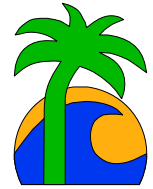


Island Parks Insider



Friends of the
Island Parks

Published quarterly by Friends of the Island Parks, Inc.

Summer 2008

President's Message

*By Barry Metcalfe
President, Friends of the Island Parks*

It has been quite an eventful few months and I feel so privileged to be President during this period. Our finances are healthy and membership is up so where do I start.....

Island EarthDays; even choosing the name was an adventure this year but hopefully we can now brand the event based on this name. There is a separate report on the event but I must take this opportunity to thank the organizing committee for their work and dedication in making this event happen. The event is valuable to the organization in more than just raising money. It provides a vehicle to promote our sponsors and also provides a focal point to bring the Friends together to a common goal.

The Nature Center also has a separate report however I must mention how pleased we were to receive and mount the 2 large prints of the **Christopher Stills** original murals from the Sandpearl Hotel. Our retail has grown and with it the infrastructure. Credit card sales were introduced initially using the old knuckle buster but we have since caught up with technology and now have a wireless credit card capability. This gives us the ability to take cc sales anywhere and in fact it was first used at Island Earth-Days. Retail sales have exceeded forecast and under Sharon's guidance we have expanded our range of merchandize to meet demand. Thanks to **Tim Marshall** and all the **Docents** who are patiently learning the retail business.

We now also have high speed internet access at the Nature Center, not so easy when there is no DSL, cable or Fios. If you have wireless access on your laptop take it to the center and give it a try. What could be nicer than responding to your emails whilst overlooking St Joseph's Sound.

As I write this column the long awaited sign for the Nature Center sign is now finished and available for install. I sincerely hope that by the time you all read this you will have seen the sign installed and agree it has been worth waiting for.

The Henry Scharrer Memorial Fund purchased a gator (a 4 wheel drive small robust workhorse vehicle) for Caladesi and we, the Friends of Island parks, Inc. purchased one for Honeymoon. You will see this working hard around the island and will recognize it by the plaque on the vehicle identifying it was funded by the FIP.

Our annual internal audit (for the 2007 tax year) was completed without any issues. Thanks to the audit team and the treasurer for 2007 for a job well done.

I could go on but I will finish with a look ahead. We are working with our Park Manager to identify the next long term project(s) within the Park that we should be supporting. There are 3 projects on the FIP priority list provided to us by the Park Manager, (1) Information Kiosk on Caladesi; (2) Playground replacement on Honeymoon; (3) Bike trail extension through Honeymoon. We are currently looking to set up a small working group and I am looking for members who would be interested.

My thanks to you all for enabling me to be President of such a wonderful organization.

Barry Metcalfe; President.



**Honeymoon Island receives 1,000,000th
Park Visitor** See article inside...

Park Manager's Report

By Pete Krulder, Park Manager

Well the dust has finally settled and this years Earth Day event is history. It was an outstanding event. This years two day event helped to raise over twenty thousand dollars for the Friends. These funds will help with several projects throughout the park and also help fund staffing at the Nature Center. I would like to thank **Barry Metcalfe** and **Sharon Meyer** for their leadership in this event. Also all of the volunteers and paid staff that made this event possible should be commended for a job well done. Without their dedication to the park much of what we do here at Caladesi and Honeymoon Island State Park would not be possible.

Honeymoon Island State Park recently took delivery of a brand new Gator utility vehicle that was purchased by the Friends. This vehicle was badly needed for work on the beach and throughout the rest of the park. It is an example of what your membership money and fundraising do for the park. In these tough economic times with restricted state budgets it is good to know that there is such a fine organization out there helping to support our efforts.

Likewise, Caladesi Island State park also received a new Gator, made possible through funding from the **Henry Scharrer Memorial Fund**. Please see **Terry Fortner's** letter in this issue for details.

The State's annual Citizen Support workshop was held May 8th, 9th and 10th at the **Tradewinds Resort** in St. Pete Beach. We were very well represented by members of the Board of Directors and I know each one left the workshop with an increased knowledge of CSO operations.

At the Annual Park Managers meeting which was held prior to the CSO Workshop, our own **Melanie Metcalfe** received the Directors Special Service Award for her service as the Florida State Parks Volunteer Ambassador. Melanie has done a tremendous job over the last two years representing the over 6,000 volunteers throughout the state. It has been my honor working with Melanie during her tenure as the Volunteer Ambassador and I look forward to seeing her around the park more now that she has stepped down from that position.

I hope all of you have a great summer and I look forward to seeing all of you around the park.

~ Pete

Honeymoon Island Welcomes 1,000,000th Visitor

The 1-millionth visitor arrived at Honeymoon Island State Park. The 1-millionth visitor this year, that is. **James and Jorga Prater** and **Deidre Caywood** arrived at Honeymoon Island all the way from Friendsville, TN and were greeted at the tollbooth as they arrived. They were overwhelmed with the news that they were the lucky awardees of the honors. They received a \$50 gift certificate towards nature center merchandise, a complimentary trip on the ferry to Caladesi, and complimentary beach chair and umbrella rental at Café Honeymoon. Their visit to the area was further enhanced by the generosity and hospitality of the Best Western Yacht Harbor Inn, where they earned a free 2-night stay and dinner for two. Congratulations!

Rotary Centennial Nature Center News

By Tim Marshall, Coordinator

The Rotary Centennial Nature Center grand opening was held on May 10, 2007. In our first year of operation, we had over 28,000 visitors. The center is 100% volunteer powered, and we have logged over 4300 volunteer hours to date! Truly a world class destination, Honeymoon Island has attracted people from around the globe, and the guest book at the center reads like a college level geography lesson, with guests registered from Denmark, Vancouver, Munich, St. Petersburg (Russia), Boxhill on the Sea, Esterhazy, Nainano and a host of other locales. We are however, still challenged, in that we've yet to have a visitor register from Dunedin. (The other Dunedin, that is!)

Nature Center Information

Hours: Daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Phone: 727-738-2903

Email: info@islandparks.org

Website: www.islandparks.org/naturecenter

Contact: Tim Marshall, Coordinator

Island EarthDays Report

By Barry Metcalfe, Event Co-Chair

Once again we were blessed with superb weather when for 2 days in April (19th and 20th) the hard work of the organizing group came to fruition as Island EarthDays. In fact the weather was so good that in some ways it worked against us in that many people who came to the Park could not tear themselves away from the beach. This was their loss as, overheard from one woman on her cell phone, "This event is awesome, so much bigger than I thought with so much to do!"

Indeed what more could you ask, in addition to our normal great low key, all day live entertainment for both days, food, beverage and craft vendors, this year we introduced an expanded hands on nature area with lots of interactive touch tables and wonderful exhibits created by our own Team Nature Tables plus for the first time, a play area for the younger visitor with games, 'sing-along's' and face painting. Special thanks here must go to **Craig Sroka** who not only ran the children's area but was the mastermind behind the 'EarthDay quilt' an assemblage of drawings submitted by local children depicting an EarthDay image, then sleeved and hung together as a collection of 6ft by 8 ft quilts forming a back drop to the play area covering about 150ft.

Also new this year was the environmental awareness trail which humorously guided people through a series of exhibits created by **Ranger Robbin** depicting simple things each of us can do to help improve our environment. This trail was well attended on both days with several parents being dragged through several times by their children who really got the message. The trail received only one complaint, from an aged couple who thought that they were really going underground into a gopher hole. Sorry for any misunderstanding there! As always the trail and beach walks were very popular and gave many visitors who had never ventured further than their favorite spot on the beach a broader understanding of the island.

Besides raising money, this year we raised nearly \$20,000 excluding any sponsorship money, the event is important to give our sponsors visibility and also for the Friends and volunteers to get together, work to a common goal and have some fun. So for all of you who helped, about 145 in total, including our **Rangers, Park Manager and Assistant Park Manager, Friends, all the Nature Center Do-**

cents and Volunteers and those that simply turned up and helped, please accept the grateful thanks of the organizing group and mark your calendars for next year: April 18th and 19th 2009.

Caladesi Island Named America's Best Beach

By: Bill Gruber, Assistant Park Manager, Caladesi Island State Park

Caladesi Island State Park's beach has been named the top beach in the United States. **Dr. Stephen Leatherman** of Florida International University, better known as "Dr. Beach," released his annual ranking of America's best beaches just in time for the Memorial Day weekend. Caladesi has been rated the second-best beach in the country for the last two years and has long been numbered among the top 10. Dr. Beach bases his prestigious ranking on a wide variety of factors from cleanliness to water temperature. Caladesi's approximately 3-mile beach is located on the blue-green waters of the Gulf of Mexico about two miles off Dunedin, FL. The park may be reached by private boat or via the Caladesi Connection ferry service from nearby Honeymoon Island State Park.



Membership News

By Ray Dabkowski, Membership Secretary

Our roster continues to grow rapidly, and your Membership Committee is eager to make your membership more valuable than ever! One way we hope to do this is by presenting events and meetings which will be stimulating, educational, and yes, entertaining. In July, **Mr. Robert Lafollette**, local author and professional photographer will present a Photography Workshop and book signing at the Nature Center. Later, in the fall, watch for our Wine Tasting evening, and a new "Arts & The Island" event.

Also stay tuned for some exciting changes in benefits for all Friends. We will be enhancing the membership levels and adding a few incentives and rewards for loyal members.

Your support is so vital to the health and operation of the Friends' organization. We directly provide financial and volunteer assistance to Honeymoon and Caladesi Island State Parks. As you know, the State budget is shrinking again. Your contributions are worth more now, than ever.

Thank you for being a Friend!

Your Membership Committee: Ray Dabkowski, Diane Hood, Ron Geisheimer and Skip Meadows

Event Calendar (7PM starting time)

June 24th - Tour of Sand Pearl Resort on Clearwater Beach; meet in lobby; please RSVP to Diane Hood drhood@tampabay.rr.com or 727.736.8406

July 22nd - Photography Workshop & Booksigning: Mr. Robert Lafollette (see www.robertlafollette.com)

August 26th - TBA

September 23rd - Wine Tasting at the Nature Center

October 28th - Arts & The Island

December 6th - Annual Holiday Party / Dunedin Boat Parade

Please welcome these new Friends of the Island:

Shirley Anderson Clearwater, FL

Elena Baker Palm Harbor, FL

Kathy Day Clearwater, FL

Phil DelGreco Palm Harbor, FL

Constance Garrison Dunedin, FL

David George Oldsmar, FL

Stacey Kamber Dunedin, FL

David Kardz St. Petersburg, FL

Judith Kelly Tampa, FL

Mary Kwapil Dunedin, FL

Greg Larsen Dunedin, FL

Marcia Latimer Corydon, IN

Gabrielle Martolano Hudson, FL

Michele Matarrese Dunedin, FL

Mark & Marilyn McCutcheon Dunedin, FL

Patricia Morales Clearwater, FL
Chris Pawlowicz Clearwater, FL
James & Leah Perkins Clearwater, FL
Joy Roberts St. Petersburg, FL
Marilyn Schaeperklaus Dunedin, FL
Anita Spellman Palm Harbor, FL
Craig Sroka Tarpon Springs, FL
Susan Tammé Palm Harbor, FL
Nancy Thompson Dunedin, FL
George Trimitsis Palm Harbor, FL
Mary Tweiten Clearwater, FL
Ann Warren Dunedin, FL
Claire Wuertz Palm Harbor, FL

Volunteer Recognition

By Karen Malo, Park Services Specialist

The winter season is over and all of our seasonal volunteers have returned home for the winter but the volunteer department continues to stay busy with many new volunteer faces. With the help of our dedicated volunteers, we accomplished many great things this past season. In February, we had over 300 volunteers help us to plant dune plants, volunteers helped with the LIFE (Learning in Florida's Environment) program, Earth Day and a myriad of other projects which make our parks the most visited in the state. Memorial Day weekend was a busy one but everywhere you went from the toll booth to the Nature Center to the beaches there were dedicated volunteers working hard supporting us in our mission.

Volunteer Spotlight:



On Tuesday, April 22, 2008 at 10:30 a.m., volunteer **Ken Baker** was given the honor of receiving the Governor's Point of Light Award for his years of service in several state parks. Established in February 2000, the Governor's Points of Light Award program recog-

nizes those Florida residents and organizations that demonstrate exemplary volunteer service to their community. Recipients have ranged in age from 6 years to 101 years old. The common thread is their love of their community and their belief that through volunteering, they can make a positive impact. Their commitment is what **Governor Crist** wants to recognize through the Points of Light Award program.

Shawn Yeager, former volunteer coordinator came from our District office and presented the award to Ken which was extra special as Shawn was the coordinator when Ken started his volunteer service in 2002. Please be sure to congratulate Ken the next time you see him!

Gator Spotted at Caladesi Island

A Letter from Terry Fortner

Dear Henry Scharrer Memorial Fund Donors,

We have very happy news! The John Deere Gator 4x4 vehicle that was purchased with your help for Caladesi Island was delivered there on Friday May 2.



Pictured left to right are Caladesi Staff members: **Steve Collier, Park Ranger, Tracy Telatycki, OPS Park Ranger, Bill Gruber, Assistant Park Manager** (seated behind the wheel), **Greg Cagle, Park Ranger**, and **Carl Calhoun, Park Ranger**. (Not pictured are **Steve Koba, Park Ranger**, and **Michael Lang, OPS Park Ranger**. They were not available for the photo.)

Asst. Manager **Bill Gruber** wants you to know that within one hour of its delivery the Gator was used for an essential mission. A wildfire had broken out in an area of the park that the trucks could not easily access. Using the Gator, Bill was able to quickly get to the site, scope out the situation and implement strategy to deal with the fire.

We are all grateful for the hard work that the **Park Rangers** do every day in caring for Caladesi State Park, and for all the Park Rangers who work in our beautiful Florida State Parks. It gives us all great satisfaction to know that we have helped to provide the Park staff with an extremely useful tool for daily use at Caladesi.

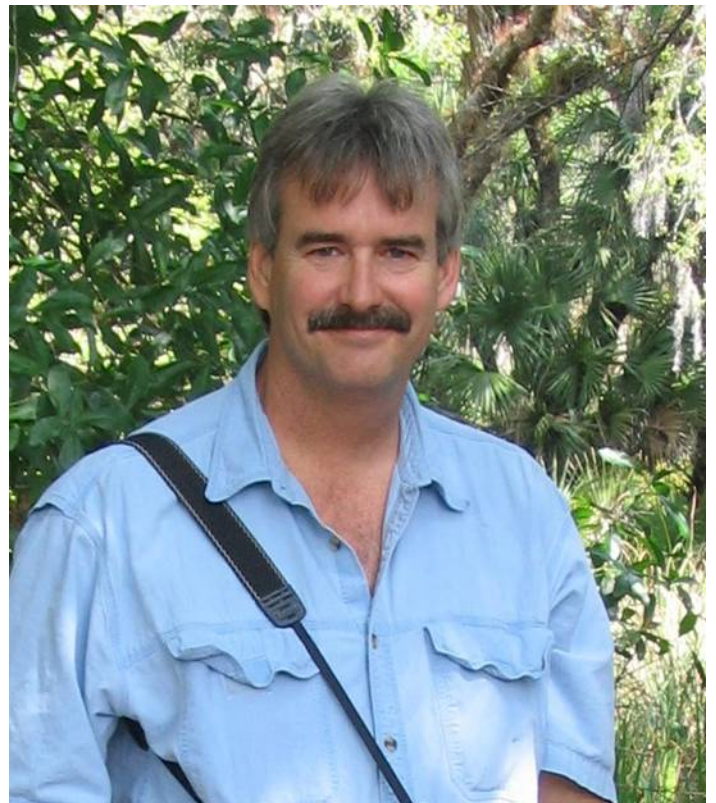
Thank YOU so much for providing the means to make this happen. I think Henry Scharrer and his daughter Myrtle would both be so pleased that this gift is made in their memory.

With sincere thanks to each of you,

~ Terry Fortner

Fine Art on Exhibit at the Rotary Centennial Nature Center

LOCAL ARTIST ERNEST SIMMONS FEATURED



Framed prints of the works of outdoorsman, naturalist, wildlife rehabilitator and artist **Ernest C. Simmons** are on display at the Rotary Centennial Nature Center. Ernie's works are based on his innate knowledge of the laws of nature in tandem with a meticulous touch at the easel. The result is photorealistic art which accurately depicts our local birds in their natural surroundings.

In 1997 Simmons was chosen as Florida Ducks Unlimited artist of the year. In both 1999 and 2000 Simmons was commissioned by the Florida National Parks and Monuments Association to paint the Everglades and Dry Tortugas National Parks. Due to his tireless efforts and continued dedication to wildlife, Simmons' paintings have raised thousands of dollars for scientific, educational, historical and visitor service programs.

Ernest C. Simmons' status as a Florida wildlife artist is unparalleled as his work deftly touches and stimulates our emotions - from the core of our psyche to the full appreciation of God's feathered wildlife. He is also that rare artist who has the talent to capture the beauty of his subjects in extraordinary detail; truly an ability to create life on a canvas. Ernie Simmons is one of the profound wildlife artists of our time, and without a doubt, generations to come will continue to honor the man and his outstanding works. Ernest has graciously offered framed prints at a very reasonable cost, via purchase at the nature center. Stop in and select from 16 different titles! For those of us interested in learning our birds, Ernie also offers a detailed poster at the nature center, featuring over two dozen species of our local water birds. To learn more about the artist and his works, stop by the nature center, or please visit his website at www.ernestsimmons.com

Lights, Cameras, Osprey!

By Tim Marshall, Nature Center Coordinator

Times are changing for all of us, and for one local Osprey family, life goes on, yet they are about to embrace technology and raise their young amongst the techni-generation.



Dunedin Osprey Cam

You can tune in to this reality programming 24/7 via www.dunedinospreycam.com. The camera is the brainchild of our own **Sparky Jones**,

who works as a Rotary Centennial Nature Center volunteer. Once word got out in the community, Sparky got support along the way as she worked out the logistics. The project was recently featured in the Suncoast News, and is backed by the City of Dunedin, St Andrews Links, and a long list of private supporters. For more information, visit the website. The cameras go live this fall, so be sure to bookmark the site.

Caladesi Island Depicted In Fine Art at Nature Center

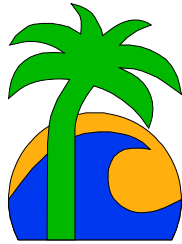


Detail from "Return to Picnic Island"

Celebrated local artist **Christopher M. Still** produced commissioned works for the **Sandpearl Resort**, and the Rotary Centennial Nature Center is now the proud recipient of reproductions of two major works. Recognition goes to the **Sandpearl Resort, JMC Communities, the Henry Scharrer Memorial Fund**, and a private earmarked donation which helped with acquisition of these reproductions. Be sure to stop in the **Herbert G. Brown Media Room** at the nature center to view both "Return to Picnic Island" and "Beneath the Waves".

These detailed prints celebrate our local heritage, and feature the natural and cultural treasures of Caladesi Island. Discover the wonders that lie beneath the waves, and then return to the surface for a view along the beach at Caladesi, as you literally look back in time over generations. Hidden treasures, symbolic meaning, and multiple story lines are intertwined as the paintings reveal themselves to viewers.

Come and experience these outstanding works of art for yourself, and ask a volunteer to share a few insights that will enrich your experience and build further meaning and appreciation of the art. Although these are newer works, you can own your own copies, and purchase directly from Christopher at his website, www.christopherstill.com. Of course, you will want to stop by the Sandpearl as well to see the very large originals – very impressive



Friends of the
Island Parks

Membership Application

Name:
Street:
City/State/Zip:
Telephone:
Select One:
<input type="checkbox"/> \$25 General
<input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Charter/Insider Renewal*
<input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Non-profit
<input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Bronze
<input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Silver
<input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Gold
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 Platinum

About the Friends

Friends of the Island Parks is a CSO (Citizens Support Organization). Florida Park Service CSOs are volunteer organizations that sponsor events, raise funds, and support the goals of the parks. The Friends of the Island Parks CSO's main focus is the support of Caladesi Island State Park and Honeymoon Island State Park.

501(c)(3) Status

The Friends of the Island Parks, Inc. is registered in Florida as a non-profit organization whose purpose is to provide educational, interpretive, and financial assistance to Caladesi Island State Park, Honeymoon Island State Park, and the Gulf Islands GEPark. This group is recognized as a citizen support organization by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks. One hundred percent of your contribution is tax deductible. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services solicitation registration number is CH14031. The Pinellas County charitable solicitation permit number is 0409075.

*Charter/Insider Renewals

If you are currently a Charter or Insider member, you may renew at that level for \$25 annually. Continuous membership is required to maintain this level.

Application Process

Please make your check payable to:
"Friends of the Island Parks"

Mail your application and check to:

Friends of the Island Parks
Attention: Membership
1 Causeway Blvd.
Dunedin, FL 34698

Dues:

Additional Donation:

Total:

Island Amenities

Be sure to visit *Cafe Honeymoon* and *Cafe Caladesi* when on the islands for food, gifts and beach supplies. Try out the **pancake breakfasts** on Sunday at *Cafe Honeymoon*. In addition, check with them about special occasions on the islands.

Honeymoon Island
The perfect setting for any occasion!

- Weddings
- Birthdays
- Breath Taking Views
- Receptions
- Fundraisers
- Unlimited Guests
- Anniversaries
- Corporate Events
- Catering by Cafe Honeymoon

www.bonappetit-restaurant.com
For More Information Contact: Shane Bittaker
727 • 736 • 2132
1 Causeway Blvd.
Dunedin, FL

Friends Scheduled Meetings

The Board of Directors meets at 6:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month for approximately 1 ½ hours.

The general membership meeting is on the fourth Tuesday of the month and begins at 7:00 p.m. and usually features a presentation of local interest. Unless otherwise posted, both meetings are held at the *Rotary Centennial Nature Center at Honeymoon Island*. You are welcome to attend the board meeting and highly encouraged to come to the membership meetings!

Meeting Schedule:

	Board Meetings:	General Meetings:
Jan. 2008	Tuesday 15 th	Tuesday 22 nd
Feb. 2008	Tuesday 19 th	Tuesday 26 th
Mar. 2008	Tuesday 18 th	Tuesday 25 th
Apr. 2008	Tuesday 15 th	Tuesday 22 nd
May. 2008	Tuesday 20 th	Tuesday 27 th
Jun. 2008	Tuesday 17 th	Tuesday 24 th
Jul. 2008	Tuesday 15 th	Tuesday 22 nd
Aug. 2008	Tuesday 19 th	Tuesday 26 th
Sep. 2008	Tuesday 16 th	Tuesday 23 rd
Oct. 2008	Tuesday 21 st	Tuesday 28 th
Nov. 2008	Tuesday 18 th	Tuesday 25 th
Dec. 2008	No meeting due to holidays	



Friends of the
Island Parks

Members of the Board

Executive Committee

President: Barry Metcalfe
Vice President: Scott Hood
Treasurer: George Skalkeas
Secretary: Ron Geisheimer

Directors

Shane Bittaker Mike Moran
Wayne Case Linda Taylor
Ray Dabkowski Bob Meadows
Marianne Davis Skip Meadows
Rebecca Hallstrom Sharon Meyer
Diane Hood Gabriella Mullins
Jacques Marion

Contact Us

Gulf Island State Parks

Honeymoon Island: 727-469-5942
Caladesi Island: 727-469-5918
Volunteers: Karen Malo
karen.malo@dep.state.fl.us
727-638-2334

Friends of the Island Parks

President: Barry Metcalfe
barry.metcalfe@earthlink.net
813-925-3442

Membership: Ray Dabkowski

rayd@en.com
727-415-1615

Nature Center / Newsletter / Website:

Tim Marshall
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