



Octifest On The Causeway

Sanibel Sea School will hold Octifest this Saturday, March 31 in a big top tent on Causeway Island A. It's one of the last events of the season and it promises to be a relaxing time with island music, gourmet food and lots of opportunities to raise funds to support scholarships at Sanibel Sea School. This year, the event will feature DJ Gentry Thomas, a home grown movie, a surprise that will surely catch guests up in its "currents" and a friendly wrap up of this great year. Principal corporate sponsors for the Octifest on the Beach are PURRE and Lily and Co.

Some highlights of the live auction will be:

- A two-hour floating cocktail party aboard the *Sanibel Thriller*
- Doc Ford and Doc Bruce – a boat trip with Doc Bruce to lunch with Randy Wayne White at Doc Ford's Rum Bar and Grille on the wharf at Fort Myers Beach
- The Sanibel Sea School

Powerwashing Team: the scientist blasters will clean your house or dock

continued on page 23



Elizabeth Meardon shows off the coconut she helped paint, which will be part of the grand prize adventure with hundreds of floating coconuts

Darling's Descendants Visit Fish House For The First Time



Three generations of "Ding" Darling's family, including two great-great grandchildren, visited the historic fish house for the first time last week. The structure was originally built for Darling 70 years ago.

by Jeff Lysiak

From the time she was a little girl, Jennifer Graham remembers visiting Captiva with her family. She recalls fishing and boating on crystal blue waters, soaking in the warm sunshine and – every once in a while – taking a ride past one of the most historic structures on the island, which at one time was owned by her family.

"I remember asking my father on several occasions, 'Can we go inside and see it?'" Graham said. "And I was always told that we couldn't, because our family didn't own it any more. But I could never understand why."

Graham, the great granddaughter of



Kip Koss, "Ding" Darling's grandson, shared fond memories of visiting Captiva back in the late 1940s

continued on page 6



From left: Thomas Mothershed, Jenny Smith, Jake Mann, Angelina Torre, Justen Montgomery, Nancy Antonio and Tommy Short

photo by Nick Adams Photography

Meet The Pazinskis At The Herb Strauss Theater

by Di Saggau

An opening night, sold out crowd gave a standing ovation to the cast of *Over The Tavern* at the BIG ARTS Herb Strauss Theater. Talk about a charming family comedy. This is just

what the doctor ordered.

Set in Buffalo, New York in 1959, the play introduces us to the Pazinskis who live in an apartment above Chet's Bar & Grill. Chet (Thomas Mothershed) is Dad, a physically and psychologically wounded man who leaves work in a bad mood, yelling at his kids and long suffering wife.

He has good intentions but can't ever seem to remember to bring the dinner home.

Mom (Jenny Smith) is the glue that

continued on page 41



Educational Walk Friday Morning

Take a Walk on the Wild Side this Friday, March 30 at JN "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel. The educational 4.1-mile walk through the refuge will introduce the public to the native wildlife of Southwest

Florida.

The walk begins at 8:30 a.m. with stops at various observation points to learn about native wildlife and its importance to the environment.

After the walk, the event continues at CROW's Healing Winds Visitor Education Center with refreshments, raffle drawings and a special presentation with hospital director Dr. Heather Barron. The walk is designed to engage and inform the public about CROW's mission to save wildlife through compassion, care and education.

Membership opportunities are available with registration for all new members.

Entry fee is \$25 per person, free for children 12 and under. Reservations can be made by calling 472-3644 ext. 231. All proceeds benefit CROW and its wildlife patients.✧



Executive Producer Sam Koltinsky

From page 1

Darling's Descendants

conservation pioneer Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling, fulfilled a lifelong dream earlier this month when she – and several members of her family – was allowed to visit the iconic fish house for the first time.

And the experience did not disappoint.

"Where else can you fish from your front yard?" said Graham, a resident of Texas who immediately climbed to the top of the nearly 70-year-old fish house. "This house, and everything that Darling did, leaves such a legacy here. And it isn't just ours... it belongs to Captiva, too."

The remarkable structure, accessed by a long dock, contains a small kitchen, living room, sitting room, bedroom, bathroom and loft area. It is constructed with multiple windows, which provide a majestic 360-degree view of Captiva's bayside waterfront and wilderness.

The visit, which coincided with the continued filming of the forthcoming documentary *America's Darling*, was arranged for by the executive producer of the project, Sam Koltinsky, with



An original "Ding" Darling cartoon, dated May 1, 1942, commemorated his moving into the fish house

assistance from the estate of Robert Rauschenberg. The fish house is part of the Rauschenberg property.

Kip Koss, Darling's grandson, smiled as he watched his children and grandkids explore the fish house, inside and out.

Looking out across the water, he recalled that the fishing was best off the northeast corner of the structure. He remembered visiting his grandfather's winter home for the first time back in the late 1940s.

"We would usually stay at Tween Waters, but after seeing this place, I really was torn between wanting to stay here or there," said Koss. "Back then, I was at the perfect age to enjoy it."

Darling, who officially moved into

photo from Captiva Memorial Library Collection

the fish house on May 1, 1942, used to "snowbird" on the island to escape the harsh Iowa winters. According to Koss, his grandfather liked Captiva for the weather, the wildlife and, of course, the fishing.

"He used to keep a boat and an aquarium underneath the house here," said Koss. "And I caught the biggest redbfish in my life right over there. It was a good size, too... and it gets bigger and bigger every time I talk about it!"

Darling's other great granddaughter, Christy Steinbeigle, took time to peruse the fish house with her husband Hal and sons Chris and Seth Steffen. And for the younger generation, it seems, Darling's



A group interview conducted at "Ding" Darling's fish house included Dr. Mark Madison, Douglas Brinkley, Kip Koss, John McCabe, Paul Tritiak, Kristie Anders, Calina and Cameron Carstens, and Tim Kenny from WGCU Public Media

photo courtesy of Marvo Entertainment



Cynde Fanter, board member of the Friends of Des Moines Parks

legacy continues to live on through them.

"I think the first thing people here should do is continue to protect wildlife. 'Ding' Darling taught all of us that," said Chris, 17. "Kids in my age group also need to become aware of how we can protect what we have, or it will be gone forever."

"Don't cut down trees or shoot wildlife," added Seth, 10. "Everyone should recycle, because that helps nature, too."

Koltinsky, who reported that *America's Darling* is still on schedule to be released in time for this year's "Ding" Darling Days celebration (October 14 to 20) at the JN "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel, said that the more people he talks to about the legendary editorial cartoonist and founder of the National Wildlife Federation, the more he is growing to admire him.

"Many people think of Darling in terms of his cartoons and conservation," said Koltinsky. "I have learned that when you open one door, that 10 others fly open with regard to this vision and his leadership skills. The drive by which this man operated is one which should inspire our country today."

On March 13 and 14, Koltinsky and his production crew interviewed several more people for the 60-minute documentary, including Douglas Brinkley, professor of history at Rice University; Dr. Mark Madison, historian for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; Cynde Fanter, board member for the Friends of Des Moines Parks; John McCabe, president of the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society; Kristie Anders, education director for the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation; Paul Tritiak, refuge manager for the JN "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge;



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SCCF's Kristie Anders gave a candid and insightful interview

and Calina Carstens, second place winner of the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society Conservation Cartoon Contest.

"Our wealth is based upon our natural resources, and if we don't take better care of those resources, we will also lose our wealth," said Anders during her interview for the film. "'Ding' Darling was the conservation spearhead for these islands."

According to Koltinsky, future interview subjects include Dale Hall from Ducks Unlimited and Jerome Ringo, former chairman of the board of the National Wildlife Federation. However, during his own "journey of discovery" into Darling's past, he explained that the icon had a creative, whimsical side to him as well.

"When visiting the fish house, I was amazed to discover the sea horses which are a part of the fireplace design. I discovered the original sketch and wood carving of his sea horse along the path of our production, which is original to the fireplace," added Koltinsky. "Retracing Darling's path as a designer has been a path of bliss for me personally. Darling was a true modern day Renaissance man."**

League Of Women Voters Annual Meeting

The League of Women Voters of Sanibel will conduct its third annual meeting on Thursday, April 10 starting at 7 p.m. at the Sanibel Public Library, 770 Dunlop Road. There will be a short business session, a discussion of programs for next season, along with an overview of this year's legislature session. An election of new board members and officers for next season will occur. The guest speaker for the evening will be Sanibel City Manager

Judie Zimomra, who will give a local government report. Refreshments will be served.

Zimomra has served as City Manager of Sanibel since 2001. During her tenure, she has developed a motivated management team dedicated in providing high quality service at the lowest prudent tax rate. She received the 30-year Service to Local Government Award from the International City Manager's Association (ICMA). She has served as an adjunct college professor at Cleveland State University, where she taught graduate students in Public Administration and as an adjunct professor at Edison State College School of Law and Public Safety. Zimomra has been named a "Power

continued on page 15

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