

Making Waves is our honor roll for residents of Southwest Florida's island coast who, in their everyday lives, make the community special. —by Karen Nelson



▲ Dogged pursuit

Well-known local actress Kelly Legarreta followed her love of dogs to find a new career in behavioral training.

Three and a half years ago, she earned a certification in horse and dog massage because she wanted to help her arthritic Pomeranian (one of her four dogs). She set up shop as Healing Paws-abilities.

As she helped dogs through massage, their owners began asking for help with behavioral problems. "It's never the dog, it's always the owner," explains Legarreta. "They're often unwilling to put in the time needed to work with the dog."

Legarreta explains that when people ask for help, they're actually expecting you to come in and train their dog, but that it doesn't work that way. "Dogs don't speak English, they rely on body language," she points

out. "The big thing is consistency: a consistent schedule, a consistent tone of voice. Sometimes people scream at their dogs, sometimes they don't.

"My job is to give the family the tools they need. I love helping people gain the self-confidence to deal with their dogs," she explains.

Legarreta still loves performing, and Schoolhouse Theater-goers will find her in two productions this season: *Funny Money* and *Caught in the Net* (the sequel to *Run for Your Wife*). But working with dogs is her dream come true. "It brings out the best in me," she says. "I'm the luckiest girl in the world. But without my sweet husband [Schoolhouse Theater Artistic Director Victor Legarreta], it wouldn't have been possible," she concludes.

Kelly Legarreta can be reached at 239-281-7777; her Web site is www.HealingPawsabilities.com.





▲ Driven to win

Driving his Porsche GT3 RS, Gavin Riches, owner of AutoQuest in Fort Myers, took first in his class and second overall at the 2007 Dunlop Targa (a New Zealand road rally).

"You're going at high speeds (up to 125 mph) on mountainous, winding roads that you've never seen before," explains Riches. "You never know what's around the next corner or over the next hill, and you're going as fast as you can, fighting for every second. Your co-driver is calling out 'intersection at 500 meters... 400 meters... 300 meters... 200 meters... turn forty-five degrees to the right.'"

Riches has been racing for years, and this was his third Dunlop Targa, a six-day, two-thousand-kilometer (about 1,650-mile) rally with about eight hundred miles of "special" stages (public roads that have been closed for the race) connected by touring stages (driving with traffic on open public roads).

Teams receive a route book that

lists intersections and "cautions," which are warnings such as "be careful on this curve." About a third of the Targa entries "crash out," notes Riches. "In a split second, things can occur," he says. "You can be coming into a corner or over a brow and you suddenly see that you're going too fast. You're using terms that you can't put in print and you're thinking, 'Oh, this is not good, we won't make it.' You fight to make it. And we do make it. And we did make it."

There's a saying in racing that if you're not scared two or three times a day, then you're not trying hard enough. Riches, who is planning to race in four Targas this year, adds, "It's part of the excitement and the adrenaline rush."



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Bookworm to bird watcher

In mid-August Margaret Mohundro took over as director of the Sanibel Public Library, and she's happy to once again be working with the public. Previously she worked in administration, where a project to bring user-friendliness to the search interface of Indiana's statewide library database won an award for innovation. At her last job her customers were librarians. "Librarians like

to search, but people like to find," she says. "Librarians need to keep reminding themselves of that."

Some of the new projects already in the works on Sanibel include a two-room Teen Space and a visiting author series that will bring Joyce Carol Oates to Sanibel on March 20. "We want to create an event where an author is coming to speak and to read," Mohundro says,

"and where there will be the opportunity to talk one-on-one."

According to Mohundro, being on Sanibel is a delight, especially since the library is the focus of so much community activity. Her biggest surprise has been the birds. "I always knew they were beautiful, but just seeing them all the time, up close, everywhere... One of my goals is to learn more about [them]."



Making magic

Magic is about how you make the audience feel," says Fort Myers-based magician Alex Geiser. Now twenty-four, he was "bit by the magic bug" at eight.

Geiser performs a lot of close-up magic (one-on-one) at restaurants and private parties, as well as stage magic. "You're up there and everyone's cheering for you...gasping," he says. "I know I'm giving them that kind of wonder." This July, he will enter a joint competition held by the International Brotherhood of Magicians and the Society of American Magicians. In 2003 he came in third at the IBM competition.

Some magicians have a stage persona, but he prefers to "just be myself. If you're

fully expressing yourself, you give whoever's watching a good show. Audience trust is essential to my misdirection."

Geiser creates all of his own magic. "Most of the time I'm thinking about magic," he says. "If I really have magic, I should be able to do anything. Nothing should be able to stop [it]."

"A true magician looks at magic as a way of life... [It] can lift a person up. If someone's having a [bad] day—say I'm in Wal-Mart and the cashier's a little grumpy—I'll

borrow a pen and then make it vanish and reappear in my ear. It's great! Just like medicine, it makes you feel better."

Catch Alex at Houlihan's restaurant in Cape Coral or contact him at 239-851-6185, geisaman@gmail.com.





Sanibel eBay treasures

Islanders Paul and Susan Reynolds were “looking for a business that would fill a niche and provide a service to the community” when they set up Sanibel Treasures last fall. This entrée to eBay for the Web-cautious is an easy way to get your own Sanibel treasures into the online marketplace.

“We come out and photograph the items,” explains Paul Reynolds. “We help people decide whether they want to sell them at a fixed price in our eBay store-

front, eSanibel Treasures, or put their items up for immediate auction.” Processing the payment (via PayPal) and shipping are also part of the service.

Paul began Web marketing back when “the Internet was a baby.” A former General Electric sales manager, he then owned a chain of retail golf stores in the Northeast (he was briefly on the PGA tour in the '60s). Paul also provides Web site design gratis to several island nonprofits, including “Ding” Darling Days and the Periwinkle Partnership.

Susan, an attorney who still practices

international law, collects and repairs antique dolls and has been an eBay buyer for years. Jokes Paul of her workroom full of doll parts: “She has a battalion of Chuckies, hundreds of them.” She graduated with the first women’s class at Dartmouth (being from Kentucky, she got more than her share of “Beverly Hillbillies” jokes).

Both Paul and Susan relocated separately to the area about five years ago and connected on Match.com. Sanibel Treasures marks a new venture in this new partnership in a still-new island home. To find out about selling your treasures, call them at 239-395-3390, e-mail Paul@SanibelTreasures.com, or visit www.SanibelTreasures.com.



Nurse of the islands

Looking for in-home professional nursing care for yourself or a loved one? Nurse of the Islands, Samantha Tumminello, R.N., packs an engaging manner along with her medical supplies when making home care calls.

Tumminello, whose mother is also a nurse, moved to Sanibel three years ago from Staten Island, New York, with her two children and her husband, who retired from the New York Police Department. She began her in-home nursing service a little over a year ago, realizing that it made sense on Sanibel, especially during season, “when off-island home care places don’t want to come out here,” she says.

Some people just want help organizing their medications. “You would be surprised how many people are alone and

don’t have someone who can help them,” she says. When teaching how to self-inject medications, along with her equipment she brings a doll and humor (when appropriate). She also makes recommendations on home safety, such as no throw rugs on tile floors.

As we go to press, Samantha is adding a new way to teach about health: a fitness program for Sanibel toddlers and preschoolers. If anyone can convince kids that fitness is fun, it might just be Samantha, with her upbeat manner. You can reach her at 239-472-1216 or Nursesam184@earthlink.net.

If you know of someone who deserves recognition, call us at 239-472-0205 or send an e-mail to editor@toti.com.