

More than a Fish Tale

Norm Zeigler



PHOTOS BY KATHLEEN BLASE

Books, travel, and fishing have always been Norm Zeigler's life passions, so it's no surprise that traveling and fishing are the premises for his own book, *Rivers of Shadow, Rivers of Sun: A Fly Fisher's European Journal*, published by Downeast/Countrysport Press.

But make no mistake; the book is not about just traveling and fishing. "It's a literary book with fly fishing in it," explains Zeigler. He wrote the book based on his experiences during his fifteen years in Europe as a travel-and-outdoor writer and as a journalist covering such events as the Iran hostage crisis, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the exodus of ethnic Germans from the Soviet Union.

Born and raised in Cape Cod,

Massachusetts, Zeigler now lives on Sanibel Island with his wife, *Times of the Islands* assistant editor Libby Grimm, and their two children. With a love of fishing he picked up from his father and a sense of adventure, the former pre-medicine-student-turned-English-major couldn't bear a life behind a desk, so he became, among other things, a freelance writer, a commercial fisherman, and a service-station manager. "I wanted some adventures," he explains. "A deeply ingrained love of travel and adventure is part of the American literary tradition."

A European vacation changed his life. He loved it so much, he decided to stay, and landed a job at *European Stars and Stripes*, a newspaper for Americans in

Europe. He soon met his wife, started a family, and traveled the continent.

It wasn't until the travel bug bit him back that Zeigler's European adventures were cut short. He contracted Lyme disease in what was then Czechoslovakia and was prescribed an environment where the air is clean and the climate mild. Thanks to a suggestion from his mother-in-law, the family moved to Sanibel where Zeigler, for several years too sick to fish and travel, began work on his book, which is due out in May.

"To me, the next best thing to fishing and traveling," he says, "is to write about fishing and traveling."

— Jennifer Workman Lessinger



Making Positive Adjustments

Mike & Jana Lampe

Imagine moving to a third-world country, not knowing how to speak the native language, and opening a new business. Seem like a bit of a challenge? That's just what Cape Coral residents Mike and Jana Lampe did a couple of years ago after graduating from Parker College of Chiropractic in Dallas, Texas.

They ended up in the Guatemalan city

of Patzun at the suggestion of Jana Lampe's grandmother, who had been donating her money and time for more than twenty years to build a hospital that would serve the region's poor for free. She informed her granddaughter that there were only two other chiropractors in the country and the couple could be very helpful there.

There was only one problem: neither knew how to speak Spanish.

The Lampes enrolled in six weeks of intense Spanish classes once they arrived in Antigua, Guatemala, where they converted a courtyard-style house into a chiropractic clinic amid cobblestone streets and centuries-old Mayan ruins.

Word soon spread about the clinic. Before the Lampes could say *hola*, they were adjusting nearly three hundred patients a week. "People would wait outside in the streets until we could see them," says Mike Lampe. "And some of the very poor would give us bananas or vegetables as payment for adjustments."

After operating the small clinic more than a year, the Lampes decided that it was time to move back to the United States and set up shop in Cape Coral. They turned the clinic in Antigua over to another couple who had recently graduated from chiropractic school and, in May 2003, they opened Lampe Family Chiropractic off Del Prado Boulevard.

The husband-and-wife team continues to contribute to its community. The clinic raised more than 255 pounds of food for the Harry Chapin Food Bank by offering free exams and X-rays to patients who brought in canned goods. Lampe Family Chiropractic also conducts bimonthly educational workshops on health issues such as emotional stress, chemical stress, and physical stress.

"Our goal is to dispel some of the misconceptions surrounding chiropractic treatment," says Jana Lampe. "By helping others and by offering our services in an educational environment, we're better able to guide people towards optimum health through chiropractic care."

— Debbie Hanson

Just for Special Kids

John Sprecher



Desperately searching for a way to help his autistic son learn such basic skills as counting and the alphabet, John Sprecher experimented ten years ago with a homemade videotape. Today, video programs modeled after that first attempt are helping reach children in thirty countries around the world—children with autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorder, dyslexia, Down’s syndrome, and other developmental and learning disabilities.

In 1994, Sprecher sensed an opportunity when he noticed that his son, Jeff, responded to television programs, commercials, and even end-of-show credits. Using a video camera, he fashioned a program that presented the alphabet, one letter at a time, and then moved on to numbers. Jeff took to the video and, in three months, went from knowing three or four letters to the entire alphabet, as well as numbers one through ten. He had not learned by rote, either, but could recognize characters in any order they were presented to him.

John Sprecher wrote an excited letter to the publication that served the Autism Society of America, detailing his project and asking if other parents might be interested in a copy of the tape. If he got enough responses, he promised he would find a way to mass-produce them. That first year, he sold five hundred copies and realized he had a business on his hands.

Today, more than five hundred schools across the United States are using the Special Kids programs to help children

with speech, writing, reading, and self-help skills.

The Sprecher family divides its time between Wisconsin and Sanibel. John Sprecher has a marketing firm and Special Kids is the family’s after-hours project. Jeff turned eighteen last year and his younger brother, Eric, acts in many of the videos.

In addition to updating earlier programs, says John Sprecher, “We’re getting involved with social skills—how to go to the doctor, go to the dentist, get a haircut. These things can be very traumatic for kids with disabilities.”

Previous Special Kids programs teach children how to brush their teeth, comb their hair, make a bed, and get dressed. “Now we’re working on programs for teens,” he says. “Things like hygiene are obviously different for older boys and girls and those who are transitioning to a work environment.” Special Kids is also launching new products, including interactive flash cards for computers and a laminated guide to taking a shower.

For more information or to order, visit www.special-kids.com, or call 1-800-KIDS-153.

“There are a few other programs on the market now, but ours remain the original videos for children with disabilities,” he says. “So many parents have told us their children learned to write and the parents didn’t even know the children had the capacity to write.”

— Libby Boren McMillan

Pine Island Protector

Ed Chapin



PHOTO BY GRETCHEN F. COYLE

Apart from the rush of six-lane highways, tall condos, and numerous golf courses stands Ed Chapin, a pioneer in land preservation on Pine Island.

Since its inception in 1976, the non-profit Calusa Land Trust and Nature Preserve of Pine Island has conserved more than two thousand acres. As one of the first members and a resident of Calusa Island, where the trust has preserved land, Chapin has been instrumental in its success.

The mission of the Calusa Land Trust is “to protect the natural diversity and beauty of the Pine Island region by acquiring, managing and preserving in perpetuity environmentally sensitive or historically important land.” The trust has about nineteen preserves, which are open to the public, secure from what could become an area of major development on and around Pine Island.

Serving as the trust’s president and a director has been a small part of Chapin’s volunteerism; he is happiest in the trenches—creating walking trails, building overlooks, and digging out exotic invasive foliage.

A quiet man with a shy smile, he comes to life when leading tours of the preserves. Educating others about the land, wildlife,

and history is a highly personal mission. He encourages residents and visitors “to learn about the natural environment, the plants and animals that are here.”

Ask what Chapin has done and the pat answers are “everything” or “anything that comes up.” Land stewardship is his field of expertise. He conducts work parties once a month and leads educational canoe tours six times a year. Working in conjunction with Lee County Parks and Recreation, Chapin has been helping chart the northern part of the Great Calusa Blueway, a network of paddling trails.

As chief ranger for the preserves, he has planted native plants and trees, cleared invasive plants, and cleaned up trash. His aim is to have a ranger for each of the preserves, which range from a small park to the almost 100-acre Pine Island Flatwoods Preserve, established in conjunction with Lee County’s Conservation 20/20 Program.

“We must protect the natural habitats, such as [for] birds and fish, that make Pine Island unique, a quality of life,” he says. “If you take those habitats away, a way of life will disappear. I want to keep a healthy environment for many generations.”

— Gretchen F. Coyle

Visitors' Views

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



PHOTO COURTESY OF MIMI DONEGAN

Holding courts on the islands *Mimi Donegan*

Tennis players at both Sundial Beach Resort and The Dunes Golf & Tennis Club have had the pleasure of being soundly beaten by Sanibel visitor Mimi Donegan, but they needn't feel too bad.

Donegan has won United States national titles on grass, clay, and hard courts. She has been ranked number two nationally in women's (age) 35 division, number two nationally in women's 40, and number eight in the world in women's 40 division.

She played the U.S. Open for eleven consecutive years, from 1967 to 1977, at Forest Hills, New York, where Donegan played opposite Billie Jean King and Margaret Court Smith. She played mixed-doubles with Arthur Ashe and other tennis greats.

"My life has been mostly teaching," says Donegan. "In between teaching, I'd qualify to play these big tournaments," she explains. "It's a result of my ranking. I'd

get invited to play at Forest Hills."

Other invitations have come her way through the years as well. Donegan has played worldwide exhibition matches and pro-celebrity tournaments with such players as Roscoe Tanner, Pancho Gonzalez, Althea Gibson, Bill Cosby, and Sidney Poitier, among others. She's also represented the United States in international championships.

Donegan has managed clubs in New York City and Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, where she was co-owner of one, and she has been a teaching pro at clubs in Norwich, Connecticut, and in Florida in Ponte Vedra and Miami Beach. Today, she can be found at exclusive Fisher Island, off the south end of Miami Beach.

Through the years, Donegan has managed pro shops, organized and run United States Tennis Association-sanctioned tournaments, round-robins, clinics, membership events, and given multitudes of lessons. Her home area recognized her many accomplishments and elected her to the Dade County Tennis Hall of Fame.

Her experiences have been "very rewarding for me," says Donegan. "I've given lessons to Robert Redford, Barbra Streisand, Senator Jacob Javits, Rod Steiger, Dina Merrill," and many others. Cliff Drysdale worked with Donegan in developing the Fisher Island Tennis Center, where she is now assistant tennis director.

When the chance for a short getaway from Fisher has presented itself, Donegan has repeatedly headed for Sanibel Island, which she learned about from her sister. "I love the island very much. It's quaint and homey. The whole concept of the island is beautiful."

This tennis powerhouse doesn't often pack her racquet for vacation, however; it's the island shopping that attracts her. "The stores are so beautifully decorated," she says. "Many of them have an extra touch of female personality. As a result, they're all very beautifully done."

The odds sound good that she'll continue to visit. "I can't compare Sanibel to any other place I've been to," she says. "It's very lovely, really beautiful."

-Libby Boren McMillan