

MAKING



Toni Shannon

SHARING THE CARE

It would be hard to find more dedicated people than the group of island mothers who started Sanibel Cares, which holds an annual art auction to raise money for The Children's

Hospital of Southwest Florida. These women, and those who have joined since it was founded in 2000, live up to the name—they *care*, and few prove it better than founding member Toni Shannon.

In the winter of 2001 and into the following spring, Shannon was busy working on the sold-out auction, even though she did not feel very well. In fact, it was pretty hard for her to make it through the final days leading up to the auction and the auction itself.

In June, she was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Thankfully, the tumor turned out to be benign. Now she continues to recover, day by day. It surprises no one that she is back helping Sanibel Cares get ready for its Third Annual Island Art Auction. It will be held April 5 in the Sanibel Community House and proceeds are earmarked for the hospital's Chrissy Brown Inpatient Cancer Unit.

The world of medicine is nothing new to Shannon. A "Navy kid" who spent much of her childhood living in Florida, she earned a

nursing degree from the University of Florida. That's where she met her future husband, well-known pediatric orthopedic surgeon Brett Shannon, the only such specialist in a five-county region of Southwest Florida.

The Shannons married after Brett finished medical school, and then they moved around while he served in the Navy. With their three children (Keely is a high-school senior, Brett a freshman, and Jimmy a sixth-grader), they moved to Sanibel in 1992 when the Nemours Clinic in Ft. Myers hired Brett as the area's first pediatric specialist.

In January 2000, when Nemours closed its Ft. Myers branch, the family stayed.

"I am so thankful that we did not leave this area," she says fervently. "It is so nice to be recovering in our wonderful, nice, supportive community. Everything was handled so well! I knew everything was being taken care of regarding my children, etc. So I was able to use my strength to get well."

—Libby Grimm

DR. LAMOTTA'S GOT A LOTTA HEART

With his shock of short auburn hair, twinkling blue eyes, and an instantaneous smile, Edward LaMotta, M.D., has a disarming sense of humor and ability to put people at ease. It is evident why his patients so readily warm to him.

LaMotta is one of two physicians providing family and urgent care at HealthPark of the Islands on Sanibel, where he can often be found on Saturdays accompanied by his dog, Jake. "We have some patients who simply can't come any other time, so I see them then," he explains.

Born in New York to a family that boasts thirty members in the medical world, he graduated from the University of Minnesota-Minneapolis Medical School, completed residency certification in family practice, and became board-certified in emergency medi-

cine. After eighteen years of medical practice, LaMotta, 53, and his wife, Penny, migrated south three years ago.

He was considering an emergency room position with Lee Memorial Health System when he discovered an opening at its HealthPark of the Islands branch. "I like the laid-back atmosphere. It enabled me to fit in very quickly."

He commutes to the island almost daily in his pride and joy, a red 1966 Ford Mustang convertible. He attends church on the island and sometimes leads animal dissection workshops with HealthPark associate, Dr. Rose Pothan, at The Sanibel School. "Getting children involved in a medical atmosphere at an early age can have a huge impact on their lives."

The predictable gamut of medical problems can be broken anytime by such island situations as last summer's rash of pigmy rattlesnake bites, or the day that produced a



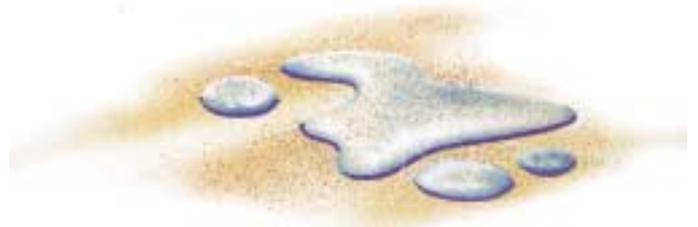
Edward LaMotta

record-breaking eighteen stingray jabs. "It was mating season," he says with a shrug.

More often, he's attending to patients' long-term well-being. "My patients will tell you, I'm very aggressive in preventing potential catastrophes," he says. And he intends to stick around to help them stay well. "I could not ask for better patients. I've always loved a small town. And I love family practice. Here, I've got the best of everything."

—Linda Heffley Keller

WAVES



JOYFUL POISE

Yoga instructor June Denison knows what it means to be flexible. Before opening her successful studio, Joyful Yoga, Denison had decided to rethink her entire life. She got out of a long-term relationship, left an established business selling fire trucks and ambulances, and moved. “I was literally changing everything in my life,” Denison says with one of her ready laughs. “I took that time out to explore.”

Her explorations took her to India, for a retreat with yogi B.K.S. Iyengar, and eventually to a series of workshops with Deepak Chopra. Denison, a Lee County resident since 1969, had first been attracted to yoga when she sought relief from stress brought on by endometriosis and fibroids. She found a side benefit: “My third yoga class is when the pain started to go away.”

Once she finished her training with Chopra and received her certification from the Yoga Alliance, Denison began teaching

classes. Five years ago she started Joyful Yoga, moving into her current space in San Carlos Park at the beginning of 2002.

Now the studio boasts fourteen teachers offering about forty classes a week in the studio and in locations all over Lee—with Collier County classes on the immediate horizon. “There’s such demand,” Denison says. “It’s almost like it’s taken on a life of its own.”

Denison spends at least sixty hours a week teaching and running her business, yet has still found time to create a book of yoga practice (also titled *Joyful Yoga*), three audio recordings of yoga and meditation, a yoga video, and she runs yoga retreats.

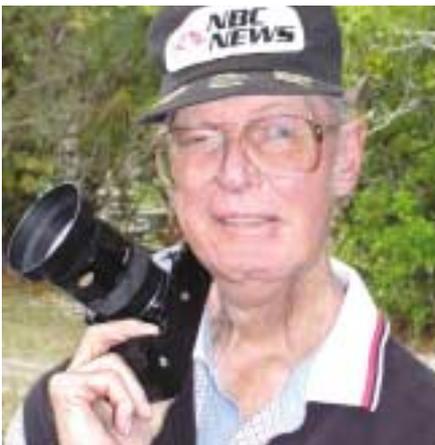
“There are things I can do that completely change someone’s life,” she says of her classes. “It’s awe-inspiring.” Denison has created her own unique style of yoga, incorporating hatha and power yogas, meditative work, and relaxation, and teaches in a fun, laid-back, anyone-can-do-it style that is no doubt part of the reason for her success.



June Denison

Denison herself is modest about her accomplishments. “This is what I’m meant to be doing, obviously, or it wouldn’t be falling into place like it is.”

– Tiffany Yates



Charles Ray

LIVING HISTORY

Videographer Charles Ray has quite an unusual perspective on Sanibel Island. An award-winning television cameraman with a career spanning thirty-six years, Ray has seen the devastation caused by riots, bomb-

ings, massacres, and wars.

“It’s a place to relax after the hectic life I’ve lived,” says Ray. “Even before I retired, we would come down here every chance we got.”

Ray spent most of his career with CBS News, first in the Atlanta bureau, then Chicago. Years later, he found himself with a massive collection of video, audio, still photos, and memorabilia—archives of American history by the man who recorded them. Ray has donated his entire collection to Florida Gulf Coast University.

“I wanted to use this material as an educational tool, to have it used in research,” he says.

The Charles Ray Photo Archives chronicles a life on the front lines of historic news events, such as the bloody clash between police and anti-Vietnam demonstrators at the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago; the bombing during a rebel insurrection in

Nicaragua; Anwar Sadat’s 1977 visit with Menachem Begin in Jerusalem, and the 1978 mass suicide at Jonestown in Guyana.

Both The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and The National Press Photographers Association have honored Ray. He was named cameraman of the year three times by the Chicago Press Photographers Association for his work at the CBS bureau there.

Ray has put together a book, called *The Life of a Network Newsreel Cameraman*, from the diary he kept for thirty years.

The FGCU collection includes 10,000 photographs and negatives, journals, audio-tapes, video, books and periodicals, a newsreel camera and projector, sixteen-millimeter film, and other keepsakes and memorabilia. “I wanted the satisfaction of seeing this work affect some young artist, photographer, or writer,” says Ray.

– Libby Boren McMillan

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PHOTO BY KATHLEEN BLASE

Dr. Suzanne Presley makes house calls on ailing island pets.

SICK PET? CALL DR. PRESLEY

Who among us hasn't had to convince an unwilling dog or cat that a trip to the vet won't be so bad? When the carrier comes out of the closet, the cat knows what it means, and although it's often easier to get a dog into the car, not many animals go willingly to the dreaded veterinarian's clinic. Frankly, you'd both rather be doing something else.

Suzanne Presley, D.V.M., to the rescue!

Presley, a Sanibel resident, is taking the hassle out of pet health care by making house calls on our furry best friends. No more carriers, no more trapping an outdoor pet, no more waiting rooms filled with anxious animals and aggravated owners.

Presley comes right to your home to provide comprehensive veterinary care for dogs, cats, and what she calls "pocket pets"—mice, hamsters, guinea pigs, rabbits, and, yes, even rats. "It's teenage boys who are particularly fond of rats," says Presley. She feels genuine tenderness toward boys upset by their pets' ailments. "It really gets me to see them so torn up."

Services include exam and diagnosis, preventive and geriatric medicine, dermatology care, comprehensive blood tests, vacci-

nations, and even microchip identification implants.

"I love the casual atmosphere of house calls," says Presley. "I get to know the animals in their home. The animals are always calmer there. Most of them really enjoy being in their own space. Plus I get to know everybody, not just the pet. It's sort of like Marcus Welby," she says with a laugh.

Presley has been a veterinarian for eighteen years. "I used to do a lot of house calls for friends and friends of friends in California. It just blossomed and became a full-time job, a house-call practice."

After she and her husband moved to Naples in 1996, she worked at a number of practices in Naples and Bonita, where she quickly built a following. In 2000 they moved to Sanibel, where their son attends The Sanibel School.

"I'm very excited about being part of the Sanibel-Captiva island community and offering my services. We really feel a part of the island and I want to give back somehow in an area that I love. I want to fill a niche that may be there."

(Dr. Presley can be reached at 239/392-0072.)

— Libby Boren McMillan

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Visitors' Views

An introduction to a few of the many remarkable visitors to Southwest Florida

FOLLOWING A ROAD MAP TO ADVENTURE

Many of us have fantasized—however briefly—about chucking everything familiar and setting out for unknown adventures, but few of us actually do it. Corinne LeCates and Sandy Baine are two who have.

These two recent visitors to Sanibel and Captiva are on the lam—from their old version of reality. They used to live in condos in Southern California with nine-to-five jobs and daily responsibilities. Now they have a well-worn road map, a collection of friends across America, and one heckuva van, named “Tessie.”

Life since July 1, 2002 has truly been a moving experience, as these two “road sisters” have visited thirty-eight states, documenting their entire journey with text and photos online.

Baine, 46, and LeCates, 36, met at the San Diego travel agency where they both worked. Deciding to go for it, they turned in their resignations and traded condo life for a 1990 Chevy Mark III conversion van, fully loaded with fridge, television, closets, and more. A friend created their logo—one that appropriately includes lots of blond hair—and it was applied to the van’s exterior as well as some clothing.

Once their Web site was established (www.TwoForTheRoad.net), a digital camera and notebook computer were stowed onboard Tessie, along with bottled water, peanut butter, cell phones, and a total budget of \$100 per day. This per diem includes food and lodging for both women; only gifts are paid for separately.

Sanibel-Captiva was a favorite stop. (Check the Web site journal, Nov. 16-17, 2002.) “We thought we were in Tahiti when we drove through the white sandy roads,” says LeCates of their island tour. Sights and stops included Bowman’s Beach, a Captiva sunset, shelling at the lighthouse, dining at local restaurants, and a welcome party attended by several simpatico females. Baine was moved by the island’s commitment to conservation. “What a surprise to see that nature has been preserved to this extent on Sanibel,” she says.



Sandy Baine and Corinne LeCates

PHOTO BY JIM ANDERSON

These resourceful ramblers have seen a lot, from the kitschy (The Corn Palace, The Spam Museum) to the monumental (Mount Rushmore). Activities have included airboat rides, hiking and biking, sampling regional foods, television interviews, and tours of everything you could possibly imagine.

The “bedtime decision” always weighs heaviest on the budget. A splurge one night calls for thriftiness the next. One can find the gals anywhere from a luxurious hotel to the parking lot of a local Wal-Mart. “There are plenty of lights and twenty-four-hour bathrooms,” says Baine with a laugh. The van has plenty of room to stretch out. Add plush bedding, candles, Christmas lights, a bottle of wine, journals, and the little TV and you’ve got the definition of cozy. Even for close friends, however, close quarters can get tight, and desperate measures must be taken. “In early December we took a break and went on vacation in the Bahamas,” LeCates says.

To share the journey, visit www.TwoForTheRoad.net, which chronicles their sometimes hilarious antics and discoveries. “We’re considering an upgrade,” says Baine, “to TwoForTheWorld.” Corporate sponsors are encouraged to e-mail, of course.

— Libby Boren McMillan

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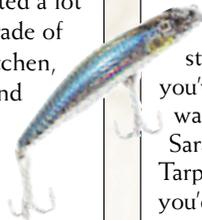


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PHOTO BY KATHLEEN BLASE

Tim Gardner

A WORKING NATURE

Tim Gardner just isn't a retiring kind of guy. He might have left his job behind, but he still logs countless hours for a myriad of environmental projects and organizations.

Gardner grew up in Glendale, Ohio, graduated from the University of Kentucky with degrees in agriculture and chemistry, and then he served in the Army Veterinary Medical Corps. He eventually went to work for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, where he played a key role in taking the pesticide DDT off the market in 1972.

After twenty busy years in Washington, he and his wife, Carol, retired to Sanibel.

Retire? The list of organizations, foundations, and committees he serves on is mind-boggling. He is president of the International Osprey Foundation, commission chairman of Lee County's Mosquito Control District and Hyacinth Control District, and former board member of the Island Water Association. He also makes time to volunteer for the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, C.R.O.W. (Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife), and the City of Sanibel's Wildlife Committee.

One of his favorite jobs is at the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, where he helps fight invasive Brazilian pepper—partly by driving the bulldozer. "Driving it is a macho thing," he says, with an impish grin. "It's a man's best dream."

With a home overlooking Clam Bayou, he also is one of three who started the Clam Bayou Preservation Association to find a way to revitalize the body of water. "It's a complicated project for which there is no simple answer," he says. But Gardner is tackling it. After all, he's retired. What else could he possibly have to do?

—Linda Heffley Keller

Making Waves is *Times of the Islands'* honor roll for Southwest Floridians who, in their everyday lives, make the community and the Lee Island Coast special. If you know of someone who deserves recognition, call us at 239/472-0205 or 239/472-0629.



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