

An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Fort Myers Beach

October 2024

FORT MYERS BEACH



A BOAT CAPTAIN & A WAITRESS

Richard & Terry Cain Fight for FMB

Cover by Sandy Sandness

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FORT MYERS BEACH

A Best Version Media Magazine
An independently owned community magazine.

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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. 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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SUDOKU

- By Gary Mooney -

SUDOKU RULES:

Each row must contain the digits 1-9.

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Answers on page 10

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Hello Friends & Neighbors!

In this issue, you will read stories about two of FMB's fantastic volunteer groups, "the FMB Woman's Club" and "The Friends of Matanzas Pass Preserve (MPP)." That got me thinking about how FMB has a large number of volunteer groups despite our small full-time population!

Besides the FMB Woman's Club there is the FMB Community Foundation, Estero Island Garden Club, FMB Strong and more "Friends" groups than Ross, Rachel, Chandler, Monica, Phoebe and Joey! In addition to the Friends of Matanzas Pass Preserve (MPP), there are "Friends" groups for the Bay Oaks Recreational Center, FMB Public Library, Lovers Key State Park, the Mound House and probably a few more I forgot! But let's not forget the dynamic Parent-Teacher Organization for the Beach Elementary School.

If you are not yet affiliated with any of these volunteer groups, you may ask, "what difference can one person make" or "what will I get out of my volunteer experience?" Well, Terry Cain, "The Friends of MPP" Treasurer, reminds us that without them, the 60-acre MPP natural oasis would have been lost to development, but "a small group of volunteers came together to acquire it with their own money, to preserve it and to ensure that islanders do not have to leave their own home to enjoy fresh air, listen to Cicadas and return to nature and that is a marvelous achievement!"

Prior to Ian, the FMB Woman's Club just began a capital campaign to substantially renovate its original clubhouse, then the hurricane's aftermath changed their entire direction. Despite losing their Clubhouse as well as most of its member's own homes, the Woman's Club immediately shifted to a relief effort to help all our island neighbors. In partnership with the FMB Community Foundation over \$1.5 million and counting has been raised, with \$730,000 alone going to #WeAreFMB 33931 fund.

But FMB volunteering is much more than just dollars and cents! "The Friends of MPP" are always looking for new Friends," Terry relates. "If you want to join a group of likeminded people, we can help you." FMBWC President Dawn Thomas offers that "I joined to meet new people and now most of my friends are from the Woman's Club." FMBWC Treasurer Mari Torgerson explains that, "for me, it is the sense of community I get."

The easiest way to get involved is to learn about our volunteer clubs first-hand and the best way to do so is to attend a group meeting yourself. The FMBWC meets the first Wednesday of each month at the Bay Oaks Recreational Center at 6:30pm and all you must do is to bring a dish to share. The FMB Community Foundation hosts a "Happy Hour" the last Wednesday of the month at the Snug Harbor Waterfront Restaurant from 5:30 to 7pm. These forums let you learn about the mission of these organizations while having fun and making friends right away!

Speaking of making friends, please support our advertisers because we cannot deliver Fort Myers Beach LIVING to you free of charge without them. When you do visit, let them know that you saw their ad in our magazine so we can continue to provide you with this original entertainment each month!

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Sandy Sandness

Publisher

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“A BOAT CAPTAIN & A WAITRESS!”

Richard & Terry Cain Fight for FMB

- By Gary Mooney -

Terry and Richard Cain are from Beach Haven, New Jersey, a small town on an 18-mile-long island. They are the parents to sons Gregory and Sandor, grandparents to 9-year-old granddaughter Skyla and Gus, their 7-year-old, 130-pound Labrador Retriever.

Growing up in the same small town, did they experience love at first sight? “It was for me,” exclaims Richard! “Her father’s family owned a Beach Haven tavern for 47 years and I would occasionally go in to see this beautiful bartender who paid no attention to me. As fate would have it, we connected again on FMB.”

Things moved slower for Terry. “Richard was a friend long before we had a romance. We stayed in contact and when he moved to FMB in the early 1970s, many Beach Haven friends visited him and so did I. While it was not love at first sight for me with Richard, it sure was for FMB as it reminded me so much of Beach Haven before overdevelopment. I visited for a few more years then in the mid-70s I purchased an Andre Mar Drive home and Richard and a few others helped fix it up, so to repay him, I took him for a ‘Thank You Lunch’ to the ‘Everglades Rod & Gun Club.’ That lunch turned into a date and soon sparks flew for me too!” “The real way she repaid me

was to marry me,” laughs Richard! They wed 18 months later, in November 1987.

Just as Richard fell in love at first sight with Terry, he had a similar reaction to FMB. “I captained a boat down here just before Thanksgiving 1970. As I was still single, I brought a girlfriend with me. We tied up at the Snug Harbor Marina and walked to the old Mermaid Club. Sitting behind us were two shrimpers with their girlfriends when suddenly there was a gunshot! The bartender screams: ‘Harry – get that gun out of here!’ One shrimper had a gun in his boot and shot a hole into the tile floor. We were scared to death but the bartender just calmly threw them out. I said, ‘I like this place; it is so laid-back!’ No one called the sheriff or the SWAT Team like up north, so that was my Fort Myers Beach introduction.”

“Wife, Waitress, Environmentalist & Politician”

Richard came to FMB as a charter boat captain and remained so for the next 54 years. “I worked out of practically every FMB marina, managed Gulf Star Marina, and eventually owned roughly a half-dozen boats. The water then was pristine and full of fish like Grouper, so much better than today. Though I retired roughly four years ago, I work part-time on the seasonal Beach Tram, helping out

“When I come over the Skybridge and look at the Gulf and my wife,” waxes Richard, “I say that we live in an amazing place.”

the tourists, and I love it!”

Terry waitressed at The Pelican, even though she had a Marine Science degree, but she gave up waitressing when they had their two sons, 10 months apart. “I then began volunteering with Keep Lee County Beautiful and that is when I met Roger Clark who was then Lee County’s Conservation Land Manager. We were paying a ton for healthcare and Richard said I needed to get a job with benefits. I contacted Roger about a Six Mile Cypress Slough position but he said to wait, as he had something else in mind. Soon the ‘Beaches and Shoreline Manager for Natural Areas’ opened. When I interviewed, I was already in my early 40s and everyone else was right out of school so I told Richard, ‘they will never hire this old lady,’ but they offered it to me and I stayed with Lee County through my retirement.”

She took a “part-time job” as well – on the FMB Town Council, eventually becoming Vice Mayor! “John Mulholland was the Mayor and he was a wonderful man and enthusiastic environmentalist. He invited me to join him with several other regional leaders to write the ‘Charlotte Harbor National Estuaries Program’ for water quality issues that included eight counties and many municipalities like FMB and John was to participate in the signing ceremony. That morning, former Town Manager Marsha Segal-George telephoned me at 7 a.m. with the devastating news that John passed away and I must represent the Town at the ceremony. When I returned, people were already talking about me completing John’s term and Council appointed me at their next meeting. Two years later, I ran unopposed so I served five years on Council, that is how my resume became ‘Wife, Waitress, Environmentalist and Politician’ and how Richard and I evolved from ‘A Boat Captain & A Waitress!’”

Clawing & Scratching!

Richard and Terry eventually built their Bay Mar Drive home. “We found this vacant lot for \$35,000 and I thought



Sandor and Skyla with Richard.



Terry "loves being Grandma! We go to Fort Pierce often to see Skyla."



"Our residents are the best and the environment is wonderful."

that outrageous," recalls Richard. "The owner would not accept our lower offers, so I went to the closing clawing and scratching! Had I known then what I know now, I would have bought ten lots at that price! Two 70-year-old men built the house like a fortress and it has now weathered several major hurricanes and none better than Ian! We did not sustain any structural damage though we lost all of our landscaping and trees, so we were the two luckiest homeowners on FMB; our insurance check was just for \$223 so we are truly blessed."

"Fortunately, we were in New Jersey visiting family when Ian struck," Terry adds. "When we returned to Florida, we stayed with Sandor in Fort Pierce for two months so we were fortunate we had somewhere to go. As for our Bay Mar neighborhood, we lost a half-dozen houses but most of our homes near our cul-de-sac did well, probably because a house broke away and got stuck near us, forming a type of barrier. Thankfully, most of our neighbors

are already back."

In their free time, Richard collects duck decoys and does gardening, yardwork and traveling. Terry likes to read and loves "being Grandma! We go to Fort Pierce often to see Skyla. I love to travel, spend time with friends and environmental issues are important to us. I volunteer with 'The Friends of Matanzas Pass Preserve' and the 'Estero Bay Buddies,' but am trying to cut down; people formerly called me 'Mrs. Meeting!' If we all give back just a little, think how much we can accomplish!"

Keep Fighting

As to what FMB will look like in five years, Richard cautions that "our Council members must remember why the Town incorporated 25 years ago: to halt high-rise buildings! We held that line for a quarter-century and now developers want 17-story structures. Sanibel and FMB each have 35-foot height restrictions yet you do not see anyone

trying to build 17 stories there because their leaders do not budge. The Beach Elementary School has under 50 students and we no longer have quality of life things like the Cub Scouts or Little League because young families cannot afford to live here and that is sad." "It took more meetings than I can recall to author the Town's Comprehensive Plan," explains Terry. "The Comp Plan made us a tremendous residential community and if we follow it, we can be again."

Despite their concerns, their love for FMB remains strong. "When I come over the Skybridge and look at the Gulf and my wife," waxes Richard, "I say that we live in an amazing place with natural beauty, low crime and great people." "Our residents are the best," concurs Terry, "and the environment is wonderful, but I hope we can improve our water quality as that is everything. I am still talking about many of the same issues from 50 years ago and that makes me sad, but many people feel as strongly



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The Friends of Matanzas Pass Preserve

Volunteer Group Plans for MPP's Reopening

- by Gary Mooney, photo by Terry Cain -



The "Friends" sponsor and provide hundreds of nature and educational programs at Matanzas Pass Preserve.

"Matanzas Pass Preserve (MPP) at roughly 60 acres is one of the few natural areas and by far the largest left on FMB, where you can walk through what our typical barrier island was originally like for hundreds of years," says Terry Cain, Treasurer of "The Friends of Matanzas Pass Preserve (MPP)." "It features two different habitats, with the first the closest to the Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve with Black, White and Red Mangroves. As you move toward the island's interior, the topography gradually rises a few inches above the water table where you find hardwoods like Oaks and Gumbo Limbo trees as well as Cabbage Palms and understory bushes, with different canopies and differing types of critters."

It appeared that FMB might lose the MPP to development in the mid-1970s. That spurred a group of passionate islanders to form "The Friends of MPP" and through a seemingly never-ending series of donations and spaghetti dinners, they raised the necessary \$105,000 in just two years. Once they acquired it, the Friends donated the land to The Nature Conservancy in 1977 to ensure its conservation. Since then, The Friends continue to sponsor and provide hundreds of nature and educational programs, school field trips, eradication of invasive species, the reintroduction of native species and animals, untold workdays and numerous other efforts to maintain the MPP as the island's natural treasure.

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"Matanzas Pass Preserve at roughly 60 acres is one of the few natural areas and by far the largest left on FMB."



"We are presently restoring the planting area at the MPP entrance with barrier island native plants with identification placards, to show islanders and visitors what types of beautiful plants will survive best on FMB."

The Most Remarkable Thing

Like everywhere on FMB, Ian inflicted severe damage to MPP, some of which may not be apparent for several years. "Sadly, MPP has yet to reopen," Terry offers. "Ian lifted and twisted substantial areas of the MPP boardwalk and Lee County is working to replace it. The hardy mangroves look good but as we learned from Charley and other hurricanes, it can take up to five years after major storm events before the stress works its way through the system to accurately determine their health."

While work continues on MPP, the Friends are already planning its first events since Ian. "We are presently restoring the planting area next to the historic cottages at the MPP entrance with barrier island native plants with identification placards," Terry reports, "to show islanders and visitors what types of beautiful plants will survive best on FMB. Whenever Lee County reopens the MPP, we will host a major event to celebrate that day!"

"The Friends of MPP" are always looking for new Friends, Terry explains. "If you want

to join a group of likeminded people who want to maintain the natural health of FMB, to plant the right native plant in the right place without herbicides or pesticides, we can help you, and if clean water means as much to you as it does to us, we can teach you that too, because on a barrier island, water is everything! Simply go to www.friendsofmatanzaspaspreserve.org and if you have questions, contact me at terrybcain@juno.com."

To Terry, the most remarkable thing about the MPP is "our community came together to acquire it with their own money to preserve it! The funds did not come from Lee County or the state or federal governments but from our own little bodies and brains, to ensure that islanders do not have to leave their own home to enjoy a deep breath of fresh air, listen to the Cicadas and return to nature and that is a marvelous achievement! I hope that everyone visits the MPP when it reopens and we appreciate your continued support as everyone on FMB works together to get back on our feet after Ian!" ■

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October

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@Bay Oaks Recreational Center
The Bay Oaks Recreational Center is open and back to full operation! Attend fitness classes, indoor pickleball, open gym, after-school care, weight room & more. Monday through Thursday 7am to 7pm; Friday 7am to 8pm. See www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov.

CLUB REC!

@Bay Oaks Recreation Center
Bay Oaks hosts this incredible "After School Program" for Beach Elementary School students EVERY Monday through Friday throughout the academic year from 2 to 6pm. Staff picks up the kids directly from Beach Elementary and brings them to Bay Oaks for games, snacks & homework time. \$125 for FMB residents & \$175 for non-residents for the entire school year!

**Tues., Oct. 1
Senior Pump & Tone with Sue Anderson**

@Bay Oaks Recreational Center
Sculpt & define all muscles with barbells and hand weights in this 60-minute class set to music to increase your metabolism, boost your energy and make you feel great! "Senior Pump & Tone" is EVERY Tuesday & Thursday at 9:30am. No reservations necessary; \$15-per-class with discounts available if you pre-pay for ten. For information see www.FMBGOV.com.

**Wed., Oct. 2
Mound House Museum,
Grounds & Store**

@The Historic Mound House
Built in 1921, the Mound House is the oldest standing structure on FMB. It is a multi-level museum that displays Calusa artifacts, interactive exhibits and the one-of-a-kind 1,600-year-old underground shell mound attraction. Wednesdays through Saturdays 9am to 4pm with Grounds daily from 7:30am to 6pm. Adults \$15, Students \$8, Kids 6 to 12 \$5, & 5 & under free; Grounds free. See www.moundhouse.org.

**Wed., Oct. 2
FMB Woman's Club Monthly Meeting**

@Bay Oaks Recreational Center
Join the best club on the entire island; bring a dish to share and all are welcome! The meeting starts at 6:30pm; see www.fmb-wc.org.

**Thurs., Oct. 3
FMB Chamber "Coffee Connection"**

@VidaCann
Start your day with your FMB Chamber friends for networking with complimentary coffee and tasty breakfast items at VidaCann at 1141 Cape Coral Parkway, East Cape Coral. The FREE "Coffee Connection" is 8 to 9:30am; see www.fortmyersbeach.org.

**Thurs., Oct. 3
Body Pump with Sue Anderson**

@Bay Oaks Recreational Center
Get tone and stay fit with Sue EVERY Tuesday & Thursday at 8am. No reservations necessary; classes cost \$15 with discounts available if you pre-pay for ten. For information see www.FMBGOV.com.

**Fri. & Sat., Oct. 4 & 5
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**Saturdays, Oct. 5 & 12
"American Boating Course"**

@San Carlos Bay Squadron Classroom
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**Sun., Oct. 6
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@Bayside Park
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**Mon., Oct. 7
Spin with Sue Anderson**

@Bay Oaks Recreational Center
Increase your cardio, burn fat, gain leg strength, build muscular endurance & more with Sue EVERY Monday & Friday at 8am. No reservations necessary; classes cost \$15 with discounts available if you pre-pay for ten. For information see www.FMBGOV.com.

**Mondays, Oct. 7 & 21
FMB Town Council Meeting**

@Town Hall, Bay Oaks Recreational Center
The FMB Town Council continues its work to rebuild FMB at 9am; see www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov.

**Tues., Oct. 8
FMB Local Planning Agency Meeting**

@Town Hall, Bay Oaks Recreational Center
The FMB LPA, appointed by Town Council, continues its work to rebuild FMB at 9am; see www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov.

**Wed., Oct. 9
30/30 with Sue Anderson**

@Bay Oaks Recreational Center
Do 30 minutes of Spin then 30 minutes of Body Pump with Sue EVERY Wednesday at 7:30am. No reservations necessary; classes cost \$15 with discounts available if you pre-pay for ten. For information see www.FMBGOV.com.

**Wed., Oct. 9
FMB Town Council
Management & Planning Session**

@Town Hall, Bay Oaks Recreational Center
The FMB Town Council continues its work to rebuild FMB at 9am; see www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov.

**Wed., Oct. 9
Zumba with Jian Tang Heinel**

@Bay Oaks Recreational Center
Join Jian and experience the most fun you will ever have while exercising EVERY Monday & Wednesday at 10:15am. No reservations necessary; classes cost \$12 or five for \$50. For information see www.FMBGOV.com.

**Wed., Oct. 9
CROW Campus Tours**

@Center for the Rehabilitation Of Wildlife
An in-depth look at what the animal patients experience, from intake to release, including the hospital and treatment process. The 90-minute tour is Monday through Friday at 11am; \$25-per-person with advance registration and payment necessary at 239-472-3644, x-229 or reservations@crowclinic.org.

**Thurs., Oct. 10
FMB Chamber Membership Luncheon**

@Mango Rita's Rhythm House
Join your FMB Chamber friends to savor a scrumptious luncheon from Mango Rita's Rhythm House at 16440 Tamiami Trail, with a to-be-announced guest speaker, from 11:30am to 1pm. First Priority Restoration sponsors the October Luncheon. \$30 members & \$40 prospective members; see www.fortmyersbeach.org.

**Fri., Oct. 11
Iyengar Yoga with Susan Carter**

@Bay Oaks Recreational Center
Focus on creating space and alignment in the body and the careful sequencing of poses EVERY Friday with Susan at 9:15am. No reservations necessary; classes cost \$15 with discounts available if you pre-pay for ten. For information see www.FMBGOV.com.

**Fri., Oct. 11
Welcome & Discovery Center**

@Lovers Key State Park
The Welcome & Discovery Center educates and informs visitors about Lovers Key habitats through interactive displays Wednesdays through Fridays from 10am to 1pm. The W&DC is FREE with the park entry fee; see www.friendsofloverskey.org.

**Fri., Oct. 11
Shell Mound Tours**

@The Historic Mound House
Discover the archaeology and history of the Mound House and learn clues uncovered about this 1,600-year-

SUDOKU

Answers from page 3

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

old shell mound on this 30-minute tour every Wednesday through Saturday at 10am, Noon & 2pm. This hands-on tour explores the environment and cultural history of the site and features replica artifact demonstrations. \$5-per-person plus MH admission; see www.moundhouse.org.

Thurs., Oct. 17

Mound House Eco-Kayak Tours

@The Historic Mound House

Explore the winding mangrove creeks and hidden backwaters of the Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve on this 2-hour tour. The MH provides all equipment; ages 12 & up, weather permitting and participants must wear shoes and bring water. The Eco-Kayak Tours are every Wednesday through Saturday from 9 to 11am. \$50-per-person including MH admission with reservations necessary at www.moundhouse.org.

Thurs., Oct. 17

FMB Chamber "Business After Hours"

@Lake Michigan Credit Union

Join your FMB Chamber friends for a fun time at LMCU at 7580 Winkler Road while devouring delicious complimentary appetizers and enjoying a cash bar from 5:30 to 7pm. Members FREE & \$15 perspective members; see www.fortmyersbeach.org.

Wed., Oct. 23

FSW Volleyball v. Miami Dade College

@Suncoast Credit Union Arena

It is a rematch of the last two National Championship Matches when the two-time defending National Champion Lady Buccaneers of Florida SouthWestern State College take on their traditional rivals at 6pm! \$8 to \$10-per-person; see www.fswbucs.com.

Fri., October 25

Bay Oaks "Fright Night!"

@Bay Oaks Recreational Center

Calling all Princesses & Pirates, for a hauntingly good time, come to Bay Oaks for "Fright Night" for indoor & outdoor fun from 5 to 9pm! Enjoy the Haunted House, Corn Maze, big inflatables & bounce houses, Costume Contest, "Trunk or Treat," food & drink, music & lots of CANDY! The FREE "Kids Market" opens at 5pm. \$6 per person or \$20 for a family of four; see www.FMBGOV.com.

Sat., October 26

"Monofilament Madness"

@Salty Sam's Marina

Grab your gloves and kayak if you have one and meet at Salty Sam's Marina to help remove monofilament fishing lines and other debris from the water and shoreline from 8am to 2pm. To register and for more details, see www.eventbrite.com; the first 200 registrants received a complimentary t-shirt with a FREE Parrot Key luncheon following the cleanup!

Wed., Oct. 30

FMB Community Foundation Happy Hour

@Snug Harbor Waterfront Restaurant

The FMB Community Foundation is the island's leading philanthropic organization, so join in on the fun from 5:30 to 7pm; see www.fmbcommunityfoundation.com.

Thurs., Nov. 7

AND EVERY THURSDAY THROUGH APRIL Santini Marina Plaza Market

@Santini Marina Plaza

This FMB South End Market offers fresh produce, artisan foods, arts, crafts, clothing and more EVERY Thursday from 9am to 1pm; see www.41markets.com.



FMB Woman's Club New Clubhouse

Capital Campaign Underway

- by Gary Mooney, photo by Terry Cain -

Hurricane Ian devastated many FMB treasures including the historic FMB Woman's Club (FMBWC) Clubhouse that was the island's first schoolhouse, a teenage dancehall, and a community meeting place, so in January the FMBWC Board voted to rebuild!

"FMBWC President Dawn Thomas and I met with Jim Ink and Albert Dambrose in March," explains FMBWC Treasurer Mari Torgerson. "Jim and Albert generously donated their services and they conjured up a stunning blueprint. Our property at 175 Sterling Avenue is in a residential area, so their concept fits seamlessly into the neighborhood. It has a cottage look and Old Florida-feel. It will feature a community room for up to 120 people with an indoor / outdoor service bar and catering kitchen – perfect for weddings, birthday parties and baby showers as well as other island events. It is our vision to have a space where the Woman's Club can hold their meetings and events and so can other nonprofits and community organizations."

Off the common area will be three suites that island nonprofits can rent annually for a space they can call their own, adds Dawn. "We feel that people will like the Clubhouse's beachy feel and I love how the community room opens up to the balcony so everyone can enjoy the outdoor space."

4.3-Million Reasons

The FMBWC will be raising \$4.3 million for their new Clubhouse, "and we must have \$3 million in hand before we break ground," emphasizes Mari. "Once shovels hit the ground, it will take roughly 14 months to complete." "That means there are just 4.3-million reasons until we are done," laughs Dawn!

They are already chipping away at those 4.3-million reasons! "We are excited to be receiving donations from the people from whom we just met," says Mari. What most impresses

continued on page 14

Fright Night

Bay Oak Hosts Annual Family Halloween Tradition

- by Gary Mooney, photo by Danielle DiBona -



Calling all ghosts and goblins, pirates and princesses! The Bay Oaks Recreational Center hosts its annual Spook-tacular Halloween extravaganza, "Fright Night," on Friday, October 25, from 5 to 9 p.m.! "Fright Night" features indoor and outdoor fun for the entire family, including attractions like the Haunted House, Corn Maze, big inflatables & bounce houses, Costume Contest, "Trunk or Treat," food and drinks, music and lots of CANDY! The FREE "Kids Market" opens at 5 p.m., with "Fright Night" costing \$6 per person or \$20 for a family of four.

"'Fright Night' is most definitely a Family-Friendly event," emphasizes Parks & Recreation Manager Danielle DiBona! "Kids of all ages, from 3 through 80, will have a blast, as we have something for everyone. Parents need not worry about their littlest ones getting too scared because we start out the evening with the Haunted House being toddler-friendly, then after the first hour or so, we alert everyone that the Haunted House will now be getting scarier. Even after we ramp up the Haunted House, young families can still enjoy things like the toddler Bounce House."

A big part of "Fright Night" is the candy and Bay Oaks is accepting donations. "Drop off your candy at either Town Hall or the Bay Oaks front desk through Thursday, October 24," Danielle says. "There are no candy limitations, like avoiding peanuts, as we leave that up to the parents as to what to give their kids. We accept all candy donations but chocolates are the most popular! We still need volunteers as well, for things like helping with the games or Bounce House, participating in the 'Trunk or Treat' or in being 'scary' in the Haunted House!

To volunteer, email us at eadkins@fmbgov.com or call the Bay Oaks front desk at 239-765-4222 by Monday, October 21. For more information, see www.FMBGOV.com."

Brand new this year is the "Kids Market." "This is a wonderful opportunity for children to learn how to run their own businesses," Danielle offers. "They interact with customers, make change, promote themselves and sell products, many of which they made with their own hands! To better generate foot traffic, the 'Kids Market' is totally FREE from 5 to 6 p.m."

To Danielle, her favorite part of "Fright Night" "is a tie between the Haunted House and Costume Contest! I love the Haunted House because even though I helped to build and decorate it, it still scares me! In the Costume Contest, I love seeing the effort that kids of all ages put into their costumes and if they receive an award, the look on their faces is pure joy. Is there anything more wholesome – I don't think so! 'Fright Night' will be bigger and better than ever before, full of indoor and outdoor activities that cover the entire Bay Oaks campus, so come on out to support the beach community while having a ton of fun at a party that you will never forget!" ■

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FORT MYERS BEACH Woman's Club

Dawn about these early contributions is that “once we explain that this building is not just a Clubhouse but a focal point where islanders can get together, that businesses can use for events and where nonprofits can host their fundraisers, it immediately piques their interest. We want to work together as a community to build back and these early donors see and believe in this vision.”

This is actually the FMBWC's second Clubhouse capital campaign. “We announced roughly five years ago that we were going to substantially renovate the original building, but then we were hit with a global pandemic,” recalls Dawn. “We got back to work and then Ian changed the entire direction. Suddenly our fundraising efforts shifted to hurricane relief and what we could do to help all our island neighbors. The FMBWC raised over \$1.5 million and counting, with \$730,000 alone going to the #WeAreFMB 33931 Fund that we partnered with the FMB Community Foundation. Remember that while our members were raising all those dollars, that most of us lost our homes as well, so that was a Herculean effort.”

Join The Club!

Mari and Dawn rave about their FMBWC experiences and encourage those who have an interest to learn more about the club! “Be a part of one of the island's leading philanthropic groups while having a ton of fun are just two reasons,” says Dawn. “I joined to meet new people and now most of my friends are from the Club. I love the way everyone works together to support our island!” “For me, it is the sense of community I get,” adds Mari. “And gentlemen, we want you too as we do not discriminate!”

For membership information or to learn more about how to support the Club, see www.fmb-wc.org. “There are membership and capital campaign tabs,” says Mari.” Better yet, attend a FMBWC monthly meeting at the Bay Oaks Recreational Center the first Wednesday of each month, with our next meeting on October 2 at 6:30 p.m.” “If you want a personal presentation on the capital campaign or to discuss naming rights, we will come to you,” concludes Dawn. “Even though we are just beginning, everyone seems really excited and receptive.” ■



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Butternut Squash Soup

by Sandy Sandness



INGREDIENTS

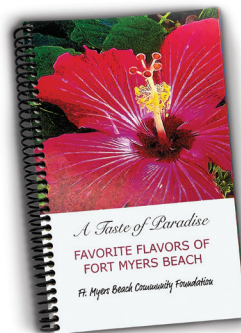
- 1 white onion, peeled and diced
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 2 cups vegetable broth
- 1 carrot, peeled and roughly chopped
- 1 Granny Smith apple, cored and roughly chopped
- 1 medium (about 3–4 lb) butternut squash, peeled, seeded and diced
- 1 sprig fresh sage
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne
- A pinch of ground cinnamon and nutmeg
- 1/2 cup unsweetened coconut milk
- fine sea salt and freshly-cracked black pepper, to taste
- Optional garnishes: smoked paprika, extra drizzle of unsweetened coconut milk, or see more ideas above

INSTRUCTIONS

- Sauté the onion and garlic. Heat the olive oil in a large stockpot over medium-high heat. Add the onion and sauté for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until softened and translucent. Add the garlic and sauté for 1 to 2 more minutes, stirring frequently, until fragrant.
- Simmer: Add the vegetable broth, carrot, apple, butternut squash, sage, cayenne, cinnamon and nutmeg and stir to combine. Continue cooking until the soup reaches a simmer. Then cover, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer for 20-30 minutes until the vegetables are all tender and mash easily with a fork. Remove and discard the sage. Stir in the coconut milk.
- Purée: Use an immersion blender to purée the soup until smooth.
- Season and serve: Taste and season the soup generously with salt and pepper as needed. Serve warm, topped with your desired garnishes, and enjoy!

A Taste of Paradise

If you love to cook, the Fort Myers Beach Community Foundation's cookbook, *A Taste of Paradise: Favorite Flavors of Fort Myers Beach*, is full of delicious recipes from the kitchens of our locals! It is available for purchase at



www.fmbcommunityfoundation.com



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