New York is expected to redefine the Eau Gallie Arts District.

Developers strive to preserve the vibe of the Eau Gallie Arts District

For more than two decades, hairstylist Karen Lewis has witnessed the ebb and flow of the Eau Gallie Arts District from the window of her salon/art gallery on Melbourne's Highland Avenue.

The historical Ginter Building, where her Alla Prima Salon resides, will have big neighbors in the form of the ultra-luxe hotel and restaurant/entertainment space that is the vision of local entrepreneur Larry Jarnes.

Jarnes' Northboro Builders is going full guns, although the project is still in its conceptual stage, with final tweaking expected. One thing is certain: Foosaner Art Museum, just a few hundred yards from Alla Prima, will be razed to make way for a four-star Unscripted Hotel by Dream Hotel Group, a New York-based boutique lodging brand. The 160-room/suites hotel will feature a rooftop restaurant with cocktail lounge and pool, an additional restaurant on the ground floor, plus banquet facilities and a coffee bar. >>



MARIA SONNENBERG

Karen Lewis, whose Alla Prima Styling Salon is just steps away from all the planned expansion, expects the new construction will bring big changes to the Eau Gallie Arts District.

Jarnes expects to break ground this year for the two-year project.

That's not all.

Across the street from the little Ginter Building, a restaurant or distillery will replace the Foosaner's education wing.

"We're vetting a bunch of different brands to find the right fit," Jarnes said.

ANOTHER PROJECT

Jarnes is also working with the city on a 500-spot public parking garage. The city is additionally working on another major EGAD project, expected to be completed early this year. The Pineapple Avenue Complete Streets Project includes construction of a multi-use trail on the east side of Pineapple Avenue, from Montreal Avenue to Pineapple Park.

The project includes pedestrian safety and corridor aesthetic enhancements, including upgrades to curb ramps, sidewalk replacement, enhanced decorative patterned pavements at key intersections, decorative lighting, speed cushions for traffic calming and pedestrian-activated beacons for two midblock crosswalks.

"The hotel and surrounding area will present a more contemporary atmosphere," Lewis said.

Like many of Eau Gallie's fans, Lewis hopes the district does not lose its artistic vibes.

"I like the small-town quaintness of the area, and I am afraid it will lose its artistic flavor if it becomes more commercialized," said artist Nancy



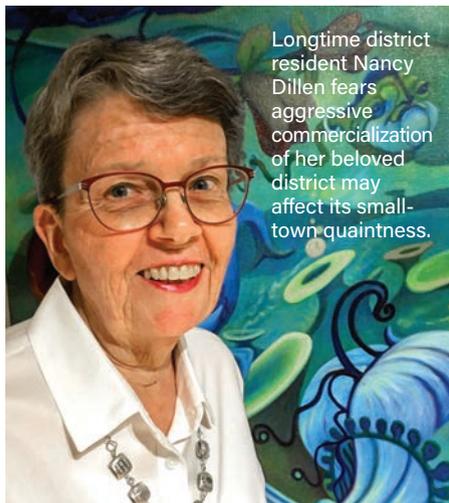
JASON HOOK

Larry Jarnes and his Northboro Builders have huge plans for Melbourne's Eau Gallie Arts District.



EGAD MAIN STREET

Festivals ranging from French films to whiskey tastings are part of the fabric of the arts district.



Longtime district resident Nancy Dillen fears aggressive commercialization of her beloved district may affect its small-town quaintness.

NANCY DILLEN

Dillen, who has lived in Eau Gallie for 31 years and is one of its biggest fans.

MISSES THE MUSEUM

Like many residents, she is still mourning the loss of the Foosaner.

"The museum gave the Eau Gallie area a special identity, something special no other area in Brevard had," she added.

Eau Gallie, an independent city from 1860 until 1969 when it merged with Melbourne, has always attracted artists and other nonconformists. Even its name is unusual, for while eau means water in French, gallie is not a word. It

may be derived from galet, or pebble, in French and might refer to the coquina rocks so prevalent in the area.

"There's no other spot like it in Brevard County," said Renee Decator, a member of the Fifth Avenue Art Gallery, an EGAD fixture for 33 years.

"It's a neighborhood that still values the historical homes and buildings, but also has a very artistic, modern vibe."

Decator is optimistic that visitors drawn to the new development will value the surroundings.

"The gallery's patrons are very often >>



FIFTH AVENUE ART GALLERY PHOTOS

Three decades ago, Fifth Avenue Art Gallery helped shape the district.



Local artist Rene Decator is associated with Fifth Avenue Art Gallery. She considers the Eau Gallie Arts District a one-of-a-kind place.

visitors to Brevard looking to include a trip to see the local art scene,” Decator said.

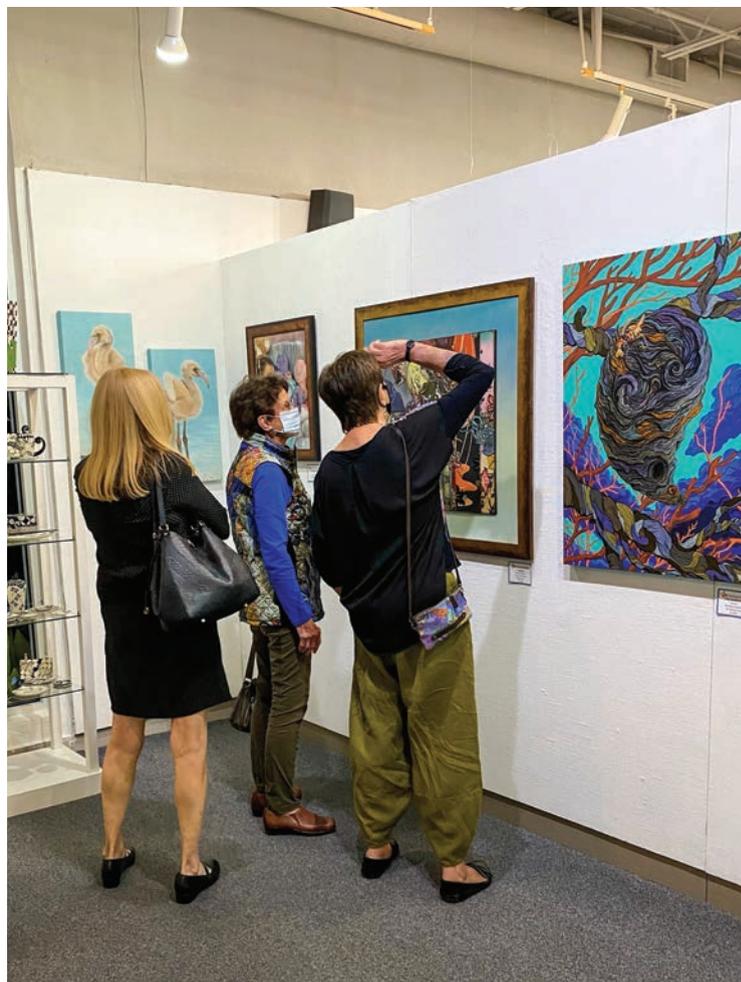
DISTINCTIVE DISTRICT

The district boasts a quirky mix of art galleries, restaurants, shops, guided mural tours and a full calendar of family-friendly events such as ArtWorks, a two-day festival that encourages participating artists to create art while exhibiting.

“It’s the epicenter of creativity,” artist Derek Gores said. “It’s the place to express yourself, make something, feel something.”

Gores believes the district will change, but not in character.

“The buzz and development are happening because of the artistic flavor,” he said. “Many of the businesses coming in are creative in nature. Many of the property owners have specifically sought businesses that add to the cultural scene. They feel it is that important. Some folks consider EGAD the soul of the Space Coast and that fits for me.”



EGAD’s First Friday celebration is a monthly tradition.

For his part, Jarnes has promised that his new projects will honor the district’s artistic roots.

“It will be very art-centric,” he said. “We look at the whole district globally and make sure we’re not just doing things a la carte, but doing things great for everyone.”

The Orlando developer and his family fell in love with the >>

area, and what had once been their weekend retreat has become their full-time home. He hopes the hotel he plans to build will further enhance the town's already high scores in the lovability meter.

"This arts hotel will be the catalyst for our arts district to grow and prosper," said Mayor Paul Alfrey, who grew up in EGAD and wants the district to retain its artsy flavor.

PLENTY OF POTENTIAL

Jarnes, it seems, is not the only businessman who has discovered EGAD's potential.

"We have a lot of new businesses and even more opening in the next few weeks," said Donna Lynn, founder of Synergia Global Inc. and treasurer of EGAD Main Street. "Right now, we have a lot of interest in commercial real estate."

In July, EGAD Main Street, which helps preserve the eclectic district's past and guides its future, presented a district redevelopment Vision Quest that, in addition to proposed hotel and garage plans, promoted redeveloping St. Claire Street as a main street connection with Highland Avenue.

Reimagined, the street would S-curve from U.S. 1 and end at Highland Avenue in front of the proposed parking garage and the Eau Gallie Civic Center.

The new St. Claire would include street parking, art-inspired roundabouts and opportunity for property owners and developers to build eight to 12 retail and office buildings in a planned fashion.



FIFTH AVENUE ART GALLERY

Artist studios are part of the charm of the district.



EGAD MAIN STREET

Yoga is never boring at Eau Gallie Square.

MIX OF PAST AND PRESENT

EGAD Main Street's vision for Eau Gallie also includes a river boardwalk running from the Eau Gallie Causeway north to Pineapple Park. A tree-lined walkway would connect the boardwalk to Highland Avenue.

"EGAD's Vision Quest is a culmination of past and present ideas for systematically shaping the development of Eau Gallie, the most historically significant area in South Brevard," said Mike McBride, EGAD Main Street's board chairman.

"It is a conversation starter, a vision with which we will work the proper channels for as long as necessary to make a reality," he said.

If all goes according to plan, the Eau Gallie Arts District will emerge energized, but still anchored in its past.

"A foot in history and a foot in the future," Gores said. "There's bigger magic ahead."

Visit www.egadlife.com for more information. ⬇️

SPACE RACE PIONEER

Calculating career went from secretary to working on the space shuttle

By Mary Ann Koenig

In 1966, women couldn't get a credit card without their husbands as a cosigner. They weren't allowed to run the Boston Marathon, and it wasn't until 1973 that all 50 states allowed women to serve on a jury. But in that year, Jean Hopkins was working on calculating the expectation of casualty on forced reentry for an experimental space program.

Her career as a pioneering woman in the space industry spanned 30 years and took her from a secretarial position to working with the team who returned the space shuttle program to flight after the Challenger tragedy.

Career opportunities came to her in the new and burgeoning space industry because of her math capabilities. She initially worked at Georgia Tech's Engineering Experiment Station, a research lab supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation. They were utilizing a new technology, a UNIVAC computer, and Hopkins had a secretarial job working for William Atchison, the head of the lab.

"Dr. Atchison had worked on some of the first computers," she says. "It took up an entire room. It was full of tubes, and we had to program it in machine language."

She eventually learned computer language to program the UNIVAC after Atchison discovered she could type his equations correctly.

"He always promised me that when he had an opening for a new programmer, I would get the job," she explains. "I always worked for nice people, I'm so lucky."

SMALL-TOWN GIRL

Hopkins grew up in the Cocoa area but was born in Orlando because the closest hospital in 1934 was Orange Memorial.

Her parents lived in Sharpes, six miles north of Cocoa, which she describes as a very small town. They were Connecticut Yankees who moved



Jean Hopkins was born and raised in the Cocoa area and had a 30-year career in the space industry spanning a period of legendary firsts in space exploration.

ANTHONY INSWASTY

to Florida because of her father's health. They opened a small general store and Hopkins attended school in Cocoa.

"There were 49 students in my graduating class," she remembers.

Hopkins excelled academically, particularly in math, but that still wasn't enough to assure her a higher education.

"My father thought, 'what good is a college education,'" she says. "But >>

my mother, who was a nurse, said that because I was a good student I should go to college.”

With a small-town upbringing, her parents were reluctant to send her away to a big university. So, a Presbyterian school, Maryville College in Maryville, Tennessee, was the solution. After her sophomore year she transferred to Florida State University, which was still an all-girls college that would not become coeducational until after World War II. She graduated with a degree in mathematics in 1949.

She met Dean Risher, married him in 1952 and they moved to Atlanta when Risher was hired as an engineer at Georgia Tech, which was how Hopkins ended up working at the computer lab. But she was homesick and the couple returned to Sharpes to be closer to her family and live in the house where she grew up.

EARLY SPACE RACE DAYS

The new world of space exploration was evident all around them in Cocoa. She got a job, again as a secretary, at TRW Systems, an aerospace NASA contractor, and moved up from there. The Space Race was on. The Kennedy Space Center had opened the previous year and Hopkins began her 30-year, full-time, problem-solving career as her work evolved from missiles to rockets and then to the space shuttle.

Today her extensive catalog of binders and folders, chronicles of primary source documents, are evidence of the meticulous approach she adhered to throughout her career.

“I kept them in case I needed to refer back to any of the programs we were working on,” Hopkins explains.

There are flow charts, handwritten notes of long-division equations, as well as letters, accolades, and remembrances from an era in American space exploration, both troublesome and triumphant.

Her work, all with NASA contractors, involved calculations for safety protocols and projections that were, in the early years, placed onto IBM punch cards.

In 1977, while with Computer Sciences Corp., she and her colleagues began work on the microwave scanning beam landing system, a contract that was later transferred to Lockheed.

“We just changed our badges and continued the same work,” she says.

HONORED FOR SHUTTLE WORK

In 1981, space shuttle Columbia, piloted by Robert Crippen and John Young, was the first reusable spacecraft with a crew. Among

On Jan. 28, 1986, Hopkins was among employees and spectators who witnessed the explosion of the space shuttle *Challenger* and the loss of her seven-member crew soon after launch.



NASA

Hopkins’ memorabilia is a First Shuttle Flight Achievement Award signed by the astronauts and accompanied by a representative medallion.

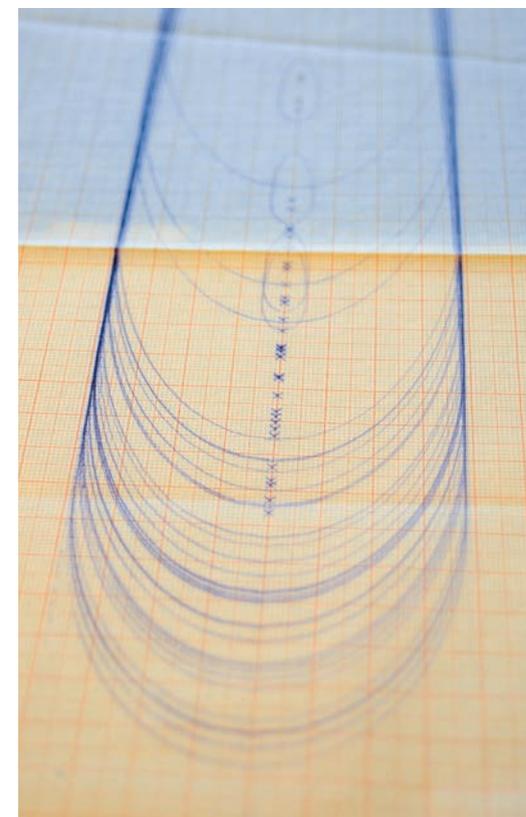
The MSBLS was transferred to a PDP-11 computer. The system provided precise elevation, directional and distance data that guided the space shuttle for the last two minutes of flight until it touched down. The PDP-11 was an early, smaller computer that could be taken to various MSBLS test sites, such as California, Africa and White Sands, New Mexico. Hopkins was sent to White Sands and Edwards AFB in California to support the tests.

“They would track a test airplane to certify that the system worked properly,” she says.

Her second husband, John Hopkins, also worked at the Kennedy Space Center as a computer programmer.

“He was an excellent mathematician,” she says. “And I’d get help from him especially when it came to interface it with the computer. And since we drove back and forth to work together, we could collaborate.”

>>



ANTHONY INSWASTY

A flow diagram that calculated the expectation of casualty for the space shuttle is among the memorabilia that Hopkins saved in neatly organized scrapbooks.

Her daughter, Valerie Risher, remembers them working together on the weekends.

“There were lined yellow pads with pages and pages of long-division calculations on the dining room table,” she remembers.

But there was nothing tedious about the task.

“Math was like a puzzle to my mom,” Risher says. “It was a challenge and fun, something she enjoyed doing.”

By Monday morning, they’d have the problem solved.

Hopkins’ work sites included several locations at the KSC.

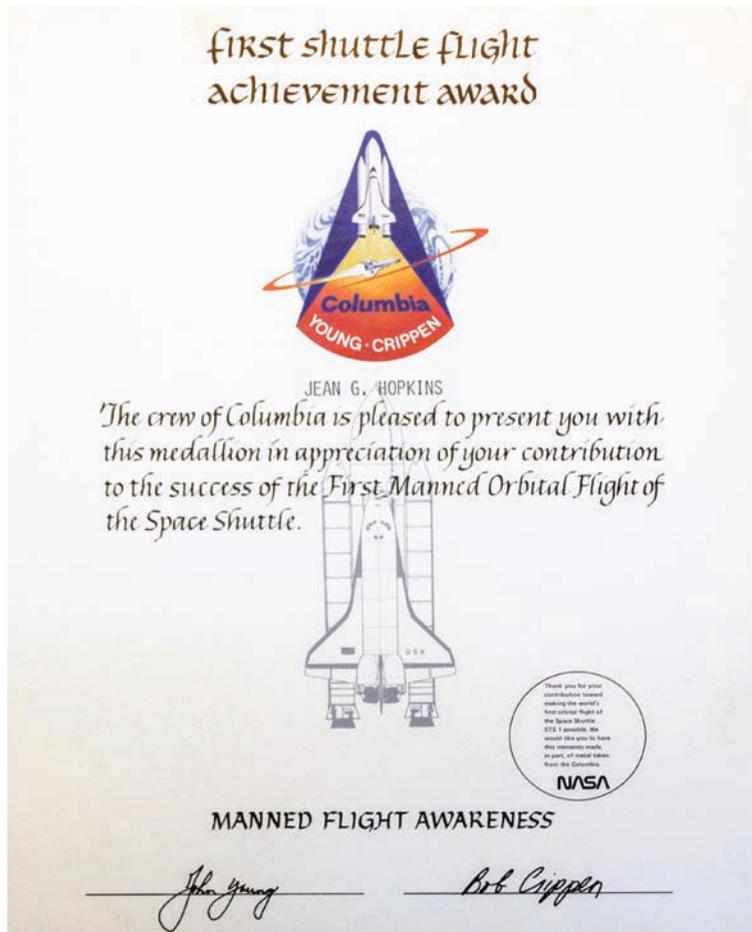
“I worked at something called the tin shack for a while.”

It was a building on the runway that previously housed the firefighting teams. In those days, the number of women programmers was growing.

“The firefighters had moved out, so our programming group moved in,” Hopkins recalls. “They had a nice big bathroom for the men and a little one for the women. So, since there were more ladies working there than >>



Hopkins, 90, examines one of the diagrams she has kept, reflecting on her career and contributions to space flight safety. HEIDI HILL



Space shuttle Columbia, the first crewed shuttle flight, was a monumental achievement for NASA, and Jean Hopkins was acknowledged for her contribution by a medallion and certificate signed by the shuttle pilots.



An American flag that flew aboard the Columbia space shuttle is a prized gift from the shuttle pilots given in recognition of her service to the mission. It is framed and hanging in the office in her Vero Beach home.

men, somebody changed the signs on the bathrooms. The secretary put a bunch of flowers in the urinal.”

FRONT ROW SEATS

By 1983 she and her colleagues moved to the blockhouse, a windowless, brick building on the runway of the Shuttle Landing Facility.

As the space shuttle became operational, with multiple flights a year, Hopkins and her colleagues began a routine.

“Every launch we all would leave our desks and offices and we’d go out to watch.”

On a cold January morning in 1986, standing outside with her co-workers, she watched as the space shuttle Challenger briefly gained the sky and then exploded. Remembering the moment, even 35 years later, she pauses and with a catch in her voice, describes the atmosphere with one word — gloom. Her tears are contained but the memory stokes a hard reality of how those working on the project took the defeat personally.

Two and a half years later, in September 1988, space shuttle Discovery returned to space. One of Hopkins’ scrapbooks contains a letter written on the eve of the launch by Doug Sargen, Lockheed president, to all members of the Shuttle Processing Contractor Team.

“The outstanding accomplishments of these past few months are a tribute to the hard work, professionalism and dedication of every team member. ... You can all take pride in the undeniable fact that you have indeed been ‘keeping America first in space.’ ”

STRONG SUPPORT SYSTEM

By 1992 she was team leader for the MSBLS calibration team, a group of five specialists establishing an on-going safe landing system for the space shuttle.

“I always had someone I could go to for help,” she says. “The support system was strong, we always helped each other. It was a great work environment. The only disruptive people we had on our team my boss eliminated or dropped.”

Proximity to the runway offered another interesting perk. When the shuttle landed in



Space shuttles were ferried to the Kennedy Space Center on the back of a 747. Hopkins remembers that sometimes the 747 would make a circular pass over Brevard County before landing. NASA

California or Texas, it returned to KSC on top of a 747. Hopkins remembers that sometimes the 747 would make a circular pass over Brevard County before landing, just to show that the shuttle was coming home.

“We had this mate-demate device out by the airport,” Hopkins says. “And it would lift the shuttle off the big airplane, move the airplane out and set the shuttle down.”

The dismount process would uncouple the shuttle from the top of the 747, which was then towed or pushed away. The shuttle was suspended in air attached to braces, like a colossal arcade toy grabber machine secured to a set of massive cranes. The landing gear was gracefully deployed and the reusable

craft was gently placed on the tarmac.

“All I had to do was walk outside to watch the operation,” Hopkins says.

At 90, Hopkins, who lives in Vero Beach, looks back and confesses to have loved all 30 years of her career. The contributions she made to a critical state-of-the-art endeavor in a time of great exploration helped the program mature and the personnel stay safe. Assessing the risks was her continual focus. And her success is a testament not only to her intellect but also the dedication to her job.

Today, NASA’s KSC has its first woman director, Janet Petro. And women like Jean Hopkins, over her long career, plowed the ground and made the runway safe for a landing like that. ▲

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Disappearing act

Replanting projects struggle to stem mangrove destruction

By Fred Mays



Mangroves are among the most abundant trees on the planet, covering temperate and tropical intertidal shorelines around the world. But as development sprawls in Florida's coastal areas, mangroves are disappearing at an alarming rate. The loss of mangroves in the Indian River Lagoon has scientists and environmentalists worried.

Florida waters once had millions of acres

of mangroves. But with all the coastal development in the past 50-60 years, the estimate is less than 470,000 acres, according to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Along the banks of the Indian River Lagoon, it is estimated 65%-80% of the mangroves are gone, lost to development pressure.

Around the world there are mangrove replanting efforts designed to counter the rising seas of climate change. Millions of acres of mangroves have

been replanted in Indonesia, Malaysia and throughout Southeast Asia. Replanting in Florida is less ambitious. The University of Central Florida has planted more than 2 miles of mangrove shoreline in the Mosquito Lagoon, near the Kennedy Space Center. The Marine Resource Council has more than 5,500 plantings in the lagoon.

According to Melinda Donnelly, assistant resource professor, the UCF project has been ongoing since 2011. It is one of >>



The loss of mangroves in the Indian River Lagoon has scientists and environmentalists worried. These mangroves can be found in the channels in Cocoa Beach.

FRED MAYS

During Hurricane Irma in 2017, an estimated \$1.3 billion in property damage in Florida was averted by mangroves, according to a study by the University of California at Santa Cruz.

many smaller private restoration projects underway in Central Florida’s lagoons and bays. The state does not have public mangrove projects, although some state grants are provided to universities and nongovernmental organization projects that have replanting programs.

PROTECT SHORELINES

Mangroves are halophytes, plants that can live in saline water. They play an important role in the environment and the battle against climate change. They are a strong carbon sink, trapping carbon dioxide in the atmosphere at a rate 10 times more effective than land-based trees. They emit high levels of oxygen back into the environment; protect shorelines from erosion; and provide habitat for marine life.

After decades of developments ripping out mangroves, it is illegal to cut down mangroves without a permit. Although they form a natural and effective barrier

against shoreline erosion, many property owners tear them out and replace them with seawalls and large boulder riprap barriers. Because of the permitting requirements, the loss of mangroves in Florida has slowed, but more is lost than can be replanted.

Tearing out mangroves can be a costly mistake. During Hurricane Irma in 2017, an estimated \$1.3 billion in property damage in Florida was averted by mangroves, according to a study by the University of California at Santa Cruz. Seawalls can often be topped and breached by pounding storm surge in hurricanes, causing them to lean and eventually collapse. Studies have shown mangrove shorelines are more effective in preventing damage from storm surges.

COLORFUL VARIETIES

Globally, there are dozens of varieties of mangroves. In Florida there are three: red mangroves [*Rhizophora mangle*], >>



Caity Savioa of the Marine Resource Council says breakwater efforts work really well in the replanting process, and laments not having enough natural shorelines left to replant.

FRED MAYS



It is estimated 65%-80% of the mangroves along the banks of the Indian River Lagoon, are gone, lost to development pressure.

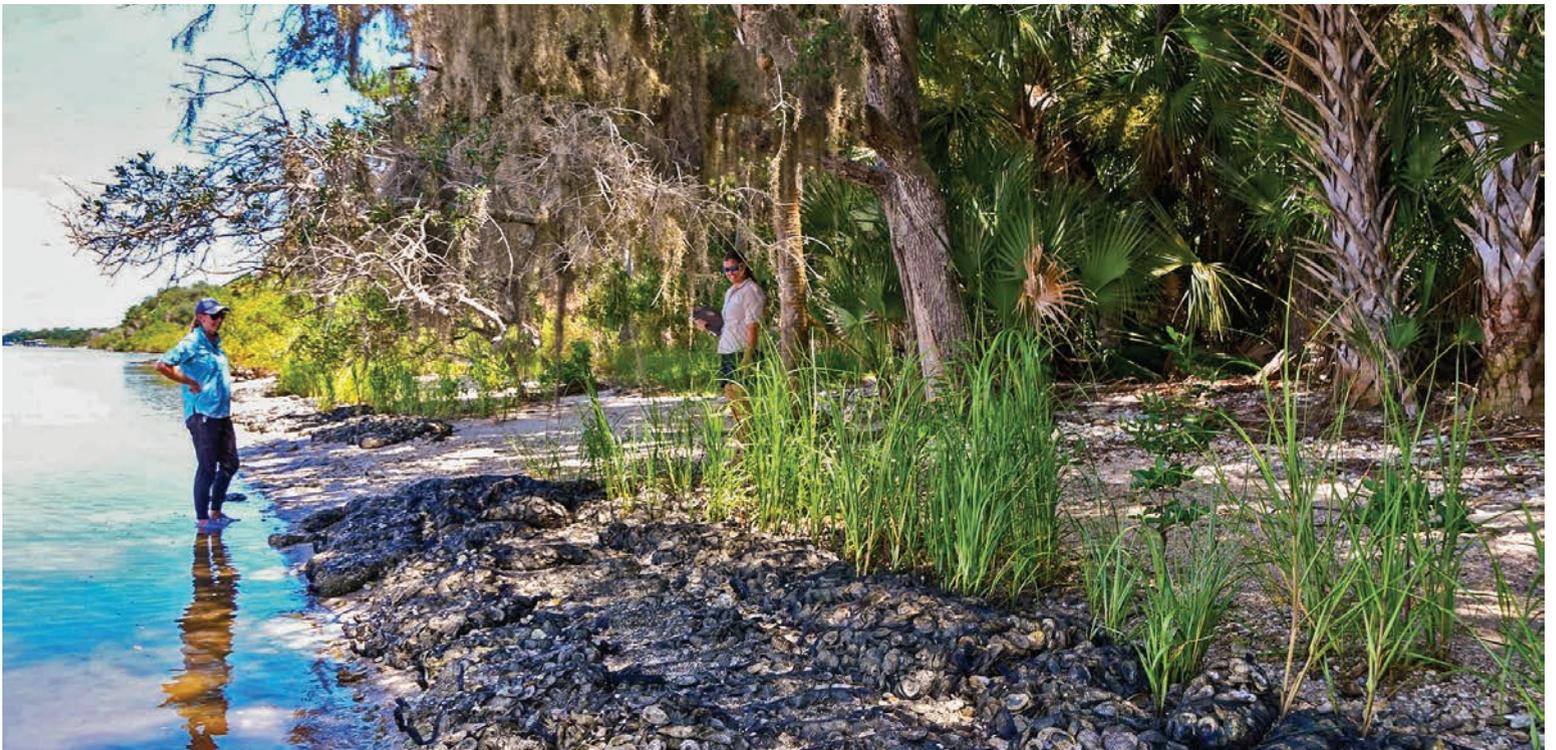
FRED MAYS

white mangroves [*Laguncularia racemosa*] and black mangroves [*Aveleinnia germinans*]. Each has a role to play along shorelines.

Red mangroves are found at the mean tidal waterline, their roots surviving in the salty water. Reds drop seedpods year-round, and propagate quickly, growing nearly 5 feet in a year. As their long roots grow they become habitat for oysters, small fish, even young sharks.

White mangroves are found just behind the reds on the shoreline. The reds and whites offer a stabilizing environment, reduce erosion and fill in sand along the intertidal area. It is not uncommon for shorelines to grow 10-20 feet when lined with mangroves.

Black mangroves are farthest from the water line. They have larger trunks and their leaves secrete salt to rid the tree of >>



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Mangrove plantings are placed behind a buffer of oyster shell bags and sea grass in order to maximize their chance for survival.

the saline water. Blacks are the tallest of the mangroves, sometimes reaching 15-20 feet high. Their wood has been used as a building material.

According to Donnelly, the majority of Florida mangrove loss in the last 30 years has been due to human activities, but not all of it. Mangroves thrive in the temperate and tropical zones, but are intolerant to cold weather. A series of hard freezes in the 1980s wiped out much of the mangrove cover in Central Florida.

Donnelly says large scale mangrove restoration has occurred in the last 20 years. But restoring mangrove shorelines can be hard work. Some restoration projects report less than a 50% success rate in replanting efforts. Donnelly's group has come up with a replanting process that yields a much higher rate of success.

REPLANTING PROCESS

Using Donnelly's system the shoreline is first protected by several feet of bagged oyster shells to buffer wave action. Behind the oysters are wetland grasses [*Spartina alterniflora*], which further protect the intertidal area. Mangroves are then

planted behind the grasses in different rows. First, the red mangroves, then the whites and finally the blacks. Donnelly says their success rate is 85% or higher.

Another mangrove project leader, Caity Savoia of the Marine Resource Council, reports breakwater efforts work really well in the replanting process.

"Some sites had zero percent success rates," she says.

But behind the breakwaters the rate has been up to 100%. She laments not having enough natural shorelines left to replant, due to development in the coastal areas along the lagoon. She estimates 65% of the natural shoreline in Florida's Indian River Lagoon in Brevard County has been lost behind seawalls and hardened shorelines.

The Marine Resource Council is planting mangroves along the lagoon shore in Palm Bay. It has a nursery for mangrove seedlings in Palm Bay and another in Vero Beach.

When people think of trees in Florida, palm trees usually come to mind first. But it is the mangrove that is most important to the environment. ⚡



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A number of volunteers work among the pots and children's swimming pools filled with mangrove seedlings. The plants will stay at this mangrove nursery until they are ready to be planted along the shores of the Indian River Lagoon.



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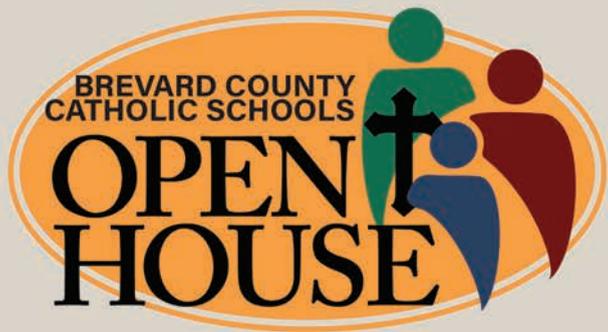
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Grain design

Sculptors travel the world carving works of art from mounds of sand

By Maria Sonnenberg

Jill Harris found fame, fortune and romance, all in a grain of sand.

OK, it was really a whole bunch of grains of sand, but it was sand, nevertheless.

Harris, who together with her husband, Thomas Koet, operates Sandsational Sand Sculpting in Satellite Beach, is a professional sand sculptor, that *rara avis* of the art world.

When passersby spot her working on some of the massive installations Sandsational creates around the world, they sometimes express envy because they believe she is being paid for playing with sand. Harris outwardly smiles, and inwardly goes “Ha!”

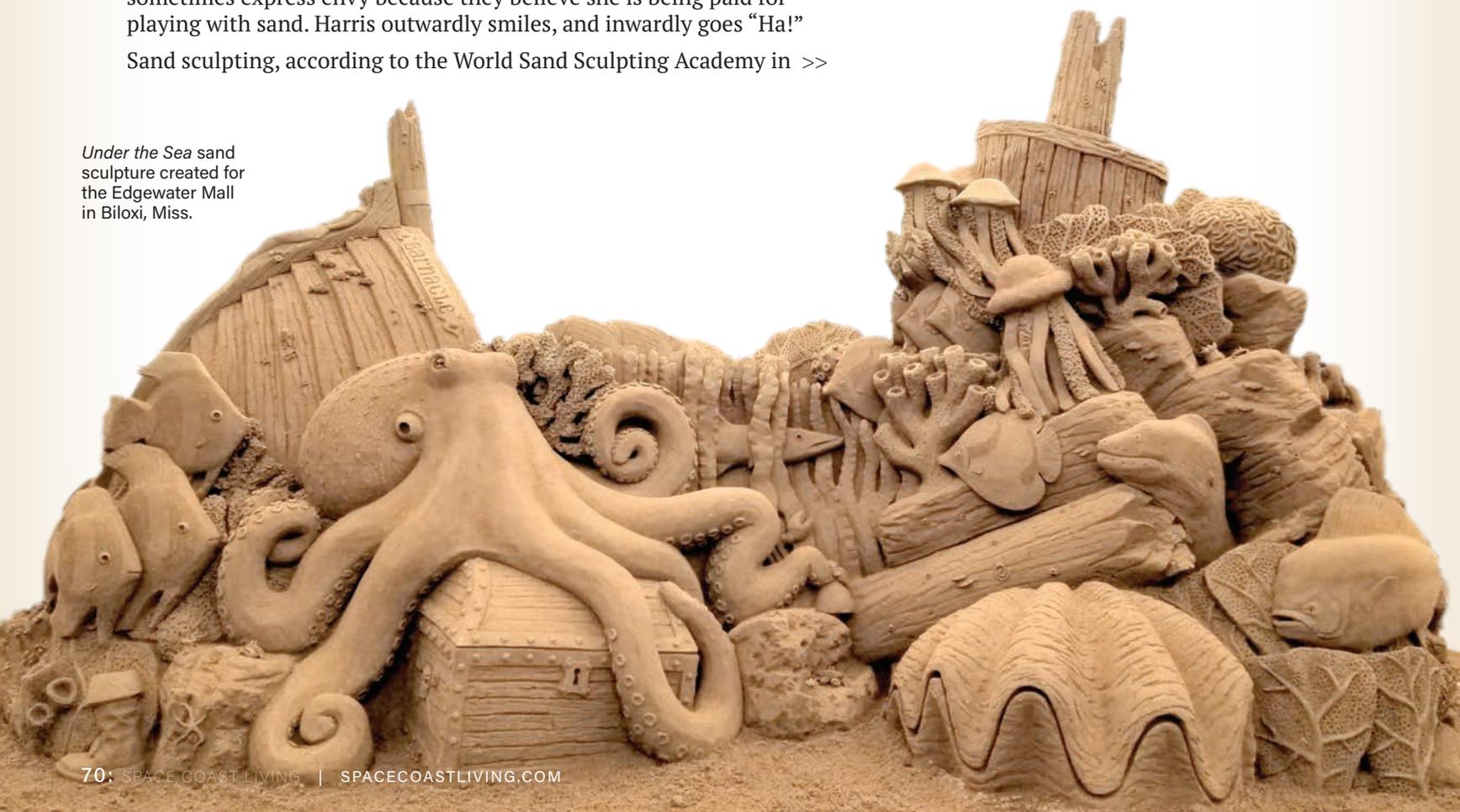
Sand sculpting, according to the World Sand Sculpting Academy in >>

Under the Sea sand sculpture created for the Edgewater Mall in Biloxi, Miss.



Thomas Koet of Sandsational Sand Sculpting competes at the U.S. Sand Sculpting Challenge in San Diego .

JILL HARRIS PHOTOS





Mangroves and Manatees, a Sandsational sand sculpture for Brevard Zoo.

The Netherlands, is anything but play. It is an art form and a difficult one because the medium consists of just sand and water. Nothing else. No permanent structural supports are used.

HARD WORK

Since a sculpture can require as much as 100 tons of sand, there is a lot of shoveling as well as pounding sand to prepare it for sculpting.

“It’s hard on the joints and your hands turn to Velcro, they’re so chapped, everything sticks to them,” Harris said.

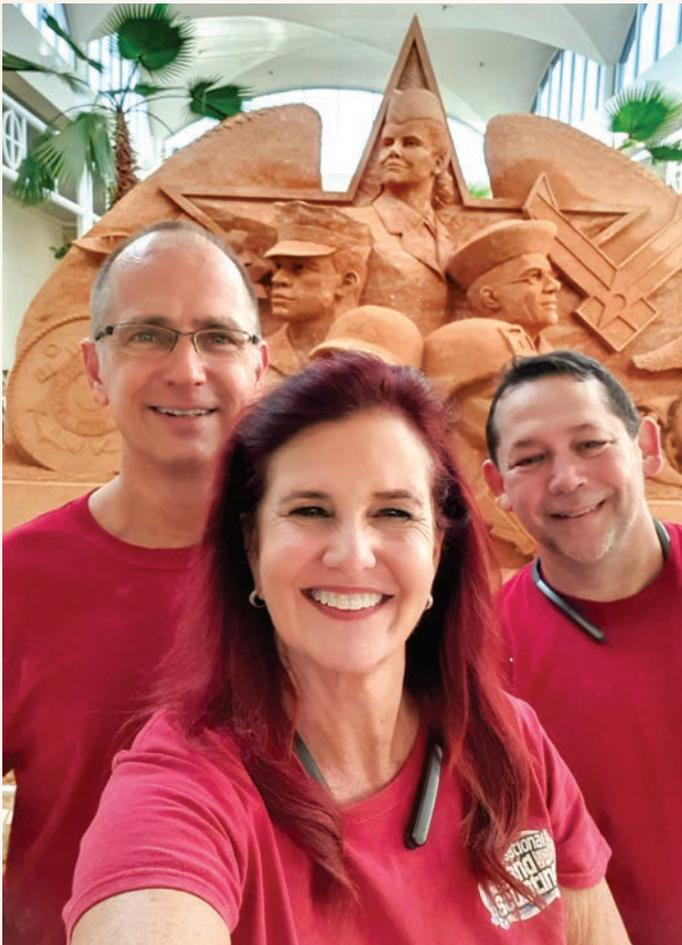
The rough work is often done after dark, away from curious viewers.

“You’re working tons of sand in the middle of the night and it can be raining,” Harris said. “Sand sculpture is not for the wimpy. It’s hard work.”

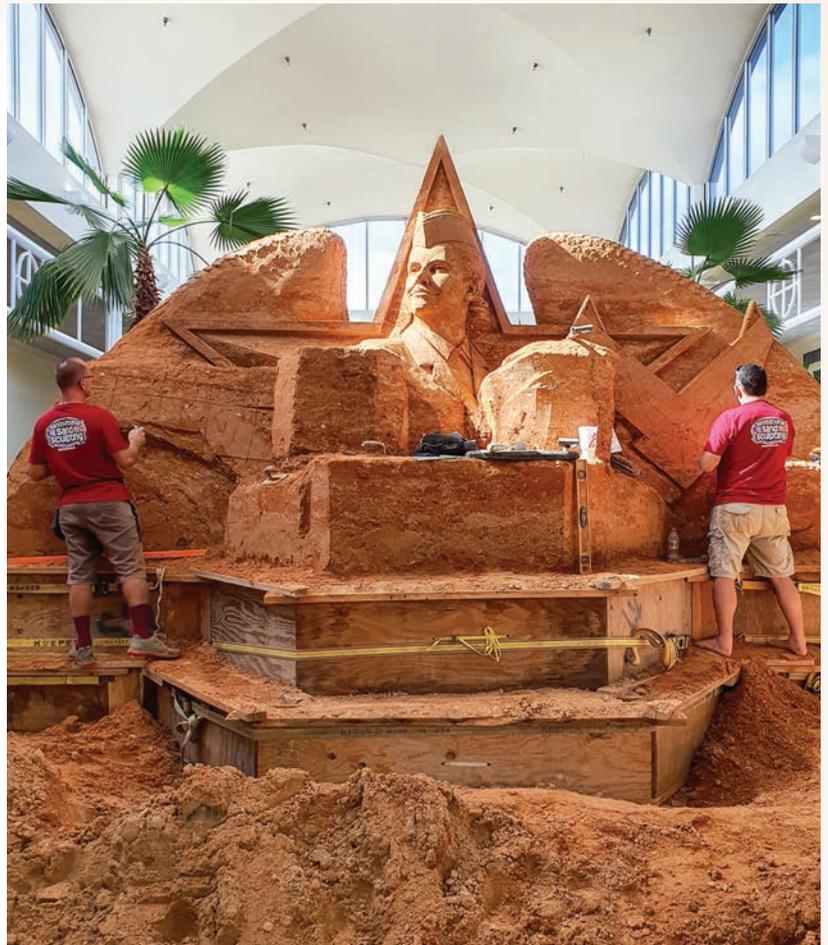
While tough on the body, professional sand sculpturing is good for the psyche. Harris would not trade her job for anything. She fell in love with the art form a quarter of a century ago when a >>



Koet of Satellite Beach works on an installation in The Netherlands.



Sand sculptors Koet, Jill Harris and Woodworth pose in front of one of their sand sculptures under construction.



Artists Koet and Woodworth block out the sections of work on a commission Sandsational Sand Sculpting was creating in Biloxi, Mississippi.



Salute to the Armed Forces, a Sandsational sand sculpture installed in Biloxi, Mississippi.

friend sought her help building a sculpture.

“I volunteered to shovel and I was hooked,” she said.

She soon went pro. During an installation in Belgium, she met her Dutch husband, who has a master’s degree in industrial design and was doing sand sculpture as a hobby.

WORLD TRAVELERS

Thanks to sand, the couple travels the world, visiting resorts, malls, botanical gardens, zoos and festivals to create new sculptures. For example, if the coronavirus cooperates, the couple is planning to spend a few weeks this month in Hawaii before heading to The Netherlands, a hot spot for sand sculptures, for a month. Then it’s off to Japan for a couple of weeks in the spring.

They also travel around the country creating sculptures at grand openings and corporate commissions for such companies as Coca-Cola and Pepsi. Sandsational’s sculptures also have been featured on the Travel Channel.

“It’s safe to say I am home only 125 days out of the year,” Harris said. “It’s become this global thing.”

In Brevard, Ron Jon Surf Shop is a longtime client, as is the Brevard Zoo, which is showcasing a dozen >>

sculptures through April. The exhibition, *Life Beneath Our Sea*, features a dozen sand sculptures of turtles, sharks, manatees and other denizens of the deep.

SIMPLE TOOLS

Tools of the trade are straightforward. Trowels, palette knives and the like are all that is needed. The sand is the key. Forget using beach sand, which typically contains none of the desired silt or clay and has been rounded by the tides and winds.

“The grains need to be sharp or spiky, so they bond together,” Harris explained.

In Florida, this desirable sand can be found around the glacial ridge of the state, in quarries such as one in Winter Haven. The sand is trucked to a site, poured into a series of frames and hand- or machine-tamped until compact. A smaller frame is placed atop the first and the process is repeated until the desired height is reached. Frames are removed, top to bottom as the sculptor works. The end result looks like a huge wedding tree.

The breadth of talent is breathtaking. Under their able hands, anything is possible, from larger-than-life-sized tableaus of a Wild West bar to a forest full of creatures or a scene of Dorothy and pals on the Yellow Brick Road.

>>



Koet works on a sand sculpture at Brevard Zoo where it and a number of other sculptures will be on display until April..



This sand sculpture of Florida beach life marked the 60th anniversary of Ron Jon Surf Shop in Cocoa Beach.



The massive *Signing of the Declaration of Independence*, one of Harris' favorite creations, was installed in Pittsburgh.

DON'T TOUCH

Among Harris' personal favorites is a depiction of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. All the Founding Fathers are there in 10-foot sandy splendor, as is the famous document, an edge of which realistically drops down the side of the table as John Hancock signs with a flourish.

Viewers can't seem to wrap their heads around the idea that the whole thing is made with just sand. It can create a problem for the sculptors because people often act on the need to touch the sculptures to ascertain that it is, indeed, just sand.

"They just want to touch and they go straight for the faces," Harris said.

Only a foolish sculptor would not place fencing between the sculpture and the audience.

The sky is literally the limit when it comes to subject matter and size. One of Harris' sculptures, a six-story castle tower, held the world record for height, until another sculptor created a taller one and then another artist surpassed that.

CHILDHOOD CONNECTIONS

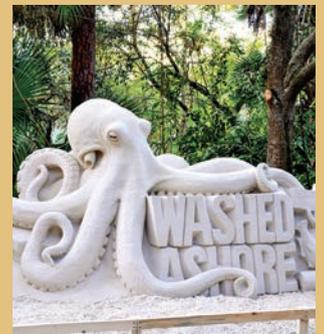
Sculptures can routinely rise to 30 feet; the artist works from the top down, using a series of ledges that encircle the sculpture. As the artist progresses down, the rudimentary scaffolding is removed so at the end the sculptor is on firm ground.

Sand sculpture is also part performance art, for the artists are often expected to interact with the public, who love to ask questions.

Harris and Koet are so in demand because clients realize

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how much of a people magnet their creations can be. While amazingly complex, these sculptures also connect viewers with their childhood.

"Everyone can relate to building a sandcastle," Harris said.

While ultimately ephemeral, the sculptures are surprisingly long-lasting. Brevard Zoo's sand creatures will be on display through April, only needing weekly touchups to fix imperfections caused by errant squirrels or pine needles.

"They can last up to six months," Harris said.

Like all sand sculptors, Harris accepts the transitory nature of the art.

"We compare it to performing a concert or cooking a gourmet dinner," she said.

"It's for the moment and that is what we like." ♣

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ZOO EXPANDS OPERATIONS TO INCLUDE NEW AQUARIUM



BREVARD ZOO RENDERINGS

An artist's rendering of the proposed Brevard Aquarium complex depicts what the 14-acre parcel at Port Canaveral will look like.

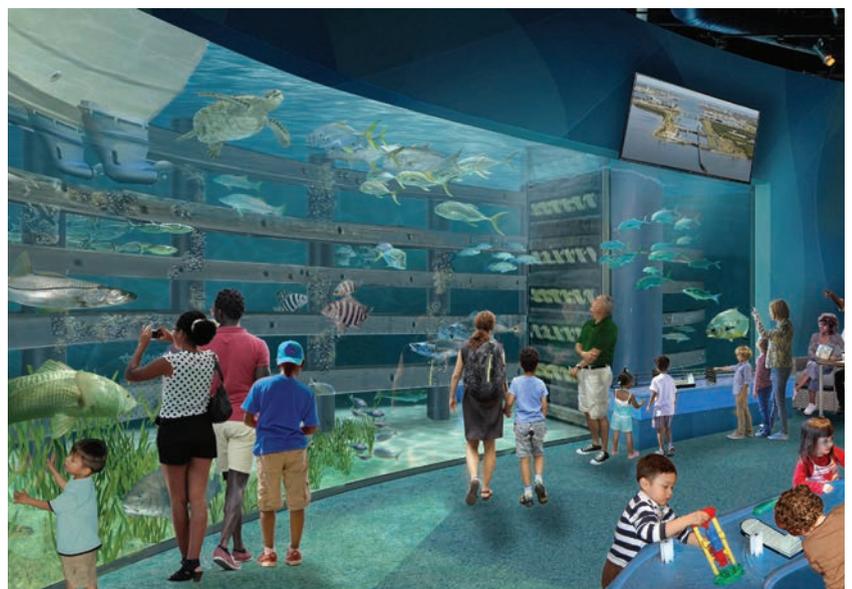
By Fred Mays

The Brevard Zoo is ranked among the best in the country, and now it wants to up the ante even more. The zoo is moving ahead with plans for an aquarium complex at Port Canaveral. The 14-acre campus will have both inside and outside exhibits.

A \$100 million fundraising campaign is underway. According to Keith Winsten, the zoo executive director, the campaign starts out with about \$32 million already in the bank, much of it from a single unnamed donor. If all goes as planned, construction will start in 2024 and the aquarium will open in 2027.

Winsten says the aquarium will have a local flavor, based on the Indian River Lagoon and St. Johns River. Some exhibits will show dolphins and manatees in their natural environment.

>>



The aquarium, slated to open in 2027, will have inside and outside exhibits.

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The site of the proposed aquarium is along the Banana River, just west of A1A and the Exploration Tower at the port.

The aquarium lost about a year of momentum due to the pandemic but plans are moving full steam ahead. According to Winsten, COVID-19 also changed some of the design. Originally the aquarium was to be housed in one large building. The new design has 10 buildings and lots of walkable space for outside exhibits.

Architectural renderings show a modern design with spacious indoor exhibits. The outdoor areas include water walkways and even water play areas for youngsters.

According to an agreement with the

Canaveral Port Authority, the port will contribute \$3.5 million toward the design work. The zoo is also asking the state to chip in \$1.5 million toward the project.

The site is along the Banana River, just west of A1A and the Exploration Tower at the port. A road extension into the aquarium will be necessary on George King Boulevard, which will be paid for by the port.

The aquarium will pay rent to the port on the property, starting at \$250,000 and going up 2.5% a year, plus additional rent pegged to admission fees. Winsten



Keith Winsten, executive zoo director, says the aquarium will have a local flavor based on the Indian River Lagoon and St. Johns River.

expects that to cap out around \$350,000 a year, based on estimated annual attendance of 477,000 people. The lease on the site runs for 31 years.

The aquarium will also donate \$1 from each ticket sale to the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program, which is actively involved in the efforts to clean up the lagoon waters.

Looking far in advance, the zoo is already soliciting ideas and recommendations from local community leaders on how to market the aquarium to local residents and visitors. Some of that was already started before COVID-19. It is expected to pick back up as the project moves along. 📌



The outdoor areas will include water walkways and even water play areas for young and not so young.

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Dr. De La Vega has practiced medicine for over 25 years and will be expanding the primary care services offered at Parrish Medical Group in Titusville. She completed her medical studies at Universidad Metropolitana in Barranquilla, Colombia and her residency in family practice at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in Bronx, New York. Fluent in both English and Spanish, Dr. De La Vega is passionate about meeting the needs of every patient.

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