A Flock of Our Own

Ashleigh Powers

"Come to the Sunshine City!" Images on postcards, billboards, and in newspapers of the bathing beauties on St. Petersburg's beaches circled the United States. Sunshine, happiness, relaxation, and ultimate paradise seemed Northerners worse than the snow against their face. The harsh reality that they were shoveling snow – unlike the Southerners who were shoveling sand – could not be avoided. While battling the winter, they began to place themselves in the images they saw. Through the early 1900s, St. Petersburg had a large marketing push to lure tourists to the area. They targeted people living in the north, framing the area with a youthful energetic image. It was seen as the ultimate playground paradise for vacationers and sportmen. Not to mention, it looks much better than snow.

One piece of paradise planted its roots in 1903. Opening to the public in 1935 as a full time roadside attraction with exotic plants, vibrant birds, and perhaps the help of beauty and career. These Q&A sessions, as well as Celeste's memoir, I Can Still See Me, offer a glimpse into her life of high adventure, celebrity, rough road trips, televised performances, sold out shows, and challenges as a working mother. 

A new chapter is about to open in the story of Bruce Watters Jewelers. Bruce Watters is about to move, but not far. In fact, this legendary St. Petersburg business has never moved far over the course of the last 109 years from its original location near Central Avenue and 2nd Street in downtown St. Petersburg. Bruce Watters is the city's oldest business. Distinguished for its high-quality diamonds, jewelry, and watches, it is the place where generations have bought their engagement rings, wedding bands, anniversary gifts, holiday presents, and Valentine's Day remembrances. It is the city's most prestigious jewelry business. It is the place where four generations of the Watters family have practiced their profession, and from which they have given back to our community. Go into the store today and chances are you will find co-owners Bruce Watters and his son Jim Watters personally tending the long-time family business, although now with the help of several associates.

Bruce Watters Jewelers
A New Chapter

Will Michaels

Today's Bruce Watters Jewelers on Beach Drive. Architects were Harvard and Jolly. Photo courtesy of Brian Supplee

Even in Magic, Happiness First

Sara W. Hopkins

This May, the Florida Magic Convention celebrated its 50th anniversary in Orlando. Neighbors from the Old Northeast and surrounding areas attended as guests on behalf of the Tampa Bay Magic Club. Among those present was one neighbor who enjoyed a professional career in magic, as one of Canada's first female magicians (and one of the most successful female magicians to date): Celeste Evans.

Evans once thrilled audiences with her performances of dove magic – audiences which included Caroline Kennedy, Indira Gandhi, packed houses in Las Vegas, party guests at the Playboy mansion, U.S. troops in Vietnam, Alaska, Iceland, Germany, Malta, and Libya, and audiences of all ages on six continents.

At magic conferences and conventions around the country, Celeste and her daughter, Evanna (a nurse in Charlotte, NC with a penchant for healing with an extra dose of laughter), thrill audiences with Q&A sessions about Celeste's star-studded life and career. These Q&A sessions, as well as Celeste’s memoir, I Can Still See Me, offer a glimpse into her life of high adventure, celebrity, rough road trips, televised performances, sold out shows, and challenges as a working mother.

Celeste is originally from White Rock, British Columbia, and decided to learn magic when two ‘punk kids’ (boys, of course) declared that it was a career for men only. That was all the impetus Celeste needed.

Through dogged determination, late nights, constant practice, and honing the consistency of her brand, Celeste rose in the ranks of the magic world. Her bodacious body, scantily clad in skintight strapless dresses left little to the imagination – with the exception of the magic world. Her bodacious body, scantily clad in skintight strapless dresses left little to the imagination – with the exception of the magic world. Her bodacious body, scantily clad in skintight strapless dresses left little to the imagination – with the exception of the magic world. Her bodacious body, scantily clad in skintight strapless dresses left little to the imagination – with the exception of the magic world. Her bodacious body, scantily clad in skintight strapless dresses left little to the imagination – with the exception of the magic world. Her bodacious body, scantily clad in skintight strapless dresses left little to the imagination – with the exception of the magic world. 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Magical St. Pete

Magic is in the air in St. Pete these days, and this issue of the Northeast Journal certainly highlights this phenomenon! It never ceases to amaze me how interesting, daring, adventurous, caring, and giving the citizens of this great city are on an ongoing basis. One person gets an idea, puts it out there for a few to contemplate, and then it takes off! Money comes in, volunteers help out, neighbors become inspired, recipients are grateful, and the upward spiral continues.

I, for one, always glean (see article about gleaning on page 10) a magical nugget of inspiration from each and every issue. While I do not wish to become a magician like Celeste Evans (see cover story), I do want to become more adventurous and see more of the world. What a fascinating woman and a fascinating life she designed for herself and her children!

How about the word “flamboyance?” What a perfect word to describe such a magical, community-building survival strategy. Read about George and Lucy, the flamingos featured on our cover and do what you can to bring more friends to the magical wonderland called Sunken Gardens.

And, read about another one of this city’s gems (except the pun) – Bruce Watters Jewelers, the oldest business in St. Petersburg. Will Michaels, our ongoing lifeblood for all matters historical, writes about the history of this family business and reveals some of the magic involved in its longevity (hint: it’s always about giving back). Yet another nugget of inspiration for this small business owner as the Northeast Journal nears its 10th anniversary!

I believe real magic happens when people are allowed to express their true inner beings. Whether you personally find the art beautiful or not, one cannot help but admire the freedom of expression exhibited in the murals around town. See page 6 as Eugenia Woods takes us on a magical mystery tour of our beloved city.

John Gee, with a bit of slight of hand, has been helping us see our local community through a different lens… maybe even as multi-faceted as a kaleidoscope! What does Mirror Lake mean to you? It’s nice; you drive by it but probably never really wonder about it or even appreciate it. Now is your chance to discover the hidden magic behind our city’s source of life. Read about John’s discovery (see page 8) and appreciate his curious mind… because without it, we might be stuck with a very narrow point of view, indeed!

Earlier I mentioned the word “glean.” I want to focus your attention now on something truly magical happening in the Old Northeast and spreading rapidly. It’s the concept of gleaning and Linda Dobbs tells us all about it in her story on the Goodness InDeed page on page 10. An abundance of mangoes in her backyard lead her to share the bounty which lead to a grassroots organization springing up. People have joined in the gleaning process of gathering the leftover fruit and vegetables from neighbor’s yards and sharing them with each other and the St. Petersburg Free Clinic. Enter the world of what-goes-around-comes-around and feel the ensuing magic. The only thing that disappears is the fruit!

Enjoy the summer season and the out-of-this-world positive energy buzzing around this city. It truly is magical!

Jen
It's that time of year again. The time when I tell you all about the new artwork popping up, splattered and pasted all over downtown walls again. Summertime is great for enjoying a little daytrip. You can pile in the car, make a few stops for snacks, and just drive around and use your eyes. It's such a simple thing, going for a drive, but it's a wonderful way to relax... as long as your AC works really well. So, put on something breezy (not THAT breezy, please), grab a parasol for shade and some decent flops, and let's go.

Have you noticed someone watching you when you're heading north from downtown on 275? I've seen Gatsby-esque eyes that loom over an industrial area. Those eyes belong to a spray painted mural by Sebastian Coolidge and they rest at Carrol's Building Materials on 20th Street and 13th Ave N. I love this kid's work. He's figured out exactly what buttons to press inside himself to let his subconscious out to play. More of his work can be found downtown where he hides a swirly rubbery gent, who has a secret or two, as he rides a unicycle in the alleyway of the 500 Block on Central Ave. Neighboring him is a rather large mural of a man releasing a jellyfish from his soul – don't ask; it's art; just enjoy it – which spans the back of the Florida Craftsman Gallery. Teaming up with Mr. Coolidge is the fiery Derek Donnely of Saint Paint. Outstanding job, gentlemen.

While we are downtown, let's park and walk to the corner of the 600 block of Central Ave and 6th Street. A lovely hot-dog-grilling tanned blonde, donning a sun cap and a few extra freckles, but always wearing a smile, is Joy of the Dawg House. There you'll get friendly service and an ice cold Publix Coke and a hot dog served however you please. Look to your left. See that awesomeness that spans the side of Foolish Pride Tattoos? That's local artist BASK and his latest masterpiece. He couldn't contain his art to the wall so he even painted the dumpster. Have you ever seen such a gorgeous dumpster?

Want more? Head behind the alleyway of the 600 block. Yep, we've been here before but the landscape changes almost daily. A giant neon baboon mural completed by BASK and Palehorse Designs keeps the Woo Memorial company. Down the ways is an oversized iguana completed by Derek Donnelly, that whispers to a series of dolls by Jennifer Kosharek. Step over to the next indentation and you'll come face to face with T wiggy herself... a giant T wiggy the size of a building! Painted by adoring fan, Chad Mize, another vintage St. Pete symbol Mr. Sun graces us with his presence. That familiar beaming face can be remembered by local natives as the Chamber of Commerce face during the 1950s. (And it was recently recreated as the face on a totebag by yours truly.)

Ready to leave the alley? Pop back in the vehicle and drive down to 1st Ave S and 22nd Street. There you'll find one of the largest and commanding murals in the city, painted by the talented Vitale Brothers. These guys have been around forever and have paved the way for the onslaught of mural madness in St. Pete. The mural is outside the Island Nautical Marine Store on the west side of 22nd Street. You literally can't miss it; it's that big. It's a giant underwater scene complete with friendly dolphins, turtles, and sea life. It's beautifully executed.

This is only a small list of the vast amount of outdoor art in this area. If you just drive around you are bound to be surprised by creativity around hidden corners. The outpouring of St. Petersburg murals continues on, and is a commanding presence known throughout the greater Tampa Bay area. Ask anyone outside St. Pete and they always say St. Pete is the artsy place to be. Aren't you so proud to live here? We know we are.
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So many metaphors, so little space. Which one best describes Mirror Lake and its surrounding park? Is it the calm eye of the storm of our town’s rapid expansion? Or does the proximity of the old St. Pete High School, the Tomlinson Learning Center (with the wise owl statues guarding its front gates), the graceful Lyceum Theatre, and our classic Carnegie library make this area the brains of our town? Or perhaps it’s the spring fed lake itself that makes it the original life-giving heart for our town. However you look at it, this gem of a park played an important role in our city’s history, but it was the supply of fresh water that first made it so essential.

In the late 1800s, our town was a tiny and mostly inaccessible outpost blissfully ignored by the world. Most of what was needed to survive was produced locally, and if you needed water, a cistern, rain barrel, or dug well was sufficient. This primitive system sufficed until the advent of the Spanish American War when the arrival of thousands of thirst-soldiers taxed Tampa’s limited fresh water resources. The search for drinkable water ended at what was then called Reservoir Lake located across the bay in the little village of St. Pete. Pumped from the lake and loaded on barges, the water was transported across the bay and used either locally or stored on transport vessels bound for Cuba. Once the war was over, St. Pete realized what a valuable resource they had, and in 1899 the town established a municipal water department using Mirror Lake as its primary water supply.

But, our town began to grow into a city and even with the addition of Crescent Lake water into the system, their water levels decreased to such a point that new wells were dug to accommodate the increasing needs of our city. Additional water was found, but the quality was never as good as the original lake water, and St. Pete just had to accept low-quality hard water as a replacement. By the 1920s, millions of gallons of hard water were consumed every year, but an increasing population and the subsequent decreasing quantity and quality of local well water made it clear that our community had to look elsewhere for water.

So the quest for more water reserves spread outward, and today our huge demand for water is provided from areas far away from the original resource of Mirror Lake. Nowadays we consume billions of gallons of water (10 billion last year) which is pumped from the aquifer, various rivers and reservoirs, and from the bay itself. Water is transported through hundreds of miles of pipes and is constantly monitored for proper use and purity. If you want to get all geeked up on the specs of our water supply, just go on the St.Pete City website and you will see how far we have come from the days of dug wells and rain barrels in the backyard.

No longer needed for drinking water, our replenished lake now rests in a well-deserved retirement offering us a quiet reminder of a simpler past. Today, Mirror Lake and its surrounding park have become the quiet center of our busy community and a reminder of how much things have changed in our town. If you ever need a place for rest and reflection, take a walk around this lake and think about the fact that our town would never had survived without its life giving waters.

John Gee

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Grenada Beach, Amazing Location, Luxury and space made perfect by a custom plantation waterfront home. From the main entry you will find a spacious foyer, formal dining room, and formal living room. The family room is open and flows easily to the beautiful outdoor living space. The gourmet kitchen features granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, and a large center island. The den with a French door to the outside is a perfect office or study. The master suite is luxurious and features a spa-like bath. A large master closet with built-ins. The home is a must see!

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Yes, I do have a mango tree. I do share the fruit with anyone who wants it, especially anyone who will climb up and pick the highest mangoes. I even share with the squirrels, not that I have any choice. But, really, there are more mangoes than our family and our neighbors and the squirrels can eat.

And, truthfully, some go to waste. How awful! That's just one tree. According to research, an estimated half of all produce grown in this country goes to waste. And yet, one in six people (locally and nationally) are “food insecure,” meaning they don’t know from where their next meal will come!

Gleaning – that's the answer! Ever heard of it? Maybe you remember it from old Bible stories – that’s, um, 2000-plus years ago? Gleaning means to collect the leftovers and share with those in need. Well, gleaning is here in the Old Northeast. Resident Tracey Locke is the impetus behind a group of “gleaners in the ‘Burg” and the Free Clinic Food Bank is the winner.

Tracey recalls that she and her kids picked some starfruit from a neighbor’s tree (with permission) last year and shared with everyone they knew. But, they still had leftovers so they took the fruit to the dog park to share. “Except,” Tracey explained, “instead of just taking the fruit, people started saying; ‘I have an orange tree, do you want some? I have a grapefruit tree, do you want some? There is so much fruit in our neighborhood alone – the idea was born!” There are other communities gleaning, but this one is a local and consistent commitment according to Tracey.

From that point until today, in only one year, almost 1,000 pounds of fruit and vegetables have been collected! That includes everything from 50 pounds of garden tomatoes to avocados, mangoes, lemons, starfruit, and grapefruit. The next scheduled gleaning is Saturday, August 2 from 9 to 11am. Volunteers are meeting at Seminole Park in Historic Kenwood, located between Burlington and 3rd Avenues North and 29th and 30th Streets North.

This is not just about cleaning up fruit trees, or keeping rats away, or sharing fruit and vegetables. This is about “raising awareness that there is a real need in the community for fresh produce,” Tracey clarified, adding; “If we can provide a volunteer service to collect the fruit and vegetables, it’s a win-win for the Food Bank and the property owner. If you have a tree or garden producing more than you can use, please consider the St. Petersburg Free Clinic Bank.”

There are monthly scheduled gleanings, and both volunteers and tree owners can sign up online by visiting the www.saintpeteabundance.org. The group meets at different city parks on the first Saturday of every month from 9 to 11am. Volunteers are sent out to homes who have signed up to share their trees and gardens. If there are more volunteers than homes, they canvass the neighborhood looking for new trees and gardens.

Weather conditions can affect fruiting and varieties of trees ripen at different times, so if the scheduled gleaning is not timed perfectly, homeowners should know that the Free Clinic Food Bank will accept donations from 7am to 3:30pm Monday through Friday. They are located at 863 3rd Avenue North, and their phone number is 727-821-6574. Drop-off is in the alley.

Note to gleaners: My mangoes are the best in the area (according to an Indian friend who likens them to mangoes back home) and if you glean my mangoes you can keep some for yourself – that is if you can resist eating the juicy, sweet fruit as you pick!
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If you could be invisible for one day, where would you be?
NYC’s Central Park

If you were stranded on a deserted island with one book, what would it be?
Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll

You have to wear a t-shirt with one word on it for the rest of your life. Which word do you choose?
Zest

What Disney character would you be and why?
Jimmy Cricket because I’m painfully literal and reality-based

Would you rather plan a party or attend one?
Definitely attend – I’m a party animal.

Tell about a collection you have.
I have a few kaleidoscopes; the changing colors in bright sunlight delight me.

What is your first thought in the morning?
Hope that the day will be full of smiles

What song most describes your life right now?
The Long Way Around

What is your biggest fear or phobia?
Snow White because she prevailed

What Disney character would you be and why?
Snow White because she prevailed

Would you rather plan a party or attend one?
Plan one. I love the challenge of working within a budget and an opportunity to be creative.

Tell about a collection you have.
Pineapples. They are a symbol of hospitality, and I think that describes me well.

What is your first thought in the morning?
Why did I sign up for the 5am workout session at the gym?

What song most describes your life right now?
September 11, 2001. Countless lives were lost or affected; our country was forever altered.

What is your biggest fear or phobia?
That something would happen to my children

What song most describes your life right now?
The Bible.

What Disney character would you be and why?
Winnie the Pooh because of his way of keeping life simple, his unsophisticated view of the world, and his kindness and loyalty

Would you rather plan a party or attend one?
Plan a party

Tell about a collection you have.
I love to travel so try to bring back something from every place I have been.

What is your first thought in the morning?
“Is it the weekend?”

If you could erase one day in history, which would it be?
9/11/2001

What song most describes your life right now?
The Secret

What Disney character would you be and why?
The secret

Would you rather plan a party or attend one?
Definitely attending.

Tell about a collection you have.
I have a few books; each book is a story that has shaped me in some way.

What is your first thought in the morning?
“Is it the weekend?”

If you could erase one day in history, which would it be?

What song most describes your life right now?
The Secret

What Disney character would you be and why?
The secret

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Tell about a collection you have.
I have a few books; each book is a story that has shaped me in some way.

What is your first thought in the morning?
“Is it the weekend?”

If you could erase one day in history, which would it be?
Some homes arouse curiosity. A sense of wonder overcomes one to know what lies beyond lit doors and windows. It captivates with its fascinating and compelling qualities and draws you into a world that is at once vibrant and comforting.

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queens on the advertisements, Sunken Gardens quickly became the city’s most famous roadside tourist attraction. This botanical getaway was another world that people from all over came to experience.

The advertising push ignited a boom in the economy, moving tourism to the leading economic factor. St. Petersburg became a prime destination spot. Visitors instantly fell in love. They loved it so much, they didn’t want to leave. Some bought vacation homes and others decided to call it home permanently.

Generations of families have enjoyed Sunken Gardens. Eric Russo went to the gardens as a child. His grandparents moved to Florida in 1954. The memories of “stepping into another world” with his brother, mother, and grandmother still dance through his head. “All the beautiful feathered birds, which they let you hold... oh and the super pink flamingos standing in a flock,” he said as he jumped from memory to memory. His first memory was when he was five years old. The young boy exploring the garden shines through his eyes as he continues to talk about lemonade slushies and days with his family. Now, 24 year-old Eric is attending law school at Barry University; those moments at Sunken Gardens are very dear to him.

The beauty of the garden, the chatter between the birds, and the tranquil state has made an impression on every visitor. This piece of paradise on 4th Street ties an experience between older and younger generations together. Eric’s father enjoyed it growing up, and his son was able to do the same. Despite the abundant variety of flora, there is one portion of the garden that everyone desires to see: an iconic bird... a flamingo.

Tourists come to Florida with the desire to see flamingos. “It’s one of the main draws for tourists. I mean who doesn’t love flamingos? When people come to Florida, they expect to see flamingos and not everybody who comes to Florida wants to go to the theme-park type experience with all of the rides and noise. There are a lot of visitors who come because they want some peace and relaxation... They want to be able to walk through a little garden and just enjoy it. To be able to see a flamboyance of flamingos walking by with all their heads in sync is a really impressive thing to experience,” said Bill O’Grady, Sunken Gardens’ supervisor.

The lasting impression of the flamingos has contributed to the memorable experience. Through the years, the attraction has had its ups and downs; the economic pressure from all-inclusive parks caused the gardens to spiral into a state of decline. The city purchased the property in 1999 and began restoring the historic establishment.

The process wasn’t easy. Tons of overgrown plants and invasive vines had to be removed. It has been an ongoing restoration project restoring Sunken Gardens to the beauty it once was, but this time even better. Pieces of founder George Turner’s family’s green thumb still remain. “We have royal palms, which were planted in 1903; a ponytail palm planted in 1935; and lots of bougainvillea and travelers’ trees planted in the ‘40s,” said O’Grady to the Highlands Paper.

As for the flamingos, out of the 17 original flock members that arrived in 1956, only two remain. The flamingos are iconic to basic community, much like they are to Florida. These birds draw people to the area. The thing about flamingos is that they don’t like to be alone. In order to survive, flamingos love to live in a large group, called a flamboyance. Being in a group makes them feel protected and safe. Their movements sync together when they walk. Their coexistence with one another is entrancing to spectators. George and Lucy, the two who still remain, have been named by the community after George, Jr. and Lucy Turner.
Nearing their final years, the community has pushed to raise money to buy more flamingos for Sunken Gardens. The group is called Flamingos Forever. The purpose of Flamingos Forever is to "maintain the historic character of Sunken Gardens by providing funding for the purchase of flamingos."

To some this may seem absurd. Why all this push for more birds? How will flamingos keep the history alive? My response: think back to Eric Russo, ask around the community. It may not be something someone mentions right off the bat, but it’s something that has stuck in their memory. The flamingos add to the experience of this beautiful garden setting.

Sunken Gardens is a place where many family generations have visited and still continue to do so. It is a place where a father takes his son because he remembered it when he was a child, and now he wants his child to share the excitement he once had. It is a place where you can escape the day. It is a place that continues to make the community grow.

"Everyone is just so positive... But to see the outpouring come in about the flamingos, and the amount of calls and just support is heartwarming. It really is. To see people from other places that come out to visit and say, ‘you know what, that is a great idea, here’s 20 bucks’ and drop it in the box. You know, it’s just heartwarming," said O’Grady. Dollar by dollar, together the community has raised almost $20,000. O’Grady, who worked for the City, believes that you have to give back to your community.

Currently Sunken Gardens is working to create a children’s garden to teach kids about where their food comes from. Their long-term goals focus on growth – growth within the community and at the garden itself. They want to educate about food, sustainability, and wildlife, while growing the garden, continuing its prestige.

From an outsider’s perspective, the roots planted by the Turner family continue to grow deeper, but it isn’t just because of their efforts. It is because of the community. It is the local shops holding fundraisers, the group of volunteers that comes to help where they can on Wednesday, and the people raising awareness. When tourists visit Sunken Gardens, they can feel the community support; dropping money into the donation box shows they believe just as much as we do. St. Petersburg is like a flamboyance of its own.

These caring and sweet birds by nature desire to feel connected to others and they form a community. Their desire to be with multiple flamingos makes me think about St. Petersburg. The dedication to keep the history alive and the community growing is remarkable. It is like a flamboyance of its own.

Continued on page 16
the passion to remain connected to other community members makes our community as bright and entrancing as a flamboyance flock. We rely on one another to protect St. Petersburg, ourselves, and the future. Raising money for a flock isn’t just about preserving the history; it’s about preserving the history in the making. As O’Grady states, “I am making a difference, and I will have made a difference long after I am gone. Historic preservation... all of these things will have an impact long after I am here. When I retire I will be able to come enjoy it and bring my family and grandkids. It’s moving to see people appreciate it, too.” The small efforts today are seen as the gardens continue to make an impression on all who visit, from our children to new visitors. That impression will be passed down. Digging our roots deeper into the community the work today will leave something behind which will be here for years to come.

Editor's note: Where did the name Sunshine City come from? “In 1910, Lew Brown, editor of the city’s afternoon paper, created the city’s nickname through a publicity stunt. Declaring St. Petersburg ‘The Sunshine City,’ Brown instituted the ‘Sunshine Offer,’ giving away his newspaper, the Evening Independent, each day that the sun did not shine. When free editions were provided, Brown encouraged recipients to mail the paper to their Northern friends. His offer gained national attention, and, during its 75-year history, the paper only gave away an average of five free editions annually.”

Ashleigh Powers is a Florida Native. Growing up with sand between her toes, Amelia Island was her home for many years until she moved to Tampa, Florida for college. Leaving the island lifestyle behind, she began a more fast pace life in the city. She recently graduated from the University of South Florida and now works as a research associate for Distinguished Professor Dr. Susan MacManus. Ashleigh enjoys getting out in the St. Petersburg community discovering all the wonderful stories people share. The historical richness and character of the community makes Ashleigh enjoy every story she writes. If you have any questions, comments or would like to suggest a cover story, you can contact her by email at AshleighPowers1@gmail.com.

Taking a stroll, the eye-catching George and Lucy spy something that catches their eye; the original flock arrived in 1956, which makes the Sunken Gardens flamingos at least 58 years old; the Northeast Journal’s managing editor up close and personal with the pair.

**FLAMINGOS** Continued from page 15

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Walt Jaap is a successful man, a happy man. A veteran of the Korean War with a degree in marine biology from the University of Miami, he has had a successful career in marine pursuits which has taken him to many parts of the world, both above and below the water. He has been married for 40 years to Karilyn who shares many of his interests including travel, and they have had a grand life together. So all is well, right?

Wrong. The man has failed retirement. Completely.

But don’t weep for Walt – cheer for St. Thomas’ Episcopal Church which has benefited mightily from Walt’s hobby of gardening, a love that has come through generations of his family. His grandfather came to this country and settled in Duluth, Minnesota... Lake Woebegone as Walt refers to it. This grandfather immediately went into the horticulture business, building four big greenhouses, each nearly a block long.

“Nobody in his right mind would have done this in Minnesota with the weather up there,” says Walt, “but this was about 1890 to 1910, and iron ore had been discovered in Minnesota.” (It turned out that the iron was worth a lot more than the gold these adventurers were seeking, “and people had lots of money.”) The horticulture business was a success. Walter’s father had the same penchant for flowers, and opened a florist shop.

The Korean War found young Walt in the Army at Ft. Belvoir’s engineering school where he was given a choice of going to Greenland or Germany. He chose Germany and came home in August of 1963 amid a fierce hurricane. His family had given up the Minnesota weather and had moved to Coral Gables, hence the degree from Miami. After graduating, Walt was hired by the state as a marine scientist, and became adjunct professor at the University of South Florida, beginning a life of studying and swimming among coral reefs around the world, jumping out of submarines to do so, testifying before Congress, and even living in a habitat in the Bahamas to observe reefs there. And he met and married his wife, who was pursuing a library science degree at USE.

After 35 years, Walt decided to retire from this job. He and Karilyn wanted to do some extensive traveling, which included hiking Yellowstone National Park.

He also went in business for himself, doing some consulting. This has included working on the natural gas pipeline from Alabama to Port Manatee, which not only improved the air quality, but formed artificial reefs all along the way, since the whole length of the pipeline was covered with tons of limestone. He has also worked on gas projects and on reef repair in Hawaii and the Dominican Republic.

Walt has also contributed to a book called Interrelationships Between Corals and Fisheries which involves the effects of climate change on coral reefs and fish. It will be published later this summer. And this is called retirement.

But back to St. Thomas’ garden. Walt gathered a crew of parishioners, and not only are they revamping the inner courtyard which is sustained by a small trust, but they are planting shrubs and flowering plants around the periphery of the church. Next, they will work on the deteriorating hedges along the bordering city streets, trying to use native plants as a matter of practicality as well as beauty.

“A garden is a place where you benefit from activity, and you can continue to be creative,” he says. It’s therapeutic to him, and soothing. “If I can avoid using a power tool, I do, as a matter of respect.”

He has plenty of time, he figures. A number of his ancestors lived past a hundred years. He may even retire again.
Southeastern Guide Dogs Needs Volunteers for Gift Shops

Southeastern Guide Dogs is recruiting energetic and personable volunteers to help as gift shop cashiers and salespersons in the Sarasota and St. Petersburg locations of the charity’s Dog Boutiques. These vibrant retail locations help raise funds and increase visibility for Southeastern Guide Dogs, while offering shoppers a wide selection of unique gifts for family pets and the people who love them.

Volunteers can form new friendships in a caring, positive atmosphere, while supporting a deserving cause.

“At Southeastern Guide Dogs, we really care about our volunteers,” said Titus Herman, chief executive officer. “They are an integral part of our operations, and without them we couldn’t provide the level of services we offer our visually impaired students and graduates.”

What:
Friendly volunteer gift shop cashiers and salespersons needed today!

Where:
• St. Petersburg Outreach Center and Dog Boutique, 316 Central Avenue, St. Petersburg (pictured here)
• Sarasota Training Center and Dog Boutique, 1618 Main Street, Sarasota

Interested?
Visit www.guidedogs.org/volunteer to find out more about opportunities.

Southeastern Guide Dogs is internationally accredited and one of the most respected guide dog schools in the United States. Established in 1982, Southeastern Guide Dogs’ mission is to create and nurture a partnership between a visually impaired individual and a guide dog, facilitating life’s journey with mobility, independence and dignity. Through their programs Paws for Independence, Paws for Patriots, and Gifted Canines, Southeastern has more than 400 active guide dog teams across the nation and continues to place more than 100 dogs annually into guiding and other careers, all at no charge to the guide dog recipient, thanks to the generous support of donors and volunteers. Visit www.guidedogs.org for more information.
Robin is a mixed media and fiber artist whose creations are Timekeeper Dolls and Heelimg Soles series which are showcased in private and corporate collections around the world.

Prior to arriving here, she traveled frequently and exhibited primarily with the American Craft Council (ACC) and Atrrider shows in New York, Baltimore, Chicago, Atlanta, and on Florida's East Coast. Stuart Weitzman Shoes commissioned Robin to create a series of decorative shoes for their storefront windows throughout the country.

Two of Robin's shoe designs have been published in Jane Gershon Weitzman's recent book, Art & Sole, published by HarperCollins. Robin especially enjoys writing weekly inspirational and humorous messages on her chalkboard featuring the many interesting and talented folks who live in our popular neighborhood, The Historic Old Northeast. This is another installment shining the spotlight on a few more of our wonderfully diverse and interesting friends and neighbors.

Know an Old NE neighbor who has had a fascinating career, achieved a remarkable milestone, embarked upon a wondrous journey, done something deliciously wacky? Let us know (nsnaeditor@aol.com) and maybe we can feature them in a future installment.

Robin Murphy (1st Street NE) moved here from Atlanta in 2005 with her youngest son, Andy, and husband, Mike, after he accepted the position as headmaster to Shorecrest Preparatory School and she became a consultant with Arbonne skin care and cosmetics.

she found Annapolis, she feels St. Petersburg has much more to offer with its big waterfront parks and festivals. Ann is living now in The ONE with her son and two King Charles Cavalier Spaniels, one of which is a therapy dog for the Ronald McDonald House.

Ann purchases and restores 1920s-era vintage bungalows in the neighborhood. Her business, called Porch Swing Boutique Home Rentals (www.porchswingrentals.com), was launched early this year. Very selective in the properties she purchases, she goes for the maximum in authenticity and charm – and then enhances them even more. Each home's outside is as important as the inside so lots of color and fragrance surround each house. Her gardens are maintenance-free for renters. “When you live in Florida, you spend time outdoors year around,” she says, “so why not sit in your garden and smell the roses...or the jasmine.” Every property comes with a custom porch swing painted in a color (with a matching front door) to accent that particular home. By keeping them authentic she strongly feels she is helping to preserve the character of this special neighborhood.

Don Silvestri (16th Avenue NE) is an award-winning artist of still life oil and canvas art. With very little training, Don became an artist following a memorable career in retailing and the financial industry. His appreciation for art was inspired by museum paintings seen during his European travels. He shares the story that he told the renowned Bucks County (Pennsylvania) artist Frank Arcuri: “You have six months to make me an artist” before he and wife Cynthia retired to St. Petersburg in 1995. In his paintings, Don loves the interplay of light and dark, shadows, reflections, and the creation of illusions. At first Don had a difficult time parting with his paintings, but his philosophy today is that "to feel that someone would buy my paintings to put in their home... it just makes me feel so good. You feel that appreciation of someone who is willing to take part of their home and introduce to it what you've done... to me, that means more than any price." (Don's work can be found locally at ARTicles Gallery on Central Avenue and Suntan Art Center in Pass-a-Grille.)

Residents may have observed the Silvestris walking beside the seawall along the Bayou and Bay with their other passion: Salukis. Minkah was their first, a rescue which they had for nine years and lost last year. This unique breed of 'sighthounds,' among the fastest on earth, stood alongside the Pharaohs in Egypt for centuries. Amani, now a bit over a year old, is their newest, which they obtained as a puppy from a breeder.

Lieutenant Colonel Rob and Angela Schuck (13th Avenue N) had recently purchased and fixed up their home when he went on a new assignment. Rob had been assigned to MacDill Air Force Base when he had to leave for a two-year assignment with the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. There, Rob is the U.S. Army attaché and Angela is a community liaison officer.

When they aren't attending official functions, Rob and Angela love to travel within Tanzania in their spare time. They have been on more than six safaris in various parks such as Selous Game Reserve, Mikumi National Park, and Kilimanjaro National Park. The couple has also been to Zanzibar five times where they like to walk through the narrow Stone Town streets chock full of history, as well as make friends with the locals and visit the beautiful beaches. They are both involved with their local church, Tanzania Lutheran Front, where Angela is a member of the choir. Angela also is a committee member of the Irish Society in Tanzania, helping raise money for local organizations. Rob and Angela transported their two dogs with them on their trip over, and they plan to return with them at the conclusion of their two-year stint, at which time Rob plans to retire with Angela to their now-rented home on 13th Avenue N.
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Bicycling In St. Petersburg

The City of St. Petersburg was first named a Bicycle-Friendly community in 2006, in part because of its comprehensive approach toward improving conditions for bicyclists within the city. The city's approach has been to implement engineering, education, enforcement, encouragement, and evaluation strategies.

City Trails and Pedestrians
St. Petersburg Trails Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan was implemented in 2003 to promote bicycling in St. Petersburg. Bicycling offers a viable, environmentally-sound form of transportation. It is an excellent method to improve one's personal fitness. It provides quality family recreation. And... it improves a citizen's quality of life!

Since 2003, St. Petersburg has installed over 112 miles of bike facilities, including 35 miles of separated trail facilities. In 2008, the federal government passed the Bicycle Commuter Act. That legislation provided tax credit for bicycling to and from work in lieu of using an automobile.

Bike to Work Day
On May 16, 2014, Bike to Work day, approximately thirty cyclists joined with Mayor Rick Kriseman to ride 1.7 miles on the Pinellas Trail into downtown where they arrived at City Hall. The mayor said, “I was honored to take part in the Bike to Work day along with many other St. Petersburg residents.”

The League of American Bicyclists originated the Bike to Work day in 1956. It has been held annually during Bike to Work week... during Bike to Work month... in May.

Bicycle Rodeo In St. Petersburg
Community organizations can request the City of St. Petersburg to conduct a bicycle rodeo which offers children an opportunity to practice and gain bicycling skills in a controlled environment with assistance from trained volunteers. Cheryl Stacks, bicycle and pedestrian coordinator, transportation and parking management department said, “At a bicycle rodeo, we usually set up a series of bicycling skills stations for children to complete as part of the rodeo. We sometimes perform a quick bike maintenance check, as well.

“The bicycle rodeo also includes bicycle helmet fitting instruction. If a child does not have a bicycle helmet, they are provided a free helmet to keep by the City of St. Petersburg. These helmets are acquired through a community partnership with the Florida Department of Transportation. In the last eight years, we have fit and distributed over 2,000 helmets to bike rodeo participants and city residents.”
540 1st Street SE. To obtain information regarding rides and events, send a note to stpetecycling@gmail.com.

Bob Griendling, boardmember of the bicycle club, said that he and his wife, Karla Leavelle, selected to live in St. Petersburg because they liked what they saw in the downtown. They chose to live in the Old Northeast neighborhood because of its proximity to downtown and that they could bike there.

Bob said, “I have ridden a bicycle for over forty years. I had never belonged to a bike club before joining the St. Petersburg Bicycle Club. I now feel that riding in a group of bikers is safer. I find that the members of this club are very helpful, outgoing, and welcoming. I have decided to run for a position on the board.

“The bike club is not only for those who race and ride fast. It is also for the casual rider and those who commute to work daily. Safety, bike laws, and motorist education are goals of the club. We can all learn more about improving on sharing the road.”

**Final Thoughts**
The mayor of St. Petersburg, Rick Kriseman, said “We need to do everything we can to raise awareness around bicycle safety, as well as using bicycles as alternate means of transportation. St. Petersburg is a great place to get on a bicycle and ride — whether it is to work, or just for fun.”

Mary Hampton is a retired educator who moved to Florida in 2007 from New York. Since arriving in Florida, she has been doing non-stop research regarding recycling and sustainability. She has been on a quest to meet people who are also interested and involved in these topics. Mary presently enjoys writing articles that highlight these topics. To collaborate with Mary on a project, contact her at queenofrecycle@hotmail.com.
To Submit Photos to People and Pets:
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The mission of the Heart Gallery of Pinellas & Pasco is to provide an emotionally safe way to connect children with families through a traveling exhibit featuring the faces and stories of local foster children ready for adoption. For more information, please visit the website at www.heartgallerykids.org.

MEGAN

Age: 17

A Beautiful Soul

Megan is a child that will steal your heart. Her beauty is both inside and out. Megan is very easy going and always eager to please others. She enjoys reading, getting her nails polished and hopes to become a hair dresser when she is an adult. Megan enjoys school, makes good grades and still attends high school.

Favorite Activities: A fun time for Megan is singing karaoke and laughing!

Ideal Family: Megan will need a family who can provide structure and emotional support as she becomes a young woman.

WILLIAM & MATTHEW

A Dynamic Duo

Ages: 13 and 11

William loves math and is a future chemical engineer. While his favorite movie is the Avengers, he enjoys watching anything based on superheroes, especially Superman, Batman, and X-Men’s Wolverine. A gamer by nature, William loves playing the Halo and Monopoly. When he isn’t shopping or cooking, William enjoys listening to Rap and Christian music.

Matthew is an adventurer at heart. He loves being outdoors, especially when he can go rock climbing! He would like to become a Mechanic, Engineer, or a Major League Baseball player someday. Green is Matthew’s favorite color and he states he is “a man of his color.” He enjoys listening to pop music, the board game Quelf, and watching Pokémon.

Favorite Foods: While William is all about sushi, Matthew prefers bean and cheese burritos!

Favorite Animal: William would prefer to live in a home without pets, while Matthew would like to someday have a turtle to call his own.

Ideal Family: William and Matthew would like a mom and dad from a similar culture who are outgoing, adventurous and foodies.
in which she escaped from a straight-jacket in nine seconds and won $1,000. Later, Barbara Walter interviewed her on the 1970s program, *Not for Women Only*.

She performed at the Palace in New York, the Playboy Mansion in Chicago, and countless other venues across the country. Her fame landed her United Nations tours to Africa and the Middle East, and in some cases, due to the political instability in those regions, she had to perform on the back of a truck in case the group had to leave on a moment’s notice to avoid enemy attack.

Her participation in John F. Kennedy’s Cultural Exchange tour proved a pivotal point in her career. Not only did the tour include performances for royalty across India and Asia, but it also brought them to Vietnam during the heat of conflict. The price of entertainment led her to a near-death experience in the hands of captors in the Belgian Congo. While she would have elected to skip that particular life experience, she says it was worth it to see the faces of impoverished African children fill with delight and wonder, even for just a few minutes.

Celeste’s balanced perspective not only drove her to accomplish far more than many women dare or dream to do—it also informed her opinion of motherhood and achieving a healthy work/life balance.

Another Old Northeast magician, Frank Lewis, knows Celeste well. They’ve been commuting to and from Tampa Bay Magic Club meetings together for years. “Celeste is an amazing person,” Frank says. “She’s stubborn, she never gives up. Women in magic during the height of her career—and in a lot of the entertainment fields—had to be really tough. Celeste and I both realized, through our very different paths, that we have a lot in common. Magic, just like art and science, gives you the ability to reinvent yourself.”

Frank is well known locally as an inventor, artist, and scientist. Ever since he started practicing lucid dreaming at age nine (without even knowing it), he has worked to create art through it. Very similar to an exercise that Salvador Dali frequently conducted, Frank draws while sleeping very lightly, an activity likened to sleep-walking. Dali described the exercise as a way to unlock the vast imagination one has while dreaming, in order to bring new inspiration into his art. Frank’s lucid dreaming art does the same. He now has a gallery on Central Avenue with other local artists. Visit his website, TheDreamist.com, to learn more. Frank sums it up best: “When you think about it, magic, science, art—they’re all the same thing. It’s about capturing the imagination with childlike wonder; searching for truth and beauty.”

Celeste reached a milestone in the search for truth and beauty when she married agent Harry Breyn and, shortly thereafter, welcomed their children Evan and Evanna. Both children joined their mother as part of her act, and each picked up various skills along the way, from illusions to acrobatics to clowning to poi (a Maori tradition of tethered, weighted balls swung in intricate patterns at various speeds). Celeste's daughter Evanna

![Celeste's daughter Evanna](image)

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![Celeste's daughter Evanna](image)
happily shared the spotlight with Evan and Evanna, and taught them an important magic lesson: self-preservation.

“In magic, nothing is sacred,” Evanna explains, her mother nodding vehemently in agreement. “You see something one day, and the next day it’s incorporated in someone else’s act with very little changed.”

Recently, magicians Penn and Teller won a suit against a copycat magician in Belgium who not only performed their exact trick on YouTube, but also offered to reveal how the trick is done for a price of $3,050. Teller had registered his trick with U.S. Copyright Office in 1983, complete with diagrams, images and explanations, providing proof that he had originated the trick prior to the man in Belgium who copied it. Though he wasn’t the first to see in such a manner, his victory in the legal systems is seen as a turning point in the magic community – a delightful and long-awaited pivotal moment for a growing industry.

Televised magic events by Criss Angel, David Blaine, David Copperfield, and many others continue to bring magic to a wider (and younger) audience. Both Celeste and Evanna insist that while the magic world still feels like a small world, it’s retaining its foothold on young, curious minds. As Frank Lewis says, it’s all about capturing the wonder of the imagination.

“There will always be the grandfather who pulls the coin out of his grandkid’s ear, and the grandkid with a burning curiosity for how it’s done. It’s something for the puzzling minds of today’s generation. And the more they see things like the televised magic, it brings it closer to home – in their homes,” Evanna says. “Magic is one of those few things where you can go to a convention and see a nine-year-old showing a ninety-year-old a card trick, and vice versa. It gets people of all ages together and learning from one another.”

When asked for their advice to magicians young and old, Celeste and Evanna offer this: find your brand, what makes you unique, different, and memorable, and stick to it. And even more importantly, practice constantly. Nothing provides flow, panache, and comfort on stage like constant practice.

Additionally, magicians of every age must remember that everyone makes mistakes, even the greats, as Celeste has chronicled in her other book, Has This Ever Happened to You? A Collection of Magicians’ Faux Pas. The most successful magicians abide by Winston Churchill’s advice: never give up.

Though she garnered fame throughout her career and the title, the Queen of Magic, Celeste maintained her focus on balancing work and life. Happiness was always the top priority – being a mother, enjoying her work, and working hard at both of those roles.
The first member of the Watters family did not bear the name Watters, but Rogers. Andrew Webster Rogers founded Rogers Jewelry in St. Petersburg in 1905. Over the years, the jewelry business grew as the city grew. In 1920, there were but five jewelry businesses in the city. But with the booming economy both locally and nationally, by 1924 the number of jewelry businesses had doubled to ten, and by 1930 the number had doubled again to 20. Today there are about 30.

In 1925, Rogers’ nephew, Bruce Weaver Watters, drove from Bellwood, Pennsylvania to join the business and the name was soon changed to Rogers and Watters. Bruce had previously studied to be a watchmaker at Bowman Technical Institute in Pennsylvania, and worked at Pennsylvania jewelry concerns in Tyrone, State College, and Altoona. He was no novice to the business. In 1913, Rogers retired and the business was renamed Bruce Watters. In 1944, Bruce acquired another leading jewelry business, Cole Jewelry Company. Over the years, the business was centered on Central Avenue, occupying various locations including 322, 293, 326, 360, and 434 Central. Over the years, while maintaining its downtown location, the business established branches at Central Plaza, Bellair Bluffs, the Bath Department Store. The Central Plaza store was closed in 1980 as the Central Plaza shopping complex gave way to competition from Tyrone Mall. Today, Bruce Watters maintains only the parent store on Beach Drive.

Bruce Weaver Watters passed away in 1986. His son, Bruce Walter Watters, recalls that during the Great Depression of the 1930s, someone came into the store wanting to sell a ring. He asked his father for twenty dollars. Bruce told the man that his ring was worth far more than $20, but that he was not able to give him what it was worth. The man said, “I will just take $20 as I need it desperately to buy a bus ticket.” So Bruce gave him the $20 and put the ring away in the safe. Much later the man was back in town and redeemed it. He said to Bruce, “You were the only person in St. Pete willing to help me.” More recently a patron came in the store wanting to buy a ring for his wife to celebrate their 60th anniversary. He stated, “Sixty years ago I had just come to St. Pete and I bought my original engagement ring from Bruce Watters and it cost $20. Your grandfather told me that I could have the ring for just $20 now and pay the rest on time to establish some local credit.” These stories and others speak to the character of both Bruce Weaver Watters and the business. Bruce Walter Watters remembers his dad as being “very social; people really liked my dad; and that was good for business.” Jim Watters, Bruce’s son, notes, “The real reason Bruce Watters has been so successful for so long is that we are trusted and known for quality and integrity.”

Operating a business is a high-risk activity. Many do not last five years. But Bruce Watters Jewelers has operated for over a century, including depression, recession, and war years. During the hard years of the Great Depression of the 1930s, Bruce Watters Jewelers found itself as buyer rather than the seller. As Bruce Walter Watters said, “We lived on $25 a week during the Depression. We had diamonds, but the home folks were offering diamonds to us.” During World War II, the business actually did well selling military insignias and watches to the thousands of military personnel training in St. Pete.

Bruce Walter Watters joined the business in 1959 after attending Emory University and serving in the Air Force as a multi-engine and helicopter pilot, and has been a leading part of it ever since. He was born in 1930 at Mount Park Hospital. He attended North Ward and Woodlawn elementary schools, Mirror Lake Jr. High School, and St. Pete High. As a youth, he remembers hunting in north St. Pete and boating in Coffee Pot Bayou, as well as swimming on the high school swim team and playing in the high school band. In a 2009 oral history given to the History Museum, Bruce observed, “St. Petersburg is an extremely clean town; a good town for physical cleanliness; clean politics, mostly; orderly development; and a great place for raising kids.”

Jim Watters remembers starting out in the business polishing silver and dusting shelves. He also remembers being “tired” at the age of 10 because he “did not think the top shelf needed dusting.” But he was shortly “rehired,” eventually joining the business as an adult full time. In 1982, he worked at the Bellair Bluffs store. After that he worked at the St. Pete store.

Over the years the Watters family has taken an active role in community civic life, as well as operate a successful business enterprise. In the 1940s, Bruce Watters, Sr. served as chair of the city’s Civil Service Commission. All the Watters family have been long-time members and supporters of the local Rotary Clubs. Bruce Walter Watters has been active in the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Merchants Association, and served as commodore of the Yacht Club, as did his father. Recently, Bruce Watters Jewelers has been the presenting sponsor of the Annual Holiday Illuminated Boat Parade and a significant contributor to the Children’s Dream Fund. Every year, Bruce Watters Jewelers has donated a diamond brooch awarded to the newly crowned Sun Goddess during the Festival of the States.

In the early 1970s, a business colleague suggested that Bruce Watters move to Beach Drive, which they did. They were advised, “That location is going to be something some day!” In 1998, Jim Watters and a few associates purchased the entire southeast section of the block on Beach Drive facing the Museum of Fine Arts and St. Pete’s renowned Waterfront Parks where the business now resides, Jim states, “We were incredibly lucky to be on Beach Drive.” He believes St. Petersburg’s Beach Drive is the “real deal, like Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, or Ocean Boulevard in Miami. This is where everyone is out enjoying themselves on...”
Jim Watters of Bruce Watters Jewelers shows new store design. The store will soon move 72 feet to its new location on Beach Drive. Robert Reid Wedding Architects are the new store designers.

Serendipitous photo of Bruce Watters (we think) as a 13-year-old sitting on a green bench on Central Avenue near the Bruce Watters store. Bruce is wearing a tell-tale watch, something most teens would not have worn at the time. Nearby is his grandmother, Maud Stevens in the white hat, his aunt Bobbie, and possibly his mother Nome Watters. Image 1943.

Bruce Weaver Watters played an active role in community affairs. L-R “Hammerin” Hank Greenberg of the Detroit Tigers, radio broadcaster Harry Wismer, Joe DiMaggio of the New York Yankees, Bruce Weaver Watters, and Jack Troy, Atlanta sports editor. Circa 1946 at Waterfront Park Stadium. Courtesy of Watters Family

Sources: Steve Otto, The Spirit of Tampa Bay; Polk's City Directories (Various); St. Petersburg Museum of History, Oral History of the Watters Family (2009); Evening Independent (May 10, 1919 [A. W. Rogers]; Aug. 25, 1986 [Bruce Watters, Sr.]; Feb. 29, 1944 [Acquires Cole Store]); Tampa Bay Times (July 7, 1929 [Andrew Rogers]; March 1, 1944 [acquire Cole Jewelry]; Feb. 27, 1955 [Central Plaza]; July 27, 2005 [100th Anniversary]); interview with Jim Watters; also special thanks to Bob Carter, Brian Supple, and Nevin Siler for their assistance.

Note: In last edition’s article on “Bahama Shores: Florida Ranch Style Architecture,” early developer Burnette F. Stephenson’s name was misspelled in several places. We apologize for the error.

In our neighborhood, the Old Northeast, there are many birds which we have the pleasure of seeing. However, to my knowledge, hawks are not usually one of these birds.

Recently, a baby hawk had fallen from a nest made in a Royal Palm in front of Lee Ann and Ted Hoornstra’s home on 18th Avenue N.E. It was very much alive and a very big baby bird, but not old enough to fly.

Something had to be done quickly because a predator would have had him for dinner in a nanosecond. Lee Ann’s daughter ran and got her favorite keepsake box which had a hole in the top. This became a bird carrier. Lee Ann wrapped the baby bird in a little towel and off they went to the Emergency Clinic which was the only place open on a Friday night.

A few days passed and the Hoornstra’s neighbor, Paul Hill, came knocking on my door asking where they had taken the baby bird as they were not home to ask at the time and another baby hawk, this one older and hopping around, was in his bushes.

Another “hero” was quick to put on his gardening gloves, scoop up the baby, put it in a box, and off they went to the Emergency Clinic where both babies were taken to the bird sanctuary to be cared for and saved.

Thank you and much appreciation to our neighbors, Lee Ann and Kate Hoornstra and Paul Hill, for caring enough to take the time to save the baby birds.

As Paul said, “that mother bird needs to rethink her nesting skills.”
AROUND THE BLOCK

Be a Good Sport

The City of St. Petersburg offers a wide variety of sports facilities. If you wish to rent a facility, many are available at competitive prices. Additionally, the Parks and Recreation Department offers classes and leagues in structured and fun settings.

Aquatics: Join a team or just swim for fun. It’s a great, low impact exercise. You can even swim year round at North Shore Aquatic Complex.


Basketball - Outdoor Courts: The following St. Petersburg parks have outdoor basketball courts: Bartlett Park/Frank Pierce Rec, Campbell Park, Childs Park, Fossil Park/Willis S. Johns Rec, Gladden Park, Northwest Park/J.W. Cate Rec, Roberts Park, Walter Fuller Park, Wildwood Park

Disc Golf: First-come-first-served. Open 30 minutes before sunrise and 30 minutes after sunset. Available at Azalea Park and Maximo Park.

Jai Alai: Jai Alia is a fast paced sport involving a ball bounced off a walled space. Played at Jack Puryear Park.

Petanque (prounced “pay-tonk”): One of Europe’s most popular outdoor games, is a cousin of both American horseshoes, lawn bowling and Italian ‘bocce’ ball. Our petanque court is located in the Northwest corner of South Straub Park.

Pickelball: The game is played with a hard paddle and a polymer smaller version of a wiffle ball. Our pickelball courts are located in Crescent Lake Park, Roberts Recreation Center, Campbell Park Recreation Center, and Walter Fuller Recreation Center.

Racquetball: Played at Azalea Recreation Center, Jack Puryear Park.

Shuffleboard: Sunshine Center/Mirror Lake Shuffleboard Club

Skate Parks: Open from dawn to 11 pm, except during rain. Fossil Park Skate Park, Lake Vista Skate Park.

Tennis: Played at these parks: Azalea, Bartlett, Campbell, Childs, Coquina Key, Crescent Lake, Denver, Fossil, Lake Vista, North Shore, Northwest Park, Puryear, Walter Fuller, Woodlawn, and Wildwood

Check out www.stpeteparksrec.org/sports-town.html for hours.
Our Neighbor, the Game Show Star

Ted Hoornstra, a financial advisor, former sportscaster, and Old Northeast resident, can now add “game show contestant” to his list of titles. Ted was on Wheel of Fortune during Father’s Day week, on Wednesday, June 11th.

“I’ve always wanted to be on a game show,” Ted says, “it’s been on my bucket list for a while, and it all started with an app on an iPad at the Mahaffey. I put my name into a drawing – and all this was in 2012; it was a two-year process – and six months later got an email that, of course, went into my spam folder. I was invited to interview in Clearwater, then to try out. Then I received a letter saying, ‘Congratulations! You’ll be a contestant in the next 18 months.’”

Ted goes on to say that 13 months went by before he received about 10-days’ notice that he needed to get to Los Angeles to film the show. Luckily for Ted’s family, the L.A. trip coincided with spring break. Ted, his wife Leanne, his daughter Kate, and his brother-in-law headed west for the big show.

Before the lights, camera or action, however, the contestants were put through a grueling preparation process. Ted arrived at Sony Pictures studios at 7:30am to fill out forms (mainly confidentiality and tax forms), then he had to sit through a rules presentation, including what contestants are allowed and not allowed to say on air – all for about six hours. Then the contestants drew at random for their show time and opponents.

Many hours later, after makeup, hair, and wardrobe touch-ups, Ted found himself on set. Vanna White and Pat Sajak met the contestants moments before taping began. And suddenly, it was show time.

“It was surreal,” Ted says. “I don’t know if anybody knows this, but the wheel weighs about 2,400 pounds.” During commercial breaks, the contestants were surrounded by a flurry of makeup artists, hair stylists, producers offering encouragement, and assistants providing cups of water.

Because it was Father’s Day week on the show, contestants were all dads, and they were given air time to talk about their families and their children, in particular. Ted’s other daughter, Sydney, had previous plans for a church mission trip and was crushed that she was unable to make it to the show. However, during the opening of the program, after Ted won the first puzzle in less than a minute, Ted spoke of how proud he is of his daughters and called Sydney “beautiful inside and out.”

Ted enjoyed his experience, and his thirty minutes of fame, in this case. When asked if he would do it again, he replied, “In a heartbeat.”

Sara W. Hopkins

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Sunken Gardens Volunteer of the Year

Sunken Gardens hosted their inaugural Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on April 30. Old Northeast resident Robin Reed was named Volunteer of the Year in recognition of her exemplary dedication, support, and ongoing excellence in service to Sunken Gardens.

In 2002, Robin joined with several other volunteers from the ONE neighborhood to organize, scan, and catalog more than 8,000 photographs, slides, newspaper articles, and more, creating an invaluable resource of archives for Sunken Gardens’ future.

Since that beginning, Robin has helped by welcoming visitors, assisting with admissions to a variety of events and festivals, and promoting Sunken Gardens at every opportunity.

Robin partnered with several community resources to develop books available for sale at numerous locations through St. Pete, including Views From the Vinoy and our own Sunken Gardens Plant Guide. Forty copies of Views From the Vinoy were given to each school that has fourth grade students in Pinellas County. Since that time, several thousand fourth graders have studied the book and then visited Sunken Gardens for field trips.

Robin assisted in the successful application process for a Preserve America Grant of $25,000 from the National Park Service to help fund the creation of a master plan and long-term vision for Sunken Gardens. She then spearheaded the drive for that master plan, and participated in the selection process for the consultants to develop it.

Most recently, Robin created and delivered, with assistance from Bill Ryland, a presentation in council chambers at City Hall to the 2014 Society for Commercial Archeology regarding Sunken Gardens as a historic roadside attraction.

Since last spring, Robin has worked with fellow volunteers and passionate Sunken Gardens supporters to create the Flamingos Forever Fund (see cover story), a tax-deductible entity created to raise money to purchase more flamingos for Sunken Gardens. To date, the organization has raised more than $10,000.

Sunken Gardens wanted to publicly acknowledge and thank Robin Reed for her continued dedication and support, for her perseverance and tenacity in the preservation, improvement, and promotion of historic Sunken Gardens.
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319 57th Ave S
Exclusive Bahama Shores Neighborhood. Hardwood Floors, Fireplace, Charming Interior with Natural Light, Extra Large Private Backyard, Just one block away from Waterfront. 3 BR, 2 BA, 2,184 Sq Ft, 1 CG Listed: $269,000

1130 Eden Isle Dr NE
Located in the Tropical Neighborhood of Eden Isle, Great Floorplan with Kitchen in the Center of the home. Master Suite with Views of the Backyard, Private Master Suite with Views of the Backyard and Updated Bathroom. Large Outside Porch and Pool are the Perfect Space for Entertaining. 3 BR, 2 BA, 1,842 Sq Ft, 2 CG Listed: $345,000

214 15th Ave N
Hardwood Floors, Spacious Formal Living Room with Wood Burning Fire Place, Kitchen has Granite Counter Tops, Stainless Steel Appliances, Inside Utility Room and the Master Suite has a Wall of Custom Built-in Closets / Drawers. 3 BR, 2.5 BA, 1,989 Sq Ft Listed: $365,000

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Pebble Tec Pool, Gorgeous Custom Built Kitchen with Stainless Steel Appliances and Granite Counter Top. First Floor Master Suite has French Doors that Overlook the Pool and Master Bath has Dual Glass Vanities with a Rain Shower Panel. 5 BR, 2.5 BA, 2,540 Sq Ft, 3 CG Listed: $835,000

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Live in the Heart of St Petersburg Gorgeous Downtown Condo with Spectacular Views of Tampa Bay, Vinoy, Old Northeast and Downtown Tampa. 2 BR, 2BA, plus a spacious den, 2,203 Sq Ft, 2CG Listed: $995,000 Sold: 6/18

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345 10th Ave NE
Charming Old NE Bungalow just Blocks from Downtown St Pete and Northshore Waterfront Park. Custom Pebble Tec, Heated Pool. Guest Cottage with Half Bath. 2 BR, 2.5 BA, 1,621 Sq Ft Listed: $459,000 Sold: 5/9

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SOLD

SOLD

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