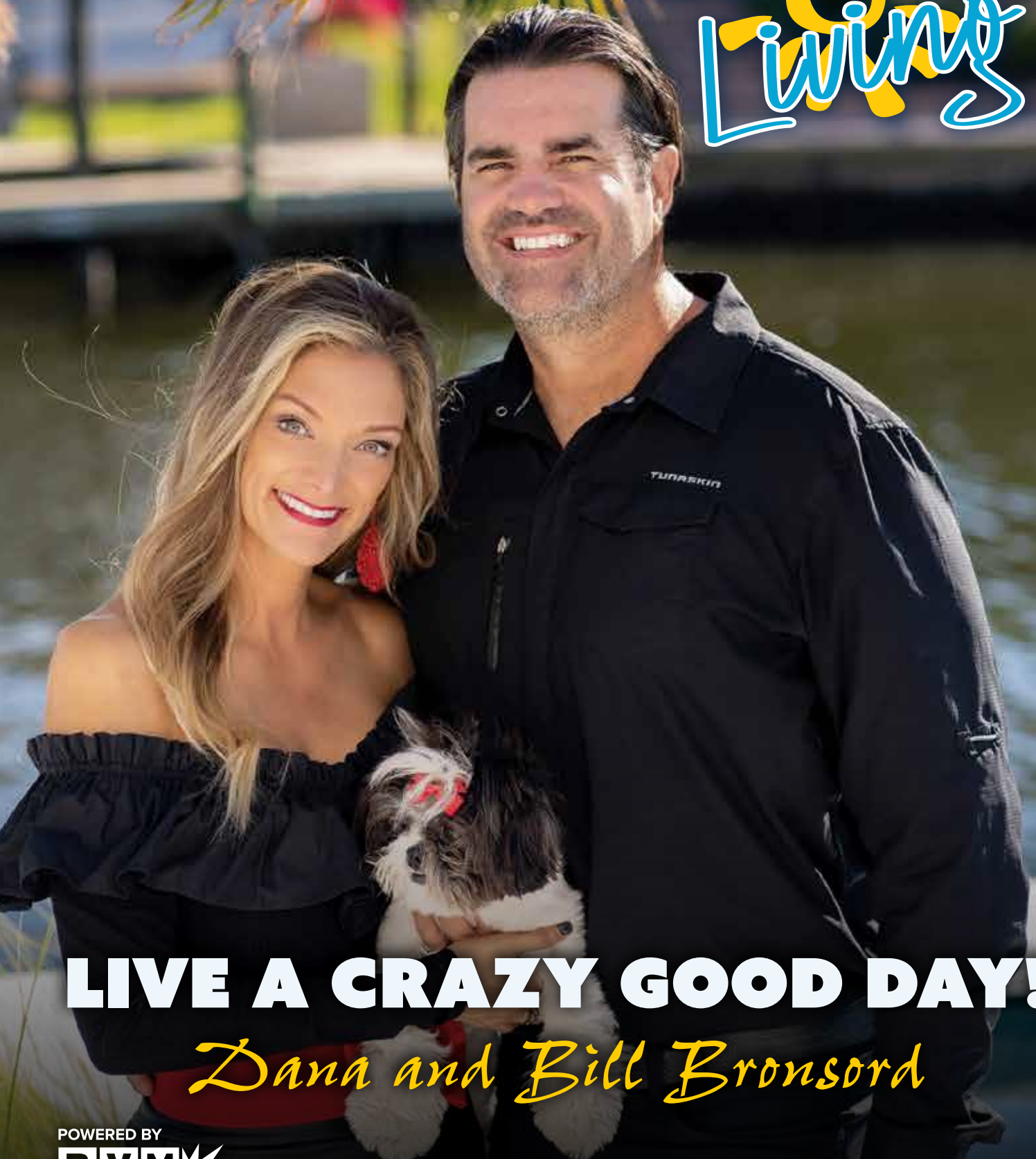


An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Fort Myers Beach

December 2023

# FORT MYERS BEACH



**LIVE A CRAZY GOOD DAY!**

*Dana and Bill Bronsord*

POWERED BY



Cover Photo By Jamie Lee Photography



# OUR FEATURED PROPERTIES



**757 SAN CARLOS DR \$3,499,000**



**17901 REBECCA AVE \$899,000**



**260 FLAMINGO ST. \$2,899,000**

## OUR CURRENT LISTINGS ON FMB

## OUR SOLD SINCE HURRICAN IAN

### RESEIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

3570 SHELL MOUND BLVD	\$850,000
4192 BAY BEACH LN #835	\$869,000
17901 REBECCA AVE	\$899,000
5 FAIRVIEW BLVD	\$999,000
5441-5451 OAK RIDGE AVE	\$1,099,900
206 CONNECTICUT ST	\$1,195,000
431 LAZY WAY	\$1,449,000
270 DUNDEE RD	\$1,499,000
260 CURLEW ST	\$1,795,000
104 WASHINGTON AVE	\$2,199,000
143 GULF ISLAND DR	\$2,199,000
265 MANGO ST	\$2,479,000
260 FLAMINGO ST	\$2,899,000
757 SAN CARLOS DR	\$3,499,000

### BUILDABLE LOTS

123 HERCULES DR	\$599,000
5780 LAUDER ST	\$609,000
151 MID ISLAND DR	\$699,000
5583 ESTERO BLVD	\$699,000
5551 ESTERO BLVD	\$900,000
2101 ESTERO BLVD	\$1,299,000
2141 ESTERO BLVD	\$1,299,000
716 ESTERO BLVD	\$1,449,000
851 LAGOON ST	\$2,269,000
711 ESTERO BLVD	\$2,999,000
2171 ESTERO BLVD	\$3,299,000
6060 GULF RD	\$3,750,000

### COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

17721 SAN CARLOS BLVD	\$999,949
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### SOLD LISTINGS

239 PRIMO DR	\$940,000
101 BAY MAR DR	\$925,000
521 ESTERO BLVD	\$920,000
424 PALERMO CIR	\$900,000
4880 COQUINA RD	\$900,000
250 ESTERO BLVD #606	\$890,000
250 ESTERO BLVD #505	\$888,000
250 ESTERO BLVD #303	\$880,000
444 MADISON CT	\$860,000
215 FLAMINGO ST	\$820,000
3071 SHELL MOUND BLVD	\$810,000
3051 SHELL MOUND BLVD	\$805,000
5770 LAUDER ST	\$775,000
3127 ESTERO BLVD	\$735,000
21750 MADERA RD	\$725,000
136 BAY MAR DR	\$725,000
105 MANDALAY RD	\$690,000
126 MADISON CT	\$689,000
7909 ESTERO BLVD	\$685,000
180 PEARL ST	\$657,500
101 / 103 ANDRE MAR DR	\$650,000
132 ANDRE MAR DR	\$635,000
250 PEARL ST	\$624,000
117 HERCULES DR	\$600,000
8170 LAGOON RD	\$555,000
3190 SHELL MOUND BLVD	\$525,000
5251 ESTERO BLVD	\$500,000
6662 ESTERO BLVD #B509	\$500,000
22748 ISLAND PINES WAY #403	\$475,000
7846 BUCCANEER DR	\$437,000
5950 ESTERO BLVD	\$4,800,000
21521 MADERA RD	\$3,705,850
3060 ESTERO BLVD	\$3,250,000
2430 COTTAGE AVE	\$3,200,000
60-64 AVENUE C	\$3,195,000
1550 I ST	\$2,200,000
823 LAGOON ST	\$2,100,000
5236 ESTERO BLVD	\$2,000,000
1 BAYVIEW BLVD	\$1,650,000
111 GULFVIEW AVE	\$1,100,000
8351 ESTERO BLVD	\$1,100,000
277 IBIS ST	\$1,100,000
8211 ESTERO BLVD	\$1,050,000
8339 ESTERO BLVD	\$1,020,000

### SOLD BUYER

7300 ESTERO BLVD #102	\$350,000
22676 ISLAND PINES WAY #142	\$380,000
6899 ESTERO BLVD #241	\$395,000
7846 BUCCANEER DR	\$437,000
5251 ESTERO BLVD	\$500,000
6662 ESTERO BLVD #B509	\$500,000
108 VOORHIS ST	\$525,000
149 PEARL ST	\$550,000
8170 LAGOON RD	\$555,000
201 DELMAR AVE	\$580,000
140 MID ISLAND DR	\$600,000
240 MIRAMAR ST	\$605,000
250 PEARL ST	\$624,000
243 ALBATROSS ST	\$630,000
129 CURLEW ST	\$650,000
2890 ESTERO BLVD	\$650,000
2880 ESTERO BLVD	\$650,000
101 / 103 ANDRE MAR DR	\$650,000
180 PEARL ST	\$657,500
105 MANDALAY RD	\$690,000
21750 MADERA RD	\$725,000
136 BAY MAR DR	\$725,000
8 PEPITA ST	\$750,000
3071 SHELL MOUND BLVD	\$810,000
4451 ESTERO BLVD	\$850,000
4109 ESTERO BLVD	\$900,000
4880 COQUINA RD	\$900,000
424 PALERMO CIR	\$900,000
23 PALMVIEW BLVD	\$905,000
130 COCONUT DR	\$925,000
4151 ESTERO BLVD	\$925,000
101 BAY MAR DR	\$925,000
239 PRIMO DR	\$940,000
530 CARLOS CIR	\$950,000
523 ESTERO BLVD	\$1,050,000
25 PALMVIEW BLVD	\$1,050,000
181 IBIS ST	\$1,100,000
106-108 TROPICAL SHORE WAY #108	\$1,100,000
191 ABERDEEN AVE	\$1,200,000
2900-2902 ESTERO BLVD	\$1,200,000
582 ESTERO BLVD	\$1,300,000
553 ESTERO BLVD	\$1,300,000
750 MATANZAS CT	\$1,600,000
256 IBIS ST	\$1,630,000
1 BAYVIEW BLVD	\$1,650,000
4142 BAY BEACH LN #704	\$1,782,666
1550 I ST	\$2,200,000
3600 ESTERO BLVD	\$2,400,000
2870 ESTERO BLVD	\$2,500,000
457 ESTERO BLVD	\$2,850,000
2301-2307 ESTERO BLVD	\$3,100,000
60-64 AVENUE C	\$3,195,000
2430 COTTAGE AVE	\$3,200,000
3060 ESTERO BLVD	\$3,200,000



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# FORT MYERS BEACH

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An independently owned community magazine.

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- FMB Public Library: 239-765-8162
- Lee County Parks & Recreation: 239-533-7275
- Beach Elementary School: 239-463-6356
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- By Gary Mooney -

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Answers on page 10

## FORT MYERS BEACH MARKETS

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# Hello Friends & Neighbors!

As I write tonight, the season's first real cold front is filtering through Southwest Florida and those out on FMB are all wearing long pants and sweatshirts! With the Holiday season well underway and what passes for "a chill in the air" Fort Myers Beach-style, it makes me recall my first island Christmas experience.

I actually arrived on FMB for a three-month stay on January 3, 2009, so technically I missed Christmas, but most businesses and homes still had their Holiday decorations up, including the lovely Poinsettia Christmas Tree in Times Square. Being from Missouri, I never saw anything like it and could not stop taking photographs, like hundreds of thousands of other locals and visitors before and since; to me, it was the definition of an "Island Christmas!"

Sadly, my Father passed away late that year, so I returned to FMB for the 2009 Christmas season to recharge my batteries. One evening, a small group of people bicycled past where I was staying, singing and laughing and playing Holiday music, with their bikes adorned in festive decorations. I soon learned that two of those folks were Dan and Megan Allers, years before they would become FMB's Mayor and First Lady, and to me this was just Magic! In subsequent Christmases, I joined in on this annual tradition and watched with pride as the "Christmas Bicycle Parade" grew in numbers and stature, with the bicycle decorations and lights becoming more elaborate every season! We became such a large group of approximately 75 riders that a Lee County Deputy Sheriff provides us an escort! We welcome everyone to join us this year for the annual "Christmas Bike Parade & Ugly Sweater Party" on Saturday, December 16, beginning at The Rude Shrimp Co. at Moss Marina at 4 p.m. If you are a newcomer, you will have the time of your life!

The next year I became a fulltime islander; oddly enough on October 10, 2010 – 10/10/10 – and soon discovered another beloved FMB Holiday tradition – the annual "Christmas Boat Parade" on the first Saturday evening of each December. Coming from a completely landlocked state, this was another new visual and sensory perception and I immediately fell in love with it, as the boats were so festive with bright lights and Christmas motifs. Ian forced us to cancel this in 2022 so it is wonderful to have the "Christmas Boat Parade" back this year. It sails off from Salty Sam's Marina on Saturday, December 2, at 6 p.m. For the next two hours, you can marvel at this Holiday spectacle from many of FMB's favorite restaurants

and bars; to see a partial list of these establishments, see our December Calendar of Events.

Another tradition that became near-and-dear to my heart was the Estero Island Historical Society "Open House" at the historic cottages near the entrance to the Matanzas Pass Preserve. It was there that I first met the legendary Fran Santini and became acquainted with her famous "Rum Balls!" Savoring just one was like spending an entire evening at your favorite watering hole! Fran and I became fast friends and when I would visit her, I learned that she froze a supply for "special friends" and got to enjoy one "offseason" from time to time!

FMB now has a relatively new island Holiday tradition, the "Christmas Tree Festival!" Ian forced the FMB Woman's Club to host it off-island last year but happily it returns to FMB this Holiday season at the Fort Myers Beach Library on Friday & Saturday, December 8 & 9. For a complete list of times and details, again please see our December Calendar of Events.

Finally, all of Fort Myers Beach will receive a magnificent Holiday present when the long-awaited and much-anticipated Margaritaville Resort opens the day after Christmas! Margaritaville is a gift that will keep on giving and a true sign of FMB's rebirth after the devastation of 15 months ago.

Speaking of gifts that keep on giving, remember to do your Holiday shopping at our local businesses and with *FMB LIVING Magazine* sponsors, and please be as generous as you can to our island non-profits who do so much for so many, especially in our post-Ian world. These good folks work hard every day to help make our island home what it is now and will be in the future due to their dedication and drive.

Oh, and a very generous donor is funding FIREWORKS on New Years Eve!!!

May You & Yours Enjoy a Blest Christmas and a Healthy & Prosperous New Year!

Let's roll into 2024!!!!



*Sandy Sandness*

**Publisher**

*Fort Myers Beach LIVING*

239-222-0129

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*“Our marriage is proof that what happens in Vegas does not always stay in Vegas,” laughs Bill!*

## LIVE A CRAZY GOOD DAY!

### The Bronsords Have a Purpose On FMB

- By Gary Mooney -

“Our marriage is proof that what happens in Vegas does not always stay in Vegas,” laughs Bill Bronsord when recalling his first meeting with Dana, his future wife! Dana is originally from Wellsburg, West Virginia, while Bill is a St. Petersburg native. She graduated from Youngstown State University with a Physical Therapy degree while playing varsity soccer, then attended the University of Maryland to attain her Doctor of Science and Physical Therapy. Bill attended Santa Fe College where he earned his Construction Management Degree.

They met in Las Vegas in 2009: “I was there for a bachelorette party while Bill was celebrating his 30th birthday,” remembers Dana. “I was with roughly 15 friends when I saw Bill across the swimming pool and said I was going to introduce myself and they said, ‘Are you kidding’ but I replied, ‘There is something about him,’ so I did! It was

his last day there so we talked a lot, then exchanged emails.”

Bill felt the attraction as well, though he admits that “it helped that Dana was wearing a bikini and high heels!” The next weekend, Bill flew to Baltimore to visit her and that was the beginning of a six-year long-distance relationship. “I telephoned my Mom,” Dana adds, “and said I just met the man I will marry and she immediately panicked!” They wed in the Florida Keys in 2015 on Dana’s October 10th birthday.

When they met, Bill was already an islander. “I was on an internship with a custom home builder in Naples in 2002. I came to FMB and immediately fell in love with the vibe, its proximity to the Gulf and – back then – homes were so affordable. I bought a little fixer-upper in Fairview Isles. Twenty-one years later, we are still in Fairview Isles but now in our fifth different house,



*Not even a Category 5 hurricane can keep these two from smiling as long as they have each other!*

having designed and built our latest in 2020, so it is fair to say that we love our neighborhood!”

Dana had no first-hand knowledge of FMB “but my grandparents had a place in Clearwater and when I visited as a little girl, I felt even then that one day I would live in Florida. When I came here, we drove down Estero Boulevard and I thought, ‘This is an interesting little beach town’ and it reminded me of my hometown where everyone knows your name so there was an instant attraction. One of the first things I asked Bill was where was the physical therapy practice and when he said there was not one, I thought, ‘Hmm!’ That was the seed that eventually became IslandFit Physical Therapy & Wellness.”

While IslandFit was a future dream, Bill began Tunaskin Aquatic Apparel around the time they met. “I came up with the concept while boating and fishing in the Florida Keys. I wanted a product that was conducive to a water lifestyle that would be super comfortable and quickly dry, so I experimented with various fabrics until I found the perfect one. We opened the first Tunaskin at FMB’s north end in 2015, then expanded to Key West in 2017, Sarasota in 2019 and Bonita Springs later that year.” Dana explains the unique name: “Tuna are the only fish that have skin rather than scales and that lack of resistance is why they swim so fast!”

Dana opened her initial IslandFit at Santini Plaza in December 2014, then expanded off-island to Summerlin Square Drive a year prior to Ian. “Thank God we did,” she explains, “as that location came through Ian in great shape while the Santini Plaza spot was a total loss.”

**We Had a Purpose**

“We stayed in our home with our beloved dog Viva for Ian,” recalls Dana, “and it was terrifying! For Irma, we evacuated the island to Bonita so there is no comparison. Fortunately, Bill built our home to survive a Category 5 – where building codes called for 10 hurricane straps, he installed 20 – but after 10 straight hours of non-stop pounding, you had to wonder. When we looked out the windows, you saw your entire community float by. Just as terrifying was the next morning, where there was devastation all around and we helped rescue people and animals, so we had a purpose.”

“We saved a few of our belongings in our garage such as our bikes that became our means of transportation for several weeks since we lost all of our vehicles,” Bill explains. “Our home held up so well that we were one of the first houses on the entire island to regain power so we were back home in just a few weeks. The strange part is that we did not see another single light anywhere for the longest time; everything was pitch black.” “That was scary,” adds Dana. “Being in our house without our neighborhood and community did not make it feel like our home. It was eerie and kind-of like being in a zombie movie!”

When contemplating if they will stay in their home for the next major hurricane, Bill emphatically answers “NO! But as much as Ian put us in harm’s way, we are grateful we could immediately help all those who were worse off than us so I would not trade the experience for anything.” “I agree,” says Dana, “but I do not want to go through that again!”

Their businesses were not so fortunate. “We first walked to IslandFit and discovered that a 15-foot storm surge



*When Dana learned there was no physical therapy practice on FMB, “That was the seed that eventually became IslandFit Physical Therapy & Wellness.”*

destroyed it,” explains Dana. “It literally took my breath away. Then we made the 6-mile walk down Estero Boulevard, through all the sand and debris, to Tunaskin.” “The windows and doors were gone,” remembers Bill, “and the surge stripped off the walls up to the ceiling. There was not one single piece of apparel left.”

But the Bronsords had a lucky break. “We ordered a custom-built Tunaskin trailer to take to fishing tournaments and boat races and it arrived about a month prior to Ian. We safely stored it in Fort Myers and it survived.” “That trailer was a Godsend,” emphasizes Dana. “It became our FMB store that we reopened less than two months after Ian.” The temporary Tunaskin got them through while they rebuilt the permanent store. “We reopened that last month,” says Bill. As for IslandFit, “that will be back too,” Dana promises. “We will return to Santini Plaza as soon as the landlord is ready for us.”

**The Best of FMB!**

Life today for the Bronsords is “non-stop,” Dana explains. “Fortunately, we have each other, as we are equal teammates. After something like Ian, you learn who your friends and family truly are. We are incredibly thankful for our employees who are like family, as without them, we would not be where we are today.” As for their Fairview Isles neighborhood, “more people return every week so that is encouraging,” she reports. “There are roughly 40 houses on our street and a couple of hundred in our neighborhood and I estimate that people live in 30 percent of them. There is now landscaping at our entryway and cul-de-sacs and it is amazing what a difference trees and flowers make. We have neighbors on either side of us again and even had a neighborhood Halloween Party.”

The Bronsords are well-known for their charitable contributions. They host a fishing tournament for wounded veterans, including arranging for flights, accommodations and boats. “It is about helping those who are less fortunate than us,” Bill shares. “To see the response from the veterans is incredible.

*continued on page 9*



*Dana & Bill love to recreate outdoors, especially on the water.*



*Bill came up with the Tunaskin concept while boating and fishing in the Florida Keys.*



# Chamber Chat!

## Happy Holidays!

If you are like me, the 2022 Holiday Season barely registered on your personal radar! Last year's Christmas season came three short months after Hurricane Ian and most of us had barely begun to rebuild our lives, homes and businesses. The idea of spreading any type of Holiday cheer amidst our devastation was just not possible. What a difference a year makes! While the FMB rebuild remains a daunting task, the 2023 Holiday Season is showing substantial signs of rebirth!

Several of our favorite FMB Holiday traditions are returning in 2023, bringing with them a sense of normalcy. The FMB Chamber has proudly announced that the "35th Annual Christmas Boat Parade" will return on Saturday, December 2nd. The Parade will depart from Salty Sam's Marina at 6 p.m. and will make one and possibly two loops around the Back Bay. Prime viewing locations include the Par-



After taking 2022 off due to Hurricane Ian, the "Christmas Boat Parade" returns on December 2nd.

rot Key Caribbean Grill, Doc Ford's Rum Bar & Grille, Dixie Fish Company, Bonita Bill's Waterfront Café, Moss Marina, Snug Harbor, Nervous Nellie's and Matanzas on the Bay among numerous other vantage points. All boats are welcome, so make sure to get your boat and spirited crew registered at <http://www.fortmyersbeach.org/events/christmas-boat-parade/>. Parade attendees will be asked to join in on the fun by voting for the People's Choice. The FMB Chamber is still accepting Parade sponsors as well, with information on the FMB Chamber website or by calling us at 239-454-7500.

While the FMB "Christmas Boat Parade" kicks off the Holiday season, other festive events follow in rapid

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*continued from page 7**NYE Fireworks will once again light up the night!*

succession. The FMB Woman's Club's "Christmas Tree Festival" is December 8 & 9, followed by the much-anticipated "Christmas Bicycle Parade" on December 16. Another island tradition not only concludes the month but the year and is a true fan favorite: FMB New Year's Eve Fireworks! That's Right!!! The NYE FIREWORKS ARE BACK! Town Council announced two months ago that an anonymous donor contributed the funds for the New Year's Eve Fireworks and the show will most likely lift off from a barge in the Gulf of Mexico. This will be our first fireworks display since Ian and they always bring a smile to everyone's faces; guests, residents and businesses alike!

Margaritaville patrons will be among those marveling at the NYE Fireworks as the luxury resort welcomes its first guests on December 26th! The Margaritaville grand opening will be a much-needed psychological boost to the island, as it will bring tens of thousands of people to FMB in 2024 and beyond. Once the guests arrive, they are sure to spread out to see what else Fort Myers Beach offers. The economic and emotional support of visitors learning about FMB and growing to love our small-town atmosphere will go a long way toward keeping our businesses open and supporting everyone's financial recovery.

Remember that the FMB Chamber of Commerce Office is open at 100 Lovers Lane, Suite 2E, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The FMB Chamber continues to operate the "Roxie" visitor information center at Times Square from Wednesday through Sunday from Noon to 6 p.m. We need volunteers to help man "Roxie" so if you have some free time and you would like to help our island recovery by welcoming guests and answering their questions, please sign up for a shift at [www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0948aaa72a2ff2-roxie#](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0948aaa72a2ff2-roxie#).

On behalf of our 400-plus FMB Chamber of Commerce members, Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and remember . . . "Island Life; It's Our Business!" ■

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

Fort Myers Beach LIVING

*The Bronsords married in the Florida Keys in 2015, on Dana's October 10th Birthday.*

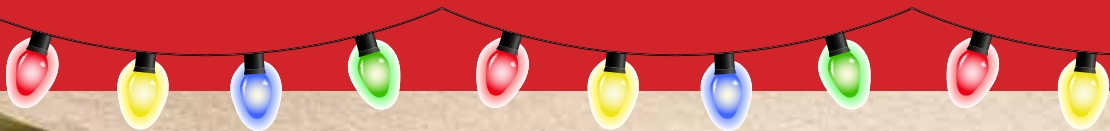
Another cause that means so much is our 'Keep Lee County Beautiful' partnership. We co-host a beach cleanup and the first year we had 50 volunteers; now we cut it off at 400! 'Keep Lee County Beautiful' presented us with its 'Partner of the Year Award' and that means a great deal."

Dana and Bill imagine what FMB will look like in five years. "Spectacular," she raves! "And it must be spectacular, for everything all of us are going through! Despite our rebuild, this community will retain its charm and character. New is not always better but it will be stronger and by that I mean, more resilient to future storms like Ian. It will look different, but I will embrace that difference." "We have already experienced this," adds Bill. "We have a house in the lower Keys and a previous storm totally demolished that entire area, and five years later that community never looked better! Everything is clean, crisp and new and I foresee the same thing happening to FMB. Fort Myers Beach has yet to see the best of Fort Myers Beach!"

Bill loves FMB's smalltown feel, "where when we go out, we not only know the name of the business owner but the bartenders, waiters and waitresses and that is a great feeling. People are constantly helping each other out and that was never truer than after Ian. We look forward to being a part of the island's rebirth and to see what FMB will ultimately become."

"FMB is now officially my hometown," concludes Dana. "The support of this community is unfathomable. When my patients come to IslandFit, they wear Tunaskin apparel and that speaks volumes to me and brings tears to my eyes every time. We have a sugar-sand white beach, the most gorgeous sunsets anywhere and the best people! Tunaskin's motto is 'Live A Crazy Good Day' and we Live a Crazy Good Day every day on FMB!" ■

*Dana & Bill "look forward to being a part of the island's rebirth and to see what FMB will ultimately become."*



# December

**Fri., December 1  
AND EVERY FRIDAY  
Fort Myers Beach Market**

@Times Square  
This Downtown FMB Market offers fresh produce, artisan foods, arts, crafts, clothing and more.  
Time: Fridays 9am-1pm  
[www.41markets.com](http://www.41markets.com)

**Fri., December 1  
Beach Kids Foundation  
Spirit of the Holidays 2023**

@DiamondHead Ballroom  
Enjoy an amazing evening with great entertainment, food and raffles! Let's all have some fun and help our beach kids!  
Time: 5pm  
Cost: \$100 per person  
[www.facebook.com/beachkidsfoundationinc](http://www.facebook.com/beachkidsfoundationinc)

**Saturdays., December 2 & 9  
"American Boating Course"**

@San Carlos Bay Squadron Classroom  
This 8-hour, 2-day basic boating class includes Florida navigation rules and dealing with water emergencies.  
Time: 8:15am-Noon  
Cost: \$65-per-person; \$20 each additional person  
[www.scbps.com](http://www.scbps.com)

**Sat., December 2  
"Christmas Boat Parade"**

@Salty Sam's Marina  
Light Up the Night with the return of this island tradition! Watch a flotilla of Holiday-decorated boats from various prime viewing locations including the Parrot Key Caribbean Grill, Doc Ford's Rum Bar & Grille, Dixie Fish House, Bonita Bill's Waterfront Café, Moss Marina, Snug Harbor, Nervous Nellie's and Matanzas on the Bay.  
Time: 6-8pm  
Cost: Free  
[www.fortmyersbeach.org](http://www.fortmyersbeach.org)

**Sun., December 3  
Welcome & Discovery Center**

@Lovers Key State Park  
The Welcome & Discovery Center educates and informs visitors about Lovers Key habitats through interactive displays.  
Time: Wed.-Sun. 10am-1pm  
Cost: Free with Park Admission  
[www.friendsofloverkey.org](http://www.friendsofloverkey.org)

**Sun., December 3  
AND EVERY SUNDAY  
Bayside Park Concert Series**

Bring your lawn chair, No Outside Food or Beverages  
Time: 4-7pm  
Cost: Free  
[FortMyersBeach.org](http://FortMyersBeach.org) | 239-454-7500

**Mon., December 4  
FMB Town Council Meeting**

@DiamondHead Beach Resort  
The FMB Town Council continues its efforts to rebuild FMB following Hurricane Ian.  
Time: 9am  
Cost: Free  
[www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov](http://www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov)

**Mon., December 4  
Caribbean Cruise-In  
Car Show**

@Parrot Key Caribbean Grill  
The largest FMB Car Show returns on the 1st & 3rd Monday of each month through April 2024. Enjoy music, food and prizes while marveling at these fantastic cars!  
Time: 3-6pm  
Cost: Free  
[www.myparrotkey.com](http://www.myparrotkey.com)

**Tues., December 5  
Beach Elementary School  
Re-opening and Ribbon Cutting**

@Bay Oaks Campus & Beach Elementary School  
Cheer our students on as they march from Bay Oaks to their new school at 7:30am  
8:30am Ribbon Cutting 8:45am Tours of the School  
Cost: Free  
[bch.leeschools.net](http://bch.leeschools.net)

**Tues., December 5  
Mound House  
Lecture Series**

"The 9 Lives of the Key Marco Cat"  
@The Historic Mound House  
Austin Bell, Curator of the Marco Island Historical Society, explores nine periods in the life of the famous six-inch-high wood carving. A complimentary wine and refreshments reception proceeds the lecture.  
Time: Reception 5:30pm; Lecture 6pm  
Cost: \$7 Mound House members; \$15 non-members.  
[www.moundhouse.org](http://www.moundhouse.org)

**Wed., December 6  
AND EVERY WEDNESDAY  
Moss Marina Market**

@Moss Marina  
Enjoy fresh produce, artisan foods, fresh fish from fishing boats, arts, crafts, clothing and more.  
Time: Wednesdays 9am-1pm  
Cost: Free  
[www.41markets.com](http://www.41markets.com)

**Thurs., December 7  
FMB Chamber  
"Coffee Connection"**

@Bennett Chiropractic  
Start your day with your FMB Chamber friends for networking with tasty complimentary coffee and breakfast items.  
Time: 8-9:30am  
Cost: Free  
[www.fortmyersbeach.org](http://www.fortmyersbeach.org)

**Thurs., December 7  
FMB Town Council  
Management & Planning Session**

@DiamondHead Beach Resort  
The FMB Town Council continues its efforts to rebuild FMB following Hurricane Ian.  
Time: 9am  
Cost: Free  
[www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov](http://www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov)

**Thurs., December 7  
FMB Art Association  
Potluck & Food Drive**

@Fort Myers Congregational Church  
Bring cocktail food to share and the Art Association provides coffee & dessert! Bring non-perishable groceries for the FM Food Bank.  
Time: Noon-3pm  
Cost: Free  
[www.fortmyersbeachart.com](http://www.fortmyersbeachart.com)

**Fri., December 8  
Christmas Tree Festival**

@FMB Public Library  
VIP Reception from 4:30 to 5:30pm then the Preview Party begins at 5:30pm featuring live music, silent auction, raffles, food trucks, cash bar and of course the Christmas Tree Festival Silent Auction! Bring a new unwrapped toy for the Beach Kids Foundation.  
Time: 4:30-8:30pm  
Cost: Free; VIP Tickets \$50-per-adult  
[www.fmb-wc.org](http://www.fmb-wc.org)

SUDOKU

Answers from page 3

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

**Sat., December 9****Mound House Eco-Kayak Tour**

@The Historic Mound House

Explore the winding mangrove creeks and hidden backwaters of the Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve. The MH provides all equipment; ages 12 & up, weather permitting and participants must wear shoes and bring water.

Time: Every Wed. &amp; Sat. 9-11am

Cost: \$50-per-person including MH admission

[www.moundhouse.org](http://www.moundhouse.org)**Sat., December 9****Annual Christmas Tree Festival**

@FMB Public Library

Shop at the Vendor's Market from 1-6pm; savor the Christmas Treats Bake Sale from 1-8pm; and partake in the Chili Cookoff & Tasting from 4:30-8pm. Kids activities, cash bar, raffles and the Christmas Tree Auction winners announced at 8pm. Bring a new unwrapped toy for the Beach Kids Foundation.

Time: 1-8:30pm

Cost: Free; Chili Tasting Tickets \$5

[www.fmb-wc.org](http://www.fmb-wc.org)**Tues., December 12****FMB Local****Planning Agency Meeting**

@DiamondHead Beach Resort

The FMB LPA, appointed by Town Council, continues efforts to rebuild FMB following Hurricane Ian.

Time: 9am

Cost: Free

[www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov](http://www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov)**Wed., December 13****FMB Community Foundation  
Holiday Party**

@Alicia Steinhagen's Home

Kick off the Holiday with your FMB Community Foundation friends for an evening of fun & frivolity! Bring an unwrapped toy for the Beach Kids Foundation.

Time: 5:30-7:30pm

Cost: Free

[www.fmbcommunityfoundation.com](http://www.fmbcommunityfoundation.com)**Thurs., December 14****FMB Chamber****Membership Luncheon**

@Pink Shell Beach Resort &amp; Marina

Join your FMB Chamber friends to savor a scrumptious meal and hear from Ivonne Perez-Suarez of the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services.

Time: 11:30am-1pm

Cost: Members \$30;

prospective members \$40

[www.fortmyersbeach.org](http://www.fortmyersbeach.org)**Sat., December 16****Christmas Bike Parade  
& Ugly Sweater Party**

@The Rude Shrimp Company

Wear your ugliest Christmas sweater and hop on your two-wheeler to join us as we peddle through the streets of FMB enjoying the Holiday lights!

Time: 4pm

Cost: Free

[www.fortmyersbeach.org](http://www.fortmyersbeach.org)**Mon., December 18****FMB Town Council Meeting**

@DiamondHead Beach Resort

The FMB Town Council continues its efforts to rebuild FMB following Hurricane Ian.

Time: 9am

Cost: Free

[www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov](http://www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov)**Thurs., December 21****FMB Chamber****"Business After Hours"**

@FMB Chamber Office

Spread some Holiday Cheer with your FMB Chamber friends, enjoying savory appetizers and cash bar.

Time: 5:30-7pm

Cost: Members Free; \$15 perspective members

[www.fortmyersbeach.org](http://www.fortmyersbeach.org)**Sun., December 31****NYE 5K**

@DiamondHead Resort

Wrap up 2023 with a run on the beautiful sands of FMB! Registration includes a race shirt, with medals to the top 3 finishers in each age category.

Time: 8am

Cost: \$30-per-person

[www.beachtalkradionews.com](http://www.beachtalkradionews.com)**Sun., December 31****New Year's Eve Fireworks**

@Times Square

Ring in 2024 with a spectacular fireworks display exploding over the Gulf of Mexico!

Time: Midnight

Cost: Free

[www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov](http://www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov)**Mon., January 1****Caribbean Cruise-In Car Show**

@Parrot Key Caribbean Grill

Stroll through the largest FMB Car Show on the 1st & 3rd Mondays of each month through April 2024. Enjoy music, food and prizes while marveling at these fantastic cars!

Time: 3-6pm

Cost: Free

[www.myparrotkey.com](http://www.myparrotkey.com)**Fri., January 5****FMB Art Association  
Winter Art Show  
"Let It Be"**

@Cape Coral Arts Center

"Let It Be" runs through Thursday, January 25.

Time: Mon.-Sat. 9am-4pm

Cost: Free

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

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# Christmas Chocolate Kahlua & Bailey's Pudding Shots

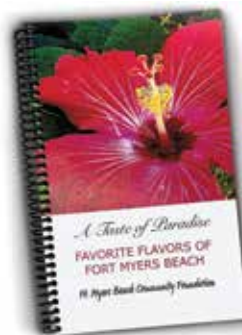
Submitted by Mary Louise Baumann

## INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup of Red Velvet Bailey's (or regular)
- ¼ cup of Kahlua (or coffee liqueur)
- 1 small box Jello chocolate instant pudding mix
- ¾ cup milk
- 8-ounce container of Cool Whip
- Christmas sprinkles for garnish

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Whisk all ingredients together in a large bowl, except for the sprinkles.
- Add the Cool Whip a little at a time.
- Fill shot cups with mixture.
- Store in refrigerator or freezer.



This delicious recipe and many more are in the Fort Myers Beach Community Foundation's cookbook, *A Taste of Paradise: Favorite Flavors of Fort Myers Beach* that is available for purchase at [www.fmbcommunityfoundation.com](http://www.fmbcommunityfoundation.com).

A great gift that supports the community of Fort Myers Beach!

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Dinner begins at NOON

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BEACH KIDS FOUNDATION HOSTS  
**20 SPIRIT 23**  
*of the Holidays*  
 DECEMBER 1ST  
 TICKET \$100 START AT 5 PM  
 DINNER & RAFFLE PRIZES  
 DIAMONDHEAD BALLROOM  
 with music and entertainment  
 For More Information:  
[www.facebook.com/beachkidsfoundationinc/](http://www.facebook.com/beachkidsfoundationinc/)



December 2nd 6:00pm



EVERY SUNDAY 4-7PM

Corner of Old San Carlos Blvd & 1st St  
 Bring your lawn chair, No Outside Food or Beverages  
[FortMyersBeach.org](http://FortMyersBeach.org) | 239-454-7500



**BEACH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL RE-OPENING RIBBON CUTTING!**  
**December 5th**  
 Cheer our students on as they march from Bay Oaks to their new school at 7:30am  
 8:30am Ribbon Cutting 8:45am Tours of the School



Enjoy a weekend of Holiday cheer & merriment!  
 The "6th Annual Christmas Tree Festival" will showcase an array of beautifully decorated trees and wreaths for anyone to bid on and take home. All auction proceeds go back to the area non-profit that created the one-of-a-kind creations.

Live Music • Food Trucks, Cash Bar, Celebration  
 Silent Auction • Raffle Prizes • Vendor Market  
 Bake Sale • Chili Tasting & Cook-off

Bring a new, unwrapped toy for the Beach Kids Foundation!

Fort Myers Beach Library | 2755 Estero Blvd.

Sponsored by  




**CHRISTMAS BIKE PARADE & UGLY SWEATER PARTY**

December 16th 4pm

Kicks off at The Rude Shrimp Co.  
 450 Harbor Ct. ~ Moss Marina



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 THE FMB WOMAN'S CLUB



**SIGN UP NOW!**

12th Annual Fort Myers Beach

**Putt & Pub Crawl**



For more information go to [www.fmb-wc.org](http://www.fmb-wc.org)  
 Saturday, January 20th, 2024



# TOP RECENT SALES FOR FORT MYERS BEACH

## SINGLE FAMILY HOMES 9-28-2023 to 10-27-2023

## CONDOS 9-28-2023 to 10-27-2023

Address	Beds/Baths	Sq. Ft.	Sold Price
21521 MADERA RD	4+Den/4.5	3,969	\$3,705,850
292 STERLING AVE	4 Bed/4	1,390	\$875,000
121-123 EUCALYPTUS CT	2 Bed/2	1,088	\$665,000
7945 ESTERO BLVD	3 Bed/2	1,640	\$720,000
130 EUCALYPTUS CT	2 Bed/1	676	\$668,500
125 COCONUT DR	2 Bed/1.5	852	\$625,000
33 HELEN LN	2 Bed/2	1,042	\$135,000

Address	Sub/Condo	Sq. Ft.	Sold Price
WATERSIDE AT BAY BEACH #556	3+Den/3	2,268	\$1,355,000
GRANDVIEW AT BAY BEACH #405	3 Bed/3	2,414	\$1,324,181
ESTERO BAYSIDE #1605	3 Bed/3	2,008	\$920,000
CAPER BEACH CLUB #703	2 Bed/2	1,116	\$900,000
WATERSIDE AT BAY BEACH #162	2 Bed/2	1,224	\$679,000
SMUGGLERS COVE CONDO #5B7	2 Bed/2	792	\$500,000
ESTERO COVE CONDO #241	2 Bed/2	832	\$395,000
ADMIRALS BAY #1411	2 Bed/2	811	\$363,500

## RESIDENTIAL LOTS 9-28-2023 TO 10-27-2023

## RESIDENTIAL INCOME 9-28-2023 TO 10-27-2023

Address	Acres	Sold Price
570 ESTERO BLVD	0.06	\$675,000
250 PEARL ST	0.093	\$624,000
7935 ESTERO BLVD	0.227	\$600,000
103 ALBATROSS ST	0.144	\$550,000

Address	Plex	Sold Price
269 DRIFTWOOD LN	Quadraplex	\$1,261,000
290-292 NATURE VIEW CT	Duplex	\$629,000

Based on information from the Florida Gulf Coast MLS, Inc. for the period 9-28-23 to 10-27-23 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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# Christmas Poinsettia Tree

The Origin of An FMB Holiday Tradition!

- By Gary Mooney -



*The Times Square Poinsettia Christmas Tree!*

One of the most popular and photographed FMB Holiday sights is the Poinsettia Christmas Tree in Times Square, but who and what began this annual tradition?

"I was in on the ground floor of this one," laughs Anita Cereceda, the first and only three-time FMB Town Mayor who people lovingly refer to as the "First Lady of Fort Myers Beach!" "Somewhere around 1997, during my first term as Mayor, about two years after the birth of the Town and shortly after the Community Redevelopment Agency created Times Square, they planted a little palm tree there in front of the fishing pier. As that Holiday season approached, my friend David and I strung Christmas lights around it. The palm tree was so small we only needed a step ladder to do it! Everyone loved the concept. One couple, however, came up to us and cautioned, 'You two better be careful because the Town has a Mayor now and HE may not like this so you better check with HIM!' David looked at me and asked, 'Is this all right' and I laughed. I then introduced myself and that couple exclaimed, 'Oh My Goodness!'"

During the following year, Anita was at the Naples Waterside Shops "and in this little pond there was a pyramid of poinsettias and I thought, 'That looks wonderful; we could do that!' When I returned to Town Hall the next day, I went to then-Town Manager Marsha Segal-George and then-Public Works Director Ed Lawler, who was a one-man operation, and said, 'I have an idea' and they gasped, saying 'Oh No – what is it this time!' I showed them a sketch and said, 'what if we stacked poinsettias in a pyramid all around that palm tree to create a Christmas Tree, with the palm fronds acting as the "star."' They liked it so we did it and that began the tradition! As the palm tree grew larger each Holiday season, the base of the Poinsettia pyramid got correspondingly bigger. Folks loved it so much that they took family photos in front of the Poinsettia Christmas Tree!"

Then Ian struck on September 28, 2022, literally wiping out Times Square and the palm tree and it seemed as though the Poinsettia Christmas Tree tradition was lost, though local developer Joe Orlandini replaced the palm. "Then, of all a sudden,

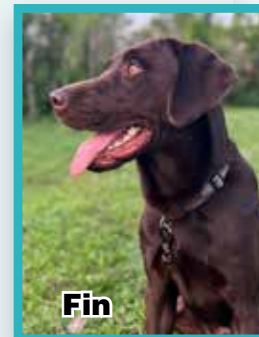
*continued on page 17*

**Name:** Chico  
**Nickname:** Granddad  
**Breed:** Chihuahua  
**Age:** 15  
**Parent or best friend:** Mr. Bruiser and the Fly Boys  
**Favorite activities:** "Laying around and eating!"  
**Guilty pleasures:** "Table scraps."  
**Lifelong goals:** "That all my teeth don't fall out so I can eat."  
**Hidden secret:** "I used to escape to the Red Coconut RV Park for treats!"  
**Anything else:** "Nobody is as lazy as I am!"



**Chico**

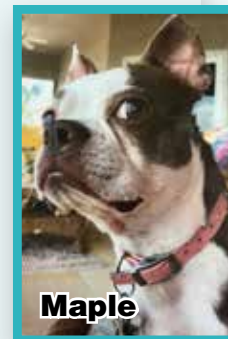
**Name:** Fin  
**Nickname:** Shark Fin, Finnigan, Finney & FIN!  
**Breed:** Lab  
**Age:** 1  
**Parent or best friend:** Dune  
**Favorite activities:** "Having the zoomies and running over anyone or anything in my path, hopping like a bunny, and sniffing all the smells."  
**Guilty pleasures:** "Stealing Dad's steak off the counter!"  
**Lifelong goals:** "Stealing more steaks and smelling every smell there is to smell."  
**Hidden secret:** "I actually do love to cuddle. I'll do a headstand in your lap to show you!"  
**Anything else:** "My parents originally named me Shark, then Sharkfin, then shortened it to Fin -- they should have stuck with Shark!"



**Fin**

We would love to profile your pet in an upcoming issue, whether your best friend be a dog, cat, avian, amphibian, or something else. Just answer the above questions the way your pet would and forward the responses to Gary at gmooney@bestversionmedia.com and we will follow up with you and your pet.

**Name:** Maple  
**Nickname:** Mapes  
**Breed:** Boston Terrier  
**Age:** 4  
**Parent or best friend:** Buddy & Dash  
**Favorite activities:** "Napping, barking at dogs on the beach, & playing volleyball in the pool."  
**Guilty pleasures:** "Turkey strips & chicken livers."  
**Hidden secret:** "Thinking I am bigger Than a Great Dane & I Hate Thunder!"  
**Anything else:** "Official greeter at home, no need for a doorbell & I love to jump up and give kisses!"



**Maple**

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**Closed Sunday to Tuesday**

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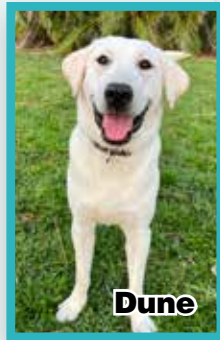
- Explore a 2,000-year-old Calusa Shell Mound with three acres of native gardens!
- View ancient, Calusa-made objects that have been discovered by Archaeologists
- Take a hands-on archaeology tour
- Guided Kayak Eco-Tours — Public Kayak Launch
- Observation/Fishing Pier

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**(239) 765-0865 • Dig Deeper at MoundHouse.org**



*continued from page 15***Name:** Dune**Nickname:** Dune and Sand Dune**Breed:** Lab**Age:** 1**Parent or best friend:** "My brother Fin."**Favorite activities:** "Playing fetch, spinning in circles and wrestling with Fin."**Guilty pleasures:** "Stealing any snack the baby is eating!"**Lifelong goals:** "Being happy and for everyone else to be happy."**Hidden secret:** "I know how to get into the food container, but if anyone asks, my brother did it!"**Anything else:** "I am always smiling; smiling is my favorite!"**Name:** Riley**Nickname:** Ry Ry**Breed:** Lab**Age:** 11**Parent or best friend:** "All eight of my human kids!"**Favorite activities:** "Laying around anywhere comfortable while babies and toddlers climb all over me."**Guilty pleasures:** "Pizza crusts and the veggies the kids don't want to eat."**Lifelong goals:** "Watching my kids grow up!"**Hidden secret:** "I am the only dog in the world who likes his ears tugged and tail pulled!"**Anything else:** "My bark is big and scary but I am literally the best dog in the world!"

a poinsettia plant spontaneously appeared near it," marvels Anita! "To my knowledge, this was not an organized campaign, just some unknown someone who did not want Ian to end this beloved island tradition, and then another poinsettia showed up and another and another, almost as a tribute, and before you knew it, there were poinsettias everywhere around the palm – it was amazing! When I heard what was occurring, I made my first trip to Times Square since Ian and found the sight powerful and emotional. Then the Town rebuilt the frame and the Poinsettia Christmas Tree came back to life."

For Anita, "it was very emotional, as it stands right by the ruins of my family's long-time 'Pier Peddler' Times Square store and even now, one year later, I still get emotional thinking about it."

### A Sign of Hope

Anita contemplates what the Poinsettia Christmas Tree means to the FMB community. "It is a sign of the Holidays, a gathering place, a location where you take your Christmas Card and family photographs, and quite simply, just something that everyone loves. In 2022 specifically, after Ian, it was a sign of hope and a statement that FMB is not giving up or giving in to our individual and collective devastation. It was islanders and visitors alike coming together, saying that we love Fort Myers Beach and we will rise again – we will not let Ian be the end but a new beginning. It became such a beautiful and fantastic tribute to the past as well as a sign of hope for our future; it was a beacon of hope, at least that is how it felt to me. Fort Myers Beach in general and Times Square specifically is such an important place to so many and an important part of my life."

Now that we are in the 2023 Holiday season, "this is the perfect opportunity to take stock of where we all are, now that Ian is a year behind us," Anita philosophizes. "To me, some days it seems like Ian was a long time ago and on others, it feels like yesterday, as many emotions are still so raw, so when you go through one of those rough days, remember our signs of hope, like the Poinsettia Christmas Tree, and know that brighter times are ahead. It can be easy to let everything overwhelm you but the Poinsettia Christmas Tree reminds us to be grateful for what we had and still have!" ■

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# After Ian!

## Chester Rogers

- By Gary Mooney -

Fort Myers Beach LIVING is catching up with our former Cover Story subjects, to learn what life is like for them "After Ian!" This month we speak with Chester Rogers who we profiled in June 2022.

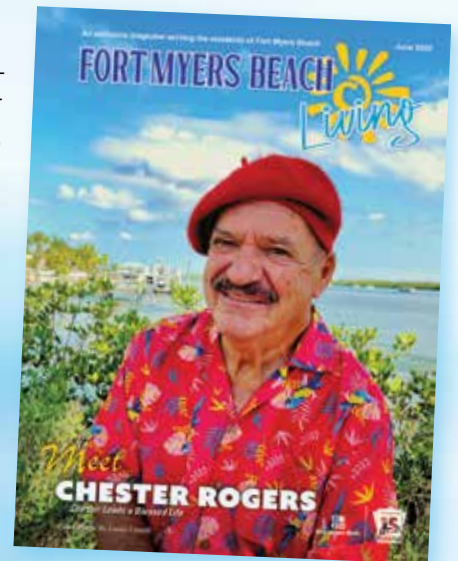
"Ian inflicted quite a bit of damage to me but not in the way it did for most people on FMB. I rent on a third floor so physically I weathered the storm fine, but I lost over 200 pieces of artwork along with numerous drawings and calendars as well as my mobility scooter, so that is tough. I was fortunate in that I saved all the photographs of my children but losing so much of my artwork is sad."

Chester intended to evacuate FMB before Ian's arrival, "but by the time local forecasters said we should go, the winds on the island were between 40 to 50 miles-per-hour and I did not dare drive my van over the Matanzas Pass Bridge, so I road Ian out here. My building is strong and sturdy so I was never in fear for my life, but at one point I looked out and water completely covered my van so I knew all my paintings, drawings, books and supplies inside it were gone and that was devastating. While I was ready to evacuate, I lived in this area my entire life and never experienced anything like Ian, so in that regard, the storm caught me off-guard! Physically, my tragedies occurred after Ian, as I fell and hurt my spine that required surgery and a nine-inch plate, then I broke my arm!"

The thought of evacuating to a local shelter might discourage some, but Chester had a wonderful time when he did so for Hurricane Irma in 2017. "I drew portraits of roughly 50 children during Irma so it was a pleasurable experience; I had fun and the kids made me laugh and that took my mind off of Irma."

While his apartment made it through Ian, he lost electricity and moved in with his brother, but once power came back, Chester returned to FMB. "I am on Saint Peter's Drive near the Lutheran Church and, believe it or not, our neighborhood is mostly fine as we have many multi-level homes. Everyone sustained damage to their first floors but above that, things seem to be all right and some did not even have roof damage so we made out much better than most of the island. I acquired a car and I am back to drawing my caricatures."

The main lesson that Chester took from Ian was that "I will evacuate much earlier next time in case the warning to leave comes late. As for my post-Ian world, despite my back and arm, my life gets better every day! If you know of any event for Autistic or Down Syndrome children, please contact me as I do those for free. The kids get cool artwork and roughly \$50 in retail items and I enjoy every minute!" ■



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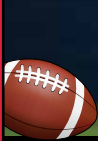
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