

An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Fort Myers Beach

June 2023

# FORT MYERS BEACH



*Steve & Cindy Johnson*

**REBUILDING AFTER IAN**

Cover Photo By Sandy Sandness

 Best Version Media®



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136 Bay Mar Dr . . . . .	\$949,999
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8339 Estero Blvd . . . . .	\$1,139,000
270 Dundee Rd . . . . .	\$1,499,000
262 Ohio Ave. . . . .	\$1,799,000
210 Curlew St . . . . .	\$1,880,000
1710/1740 Estero Blvd . . . . .	\$3,900,000
130 Bahia Via . . . . .	\$2,250,000
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5583 Estero Blvd . . . . .	\$799,000
140 Bahia Via . . . . .	\$869,000
2141 Estero Blvd . . . . .	\$899,000
823 Lagoon St . . . . .	\$2,499,000
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5246 Estero Blvd . . . . .	\$3,900,000
6060 Gulf Rd . . . . .	\$3,999,900
5830 Estero Blvd . . . . .	\$3,999,900
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8170 Lagoon Rd	108 Voorhis St
250 Estero Blvd #505	209 Miramar St
215 Flamingo St	129 Curlew St
101 Bay Mar Dr	530 Carlos Cir
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3071 Shell Mound Blvd . . . . .	\$810,000	201 Delmar Ave. . . . .	\$580,000
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250 Estero Blvd #303 . . . . .	\$880,000	240 Miramar St . . . . .	\$605,000
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# FORT MYERS BEACH *Living*

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**FEEDBACK / IDEAS / SUBMISSIONS**

Have feedback, ideas or submissions? We are always happy to hear from you! Deadlines for submissions are the 20th of each month, 6 weeks in advance of publication. Email your thoughts, ideas and photographs to [gmooney@bestversionmedia.com](mailto:gmooney@bestversionmedia.com). Submissions must be original and exclusive to *Fort Myers Beach LIVING*, at a maximum of 500 words. *Fort Myers Beach LIVING* reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, space limitations and spelling.

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- Emergency: 911
- Lee County Sheriff's Office: 239-477-1000
- FMB Fire Department: 239-590-4200
- FMB Town Hall: 239-765-0202
- FMB Public Library: 239-765-8162
- Lee County Parks & Recreation: 239-533-7275
- Beach Elementary School: 239-463-6356
- FMB Water Department: 239-463-9914
- Trash Collection: 239-334-1224
- Florida Power & Light (FPL): 1-800-226-5885
- CenturyLink: 239-335-3111
- Comcast Cable Company: 239-432-9277
- FMB Chamber of Commerce: 239-454-7500

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**ON THE COVER**  
Steve & Cindy Johnson  
Photo by  
Sandy Sandness

## Hello, Friends & Neighbors!



There are some people who I have met in my life who always make me feel like I am the most special person in the world. My Grandmother was one of those; from my earliest memories we would sit on the step of the back porch, Grandma with her cup of coffee and I picking flowers and asking questions as she told me stories of her life growing up. I never tired of listening and learning as she continued to fill me with life history until her passing at the age of 92.

I have met several individuals in my 13 years of living on Fort Myers Beach who filled me with that same love for times past and one was the late AJ Bassett, who recently passed on April 23. While working at the "Island Sand Paper" I heard so often about the great AJ and her Island stories and once we met it was an instant kinship. I was so fortunate to spend entire days with her listening and sharing our personal histories with one another. She had the kindest sweetest most sincere voice and could tell her stories in such detail that I could see them all in my mind.

We lost some true greats of Fort Myers Beach history this year, such as Bill Semmer and Tom Myers along with AJ, but they remind me of how important history is and how crucial it is to preserve our rich island history. We are all now a part of living history of the worst hurricane to ever make landfall in Florida. I ask each and every person to document your story, video and pictures on digital format for our future generations. Let's build our Estero Island Historic Society back with history from long ago as well as the history that we live out each day as we rebuild the Fort Myers Beach of tomorrow.



*Sandy Sandness*

**Publisher**

*Fort Myers Beach LIVING*

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*The Johnsons are avid conservationist and have been involved with Turtle Time for over 9 years.*



# Eclectic & Eccentric!

## Steve & Cindy Johnson Rebuild After Ian

- By Gary Mooney -

Cindy and Steve Johnson are originally from Chicagoland, with she from Oak Park and he Bensenville. "We met at a college frat party while attending Augustana College," says Steve. "She wanted nothing to do with me when we first met freshman year, but by Junior year Cindy gradually warmed up to me. Finally, at another frat party, she made her move and the rest is history!" "They were the campus 'Animal House' and that is being kind," Cindy adds laughing! They have been married for almost 39 years.

Their son Brandon and wife Lucy reside in Brooklyn, with daughter Corinne and husband Ian in San Carlos, California, "so our family triangulates the country," chuckles Steve. "Corinne and Ian are parents to our 2-1/2-year-old granddaughter Sierra, who they named after the Sierra Madre Moun-



*Every FMB neighborhood is great but ours is uniquely special . . . making it easy to bicycle and walk the dogs through our neighborhood.*

tains, and will make us grandparents again in September." Of course, their son-in-law's name is now infamous in FMB lore: "I texted him before the storm to joke that Ian first stole my daughter, and now could take our home, and it almost came true," says Steve!

Prior to retiring, Steve worked for Mettler Toledo Inc., starting in sales in the laboratory analytical department and finishing as the General Manager of North America. "I had intended on retiring early and after 30 years decided it was time to pursue other interests." Cindy was a homemaker, splitting her time between raising children and being a community volunteer. "We made a conscious decision early on," Steve explains, "that raising our kids was our priority so as I traveled for work, it made sense for Cindy to stay home and manage our lives."

### Living Their Idyllic Life

"I never believed in a million years I would ever live in Florida," Cindy states! "Business meetings brought me to the St. Pete's Beach area on a consistent basis," offers Steve, "and I found Southwest Florida gorgeous! We loved to boat and fish and the kids were grown and gone, so we wanted a place where they would like to visit, so we began scouting out waterfront commu-



Activities were conducted under USFWS Permit #MA773484-11 Photo credit: FWC-SWFL

In addition to Turtle Time, Cindy & Steve volunteer with the FWC Marine Mammal Group, assisting with dolphin and manatee rescues.



"Our kids were grown and gone, so we wanted a place where they would like to visit; we stopped in FMB and found it idyllic!"

nities. We stopped in FMB and found it idyllic, an authentic small-town beach community where we could buy a house with a boat on a lift in our canal and the beach at the end of the block. Importantly, it was near Southwest Florida International Airport, as I was still working and traveling. We found a modest home to make life as simple and carefree as possible. We moved down fulltime on Halloween 2011 and I retired in 2015." Cindy acknowledges that "every FMB neighborhood is great but ours is uniquely special! We are on Seminole Way in the McPhie Park neighborhood, just a block off Estero Boulevard and Sterling Avenue, making it easy to bicycle and walk the dogs through our neighborhood."

The Johnsons lived their idyllic life until Ian roared onshore. "When Irma gathered steam in September 2017, we did everything right," recalls Cindy. "We stored a car at the airport, moved most of our valuables, and I took all our photographs and personal papers to a safe concrete building in Bonita Spring, though Steve stayed at the house. After all that, there was minimal damage so with Ian, we assumed it would be more of the same and did not make many preparations."

"Irma made many people complacent about Ian, including us," philosophizes Steve. "None of our neighbors prepared the same way as Irma, with no one talking about evacuating. Fortunately, a neighbor down the block with a newer elevated home told us the day before the storm that we could use it if necessary and that became our emergency plan. We parked our truck at Publix, thinking that was high ground, and when the storm hit, Cindy took the dogs to that house while I stayed home. Unlike Irma, the water came up tremendously fast and I realized Ian was a different animal, so I joined Cindy by crawling out our bathroom window; I made my way through the chest-high water trying to avoid debris hitting me. I doubt we ever ride out a future hurricane here."

Around 4 a.m., Cindy walked down to check on their house. "While the exterior seemed fine, inside it looked like everything went through a washing machine spin cycle! The

storm pushed in our front window, with our kitchen island scooped up and turned over across the house. We eventually found and dried out many of our important papers and photographs, as well as locating a few valuable personal possessions like our wedding rings."

### The Salt Life

Because their home remains structurally sound, the Johnson will rebuild under the 50% Rule. "With the house now completely gutted, we are living the refugee life in a FEMA trailer on our property," laughs Steve! "We finally successfully settled with our insurance agency and the rebuilding is underway." As they wait, "we live as normal a life as possible," Cindy emphasizes, "like volunteering again for Turtle Time." Most of their neighbors were fortunate as well. "Only two had to raze their homes," says Steve, "and one will rebuild with a modular house. Some are already landscaping so it looks as good as it can right now. Our neighbors are terrific, with everyone helping out everyone." "It really helps getting together," agrees Cindy. "If we did not have each other, it would be difficult to move forward."

"We moved to FMB to boat and fish and live the Salt Life," explains Steve. "We are recreational stone and blue crab-

Continued on page 12



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*Sherry Valverde, APRN-C*

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## **MORE OPTIONS, LESS RISK — Gardner Orthopedics**



# The Mayor's Message

- By FMB Mayor Dan Allers -

Although it still feels like it was yesterday in our minds, it is over 8 months since Hurricane Ian changed Fort Myers Beach forever. As you walk, bike or drive down the streets there are still reminders of what is left to be done, but positive signs of progress are everywhere; signs of our past and our future.

After the initial shock of what happened cleared our heads, we knew we must have a team in place who would believe in collaboration and teamwork so we made a change in leadership. Although there may never be a perfect time for this change, especially right after a devastating hurricane, it was something that had to be done if we were going to get back to who we are. We were fortunate to have not just one but two gentlemen – Interim Town Managers Chris Holley and Keith Wilkins – who stepped up and brought their vast knowledge of leadership in times of difficulty to help us achieve our goals.

As they wrapped their arms around the situation you could clearly see their experience kicking in. They assessed the team around them and learned, as Chris so rightfully said, “who is on the bus and who is off the bus”. They made difficult changes to help mold that culture that is so necessary to achieve our success. And although they may not admit it, I could tell they were thinking “what the heck did we get ourselves into here!” But they pressed forward, putting us on a path to our next chapter. On behalf of our residents, business owners, and myself I want to thank Chris and Keith for guiding us into our next chapter. You will forever be members of the Fort Myers Beach family.

Outside of town hall, residents and businesses were dealing with similar issues, realizing they lost everything with no clear playbook on what to do next and making the same difficult decisions as the Town, but for their own lives. Those who were fortunate to still have a standing home or business had to decide if they wanted to rebuild, if they could, or simply move on to whatever was next in store for them. For most, those decisions happened quickly. We saw neighbors helping neighbors to clean up what was left behind and start to rebuild their futures. Within weeks we saw people working on their properties and businesses, opening in whatever capacity they could. We started to see why we all call this place home. It was a clear indication of the road to recovery and how we were going to pave it.

As people began rebuilding their lives, properties are listed and sold at prices this island never saw. It is another reminder that what we have become accustomed to will never be the same. We are going to see different houses and different businesses; we will lose residents and gain new ones and that is just the new reality but that does not mean we have to completely change our culture or what got us to this point. It does not mean we must lose our identity. With some of the largest properties changing hands and others retaining theirs, meetings started to happen to provide investors looking to rebuild Fort Myers Beach with guidance on just what our community wants and needs. We initiated those discussions with the decisionmakers and residents, asking “What do we need to change and what do we want to change?” Over the next few months we will answer many of these questions to provide a clear indication of what the new Fort Myers Beach will look like, so it is now more important than ever for our community to engage and communicate your input to help shape our future.

Although the last 8 months have been devastating, we do have plenty for which to be thankful. We are starting to see new homes rise up, more people move out of their temporary homes and into their permanent ones, more businesses re-opening their once destroyed doors, more long-time visitors returning and, most importantly, tears of pain turning into tears of laughter and joy. We will never forget but we are starting to rewrite our history.

On Monday, May 1, we began the next chapter of our story by welcoming our new permanent Town Manager, Andy Hyatt. He has the experience and knowledge that will help guide us into our future. I know our community will do what we always do and welcome him and his family, like we did with Chris and Keith. We will show Andy the support we show every one of our neighbors and friends.

With the dust settling, our future is bright. With continued communication, collaboration and commitment our ceiling is limitless. I'm very proud of every Town staff member, resident, businessowner, and volunteer near and far. Without your desire to dig in and get things done we may not be where we are today. We will continue to move forward and show why We Are FMB Strong! ■



# Chamber Chat!

## Two Handclaps & Two Exclamation Marks!

The FMB Chamber is reviewing the island's Spring Tourism Season and, all things considered, the numbers are highly encouraging, evidenced with long lines of traffic on the island most days, meaning our success really is a hurricane miracle! Not only was visitation strong, but more and more restaurants and businesses are reopening each and every week.

And the FMB Chamber was among that number! We recently opened our new Fort Myers Beach Chamber Office at 100 Lovers Lane, Suite 2E, for the most part on Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Also, the FMB Chambers has a Times Square satellite office, with our cute-as-a-button mobile "Roxie" trailer on Wednesdays through Sundays from Noon to 6 p.m. The Chamber staffs "Roxie" with an employee joined by a plethora of volunteers, so if you want to join us, contact the FMB Chamber and we will add you to the schedule! The FMB Chamber thanks Beth & Bryan Bright for the generous donation of the use of "Roxie" as well as Terry Persaud for generously donating the space on which we park "Roxie!"

In my opinion, Fort Myers Beach's comeback from lan is amazing! We will continue to endure struggles, challenges and frustrations – no doubt with more yet ahead – but if you look back at where we were just eight months ago, especially compared to other communities that suffered similar disasters, our recovery is light years ahead! I attribute this to the special blend of residents, business owners and visitors who adore our 7-mile slice of Paradise. Together, we have rolled up our sleeves, kept our chins up and our eyes fixed on the future; this is what has allowed us to move forward so quickly and I see this "Can-Do" attitude everywhere I look. Whenever any of us has a down moment, someone else is right next to them with encouragement, advice and a helping hand. This is what makes Fort Myers Beach such a special place and it is why we are moving forward at such a rapid pace – we won't take NO for an answer and we are all working toward a new and vibrant FMB for generations to come. It takes every single one of us, through acts big and small, to build and rebuild our bright future, so let's give everybody two big handclaps with two exclamation marks – LET'S GO!

For June, look for details on the FMB Chamber hosting a group trip to the Seminole Casino including transportation, as well as an event recognizing our annual Community Awards.

Last but certainly not least, the FMB Chamber asks you all to continue your support for the return of the Beach Elementary School. As Steve Johnson says in this month's Resident Feature of he and wife Cindy, "maintaining the presence of the Beach Elementary School is an important effort, as you cannot be a vibrant community without a school." Amen! Please contact the Lee County School Board and Superintendent Christopher Bernier to emphasize not only what the Beach School means to our island but to the mental and emotional health of our children, our most precious resource.

On behalf of our 400-plus Fort Myers Beach Chamber of Commerce members, remember . . . "Island Life; It's **Our** Business!"

*Jacki Liszak, President  
Fort Myers Beach Chamber of Commerce!*

# SUDOKU

- By Gary Mooney -

### SUDOKU RULES:

- Each row must contain the digits 1-9.
- Each column must contain the digits 1-9.
- Each box must contain the digits 1-9.

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				3	8			
						5		9

Answers on page 13

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# HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

## June

**Thurs., June 1**

### **FMB Chamber "Coffee Connection"**

@Sunmed – Your CBD Store, Fort Myers

Start your day networking with your FMB Chamber friends while savoring tasty complimentary coffee and breakfast items.

Time: 8-9:30am

Cost: Free

[www.fortmyersbeach.org](http://www.fortmyersbeach.org)

**Sat., June 3**

### **Mound House Kayak Tours**

@The Historic Mound House

Enjoy this two-hour kayak tour through the mangrove islands and tunnels of the Estero Bay that focuses on its ecology as well as dozens of bird species, dolphins and manatees. Advance reservations necessary at [www.moundhouse.org](http://www.moundhouse.org).

Time: Every Saturday morning from 9-11am

Cost: Members \$20; Non-members \$50

[www.moundhouse.org](http://www.moundhouse.org)

### **"Incorporate Your Furry Friends In The Garden"**

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Cost: Free

[www.fiorelandscapes.com](http://www.fiorelandscapes.com)

**Mon., June 5**

### **FMB Town Council Meeting**

@DiamondHead Beach Resort

The FMB Town Council continues efforts to rebuild Fort Myers Beach following the devastation of Hurricane Ian.

Time: 9am

Cost: Free

[www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov](http://www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov)

**Tues., June 6**

### **Mound House Grounds & Museum Store**

@The Historic Mound House

Built in 1921, the Mound House is the oldest standing structure on FMB, sitting atop an ancient Calusa Indian Shell mound directly on the Estero Bay. It is a multi-level museum that showcases Calusa artifacts, interactive exhibits and houses the one-of-a-kind 2,000-year-old "Stories Beneath Our Feet" underground shell mound attraction. Stroll the magnificent grounds and gardens and visit the marvelous Museum Store.

Time: Mound House: Tues., Thurs., & Sat. 9am-4pm;

Grounds daily 7:30am-4pm

Cost: \$15; Grounds Free

[www.moundhouse.org](http://www.moundhouse.org)

**Thurs., June 8**

### **FMB Town Council**

#### **Management & Planning Session**

@DiamondHead Beach Resort

The FMB Town Council continues efforts to rebuild Fort Myers Beach following the devastation of Hurricane Ian.

Time: 9am

Cost: Free

[www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov](http://www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov)

### **FMB Chamber Membership Luncheon**

@ Parrot Key Caribbean Grill

Join your FMB Chamber friends and hear an exciting speaker at its monthly luncheon. Our host this month is the Parrot Key Caribbean Grill, featuring its scrumptious menu, colorful décor and beautiful Estero Bay view.

Time: 11:30am-1pm

Cost: Members \$30; prospective members \$40

[www.fortmyersbeach.org](http://www.fortmyersbeach.org)

**Fri., June 9**

### **Fort Myers Mighty Mussels v. Clearwater Threshers**

@Hammond Stadium at

Lee County Sports Complex

Watch the MLB Stars of Tomorrow Tonight!

The Mighty Mussels, the Low-A affiliate of the Minnesota Twins, take on the Threshers of the Philadelphia Phillies organization.

Your Mussels bring their muscle by wearing special "Marvel Defenders of the Diamond" commemorative jerseys that you can purchase at auction. Following the game, marvel at fantastic fireworks that the Mussels host following every Friday evening home game, so "Play Ball!"

Time: Tues.-Fri.: 7pm; Sat. 6pm; Sun., 1pm

Cost: \$11 to \$15

[www.mightymussels.com](http://www.mightymussels.com)

**Thurs., June 15**

### **FMB Chamber "Business After Hours"**

@Coste Restaurant in the DiamondHead Beach Resort

Join your FMB Chamber friends for networking as well as savoring tasty complimentary appetizers with a cash bar.

Time: 5:30-7pm

Cost: Members Free; \$15 perspective members

[www.fortmyersbeach.org](http://www.fortmyersbeach.org)

**Wed., June 14**

### **FMB Woman's Club Monthly Social**

@Junkanoo Below Deck

Everyone welcome at this family-friendly restaurant overlooking the back bay with outdoor seating, sports TV's at the bar, and cocktail specials. Come by land or by sea! Weekly entertainment!

[www.junkanoobeachfmb.com](http://www.junkanoobeachfmb.com)

Time: 5:30pm

Cost: Free

[www.fmb-wc.org](http://www.fmb-wc.org)

**Tues., June 20**

### **FMB Town Council Meeting**

@DiamondHead Beach Resort

The FMB Town Council continues efforts to rebuild Fort Myers Beach following the devastation of Hurricane Ian. Town Council meets on Tuesday this week, due to the Juneteenth holiday on June 19.

Time: 9am

Cost: Free

[www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov](http://www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov)

### **Shell Mound Walking Tour**

@The Historic Mound House

The 30-minute Shell Mound Walking Tour examines the Mound House's outdoor history, focusing on the site, the ancient Calusa and their relationship to the environment, and replica artifacts including throwing the atlatl spear. No reservations necessary.

Time: Each Tues., Thurs., & Sat. at Noon

Cost: \$5 plus Mound House admission

[www.moundhouse.org](http://www.moundhouse.org)

**Thurs., June 29**

### **"Descendants: The Musical"**

@Fort Myers Theatre

It is present-day in the kingdom of Auradon, where all of Disney's beloved heroes and royalty live happily ever after, until Ben, the benevolent teenage son of Belle and King Adam the Beast, offers the teenage offspring of Disney's evilest villains a chance at redemption. Now the four villain children have a difficult choice to make – be good or follow in the parents' wicked ways! "Descendants" runs through Monday, July 3. Time: June 29 & 30 and July 3 at 6pm; July 1 & 2 at 2pm

Cost: \$20-\$30 per person

[www.ftmyertheatre.com](http://www.ftmyertheatre.com)

**Sat., July 1**

### **FMBA "Summer Show: FORTITUDE"**

@Tribby Art Center at Shell Point

FORTITUDE opens today, featuring magnificent artworks by the FMB Art Association and the SanCap Art League that will cure your "Summertime Blues" during "Those Lazy-Hazy-Crazy Days of Summer," cooling your mind with a "Summer Breeze" while ensuring that you will have "Hot Fun in The Summertime!" "FORTITUDE" runs through September 7.

Time: Tues.-Sat., 10am-3pm

Cost: Free

[www.fortmyersbeachart.com](http://www.fortmyersbeachart.com)

**Mon., July 3**

### **Fort Myers Mighty Mussels v. Lakeland Flying Tigers**

@Hammond Stadium at Lee County Sports Complex

Watch the MLB Stars of Tomorrow Tonight! The Mighty Mussels, the Low-A affiliate of the Minnesota Twins, take on the Lakeland Flying Tigers. Mussels players wear special Red, White & Blue Patriotic jerseys available for auction after the game to benefit Keep Lee County Beautiful. Following the game, kick off your July 4th Celebration by marveling at the largest fireworks display in Hammond Stadium history, so "Play Ball!"

Time: Weds.-Fri.: 7pm; Sat.-Sun.: 6pm; Mon.: 6:30pm

Cost: \$10 to \$15

[www.mightymussels.com](http://www.mightymussels.com)



*"I fully expected the building to be gone," recalls Star. "Even with that mindset . . . it was devastating and I was heartbroken."*



*FMBAA Treasurer George Buelow joins Star on the destroyed gallery steps. Star holds a FMBAA coffee mug she found in the wreckage.*

# A Blank Canvas

## FMBAA Already Painting With a Full Palette!

- By Gary Mooney -

"Hurricane Ian totally destroyed the Fort Myers Beach Art Association & Gallery (FMBAA) at 3030 Shell Mound Boulevard," relates former FMBAA President Star Sherwood. "We already completely cleared the lot and formed committees to interview architects, builders and contractors to see where we go from here. It is our intent today to rebuild on our current location, however we have many things to consider such as the new Town and FEMA regulations and of course the cost to rebuild. Nothing is written in stone as we have a lot of work ahead of us. The FMBAA is a non-profit organization without a great deal of capital so we must work within our means. We however have been part of the Fort Myers Beach community for a long time and it is our mission to provide it with wonderful art so our goal is to remain a vibrant member of this island."

The FMBAA began in 1951 with art shows and meetings in a member-constructed chickee hut. After two other temporary homes, the FMBAA purchased land in 1965 at 3030 Shell Mound Boulevard and built its permanent gallery in 1968, with expansions in 1978 and 1984 for a second gallery and improved ADA accessibility.

"As I returned to the beach after Ian, I fully expected

the building to be gone," recalls Star. "Even with that mindset, when I first arrived at the gallery and saw the destruction, like that of most of the island, it was devastating and I was heartbroken."

When Ian hit in late September 2022, "the FMBAA was displaying our annual Summer Show," continues Star. "The gallery contained walls full of original pieces of artwork. We found a few pieces of art strewn around in the sand near the parking lot but most were gone, including all our important documents that we kept in a fireproof safe that sadly was not waterproof. Since Ian, I have gone through it a million times in my head and struggled with some guilt that I did not go to the gallery to save the artwork and documents but it never occurred to me that the hurricane would inflict such destruction."

### A Close-Knit Family

The FMBAA priority in Ian's immediate aftermath was its members. "I was still the FMBAA President at that time, so I felt it was my duty to contact each person to see if they needed clothes, a place to stay, food or money, so we helped each member as best we could. The next priority was to find a place where we could all gather together, as the FMBAA is a close-knit family that re-

*Continued on page 13*

# TOP RECENT SALES FOR FORT MYERS BEACH

## SINGLE FAMILY HOMES 3-23-2023 to 4-25-2023

## CONDOS 3-23-2023 to 4-25-2023

Address	Beds/Baths	Sq. Ft.	Sold Price
275 MIRAMAR ST	3 bed/2	1,587	\$2,500,000
715 MATANZAS CT	2 Bed/2	1,119	\$2,500,000
274 PRIMO DR	2 Bed/2	1,000	\$2,100,000
251/255 CAROLINA AVE	5 Bed/4	2,556	\$1,525,000
5140 WILLIAMS DR	3+Den/2	1,864	\$1,450,000
910 3RD ST	3 Bed/2	1,176	\$1,250,000
275 BAHIA VIA	3 Bed/3	1,221	\$1,200,000
227 MANGO ST	3 Bed/2	1,358	\$1,100,000
5161 WILLIAMS DR	3 Bed/2	1,921	\$1,030,000
410 MADISON CT	3+Den/3	2,084	\$900,000
5195 WILLIAMS DR	2 Bed/2	1,667	\$900,000
460 DONORA BLVD	3 Bed/2	1,863	\$875,000
144 TROPICAL SHORE WAY	3 Bed/2	1,546	\$753,000
8336 LAGOON RD	2 Bed/2	1,411	\$750,000
18 PEPITA ST	2 Bed/2	1,224	\$705,000
146 HERCULES DR	3 Bed/3	1,678	\$700,000
832 OAK ST	2 Bed/2	1,224	\$700,000
21570 MADERA RD	2 Bed/2	1,152	\$700,000
126 MADISON CT	2 Bed/2	1,172	\$689,000
140 MID ISLAND DR	2 Bed/2	994	\$600,000
201 DELMAR AVE	3 Bed/4	1,452	\$580,000
131 CONNECTICUT ST	2 Bed/2	1,759	\$530,000
955 SAN CARLOS DR	3 Bed/2	1,627	\$525,000
170 WASHINGTON AVE	2 Bed/2	951	\$525,000
175 BAYVIEW AVE	2 Bed/2	672	\$512,500
180 WASHINGTON AVE	2 Bed/1	777	\$485,000
7910 BUCCANEER DR	3 Bed/2	1,376	\$437,500

Sub/Condo	Beds/Baths	Sq. Ft.	Sold Price
WATERSIDE AT BAY BEACH #596	3+Den/3(0)	2,262	\$1,350,000
WATERSIDE AT BAY BEACH #384	3 Bed/3(0)	1,877	\$1,100,000
PALM HARBOR CLUB #802	2 Bed/2(0)	1,394	\$1,075,000
WATERSIDE AT BAY BEACH #452	3+Den/2(0)	2,119	\$1,050,000
PALM HARBOR CLUB #704	3 Bed/2(0)	1,851	\$1,050,000
WATERSIDE AT BAY BEACH #796	3 Bed/2(0)	1,848	\$995,000
ESTERO ISLAND BEACH VILLAS #606	2 Bed/2(0)	940	\$890,000
POINTE SOUTH CONDO #202	2 Bed/1(1)	742	\$675,000
ESTERO BAYSIDE #1203	2+Den/2(0)	1,501	\$665,000
WATERSIDE AT BAY BEACH #1H2	2 Bed/2(0)	1,445	\$650,000
WATERSIDE AT BAY BEACH #274	3 Bed/2(0)	1,639	\$650,000
WATERSIDE AT BAY BEACH #251	2 Bed/2(0)	1,445	\$650,000
BELLA LAGO #224	3 Bed/2(0)	1,673	\$625,000
WATERSIDE AT BAY BEACH #135	3 Bed/3(0)	1,849	\$615,000
CAPTAINS BAY SOUTH #201	2 Bed/2(0)	1,073	\$585,000
THE PALMS OF BAY BEACH #3D	2 Bed/2(0)	1,024	\$525,000
WINDWARD POINT CONDO #409	2 Bed/2(0)	952	\$457,900
WINDWARD POINT CONDO #103	2 Bed/2(0)	872	\$405,000
CRECIENTE CONDO SOUTH #100	2 Bed/2(0)	1,545	\$399,000
ADMIRALS BAY #241	2 Bed/2(0)	811	\$389,900
CASA PLAYA RESORT CONDO #405	1 Bed/1(0)	279	\$270,000
120-124 FAIRWEATHER LN #120 + 124	Duplex		\$550,000

### MANUFACTURED HOMES 3-23-2023 TO 4-25-2023

3 NANCY LN	3 Bed/2	1,074	\$365,000
58 NANCY LN	2 Bed/2	728	\$157,040
111 BLACKBEARD WAY	3 Bed/2	1,032	\$115,000

Based on information from the Florida Gulf Coast MLS, Inc. for the period 3-23-23 to 4-25-23 for FB01-FB07 • Best Version Media does not guarantee the accuracy of the statistical data on this page. The data does not represent the listings of any one agent or agency but the entire real estate community in the area. Any real estate agent's ad appearing in the magazine is separate from the statistical data provided which is in no way a part of their advertisement.



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*"We moved to FMB to boat and fish and live the Salt Life!"*



*Steve, past President of the Fort Myers Beach Tarpon Hunter's Club, releasing a Tarpon caught off Fort Myers Beach.*

are available if you want to learn as a citizen-scientist, and the hands-on aspect of working on the water is very satisfying," Cindy shares. "We think volunteering is worthwhile," agrees Steve. "You either talk about it or do something about it."

They are relatively happy with how well the beach's wildlife is recovering since Ian. "Within a week after the storm, I saw a manatee with a calf in our canal," recalls Steve, "and immediately knew everything would eventually be OK. While there do not yet seem to be large flocks of birds on the island, the shorebirds appear to be doing quite well. We've seen only a few snakes and minimal lizards so the survivors must have found a place to hide during the storm." "Prior to Ian, there were an abundance of rabbits but now we notice just a few," adds Cindy, "with a squirrel on occasion. We however anticipate a great nesting sea turtle season if they can find suitable nesting locations on our disturbed beach. Overall, things wildlife-wise are OK."

**It Comes Down to The People**

As to what makes FMB special, "it comes down to the people," Cindy says. "When we first came here, we immediately noticed how active everyone is – you see 90-year-olds riding their bicycles and playing tennis. Island residents volunteer like crazy and will do anything for anyone; FMB is eclectic with something for everybody." "I like to say, 'eclectic and eccentric,'" reinforces Steve! "FMB enriches our lives with fun combined with natural resources so it is truly unique. Everyone is genuine and that is important to us." "FMB residents are doers who work hard and are resilient," adds Cindy, "and that is why this island will thrive despite Ian."

What will FMB look like in five years? "That depends on if our residents speak up," stresses Cindy. "Since we must rebuild so much, our residents will directly determine in which direction FMB will go, so our often 'Silent Majority' must speak up at Town Council meetings, especially when

*Continued on page 14*

*Continued from page 5*

bers and really value the fresh seafood available for those who work to harvest it. FMB is an unpretentious community where you can really relax, be yourself, and enjoy the water and subtropical climate, so there is no place like it." "We wanted a place where we could enjoy our outdoor activities, welcome a lot of family and visitors, and make memories," Cindy says. "During Christmas, we host up to 28 family members and have done so for the last ten years. Last year unfortunately we all had to meet up in Anna Maria Island but are hopeful to resume our Holiday tradition on FMB this year."

Steve is on the Town's Marine & Environmental Resources Task Force (MERTF), serving for five years and being its Chair the past three. They volunteer with Turtle Time and the FWC Marine Mammal Group, assisting with dolphin and manatee rescues. "It is amazing how many opportunities



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*"We have the best Plein Air club on the planet!"*



*The FMBAA began in 1951 and not even Hurricane Ian can stop it.*

*Continued from page 10*

ally loves and cares about each other and we all needed to be together as part of the healing process. Fortunately, the Alliance for the Arts reached out to us and offered us a classroom. When we met there, some days we painted and worked on our own creations and other days we simply talked and shared hugs and our stories."

By late 2022, the Alliance for the Arts needed its space for its own agenda, so Star explains that "the Fort Myers Congregational United Church of Christ on Collage Parkway made available its beautiful Fellowship Hall for our indoor paint days, workshops, classes, board meetings and potlucks so, believe it or not, we had a full 2022/23 season and will continue to have a complete 2023/24 one as well." FMBAA exhibits are at venues such as BIG ARTS on Sanibel and the Tribby Art Center at Shell Point that will host the Summer 2023 Show, "Fortitude," from July 1 through September 7.

"It blows me away how the surrounding communities reached out to us," Star expresses, "with love and compassion so the FMBAA can continue on in some sense of normalcy. This includes many financial donations from individuals, various art leagues from all over the country, and local and non-local corporations, friends and neighbors. To learn the locations of our upcoming exhibits or to contribute financially, please see our website at [www.fortmyersbeachart.com](http://www.fortmyersbeachart.com) as it is chockful of information."

### The Best On The Planet!

The FMBAA is trying to support other art leagues that need some help now as well, Star offers. "For instance, in the wake of Ian, the SanCap Art League was struggling so we invited them to be part of two of our shows. It was exciting that several of those members won awards at our recent BIG ARTS show."

With its gallery in ruins, a current FMBAA mainstay is its talented Plein Art group. "There are roughly 25 amazing artists in Plein Air and nothing stops them, not even a major hurricane," gushes Star! "You will see them painting all across FMB, Sanibel, Bonita Springs, and Fort Myers. We have the best Plein Air club on the planet!"

The FMBAA is looking to add new members in the wake of Ian. "It comes as no surprise that we lost many members since the storm, as quite a few had to relocate, but we are picking up new people at the same time. The FMBAA will bounce back strong, just as Fort Myers Beach will in some future capacity." ■

Answers from page 8

5	6	1	7	8	3	9	2	4
7	4	2	9	6	5	3	1	8
8	3	9	1	4	2	6	7	5
2	1	3	6	5	4	8	9	7
4	9	8	3	7	1	2	5	6
6	5	7	8	2	9	1	4	3
1	8	4	5	9	6	7	3	2
9	7	5	2	3	8	4	6	1
3	2	6	4	1	7	5	8	9

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*Continued from page 12*

it comes to the conservation of our natural resources. One evening last turtle season, we were lucky enough to witness a sea turtle on the beach laying eggs and a woman with her family were there watching and shared that this was on her Bucket List; the next thing I knew, she was crying! You can fill this island with great resorts and restaurants but you cannot buy the special experience that woman shared on the beach and everyone must appreciate that about FMB!”

“Undoubtedly there will be an increase in overall building mass on the island as new elevated structures are built out to legal setbacks,” Steve expects. “I like that Council is retaining the current Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code, as those will aid in the prevention of overdevelopment and increased density that can ruin our island. FMB will obviously change, but if you manage it properly by using the current ordinances in place, change can be good while retaining our small-town quality. Maintaining the presence of the Beach Elementary School is an important effort as well, as you cannot be a vibrant community without a school. Finally, if we take care of our natural resources, we take care of our economy and the unique value that offers, and people often overlook that. We must appreciate what we have here naturally because once it is gone, it is gone and that is the challenge.” ■

## TIPS to Protect Sea Turtles On Our Beach

- By Sandy Sandness -

Sea turtle nesting season runs from May 1 through October 31. Below are some practices residents and visitors can do to help keep our beaches sea turtle friendly.



- During the nesting season, please modify or turn off exterior light sources so illumination is not directly visible from the beach or illuminating areas seaward of the primary dune between sunset and sunrise.
- Close drapes or blinds after dark. Avoid using cell phones, flashlights or fishing lanterns on the beach. Even light from cell phones can impact hatchlings. Do not light fires and fireworks. Rely on your night vision or moonlight when walking on the beach at night.
- Do not leave furniture on the beach overnight.
- Pits, holes and sandcastles made by beachgoers can turn into deadly pitfalls that entrap sea turtle hatchlings. Please leave the beach in the same condition in which you found it -- or better!
- Do not litter. Balloons, plastic bags, Styrofoam and other non-degradable pollutants cause the deaths of many sea turtles that mistake them for food. Dispose of fishing line in a proper container.
- Keep pets on a leash, away from sea turtles and their nests.
- Do not disturb nest sites or nest identification markers.
- Quietly observe a nesting turtle from a distance. Do not shine lights on or around her or she may abandon her nest. Stay far behind the turtle so that she cannot see you.
- Do not harass a turtle by touching or prodding her to move. Stay out of the way as she crawls back to the water.

To report a dead or injured sea turtle or if you accidentally hook a sea turtle, immediately contact the FWC Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-FWCC (3922) or Turtle Time, Inc. at 239-481-5566. For lighting information or to report a violation, contact the Town of Fort Myers Beach at 239-765-0202. ■

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