

CCA NEWS

CAPTIVA CIVIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

WORKING FOR THE BETTERMENT OF CAPTIVA SINCE 1936

The Captiva Civic Association's Mission is the preservation of the quality of life, ambiance, and environmental integrity of this unique barrier island

WINTER
2017

ABC Gala Set For March 9

Please note Thursday, March 9 on your calendar for the 2017 ABC Gala.

The 50th ABC Event will kick-off at 5:30 p.m. at the Captiva Civic Center with cocktails and music on the veranda followed by an always entertaining auction presided over by Auctioneer Tommy Williams.

This annual charity auction and full course dinner served by the Sanctuary Golf Club, is sponsored by the CCA Foundation to raise funds to support programs, activities and operations of the Foundation and CCA.

When the event first began 50 years ago, it was dubbed the ABC Sale, because the civic organization's members were urged to scour attics, basements and closets to come up with items that could be sold at a tag sale or flea market to raise funds.

But as venerable CCA member Sharon Brace explained, the event is not all about raising money.

"No one out here on this island has had either a basement or what anyone up North would consider an attic," she explained, "but everyone sure has had a lot of fun over the past 49 years supporting this wonderful community event."

CCA President and ABC Chairman, Jack Cunningham advises members, "We are seeking one-of-a-kind



Tommy Williams, ABC Auctioneer Extraordinaire



ABC Event Chair & CCA President Jack Cunningham

auction items you can't find retail for the ABC Auction and we encourage anyone who knows of any exceptional items or exciting activities such as hosting a dinner party, to please contact the CCA office."

Look for your ABC Invitation in the mail this week. Reservations are \$125 per person and includes a full course dinner with an open bar. Seating is limited to the first 120 RSVP's. Tables seat 8 persons. For additional event information, please call (239) 472-2111 or go to CCAcaptiva.org.



Local artists decorating custom-crafted Accent Tables for the ABC Auction Art Project: Tom Libonate, Eleanor Dominek & Sharon Brace. Not pictured are Patti Chipman & Susan Scott.



Sample ABC Auction Art Project Accent Tables decorated by Tom Libonate (left) and Sharon Brace (right).

New Board Member Brings Lots of Experience



Merni Libonate waves from the CCA's entry she helped decorate in the Captiva Golf Cart Parade last Holiday Season.

When Phill Urion recently moved from Captiva to Sanibel, his departure created a vacancy on a CCA Board of Governors seat he had held since 2011.

Although Urion is irreplaceable, Merni Libonate, who was selected to fill the vacancy, brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to the Board.

A native of New Jersey who lived in Farmington, CT. while working for the NBC Today Show and also

running an event planning business, Libonate first came to Captiva in the late 1990s with her husband, Tom. They rented a house across from the Captiva Civic Center they became active in the CCA and the Captiva Island Histori-

cal Society. Eventually, they bought property here in 2014, finishing construction on their new home last year.

"I'm very excited to become more involved in the Island, and to do what I can to help preserve and thoughtfully promote it," she remarked.

With a background in TV and her own event-planning company that represented large firms with naming rights to major sporting events, Libonate said she is eager to use her experience on behalf of the CCA.

Already Merni and her husband helped decorate the CCA entry in his year's Captiva Golf Cart Parade.

Describing herself as "a beach person," Libonate said, "I love to sit on the beach and read, and collect shells, and that's it. I can't get enough of it."

She also enjoys photography, remarking, "You can't take a bad picture on this island."

Merni and Tom still go back to Connecticut about three months every year to see grandchildren and spend the summer, but they are on Captiva the remainder of the year. "I'm a step-mother," she said, "but Tom and I have three fabulous grandkids that I just adore."

Welcome to the CCA Board of Governors, Merni.

Tom Rathbone Joins the Panel

Tom Rathbone is the newest CCA appointee to the Captiva Community Planning Panel, replacing Jack Cunningham, whose term expired, and joining the other CCA appointee Peter Koury on the 11-member panel. Rathbone, who is from Cleveland, first started coming here in the mid-1980s.

He said the parents of his late wife, Susie, came to this area in the 1960s before the Sanibel Causeway was built.

The couple rented before eventually buying a condo in the Hide-A-Way on Old Lodge Lane.

"We joined the CCA right after we bought down here," Rathbone noted. "Susie was all into getting into the community, and the minute she knew there was a CCA, she joined us up." Susie Rathbone passed away unexpectedly last April.



Tom Rathbone is the newest CCA appointed Panel member

Commenting on the Panel, its newest member said, "All of us have a responsibility to chip in and do what we can for the benefit of the Island.

"It seems the longer I'm here, the more I realize that it's a matter of teamwork, and that everyone is looking to preserve this island and make it a better place."



Jennifer Lusk drives the CCA entry in this year's Captiva Golf Cart Parade, with Merni Libonate, while the Lusk children, Kylie & David wave to the crowd from the rear of the golf cart.

Their father, Lee County Sheriff's Deputy Chris Lusk, was busy helping direct parade traffic.



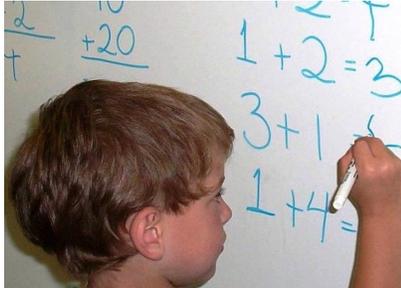
Tom & Merni Libonate decorated Jack & Michele Cunningham's holiday-red golf cart, acquired by the winning bid at the 2015 ABC Auction.

A Young and Most Deserving CCA Scholarship Recipient

At age 16, Nicholas “Nick” Caiazza is the youngest recipient of college scholarship assistance from the CCA Foundation, which provides financial help to students living on Captiva and to nonresident employee dependents of Captiva service organizations.

But then Nick, the son of Lee County Sheriff’s Deputy Joe Caiazza, who patrols Captiva and the upper islands, and Erin Caiazza, has a history of being the youngest to achieve a lot of things.

According to his parents, Nick learned letters and sounds around age 2, was reading by age 2½, and had 10th grade math skills by age 11.



Nick Caiazza, son of Captiva Deputy Sheriff Joe Caiazza, works on solving math problems at age 4 in 2004

Home schooled so he could learn at his own pace, Nick became the youngest student, at age 13, to be admitted to Westminster College in New Wilmington, Pa.

He expects to graduate in May 2018 with a double major in mathematics and computer sciences at the ripe age of 17 before going directly into a Computer Science PhD program to conduct long-term research.

A Dean’s List student since his freshman year, Nick was chosen for the Lambda Sigma Honor Society and the Kappa Mu Epsilon Mathematic Society his sophomore

year. He won a third-place prize for freshman participants at the Undergraduate Research and Arts Celebration, and was the only student at Westminster College to compete in the 2016 Putnam Mathematics Competition.

As a sophomore, Nick competed in the Trinity College Firefighting Robotics competition.

He and his partner built a robot to navigate a model home (maze) in search of a fire and then extinguish it. He is currently working with his Mathematics professor on a long term research project on Pascal-like visualizations.

But it is not all academics for this incredible young man. Nick is actively involved with Seekers, a campus group that allows students a supportive environment to grow in faith. He also engages in volunteer service work, including Operation Christmas Child and Relay for Life, as well as working with local nursing home residents.

Having lived for awhile in Abu Dhabi as a youngster, Nick has become vice-president of his campus International Student Committee and also helps tutor students struggling in Calculus and other math courses, including those students with the Computer Science Department.



CCA scholarship recipient Nick Caiazza, at age 16, is the youngest ever to receive college tuition assistance.

Full Season at the Captiva Civic Center

More than three dozen events – from art shows to iPad classes and from concerts to speakers – are slated for the Captiva Civic Center between now and the season-ending Spring Social on April 11.

Activity got underway Dec. 8 with a “Capture Captiva” juried art show featuring 84 paintings by local artists, along with the CCA’s inaugural social of the season, “Jingle & Mingle”. It was followed by a wildlife photography show titled “Patience, Pause and Click” showing through Feb. 10 featuring spectacular nature photos by the likes of Sallie Rich, Kyle Sweet, David Jeffrey and George Hoch.

It will be followed by a group art show opening Feb 16, featuring artists such as Pam Brodersen, Helen Gracey, Marion Hall, John Lettmann and Stan Timson. A final art exhibit featuring modern and contemporary art opens on March 23.

Also for art lovers, the Captiva Memorial Library will have a program of video and posters highlighting the exhibits of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture at one of its Wednesday afternoon Library presentations March 15 at 3 p.m.



Winners in the season opening “Capture Captiva” art exhibition are (left to right) Patty Timson, standing in for blue ribbon winner Stan Timson, whose painting is shown here; 2nd prize winner Judy Clark; and 3rd place winner Boomer Carroll.

Speaking of the Wednesday afternoon Library programs, there will be presentations on a WWII memoir of Lt. Harlan Highfield on Feb. 15, and a “1968 Presentation” on Feb. 22. David Kilbride presents live music of the 40’s, 50’s and 60s on March 22 – all at 3 p.m.

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Full Civic Center Season

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The library season also features a 3 p.m. James Chartier comedy and magic show on March 2, and an outdoor bird safari excursion, March 10 at 8:30 a.m. which has limited capacities and requires advance reservations by calling the library at (239) 533-4890.

Another event requiring a reservation with the Captiva Island Historical Society (239-472-2323) is "An Old Fashion Picnic" in the Chapel-By-The-Sea courtyard at 4:30 p.m. on Feb. 15. Other programs are Island Voices speaker, author, artist and entrepreneur Katie Gardenia on March 14 and Rae Ann Wessel, SCCF Natural Resource Policy Director on April 5. All three programs start 5:30 p.m.

Classic Movie Nights featuring timeless films introduced by Merni Libonate are at 7 p.m. on Feb. 13 and March 20.

The Civic Center is also hosting a series of computer classes taught by Gerard Damiano focused on members who want to learn more about their iPhones and iPads.

An iPhone basics class on Feb. 27 will be followed by an intermediate class March 6, a



Marion Hall's "Pelican Perch" watercolor is on exhibit along with many other paintings at the "Island Artistry" group show opening Feb 16.

class dealing with e-mail and the Web on March 13, and an iPhone class focused on the media March 20 – all at 2 p.m. Final basics, advanced and intermediate iPad classes will be respectively at 9 a.m., March 21, March 27 at 2 p.m., and at 9 a.m. on March 28. There is a charge of \$50 for members and \$63 for non-members for each of the three-hour classes. Sign up for the classes by calling the CCA office at (239) 472-2111.

As for social events, keep your calendars clear for a Captiva Community Potluck Supper on Feb. 18 at 6 p.m., and a season-ending Spring Social at 5 p.m. on April 11.

Addressing South Florida Water Woes

Southern Florida water problems were the topic of a discussion involving Congressman-elect Francis Rooney, SCCF Natural Resources Director Rae Ann Wessel and Sanibel Mayor Kevin Ruane at a recent meeting of the Captiva Community Panel.

For decades, water management of Lake Okeechobee, transformation of the surrounding land into agricultural uses, and alterations to the Caloosahatchee and Kissimmee watersheds have been causing pollution runoff and salinity problems in the estuaries, as well as loss of sea grasses and algae blooms locally and water shortages in the Everglades.

All three speakers agreed that solving the problems involves complex and comprehensive solutions addressing Lake O, surrounding agricultural lands, both estuaries and the Everglades. They said it entails both federal and state action – especially to obtain adequate funding for projects on the drawing boards.

Rooney, Wessel and Ruane all agreed that there needs to be a unity of message and continual focus - not just when local water quality problems periodically arise.

Rae Ann Wessel, also will be speaking at the Captiva Civic Center at a 5:30 p.m. Apr. 5 presentation for the Captiva Island Historical Society Island Voices event.

She argued that the water quality problems have negative local economic impacts, including \$541 million in lost real estate value for each foot of lost water clarity.



SCCF Natural Resources Director Rae Ann Wessel



New to our Island Paradise?

We welcome you to join the Captiva Civic Association. Membership information and applications are available at CCAcaptiva.org