

Gulfport Messenger

Newsletter of the Gulfport FL Merchants Association

April/May 2009

Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony Will Highlight Gulfport

A special event planned for April will showcase Gulfport's budding relationship with the St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce. The Gulfport Merchants Association, the City of Gulfport and other individual Gulfport merchants have each recently joined the St. Petersburg Chamber in order to take advantage of a broad range of networking and marketing opportunities available to Chamber members. By cooperating with the St. Pete Chamber (as has been done with the Gulfport Chamber) and accessing its unique resources, promotional efforts on the part of GMA and the City will reach an exponentially larger audience, including hundreds of businesses and thousands of residents and visitors throughout Pinellas County.

One of the first events to mark the new partnership will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Thursday, April 23rd at 5PM sponsored by the St. Petersburg Chamber. Gulfport Mayor Mike Yakes will conduct ribbon-cuttings for the City of Gulfport, the GMA, Seaside Villas and 007 Computing in an event to take place in and near the House of Renee Originals at 3127 Beach Blvd. The ribbon-cuttings serve as an inauguration of St. Petersburg Chamber membership. Invitations to the event have gone out to all Gulfport and St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce mailing lists.

All GMA member businesses are invited to participate by attending, inviting friends and customers, networking and bringing business cards and promotional materials to be available at information tables. Or space can be made available for your own table. A wine tent and live music will enhance the evening. Media will be present to cover the ceremony. For more information, contact Joey (House of Renee Originals) at 347-1552.

Joey has actively pursued a working partnership with the St. Petersburg Chamber and has helped Gulfport and GMA by promoting its members and events at Chamber "After Hours" meetings. Her own ribbon-cutting ceremony for House of Renee Originals was held last December

BACA event promotes Gulfport to Hospitality Professionals

The March 24th mixer of the Bay Area Concierge Association (BACA) was hosted in Gulfport and was a resounding success. Over 30 BACA members attended, representing many of the finest hotels and resorts in the Bay Area including the Don Ce Sar, Sheraton Sand Key, Marriott Clearwater Beach, Sand Pearl Resort, and Ultimate Escapes. BACA members work with thousands of visitors each year promoting destinations and activities to their guests.

The event began with a meeting at the Casino in which attendees enjoyed presentations by Casino, GMA, Gulfport Chamber of Commerce, and City of Gulfport representatives offering information on the variety of activities, events, restaurants and shops Gulfport has to offer. Kurt Zuelsdorf of Kayak Nature Adventures also offered a presentation on kayaking and other outdoor attractions. Appetizers were donated by O'Maddy's. Gift bags including Gulfport promotional materials were offered to members.

Meeting attendees then toured some of the local businesses on Beach Blvd. as they made their way up to Peninsula Inn & Spa, which offered a reception on their veranda complete with complimentary beverages and hors d'oeuvres. The evening concluded with a dazzling demonstration of glass blowing by Owen Pach at the Industrial Arts Center. Many BACA members gave the event glowing reviews, commenting that the evening gave them an ideal perspective on Gulfport which they will be able to pass on to countless tourists.

Thanks go to all who cooperated in making this a memorable and successful evening including the City of Gulfport, Gulfport Chamber of Commerce, Dominic's Pizzeria and GMA members O'Maddy's, Kayak Nature Adventures, Peninsula Inn & Spa, Seabreeze Manor B&B, Stillwagon Studios, Yummy's, Domain Home Accessories, House of Renee Originals and the Industrial Arts Center.

Welcome

The Gulfport Merchants Association is pleased and proud to welcome these businesses which have recently joined GMA. .

007 Computing
Pia's Trattoria
Seaside Villas

We appreciate the support and participation of our members, helping us to nurture the best possible business climate, fostering new and improved events, creating new customers and raising the profile of Gulfport.

Member Highlight: Stillwagon Studios

Tucked into a niche of its own, literally and figuratively, Stillwagon Studios represents one of the only working art galleries still present in Gulfport's "Art Village." Stillwagon Studios is located in a small storefront adjacent to Domain Home Accessories near the corner of Beach and Shore Blvds. The featured attraction is the art of Gulfport resident Keith Stillwagon.

Keith has been painting since childhood and has made a living from his art for over 20 of his 65 years. He is also one of Gulfport's colorful characters, an avid biker and a blues harmonica player, jamming every week with Sterling Magee's combo at the Peninsula Inn as well as other local bands

Keith's work includes a variety of colorful subjects including themes of nature, fantasy and mysticism. Paintings and painted objects abound in the gallery's small quarters. In addition to canvases, objects bearing Keith's artistry include cabinets, small furniture, mailboxes, a bowling pin, and perhaps most surprising of all, a five-foot-tall hand-crafted coffin. All original art is available for purchase and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity. Additionally, selected works are available in prints, postcards and giclees (prints on canvas).

A primary focus for Keith is murals. He has painted over 70 murals in the area, many of which can be seen by passers-by in outdoor spaces. Walk or cruise by some of these addresses for examples of Keith's mural art:

Member Highlight (continued)

The Longhouse at 2309 49th St. S.; and residences at 2617 48th St. S. and 2811 45th St. S.; and a work in progress at 5732 23rd Ave. S. Photo albums illustrating Keith's paintings and murals are available at the gallery for perusal. Keith can usually be seen working on his paintings at the gallery during Art Walk on the first Friday and third Saturday evening of each month.

Keith's partner of nine years, Michele Mangelsdorf, manages the gallery on a daily basis. Michele has been a Gulfport local for over 12 years and was the proprietor of a previous Gulfport shop, Cats and Roses, offering antiques and gifts, as well as Keith's artwork. Michele populates Stillwagon Studios with other items for sale including imported ceramics, jewelry, women's casual wear, hand-crafted soaps, potpourris and Michele's own hand-dipped incense. Check out their website at www.keithstillwagon.com.

Keith and Michele occupy a valued and important place in Gulfport by keeping a working art gallery in the heart of the Village. For this, they deserve our thanks... and congratulations: Keith and Michele were just married on Monday, March 30th!

Dine Out For a Good Cause

Thursday, April 30th marks the third consecutive year of Tampa Bay's participation in the international HIV/AIDS fundraiser Dining Out For Life. The event takes place on the same date in over 60 cities and metro areas in the U.S. and Canada. In Tampa Bay, over 50 restaurants will participate, helping to raise funds for AIDS Service Association of Pinellas (ASAP), the largest provider in Pinellas County of services to people and families living with HIV/AIDS. From diners and cafes to pizzerias to white tablecloth establishments, eateries of all stripes will cooperate to support the cause.

Gulfport's Art Village restaurant community has consistently been a leader in this event, with nearly all Village restaurants participating each year from the beginning. During the hours which restaurants participate, 25% of diners' bills will be contributed to ASAP's work. All donations go directly to ASAP and stay in the community..

Dine Out (continued)

The event has taken on a life of its own in Gulfport and is now recognized as one of our town's "can't miss events." Especially during dinner hours, expect the streets and restaurants to be filled with diners who wish to support the cause. This year, live music from St. Petersburg's Double M Band will be featured on a stage at Shore and Beach Blvds. and sponsored tents will be set up, including a wine-tasting tent from Barefoot Wines and Bubbly. The fundraiser is a win-win-win situation for ASAP and for diners, as well as for participating restaurants that will benefit from thousands of dollars worth of free advertising and see their restaurants brimming with business on what might otherwise be an uneventful weeknight.

We are proud of our restaurants for stepping up from the beginning three years ago and maintaining their strong support for this worthy cause. Enjoy breakfast, lunch, dinner, cocktails, coffee and dessert at a variety of restaurants during their hours of participation and you will be supporting fellow community members in need. Check out www.diningoutforlife.com and click the Tampa Bay Area on the map to find a list of participating restaurants in Gulfport and beyond as well as their hours of participation.

Coming Up Soon

Fri. Apr. 3: Art Walk 6-10PM
Sat. Apr. 4: Seaside Villas Open House
11AM-3PM
Tue. Apr. 7: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM
Sat. Apr. 11: Spring Fest 11AM-8PM
Sun. Apr. 12: Easter
Tue. Apr. 14: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM
Tue. Apr. 14: GMA Monthly Meeting
(@ Art Village Courtyard)
5:30-6:30PM
Sat. Apr. 18: Art Walk 6-9PM
Tue. Apr. 21: Fresh Market 6-9PM
Wed. Apr. 22: Earth Day
Thu. Apr. 23: Gulfport/St. Pete Chamber
Ribbon-Cutting 5-7:30PM
Sat. Apr. 25: Gulfport Goes Green
10AM-5PM
Tue. Apr. 28: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM
Thu. Apr. 30: Dining Out For Life (hours of
participation vary by location)
Fri. May 1: Art Walk 6-10PM
Tue. May 5: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM

Coming Up Soon (continued)

Sun. May 10: Mother's Day
Tue. May 12: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM
Tue. May 12: GMA Monthly Meeting
(location to be announced)
5:30-6:30PM
Sat. May 16: Art Walk 6-10PM
Tue. May 19: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM
Sat. May 23: Gulfport Goes Green
10AM-5PM
Mon. May 25: Memorial Day
Tue. May 26: Fresh Market 9AM-3PM

Your GMA Board Members

Feel free to contact board members with questions and comments about GMA activities and events. Your input matters.

Mike McCue (Domain Home Accessories):
President (mmccue@tampabay.rr.com
or 302-9299)

Leslie Gilchrist (The Outpost): Treasurer
(gilchristleslie@gmail.com 439-1485)

Lori Rosso (Sea Breeze Manor): Board Member
(rsvp@seabreezemanor.com or
343-4445)

Mary O'Malley (Reef Dog Gifts & Grooming):
Board Member ([reefdogmary@
yahoo.com](mailto:reefdogmary@yahoo.com) or 323-7007)

Michele King (Sail Away Realty): Board Member
(michwilltwo@aol.com or 433-3610)

Suzanne King: Events Coordinator
(gulfportevents@gmail.com or
322-5217)

Something to Think About

"If I can't dance, it's not my revolution!"

Emma Goldman
(attributed)