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An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Fort Myers Beach

September 2025

FORT MYERS BEACH



Living



*“A Friendly
& Fun Place!”*

Jane McCloskey

Cover by Sandy Sandness

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FORT MYERS BEACH *LIVING*

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.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

- 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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- By Gary Mooney -

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- Each row must contain the digits 1-9.
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SUDOKU

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Answers on page 10



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Hello Friends & Neighbors!

This month's cover feature is the new Fort Myers Beach Community Foundation Co-President Jane McCloskey, whose term began on July 1. FMB LIVING previously profiled her Co-President, Amy Gillette and her husband Tre roughly two years ago. The FMB Community Foundation is an indispensable island institution that awarded in 2024 alone over \$107,000 to FMB non-profits along with fourteen scholarships to FMB students. You will find as well a feature on the upcoming "Island Hopper Songwriter's Fest" that will be at nine different FMB bars and restaurants from September 26 through 28. Many islanders call the annual "Island Hopper" the beginning of our Tourism Season!

The Historic Mound House needs volunteer citizen-scientists for its "What's In The Water" sampling day on Saturday, September 13, from 12:30 to roughly 1:30 p.m. Those of us who were here for 2018's twin water quality crisis of Red Tide and Blue-Green Algae remember what a nightmare those months were, both environmentally and economically. I was particularly struck by this quote from "What's In The Water" coordinator Nicloe Alyse Wiegold: "When you chose to live on FMB, you accepted the unspoken rule that you will understand, respect and protect the environment of your home. You agree to join our cause to take care of the environment and not to screw up the water. This is our collective responsibility so we really need you to care about this. Remember, clean water is the foundation of FMB, because without clean water, we have nothing." That sounds just about right.

I hope you caught the July 21 episode of the new NBC show, "Survival Mode," that chronicled the harrowing experiences of several of our neighbors who chose to remain on FMB for Hurricane Ian, and sadly not all of them would survive. Today, those who lived through

Ian are unanimous in saying they made a mistake in not evacuating.

September is the peak of hurricane season, as evidenced by our recent history with Irma, Ian and Helene. Should Lee County urge us to leave this year, think of it as a "Vacation" rather than an "Evacuation." Take a ride up the coast or across the state, where offseason resort rates are as inexpensive as here, with every restaurant and bar running some kind of special. Then after a few glorious days and nights, return to FMB when our businesses reopen, our homes are safe and the island cleanup underway. As "Survival Mode" reinforced, PREPARE AS IF YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT, AS IT JUST MIGHT, and don't let our devastating recent history repeat itself.

Speaking of glorious FMB days and nights, please continue to support our advertisers because we cannot deliver "Fort Myers Beach LIVING Magazine" to you free of charge without them. When you visit, please let them know that you saw their ad in our magazine so we can provide you with this community-oriented original entertainment each month!

*Enjoy "The Island Hopper Songwriter's Fest"
& Have An Awesome Beach Day!*



Sandy Sandness

Publisher

Fort Myers Beach LIVING

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“A Friendly & Fun Place!”

Jane McCloskey

– By Gary Mooney –

“I was born and raised in Old Greenwich, Connecticut and I remained there until I went away to what is now Arcadia College in Pennsylvania,” says new Fort Myers Beach Community Foundation Co-President Jane McCloskey. “I remained in Pennsylvania through Graduate School and then starting my family. In 2005, however, I bought a home in Zephyrhills, Florida, because my brother Chris lived there. I visited Chris and his wife for a week and decided that it was a fun and nice place, so I purchased a house that I initially used as a rental property. I eventually relocated to Zephyrhills fulltime in 2010, as by then I could work from home. I quickly got to love Florida’s nice weath-

er and it was wonderful to put the cold weather in my rearview mirror!”

Jane however had another brother, Tim, who lived in Southwest Florida, “and he convinced me to move down here,” she recollects. “That appealed to me as Zephyrhills was already overcrowded. I found the Parker Lakes community that is about five miles from FMB and moved here in 2019. I love Parker Lakes; it is quiet and lovely and is conveniently located to everything I need, including FMB.”

She is the mother of one son and two step-sons. “My boy is Todd who is married to Geeta and they have a son,

Jane will permanently relocate to Richmond, Virginia, in Fall 2026. “It is time for me to spend more time with the grandchildren and great-grandkids.”

Aidan. My stepsons are Kenny and James. Kenny’s wife is Emmy and their son is Jason. James is the father of three girls: Valerie, Carli & Taylor, and my grandchildren have blessed me now with seven great-grandchildren!” In Fall 2026, Jane’s Southwest Florida adventure will conclude. “I will permanently relocate to Richmond, Virginia, as Todd and his family will move there from Washington DC. It is time for me to spend more time with the grandchildren and great-grandkids.”

The Computer Revolution

Before retiring in 2019, Jane “spent most of my professional career in software development, although through and after Graduate School, I was a Special Education instructor at a private school in Elkins Park. This was before regulations required that public schools educate all children regardless of ability or behavioral problems so that was a tough occupation. After seven years, I decided to try something else and that led to software development.”

Beginning in 1981, Jane worked at Digilog, “programming the disc drives for our personal computers, then I shifted to designing and programming the operating systems for our line of protocol analyzers until 1995. Next, I moved on to SoftSwitch that was later bought by the larger Lotus software company and then the even larger IBM acquired us. I was laid off in 2009, after which I worked with KVB-Enertec on software monitoring emissions from power plants, doing that through my retirement. Looking back, I was in on the beginning of the computer revolution and I really liked that!”

Jane enjoys reading and gardening, “though I don’t garden as much as I like because of the heat. I belong to several lunch groups and that is fun. I love trivia and going to several of our local theaters, like the Players Circle



Jane is the mother of one son and two step-sons. "My boy is Todd who is married to Geeta and they have a son, Aidan. My stepsons are Kenny and James."



Amy Gillette and Jane began their term as FMB Community Foundation Co-Presidents on July 1.

Theater and the Fort Myers Theatre because they always put on such great shows! Then, of course, there is my work with the FMBCF."

Madam Co-President

When Jane moved to Southwest Florida, she was eager for an outlet where she could meet new people. "My friend Maggie, who I worked with in Pennsylvania, lived here and she was a FMBCF member so she invited me to join, saying it was a great way to meet people as well as a wonderful way to contribute to my new community, so I became a member. I quickly fell in love with FMB; the women in the CF are fantastic and we are all quite close. FMB reminds me so much of Old Greenwich because it is such a close and quaint little community."

On July 1, Jane began her term as FMBCF Co-President. "There is a FMBCF regulation that you must already be on the Board of Directors to become President, so you have a grasp of the current activities, and I was on the Board so I stepped up, with one provision. Since I do not live on the island, I requested that someone else with a long FMB history serve with me as Co-President and Amy Gillette said that she would. Sadly, Hurricane Ian forced Amy off the island but she and her husband Tre are long-time FMB residents and businessowners."

Jane proudly raves about the FMBCF! "We exist for one reason – we raise a lot of money to give away a lot of money! I was reviewing old documents and noticed that in our first ten years, we contributed a total of \$117,000 to FMB non-profits and scholarships, but in the last year alone, we distributed over \$107,000 to organizations that provide for FMB residents!"

Her favorite component is the FMBCF Scholarship Fund. "Last May, we awarded \$21,000 in \$1,500 scholarships to fourteen students of parents or grandparents who either live or work on FMB, and these dollars can go to any educational institution, be it a traditional college, junior college or trade school. For the past six years, we have been funding an endowment at Florida SouthWestern State College (FSW).

With this year's contribution, we reached \$75,000 so FSW will begin distributing scholarships from the interest this fall. We also gave FSW \$10,000 to give to students with an FMB affiliation."

"Halloween Bar Crawl"

Don't think however that the FMBCF is all work and no play, Jane cautions! "We do monthly Socials all year and we invite husbands, family and friends. We have a monthly luncheon meeting where we hear from a local non-profit speaker. We host super-fun events like our annual Fashion Show and yearly Casino Night. This fall, we start a new tradition with the "Halloween Bar Crawl" on Saturday evening, October 25, cosponsored by The Whale, so see details and registration information at www.fmbcommunityfoundation.com. In conjunction with Keep Lee County Beautiful, we conduct five yearly Beach Cleanups – on New Year's Day and July 5th, as well as the 'Great American Cleanup' each spring; 'International Coastal Cleanup Day' on Saturday, September 20; and 'Monofilament Madness' on Saturday, October 25."

Jane reminds that "my main reason for joining was to make friends and the FMBCF is a fun organization full of good people, as enjoying a terrific time while helping others and the environment is a great combination! We always want new members and, like me, you do not have to live on FMB. We recently installed our first official male FMBCF member, and that should bring out another point of view, so more men would be nice and everyone is truly welcome! You can find membership information at www.fmbcommunityfoundation.com."

As she peers into the future, Jane contemplates what FMB will look like in five years. "Unfortunately, many tall buildings and hopefully the FMB Pier will return, but other than that, I am not sure. Sadly, many long-time residents no longer live on FMB due to Ian so new people bring change. What I hope is that the dialogue becomes less divisive and things settle down as you rarely accomplish anything positive when everyone is so angry. After all, FMB's best attribute is its people. While the beach is beautiful, the shopping terrific, and the Gulf breezes cool, FMB's trademark is that it is such a friendly and fun place!" ■



FORT MYERS – ISLANDS, BEACHES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

ISLAND HOPPER

Songwriter Fest

The Hit-Makers

Island Hopper Songwriter's Fest Returns for 11th Year

- by Gary Mooney, Images Courtesy of Fort Myers-Islands, Beaches & Neighborhoods -

Everyone knows The Carpenter's "We've Only Just Begun," but who knew the then-unknown Paul Williams wrote it? Patsy Cline struck it big with "Crazy," but a clean-cut, suit-wearing young man with short hair named Willie Nelson penned it. "Me & Bobby McGee" made Janis Joplin a star, but previously unheard-of Kris Kristofferson authored the lyric. While it is the performer who makes a song legendary, many of our greatest and most beloved singles have a nearly anonymous writer behind the scenes, some who eventually become famous in their own right, but most who carve out long successful careers as the faceless talents behind our hit music.

To discover this artistic magic for yourself, attend the "Island Hopper Songwriters Fest!" The "Island Hopper" is a 10-day

Southwest Florida music festival featuring performances by the best Broadcast Music, Inc.'s (BMI) singer-songwriters from Nashville and beyond. In 2024, "USA Today" ranked the "Island Hopper" as the Fourth Best Music Festival in the United States. This year's Festival features at least 66 performers at roughly 20 area venues in approximately 80 performances, with the vast majority of the shows FREE, though there are nine ticketed experiences for "Festival" headliners, including two on FMB.

The "Island Hopper" is from Friday, September 19, through Sunday, September 28, including shows exclusively at various FMB venues from Friday through Sunday, September 26 to 28. FMB Friday shows are from 7 to 10:30 p.m., with weekend performances from roughly 2 to 10 p.m. The "Island Hopper" begins

The "Island Hopper" is a 10-day Southwest Florida music festival featuring the best BMI singer-songwriters from Nashville and beyond.



on Captiva Island from September 19 through 21, moves to Cape Coral on September 22 & 23, then to Downtown Fort Myers from September 24 to 25, before concluding on Fort Myers Beach.

A Dynamic Combination

Nancy MacPhee, Manager of Product Development for the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau (VCB), explains why everyone should attend the “Island Hopper.” “What better way is there to enjoy fabulous music while watching a magnificent sunset on FMB! On top of that, the ‘Island Hopper’ is the ideal forum to boost business during the slowest economic time of the year. The ‘Island Hopper’ is a very popular event that continues to grow every year, as the audiences just love it and they return again and again, bringing family and friends with them. While people travel from all over to enjoy the ‘Island Hopper,’ we hope all of our local residents take this opportunity to delight in first-class entertainment right here in your own backyard! In fact, turn the ‘Island Hopper’ into a ‘Stay-Cation,’ because rates now are as low as they will be all year. We have sixteen great local hotel partners, including several on FMB, so spend some time on the beach while listening to these tremendous musical performers.”

“The ‘Island Hopper’ offers the Southwest Florida community the unique experience of getting to listen to some of our nation’s greatest songwriters who wrote many of the most iconic songs made famous by the biggest acts in Country music, as well as other lyrical styles,” adds Miriam Dotson, the VCB Communications Manager. “The artists will not only sing their songs, but they will tell you the story behind the tunes, and who doesn’t like being let in on a secret, and that makes their performances even more special! When you combine that with the natural beauty of FMB, that is a dynamic combination. Great music, terrific entertainers, Gulf breezes, a cocktail or mocktail, with most of the shows FREE – how can you top that?”

FMB Ticketed Events & “Home Town Girl”

The ‘Island Hopper’ offers shows at nine FMB venues: Alair Custom Homes; DiamondHead Beach Resort; Margaritaville Beach



This year’s Festival features at least 66 performers in approximately 80 performances at roughly 20 venues, with most shows FREE!

Resort; Matanzas On The Bay; Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina; Yucatan Beach Stand Bar & Grill, and Bayside Park, with food and beverage service from Nervous Nellie’s; Snug Harbor Waterfront Restaurant, and Wahoo Willie’s. Most of the performances are FREE, though there are two FMB ticketed events.

On Saturday, September 27, the “Island Hopper” presents “Canvas & Chords” with Danny Myrick and Katrina Cain, along with local artist Lacy McClary, who paints live, at Alair Custom Homes at 4 p.m. The next day, the “Pink Shell Pool Party” closes out the 2025 “Island Hopper” at the Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina with Country superstar Chris Young at 5 p.m.

continued on page 14

Ft. Myers Beach

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September

**Monday Through Friday
Bay Oaks Recreational Center**

@Bay Oaks Recreational Center
The Bay Oaks Recreational Center is partially reopen, following its closure after Hurricanes Helene & Milton, on Mondays through Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Indoor Pickleball is Tuesday & Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. with Open Gym on Fridays from 5 to 7 p.m. Both are FREE to FMB residents and \$5 for all others. The Weight & Cardio Room is open again as well. For Bay Oaks status updates, see www.fortmyersbeachfl.org.

**Monday Through Friday
CLUB REC!**

@Bay Oaks Recreational Center
Bay Oaks hosts this incredible "After School Program" for Beach Elementary School students EVERY Monday through Friday throughout the academic year for games, snacks and homework from 2 to 6 p.m. \$125 for FMB residents & \$175 for non-residents per semester! For information see www.FMBGOV.com.

**Saturdays
"American Boating Course"**

@San Carlos Bay Squadron Classroom
The "American Boating Course" does not meet in September but returns on October 4 & 11. This 2-day, 8-hour basic boating class includes Florida navigation rules and how to deal with water emergencies. \$65-per-person & \$20 each additional person from 8:15 a.m. to Noon; see www.scbps.com.

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1
HAPPY LABOR DAY!**

**Tuesday, September 2
& EVERY MONDAY
THROUGH FRIDAY
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 11 a.m.; \$25-per-person with advance registration and payment necessary at 239-472-3644, x-229 or reservations@crowclinic.org.

**Wednesday, September 3
& EVERY WEDNESDAY
THROUGH SATURDAY
The Historic 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 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with Grounds daily from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Adults \$15, Students \$8, Kids 6 to 12 \$5, & 5 & under free; Grounds free. See www.moundhouse.org.

**Wednesday, September 3
& EVERY WEDNESDAY
"Story Time"**

@The FMB Public Library
The perfect way to educate and entertain your little ones, with a family-friendly story each Wednesday at 10 a.m. There is something for everyone at the fabulous FMB Public Library! For more information, see www.fmb.lib.fl.us.

**Thursday, September 4
FMB Chamber "Coffee Connection"**

@Keep Lee County Beautiful
Start your day with your FMB Chamber friends for networking with complimentary coffee and tasty breakfast items at Keep Lee County Beautiful at 4300 Ford Street, #108. The FREE "Coffee Connection" is 8 to 9:30 a.m.; see www.fortmyersbeach.org.

**Thursday, September 4
& EVERY WEDNESDAY
THROUGH SATURDAY
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 11 a.m. \$50-per-person including MH admission with reservations necessary at www.moundhouse.org.

**Thursday, September 4
& EVERY THURSDAY THROUGH
SATURDAY
FMB Art Association September
Show: "Anything Goes"**

@FMBAA Gallery
Marvel at the Fort Myers Beach Art Association's September Show, "Anything Goes," through September 19 at their new Gallery at 13451 McGregor Boulevard, Unit #1, in Cypress Square in Fort Myers, near the Prawnbroker Restaurant & Fish Market. The Gallery is open Thursdays through Saturdays with free admission from Noon to 6 p.m. For more information, see www.fortmyersbeachart.com.

**Friday, September 5
Fort Myers Mighty Mussels
v. St. Lucie Mets**

@Hammond Stadium, Lee Health Sports Complex
The Mighty Mussels, the Low A affiliate of the Minnesota Twins, take on St. Lucie of the New York Mets organization at 7:05 p.m.! Following the game is the FINAL Fantastic Fireworks Extravaganza of the 2025 season, so Play Ball! The Mussels & Mets play on Saturday, September 6 at 6:05 p.m. then wrap up 2025 on Sunday, September 7 at Noon; tickets \$10 to \$17. See www.mightymussels.com.

**Sunday, September 7
& EVERY SUNDAY
Bayside Park Concert Series**

@Bayside Park
Relax while listening to fantastic tunes from local musicians at these FREE weekly outdoor concerts, weather permitting, from 4 to 7 p.m.! September 7: TBA; September 14: "The Echo"; September 21: TBA; & September 28: "Riverside". See www.fortmyersbeach.org.

**Sunday, September 7
& EVERY SUNDAY
Reggae Party**

@Lighthouse Island Resort Tiki Bar
After you enjoy the "Bayside Park Concert Series," boogie on over to the nearby Lighthouse Island Resort Tiki Bar to get your Reggae on from 6 to 9 p.m. Dreadlocks optional! See www.lighthouseislandresort.com.

**Tuesday, September 9
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 9 a.m.; see www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov for a possible location change.

**Wednesday, September 10
& EVERY WEDNESDAY
THROUGH SATURDAY
Calusa Tours**

@The Historic Mound House
Discover the incredible history of the Calusa, the original stewards of Southwest Florida, on this 30-minute guided outdoor tour. Learn how this powerful and innovative Indigenous society thrived across our region for centuries, leaving an enduring legacy still visible today with their shell mounds. Explore how the Calusa shaped their environment and uncover the stories revealed by archaeologists through hands-on activities such as an atlatl demonstration. Calusa Tours are Wednesday through Saturday at 11 a.m. & 1 p.m. \$15 includes Mound House admission; see www.moundhouse.org.

**Thursday, September 11
FMB Town Council Meeting**

@Town Hall, Bay Oaks Recreational Center
The FMB Town Council continues its work to rebuild FMB at 9 a.m.; please note the different day for this meeting. For more information and a possible location change, see www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov.

SUDOKU

Answers from page 3

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Thursday, September 11

FMB Chamber

Membership Luncheon

@Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina
Join your FMB Chamber friends to savor a scrumptious luncheon from the Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina while listening to a presentation from Steven's Construction from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Waste Pro sponsors the September Luncheon. \$32 members & \$42 prospective members; see www.fortmyersbeach.org.

Thursday, September 11

FMB Town Council Meeting:

1st Budget Hearing

@Town Hall, Bay Oaks Recreational Center
The FMB Town Council begins to make its final adjustments to the Town's proposed 2025-26 Fiscal Year Budget from 5 to 8 p.m. For a potential location change, see www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov.

Friday, September 12

Welcome & Discovery Center

@Lovers Key State Park
The Welcome & Discovery Center educates and informs visitors about Lovers Key habitats through interactive displays Wednesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The W&DC is FREE with the park entry fee; see www.friendsoflovesskey.org.

Saturday, September 13

"What's In The Water"

Sample Collection Day

@The Historic Mound House
It's that time again! FMB volunteer citizen-scientists collect valuable water quality samples and data for FMB and the Estero Bay from 12:30 to roughly 2 p.m. We still need volunteers so register in advance with Nicole at nweigold@FGCU.edu.

Saturday, September 13

Second Saturday: "Baile y Comida"

@The Historic Mound House
Join us at the Mound House Museum for "Baile y Comida," a special event celebrating Latinx Heritage Month from 6 to 8 p.m. Enjoy a guided tour of the site, a delicious meal, and a lively dance lesson while learning about Southwest Florida's rich history! \$30-per-person for Mound House members; \$40 for all others. Register in advance at www.moundhouse.org.

Thursday, September 18

FMB Chamber

"Business After Hours"

@Lovers Key State Park
Join your FMB Chamber friends for a fun time at the beautiful Welcome & Discover Center in Lovers Key State Park! Enjoy delicious complimentary appetizers and a cash bar from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Members FREE & \$16 perspective members; see www.fortmyersbeach.org.

Saturday, September 20

International Coastal Cleanup Day

@Fort Myers Beach
Join your FMB Community Foundation & "Keep Lee County Beautiful" friends with the "International Coastal Cleanup Day" from 8 to 10 a.m. KLCB provides the gloves, garbage bags, pickers, water and more while the FMBCF helps hand out the materials so volunteers have everything they need. Register in advance at www.KLCB.org and see the Reservation System link.

Wednesday, September 24

FMB Town Council Meeting

@Town Hall, Bay Oaks Recreational Center
The FMB Town Council continues its work to rebuild FMB at 9 a.m.; please note the different day for this meeting. For more information and a potential location change, see www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov.

Wednesday, September 24

FMB Town Council Meeting:

2nd Budget Hearing

@Town Hall, Bay Oaks Recreational Center
The FMB Town Council sets the Town's final 2025-26 Fiscal Year Budget from 5 to 7 p.m. For a potential location change, see www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov.

Wednesday, September 24

FSW Volleyball v.

Polk State College Eagles

@Suncoast Credit Union Arena
The Florida SouthWestern State College Lady Buccaneers are the reigning Three-Time Junior College Volleyball National Champions. They continue their "four-peat" quest by hosting conference rival Polk State College Eagles at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$8 to \$10; see www.fswbucs.com.

Thursday, September 25

& EVERY THURSDAY THROUGH SATURDAY

FMB Art Association

October Show: "Plein Air Exhibit"

@FMBAA Gallery
Marvel at the Fort Myers Beach Art Association's October Show, "Plein Air Exhibit," through Friday, October 24, at their new Gallery at 13451 McGregor Boulevard, Unit #1, in Cypress Square in Fort Myers, near the Prawnbroker Restaurant & Fish Market. The Gallery is open Thursdays through Saturdays with free admission from Noon to 6 p.m. For more information, see www.fortmyersbeachart.com.

Friday through Sunday, September 26 to 28

"Island Hopper

Singer-Songwriter Fest"

@Various FMB Venues
The annual "Island Hopper Singer-Songwriter Fest" returns to Southwest Florida from January 19 through 28, with the final three days on FMB and most of the shows FREE! For the entire schedule, see www.IslandHopperFest.com.

Saturday, September 27

"Canvas & Chords"

@Alair Custom Homes
This special ticketed "Island Hopper" FMB show features Danny Myrick and Katrina Cain, along with local artist Lacy McClary, who paints live, at Alair Custom Homes at 4 p.m. For details, tickets, & the entire "Island Hopper" schedule, see www.IslandHopperFest.com.

Sunday, September 28

"Pink Shell Pool Party"

@Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina
The "Pink Shell Pool Party" closes out the 2025 "Island Hopper" with Country superstar Chris Young at 5 p.m.! Young is a multi-platinum global entertainer with over nine billion global streams, 14 career Number One singles, numerous Grammy nominations, and "Performance of The Year" at the CMA Music Awards. For details, tickets, & the entire "Island Hopper" schedule, see www.IslandHopperFest.com.

Friday & Saturday, October 3 & 4 AND EVERY FRIDAY & SATURDAY Fort Myers Beach Market

@Times Square
This Downtown FMB Market offers fresh produce, artisan foods, arts, crafts, clothing and more EVERY Friday & Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; see www.41markets.com.

Saturday, October 25

"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 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Register in advance at www.KLCB.org and see the Reservation System link..

If you belong to a new or existing FMB neighborhood group or community club, please submit your event information to gmooney@bestversionmedia.com. The submission deadline is the 20th of each month, 6 weeks in advance of publication.



Nicole Alyse Weigold in the Vester Field Station water quality laboratory

What's In The Water

Volunteers Needed for September 13 Water Quality Sampling Day

- by Gary Mooney -

"The next 'What's In The Water' test sampling day is Saturday, September 13, and we need volunteer citizen-scientists to assist us from 12:30 to roughly 1:30 p.m.," explains Nicole Alyse Weigold, the Bonita Water Steward who is with the Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) Water School and coordinates "What's In The Water." "The volunteer citizen-scientists pick up their testing kits from the Mound House at 12:30. We have 46 island-wide testing sites so everyone will collect two water quality samples at approximately 1 p.m."

The "What's In The Water" Project, sponsored by the historic Mound House in partnership with FGCU and the FMB Chamber of Commerce, began in 2019. "What's In The Water" studies non-point source pollution coming from FMB into the Gulf of America and Estero Bay. The program pays particular attention to nutrients that contribute to Red Tide Harmful Algae Blooms like the one that precipitated our Summer 2018 water quality crisis.

"We ask our citizen-scientists to collect two samples at 1 p.m.," says Nicole, "to give us a true island-wide snapshot of our water at that exact point in time, to use to build upon past and future readings. The volunteers then immediately return their samples to the Mound House and the rest of your Saturday is yours! We have 26 volunteers so far and I would love to double that, so if you can help on September 13, email me at nweigold@fgcu.edu. I will confirm your registration and send you any additional instructions."

Once the volunteers return their samples to the Mound House, Nicole will immediately test one for color-dissolved organic matter and record the data. She freezes the other to take to her FGCU laboratory at the Vester Field Station for orthophosphate, nitrate/nitrite, and ammonium analysis. Researchers will analyze the results to identify any high level nutrient "hot spots" and make recommendations on how to lower non-point source pollution.

"We look for nutrient loads, particularly from nitrogen and phosphorus, that get into the water from sources like fertilizer, septic tanks and associated runoffs," adds Nicole. "I heard Louise Kowitch speak at the Welcome & Discovery Center in Lovers Key State Park and she said, 'what you see on land is what you see in the sea' and that struck me as exactly correct, because the nutrients that go into the water from runoff become the 'food source' that produces the harmful algae blooms that can cause Red Tide."

Nicole hopes that new volunteer citizen-scientists can commit to collecting samples beyond September 13. "We conduct 'What's In The Water' twice a year, once during wet season, then again in dry season, so our next one will be in either April or May 2026. Please let me know if you can help and I will stay in contact with you. Many of our volunteer citizen-scientists have helped us for years. The Mound House, Vester Field Station, FGCU Water School, the Town of Fort Myers Beach, and the FMB Chamber of Commerce all work together to refine this data to enhance FMB water quality."

Six Years Later

What has “What’s In The Water” discovered after six years? “FMB’s water is not any worse and that is good, but it is also not any better and that is bad,” summarizes Nicole. “Overall, the nutrient load is about the same, but the Environmental Protection Agency sets the ‘Total Maximum Daily Load’ and we exceed that every single day because our water’s nutrient level is too high, primarily from runoff from a variety of sources. For example, we noted a higher incident of runoff after Hurricane Ian from things like septic tanks, so we encourage you to switch from your septic tank to city water, though I know that is expensive. Unfortunately, major runoff causes are fertilizers from rainfall on residential lawns and golf courses, as well as from construction, and FMB right now is one huge construction site, so the entire island is a non-point pollution generator rather than just from one or two identifiable sources.”

On the positive side, the study has not identified many FMB pollutant “Hot Spots.” “The primary ones are the closed-off lagoons because they are separated from the rest of the system,” Nicole explains. “FMB and the Estero Bay estuary have tidal flows that naturally flush their natural systems but lagoons are isolated. After Ian, FMB water quality was really poor, but the Gulf and Estero Bay are resilient and now mostly repaired themselves.”

Stay Informed!

When Nicole ponders the ultimate “What’s In The Water” goal, “To Endorse Change,” she exclaims! “To accomplish that, we need FMB citizens to Stay Informed! That is all we ask of you! Be knowledgeable and educate yourself about your island home, to protect the environment where you live! Remember, knowledge is power and clean water knowledge is FREE! Clean water information is literally at the tips of your fingers because we all carry a \$1,000 cellphone with Internet access so you can become an expert from the comfort of your own home! These two things go hand-in-hand: ‘People who don’t know don’t care and people who don’t care don’t know!’ If you live on an island like FMB and you don’t know about water quality, you either don’t know how vital it is or you don’t care, and not caring is unacceptable. Stay informed – that is all we ask you to do.”

Nicole concludes by explaining that “when you chose to live on FMB, you accepted the unspoken rule that you will understand, respect and protect the environment of your home. You accept the responsibility that this is not just some place to flee winter’s cold but that it is a privilege. You agree to join our cause to take care of the environment and not to screw up the water. This is our collective responsibility so we really need you to care about this. Remember, clean water is the foundation of FMB, because without clean water, we have nothing.” ■

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In 2024, "USA Today" ranked the "Island Hopper" as the Fourth Best Music Festival in the US.

continued from page 9

Young is a multi-platinum worldwide entertainer with over nine billion global streams, 14 career Number One singles, numerous Grammy nominations, and "Performance of The Year" at the CMA Music Awards. He released his ninth studio album, "Young Love & Saturday Nights," in 2024.

Nancy wants FMB residents and visitors to know about a special non-ticketed performance on Saturday evening at the DiamondHead Beach Resort. "A glorified jam session breaks out at the DiamondHead on Saturday night, after all the scheduled performances are over. FMB's own Sheena Brook, who will entertain as part of the 'Island Hopper,' takes the lead on this, getting many of the performers to come up on stage and play together, and it is tremendous!"

In addition to Sheena, locals will know several 'Island Hopper' artists who frequently perform in the area, adds Nancy. "Cypress Lake High School graduate Brian Sutherland is red hot in Nashville right now and we are really proud of him. Audiences already know longtime Floridians Hunter Smith and Claire Liparulo and of course Sheena is already a FMB legend!"

To see the full "Island Hopper" schedule that should be up by early September, or to purchase tickets for the necessary shows, see www.island-hopperfest.com; Facebook.com/IslandHopperFest/; Hashtag: #IslandHopperFest; and Instagram.com/IslandHopperFest/ or @IslandHopperFest. BMI, iHeartMedia, Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association, and Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau present the "Island Hopper Songwriters Fest," with associated FMB Sponsors that includes Alair Custom Homes, DiamondHead Beach Resort, Margaritaville Beach Resort, Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina, Sanibel Capiva Community Bank, and Tunaskin Aquatic Apparel.

"I Love That Connection!"

As for their own favorite aspects of the "Island Hopper," Alison Giesen, the VCB Product Development Coordinator, says, "For me, it is the overall experience. It is unlike any other music festival anywhere, where you get to personally interact with these sensational performers in a beautiful beach setting, and that combination makes the 'Island Hopper' unique."

Nancy loves to "sit back and watch the reaction of the audience to the performers, as well as reconnecting with people who return year after year and are now friends! This includes our business partners and all the wonderful resort owners who generously pro-



vide rooms free of charge for the artists. They prepare for this for months, and when you see them, their faces light up, so we cannot thank them enough, yet they come up to us and say, "thank you!" It is that spirit of being all on one team that I most love!"

For Mariam, "I honestly love the live music, as I have such an appreciation for these marvelous artists. They are so creative and talented, and you can tell that they love to perform for us as much as we like listening to them. Then you throw in the gorgeous sunsets, Gulf breezes and the behind-the-scenes stories about the songs, and that makes the 'Island Hopper' spectacular. Music has the special ability to connect people and I love that connection!" ■



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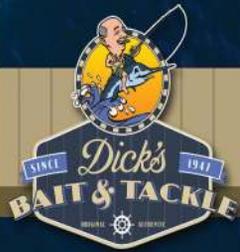
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