



ISLAND PARKS INSIDER

Published quarterly by Friends of the Island Parks, Inc.

Winter 2009

President's Message

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

Looking back over the year, once again I consider how fortunate I am to be part of such an organization. There is no doubt that Caladesi being named #1 beach by Dr Beach helped our Parks become the most visited Parks within the Florida Park Service (FPS) however Caladesi would not have gained that distinction and Honeymoon would not have exceeded 1 million visitors without the dedication of staff and volunteers who all played their part in the constant care, maintenance and improvements to the Parks. During these hard economic times the Parks remain one of the best value days out for the whole family and the events we support act as focal points at different times of the year for people to renew their acquaintance with the Parks.

The Honeymoon Halloween event, which resulted in a profit of \$2K, stands out as a firm favorite in the fall whilst the Rotary Dunedin Triathlon brings in many people who might not otherwise experience the Parks. This year the triathlon saw a record number of competitors, many of whom stated it was their favorite competition because of the venue and organization.

Island EarthDays, our major fundraiser, was once again very successful even though the weather was so good it was difficult to tease the visitors away from the beach and idyllic gulf waters. Without counting the sponsorship, which we have now launched as an annual 'Friends' sponsorship rather than single event sponsorship, Island EarthDays raised nearly \$20K.

Our retail outlet through the Rotary Centennial Nature Center (RCNC) now exceeds \$20K per annum and is becoming a significant source of fundraising. Such constant basic fundraising is necessary to maintain the funding for the OPS position to manage the cen-

ter and set aside \$10K pa for exhibit renewals and replacement when they become due.

Our bench donation program, which has grown to include benches, swings and picnic tables, continues to be highly successful contributing \$14K to our revenues.

Membership continues to increase and at the end of the year stood at 164, a 46% increase over 2007 and our monthly meetings, now separated from the Board meetings, are well attended. Our membership committee has really excelled with the variety of programs that they have put together and we are looking at ways to increase the capacity of the meetings. They introduced a combined Christmas party and Annual General Meeting, a sure way of getting maximum attendance, at which the members elect the new Board.

The mission of The Friends of the Island Parks (FIP) is basically to provide a fundraising capability and a conduit for money to directly support Caladesi and Honeymoon State Parks. In 2008 I am pleased to advise that we were able to meet this mission by providing over \$45,000 directly to the Parks in goods and paid for services. You should all feel proud of what you have achieved throughout the year.

In summary I believe that we have continued to meet the mission and goals as set out at the commencement of the year and I would extend my thanks to the Park management and staff who continue to support us as we try to help them. Above all, I would like to give my thanks to all members of the FIP who make this organization such a joy to be part of.

Park Manager's Report

By Pete Krulder, Park Manager

After the passing of several nasty cold fronts, it was great to have some nice weather and get back out in the park again. For those of you that have not heard, we have a pair of Bald Eagles that took up residence and nested here in the park. *(Continued)*

By the time this letter makes it to print, the eggs will have hatched. This will mark the first ever recording of Bald Eagle chicks hatching at Honeymoon Island State Park. It has been very exciting. Unfortunately, in order to protect the nest, we had to close about ¼ mile of trail. This will have to be done for at least 5 years from the last nesting attempt. The closures will take place in October and last through to May. I apologize for the inconvenience but most everyone will agree it is well worth it. Once we can start working in that area again, we plan on making some changes to the trail so that we can lessen the inconvenience.

The last few months have been very busy and anyone who tried to get into the park during the holiday season would have thought it was the middle of summer. Our visitation rivaled the summertime during the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. I have been told that New Year's Day was the busiest day ever recorded at the Nature Center.

If you happened to see the cover of the program for the Super Bowl, that beautiful sunset beach scene with the Lombardi Trophy was taken at our own Caladesi Island State Park.

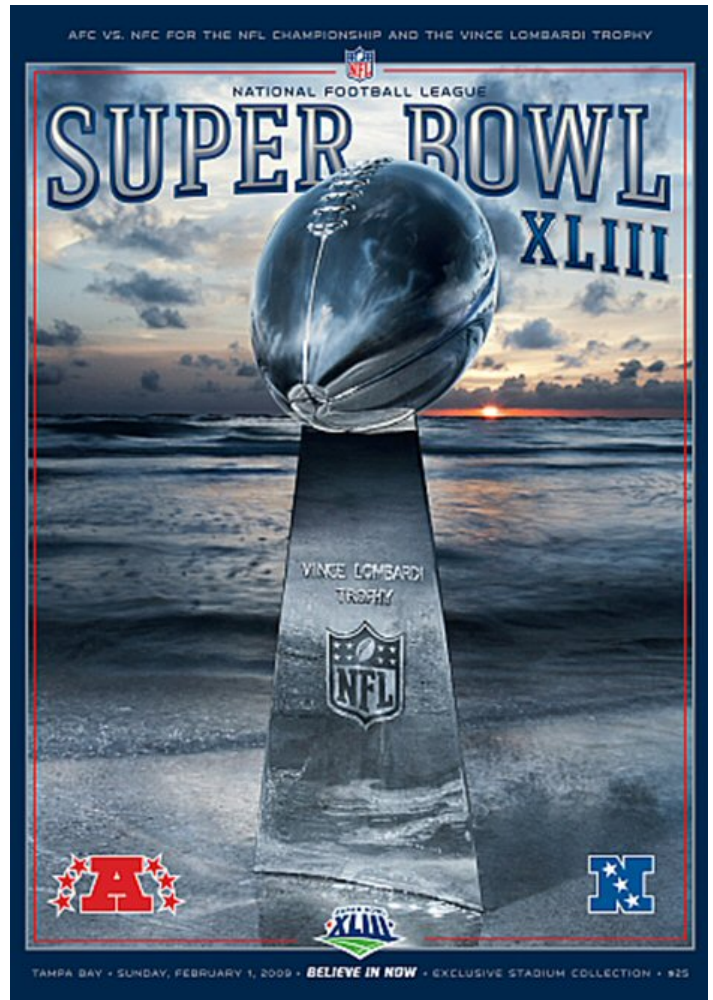
The Friends of the Island Parks are once again gearing up for the annual Earth Day event, which this year will take place on April 18th and 19th. This is the CSO's major fundraising event which takes an incredible amount of time and effort to plan and put this event on. If you have not yet signed up to volunteer, please do so. We can use all of the help we can get during the planning stages prior to the event and during the actual event itself. Without the efforts of all our volunteers, the CSO cannot put on this great event and fund the many projects that they take part in.

It has been great to see all of the projects going on around both parks. Our volunteers are out in full force. You can see them working in the Toll Booth or doing construction projects. They are out on the beach picking up trash and in the offices helping with administrative tasks. They are all over doing whatever is needed to make us such a success. It is incredible what a group of like-minded individuals can accomplish. My thanks go out to all of you that give of your time so freely.

With the nice weather, get out and see the parks with all of the wonders they hold.

See you around the island,

Pete



Program for Super Bowl XLIII Depicting Caladesi



Monthly Shell Show at Rotary Centennial Nature Center

ONGOING – Stop in any time all morning long...

What: The Rotary Centennial Nature Center at Honeymoon Island State Park invites you to come to the nature center for a free Shell Show. The nature center is a fun place and we will have several aspiring conchologists on hand to instruct, inspire and interpret our amazing mollusk life, and the shells they create. As a bonus, watch a special movie and a create a shell craft!

Where: Rotary Centennial Nature Center at Honeymoon Island State Park

When: The Second Saturday of every month

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (Ongoing)

Cost: Free! With Park Admission - (\$5.00 per car, up to 8 people per carload)

Rotary Centennial Nature Center

By Tim Marshall, Nature Center Coordinator

Special discounts for All Friends Members!



Friends members, volunteers, and park staff receive a complimentary 10% Discount on all merchandise sold at the nature center, with the exception of consigned art/photography.

Additionally, members are entitled to a substantial savings on registrations for workshops such as our popular Birding 101. The workshop registration is \$35.00/person but Friends pay just \$20/person!

Please present your membership card to qualify.

We now accept Cash, check or credit card, and offer an expanded selection of exclusive items.

Our featured books are now available for online purchase, and prices include tax and shipping!

Go to www.islandparks.org and click on the "Merchandise" link to check it out!

Center Hours / 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

The Start of a New Year...

By Ellen Pfau, FIP Director

Just want to share with you the glorious day I spent at Honeymoon on Jan. 1st.

First, I spent a couple hours at the Nature Center with the spotting scope out on the deck as low tide was 9AM. It was a real low, low tide with mud flats exposed all around and up to the sea wall. I watched a Reddish Egret do his 'drunken sailor dance' for awhile, recorded what I saw on the Observation Board and then headed out to the Osprey Trail.

It was a spectacular morning! I didn't get any further than the Great-Horned owl nest on the main trail. With the spotting scope set up, I had a steady stream of people ALL day to see that owl!!! Literally people from all over the world looked at the owl and were amazed.

She would put on quite a show at times. She would get up ruffle her feathers until she looked as big as a turkey. She'd walk around the edge of the nest a few times, move her eggs around and sit back down. It was especially good when she faced directly into the scope with her big yellow eyes wide open. Many pictures were taken of the owl this day.

A visitor came and told me he saw a small hawk in a dead snag with a dead bird. Right past the Rattlesnake sign there was a Merlin eating a shorebird that was as big as him! He was plucking the feathers off it and throwing them up in the air. It was quite a show! He stayed there until there was nothing left of that bird! So now I needed a swivel for that scope, I'd point it one way to show people the Merlin and then turn it around to show them the Owl. I would lower the scope for the kids to see and they would be just so amazed at seeing these birds.

Finally it was time for me to eat some lunch and then I had planned to go out to the Eagle nest. So I went put my shorts on as the day had really heated up and then went back with my sandwich. I still couldn't get past that Owl. I guess I will never tire of showing it to people and seeing their reactions when they look in that scope and see that astounding bird so close. I finally started out the second trail to see the Owl nest from the other side at about 3PM. Now there were more people over there to show her to from a different angle!

(Continued)



American Bald Eagle by Ray Dabkowski

The walk out to the Eagle nest was just delightful with Woodpeckers calling, Yellow-rumped and Palm warblers pippin away in the brush and young Armadillos working the ground under the palmettos. A big ole Gopher tortoise was munching away on a prickly pear cactus. Ospreys were calling and mating in their nests. Some were eating big fish in the dead snags.

There was a 2nd year, immature Eagle on the way out just sitting on a snag. Watching everybody going past.

Well I finally got out to the Eagle nest around 4:30. When I got out to the nest the female was in the nest, every so often she would put her head down in the nest with her tail up. Then Dad flew in and perched above the nest. She continued to pick around the nest (turning eggs? Who knows?). After about 15 minutes she jumped out of the nest to a branch above it opposite the male. Then they called back and forth to each other – I had goose-bumps - their call always is so thrilling to me - I just love it! I have to say this was one of the highlights of my day! Then he flew off and she stayed around for another 5 min-

utes and then flew too. I waited another 15 minutes but they did not come back and it was time to head back.

I finally got off the Island at 6PM. I'm sure I talked to over 100 people on the trail. It was a great way to spend the first day of the New Year! I will remember this day all year!

Ellen Pfau

Volunteer Spotlight

By Karen Malo, Park Services Specialist

Well, another winter season is winding down and we are gearing up for a busy spring season and Earth Day in April. Please sign up with **Ray Dabkowski** to volunteer for the event. We had a volunteer orientation in January and had 16 new volunteers sign up for various positions from the toll booth to the Nature Center and Friends and even some for maintenance. Please welcome them if you come across them!

Congratulations to the volunteers who were nominated by park staff for Volunteer of the Year. There are many criteria that the Friends of Florida State Parks ask of nominees including serving 500 hours in a year and supporting all aspects of the Florida Park Service Mission. Each year this is a very difficult decision because we have so many great volunteers that we depend upon, but the rangers voted and the results are in.

Honeymoon Island

Ron Doyon
Richard Krauss
Wilf Yusek

Caladesi Island

Alan Hall
Carrol Sousa

These volunteers were recognized for their contributions at te volunteer appreciation day on Saturday February 21st at **Koreshan State Park**. Thank you for everything you do to help us at both Caladesi and Honeymoon Island!



An Historic Image from Koreshan S.P.

'IVS' Reaps Bountiful Pea Harvest at Caladesi

By **Bill Gruber**, Assistant Park Manager

We called them the "International Volunteer Squad."

Friends of the Island Parks member **Terry Fortner** joined two of her dear friends from overseas recently for a volunteer day at Caladesi. The dynamic trio spent the day collecting rosary pea seed pods in the island's interior.

Rosary pea is an aggressive invasive exotic plant that displaces native vegetation and forms what biologists call a monoculture. Its seeds, when ingested by humans, are highly toxic, but they may be handled safely. Each rosary pea seed is a potential rosary pea vine, so collecting the seeds, then spraying the vines with herbicide, is the best way to control this pest. Fortner and crew picked a bushel and a peck – aka a large garbage bag full – of the seeds in the course of very productive harvest. Park staff followed up by spraying the vines with herbicide.

Fortner is perhaps best known to Friends members as granddaughter of the late **Myrtle Scharer Betz**, who grew up on a Caladesi homestead and years later penned the memoir, "Yesteryear, I Lived in Paradise." Last year Fortner published a third edition of the book, now available for sale at the Rotary Centennial Nature Center. The new edition includes an extensive historical timeline and many previously unpublished photographs.

Fortner and her husband, Bob, are regular Caladesi volunteers. She was joined for the rosary pea project by two close friends who reside in Europe but have second homes in the Dunedin area. **Iben Clausen** is Danish, and **Jacqueline Brownell** is French. But both women love the southwest Florida outdoors and consider the area a second home.

"It was the most enjoyable day of volunteering," Clausen said. Both women vowed to return and continue their campaign on the exotic removal front.

'International Volunteer Squad'



Friends member Terry Fortner, left, Jacqueline Brownell of France and Iben Clausen of Denmark show off their bountiful harvest of rosary pea seeds and pods at Caladesi Island State Park.

Membership News

By **Ray Dabkowski**, Membership Director

We so greatly appreciate the outpouring of support from Friends like you. Our membership continues to grow rapidly. In appreciation, we will be offering additional benefits for new and existing members, including discounts on items selling at the Nature Center. We are in the process of re-aligning the membership tiers and renaming the levels to more closely reflect the perspective of the organization. For example, the "General" membership will now be called "Friend" and will remain at \$25 per year. As another example, the former "Bronze" level is being updated to "Islander" with enhanced benefits. At the same time, the membership brochure is being redesigned to convey a more professional introduction to prospective members. Stay tuned for announcements on the Web site and at future monthly meetings.

Your membership committee has been working hard to scheduled exciting events for the coming months. The Bald Eagle program in January and our annual Chocolate Buffet in February got the year off to a great start. And as they say on TV, but wait... there's more!

We will rerun our popular Astronomy program later this summer. New on the list is a social event we're calling "Picnic on the Beach". We

have several nature programs planned, including two programs on birds: one coincides with our Annual Wine & Cheese event, and the other will occur during migration. A program on fishing will be held later this fall. We have contacted several important figures in the community and we anticipate having them as speakers during the year as their schedules allow. In the fall, we will have a new artist displaying in the Nature Center, and we will host the opening kickoff event. Finally, of course, we will celebrate the season with our annual holiday party in December. If you have any suggestions for future programs, please don't hesitate to share your ideas.

There's a lot to look forward to! We're glad to have you on board and hope you'll take advantage of your membership benefits. We thank you kindly for your generous support.

Ray Dabkowski
Membership Director



Honeymoon Island State Park

www.celebratewithfriends.com

2 Big Days!

Sat. April 18, 2009 10 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Sun. April 19, 2009 10 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Prize drawing tickets on sale at nature center
 \$5/each or Five for \$20

Welcome to Our New Members!

Name	Location
Sandy Russell	Safety Harbor, FL
Judith Nevrla	Dunedin, FL
Martha Richardson	Dunedin, FL
Susan Pulling Robinson	Dunedin, FL
Bill & Debbie Stitt	Clearwater, FL
John & Valerie Glowinski	New Port Richey, FL
Phil & Joyce Sheesley	Tampa, FL
Cathy & Brent Kooistra	Dunedin, FL
Lisa Dryden	Tarpon Springs, FL
Gayle Stokes	Tarpon Springs, FL
Paula Gettino	Kansas City, MO
Lesly Longa	Tampa, FL
Robin Rebeck	Clearwater, FL
Sheryl Avruch	Dunedin, FL
Carroll Sousa	Palm Harbor, FL
Patricia Baldwin	Dunedin, FL
Jerry Skinner & Marj Cremer	Monroe, MI
Stephanie & Bob Komarek	Clearwater, FL
Ina Loughton	Dunedin, FL
Melanie Metcalfe	Oldsmar, FL
Susie Rodenbeck	Dunedin, FL
Brigitte Lukas-Szabady	Palm Harbor, FL
Sandra Langille	Dunedin, FL
Coleen & Tod Young	Tampa, FL
Patti Boylan	Dunedin, FL
Charlotte Murray	Dunedin, FL
Catherine Boone	Bedford, TX
Marilyn Nystrom	Granby, CT
Jan Gordon	Palm Harbor, FL
Kathy O'Neill	Crosswicks, NJ
Lynne Franklin	Palm Harbor, FL
Nancy Schmidt	Dunedin, FL
Linda Brandt	Dunedin, FL
Caryl Lynch	Dunedin, FL
Arlene & Jim Feehan	Dunedin, FL



The Pine Flatwoods along the Osprey Trail



Friends of the Island Parks

Membership Application Renewal Form

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.

Important: Please print clearly. – Thanks!

Name:
Street:
City/State/Zip:
Telephone:
Email Address:
Select Your Preferred Membership Level:
<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

*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 – You may apply or renew at our website, or use this form.

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 *Café Honeymoon* and *Café Caladesi* when on the islands for food, gifts and beach supplies. Try out the **pancake breakfasts** on Saturdays & Sundays at *Café Honeymoon*. In addition, they can help you plan your 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

Everyone is Welcome at Friends 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 meetings and highly encouraged to come to the membership meetings!

Friends Meetings Schedule

	Board Meetings:	General Meetings:
Mar. 2009	Tuesday 24 th	Tuesday 31 st
Apr. 2009	Tuesday 21 st	Tuesday 28 th
May. 2009	Tuesday 19 th	Tuesday 26 th
Jun. 2009	Tuesday 23 rd	Tuesday 30 th
Jul. 2009	Tuesday 21 st	Tuesday 28 th
Aug. 2009	Tuesday 18 th	Tuesday 25 th
Sep. 2009	Tuesday 22 nd	Tuesday 22 nd
Oct. 2009	Tuesday 20 th	Tuesday 27 th
Nov. 2009	Tuesday 17 th	Tuesday 24 th
Dec. 2009	<i>Holiday Party to be announced...</i>	



**Friends of the
Island Parks**

Members of the Board

Executive Committee

President:	Barry Metcalfe
Vice President:	Bob Meadows
Treasurer:	George Skalkeas
Secretary:	Melanie Metcalfe

Directors

Elena Baker	Scott Hood
Shane Bittaker	Jacques Rene Marion
Wayne Case	Sharon Meyer
Ray Dabkowski	Mike Moran
Ron Geisheimer	Gabriella Mullins
Rebecca Hallstrom	Ellen Pfau
Diane Hood	Linda Taylor (ex-officio)

Contact Us

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
info@islandparks.org
727-733-5188

Island Parks Insider

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