TIMES OF THE Islands
SHORE & ISLAND LIVING
PREMIER ISSUE VOL. 1 Nº 1
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An authentic reproduction of a 16th century galleon with a sunset view of Sanibel Island. Cover concept by Ross Studios/Whittingslow & von Schatzberg with design and digitized images by Susan Ross. Location photography in San Francisco and Sanibel by Greg Ross.
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The relaxed islands of Sanibel and Captiva are places to be explored and enjoyed. And on Captiva Island and Sundial Beach Resort on Sanibel Island and sample any one or all of

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What began as an idea born of a lifelong passion has now, in these pages, become a reality. For over 30 years, my travels have taken me to islands throughout the world—from the island continents of Australia and New Zealand, to the most minuscule dots in the Caribbean, with long sojourns in places like the Turks & Caicos, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and the British Virgin Islands.

Born in Europe and raised partially in South America I have been blessed with a divided soul. The Latin influence ignited a fiery passion, a consummate desire to be close to the earth, the elements and nature; while my Germanic roots bequeathed me with a steadfast determination to pursue more challenging enterprises offered by the urban landscape of temperate climates.

But, of all the places I’ve been—places where the sun bleaches the sand and the sea echoes the murmurs of earth and sky—the Southwest Florida barrier islands have beckoned me the strongest.

My affinity for these islands began in 1989, when I left behind the hurdles of a very demanding business in Pennsylvania, and heeded the many invitations of good friends like Mitzi and Carl Koelmel, Tina and Guy Tober, and others, to visit their best kept secret—Sanibel and Captiva. For two weeks, I relinquished myself to the inebriating beauty of the sunsets, the transcendental communion of an exuberant vegetation and the placid Gulf waters, and the peaceful coexistence of the omnipresent wildlife with a population of respectful citizens. All this contributed to making these islands my most sought after piece of paradise.

That first trip in 1989 marked the beginning of a love story which, like good wine, only improved as the years went by—and I kept coming back. The natural beauty of the islands notwithstanding, other alluring factors prompted me to keep returning; first and foremost, the outstanding people that I encountered here, for it takes a most singular type of people to make these islands what they are today. Through their great love and respect for the land, their spirit of fellowship, punctuated by a remarkable sense of humor, they have lent to these barrier islands their unique features. These people awakened the desire in all of us involved with Times of the Islands to give back to this land and its community our talents and innermost appreciation in the form of this magazine.

As my life begins to slow its frenzied pace, I can call these islands home and embark on a new journey. Though I had previously worked as a business publisher in New York, my sole intention now is to celebrate the island modus vivendi that is so dear to my heart, and to the hearts of all those who have ever been spellbound by brilliant sunsets, enamored with tiny webbed feet pressed in the sand, or instantly soothed by the smell and sound of the sea.

Throughout this endeavor, I have counted on a dedicated team: our managing editor, Suzanne Tissier; our production director, Aldo Ullio; and our senior consulting editor, Tom Whittingslow, as well as our many contributing writers, photographers and designers.

Aply christened on a humid night, in the Sunset Grill overlooking the Gulf, Times of the Islands pledged to bring you the best of the islands. Come along and share our dream.

Friedrich Jaeger
Publisher

SANDY BEND APARTMENTS
3057 West Gulf Drive,
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(941)472-1190
Welcome to the Community

Congratulations on the Premier Issue of Times of the Islands. I know that this will be a richly rewarding experience for both your readers and your advertisers. Throughout the world, Sanibel and Captiva’s image is growing, and I am sure your new magazine will be a vital part of this process.

Before launching a new magazine, every publisher must ask himself what need is to be fulfilled. Our unique corner of the world offers unparalleled opportunities to enjoy nature, culture and recreation in one of the country’s most desirable locations. Our history—from the pirates of the Caribbean searching for hidden treasure, to the visitors seeking a suntan or just a glimpse of the roseate spoonbill—offers great editorial opportunities.

However, more important, a publication inspired by the islands creates a sense of community and belonging. Something we are all proud to share with the world.

Again, best of luck in this exciting new venture. The time has come for Times of the Islands.

Senator Fred R. Dudley
The Florida Senate

City of Sanibel

On behalf of the citizens and the City Council of the City of Sanibel, I would like to extend both congratulations and a welcome to your new publication.

Sanibel is known far and wide for its beautiful beaches, its abundant wildlife, and the community’s overall concern for the environment. In fact, all of our efforts are designed to accomplish the delicate balance between humans and nature. On Sanibel, we strive to preserve the natural beauty of Southwest Florida that drew us all here in the first place.

Those who support these same philosophies are graciously welcomed to sunny Florida. I invite your readers to explore the unique island of Sanibel not merely through the pages of your new magazine, but to see for themselves how people can coexist in harmony with the wonders of our natural world.

Again, congratulations and best wishes for your continued success. I am looking forward to each issue.

Mayor Robert P. Janes
City of Sanibel

Greetings and congratulations on behalf of the businesses of the Islands, and specifically the Sanibel Captiva Islands Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber is happy to welcome Times of the Islands to its ever-growing membership roster.

For over 40 years, the Chamber has been meeting the needs of island visitors and residents alike. Our members are an outstanding group of people who not only appreciate the Barrier Islands, but who have dedicated themselves to providing islanders with the goods and services they desire.

Now, with the advent of your new publication, we have one more way of providing quality entertainment and information to all those who grace our shoreline. We also appreciate your magazine’s mission of promoting this beautiful piece of paradise we call home.

We extend a warm welcome to you and your readers, and wish you the best of luck in your new venture.

David H. Besse, Executive Director
Sanibel Captiva Islands Chamber of Commerce
As I look at the calendar on the wall of my office (as I’ve done several hundred times a day since we started production on this issue) it occurs to me that another year has slipped by. The few thin pages filled with scribbles and deadlines that flutter when I walk by seem anemic in comparison to the heavy, brass hook that once held an entire year of my life. Most years, when the realization hits me that the holidays are just moments away, I wonder where the time went and, more importantly, what I did with it. This year, however, as I hold the Premier Issue of Times of the Islands in my hands, I see exactly where it went and what I did with it. And, I am exhilarated anew each time I witness this amazing process called publishing.

What begins as a concept or a vision, quickly explodes into a frenzy of words and images, yet ultimately culminates (heaven knows how) into an orderly, succinct extension of the many personalities that made it all happen. All the parts, all the pieces, all the concepts fly from different directions and are funneled and stripped into one sane, tangible creation. This unbelievably satisfying process must certainly be the ultimate in creating order out of chaos.

And, really, isn’t that what we’re doing as we pursue that piece of paradise we call the island lifestyle? Whether visiting for a day or living on-island for a lifetime, we do so to rid our lives of chaos and clutter; to take what life throws haphazardly in our path, and guided by our vision, synthesize it into a higher existence—an existence where we fully appreciate nature, community, the environment and the extraordinary gift of living in a place of utmost beauty. We cull through the confusion and edit out the redundancies in pursuit of that one pure moment of harmony, peace and order.

The mission of this magazine is to celebrate this pursuit—this vision. Our goal is to make you laugh, make you think, and make you even more aware of the people, places and things that make our area so unique and our lifestyle so desirable. Not only will we focus on the Southwest Florida barrier islands and all their treasures, we will also visit distant island getaways. In this issue, you’ll discover Gulf diving secrets, visit the Turkish island coast, and chat with world-renowned nature photographer Clyde Butcher. You’ll laugh at that rare breed of guys that only inhabit the islands, and you’re even invited to participate in our continuing saga, “Fantasy Beach”—a unique blend of fact, fiction and local color.

So grab a chair or spread your blanket in the sand, and enjoy the best of the islands and the best of life, and—if only for as long as it takes to travel from cover to cover—kiss the chaos good-bye.

Suzanne Tissier
Managing Editor

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What makes *Times of the Islands* so intellectually, spiritually and visually stimulating? Certainly its quality, content, and magnificent backdrop contribute; but, what really makes our publication special are the people behind the scenes who make it happen.

**Friedrich Jaeger, Publisher**
Friedrich was born in Germany and partially raised in Brazil, and is a full-time resident of Sanibel Island. His professional life has taken him throughout the world to such far-reaching places as Africa, Latin America, Europe, and numerous exotic islands. Throughout his varied career in publishing, strategic planning, marketing, business development, import and export, manufacturing and international finance, he has held true to one vision—to create a publication that celebrates the island lifestyle.

**Suzanne Tissier, Managing Editor**
Born in Pennsylvania, Suzanne is a “virtual” Florida native, having spent 18 years in Palm Beach and the last 14 years in southwest Florida. Her professional career as a writer, editor, graphic designer, public relations and marketing consultant spans over 14 years. A member of both the performing company and board of directors of Gulf Coast Dance Company, she teaches and performs in community dance and theater productions throughout the year.

**Aldo Ullio, Production Manager**
A native New Yorker, Aldo made southwest Florida his home six years ago. During his 24 years in the publishing industry, he has worked for such publishing giants as the Hearst Corporation and Ziff-Davis Publishing. His production background began with *Popular Mechanics* magazine and led to relationships with numerous trade and consumer publications which include *Redbook* and *Personal Computing*.

**Barbara Linstrom, Contributing Editor**
An annual visitor to Sanibel Island for 20 years, and a resident for the last three, Barbara’s career as a journalist has led her to such places as Italy, Venezuela, and the British Virgin Islands. A freelance writer and independent video producer, she also writes for the screen.

**Libby Boren McMillan, Contributing Editor**
Libby has had sand in her shoes since her 1989 move to the islands of Sanibel and Captiva. She hails from an unusual family of writers, performers and politicians. An advertising copywriter for 16 years, Libby owns a local brochure distribution business, which affords her just enough time to explore the world with her husband (and favorite pilot) Michael.

**Kathleen Blase, Staff Photographer**
A South Carolinian, Kathleen has spent 10 years as a full-time resident and another 10 years split between South America and our balmy shores. Her career in photography and photo-journalism includes work for the *Island Reporter*, the *Islander*, the *Captiva Current*, the *Pine Island Eagle* and the *Cape Coral Daily Breeze*. When not behind the lens of her camera, she can be found at the Sanibel Captiva Islands Chamber of Commerce.

**Dana Nicloy, Art Director**
Dana was first introduced to Sanibel 23 years ago by her roommate at USF, in Tampa. She came back to Southwest Florida 13 years ago with her husband. Her career, which includes printing/production, art direction, graphic design and desktop publishing, spans 18 years. As new parents, she and her husband look forward to showing their daughter the true beauty of life in paradise.

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With a tip of our hat to the many knowledgeable concierges in local resorts, we’ve compiled a list of island services we agree are worth a mention. Services are a fantastic gift for someone you care about—a treat they’d probably never give themselves. But, we think you should spoil yourself as well.

Hair, Skin and Nails Day Spa on Sanibel offers a relaxing paraffin foot treatment, highly recommended for barefoot island weather. Guys, don’t be shy; you’ll enjoy a spa package or reflexology session as much as she would! Stop by for a menu of services. Gift certificates are available. Periwinkle Place, 2075 Periwinkle Way, 395-2220.

If you’re feeling really lazy and sore after a day on the golf course or the tennis courts, it’s possible to have a professional massage without ever leaving your room. Several masseuses have portable massage tables. On Ft. Myers Beach we found Massage by Sharyl at 463-8941.

Sanibel and Captiva licensed massage therapists are also on call, including Karen Williamson at 395-9214 and Paul Zimmerman at 472-3752.

Brush up on a troublesome tennis stroke at any one of several resorts. Instruction is available at Sanibel Harbour Resort, Punta Rassa, 466-2159; The Dunes, 472-3522, and The Sundial, 472-4251 both on Sanibel; and South Seas Plantation Resort on Captiva, 472-5111.

Another particularly unique island option is water taxi service to the out islands. A day of secluded shelling on Cayo Costa is easily arranged by calling Jensen’s Twin Palm Marina, 472-5800.

Great fishing in local waters makes at least one guided fishing trip a must also has several experienced captains. Call 941-964-2283.

Local hotel and condominium staffs will have several excellent suggestions as well. Never overlook (or underestimate!) the wealth of knowledge available to you from the people who live and work on island.

- Compiled by Libby Boren McMillan
Island Getaways

The Pink Shell
Fort Myers Beach

As a tall ship comes in from its last cruise of the day, the sunset is slowly relaxing to the spontaneous music of surf and sea breeze. From my balcony, I can see Sanibel Island and the causeway, but for all its familiarity, it’s a million miles away. Below me are several charming cottages, an inviting pool and perhaps the widest expanse of beach I’ve seen in the islands. An opposite vantage point allows me to spy the popular anchorage nestled beyond Estero Island’s grand bridge. These fabulous views and seemingly endless beach are only the beginning of the discoveries at Best Western Pink Shell Beach Resort.

Fort Myers Beach at its best, Pink Shell is a family-oriented island resort nestled between the Gulf of Mexico and Estero Bay. The 12-acre property stretches across the northern tip of Estero Island, adjacent to a county nature park, and has an unequaled 1,500-acre stretch of shoreline, with soft, powdery-like sand.

Nothing has been forgotten at Pink Shell when it comes to amenities. Guests enjoy a bayside fishing pier, three heated swimming pools and a children’s wading pool, lighted tennis courts, bike rentals and volleyball. Water enthusiasts will want to stay awhile to enjoy on-site rentals of wave runners, windsurfers, catamarans and powerboats. Dock accommodations, sightseeing cruises, video rentals and a well-stocked general store round out the long list of reasons a Pink Shell room key is one of the best treasures on the beach.

In fact, once you’ve checked in, you may never need to leave at all. Overlooking the bay, the full-service Hungry Pelican restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. In addition, someone at the resort also understands those of us who are so relaxed we’d rather not change out of our swimsuits simply because we’re hungry. Voilà! A poolside bar and grill is open daily for lunch, snacks and all sorts of exotic island drinks.

Families will be particularly enamored with this friendly resort’s recreation program. Daily activities revolve around a weekday camp for children of all ages. Mom and Dad can relax while professional recreation staff lead the kids through water games, environmental learning activities and beach crafts. There’s plenty of organized fun for grown-ups, too, including the hilarious hermit crab races, starring Speedy, Big Red, Green Machine and friends. The recreation staff also provides entertainment for birthday parties, groups staying on the property, and for the community-at-large during special events.

Recreation Director Linda Leitch can barely contain her enthusiasm for this quickly growing facet of Pink Shell. “Circus Night is my favorite. Kids choose the role they want to play, then put on costumes and practice their act. At the end of the evening we put on a circus performance for the parents.” Leitch understands the need for Mom and Dad to have time to themselves. “In families where both parents work, it’s more important than ever to have the kids with you on vacation, but working parents aren’t used to 24-hour-a-day togetherness, and can go home from vacation exhausted. We give them a break, and their kids take home lasting memories, pen pal addresses and crafts they’ve made.”

Linda’s team carries on one well-photographed tradition that started prior to her arrival at Pink Shell. Called Stretch Break, the early morning exercise program began as 15 minutes devoted to employee morale and well-being. As it grew in popularity, it evolved, and housekeeping staff now can be seen doing popular line dances in the street to the delight of surprised guests who stumble upon the scene. Guests now join the staff for this 15 to 20 minutes of light (and lighthearted) exercise during which anything can happen.

Part of the prestigious and accommodating South Seas Resorts Company, Best Western Pink Shell underwent substantial renovation in December 1994 and is now the only AAA three-diamond and Mobil three-star resort on Fort Myers Beach.

Guests have a wide range of accommodations to choose from, includ-
ing efficiencies, cottages, suites and the breathtaking, seven-story Beach Villas, opened in February 1995. Over 1,000 square feet each, the light and airy villas feature two bedrooms, two baths, washer and dryer, fully equipped kitchen, living and dining areas and a private Gulf-front screened balcony. My villa was one of seven with an additional balcony facing beautiful Estero Bay. Morning brought views of working shrimp boats heading out to sea. I also visited what Pink Shell calls The Penthouse. Although not as new (or as high) as my villa, this 2,100 square foot, three-bedroom, split-level unit has vaulted ceilings, a fireplace, three balconies and a rooftop deck—perfect for family reunions or small corporate retreats.

Environmentally-conscious visitors will be surprised at the great strides Pink Shell has taken toward reducing waste. Accommodations and common areas have a recycling bin that’s emptied daily. My bathroom displayed a card asking me to use a “code” for the housekeeping staff: towels I left in the tub meant “Please change them,” towels on the rack meant, “I’ll use them again.” This simple plan helps save millions of gallons of water, as well as the fuel to heat it, and detergents. Besides setting a good example, this system makes visitors to our eco-conscious area even more aware of nature’s precarious balance.

Everything is easy at Pink Shell. Guests can explore Estero Island by hopping on board a trolley that comes right to the resort. Running the length of Fort Myers Beach until 9:00 each evening, this quaint, trouble-free transportation opens up a world of shopping, restaurant and entertainment options. Located at the secluded end of Estero Island, the resort is sheltered from the hustle and bustle sometimes associated with Fort Myers Beach, and, with the long-anticipated downtown renovation project just beginning, Best Western Pink Shell can look forward to an even brighter future.

-Libby Boren McMillan

With the holiday season upon us, shopping is on everyone’s mind, but there’s no reason it can’t be an exciting prospect rather than a dreaded one. Friends and family will delight in anything that helps them dream of sun-baked beaches, particularly as the national weather map changes into an ever darker shade of blue. This year, treat your friends in cooler climates to a taste of the islands. A cornucopia of food-related gift items awaits you, and often at stocking-stuffer prices!

The Cheese Nook on Sanibel is a wonderfully dangerous place for food-loving shoppers. Filled with fantastic sauces, wines, gourmet items, preserves and gifts, this engaging mercantile holds the key to an island-lovers heart and palate. With its own line of mouth-watering products, The Cheese Nook tempts with shrimp boil seasoning, Caesar salad dressing mix, vidalia onion and peach hot sauce, and other palate-pleasers, each in Sanibel Seasoning packaging. Some are small enough to include in greeting cards. Periwinkle Place, 2075 Periwinkle Way, 472-2666.

Sanibel’s Unpressured Cooker has an extremely popular cake pan shaped like a lemon pectin seashell. It makes for happy bakers everywhere. And, who says Christmas cookies always have to look the same? Bring the tropics to the minds (and mouths) of cookie monsters everywhere. Choose from cookie cutters shaped like palm trees, dolphins, alligators, lighthouses, seashells and fish—each for less than a dollar! Periwinkle Shopping Center, 32 Periwinkle Way, 472-2413.

Just down the road, in Tahitian Gardens Shopping Center, at Spices and Spoons, pasta aficionados will be amazed at what they’ll find. Who wouldn’t love a bowl of manatee-shaped pasta? You can also select from dolphin, golfing, Florida and gator shapes, but our favorite was the tri-color seashell pasta, which looks like treasures from the beach when uncooked. You’ll also find rib-tickling bottles of Sting Ray Bloody Mary mix. 1993 Periwinkle Way, 472-5599.

Island Style on Captiva Island should be your first stop if someone on your list is quirky, artsy, humorous, on the edge or all of the above. Of several styles of witty dinnerware, one stands out: Wally Ware by Tom Edwards. Exclusively available at Island Style, this cutting-edge line of hand-thrown pottery sports goofy graphics and catchy phrases about local luminaries, national political figures and pop culture. Nothing is sacred; everything is funny. Chadwick Square, 472-4543.

Boca Grande’s gourmet food shop, The Grapevine, is happy to deliver or ship specialty gift baskets anywhere in the country. Each is beautifully arranged and gift-wrapped. Gourmet coffee and wine connoisseurs will appreciate the great selection of both. 321 Park Avenue, 964-0614.

Pine Island remains the local agricultural mecca for exotic fruits of all types. Nolan Murrah, proprietor of the popular Blind Hog Grove, invites you to visit his grove’s fruit stand, where you’ll find both exotic carambola and passion fruit. The grove will happily help you ship these amazing fruits. At the intersection of Stringfellow and Pineland Road, 283-4092.

Coconut toast spreads, tropical candies, mango jelly, grapefruit-orange jelly, coconut patties and key lime cookie mix all await you at Gulf View Shops on Fort Myers Beach. Ship juicy Florida oranges and grapefruits anywhere in the U.S., Canada and Europe directly from the shop, or simply call with your credit card number—shipping couldn’t be easier. 2943 Estero Blvd., 463-9252.

Put a little imagination into you gift-giving this year and enjoy the holidays the island way. Happy shopping!

— compiled by Libby Boren McMillan
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Island Explorer

Adventurers, take note! Several local outdoor enthusiasts have helped Times of the Islands compile a list of favorite trails, paths and waterways. This issue, we'll focus on Sanibel and Captiva Islands. How many of these popular routes have you already discovered?

Bikers and Hikers

Cyclists agree the most unique stretch of Sanibel bike paths lies between Middle Gulf and West Gulf Drives. Veering away from the road, the path meanders past an old Sanibel cemetery and the road to Algiers Beach. Another favorite section of paved bike path runs between Sanibel-Captiva Road and West Gulf Drive, parallel to Rabbit Road. Cyclists pass a spacious pond that offers dependable alligator-watching. (Remember to never feed an alligator—it's illegal and can result in the gator’s destruction).

Nearby, in the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge, explorers with bikes or on foot will find the 2 1/4 mile Indigo Trail. Splitting off to the left shortly after the park’s entrance, this off-road trail lets explorers visit the heart of the Refuge with no motor vehicles in sight. Accessible seven-days-a-week, the trail also begins as a boardwalk from the Visitors Center, and is the only part of the Refuge open on Fridays.

A separate part of the Refuge is found on Tarpon Bay Road, just south of Sanibel Boulevard. Known as the Bailey Tract, this 100-acre park is home to pig frogs, marsh rabbits, soft-shell turtles, red-shouldered hawks and even the elusive Florida bobcat. (Don’t worry, the most you’ll see of this rare creature might be his scat). Well-marked, with educational signage throughout, the Bailey Tract provides a natural history perspective of Sanibel Island. Several trails run through the tract—the longest being 1.2 miles—with one wooden sidewalk spanning a wildlife-rich, spartina cordgrass marsh. Rich in island folklore as well, the tract holds the key to the tale of an important Sanibel seaplane, as well as a mysterious woman named Hell Roar’n Smith. Cyclists and hikers are welcome from sunrise to sunset, and there’s no charge for admission.

An altogether different setting that offers tranquility, as well as the chance to get wet, lies at the end of Bailey Road. Running north from Periwinkle Way just west of Causeway Road, Bailey

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Road stops at the bayshore of Sanibel. A lovely little stretch of partially shaded beach awaits, as does a fabulous view of the causeway and the many dolphins that frequent these waters. Wear a swimsuit under your riding shorts, or you'll wish you had. A new bike path now connects the Causeway to the beach via a trail that enters the Sanibel Captiva Chamber of Commerce parking lot. While it is legal to cycle across the causeway, no additional lane is available.

Canoes and Kayaks
If you desire a more unusual route of discovery, several water-based exploration options are available. Local naturalist Bird Westall will take you on a guided canoe tour of “Ding” Darling, pointing out various wildlife and flora and answering any questions you may have about the unique environment of the Refuge. Call 472-5218.

Another way to paddle your way through the park originates at Sanibel’s Tarpon Bay Marina. A choice of kayaks and canoes are offered; visitors to Tarpon Bay may either go with a professional guide or on their own self-discovery trip through the well-marked trails of the Refuge. Reservations are necessary in high season. Call 472-8900.

Kayaking has become extremely popular on the islands in recent years. Warm water temperatures and the lack of dangerous currents contribute to the sport’s appeal. Wildside Adventures on Captiva Island rents kayaks and canoes for back bay exploration, as well as trips to nearby Buck Key. Unbeknownst to many, this neighboring uninhabited island has several trails through it. Owners Greg and Barb LeBlanc can help you decide which time of day will work best with the tides for a Buck Key adventure. Wildside also offers full moon kayaking on the bay should you be lucky enough to be on island at that time of the month. Located at McCarthy’s Marina, 395-2925.

‘Tween Waters Inn on Captiva also rents canoes, and professional guide Brian Houston gives kayak tours and instruction. Call 472-5161.

However you choose to explore, the islands offer a multitude of spots worth discovering. Have fun!

- Compiled by Libby Boren McMillan

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The International Medical Center
The International Medical Center offers comprehensive medical care, integrating traditional medicine and recognized therapies to allow the patient treatment choices. This quiet, nurturing Center is surrounded by all the beauty Sanibel Island has to offer, and is located at the 3-mile marker on the Sanibel-Captiva Road.

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"I am Tondelayo!"

In 1942 Hedy Lamarr’s sensual introduction made history forever in the steamy African jungle movie White Cargo.

She was wearing a sarong. Or pareo. Or lungis. Whatever the fashionable name of the moment, for centuries sarongs have been the standard dress of women in much of Southeast Asia, the East Indies and many Pacific Islands. The Western world became aware of it as a fashion statement during the 40s and 50s, when Hedy Lamarr and Dorothy Lamour personified the sultry, languid beauty of the Polynesian and Hawaiian women. It has made a show on every beach ever since. It was chic on the elegant beaches of Saint Tropez, Cap Ferrat, Sanibel and the Seychelles; and women wearing the filmy, flowing sarongs raised eyebrows of admiration and passion.

For some time, the sarong was relegated to exotic islands and trendy resorts but, like most good things, around the mid-80s, the “grand designers” decided that its time had come. From Milan, Paris and New York, the likes of Emanuel Ungaro, Valentino and Calvin Klein incorporated the sarong into their couture collections—and the draped skirt became simply elegant, simply versatile, simply timeless—the sarong resurges again and again, bringing its purity of design and sensual styling to the forefront of island fashion.
Sarongs Around Town

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472-2676

Animale
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Sanibel Island
395-1912

Kokonuts
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Fort Myers Beach
463-8208

Island Beach Company
14820 Captiva Dr. SW
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popular with every look, whether business or evening wear.

Sarongs are now showing up in restaurants, at cocktail parties and at social events, dressed up with dazzling accessories and glamorous hairstyles.

"The thing I love about the sarong is that it takes you places a swimsuit can't," explains Mary Bauer, co-owner of the popular Beach House apparel shops on Sanibel and Captiva Islands. "Wearing a sarong, a woman can go into a restaurant or a shop where she just wouldn't feel comfortable wearing a bathing suit."

With the extensive range of fabrics and styles available, Bauer says, the wrap can suit every woman's individual cachet. "The variety of fabrics available is endless. Women choose a sarong based on the fabric's pattern, colors and texture. You'll find everything from bold patterns with vivid colors to more subdued, muted or neutral earth tones," she continues. "There is a sarong for every taste and budget." Prices can vary from $10 for a cotton mini to $200 or more. "They are incredibly versatile and create a wonderful silhouette. The sarong can enhance the overall look while hiding areas that a woman doesn't want to accent."

While a bikini top is the most common accompaniment, Bauer says there are no set rules to completing the ensemble. Halter tops, knotted tees and crop tops can dress up—or dress down—the ensemble depending on the situation. Proper accessories complete the overall image. Here again, there are no set rules.

"Accessorizing the sarong with dazzling gold bangles, a chunky necklace and matching sandals gives a woman the island girl look, perfect for a party, restaurant or an evening out; but even a minimalistic, simple approach can be sophisticated and elegant," Bauer continues. "It all depends on your own style—whatever you're comfortable with."

Available in many local island boutiques, shop around to find the sarong that best fits your budget, your fashion needs and your personal sense of style.

You might never wear pants again!

David Salinero, a freelance writer and public relations professional, has been published in Gulfshore Life, Mature Lifestyles, and the Naples Daily News.
I know, I know, I know; no matter what I say, or how I beg or tempt or plead with you to leave that holiday turkey in the store this season and try something different—something island, for instance—you'll not hear me. At first you'll say "oooh, that sounds goood." Then you'll panic and think it's some sort of bad omen not to eat turkey. Like maybe you'll get curses from the Gods of holiday tradition. At the very least you'll think that everyone at your holiday table will be sad, or disappointed, or think that you've lost your mind. Quite honestly, I think they will be thrilled!

Think about it. How many turkeys have you had in your life? If you multiply two turkey holidays a year, and if you are, for instance, 40 years old, that would be 80 turkeys! Imagine all those turkeys lined up one after the other after the other...all those legs, all those wings, all those leftovers!

Now, think cool, think Caribbean, think festive and light. Picture tender, juicy, fresh Florida snapper prepared Cayman style with red and green peppers and just a touch of spice. Serve with Banana Salsa and rich, creamy sweet potatoes, and imagine the surprise of your guests! They'll applaud, they'll cheer, they'll lift up their glasses and love you forever, I tell you. Try this and you'll see.

**SNAPPER CAYMAN STYLE**

6 filet of snapper
1-1/2 c. diced onion
1-1/2 c. diced green and red pepper
1-1/2 c. tomato concasse (diced peeled and seeded tomato)
3/4 c. fish stock or clam juice
1-1/2 tsp. cornstarch dissolved in water
Salt and pepper to taste
A few drops of Tabasco
3 tbsp. oil
Flour for dredging

Heat oil in sautee pan. Dredge fish in flour to prevent sticking. Salt and pepper and saute each side approximately 4-5 minutes. Remove fish and keep warm. Add remaining ingredients and saute lightly. Add fish stock or clam juice. Season with Tabasco and cook for 2-3 minutes. Thicken with the cornstarch liquid. When mixture returns to a boil, pour over fish and serve immediately.

**BANANA SALSA**

6 ripe but firm bananas, quartered then diced
1 jalapeno pepper, stem removed, then minced
1 tbsp. olive oil
2 tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro
1 tbsp. chopped fresh mint
1 red pepper, cored, seeded, and diced
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Yah, sounds good? But maybe next year, you say? Well, if you insist on dressing up those turkeys and inviting them to dinner again this year, remember two things: 1) think small, and 2) cook the stuffing on the outside.

What most people seem to overdo on the holidays is the quantity of food they prepare. A family of four makes a 25-pound turkey, and then they have leftovers for six days and everyone complains about it. I don't understand why people don't make
Where would someone crazy about food go for a perfect meal? Sanibel’s Mad Hatter restaurant has it all – four-star rated new American cuisine, artfully presented in a cozy romantic island cottage setting with the best sunset view in the islands! Fine wines, attentive service and chef Chris Agius’s eclectic influences make dining at The Mad Hatter an adventure!

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APPLE STUFFING

1/2 c. butter or margarine
1 sm. onion, peeled and chopped
4 to 5 tart apples, peeled, cored, and sliced thin
Juice of 1 or 2 lemons
Pinch of sugar
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1/2 lb. stale bread or rolls, diced
4 eggs
1-1/2 c. chicken stock

Melt butter in a large frying pan and add the onion. Saute for 5 or 6 minutes. Add the apples, lemon juice, sugar, cinnamon, and salt and pepper to taste. Cook for a few minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the bread cubes and mix well.

Mix the eggs and stock together and pour over the bread mixture. Pour the stuffing mixture into a 1-quart buttered loaf pan and bake along with the turkey for 30 to 40 minutes, or until crisp and golden on top. If you are baking this by itself, set the oven at 375 degrees.

So, remember, if you don’t go Caribbean this year, you can still share the holidays with Chef Tell. Try turkey my way—small and succulent with the stuffing cooked beautifully on the outside. But at least dress him in the island style—bring him to the table lounging on a bed of sea grape leaves with hibiscus flowers between his suntan legs, then, who knows, maybe next year you’ll take the plunge and celebrate the holidays the island way.

I see you!

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Then it’s on to Thistle Lodge and a Poncho Burger for lunch with chunky salsa, jalapenos and monterey jack cheese. Casa Ybel Resort, 2255 West Gulf Drive, 472-9200.

If the desire to perspire overcomes you on the water, tie up at Over the Waterfront on North Captiva and bite into their popular Grilled Cajun Chicken Sandwich for lunch, or the tempting Blackened Fish with Betsy’s homemade mango chutney for dinner. Channel Marker 48 from the Intercoastal Waterway, 472-6994.

Barnacle Phil’s famous Black Beans and Rice can also give your taste buds a jump-start, depending on how heavily-handed you are with Tabasco. Just be sure your eyes aren’t watering so much you can’t steer your boat! Channel Marker 48 from the Intercoastal Waterway, 472-6394.

Pine Islanders have been harboring a secret from the rest of us in the form of The Borderline, a popular Mexican restaurant that will surely fit the bill for spicephiles. While it’s not on the water, we hear it’s worth the drive! 3002 Stringfellow Road, 283-4225.

Surely by now your mouth is watering, and you won’t be satisfied until you’ve found some degree of that old familiar pain...the burning tongue, the tender lips, the tear-filled eyes...bring on the ice water!

- Compiled by Libby Boren McMillan

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Fantasy Beach

by Edward Thornton

It was there, in a bottle, wedged beneath the roots of a Gumbo Limbo tree. The opalescent green surface was so encrusted with barnacles that you couldn’t see inside. Silverio had been the only person on the beach that day—a day as still as death. The sea was flat, the color of phosphorus limeade, and seemed to glow with an inner light. In contrast, the horizon, toward Yucatan, was heavy and slate gray. A couple of ancient pelicans languidly cruised the glassy surface of the water, breaking the oppressive stillness.

Everyone had left, not only because of the heat, but for the fearsome thunderstorms that blew in from the Gulf in mid-summer. Without notice, the horizon would crack open, and you could feel the thunder deep in your bones. But Silverio loved the energy of these dread tropic days. The heat penetrating his body, the smell of naked energy in the luxuriant air. There it goes again. *Blaam! Crack!* An electric pink lightning bolt split the horizon, but not a drop of rain fell on the beach. Silverio could hear the first strains of "Margaritaville" coming from the outdoor bar. Scott, the bartender, was trying to encourage some action from the few dinkers, as still as tortoises, sleeping around the pool.

Silverio, who had spent the earlier part of the summer rehearsing with the off-Broadway cast of Follies, preferred this coast over the frantic meat market of South Beach, with its willi-vanilli flamenco guitarists and baby pink bars. As a professional dancer, he had graduated from their trite Latin line dances long ago. Here in Sanibel, he could relax, re-focus, and feel his body being recharged by the warm sand and the purifying electrical storms. He also enjoyed the easy pace of performing in community theater. *Blaam! Blaam!* He imagined himself being reborn as Poseidon. The lightning bolts stabbed at the horizon. Now, even the pelicans were gone, and he was alone again.

He ambled back to the bleached stump where he left his camera wrapped in a beach towel, and the keys to the Saab convertible buried beneath it in the sand...Perhaps, just once, he could capture this afternoon lightning storm on film. When he lifted the towel to shake off the sand, he saw the neck of the bottle trapped in the gnarled roots. With his fingers he dug the wet sand away, trying to free it from the roots' grasp that held it in a strangle-hold like ancient claws. He could have left it for the beach patrol to clean up, but he was fastidious about these things. Besides, the encrusted glass had a hypnotic attraction. Something to remind him of this day where time seemed to stand still. *Blaam! Blaam!* This time the rain came down in buckets, washing his body of sweat. He struggled to free the bottle, twisting it one way, then the other, careful not to let it break, sending shards of glass through his hand. The sand ground away at its neck, finally breaking the calcified cement that held it in place. He eased it from the stump and held it up to the sky. Through the glass that had been tumbled among the shells and sand, for God knows how long, he could see something. There was something inside the bottle that was sealed in what looked like a type of resin. It was much older than Silverio could have imagined.
August 17, 1519

For the past fortnight we have sailed past the sea of living grass. We are piloting a course on the Cantino Map¹ of the Duke of Ferrara, sailing north along Terra Florida. Our hold is packed with the great tortoises that we slaughtered by the hundreds. I hope not to eat their meat as it increases my thirst. Surely, we will reach land soon. We left the tierra firma flota² in Havana and have been sailing alone over this flat sea above the 26th parallel, which in many places is barely deep enough for us to pass. Due to the shallow depth, it is the most astonishing shade of blue. The helmsman is on edge, as is the captain, for fear we will go aground. The pilot calls out depth readings day and night. Yet, our captain is intent on this course toward the ‘Garden City’ of the savages. I feel we may be getting close. Yesterday we passed one of their boats—two wooden hulls, lashed together. It had sails of woven palm leaves that had been torn to bits in a storm. We pulled alongside, hoping for treasure, or food, but it was empty except for a few large broken shells the color of the rainbow. They call themselves the Kanyuska, Is ti tea ti³. It means red men because they pierce their bodies in incredible designs, but their skin is fair and the color of copper. We are in dire need of fresh water. Despite the frequent thunder storms, there is barely a cup to drink.

August 18, 1519

We see islands all around us, but we cannot approach. The dolphins never leave our side, jumping and leaping toward our bow; they seem to be mocking us. Do they think we are some great whale? Due to the shallow seas, we see many creatures, some like great bats even break the surface, as if gasping for air. And it is no wonder, this water is as warm as a whore’s heart. If we reach land, our captain promises wealth beyond measure. But, I think the heat and his age have affected his mind. Each night after victuals, he keeps babbling about the Font Juventutis⁴, the magic fountain of these red savages, as if it’s some kind of elixir of life. But, I think his main purpose is to take more slaves. For my part, I would settle for a jug of wine and a woman’s breast than to eat on the golden fruit that he says grows in abundance near its waters. I pray to our savior that this madness will end, and that we will return to Hispaniola. Due to the sand bars, our progress is painfully slow.

August 19, 1519

There was a fight today between the Portuguese over eggs they had found from one of the tortoises. For my part I would throw them all overboard, the Portuguese included. The first mate, who has been on these islands, told me about the red savages. He says that he can speak their language, and that they worship idols shaped like a cat and parade in masks of deer and other animals. Their women are comely, he says. They wear nothing but a short skirt of blue moss. Some have gold beads around their necks, but nothing covers their breasts. One never knows whether they will provide water and fresh fruit, or beat you to death with their fearful clubs lined with sharks’ teeth. It’s raining only a stone’s throw away, but not a drop hits our sails. We are becalmed. To our port side we can see an island, flat like all the rest, with the exception of great mounds rising above the beach, some as tall as our mast. Yet, it is totally abandoned. The first mate says this is their Holy city where they bury their dead and pray to their gods with the animal beads. This morning I thought I smelled cooked fish coming from the islands to our starboard. Perhaps we are nearing the Garden City of their cacique⁵, where the savages grow melons on poles. Never mind the

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¹ Cantino Map
² tierra firma flota
³ Is ti tea ti
⁴ Font Juventutis
⁵ Garden City of their cacique
magic fountains, to rejoin the flota we need to return with gold or pearls. Our water ration has been reduced to just a cup, although there is still some wine.

August 29, 1519

Last night the first mate came to me during my watch. He thinks the captain is mad and has lost his senses and that our only hope of rejoining the flota is mutiny. The captain's age has made him soft in the head. Without this fountain of life, he will never make the voyage back to Havana. I have heard that these savages eat their captives. I don't know if we will return, so I will seal this journal in a bottle and commit it to sea. My only hope is to have a Christian burial and not be eaten by the largetos.

August 30, 1519

The wind has changed and we have passed the mouth of a great river that the first mate says is the main waterway to their kingdom. He says it is protected by panthers, and believes it to be the Rio de Stapano. One of the Portuguese stuck his finger in the water and licked it. He says it is sweet, but no one dares to drink, as all kinds of creatures live in it, including the great sea cow. For the past two days we have seen magnificent birds of all descriptions; some as large as an albatross and the color of dawn. The island before us protrudes into the sea; it is covered with trees like all the rest. Yet, there are higher places, perhaps this is where the savages have built their terraced gardens. We are watching for smoke or some sign. From what we can see, the beach is knee-deep in shells and there is no place to land. The captain calls it S.Isabella, for our beloved departed Queen, and is calling for a change in course to the southeast. I think he is looking for a safe harbor that will accommodate our draft. To our port, the sea is so shallow one could practically walk to the island's shore. This will be my last night aboard this suelto commanded by an aging fool.

Silverio sped north along West Gulf Drive. The Saab's windshield wipers struggled to maintain visibility through the downpour. He turned right at Tarpot Bay Road, then into the empty parking lot at the Bailey Track, oblivious to the tumultuous finale of Wagner's "Lohengrin" coming from the car's compact disc player. His heart was pounding, and he felt that he might pass out. Had the heat and humidity been playing tricks on his mind? He shut the engine and stared at the wet prairie of saw grass and alligator flags. In the distance an osprey circled the pond, then landed in a little clump of sable palms. He was afraid to look in the back seat at the bottle that he had so carefully wrapped in his beach towel. With hands trembling, he opened his cell phone to call the Pirate Playhouse to let them know he would be late.

...Fantasy Beach will continue...

Fantasy Beach exists in all our minds—on Sanibel, Captiva, and certainly on Lover's Key. For more than 400 years people have come here, each pursuing their private dreams. To keep the legend alive, enter Times of the Island's Fantasy Beach Writers' Contest. Submissions of 2,500 words or less should be sent to Suzanne Tissier, managing editor, Times of the Islands, P.O. Box 1227, Sanibel Island, Florida 33957.

All characters must be fictional, or fictionalized composites of existing island residents. Winning submissions will be published in Times of the Islands magazine with the author receiving $250.00 in gift certificates at select restaurants plus tickets to the Pirate Playhouse or the Broadway Palm Dinner Theater. Submissions must be received no later than January 15, 1997.
Guys who inhabit an island can no longer imagine life in the "real world." The choice they've made, to live out here in Paradise, fits them like a second skin. They rarely have to wear socks, and need a necktie only about once a year. Days are simple, live bait is plentiful and the girl-watching is good for those who are interested. Perhaps you want to meet one of them, or perhaps you want to be one of them. They are the Men of the Islands, a diverse group of guys, each playing a crucial role in making life interesting out here on the sandbars.

THE RECREATIONAL SPECIALIST
This life-of-the-party fellow has no visible means of support. You can easily find him, comfortably settled in at the nearest breakfast spot, at the pool bar, on the links or at a party, but never, and we mean never, at work. He may, in fact, do "it,"—it being the nasty "w" word—but you'll never actually witness him partaking in this phenomenon. Work is a distasteful subject. If it is a necessary evil, he has probably found a way to earn a living within his particular field of passion, say, on the tennis court, for instance. Or, he might have several vague but lucrative deals in the making. Although we have no proof, we suspect many of these laid-back guys made their money the old-fashioned way...they inherited it.

The Recreational Specialist has an island wardrobe that speaks of his leisure. You might never see him in a pair of pants, unless he's been invited to a particularly fancy evening bash. He is usually ruggedly handsome, with a great tan, good calf muscles, a repertoire of new jokes, and plenty of charm for the gals. He might be married, but his lifestyle is about fun. If a lady can keep up with him, she just might win him over, but his priority is hanging out enjoying the island lifestyle. And, it goes without saying, all the bartenders and waiters know him by name.

Illustrations by David Drolet
Remaining lively and entertaining throughout his later years, The Recreational Specialist eventually attains the status of C.O.D. (Cool Old Dude), as opposed to the very un-fun and whining member of every homeowners' association, the O.C. (Old Coot) who thinks The Specialist leads a nihilistic, irksome and noisy life.

THE REALTOR
The Realtor has a cellular phone permanently attached to his head. His business card announces his office number, home number, beeper number, cellular number and e-mail address. His working wardrobe includes shorts, but they won't be nylon; they'll have belt loops. He probably drives a luxury car, and it might even be paid for. He is The Realtor—the man who lives to make your dreams come true in an incredibly unique Gulf-front property with a sensational view, state-of-the-art kitchen, awesome master suite and separate guest quarters.

You will see his four-door car coming toward you, always clean, even in the rainy season (how does he do that?). It sports a tag on the front declaring loyalty to the firm which pays him handsomely every time his ducks are in a row. You will recognize The Realtor in the grocery store from his numerous newspaper ads and plentiful media coverage—he's a volunteer, a coach, a fund-raiser, a club-joined and a member of the board of directors. He wants you to know his name...and that he's having a great year. He's pretty smart when you think about it—why work on the mainland, selling 60 homes in 52 weeks just to pay the bills, when one great deal on the islands can set him up for a year? We give The Realtor 50 points for civic duty, with our thanks.

THE OLD COOT
Being an Old Coot is not necessarily determined by age, but by state of mind. There are O.C.s on the islands who have yet to see the age of 50. O.C.s originally moved here for the relaxation, the warm climate, and to partake in the laid-back lifestyle, but somehow they ended up just getting on everyone’s nerves. We’d like to take these guys parasailing, and leave them hanging up there with a giant pina colada until they realize that people who are having fun are not part of life’s problems!

O.C.s often qualify for membership in the ranks of the alleged C.A.V.E. organization, otherwise known as Citizens Against Virtually Everything. (I wish I could take credit for this acronym, but I read it in the Cedar Key newspaper, which only goes to show you that every island has its O.C.s!) Avoiding them is easy, however. Frequent Karaoke Night at your favorite night spot, or the humor section of your local bookstore; we guarantee there won’t be an O.C. for miles in any direction.

THE HARD WORKER
Now, we know what you're thinking. Does this imply The Realtor is not a hard worker? No, it does not. It simply implies that we don't always see The Realtor working, and we certainly never see him with stains under the arms of his shirt. The Hard Worker sweats. He comes home with dirty clothes. He works long hours. We love this guy. He's a bartender, a landscaper, a fishing captain, a chef, a small business owner, a delivery man, a handyman. We'd be in a real pickle without this fella. Our world would be a giant mess without his work ethic, and he knows it. That's why he has a sense of humor when The Recreational Specialist suggests they go boating together on Monday morning—like The Hard Worker doesn't have anything better to do.

The Hard Worker can sometimes be seen at a local bar with a well-deserved cold one in front of him. He may just make it for last call after a long night, or he may start his day so early he's had a run and a shower before sunrise. You might find him in the gym, or on the bike path working up to high speed. He could just as easily turn up on the dance floor, or be tucked happily at home with the wife and kids. He has been known to play as hard as he works, but he's made a commitment to living on the islands and doing whatever is necessary to keep the whole dream afloat, even if it's above his means. Without The Hard Worker the islands would lose their heart.
THE BEACH DUDE

No island is complete without him. His hair is blond and possibly radical, he has zero body fat and is sometimes tattooed and pierced in strange places. He is young, and not yet worried about the future. And, you can bet your flowered swim suit, The Beach Dude is grossly misunderstood by The O.C.s.

The Beach Dude’s physique helps us remember the days when our bodies could recover from anything we did to them, though ironically, many Beach Dudes would never abuse anything but a wave. Age, however, is not a prerequisite, as there are a few older, wrinkly Beach Dudes who share the same laissez faire attitude and economic status as their young compadres. We salute all The Dudes for making us smile. If it were up to us, we’d set up Free Dude Parking zones during every big storm. Surf’s up!

THE COMMUTER

The Commuter dreams of being a Recreational Specialist. His trips here are frequent, and he’s painfully aware of what day it is. The clock is always ticking. He is making his money somewhere else, but considers himself an Islander. He is here so often that the locals concede this title to him, although they give him a hard time about his constant comings and goings.

Commuters are hard to meet because they have a lot to squeeze in when they finally get here for their short reprieve from the real world. In fact, the hardware store is a good place to catch up with them, because every time they hit the islands something on their island property needs fixing.

The Commuter is frequently a golfer and sometimes a beach-goer. He often has family already living here, or at least a wife who has decided she is not The Commuter type and simply began retirement before he did.

We envy this guy’s frequent flyer miles, but we’ll just pay for our tickets, thank you, and stay happily rooted in our island nest. We feel sorry for The Commuter, and hope all his hard work earns him several great years of comfortable retirement. We call the traffic lane heading toward the islands the Happy Lane in honor of him.

Libby Boren McMillian is a freelance writer living on Sanibel and Captiva since 1989. She owns a successful marketing firm which promotes island businesses. Libby is a contributing editor to Times of the Islands, so look for her work in future issues.
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November

"Cabaret" (thru Nov. 23)
Nina Connor Art Exhibit (thru Nov. 30)
"No Biz Like Show Biz" (thru Nov. 30)
"Taking Steps" (thru Nov. 30)

19
"A Chorus Line" (thru Nov. 21)

20
3rd Annual Fun Fest (thru Nov. 20)/Downtown Ft. Myers (941) 332-2930
Holiday Celebration Gift Show (thru Nov. 26)

23
Tommy O Revue (thru Nov. 24)
7th Annual Kids Kingle's Closet Arts & Crafts Show (thru Nov. 24)/
Lakes Park (941) 338-3300
Ft. Myers/Naples All Breed Dog Show (thru Nov. 24)
Margaret Shavchenko, pianist

28
"Holidayalias" (thru Dec. 25)

29
"The Eight Reindeer Monologues" (thru Dec. 18)

30
18th Annual Model Railroad Train Show & Flea Market (thru Dec. 1)/

December

3
"Oh, Mr. Faulkner, Do You Witte?" (thru Dec. 7)

6
Christmas Luminary Trail & Open House (thru Dec. 7)/Sanibel & Captiva (941) 472-4014
Holiday House (thru Dec. 15)/Edison-Ford Complex (941) 769-261
Frog Smith Art Exhibit (thru Dec. 28)
SW Fa Symphony -Strikka, Beethoven and Prokofiev (thru Dec. 7)

7
City of Palms River Run & Wellness Walk
Captiva Sea Kayak Classic (thru Dec. 9)/Tween Waters Inn (941) 472-9454

13
"Harvey" (thru Jan. 6)
"Nutters" by Dance Alive!
"Born Yesterday" (thru Jan. 4)

14
Reindeer Run & Santa Races /Lakes Regional Park (941) 338-3300
Annual Wine Tasting /Bouroughs Home, Ft. Myers (941) 332-6126
Shari Lewis and Lamb Chop
Mick Loren, bartone

15
Breakfast With Santa /Bouroughs Home, Ft. Myers (941) 332-6125
The Messiah-Gulf Coast Symphony Orchestra

16
"The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" (thru Dec. 21)

17
"A Christmas Carol" (thru Dec. 22)

19
"A Christmas Carol"

20
Carol Channing in "Hello, Dolly" (thru Dec. 22)

21
Winter Solstice-Celebration of Light/Six Mile Stough Preserve (941) 432-2000

22
20th Annual Christmas Boat-A-Long/Four Freedoms Park, Cape Coral (941) 574-1

23
"Yo Ho Ho! The Christmas Show '96" (thru Dec. 31)

28
"Nutcracker On Ice"
"Crazy for You" (thru Feb. 22)

31
The Downtown Countdown/Downtown Ft. Myers (941) 332-0088
January

3  SW Flo. Symphony - Weber, Copland, Mendelssohn and Young Artist Competition Winner (thru Mar. 4)
   "Hammerstein" (thru Mar. 8)
   Yosif Feigelson, cello

6  "Gershwin on Ice with Peggy Fleming"

7  "Prelude to a Kiss" (thru Feb. 1)

10  Riverview Art Festival (thru Jan. 12); Jaycees Park, Cape Coral (941) 542-2020

17  "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat (thru Jan. 19)

18  24th Annual Lee Sidewalk Arts & Crafts Show (thru Jan. 19);
    First Street, Ft. Myers (941) 334-6626
    Manhattan Sting Quartet

19  German-American Social Bavarian Garden Fest;
    German-American Social Club, Cape Coral (941) 574-6715

24  "Zorba"

29  "The Miracle Worker" (thru Mar. 1)
    Dorothy Kemps, soprano & David Reeves, piano

31  "Miracle Worker" (thru Mar. 1)
    SW Flo. Symphony - Kraner, Haydn, Dvorak and Ravel (thru Feb. 8)

February

1  "Miracle Worker" (thru Mar. 1)

2  Scholastic's "The Magic School Bus Live"

5  Anne Murray

7  6th Annual Tour De Cape May Century/Lake Kennedy, Cape Coral (941) 574-3001
    Sanibel Island Arts & Crafts Fair (thru Feb. 9)/Sanibel Island Elementary School (941) 472-6368
    Archaeology Fair/Koreshan State Park, Estero (941) 992-0311

8  Magic of Dalia/Bell Tower Holiday Inn, Ft. Myers (941) 433-1848
    George Cofin
    Gabriell Tito

12  Steve Lawrence & Eydie Gorme

15  36th Ft. Myers Beach Lions Club shrimp Festival (thru Feb. 23); Lynn Hall;
    Estero Island (941) 463-0194
    Dallas Brass

16  German-American Social Bavarian Garden Fest/German-American Social Club;
    Cape Coral (941) 574-6715

20  8th Florida Uterlyltes Expo (thru Feb. 21)

21  "Pocahontas"

22  "Les Miserables" (thru Mar. 2)

25  "Hello Dolly" (thru Apr. 9)
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Shell Point Village

A nonprofit ministry of the Christian & Missionary Alliance Foundation, Inc.
If you know where to go, how to get there and can bring along a sense of adventure, Gulf diving offers unique aquatic encounters which reflect the subtle, natural beauty of our barrier island environment.

Where can you find exciting diving that’s nearby, uncrowded, and offers good opportunities to encounter big fish? Local divers in the know turn their boats west and head out into the Gulf of Mexico to dive locations like “The Mushroom,” “Java Ledge,” the Stacy Ann and “Monster Hole.” At these unspoiled and rarely visited dive sites lie unique bottom structure with visibility which sometimes approaches 50 feet, huge populations of snapper, spadefish, and friendly red grouper, as well as encounters with giant jewfish and docile nurse sharks. It’s a little known secret that our island area holds unique and rewarding dive opportunities. The more experienced and adventuresome the diver, the greater the rewards, but even those more comfortable in shallower waters and equipped with only basic snorkel gear can experience a surprisingly enjoyable aquatic encounter. It’s all in knowing where and when to hit the high seas—or in our case, venture onto the calm of the Gulf waters.
What to Expect

First and foremost, remember that this is not the Florida Keys; coral heads and mountainous reefs are not a short swim from the beach, nor do multi-colored parrot fish and spotted morays lounge in 15 feet of crystalline water. Gulf divers travel anywhere from two to thirty miles offshore to dive limestone ledges, underwater springs and sinkholes, shipwrecks, and artificial reefs. This varied bottom structure lends itself to equally varied dive encounters.

Diving depths can range from 30 feet to over 90 feet, depending on your dive destination and distance from shore. As a rule, deeper water usually means better visibility, but rules are sometimes broken...at times, water currents bring gin-clear water right up to the beaches. Our coast's most unique dives are on the spectacular limestone ledges. They snake across the bottom for long distances, and are frequently undercut, forming small cave-like areas that fish (and Florida lobster) just love, to call home. Our coastal waters are also the final resting place of numerous sunken shrimp boats and freighters, each loaded with fish, each creating a distinctive underwater community.

The artificial reefs put down by Lee County and citizens' groups from the islands were designed expressly to attract and hold large populations of fish, thus appealing to divers and fisherman alike. We also have underwater sinkholes and springs, with cold, fresh water welling up from holes in the ocean floor. Each of these dive locations boasts plenty of fish, some of which aren't seen in the Keys. Watch for a beautiful, crimson hog snapper with his striking colors and impressive dorsal fins, or a school of bright silver spadefish. Swim with log-jams of redfish and snook, and cross paths with a spotty, rotund jewfish. No, it's not the Keys, it's different. Gulf diving reflects the subtle, natural beauty our area is valued for. Just as the sea oaks, sea grapes, and velvety driftwood which typify Florida's Gulf coast lend to our appreciation of an unspoiled environment, the varied bottom structure, friendly fish faces, and quiet colors encountered in Gulf diving broaden our sense of aesthetics and adventure.

DIVE OPERATIONS

UNDERWATER SPECIALISTS
(941) 656-3483
Captain Kevin Alves, Master Dive Instructor
BOAT(S): 27' Boston Whaler
22' Boston Whaler
# OF DIVERS: 6/6
BOAT LOCATION(S): Trailerable, will pick up group at dock.
SPECIALITIES: Day or night trips.

GULF VENTURE CHARTERS, INC.
(941) 540-2628
Captain Ken Flicker
BOAT: 28' Bertram
# OF DIVERS: 6
BOAT LOCATION: Cape Coral Yacht Club or will pick up at hotel docks.

ULTIMATE GETAWAY
(941) 466-3600
Captain Rick Pitts
BOAT: 110' Custom Aluminum Dive Boat
# OF DIVERS: 20
BOAT LOCATION: Getaway Marina, Ft. Myers Beach
The Dive Sites

**The 240 Ledges.** Long before the days of navigation aids like Loran and GPS, local fishermen knew they could find these fish-producing ledges by taking a 240 degree heading from the Sanibel lighthouse. The ledges start about 16 miles out and are clustered in a mile-square area with depths from 55 to 70 feet. There are dozens of good dive sites in the 240 area, each with tall, undercut ledges that are home to schools of red snapper, groupers, tropicales, and resident jewfish. Visibility can be anywhere between 20 and 70 feet, and is best at high tide.

**The Java Ledges.** About a mile beyond the 240 Ledges, with depths in the 60-foot range, the Java has some of the biggest ledges in the area. Spectacular horseshoe-shaped basins are crowded with schools of fish, large and small. With the help of a dive light, Florida lobster and bulldozers can be spotted in the numerous nooks and niches which characterize these ledges.

**The Mushroom.** Twenty-three miles southwest of Sanibel lies “The Mushroom.” This limestone ledge is 70 feet deep and roughly 100 yards in diameter, and rises three to five feet from the surrounding sandy bottom. Easy to find and fun to dive, it’s long been a favorite of local divers. It’s not unusual to happen upon a snoozing nurse shark or an occasional school of amberjack navigating stealthily through the dark waters. Again, a dive light helps bring the scene into focus.

**The Edison Reef.** The old Edison Bridge was once the main route across the Caloosahatchee River. Now it’s one of the largest artificial reefs in Florida. Sitting in 50 feet of water, 14 miles southwest of Fort Myers Beach, the Edison Reef is divided into seven units, creating big bottom structure, and is loaded with fish. Barracudas cruise above schools of trophy snook loafing under spans of the old roadway, while bright swirls of bait fish envelop divers poking around the giant gears and cogs of the drawbridge mechanism.

**The Belton Johnson Reef.** Located about five miles west of Bowman’s Beach on Sanibel, the Belton Johnson Reef (named for Sanibel’s legendary fishing guide) is the newest addition to Lee County’s artificial reef program. In 35 feet of water, the BJ reef has quickly become a haven for sealife. Recent dives have included encounters with loggerhead sea turtles, large schools of mature redfish, as well as healthy populations of tropicales like gobies, damsels and butterfly fish. This reef is easy to find and has a marker buoy on the main structure.

**The Shipwrecks.** Few diving experiences are more exciting than wreck diving, and there are dozens of wrecks in our area. Shrimping has been big business in Southwest Florida since the 1950s, and many a shrimp boat rests on the bottom of the Gulf in silent memorial to the dedicated seamen who drag their nets in the black of night. Most of these wrecks are wooden, so there’s not much left of the hulls, but the tall outriggers, nets and machinery still attract jewfish, grouper, snapper and barracuda. Though the *Stacy Ann*, *Valiant*, and *Miss GM*, are asleep in the deep, they still live in the imagination of divers who visit their remains.

One particularly notable wreck is the *Baja California*. Sunk by a German U-Boat on July 19, 1942, it can be found 55 miles south of the Sanibel lighthouse. The *Baja* is over 250 feet long and lies in 110 feet of water. Schools of giant amberjack and ocean-going permit encircle a single deck gun, while grouper and cubera snapper up to 90 pounds lurk in her dark hold. For many divers, a trip to the *Baja* means searching for artifacts. In her holds have been found ornate, cobalt blue glass bottles, and brass, bronze and personal items from her crew. Going to the *Baja California*, however, is not a task to be taken lightly. At her distance and depth, it’s best (and much more fun for everyone involved) to charter a boat with an experienced skipper and divemaster.
Meeting A Jewfish

Encountering a jewfish (also known as Giant Sea Bass) on a dive in the Gulf is almost unavoidable. These mammoth members of the grouper family grow to be over 500 pounds and even a small one can weigh 50 pounds. Florida’s jewfish have been protected for over a decade now, and our coastal area is one of the few places in the world where these large fish can be easily seen and approached.

Frequently, spotting a jewfish begins not by sight, but by sound. The loud THUMM that reverberates through the water is his way of telling you he knows that you’re there. They are not shy and are usually unafraid of divers. Their sheer size can be intimidating, but jewfish aren’t aggressive, just curious. With their mottled coloring of browns, reds and oranges, they are content to stay under ledges, wrecks and other cover, but will often swim out to investigate those bubble-gushing, fin-footed oddities in slippery black suits. You may also encounter them hovering peacefully or swimming with ponderous grace surrounded by a cloud of bait fish, slowly opening and closing their huge, thick-lipped mouths. Swimming with one of these huge fish is an unforgettable experience. Because of their size, they somehow seem more evolved, more human, projecting a patriarchal wisdom that transcends time and tide.

How To Get There

There are several local dive operators that will take you diving in the Gulf. Area dive boats range from 25-foot day-trippers that will handle as few as four divers, to 110-foot live-aboards with private air conditioned cabins for up to 20 divers. The boats are Coast Guard ap-

Artificial Reefs

Fishermen have always known that bottom structure attracts fish. Underwater structure provides places for sponges, soft coral and barnacles to attach and grow, and in turn, provide food and shelter for small fish. The big fish are there, too. For years local fishermen would take old washing machines, oil drums, tires, and other debris out to some secret place and haphazardly build their own “private” artificial reef. This has been banned, of course, because of the obvious environmental hazards of unrestrained dumping. The building of artificial reefs, however, is more important than ever, and is now part of a well-planned effort to reinforce, support and enhance the fish habitat throughout Southwest Florida waters. A citizen’s committee made up of members of the Lee County Fishing Reef Association, Sanibel Fishing Club, Sanibel-Captiva Professional Guides Association, and Caloosa Dive Club, as well as shrimp boat captains, charter boat captains, and environmentalists, works closely with Lee County’s Division of Natural Resources Management to design, locate, fund and place artificial reefs where they can provide the best habitat for fish and other seafood. The artificial reef program has been a spectacular success, with its jewel being the Edison Bridge Reef. Now four years old, the Edison is one of the largest artificial reefs in Florida, and each day produces large numbers of grouper, snapper, king mackerel, cobia and other game fish. But the Edison Reef is only one of 22 artificial reefs that stretch from Boca Grande to Bonita Springs, each a popular fishing or diving destination. Plans are currently in the works for an artificial reef designed expressly for divers. This reef will be a home for giant jewfish so divers can easily and comfortably see large numbers of these awe-inspiring creatures. It will be a popular destination for visiting divers, as well as an important addition to Lee County’s marine habitat. Funding for Lee County’s artificial reef program comes from local citizens, community groups, and state and federal grants.
proved, designed specifically for diving, and their skippers and divemasters know where to find the best dive sites.

With access to a dependable, seagoing boat over 20 feet with a good Loran, bottom-recorder, and VHF radio, divers can find the larger dive sites themselves. It’s imperative that divers be armed with Loran numbers, expertise in locating underwater objects with a Loran and bottom-finder, at least two floating markers to pinpoint the dive site and, above all, a sense of adventure.

A typical dive trip in the Gulf starts early because of the distances involved—it’s not unusual to travel over 70 miles for a day’s diving. Expect two to three dives in a day, each at a different site, starting with the deepest dives and working back into shallower waters. With close attention to a dive computer, dive tables and times, and surface intervals, some unique and exciting diving can be found in our Gulf.

So, the question was, “Where can you find exciting diving that’s nearby, uncrowded, and offers good opportunities to encounter big fish?” The answer, of course, is the Gulf of Mexico, right here off our island coast. It’s our hidden secret, and an opportunity to experience even more of our area’s subtle, natural beauty. And, it’s the chance to rediscover the sense of adventure that inspired our early settlers and seabound frontiersmen.

Roland Barron, an avid diver, fishermen, and freelance writer, is president of the Calusa Dive Club and serves on Lee County’s Artificial Reef Advisory Committee. He supports his water-sporting activities as a video producer.

**Snorkeling Areas**

While it’s true that the best diving in our area is offshore in deeper water, there are still some fun places to enjoy with just a mask, snorkel and fins. Finding places with structure and fish is easy, finding places where the water is clear enough to actually see the structure and fish is harder. Timing is the key. Because high tides bring clear water closer to shore, checking the tide tables is imperative. The daily paper or any bait shop provide such information. Arriving at the selected site an hour before high tide hits is the best way to ensure optimal visibility.

**By Land**

Big Carlos Pass is on the south end of Estero Island. There is a small parking area on the southeast corner of the drawbridge. The large coral rocks on the south side of the bridge extend out into the shallow water of the pass. Damsels, gobies, sheepshead and pinfish, as well as hermit crabs, blue crabs and an occasional mystery fish will show their faces for your viewing pleasure. It’s a fun, though brief dive. Remember to watch for high tide and leave the water when the tidal current gets strong.

Gasparilla Island has some of the clearest waters in the area. By the beautiful lighthouse at the south end of the island there’s a wonderful beach with good snorkeling around the tall concrete pilings at the north end. Large chunks of concrete and rock harbor colorful tropical fish and small stone crabs. It’s shallow, fun to snorkel, and parents can relax on the sand and keep an eye on the kids. The current gets stronger near the pass, so stay by the pilings. Avoid the famous phosphate docks on the bay side unless you’re an experienced (and brave) diver. Currents there can be quite dangerous, and the pilings are strewn with old fishing line and hooks.

**By Boat**

There are three large limestone ledge areas just off the beaches of Cayo Costa island. The South Rocks are on the Gulf side about one-half mile from the south end of the island. These long ledges run parallel to the beach in three depths. The shallower is in only three feet of water at low tide, and the deepest lies in about 15 feet of water. The colorful soft corals, sponges, and plentiful seafish make this a wonderful snorkeling area, and when the visibility is good it’s a “must see” for visitors. Be careful not to hit the rocks when approaching the area. Look for the dark colored waters and anchor on the outside unless you’re comfortable anchoring in the surf.

At the north end of the island, again on the Gulf side, are the North Rocks. These rocks are 40 feet off the beach, rise about 10 to 12 feet from the bottom, and run for about 100 yards. They are covered with bright sponges and soft coral, and support a healthy population of snapper, grouper and other larger fish. The North Rocks are great fun, but they’re close to Boca Grande Pass and the strong tidal currents limit the times they can be snorkeled comfortably. Enter the water at a high slack tide.

On the bay side of Cayo Costa, just around the corner from the North Rocks, are the Finger Rocks. These rocks run from the beach out into about 10 feet of water in Charlotte Harbor. They’re easy to find, have lots of fish, wonderful beaches, and there is even an old shrimp boat wreck a little to the south.

If you’re running around on the back side of any of the islands, look for deep water (about five or six feet will do) right along the edge of the mangroves. The waters here are usually clear and calm, and you won’t believe what you can see up under the mangrove roots. Big snook and redfish snooze in the shade while bait fish, mangrove snapper and mullet swim by looking for tidbits. Look closely and you’ll see that everything is covered with life. Live barnacles gently sweep the water with feathery arms while crabs and small creatures scurry among the leaves and turtle grass that cover the bottom. Spending time suspended quietly in this environment allows snorklers to glimpse how marine estuary really works. It’s another island secret.
The Turkish Coast between Antalya and Marmaris is a series of isolated islands and rugged peninsulas sprinkled with Greek, Roman and Byzantine ruins. Following this ancient trade route is a journey into classical civilizations, unspoiled by time. The topography is similar to the Italian Riviera, only much less inhabited. Steep hillsides covered in conifer and Aleppo pine plunge into small, turquoise bays that lace the entire 200-mile coastline. The only way to see its archeological treasures is by charter yacht.
The crowded flight from Istanbul followed the Taurus Mountains. At 25,000 feet we could see Mount Ararat, Noah’s last port of call. The passenger next to me was gobbling gooey, rose-flavored Turkish Delight, dipped in powdered sugar and crushed pistachios. I didn’t know it at the time, but we were embarking on a voyage into time, as ancient as man himself. Not far away, in central Anatolia, archeologists were taking snapshots of *Ankarapithecus meteai*, a 60,000-year-old, fruit-eating ape, the latest edition to our human family album.

After an overnight stay and a Turkish bath at the ultra-modern Sheraton Voyager Antalya, we took a motor coach to our yachts which were moored at the nearby port of Finike. The two-lane highway passed Mount Olympos, an active volcano where a sanctuary dedicated to Hephaistos, the Greek God of Fire, still remains. We stopped for a hike at Termessos, a wildly romantic city high in the mountains, so formidable that Alexander the Great declined to conquer it. Exhausted, yet exhilarated, we continued along the Turquoise Coast to Finike.

The masts of the *Ipek* (meaning silk in Turkish), towered above the smaller boats in the harbor. Turkish yachts, or *goulets*, are designed for comfort. Broad beamed with carved wooden rails, they can easily be mistaken for pirate ships. Our group consisted of four couples, including a renowned brain specialist from New York and his companion; a former Clairol executive, who resembled a classic film star; and the docent of a Washington DC art museum. Her husband was formerly with the State Department in Saigon. A separate yacht, the *Dalga*, was chartered by a prominent Napa Valley wine couple.

Our guide, archeologist Edip Ozgur, offered introductions to the crew. Ishmael, the captain, smiled shyly; so did the cook, a stocky man named Mehmet, who looked like he jumped from the *Iliad*. Neither one spoke a word of English. Edip explained that Birol, a handsome youth recruited from a nearby village, would serve as bartender and cabin boy.

The group was nervous, making jokes about the pump toilets and trying to order drinks from Birol, who didn’t understand English either. Reclining on cushions beneath a huge Turkish Flag, the California vintner and his chic wife had already opened their first bottle of Chardonnay. They were part of our group, but chose to cruise on a separate but equal yacht—all of 65 feet! Too excited to sleep, we sprawled on the sunbathing mats on the fore deck and listened to the strains of Pink Floyd coming from the *Dalga*. The oldest members of the group, a couple in their seventies, chatted late into the night until the brain doctor, famous for his black sense of humor, threatened to sew their mouths shut with his suture kit. Before dawn everyone slipped below deck to escape the early morning chill.

I awoke to see the glassy Mediterranean sliding past the port hole, which had been left open during the night. The rocky coast to our starboard was known to the ancients as Lycia, one of the oldest inhabited places on earth. Homer wrote about it, and it is rumored that Anthony and Cleopatra made love there. Saint Paul traveled this same coastline with the Virgin Mary, en route to her final resting place in a stone villa overlooking the harbor of Ephesus. Five thousand years before Christ, people living in caves in this region were worshipping a large-breasted, wide-hipped Earth Mother known as Cybele. Many scholars believe her to be the predecessor of Artemis and Diana. Today, people still come here, seeking re-
newal in the bleached ruins of ancient cities scattered along the savage, untamed coastline.

In the galley, Mehmet was preparing fruit plates and omelets made with onions, chili peppers and goat cheese. We asked Edip if it was a Hellenistic or an Ottoman omelet. He didn’t get the joke, answering that Mehmet picked up the recipe from a German tourist. While the Turkish coast is popular with Russian and German vacationers, it is a relatively new destination for Americans.

In mid-afternoon, Ishmael eased the big diesel motors to a quiet idle as we glided into a small bay barely large enough for the two yachts. The indigo sea faded to pale blue as we approached the island of Kekova, a mere sliver of land in the Mediterranean. On shore, the skeletal asp of a Roman church protruded above the overgrowth, an eerie reminder of the souls that once lived here. Low granite outcroppings surrounded the shore. As we drifted closer, I could make out a regularity to the stones that doesn’t occur in nature. Then, only a few feet above the sea, the top of a wall appeared. We had entered a submerged city just a few feet below the surface. We stared in disbelief.

Breaking the silence, Edip explained that a series of earthquakes had devastated the area. Through the millennia, the sea had risen up, covering the battlements and the once splendid merchant villas. Arab raids in the eighth century finished it off, leaving only thistles and feral goat paths. Silent for more than a thousand years, Kekova lay just below us.

Snorkeling from one shallow channel to the next, we detoured around partially standing walls and ancient parapets. A sprinkling of black sea urchins dotted the clear bottom. Reaching down, I brushed away the fine sand. My fingers trembled as they ran across the grey mosaic floor of a fourth century merchant villa. Near the shore we removed our fins and scrambled up a small rocky beach to lie in the sun. Fingering the coarse pebbles, I could see that the entire beach was a potpourri of pulverized archaeological fragments being returned once more to sand. I slid one of the larger stones into my swimsuit, not knowing I was breaking one of Turkey’s most unforgiving laws.

Swimming back to the Ipek, my eyes scanned the bottom for anything remaining of this ancient port. Just where the rubble dropped sharply into the sea, I spotted a round opening no larger than my fist: the unmistakable mouth of an amphora, encrusted in centuries of calcified stone. My fingers groped for the black hole, hoping to lift it from its grave. A blinding pain shot up my arm as the spines of a sea urchin jammed beneath my fingernail. The treasure still remains on the bottom, waiting for the next curious diver.

After lunch we crossed the channel to the little hamlet of Simena. Terraced rows of fishermen’s huts rose from the small harbor to the ramparts of Kale Koy, a medieval castle that dominates the rocky headland. Colorful kilims hung like flags from every porch and window. It was hot, and we could see the older villagers inside, silently watching our arrival. A few feet from our anchor, an ancient Lycian rock tomb protruded from the sea like a Japanese Zen sculpture.

We were met by a bevy of young girls selling handmade cloth laced with tiny sea shells. They were laughing and carried bouquets of fragrant sage and rosemary, which they presented as guilt-gifts, in hopes of making a sale. Edip quickly guided us past them toward a series of stone steps that led up the hillside to the castle. Halfway up we stopped to rest beneath a fig tree. The adjacent fisherman’s house was constructed of a “Whitman’s Sampler” of ancient stones—the carvings of Byzantine and Lycian figures still visible on the foundation blocks. Behind us a family of goats was taking a siesta in cool, rock tombs that had been carved into the mountain millennia ago. Below, in the harbor, little blue fishing boats bobbed carelessly around rock outcroppings that had been mysteriously carved with stone steps leading to the sea.

Kale Koy castle, thought to be of Genovese origin, was built on top of the ruins of an even older acropolis. Struggling through a field of thistles growing from the rubble of the turrets, we could see that the entire hillside behind the village was covered with Lycian sarcophagi. Neither Greek nor Roman, they remind one of the cryptic heads of Easter Island. Some rested on massive stone pedestals, higher than a man’s head. Others, resting on their sides, had gaping holes left by tomb robbers. As recent as 1984, coins smuggled from these tombs caused a bidding frenzy in the numismatic auction houses of New York and Paris. The stone tombs had a timeless, care­less appearance, as if nature had intended them to be left that way.

Back in the village we gathered at a restaurant on the roof of a waterfront shop and watched the women below us weave carpets on large, handmade looms. We were the only tourists in Simena, and the English-speaking waiter tactfully pushed away the money when we insisted on paying. The waiter’s father owned the carpet store conveniently located below us, and Edip smiled knowingly when the young waiter led the women downstairs to a shop piled high with Turkish carpets and antique kilims.

The following morning we sailed at 6:00 to avoid the choppy sea. Everyone stayed below deck as the Ipek stole past the mysterious Island of Lesbos. We were leaving the Mediterranean for the Aegean and the landscape had changed. We passed
No one knows its name. Close behind, in rough seas, the Dalga followed like a puppy. On trembling legs, the art museum docent arrived on deck and exclaimed, "Look! Cezanne's palette...orange, ochre and blue." Lost in their private fantasies, no one answered. Birol, the cabin boy, thought she wanted a cup of coffee.

For six days we sailed the seas of Homer, swimming in the morning, and hiking to ancient ruins in the afternoon...Xanthos, Gemiler and Letoon. From a sheltered anchorage near Ekincik, we took a launch along the jagged, pine-covered coast to the mouth of the Dalyan River, then followed a labyrinth of canals that snaked dream-like through miles of giant reeds. Halfway up we stopped to climb the acropolis of Caunos, an ancient city about which very little is known. In the fourth century B.C., Stratonicus commented on the greenish complexion of its inhabitants. When criticized for his scathing tongue, he replied: "How dare I call a city unhealthy where even dead men walk the streets." Although Caunos was rich from slave trading, it was notoriously unhealthy from malaria and spending its wealth on a decadent lifestyle. Coming down from the mountain, we stopped at a Roman bath house and marveled at the magnificent view of the rich delta below us. Sitting in one of its heating caviaries, Edip quoted Homer: "As are the generation of leaves, so are the generations of men." We quickly left the bath house of the green Caunians and returned to the safety of our launch.

We continued up the Dalyan river, the reeds choking off the view of surrounding cliffs. We passed a group of small boys swimming in the pea green water and a quiet fisherman, his wooden boat nestled in the reeds. It was late afternoon and the sun backlit the white plumes glowing above our heads. Every one spoke in hushed tones as the rumble of the outboard motor slowed to a halt. Through an opening in the wall of grass, we caught our first glimpse of a row of exquisite burial temples carved into the face of a cliff, 60 feet above the delta. Carved to actual size—with columns, friezes and capitals—these tombs were a humble reminder of forgotten civilizations. The last one looked as if it had been abandoned during construction only yester-

terday. In Fethiye we saw similar carvings, barely visible above the forest of masts in the busy harbor. These were the tombs of rich citizens of the ancient city of Telmessus, the "City of Light." The largest, about 40 feet high, stands like a Doric temple above a busy port that is choked with shopping stalls, cafes and an eclectic crowd of backpacking young Turks and Europeans. After the haunting splendor of Caunos, it was disappointing.

During our only night in that port, the Ipek and the Dalga were sandwiched between two large yachts of partying Germans and Swiss. At midnight, unable to sleep, we made our way past the second class hotels up the hill to the city's main discotheque. It was a curious mixture of visiting yachtsmen and local youngsters, with parents guarding from little dark side tables. There was lots of boy/boy and girl/girl dancing to old Donna Summer songs with an occasional line dance thrown in. In the far corner we saw Ishmael, our captain. Hoping to go unnoticed, he smiled weakly; he hadn't spoken a word since we boarded six days ago.

Two days later, jolted from our time warp, we passed a screaming boat of tourists near the entrance of the harbor of Marmaris. The channel was filled with whitecaps, and Birol ran to take down the swimsuits that had hung on the line all day. For the first time, he showed some animation—this was his home port. Despite the intimacy of our group, the Turkish crew had remained separate throughout the journey. While not fully understanding our requests, they had been quietly accommodating.

Travel Information
Turkey Government Tourist Office (212) 687-2194, United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017. Club Voyages (212) 291-8226, 43 Hooper Ave., Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716. For the best practical advice on visiting Turkey, call Pat and Kemal Goksel. The Gokses have won broad recognition for their knowledge on Turkey from such varied sources as The New York Times, Archaeology and Fodor's Guides.

Kaile Kay (Simeno)
Kaile Kay (or Simeno) is very small and quaint. The carpet shops offer truly artisan work, with prices slightly lower than Istanbul's. You can arrange to stay in the village, but you should rely on Club Voyages to arrange the reservations. The village is accessible by boat only.

Marmaris
Dining: Campano is near the entrance to the Nesele Marina (on the second floor). An Italian/Turkish couple own and operate this special restaurant. Delicous pasta, crispy calamari, tempting desserts and views of the marina. Stop in to make reservations. Pineapple, on the second floor of the shopping area of the Nesele Marina, offers a similar sandwich (thin slices of roasted lamb on Turkish bread) and fine views of the yacht harbor. Dine on the porch or in the pub. Napoli Pizza, on the second floor back from the docks, serves small Turkish-style pizza with a thin, crisp crust. For a different experience, buy some fresh, giant almonds from a street vendor. They are sweet and tender, and tastier than anything you've ever experienced.

Shopping: Just behind the main avenue in front of the harbor, you will find a variety of items in a typical bazaar: beautiful carpet shops, great leather/camel woolen bags and, of course, Chanel and Ralph Lauren tee-shirts of better quality and prices than Istanbul's.

Don't forget gold: whether chains, necklaces or slave bracelets. Gold is sold in Turkey by weight and you have a better chance of getting a bargain than in other countries.

Times of the Islands
FRONTIERS
OF THE MIND

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PREMIER ISSUE 1997
To get there you drive through two panther crossings, passing primordial swamps surrounded by old-growth cypress draped in silver Spanish moss. The landscape is surreal—like traveling through an ethereal water garden that is neither sky, earth nor water, but a fusion of all three. The air is so fecund that air plants could sprout from your breath.

This is the pied-à-terre of Clyde Butcher, the photographer who is changing the world’s image of Florida from Disney and flamingo lawn ornaments, to a raw, pristine ecosystem that exists nowhere else on earth. He’s been compared to Ansel Adams, yet in many ways he has gone beyond photography into a frontier of the mind, where feelings and emotions transcend perceptions. Clyde’s work has become a driving force in saving the Everglades and Florida’s islands and wetlands. His admirers range from Vice President Al Gore, to Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt. Through showing us how to see Florida naked, he teaches us how to love it, hence how to protect it.

Sitting like a great forest gnome beneath the ceiling fans on their unscreened porch, Clyde talks of their life, their work, and the direction of their Big Cypress Gallery.
Q: You’ve been called the Ansel Adams of Florida, but it didn’t start out that way.

CB: No. I had to make a living. I started out shooting in color in California. It got to the point where it was like a magic formula...I knew that if certain elements were present, the image would sell “x” number of copies. I was into “generic” commercial landscape photography—something everybody likes; some images sold over 250,000 copies. Following a family tragedy, I discovered something missing in my work. When I changed over to black and white, I took pictures that I thought I should take, whether they were commercially viable or not. I really didn’t care if anyone liked them.

Like many profound transformations, Clyde’s turning point came about after a soul-wrenching family tragedy. Clyde and Niki lost their beloved son Ted on Father’s Day, 1986. He was going to the movies in Fort Myers with friends when the car he was riding in was hit by a drunk driver trying to outrun a convicted felon who had struck him in the head with a beer can. Ted was killed instantly, leaving a gash in Clyde and Niki’s soul.

A vibrant, natural-looking woman who projects confidence and enthusiasm, Niki joins us on the porch. An artist in her own right, she is an intrinsic part in all that happens here. “The nearest grocery store is 45 miles in either direction.” Niki quips: “If I want to go to Cuba, I head east to Miami—if I want to visit the Midwest, then I drive to Naples.” She hasn’t been out of the swamp for three weeks, and seems to enjoy the company.
Q: What are the physical or psychological characteristics that allow one to see things as you do?

CB: It’s like magic; it’s a whole other world. There’s seeing, and there’s feeling. Feeling is the next step after seeing. People come down here and pull off the road, look at a tree, then drive on without stopping the motor. They want to see everything, but feel nothing. I think people are afraid to feel because they get hurt so often. When you stop feeling, you stop learning.

Back in the 70s, I would spend two or three weeks in the redwoods, and I would see only two or three shots—I really had to work at it. The last time I went to California, I saw so many shots that I couldn’t photograph them all. Niki and I said, “What’s happening, why am I seeing all this?” When I looked at it before, my mind said: “This wouldn’t sell.”

An artist, whether he’s a painter or a photographer, makes order out of chaos. Look out there (he points to the small pond beside the house, where a tangle of trees covered in bromeliads and ferns filter the sky). How do you make order out of that? Florida is so chaotic from a visual standpoint.

A friend from Santa Barbara came out and spent some time with us. He kept asking: “Where is the focal point? Where is the rock; the signature tree?” Photographers are shortchanging nature when they take pictures of things. God creates feelings. To see Florida, you have to get in it! That’s what we’re doing here with our “Muck-Abouts.” We had a couple of ladies from New York down here for an open house. They’d never been camping, never roughed it. I guess their boyfriends talked them into it. They went in, waist deep, one barefoot, the other in sandals. Believe me, they were not seeing it, they were feeling it—they went wild. That’s what I try to do with my photography, to enable the viewer to experience Florida.

Q: Aren’t you afraid to wade in there in bare feet, without protective gear?

CB: People have a great misconception about animals and reptiles. While we either love or fear them, they simply don’t like us. They want to get as far away from us as they can. In their hearts, they know we want to eat them!

Q: Ansel Adams’ famed picture of Yosemite has been iconized throughout the world, and it has created a universal desire to visit the park. Do you think that your work is having the same effect in Florida?

CB: It has already happened—it has changed the whole world’s notion of what Florida is all about, and we’re attracting a different kind of tourist.

NIKI: When he first started showing in black and white, people would come up to Clyde and ask if it was Belize or Africa. They never thought it was Florida. That was about 10 years ago. Today, people know it’s Florida. Somewhere along the way they began to identify what Florida is actually like. This is part of the process here—to educate people that this is beautiful. When people see something as beautiful, they’ll be more conscious and protect it. The whole environmental movement in Florida has changed since we’ve been here.

We stare at the silent pond below the porch. The afternoon sun struggles to penetrate the wild canopy of vegetation—ancient cypress with flared roots; mangroves, wild tamarind and gnarled buttonwood with bromeliads and ferns sprouting from every branch. Silver-gray moss hangs like prehistoric streamers over this marshy biosphere. In a far corner, the unblinking amber eyes of an alligator glow above the surface. Waiting. In this world, we are the aliens.

This education process is having an effect in the highest circles of government. The Department of the Interior has commissioned several of Clyde’s works to be hung in their conference room, where national policy decisions are made on environmental issues.
CB: There is no place like this in the world. This is a river 50 miles wide always moving. In California you have to go miles to see the water. Here it's everywhere, but it's only six inches deep.

NIKI: One day, I was downstairs working on the computer, and I felt the floor shake. For a moment I thought it was an earthquake. In a panic, I rushed outside, and there was an alligator bellowing. When they bellow, it is so deep that the whole pond, in fact the whole house, shakes. It was the first time I'd ever heard one bellow. The ones in the pond are very shy. When people come close, they move away.

CB: They can run 45 miles an hour. We've had to put a sign near the gallery to prevent people from feeding them. If you feed them, they want to feed on you.

NIKI: In the Sierras, you can hike a hundred miles and see people. Here you can go 50 yards, and see no one. If someone was there, you couldn't see them anyway. It's very dangerous to go by yourself.

Author David Rosenberg is a frequent visitor to the Butchers' Everglades outpost. Rosenberg and his wife, Rhonda, are co-founders of "The Field Bridge Program," a breakthrough organization devoted to bridging natural sciences and the arts. This year Field Bridge will enlist prominent authors and Florida scientists to create a cultural artifact called "The Everglades Charter," the first literary narration of an endangered natural system.

Q: Do you find it awkward working so far from civilization?

Following the loss of their son, Clyde failed to see anything of interest in the flat Florida landscape. The future seemed dismal. They were just one step ahead of the repo men who were pursuing the fallout of their fast-track days in California. If it weren't for Clyde's love of sailing in the warm waters of the Gulf, the Butchers would have abandoned Florida.

During one of her solo trips down Highway 27, Niki stumbled on something that would change their life. It was a honky roadside attraction known as Gaskins' Cypress Knee Museum. In a desperate attempt to divert motorists traveling between Miami and Tampa, the owner touting that the gnarled trees actually resembled celebrities...Carmen Miranda, Charles de Gaulle. It represented everything that Clyde abhorred about Florida. But what Niki discovered was a primordial beauty she had never seen before—a pristine swamp, just as it had been for more than 5,000 years. When Clyde first walked a few yards into the enchanted wilderness, he felt as if he were emerging from a dark cocoon, floating in mid-air. The light was pure and the water was so clear you could hardly see where it began. The raw energy of life surrounded him, and he knew he had to photograph it. For no reason that he could fathom, he loaded his camera with black and white film. Niki cringed. No one wanted pictures of swamps, even in color. It was a major turning point in their life. From that moment forward, a series of inexplicable events led to a body of artistic work in black and white that has been acclaimed throughout the world.

NIKI: Clyde wanted to get away (after their son's death). The way this happened was such a spiritual miracle that we felt that it was not within our control—it was coming from without. So we wanted to just let it flow. What's beginning to happen is that this has become a meeting place of minds. Clyde's work is such a strong force for communication that it's bringing people here who want to communicate and use each other's talents in an unselfish way. It has been getting stronger and stronger these last six months. We're trying to pull the State together in an environmental way, without taking sides to issues.

Much like Elizabeth Dole, Niki has a way of finishing her husband's sentences. Rather than being abrasive, it is an extension of the same thought, as if the same soul were speaking.

It was Niki's charm and resourcefulness that led to the gallery's purchase. Every time Clyde had tried to photograph the magical pond beside "Orchid Isle," he had been run off the property by a snarling poodle and an
old man wielding a machete. The tourist trap was owned by an eccentric named Louis Napoleon Whilde, Jr., an octogenarian who loved orchids, but hated tourists. Yet, the site had irresistible virtues to the Butchers. Sandwiched between the Big Cypress Seminole Reservation and Everglades National Park, the water was so pure you could drink it. The Indian campsites and pioneer homesteads had been closed or burned down decades ago, leaving the property surrounded by old growth cypress, strangler figs, and a canopy of bromeliads and air plants that staggered the imagination. After several attempts to gain access, Niki returned to Orchid Isle alone. Waiving two dollar bills from the roadside, Napoleon finally let her in. From the corner of her eye she spotted a For Sale sign.

Q: Do you still see as much beauty here as when you first walked into the swamp 10 years ago?

CB: More all the time. There’s an awful lot of life here, you just can’t see it, but it’s crawling all around out there. My concept is to develop an educational show that we could take around the country. I talked to Babbitt (secretary of the interior), and he thinks it’s exciting. Then I talked with Vice President Al Gore, and he’s interested. I don’t know if I can, but I’d like to do pictures sixteen feet by eight feet. I want people to feel the veins in the leaves.

Do you have any idea what angle of view you see...what do you think? Seven degrees—that’s all you see! You may perceive you are seeing 180 degrees, but what you see is just a very narrow thing. If you want to see something, your eye has to scan all over, then your brain puts it together. When you start to scan, your brain gets very excited; this creates emotion. Most people want to see a photograph; I want them to experience it.

Q: Where do you go to draw energy and inspiration? Both Clyde and Niki laugh. He points to Niki.

NIKI: In life, when you walk down a path, it’s not easy to stay on that path. When two people are trying to achieve something in life, one without the other wouldn’t work.
Q: Do you feel that the angle of light affects people’s emotions—does the latitude change how they feel?

CB: Oh, I’m sure. There’s a lot of light in Florida, because there’s a lot of sky. You’ll never see this light in Southern California; it’s tinted by pollution. Light is life.

Q: How you see things often depends upon your mood, what you experienced that day. Does this ever happen to you, when you see something one day, then it appears entirely different the next?

CB: For three years I went to the Loxahatchee River. During those three years, I got only three shots. Then one day I went back to the same place, put my gear in the canoe and got into the water. I took 23 shots that one day. Same thing down in the desert. I shot sand dunes for 12 years, then one day it happened.

NIKI: If you feel great, then you can probably go out and shoot it. But, if you have a deadline and the light isn’t right, it doesn’t matter how hard you try. In all these years Clyde has had only two commercial jobs—they were about 20 years apart. The only reason the second one happened is because he forgot! Developers approach us and say, “I’ve just got to have this shot.” But it doesn’t work that way.

CB: The last time I quoted them $50,000 (per photograph); the next time it will be $100,000. Sometimes, it takes two or three years to get the right shot. One developer approached me in 1988; he got the shot in 1991.

Clyde and Niki Butcher’s life could be likened to dancing on a high wire. Beginning in California as a designer of architectural models, Clyde abandoned this enterprise to become a commercial photographer. He became immensely successful photographing Yosemite, the redwoods and coastal scenes in California and Hawaii. His photography produced millions of dollars in revenue, but due to a restless spirit that remained true to his dreams, and over-aggressive business partners, the Butcher’s fortunes plunged between...
affluence and poverty. They have lived in everything from a sailboat to a windowless house trailer in the Southern California desert. For almost a year they were virtually homeless, living in state and county parks, bathing their children in public showers and cooking over barbecue grills, moving on when their permits expired. Less than a year later, Clyde's photography was grossing over a million dollars, and their company employed more than a hundred workers. Niki helped manage the business, but they felt trapped, and their marriage was strained. Clyde responded by buying a one-way ticket to Cabo San Lucas where he rented his family onto a small sailboat that took them on a hair-raising odyssey along the Pacific Coast of Mexico. When they finally returned to San Francisco, they sold the business. It was Clyde's love of sailing that eventually led them to Southwest Florida.

Q: Do you mind if I take a picture?

NIKI: No, please do. We encourage everyone to photograph here.

Clyde and I are really excited about this new computerized, digital photography. For the first time there will be a defining factor between art and photography. Film will be the medium of artists. You can now manipulate images, and change nature. Magazine editors don't know anymore who is telling the truth with photography. The Audubon Society accidentally published a picture of a bird on their cover that was taken out of its environment and placed on a tree. People came from all over the world. Now they have a policy that not one photograph can be digitized.

CB: A photograph is a moment in time. Once you change that moment, you're lying.

Before leaving, Clyde and Niki insist that we take a canoe ride in the enchanted pond beside their home. Somehow it seems sacrilegious to break the stillness. The surface is so smooth that even your breath would cause waves. Barefoot, Clyde takes us to a small landing and shoves us off in the canoe. We suck in our breath as we glide beneath a cacophony of vegetation that almost touches our faces. Ferns surrounding the edge of the pond are reflected in the water, causing disorientation. Only a few feet deep, the water beneath us is an other-worldly garden filled with vegetation that looks like bibb lettuce. We bend over to float beneath a low branch; a hanging orchid, shaped like a great white spider, warns us of the fragile nature of this rarefied landscape. Immersion in this pond seems like an initiation into the world of Clyde and Niki Butcher.

Leaving Big Cypress Gallery, we follow State Highway 41 toward Naples. The Everglades spreads before us like a vast, limpid watercolor. Passing Monroeville Station we see a sea of grass, the horizon etched with a small cluster of sable palms—it looks like one of Clyde's photographs. We are driving into the sun for some time. When the passing thunder clouds finally screen the blinding light, we come upon our first vehicle; its bumper sticker reads: "If you're not living on the edge, then you're taking up too much room."

Thomas Whittingslow is a freelance writer and marketing consultant who recently moved to South Florida from San Francisco. His articles have appeared in San Francisco Focus, Palm Springs Life and the Los Angeles Times.
By moving to Captiva Island in 1990, New Orleans born and bred Stella Farwell realized a life-long dream. Ever-envisioning herself residing in a place where she could walk on a spacious beach and absorb a vibrant sunset, she left the city life for her heart’s desire. “My goal here is to try to see the sunset every evening,” says Stella, with bright light twinkling in her sky-blue eyes. “I couldn’t imagine myself being happier living anywhere else on earth.” For Stella, a voracious traveler who was successfully ensconced in the business world until the mid-1980s, comparing Captiva to other places on the planet is a reality.

As an artist, Stella pursues a dynamic and unique approach to various media. She continually pushes herself to create anew. Her works, which are exhibited in such diverse places as Japan, New York, Canada and England, vary from delicate pastel-hued watercolors to large-scale, bright abstract works in aluminum.
"I love to explore and find new ways to combine colors, textures and shapes," she confesses with the enthusiasm of an eager 11-year-old. "The truth is, I'm really just a big kid." When Stella refers to herself as a child, she does so with the steadfast sincerity of knowing that freedom and love of adventure in her art, as well as her life, are what make her happy. She truly is following her bliss.

Last summer she learned how to drive a steam locomotive in England—she even shoveled the coal. Several years earlier, she went on a 90-mile open canoe adventure down the Rio Grande River, making camp along the way. Prior to that, she did a 10-day sea kayak trip through Baja California, where she paddled among whales.

One of her favorite experiences in life was when she went skydiving in Arizona at sunset. "I didn’t want to come out of the sky. I just loved the feeling of free fall. If I were younger and lived near a drop zone, I would do it a lot," she says, confiding that she thinks she's 57, but is not keeping too close a count. For Stella, the age concept is fairly irrelevant in terms of how you choose to live your life.
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Barbara Linstrom is a freelance writer and Sanibel resident. A former editor of the Captiva Current, she has been published in Gulfshore Life, Gulf Coast Woman and The Sanibel-Captiva Chronicle.
Things are different here. If you want to change the horizon, you have to plant it. In fact, the entire topography of the barrier islands is formed by its vegetation—the islands' survival depend upon it. The trend toward natural landscaping or xeriscape is no longer a fad, but an important part of living in paradise. You truly become a native once you begin to understand the purpose of native plants—and, when you use them, you become a positive force in the evolution of the islands. In each issue, Growing Native will feature plants that not only beautify the environment, but thrive in the dynamic conditions of the islands. Fortunately, most of the plants featured are available locally at the Native Plant Nursery at the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, 3333 Sanibel-Captiva Road.

The Gulf of Mexico changes the shape of the barrier island chain, defining the Charlotte Harbor estuaries with every wave that reaches the beach. Whether moving in soothing alpha rhythms or nerve-racking torrents, barrier island real estate is in a state of dynamic equilibrium subject to sudden changes. That means that everything here is in constant motion. Sometimes that motion is almost imperceptible; other times, it's quite dramatic. To cope with the stresses presented by their nearness to the sea, native island plants—that is to say those that exist here on their own—have adapted in many interesting ways over thousands of years.

Sea Grape

Landward of the beach, on ridges of sand and shell thrown up by storms a few decades ago, one of Florida’s most intriguing and beautiful trees thrives. Common in both natural and created island landscapes, sea grapes thrive in salt spray, and are often maintained as hedges, although they can grow as high as 50 feet. Even from a distance, the trees stand out because they have a texture different from trees with smaller leaves. Their leathery, round leaves up to 10 inches wide are natural works of art that vary considerably in shape and color. New leaves at the ends of branches are a beautiful dark red before they turn green. The prominent leaf veins can be a light green, pink, or red or any shade in between.

The waxy coating, called the cuticle, on the upper leaf surface protects the plant from water loss when it is covered with salt spray and during the frequent dry periods on the islands. Names or messages can be scratched on the surface of fresh leaves to make interesting note cards, gift tags or place cards that add an island flavor to formal dinners. Dried sea grape leaves work equally well, but require the use of a felt tip pen.

The generic name of the sea grape, Coccoloba, is from the Greek words kokkos and lobos, and refers to the shape of the fruit. The specific name, uvifera, also refers to the fruit and means grape-bearing. Although sea grapes are in no way botanically related to the cultivated grapes we find in grocery stores, there are some surprising similarities.

The fruit of the sea grape hangs in grape-like clusters and is red to purple
when ripe, but the clustered fruit does not ripen at the same time. The local harvesting method is to lay a cloth under the tree and shake the trunk. The ripe fruits fall on the cloth, and the green sea grapes remain on the tree until ripe. The individual fruits are up to three-quarters of an inch long, with a thin pulp over a single seed. They are described in most books as being bitter and astringent, but in reality, when ripe, they are good eaten right from the tree. In the islands, the juice is used to make a tasty jelly and can even be fashioned into an interesting wine.

The wood of sea grape is prized for cabinetry. It is hard, of a consistent red in color and turns well on a lathe. It is not as well known to woodworkers as cocobola, another tropical hardwood with which it is often confused. Sea grape wood is not available commercially, although tree service companies will often save logs if someone requests them. Sea grape wood is also a favorite for smoking fish.

The flowers of sea grape, though inconspicuous to people, are quite popular with nectar-sipping insects. Beekeepers rank it in importance with black mangrove as a nectar source for honey production. Sea grape honey is of a lighter color than most honey produced locally and has a discernibly different, somewhat fruitier taste.

Sea Oats
These plants play a very important part in balancing the effects of the sea’s continuous cycle of destruction and construction of the beaches. The dominant player in this role is sea oats, Uniola paniculata. The nodding seed heads of this tufted grass are as familiar to most beach-goers as seashells. The sea oat flower stalks that provide waves of grain along the beach on a windy day bear the plants fruiting bodies in a pattern that looks braided. The arrangement is called a panicle, and accounts for the Latin specific name paniculata. The name of the genus, Uniola, is another ancient Latin
name of a now unknown plant.

Sea oats are found from the beaches of Virginia all the way down the Atlantic coast, and along the Gulf of Mexico through Texas. They have adapted to the harsh beach environment by growing very rapidly. They are able to gather enough nutrition from the nutrient-impoerished beach sand by sending a vast network of fibrous roots out to collect food and water to fuel their growth; far more of the plant is under the sand than above it. This extensive root network helps hold sand in place in the upland portion of the beach above the water level. During rough weather, when the sand moves to build bars off the beach to buffer wave energy, the soft roots "go with the flow," allowing the beach to deposit sand where it is needed most.

Their attractive panicles remain on the stalks for a long time, making them beautiful and tempting additions to dried flower arrangements. Lawmakers, however, determined that wholesale removal of these grasses was not good for keeping beaches alluring and functional. So in Florida, as well as in most of the states where they grow, collecting sea oats from public land is now prohibited.

Another adaptation is the ability to re-establish quickly from buried rhizomes (root structures) after the sea energy has subsided, and sand is put back in storage up on the beach. Storm energy also breaks the sea oat seed from the stalks, and they float on the waves...
in their husks until deposited in a windrow of flotsam on the beach, where they germinate to repeat the cycle. Sea oats, like all of the native plants on the beach, have developed ways to thrive in this hostile environment and play contributing roles in the interactions of all its component parts.

Nurseries under contract from state park beaches harvest the seeds of the sea oats, and then grow the plants for beach sand stabilization projects. Sea oats on Southwest Florida beaches are not very productive. Only a few of the spikelets on a stalk have viable seed in them. Plants on beaches farther north produce more seed for reasons not yet fully understood. However, retail nurseries on the islands generally stock the grasses for homeowners who follow the nature-knows-best rules of island landscaping.

The most common mistake made in planting sea oats on beaches is planting them too shallow. The grandfather of sea oat growing and planting, Otto Bundy of Horticultural Systems in Parrish, advises planting them at least four inches deep or down to the wet sand. He also recommends adding a teaspoon of time-release fertilizer to each plant when they are planted to give them an edge on surviving the beach environment.

Dick Workman is a former director of the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation and a founding member of the Florida Native Plant Society. He is the author of Growing Native: Native Plants for Landscape Use in Central South Florida, and is currently president of Coastplan, Inc., an environmental consulting firm that specializes in ecological restoration.

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Sea oats at discount can be purchased periodically from Keep Lee County Beautiful. Sanibel resident Don Fleming is chairman of the nonprofit organization's Beach Renourishment and Beautification Subcommittee. Fleming has his own large experimental field of sea oats growing on West Gulf Drive, and says if enough interest is generated, his committee will order other beach vegetation such as dune sunflowers, railroad vine and beach bean. Fleming can be reached at 941-334-4744.
Welcome to Villa Lupo

by Libby Boren McMillan

Mysterious driveways wind away from exclusive Captiva Drive through dense tropical foliage toward the Gulf of Mexico. The view from the pine-canopied road gives no clue as to the estates of Captiva Island’s Gold Coast. Each lush, palm-filled property is distinguishable only by a small, roadside sign discreetly announcing a quaint or curious name, often times revealing a hint of the owner’s or the property’s personality. A handful of these unseen...
estates retain the aura of “Olde Florida” with only modest board-and-batten cottages nesting near the beach. In other instances, older homes have been razed and resurrected on a scale more the size of seaside palaces. And then there is Villa Lupo.

Positioned happily between cozy and grand, Villa Lupo brings to mind the posh Caribbean residences of Mustique. Intensely private and incredibly comfortable, a stay at Villa Lupo is an immersion in pleasure. It is the definitive abode by which all island properties could be measured. The current owner of Villa Lupo was kind enough to let us venture down the cloistered drive for a closer look at this seaside retreat.

Obviously a labor of intense love and devotion, Villa Lupo was the brainchild of former owner Dan Orwig. Starting with a rather typical Florida cottage in a superior waterfront location, he envisioned all that his paradise could become, and made it so. Orwig, a landscape architect, had been coming to the islands for 35 years, many of them pre-causeway, before he purchased the estate in 1987. Planning to renovate whatever he purchased, Orwig drew the floor plans himself, mandating that wind movement through the house be a primary design consideration. “The problem with the old house” says Orwig, “was that no one had given thought to this issue. The rooms not facing the Gulf were intolerable without air conditioning. That entire side of the house was still and very uncomfortable.”

The renovation took two years to complete, as only the slab of the original structure was retained. During this process, Orwig gathered building materials from as far away as Nagasaki, where he purchased Japanese clay tile for the roof. Acting as contractor from out-of-state, he and his wife Julie made several trips to oversee the project, staying in the house amidst the construction. What resulted was a residential Phoenix, as appropriate to its surroundings as a home by Frank Lloyd Wright.

While architecturally Eastern in its simplicity, Villa Lupo’s main function meets its architectural objective: sea breeze moves through this home like nowhere else on the islands. To achieve this, Orwig used commercial sliding glass doors, eight feet high, to run the entire length of the two main Great Room walls. When the wall parallel to the beach “disappears,” and the opposite floor-to-ceiling sliders which face the pool are opened, the Great Room is transformed into a gigantic breezeway. Gleaming black granite floors reflect outdoor light and the shapes of nearby palm fronds, and afternoon breezes carry sounds of shorebirds and gentle waves; the lines between shelter and nature disappear in this magical space, as Orwig surely knew they would.

A large portion of the Great Room’s third wall also slides into hiding, exposing a Japanese garden tucked behind ornate wrought iron grillwork. The constant music of water trickling from the garden’s clamshell fountain adds further ambiance not only to the main space, but to adjoining sleeping quarters as well. Three bedrooms in a split floor plan are positioned under separate roofline peaks, creating exterior visual interest.

Engineering the disappearance of the many sliding doors created a significant design challenge. Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company had just developed a glass block that literally “turned the corner,” by being a more rounded version of the block previously in existence. These became the rounded edges of massive, glass block anchors at each corner of the Great Room, not only hiding the pockets for the doors, but contrasting impressively with the black stone floors.

The rounded corners of these glass columns are mimicked in custom living room cabinetry. Made locally, an elongated, solid walnut cabinet conceals a television and ample storage space. The Great Room ceiling, which rises to a center peak of 28 feet, and all interior walls are locally milled beadboard, reminiscent of the New England cottages close to Orwig’s Massachusetts home. To keep a consistent visual scale, the beadboard on the walls, closer to eye level, was made narrower in width than that used on the ceilings.

During the design, much thought was given to storm precautions. Building in a hurricane zone makes potential flood damage a reality. While the bedroom areas remain on the level of the original house, the Great Room was stepped up several feet, and the state-of-the-art kitchen, with its many electrical outlets and vulnerable appliances, was raised yet another level. Beadboard walls, unlike drywall, can be dried out and refinished if damaged, according to Orwig, and his choice of block construction further protects against damage. Villa Lupo’s roofline hides a massive truss and steel reinforced system designed to hold its own against high winds, while small lightening rods
pierce the sky from each tiled peak.

Despite the impressive details inside the home, the estate’s main attraction is outdoors. When opened to its surroundings, Villa Lupo becomes a window on its own world. An inviting pool visually melts into the Gulf, while a waterfall cascades from an elevated hot tub. Inkberry hedges line the paths from the beach to the outdoor shower, while trimmed sea grapes and tiny palms surround the pool, creating just enough shade for summertime afternoons. Oversized terra cotta urns on the back terrace and in the pool area appear to be decorative, but actually function as dry wells; thick chains running from copper roof gutters disappear into these bottomless urns, directing rainwater subsurface to surrounding plants and shrubs. These urns, like the Villa herself, are an elegant fusion of form and function.

The Orwigs are now looking for another property to renovate, perhaps in the Caribbean, while Villa Lupo stands as a testament to all that an island habitat can be—simple, soothing, secluded, inviting.
**Monday**
Checked M&D’s property today. They think they’ll be back on island mid-month. After a quick clean-up, it occurred to me how lucky I am to live in a place where the “trash” in the yard is a coconut frond, a ripe mango and a brand new golf ball...

**Tuesday**
Corn on the cob for dinner. Took the cobs down to the dock for the crabs. They were all diving for the bits of kernel left on the cobs. One huge guy straddled a cob and took it out to sea so he wouldn’t have to share. Gotta show the boys this when they visit.

**Wednesday**
Bayou’s very green tonight and there’s a nice breeze out on the screened porch. Wonder when the whippoorwills start their nighttime serenade? Seems like it should be soon...

**Friday**
Chased a gecko around the living room tonight. Couldn’t catch him. (Hope Nemo can’t either.) Don’t know if their tails come off like the lizards do. Loretta says a gecko in the house is good luck.

**Monday**
Ditto, damn it. P.S. McDonald book was awesome! I love Travis McGee almost as much as Doc Ford.

**Wednesday**
Took Mimi’s advice, switched from millet to sunflower seeds and the “bikers” left. Wrong kind of bills. Cardinals relieved.

**Friday**
Took Chickcharnie to L&K’s for dinner. Too lazy to row so we used the motor. D was in from NY with his new gal pal (like her!) who made bananas flambé for dessert. We brought Nemo a leftover scallop—he’s Mr. Happy now. Full moon for boat ride home...very sexy.

**Monday**
Huge pod of dolphin just off Captiva’s beach today. Haven’t seen the two regulars come by our house for four nights now.

**Tuesday**
Heard something funny at breakfast; D’s gal went back to NY. Seems she was jump off here because of the tree frogs! Now, that’s funny. I’d opt for tree frogs over the rat race any day. You can take the girl out of the city, but it takes a while to get the city out of the girl. I remember...

**Saturday**
Wish I had invented the Water Noodle. Only saw about a billion of them today.

**Sunday**
Lots of locals at the pool today. Took a long beach walk. Lots of coquina beds and one ibis who stayed just ahead of me the whole way. Purple/orange sunset, but no green flash. Wonder if seeing it twice is it for me? The pines are really making that whisper sound tonight.

**Monday**
Put a lizard into a trance today at breakfast by whistling to him. Blisses them out every time. They tilt their head, close their eyes, and then before you know it, they’re out like a light. Really clear skies again tonight. S&I star-gazed on the front deck after dinner. Saw one falling!
Tucked amidst the pines and palms of Sanibel’s “Ding” Darling Wildlife Preserve, lies a golf club community which, quite frankly, is not for everyone.

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